The Ursa and the Heda

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Summary

Spirits are a large part of grounder culture, when Clarke switches places with Finn to spare him his life and get the alliance, something happens that changes her. Changes the way the grounders and her own people look at her. (Warning torture in first chapter) (Clarke and Lexa wont be together until later chapters.)

Notes

I own nothing mentioned in this story.
A/N: At end.

See the end of the work for more notes.
Blood spilled and burned

Chapter Summary

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Chapter Notes

A/N: This idea just popped into my head and I decided to write it. Grounders are a spiritual culture so I worked with that. I don't believe an alliance could have worked if Finn stayed alive. The 100 writers had the balls to kill off a main character where others would have found an excuse for him to stay alive and I love that about the writers. But in my story I needed Clarke to be on that post so she needed to switch places with Finn.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"I burned three hundred of your warriors alive. I slit a man's throat and watched him bleed and die. I am soaked in grounder blood." The blonde's voice cracks as she tries to reason with the Commander in front of her. "Take me."

Green eyes stare at her in understanding but the Commander sighs. "But Finn is guilty."

"They want a murder's blood." Blue eyes blaze with an intensity that catches the Commander's attention. "They want blood for blood. I am soaked in grounders blood. So much that I don't even know what is my own. Take me. Show my people you can be merciful but show yours that you take what is needed." Like a fire too hot those blue eyes burn bright. "They want blood. Let me bleed."

Lexa eyes the fire in the blonde, that spirit in the blonde. She feels an image flash before her eyes. The blonde's chin tilted up in strength and blood dripping from her wounds. So the decision has been made for her. The spirits want this and she will listen.

She tilts her chin minusculy and Gustus releases the murderer from the pole. "Take him to his camp."

Shouts ring out from her people. And the murder's eyes are wide in fear. "Enough. Do as I say."

Clarke stands there staring at Lexa until the grounders shove Finn through the gate of Camp Jaha. They come back down minutes later and Clarke finally turns her gaze to Camp Jaha. Raven clutches at Finn's shirt, sobbing in relief. He was her family, she couldn't lose him. She owed him so much. He was sent Earth instead of her. Bellamy eyes are torn as he stares down at Clarke, for Finn was a killer but also his friend. "Blood must have blood. The Princess offers her own up. Her blood that is covered in our peoples blood! She pays the price of eighteen deaths and more!"

The grounders stare at the blonde. Some recognizing her as the one who met Anya. The one who killed three hundred of their brothers and sisters. "Jus drein jus daun. BLOOD MUST HAVE BLOOD." The chant rings throughout the darkness and the Arkers stare at Clarke, waiting for her to come back.
Raven smile trembles. "She did it. She kept her promise." Her fingers stay tangled in Finn's shirt but she turns to stare at Clarke. Waits for her to come back up so she can hug her.

Bellamy swallows. "What happened?"

Finn's eyes are guilty. Pained. He killed all those people yet they let him go after shouting for his death, why? "I don't know. I couldn't hear what they were saying. They just untied me and brought me here."

"What are they doing?" The original hundred stare down at their leader. The ropes were being readied. Bellamy's face cracks. "No." His dark eyes crack and he shoves past Finn. "She traded places!" He tries to tear through the guards but they hold him back with tight hands and grim faces. "Let me go!" Raven pushes against them, throwing fists when she can as Finn does the same, his face twisted into guilt, anger and heartbreak.

By the burning fire Lexa stares into blue eyes. "Do you understand what will happen?"

The blonde doesn't even shake in fear, her eyes hold resolution. Understanding. Pain. "Yes."

Lexa stares at the blonde, a noble sacrifice to keep her people alive and peace. It needed to be honored. "Do you have any requests before we begin?"

Clarke swallows, tongue thick in her mouth. "Don't let them see me. If you do as Lincoln said don't let them see my body like that." She couldn't stand to have them see her broken and bloody beyond recognition.

The brunette dips her chin in agreement. "Let us begin Clarke of the Sky." She walks the blonde forward. She does not push or shove for Clarke was a willing sacrifice. She would not sully the blonde's dignity and pride and sacrifice by shoving her. The young leader holds her hands up willingly, eyes not looking up to her camp. She knows what she will see. She can hear them screaming. Fighting. "Keep them away. Tell them they all die if they interfere." The warriors nod and walk up the camp, voices loud and carrying. Clarke's people still struggle. The blonde can hear Raven, Bellamy, Octavia, Monroe, Finn and her mom.

Clarke tilts her chin up, jaw clenched as she stares at her soon to be executioners. The Commander tilts her head. Even in the face of death. In the face of torture this sky girl showed the traits of a true warrior. "Promise me one thing before you begin." Blue eyes stare into green.

The Commander raises her chin. "What is that?"

Blue eyes shine and her voice is dangerous. "Get my people out of Mount Weather. Make them crumble."

A true leader then. Thinking of her people even faced in death. "I promise this to you as Commander, the Mountain men will feel the pain they've caused and your people will be freed."

"Thank you." Clarke brings her blue eyes to the sky, lips trembling before the Commander nods.

Clarke swallows and drops her head to stare straight ahead as the first man steps forward. His fingers press the knife into her arm and she knows it will be painful but won't bleed too much. He draws it slowly into her flesh, dragging the pain out. She grits her teeth. This was like when she had torn her stitches out. She could do this. Her people didn't need to hear her screams. But the second one. The one that drags across her stomach has her teeth gnashing down and gritting so hard she swears they will break as this low pained moan rips from her throat before she cuts it off, taking in a deep breath
through her nose. They didn't need to hear her screams.

The next one is coming and he cuts away her jacket, leaving her in her too thin long-sleeved ratty shirt. The sleeves are destroyed on both. He lifts her shirt and she keeps her chin tipped forward. He drags the knife across her ribs. She forces her eyes to stay open and they meet the Commander's green. The woman does not look pleased but her eyes are full of respect. Clarke lets out sharp breaths that were betraying her pain. She can still hear her people struggling and then another cut on her other arm has her shoving her head back against the pole. Her neck muscles tighten and she sweats her jaw will break at the force she's clenching it. The next is across her ribs again, a mirror image of the other side. Indra glares at her as she drags it across slowly, eyes twisted in hatred as the pain burns and sparks threatening to pull pain grunts from the young leader. Clarke does her best to stay silent before the next man it cutting her across her hip, she swears the knife must touch the bone but knows it doesn't. That one drags a scream of pain out of her before she clamps her mouth shut.

Sharp pain in her other hip as the next man holds her shirt up. She hears her jaw pop and her eyes clamp shut but she stays silent. Her eyes water and threaten to spill as she stares at the girl walking up to her, no older than Clarke. Slowly she takes the knife, looking it over in her hands before slowly, ever so slowly poking Clarke in the side with the tip and twisting it until there is a drop of blood. Then she's slicing sideways at an angle that rips a scream from Clarke's throat. Her body betrays her, bowing away from the knife as her head presses into the wood behind her. With every beat of her heart pain sears her and her heart thunders. The next warrior, a man with a bald head and twists and twirls of tattoos across it, takes the knife to Clarke's cheek quickly, getting two inches in before Lexa reprimands him for his impatience. They left the face alone until the last day. She feels the sting on her left cheek bone and the blood drips down her chin. The man is sliced across his own face in a similar way until the next warrior steps forward. Her eyes are not pleased or displeased. She stares at Clarke with an almost bored look.

The scream echoes around the camp and Abby is sobbing into her hands. Bellamy pinned below three guards, Finn tied down to a pole and Raven below another guard. Their eyes stare at their leader. Monroe is tied next to Finn, her face twisted in rage and tears dripping down her cheeks. Octavia stares at Lincoln, her hands bond behind her. "How long?" Her voice shakes as she stares at her lover.

Lincoln looks at the girl, jaw ticking before he answers. Voice low. They should have left Finn down there, let him pay the price for his crime. "They know how to drag it out. They'll draw her blood with cuts. Move to burns or whips next. They'll cut her well into the night. Hours and then let her rest for two hours at maximum. Let her body ready itself so she continues to be their punishment."

"We can't save her can we?" Her voice cracks.

"No. Life has no value if death has no price." His hands wind around her shoulder and she bite her lip to stop from crying.

Finn pants, eyes broken. "This is my fault. I shouldn't have let them bring me up here."

Another scream rips through the night. They all wince, Clarke hadn't screamed that much but when she did it ached. Raven pulls at her bindings after the guard sits her up. "I told her. I knew it was suicide and I asked her to save you." Raven growls out, eyes full of tears.

Finn drops his head to his chest. "I was ready to die. I killed those people. I murdered them."

Bellamy fights from below the guards. "Then you live with it!" His eyes are crazed. Pained and
angry as he glares at Finn. "You killed them. That's on you. Live with what you've done. Don't mope about it. Clarke is giving up her life for yours."

Clarke doesn't know how much time has passed. Just that everything stings in a numbing way. Her jaw aches and her breaths are shallow pants. Blood seeps through her clothes, staining the ground. They hadn't touch her legs yet. Staying and cutting lines close together, criss-crossing and it hurt so bad. Stung and ripped and made her thrash her head back. The dark night greets Clarke's eyes. Stars bright and she stares at them. They used to be home. Used to be a comfort. The next warrior steps forward and she lost count. Knows they're well up in the double digits. Knows this pain won't be done for a long time. What had Lincoln said? Cut, Burn, tongue, hands. Eighteen deaths and more. The knife drags along her collarbone and she has no idea why they let her keep her shirt on instead of stripping her to her bra. The thought is random and fleeting as the knife stings across her skin.

Lexa steps forward now, hand taking the knife as she cuts a line above Clarke's heart, Clarke's body radiates so much pain that she doesn't even mumble a groan out. But she sees the Commander's eyes glaze over as she keeps her chin up in defiance. Even as it trembles.

Lexa feels the flesh beneath her give way, at the second blood is spilt by her own hands a vision hits her. The mountain door rips open, smoke licking behind it and cheers of triumph. It was victory. It was the mountain men defeated. Why would the spirits show her this now? Did this mean she was on the right path? Suddenly the thunder booms and she recognizes the signs.

It pelts down on them and Clarke has her head tipped back against the post as she stares at the sky. Rain washes away the blood. And the grounders stare at her as she laughs at the feeling of cooling rain on her face. It cools the heat from the wounds. She tilts her head down, eyes catching the Commander's. Another warrior steps forward. Lexa holds up her hand. "The spirits have spoken. We are done for the night."

Clarke keeps her head tilted to the sky as the rain continues to pound down, soaking the ground. Causing fires to flicker. Her mouth opens and she greedily takes what she catches in her mouth. It is cool against her parched throat and her arms above her head ache until a grounder is pulling them down and forcing them to be tied around the pole behind her back. Her shoulders twinge in protest but she stands as well as she can. Not wanting to show weakness.

Clarke's body shakes with chills as the night air beats away at the soaked clothing. The rain has yet to let up and Clarke takes the cool reprieve against her hot skin. At the Arc everyone sans a select group has gone inside to hide from the downpour.

Finn sits, head crumpled in his hands, gaze on his feet. Raven stares at Clarke, eyes broken and guilty as she sees the blonde's head slumped against the wooden post. Bellamy's hands clenched in his fist but they can't exit the gate. It is guarded by five Arc guards and five grounders stand outside it. Gazes on them. Octavia paces, Lincoln leaning against a building as Monroe clenches and unclenches her fists against her knees. Murphy stands in the shadows, eyes on the blonde. He had told her it was her fault when in reality it was Finn's. Abby is still kneeling on the ground, eyes on her daughter's prone form. They stay like this until dawn peeks at the horizon.

It is the edge of dawn, when the sun has yet to break the horizon and the world is still painted in dark hues. The grounders make their way to Clarke. The blonde looks up to meet their eyes. Her own are tired. Worn but not defeated. She had saved Finn and kept her promise to Raven and Lexa had promised to save her people. All would be well. "Yesterday we cut for blood. Today we draw blood through the fires that will burn our dead!" Lexa's voice commands attention and in Camp Jaha Lincoln winces, knowing these screams will be worse. He is surprised Clarke had not screamed more. Many warriors were trained from apprenticeship not to scream and Clarke had held strong,
screaming few times. Screams that echoed through the nights and camps.

The fire is started and it licks at them as the rain continues to dribble. Not a torrent anymore. Not a downpour but a light drizzle to coat the skin. Blue eyes stare as they push a long rod into the fire. They were to burn her. Brand her. Her body trembles on its own accord and her heart races and for a minute she is scared and she wants her mom to turn away. To leave. Her jaw clenches as the man walks forward. He stares at her and she stares right back. Never breaking eye contact as he presses the steel into her hip. Her teeth clack together so hard her tongue gets caught between them. He holds it there, her back and head pressing against the post as her body tries to lurch away, when she thinks she might black out he takes it away and she drops her gaze, panting, blood dripping from her mouth and down her chin. She looks through her lashes at the grounders. They stare at her, some in anger others with emotionless gazes.

She can hear the fire licking around the rod as the rain continues to fall down on them. Her hair is soaked and she knows her wrists are rubbed raw. She had thrashed too much for them not to be. Her knees tremble as they press the rod into her other hip, right where her pant line will hit. Her pants ride low on her hips but remain there as the grounder presses in harder until a moan rips out of her throat. He pulls it away and Clarke spews her bloody spittle on the ground. They're heating it up again and her body shakes. She was hot yet cold. She knew she most likely had a fever. Could she handle two more days of this? Lincoln said they don't last more than three. Would she last that long? Did she want to last that long? Go through all of that torture. Make her friends listen for three days? Then the brand is there again and it's pressing into her right collarbone, chasing the thoughts away and her fingers grasps each other as her hands thrash to pull her away, her head tilts to the left to avoid the heat and the scream that pulls from her throat makes her knees shake and ears ring. The burns hurt so much more than the cuts. They pull it away again and Clarke trembles. Her head wants to fall to her chest but she tilts her chin up, accepting her punishment defiantly. She would not bow down to them. She would not beg for death or cave under their torture. They press it again onto her left hip, right beside the other, creating a dull ache as they pull it away and she can't tell what's was fresh and what was old injuries. The rain drips down her chin and she watches the sun rise. She feels the urge to paint it as another brand digs into her hip. She doesn't feel the pain as much this time and she knows that should scare her as she stares at the sun rising and the stars hiding.

A hulking creature lumbers around the forest, sniffing until it catches the scent of blood. A scream tears through the air and if follows the scent of this blood. This scream, feet taking it slowly there until it sees fire. Something draws it closer and it sees the people stare. Long metal and wooden sticks in their paws. It snorts at them, sniffing the air. They back away and it hear a cry from above the hill but continue until it makes it to the pale haired creature saturated in blood and pain and rain. Blue eyes stare back and the creature sniffs. This was it. This was the reason it was here. It steps closer and the pale two legged thing stares back in awe. No fear on that face. It lets out a huff of warm air. Watches as the pale strand of its fur flutter. It sniffs at the blood on its cheek. This being bleeds much. Smelt of burns. Of fire and death. Of pain and despair but strength and determination. This was a good choice.

Lexa and her people stop their torture when they hear the crunch of feet on the forest floor only to have an Ursa step out of the forest. Its large body lumbering forward. Her warriors step back, eyes wide and Lexa watches as it sniffs the air before moving to Clarke. She hears the cry of the sky people as the Ursa stands in front of Clarke, breathing in deeply. Only two things could happen. Lexa holds her breath as the Ursa sniffs again and Clarke stares at it in awe until her hair is moving as it exhales onto her face. They continue to stare at one another until the Ursa nose touches Clarke's bloody cheek and it sniffs again before touching it's nose to her forehead. She catches the shiver go
through the girls body before the creature huffs more warm air into the girl's face before stepping back. It stands on it's hind legs, body towering over the warriors before it lets out a roar that shakes the ground they stand on. Warriors drop to their knees, weapons falling as the creature stays on its back limbs, overlooking the crowd. It's eyes find Clarke's again and it lowers itself huffing at the girl before trotting back into the forest. Lexa stands tall as her people murmur around her in shock. Her voice is the loudest. "Untie her."

From Camp Jaha they watch with rapt attention and Abby cries out as a bear comes out of the forest, heading straight for her daughter. She screams and Kane holds her as the warriors stands by for the bear to rip into her baby girl. They watch as it touches her and then it is roaring and they watch in shock and fear as the warriors fall to their knees, even Lexa. Lincoln falls to his knees and Octavia follows him, eyes curious until Clarke is being released. "What was that?" Octavia stares at they untie her leader.

Lincoln's eyes are focused down below. "A claim. Clarke was chosen."

Clarke feels them cut the ropes against her wrists and she almost falls forward but manages to keep herself upright. Had a bear just touched her or had she dreamt it? Was she hallucinating now? The warriors watch her, eyes fretful as Lexa walks forward. "Come." If this was a dream then she might as well listen. Clarke stumbles after her until they are in a tent. Lexa motions to a chair and Clarke stands, body wavering but she stands tall. "You are stubborn but that is not always good. Sit."

She stands a few seconds longer until her legs give out and her whole body aches. Her head burns. Forehead throbbing in a dull acceptance. A dull ache where the nose had touched her. She hears the tent flap open and then Nyko is there. He kneels before her, motioning to her shirt. She stares at him. "I need to treat your wounds."

"Why?" Her words are deep, a gravelly sound that exits her throat. "This isn't the plan. I'm suppose to burn and then lose my hands. Then tongue."

Nyko bows his head. "That was before. Now. Now I treat your wounds," Lexa just stare at them as Nyko cuts her shirt away. His fingers hover over the crisscrossed patterns on her.

Blue eyes stare at Lexa, challenging. "Are you going to kill me or not?"

Green eyes are dark as they stare into Clarke's own eyes. "No. The spirits have spoken."

"What do you mean?" She clenches her jaw as Nyko begins to clean the blood from her.

"You will live." The Commander's voice is steady, final. "The spirits have spoken."

"My people?" Clarke worries. They had not gotten the death they sought.

"Will live." Those green eyes speak the truth and Clarke wants to believe them. "The alliance will hold strong. The murderer is not to step foot in our ground." The green eyes flash in anger. In hatred at the mention of him, her face is emotionless but her jaw is clenched.

Clarke stands, legs protesting as she pushes Nyko's worried hands away. "Then take me to my people."

Nyko shakes his head. "Your wounds."

The blonde tilts her chin up in challenge. In defiance and strength. "Take me to my people." Lexa's
"You heard the Ursa. Let us go." At Lexa's words Nyko hands Clarke another looser shirt and she slips it over her head, hissing in pain. They exit the camp and warriors move out of their way. Eyes following them. Clarke's legs feel like jelly and she wants to sleep. To lie down and never get up but she needed to get to her people so she keeps moving. Her arms wrapped around her abused abdomen. Blood trickles out of it but they continue on until the gate is opening. The Commander tilts her head up. "Get the murderer out of our site."

Finn stares at Clarke until two guards shove him away and into the detainment location and then the three of them are walking through the camp. Grounders outside tense and wait as Clarke's people stand by, shifting in front of them before Clarke is walking forward past Nyko and Lexa. Then her mom is rushing forward, before they can blink, Nyko has his knife out and is in front of her. Guns cock and everyone tenses, waiting for blood to be spilled. "You do not rush the Ursa."

"The Ursa?" Abby stares at him, brown eyes alight with emotion. "She is my daughter."

"She was chosen by the Ursa." Lexa speaks calmly even in the face of guns trained on them.

They all look around in confusion so Lincoln speaks up. "The Ursa is the spirit of life and death. Of strength, leadership and healing. She chose Clarke. It is an honor." He turns to look at the Commander. "The Commander is Heda, the Heda leads when the time is right. Has visions of what's to come and visions of the past. The Commander is always chosen by a Heda."

Clarke stands there, body threatening to give way to exhaustion. "We need to discuss the attack on the mountain. We need to get my people out of there." Her eyes turn to Nyko and Lexa. "And the grounders out. We need to move fast."

Abby shakes her head, eyes looking over her daughter. "Not before you're treated. You need rest Clarke."

Blue eyes flash and Clarke steps forward. "My friends could be bled dry while I rest! We need to move now."

"Your mother is right Clarke." Blue eyes snap to the Commander, angry at the agreement. They needed to move quickly not wait around. "You must be treated. I have seen visions, the mountain crumbles under our attack."

Clarke wanted to be wary, wanted to scoff at the idea of vision but when that bear, that Ursa, had touched her everything had gone until she saw blood and smoke and destruction and felt her body come alive as if hit by lightning. Clarke nods sharply and follows her mother to the medical bay, everyone on their heels. Raven shifts in the doorway, looking as if she wants to run forward and Clarke stares at them. Abby turns around brown eyes looking over the others. "Clarke needs to take her shirt off. Leave."

Bellamy and Lincoln drag Octavia away but Lexa, Raven and Nyko stay. "I said go."

Clarke shakes her head. "It's fine mom. It's not like they haven't seen it." She pulls the shirt off and hears the sharp intake of breath from her mother.

Abby turns to glare at them. "How can you be in here and look at the damage you've done and feel nothing?"

Lexa tilts her chin up and glares at the righteous woman. "She was paying for the deaths of eighteen innocents. Her blood was the price and so was her life."
Brown eyes blaze in anger and hatred as she stare at this child who led these savages. "And you spared her because a bear didn't eat her?" The words shake in pent up rage.

Lexa stares at Abby before her eyes flicker to the blonde. "The Ursa rarely chooses. Clarke is special. The mountain will fall and we will prevail."

Raven's eyes water as she speaks. "She paid for Finn's crimes." Her lips tremble. "Because I asked her too."

Clarke stands up sharply, they were speaking as if she wasn't even here. As if she was already dead. "You didn't ask that of me Raven. I did this because I decided to." The words are sharp as they cut through the former Arker's. "Finn killed those people. He can live with that guilt. Deal with it for the rest of his life because he did it and we need to accept that."

Raven's lips tremble before she stills them "You'd be dead now if that bear hadn't have come."

Clarke stands tall. "You'd still be getting our people out of mount weather. That's all that matters anymore. Not war. We need to stick together to get out people."

Tan fingers stretch to brush along tortured skin. "I am sorry."

"You didn't do anything." The blonde sighs and then her mom is pushing her back down and stitching her together.

Clarke clenches her jaw at the ever present pain. It stung more than when the knives were pressed into her skin. "I'm sorry Clarke. We have no numbing agents." Her mother's eyes are pained as she stares at the abused skin of her daughter.

Clarke swallows as the stitches pull on already sore and tortured skin. "It's fine mom." Slowly Abby cleans the wounds and then Nyko is passing a bag forward.

Abby glares at him, eyes threatening his life. He just stares back. "It is for infections."

Clarke looks at it, hands clenched across the table. "I used it on Jasper. It's safe mom." She looks between them. "It's faster if you use it as a tea." Nyko tilts his head before nodding slightly. Clarke clenches her jaw as she feels the needle and thread pull and push her skin back together. They were some crisscrossed cuts that she knew no matter how skilled her mom was at stitching, they would be brutal looking.

It feels like hours later when her mom stops. She's rubbing the seaweed across her wounds. "Some don't need stitches but they need butterfly stitches Clarke."

Clarke nods. It meant more chance of infection if she didn't watch them. "I know."

"The burns." Her mom's voice cracks.

They would be permanent. Brands forever stuck in her skin. She ducks her head. "I know mom."

Abby goes to wipe the blood from her face. Lexa grabs her hand. "Leave the mark alone." Abby turns to glare at her. "It is a mark left by the Ursa. Clarke may wipe it away but no one is to touch it."

Abby sighs and hands Clarke the cloth. The blonde leaves the blood stained on her forehead alone but dabs at the blood dried on her cheek until it is clean. "We won't use butterfly stitches and real stitches would mar your face. It need to heal on it's own." Clarke nods before tossing the rag down.
She stands quickly, squaring her shoulder as she stands in just a bra and low slung pants. The white gauze is a stark contrast to her skin. "Can we talk war now." Her words are steady and demanding. Not a question.

Lexa smirks. "I see why the spirit has chosen you." She could, Clarke was everything a great warrior and leader should be. Not what the Sky-demons were said to be. "But you are tired. You need rest."

Clarke steps forward, toe to toe with the woman. "What I need is to get my friends out of the mountain and you promised me we'd get them out."

"I did and we will." Lexa steps forward so they are almost touching. Her voice is calm and collected. The opposite of Clarke's angry and defiant drawl. "We have a few day to plan our attack. I am the Heda. My job is to think war through clearly. So you will rest and we will go to burn the innocents in their village and tell the others an Ursa has been chosen."

Clarke wants to through her hands wide as her jaw ticks in anger. Blue eyes blaze like the too hot fires from the broken machines Lexa had seen visions of. "Are you really going to stand around twiddling your thumbs? Our people are dying in that mountain." The tone and gaze are angry and accusing.

Lexa steps forward, impossibly closer, gaze stern. "And I lead the army that will defeat the mountain. We need to plan. Do not question my abilities."

Clarke clenches her jaw. "When do we leave for the village?"

"After you rest." Clarke opens her mouth but Lexa continues. "You are of no use to us if you faint on your feet on the way to the village. They will think you weak. Rest. gather the strength that you need. We will leave tomorrow."

Chapter End Notes

This story will follow the second season of the 100 but with different lines and slight twists until ch 5, where it goes completely into my own story without using the second season as a crutch. Ch 5 was one of the first parts I wrote for this story, Ch 1 through Ch 4 are setting background information and the works. Please enjoy.
Fire Destroys and Heals

Fire dances behind metal and the blonde's face is contorted into anguish, fear, and loss; she wants to scream. To run. Sirens sound until finally the blonde is standing in the middle of a city. The old cities. Buildings higher than the trees that now grow. Automobiles are idling in the street and she turns quickly in a circle looking for something. Anything as her mind spin and spins like a top. The weight of a gun rests familiar against her hip as she runs down the street. Where were they? A sound like the flares so long ago greets the air and then smoke and flames and debris are flying everywhere. Surrounding her like the stars would and once did. She throws her hands up over her eyes but doesn't feel the pain. Doesn't feel the searing of the fire or the the bar penetrating her abdomen. She falls to her knees, eyes closed and then they open slowly until she focuses on the place around her. Smoldering grounders. The drop ship. Three hundred dead warriors all on Clarke's hands. Blood coats them, dripping and mixing with the dirt. The blonde pants and her knees waver as she stumbles to her feet but she stands tall. She would be strong. Blue eyes search the ash when she hears the gunfire. The booms echoing around the trees, horrendous. Shots that make her ears ring and heart skip. Feet tear across the ground in a familiar path and then Anya is collapsing again. Blood spilling out of her and words on her tongue. The young blonde's scream rings out as she races for the woman only to see more bodies join the General. An old man, eyes open in fear. A young girl, tears still wet on a cooling face, doll in hand. A young boy, arrow on his belt and his father's tear stains on his shirt. Her world spins and slows all the same before she sees the monster. Dark eyes filled with rage and hatred. Hair matted with sweat, fear, blood and retribution. He holds a gun and those monstrous eyes soften like a rabid dog to a loving puppy. 'Clarke. I found you.' Soft words full of joy and relief. So much different than the loud rage filled shouts. The world changes again but those eyes are forever staring at her, a monster hidden in the depths of innocence and love. She feels blood on her hands and looks down. A knife connect to her fingers and buried into the boys ribs. His eyes dull, no longer rabid or relief filled. Dead. Dull and then an anguished filled scream is ringing through her ears.

The blonde sits up with a quiet gasp, heart racing. Her hands tremble and her body aches and throbs. Blue eyes search the room but thankfully she hadn't woken Bellamy or Raven up. Slowly she sets her feet against the floor. Boots clicking silently. She feels eyes on her and snaps her head up to connect with the man across from her, his face is now clean. His beard once full of blood, is gone but his eyes are haunted. "Lincoln." His name is low and soft as it leaves her lips, an understanding. Those eyes held a familiar pain.

Lincoln bows his head. "Clarke." His eyes search over her and she sighs in relief when he doesn't ask her anything. Doesn't comment on the racing of her heart or the pain that seems to radiate off of her.

Her feet touch the floor softly and she slowly rises, fingers clasping for clothing resting on the table near her. The shirt pulled over her wounds is thin and light but heavy against her stitches. The once soft fabric pulls and catches in the black knots all across her torso. Jaw clenching and eyes flash as she pulls her jacket on; her head swims with the pain and she grips the bed for balance. The jacket was tight against the wounds. Pressing. Painful but it was her armor. Her unaffirmed protection against something. Against things she hadn't understood but it felt like home. Felt like safety. The watch clinks as she picks it up from the table and the heaviness in her heart seems to fall and relax the second it is back on her wrist. Her pants dig into the burns and cuts on her hips and she wants to slam her head into a pillow and scream. Instead she lets her muscles twitch and quiver and her knuckles whiten against the bed until she's caught the pain and shoved it away. All at once she stands up straight, releases the bed. "Where's the Commander?" The words don't tremble even as her body begs to quake and quiver in pain.
Lincoln stands taller, hands shaking in detox, eyes full of understanding. A thousand cuts could make even the strongest warrior curl and stumble in pain yet Clarke fought it. Slowly his own hands stop shaking and he squares his shoulders, pulling strength from the girl who once tortured him. "Follow me." His eyes flicker to Bellamy and Raven but Clarke doesn't want their hugs. Their grief and happiness and pity and pain. She needs to get her people out of Mount Weather. Needs to finish this last task she and Anya had spoken about. Needs to finish her promise to the woman and get the grounders out. Get her own people out. Thankfully Lincoln seems to understand her mind and they make their way out of the Arc pieces. The metal feels cold and angry, worse than when she had once been prisoner inside of it. It is stifling. Consuming. A cage for a bird who had known freedom only to be caged again. It was not a comfort to her as it was to those that fell with the Ark.

Octavia greets them, sword on her back. Green eyes are bright with affection yet blaze with respect and fire as she stares at her lover and then her leader. "Glad to see you're good Clarke." Teeth flash white against tan skin.

The blonde has a small almost trembling smile cross her lips, blue eyes softening as the masked pain is replaced with affection and relief. "Me too." She looks back to Lincoln, eyes shifting in an instant. Hard with decisions and knowledge. "Take me to her."

He nods, gait long and hands slightly trembling. Slim tan fingers, adorned in new callouses, grip the shaking right hand and Lincoln's body seems to relax as he holds his fingers tangled with Octavia's. They make their way to the gate, steps sure and stride fast and long. A guard stands duty, he straightens as the three of them stand at the gate, eyes flickering nervously to the sword on Octavia's back and then the tall man with the closed off face. He swallows as his eyes find hard blue. His ears ring from the roar of the bear hours ago. "The Chancellor said to not let you leave without her permission."

Clarke clenches her jaw, fire burning bright and almost uncontrolled in her eyes. "I need to speak with the Commander, let me out." The feeling of being caged is growing, stifling.

He swallows thickly, hands almost shaking in fear as the three of them stare at him. "I can't. I'm under orders." Lincoln raises his chin, about to argue when he spots Clarke's shoulders squaring, muscle tightening and she clenches her jaw and spins around. Feet stalking to where she knew her mother would be. Octavia jerks Lincoln into following Clarke. Despite the pulling of the skin on her hips the blonde's pace is quick. Determined. A door is thrown open and seven sets of eyes turn to stare at her.

Brown eyes fill with worry. "Clarke, is everything alright?" Abby steps forward, eyes searching over her daughter for any apparent damage.

"The guard will not let me through the gate." Blue eyes are accusing and angry. "I need to speak to the Commander." A single goal set in her mind, fury blazing in her eyes as her mother became an obstacle. Another body standing in front of Clarke saving her people. Her friends.

Abby swallows, eyes turning to the six people behind her. "We're in the middle of a council meeting."

"My people are possibly dying in Mount Weather." The words are hard as Clarke stares at her mother. Blood on her forehead and anger in her eyes. "I need to speak with the Commander. We need to save them."

One of the council members speaks up. "We don't know if they've harmed your friends yet. You said they were well taken care of. That only the grounders were being bled. We have time."
"There is no time! Don't you understand that? It doesn't matter if they're safe for now, we have no idea how long they'll be safe." Her chest heaves and fists are clenched beside her hips and she wishes for Bellamy. His presence would help. His looming and his dark glare. Though Octavia's is seeming to do a pretty good job, eyes hard and accusing as they cause council members to shift in their seat.

"We need to prepare." He speaks up again, swallowing thickly. Sitting behind the table as if it offers him protection. A shield. "We cannot just go gallivanting where these grounders want us to go."

Lincoln steps forward, jaw ticking but voice even. "It is a funeral for the ones that died. Eighteen dead will be burned in the village where the massacre happened. Then we will celebrate our alliance and plan our attack against the mountain. Clarke must speak with the Commander. To hold her back and keep her away could cause trouble." His words are calm yet demanding. Every ounce different than Clarke's fury filled words and Octavia's glare.

Abby sighs, pinching the bridge of her nose and holding her hand up. "Enough. I will go speak with the Commander. We can only spare so many guards to help them."

Lincoln stands tall. "She will not speak with you."

"Excuse me?" Abby straightens her posture, shoulders squaring and chin tilting forward, the other council members staring with rapt attention. Waiting on baited breath.

"The Heda will only make deals with Clarke. She is the Ursa." Octavia's muscles are tense as if expecting a fight, Lincoln's body is loose but Clarke can see the danger in him as her own muscles tighten in anger. Wounds protesting as she stares down the council members. Her mother.

"I am the Chancellor." Abby's voice rings throughout the room as she seemingly challenges Lincoln. Righteousness in her voice and actions and Clarke holds back her screams and yells; knuckles white as she clenches her fists. "Leader of my people."

"Chancellor has no meaning to our people. In their eyes Clarke is the one to look to."

"She's a child." Abby speaks, voice hard and eyes full of something motherly and something almost dangerous; Clarke clenches her jaw at the tone. The implication.

"I stopped being a child the day you had my father floated." Abby flinches back, face twisted in grief. "I am going to speak to the Commander. Have some guards ready or don't. I need to save my people. The ones you sent down here like lab rats." She spins and leave, heart racing and blood hot with anger. Octavia follows after her and then Abby is hot on their heels.

The woman almost grabs her daughter's arm to pull her back but as her fingers brush the jacket she remembers and her hand falls. "Clarke, what are you doing? You need to rest. Tearing any stitch-.."

"I need to save my people mom!" The blonde spins, blue eyes alight with anger and frustration and an almost manic look. "Nothing will stop me, not even that guard or you. Let me through." Her words drop, lower into a frightening tone and Lincoln almost shivers. Feels the power in her voice. Feels the command.

"I'm coming with you ."

Clarke shakes her head. "You can come to the village if you want for the dinner but I will talk to the Commander today, not you. You can't think straight."

"I can put aside our disputes to save those kids." Abby's voice is hard and almost annoyed.
"You almost ate her head off when they brought me in. I can't have you messing this up mom. I can't have you making her mad." Clarke shakes her head, shoulder dropping in almost defeat. "I need her warriors to save my people."

Abby stares at her daughter, so much familiarity yet so many differences in her daughter. Her eyes take in the changes as her heart ache. "Okay. But you're taking people with you. Do not go alone."

"I'm not taking any guards down." She shakes her head almost scowling, knowing their prejudice ways would end up with the alliance broken and Clarke's friends dead. "This is about trust. I'll go by myself."

"Clarke." A warning yet the tone of a mother reprimanding a child.

Lincoln stands straighter, shoulders stilling and hands stop twitching. "Octavia and I will go with her. She will be fine."

Abby clenches her jaw but nods. She almost hugs Clarke but her eyes take in the looks of Lincoln and Octavia before she is spinning around and moving to the council.

They begin to make their way to the gate, Clarke stalking like a bull on a warpath, Lincoln and Octavia right behind her, when they are stopped. "Going without us Princess?" Bellamy's voice is jovial, teasing.

Clarke's eyes turn to the hulking grounder, eyes questioning. Losing their hard edge. "Lincoln?"

He almost smiles. "Bring your trusted with you. Bellamy is your General. It would be unwise to not bring him."

Raven snorts. "And us?" She gestures to her and Monroe, they were the remaining hundred. They were in this together.

Lincoln swallows. "It may come as a threat. Stay here. Allow us to go." Raven clenches her jaw but nods, understanding but hating watching her friends moving to the lion's din. Especially so close after one friend was almost metaphorical dinner.

The guard almost trembles as he opens the gate for them. Bellamy right behind her, a familiar presence that made her relax. Comforted her. Octavia's sure and strong footsteps match her boyfriend's and Clarke feels like she has an army at her back. Grounders straighten when they see her, some dipping their heads and murmuring Ursa. Some with eyes full of respect and fear. Some confusion others hatred. Bellamy holds back his smirk, their Princess had a new nickname. His face remained stern, full of deadly promise if someone so much as step forward to touch Clarke. Gustus, the one who released Finn, steps in front of them. "What is it you want?"

Clarke straightens her shoulders, voice full of command. "I need to speak with The Heda."

He looks over her but nods, eyes tight with worry and suspicion. "No weapons past the tents."

Bellamy clenches his jaw but drops his gun and a knife in the box. Lincoln throws three knives in there. Octavia her sword and two knives. Clarke drops the pistol and a knife in, the man grunts and his eyes move over them before nodding them forward. "The Commander will see you now." He looks over the group and walks in with them. Muscles tight as his back is turned to them.

The brunette sits on her throne, eyes bored as she plays with her knife. "You've brought guards."

Lexa's voice is amused.

Clarke stands taller. "Bellamy is my General." She thinks to Lincoln calling him that, to the way
Indra rest just at Lexa's right. "Octavia and Lincoln are delegates for your clan and my own. I have
two others back in camp. A mechanic and another warrior." Indra glares at Lincoln, eyes hard and
unforgiving as Clarke speaks. "They are mine."

Lexa leans forward from her throne, eyes taking in the three at Clarke's back. "They are your council
then?" Clarke nods, heart thundering in her chest but her friends presence calms her. Strengthens her.
"I've never known an Ursa to have a council. The others will be curious about this." Lexa plays with
her knife. "What is it you came here for?"

"We're ready to leave for the village. To burn the dead and plan the attack."

Lexa almost smirks but her face remains impassive. "You are determined. That is a strong trait. Do
not let it cloud your judgment."

The blonde steps forward eyes blazing in a familiar fire, the fire the night they tortured her. That has
Lexa's back straitening without her consent. The Heda reacting to the Ursa. "Our people are being
bled dry in that mountain. Killed." The blonde's voice doesn't raise above a rough drawl but the
words are deafening. "I don't know about you but I want them out."

This seems to cause the Commanders spine to straighten impossibly further. A challenge. And then
she is staring at Clarke. Green eyes boring into blue. Fire lights them like emeralds and the blonde
tilts her chin up in challenge before the young commander is speaking. "I want my people out of
there more than you can imagine." Her jaw twitches, eyes hard as she stares at the blonde. "But we
need to plan. We cannot risk warriors lives with a halfway plan."

Clarke can feel Bellamy almost reaching for her as she steps forward but his hand never comes. "We
plan tonight then. At the village."

Indra steps forward, hand on her sword. "You would do well not to order the Heda around Sky-girl.
Watch your tongue." Her eyes are darker than coal and harder than the steel in her hand.

Clarke's face almost twists in something. Almost cracks and breaks and screams as she stares back at
Indra. "And the Ursa is meant to follow the Heda?" Her words are different. More powerful than
Octavia and Bellamy had heard it before. The grounders in the room shiver. Recognizing the feeling.
The strong spirit. The Ursa.

Clarke watches as Lexa's eyes flash and her muscle tense almost as if challenged. Indra's hand on her
sword is tight as she glares at Clarke. Lexa waves her hand as Gustus takes a threatening step toward
Clarke. "Enough." She eyes Clarke as Indra scowls and Gustus steps back. "We are both leaders.
Both chosen by a spirit, there has not been an Ursa for decades. We are not subordinate or above one
another. But equals Clarke." The brunettes chin dips as if telling Clarke to accept the truth.

Clarke's muscles sing and burn after she relaxes them. Loosens them from the tightness they had
become when Gustus had stepped forward. "When do we leave?"

"Today. We will walk to the village of the massacre and burn the dead. Then we will have a dinner
and plan." Clarke nods and Lexa tilts her head to the side. "Bring your council and those you trust."
Lexa's eyes flash. "The murder is not to come."

Clarke swallows. "He will not step foot out of Camp Jaha."

Lexa nods her head and eyes Clarke. "We will leave soon."

"I'll get my people." Clarke eyes Indra as she spins around and leaves. The other three hot on her
heels.
Clarke shifts as she stands in front of the gates. Bellamy's hand softly touches her shoulder, voice gentle. "We're ready." Her eyes connect with his before looking behind her. Kane and her mother stand behind them. Kane with eyes taking in everything and Abby's affronted. Eyes worried and nervous. Raven cracks her finger as she walks over, Monroe on her heels and Octavia and Lincoln pulling up the rear.

Monroe still has a slight limp but the girl nods to Clarke. Ready. The blonde eyes her mother as two guards come up beside her. Byrne and Miller. "Mom I said no guards. We need to show we aren't afraid. That we aren't threatening them."

"Clarke we need guards. Power. If something goes down."

Clarke's head throbs with something, a bright pain behind her eyes. "We have Lincoln Octavia, Monroe and Bellamy."

Abby looks over them, eyes hard as she stares Clarke down. "He is a grounder. Octavia and Monroe are young. Bellamy is a fugit-"

"He was pardoned!" Clarke steps forward almost unconsciously, words harsh. "Jaha is alive and Bellamy was pardoned." She swallows eyeing Raven before she speaks. "Finn killed eighteen innocents and lived. Do not tell me about Bellamy."

"Clarke."

"No. You can bring your two guards but you leave mine alone." She spins and the gate opens. Clarke stalking through it, a smirking Bellamy on her heels.

Raven lets out a low whistle, eyes moving from Clarke then to Abby before Monroe. "Princess knows how to make an exit." Before she and Monroe follow after her. A rifle on Monroe's shoulder and knife on her hip.

A large group of grounders greet them, some on horseback. Lexa and Gustus at the front, horses under them snorting. Lexa clicks her tongue and then they are moving. Clarke and Bellamy falling into line behind Lexa and Gustus. Raven grunts in annoyance before trudging after them, an eye-roll evident as Monroe smiles in amusement. At front of them Lexa and her guard speak. "This alliance is dangerous."

"We will be fine. Clarke is the Ursa, I trust the spirits." Lexa's eyes find his, daring him to challenge the spirit.

Gustus' eyes are nervous as he eyes the four adult sky people behind them. "This alliance could cost you your life, if they do one wrong thing."

Lexa's lips twitch as she turns green eyes to her protector. "Then do your job, keep me alive."

The sun beats down on them and Clarke almost trembles as the sweat sticks to her wounds. Bellamy eyes her but keeps his mouth shut. Blue eyes move to her watch. The pace is steady but quick and if it were her first day on the ground again Clarke would be spinning and marveling at the wonders around her like she had with Octavia, Finn, Monty and Jasper. Marvel at the beauty. But it isn't the first day again. It's a month later and her friends are in a mountain. In danger and she left them. Her stomach twists and pulls with emotion and pain as she quickens her steps.

They'd been walking for almost two hours and the grounders show no signs of stopping nor does the blonde Ursa. Abby quickens her pace to catch up to her daughter, eyes assessing the young woman. "Clarke. How are your wounds?"
"Fine."

Abby aches to check over to daughter. To help her. Watches the slight pull and knows the wounds ache and throb and sting. "Let me look at them."

"They're fine mom." The dried blood on her daughter's forehead is stark against a pale face covered in scratches and bruises. The fresh cut on her already bruised cheek makes her look older as she turns to stare back at her mother. "We can get The Commander to let you rest."

"No." Blue eyes are like ice as she spins to look at her mom. "I am fine. I am not weak. We keep walking." She turns back around, quickening her pace until Bellamy's long stride are even with her own.

Kane settles his hand on Abby, eyes full of compassion and understanding. "She will be fine Abby."

The Doctor shrugs his hand off, face full of pain, fear, love and despair. "You don't know that." Her voice cracks. "She almost died and now I don't even recognize her."

Kane's eyes flicker to Clarke and his heart aches for the girl who grew up too fast. "Something like that will change a person; especially if what they say is true."

"What do you mean?"

Kane's whole body gives a shiver as he remembers yesterday. The noise then deafening silence. "The Ursa spirit that chose her, it's bound to have some effect on her. A change."

"You believe that?" The doctor shakes her head, eyes disbelieving of the man. "Marcus you didn't pray at the tree, what are yo-"

"People change Abby." The man's voice is uncharacteristically sharp. Hard where it was once compassionate. "Things change. I don't know what happened but I do know that a bear touched your daughter." A huge hulking creature that hadn't paid the blood covering her any mind and Marcus felt it. He almost believed. "A bear walked right up to your daughter touched her and roared and every single grounder fell to their knees like they had seen a god."

"You think she's a god now?"

"No, but she's something to them." Wonder filled and curious eyes find Clarke. Staring at the young woman before finding Lexa's back. The Ursa. The Heda. Spirits that chose leaders. "Something we can't comprehend." His voice is almost awed but hold something. Something uncomprehendable.

"She's a child." Abby clings to the notion like a drowning man to a life raft.

The man's heart almost break and he swallows, throat thick. "The heaviest burdens lie on the smallest shoulders." His eyes search her face, looking for understanding and something else. "She is strong."

"She's not Atlas!" Abby almost shouts at him, Miller and Byrne flick their eyes to the two arguing adults but continue walking. "She shouldn't have to bear the weight of the world on her shoulders."

"No, maybe not, but she believes she needs to." He hand recognized the look in her eyes. The burden yet the responsibility. The understanding and the pain. "We sent them down here without a thought and they became something. Those children we sent her to die became something more. Something else. They grew and they changed, they aren't who they once were."
Abby's face is twisted in confusion and pain. "And that makes everything okay?"

"No. What we did was for the better of our people." He swallows, knowing whatever they did, all the wrong doings, it mattered for their people. "A last chance and we do what we must for our people. I believe Clarke understands that."

Bellamy walks beside Clarke, his shoulder relaxed yet eyes alert. "We can't take down the mountain from the outside." His words drag Clarke from her search of the forest. "If you can get out of Mount Weather I can get in."

"Bellamy." Her words hold warning, fear and something they both know people would use as a weakness.

"Clarke we need an inside man." He shakes his head, voice full of authority, reason and fear. Fear for his people. His remaining hundred.

"I can't lose you." Her words almost crack and he sees something in her eyes. A crack in the armor shielding her from everyone. Hiding the pain and burden she deals with.

"Clarke." His words break. "They're my people too. Our people. We need to get them out as soon as possible and to do that we need an inside man."

Before Clarke can argue Raven is popping up next to them. "He's right." Clarke clenches her jaw and Raven shrugs her shoulders as Monroe falls into step beside them, Lincoln and Octavia stepping into their group as they all walk. "From what you've told me and the map you drew, they've got to have something else hidden up their sleeve. They've already got acid fog and Reapers. Shooter's right Princess, we need someone on the inside to shut it all down."

Clarke's muscle twitch and her throat flexes as if holding back a scream. "How do you suppose we do this?"

Raven smirks. "Well, I just gotta get this radio fixed." Her fingers dance across the radio where it rests in a box. "All we gotta do is get Shooter in there, have him radio us from a station we've singled out and give us info. Easy as pie."

"They won't let him just walk in and speak on the radio Raven." The words are harsh and everyone tenses as the two bull-headed girls stare one another down. "We need a plan instead of just ideas."

"So we plan tonight after the stupid feast." The mechanic's muscle tighten as she has a stare down with her friend. Her lips twitch as the next words leave her mouth, hoping to get a smile out of Clarke. "Commander Raccoon Eyes wanted to plan so we plan Princess."

Clarke pinches the bridge between her eyes not even breaking into a soft smile or twitch of the lips. "We'll finalize plans tonight and tomorrow, no one does anything without my permission."

Raven rolls her eyes. "Aye Aye Captain." The rest of her retort was cut off as they came upon the village finally. They stare at the village in awe. The gates were shut tightly and grounders stood atop it, bows and arrow in their hands. "Welcoming." The mechanic's voice holds sarcasm as the four Arc adults tense far behind them while the teenagers looking at the gate nod their agreement to the mechanic.

Slowly Gustus and Lexa slide down off of their horses and the man is walking over to them. Face full of something and eyes weary. "No weapons past the gate." He eyes them as Clarke drops her pistol in the box followed by a knife. Bellamy drops his rifle after disassembling it and then a pistol as well as a knife from the drop ship. Monroe slides the rifle off her shoulder, eyes trusting as she
looks to Clarke and then Bellamy before setting it gently in the container with her knife as Lincoln and Octavia strip themselves of knives and swords.

Raven begins to pull various weapons off of herself. A knife from her belt, gun from her shoulder and another knife from her brace then another from her sleeve then two from her boots. Gustus reaches back into her backpack and pulls a small vial of liquid from her bag. "C'mon it's fricking rocket fuel." She grumbles and then he is pulling out her tool kit and setting it in the bin. "Hey!" She jerks forward against another grounder hold her shoulders. "That's my tool kit for the radio!"

Clarke steps forward, her own hand almost yanking the handsy grounder's off of Raven. "If we want to hear what the Mountain Men are planning we need that tool kit." Blue eyes tear down any defenses as she stares down Gustus, voice as hard as the steel in the bin.

The man turns to Lexa who drops her head in a slight nod. He tosses the kit back to Raven. "If she tries anything she dies." Clarke clenches her jaw, face twisting as she fights back her anger and nods.

The gates open and Lincoln slowly grabs Octavia's hand, his fingers seeking hers out in comfort. The former prisoner grips his hand tightly and then they are walking through the gate, Clarke leading her few people. There are protest once they see the sky people and then a man is rushing forward, shouting in the grounder language. Voice hard and broken, full of enough anger and pain to make Clarke's head reel. Lexa tilts her head and speaks loud enough for everyone to hear, Lincoln and Octavia translating for them. "Anyone who tries to end or oppose this Alliance will die." Gustus begins to beat the man. Fists true and kicks strong. The villager grunts but doesn't beg, shame in his eyes for shouting at his Commander. The Heda.

Clarke moves forward. "Commander, enough. Please they will blame us for this." Blue eyes are as hard as iron as they stare down Lexa. The woman tilts her head and the beating stops. Clarke turns to look at the crowd and the grounders catch sight of her forehead. The mark. Some tremble and fall to their knees but the murmur throughout the crowd is real. Ursa. Whispered quietly.

The Commander stands taller, gaze sweeping over her people. "You are correct in your assumptions. The Ursa chose this Skaikru Comanda." The grounder looks around at her people, taking in their faces as she confirms their suspicions. "The Prisa of the Sky is now the Ursa." Green eyes burn with a bright fire as she addresses her people. "She was willing to sacrifice her life to save her people. To tear down the mountain! Now she is here to bear witness to the pyre burning and to plan an attack. We will make the mountain crumble but first we burn the lost."

Clarke watches as respect, awe and fear seems to fill every single grounder in the camp as Commander Lexa speaks. The Commander looks to Clarke and slowly the blonde walks forward as eighteen innocents are placed on the wood. Lexa's eyes turn to find Clarke and the brunette offers her the torch. "Clarke."

Clarke finishes walking forward, steps steady even as her stitches scream at her. Fingers slip around the wood and grip it tightly as she stares at the eighteen dead. Quietly she wonders if these eighteen innocents haunt Finn like the three hundred warriors, Atom, Wells, Charlotte, the un-named grounder, Tris and Anya haunt her mind. She feels words in her chest and then they are flowing up through her throat and out of her mouth. "Yu gonplei ste odon." She hears the hush that falls over the village at those words. As she touches the flame to the wood. It catches and burns brighter than the sun as they stand there and watch the dead burn. The dead Clarke almost gave her life to repay. Clarke's eyes are wide as she swears eighteen people rise from the fire. With a shake of her head the images are gone.

Lexa watches the fires burn. Watches as they take the innocents and release their spirits back to where they belong. Out of the corner of her eye she watches the blonde. The Ursa. She was
surprising. Shocking in her way but maybe that is why the Ursa chose her. Lexa is speaking before she can stop the words in her throat, her gaze on the fire as she tries to get Clarke to understand. "I lost someone special to me once." The words are spilling from her lips without her consent. "Her name was Kostia and she was capture by the Ice Nation whose queen believed she knew my secrets." Dark hair, darker than the night flashes through her mind and the dark braid burns from where it rests on her chest plate. "Because she was mine. They tortured her. Killed her, cut off her head. If I could have I would have done the same as you." Her body ache and her words almost tremble. Images dance behind her eyes, always in the back of the young Commander's head. She understands the blonde's desperation last night.

Clarke stares at her blue eyes full of so much emotion Lexa turns back away from them as the sky girl speaks. "I'm sorry."

Lexa stares at her again, taking in the blonde before she speaks again. Words growing stronger. "The pain was unimaginable. I thought i'd never get over it. But I did."

Clarke shifts to look at her, shocked and confused. "How?"

"By recognizing it for what it is." Lexa's heart thunders and her mind fights against her but her exterior remains firm. Untouchable even as her insides are tearing apart at the memories. At the words leaving her lips. "Weakness."

"What is?" Blue eyes crack slowly in confusion and loss. Memories of Wells, her dad, all those already gone in her head. "Love?"

Lexa turns to look at her and nods even as her throat tries to close after speaking of Kostia. "That weakness will get you killed. Those you loved killed. You almost died for the murderer and you are weak with your concern for your people."

Clarke shakes her head, blood boiling and head racing. "I can't shut off my emotions. I can't stop caring. It's not possible." Blue eyes are full of pain. So much pain that Lexa recognizes it. And she wonders if this all the spirits had chosen them for? With their eyes full of pain and knowledge and every other horrid emotion that would rip weaker warriors to pieces. Is this why they were chosen? Lexa steels her jaw and words. "Then those closest to you will be in danger."

Clarke follows the grounder, Indra, the one who shot Lincoln scathing glares and eyed Octavia like she knew a secret. They travel down into a building, a door slipping open and then they see the feast. A boar on the table, goblets of liquid and plates resting empty on the table. Clarke moves to the seat right in front of Lexa, standing tall, shoulders back as she stares at the woman who tried to convince her that Clarke didn't see pain in those green eyes. Didn't see the loss, love and remorse in those eyes as she spoke of Kostia and Ice. Of weakness. Bellamy shifts until he is standing beside her, Kane and her mother on her other side and the rest of her people standing at attention. Monroe and Raven both shift on their feet as Kane steps forward. "A gift." He smiles gently, passing the cloth covered bottle over.

The Commander slips the white cloth off, tilting the bottle in her hand and dipping her head at the man. Her eyes find Clarke. "Drink with me Clarke." They both wrap hands around their cups and then the Commander's face changes hardens as she thinks. "Today we celebrate the peace of alliance, tomorrow we plan a war." She and Clarke down the drinks, green eyes widening slightly at the harsh taste. The brews from local villages were much sweeter.

Lexa sits and then the entire room relaxes, finally sitting. Clarke sits back rim-rod straight, cuts across
her abdomen protesting if she even thinks of twisting in the wrong direction. She watches as food is passed around and her body and mind beg her to scream. To flip the table and tell them that they need to save their people, not eat and celebrate when their friends are still in danger. A hand lands on her shoulder and she almost jumps, turning blue eyes to meet Bellamy's. Dark eyes obscured by a bruise stare at her in understanding as he passes her some meat. She swallows nodding her head in thanks and idle chatter sounds in her ears. Kane discussing their hunting habits and how to make bread. Some warriors scowl at him but Lexa answers honestly, eyes flickering to Clarke once in a while.
The room is full of tension and anxiety. Bellamy's hands are tight behind his back, a trait from guard training. Shoulders straight and back stiff, hands tucked into his lower back. Raven fiddles with the radio as she sits by the table, brow furrowed in concentration and lower lip captured between her teeth. Lincoln stands loose but ready beside Bellamy, his dark eyes focused on the table. Their different tactical training showing through their stances. Octavia's face is twisted into a clenched jaw and tight lips as she waits for the meeting to start. Monroe beside her, finger curling around one of her own three braids as she stares at the radio in Raven's hand nervously. Clarke has her hands on the table as she looks over the blueprints she had drawn up. Blue eyes hard and focused as she works to find a weak spot.

Lexa walks in and the three Trigdakru warriors opposite of Bellamy and Lincoln stand taller in the presence of their leader. Indra's glare is dark and promising as she finds Lincoln's own eyes. Lexa sweeps her eyes over them as Clarke straightens her shoulders without realizing it. "You are here early."

Clarke dips her head. "We have to a lot to go over for us to be late." Her eyes sweep over the map, words hard and controlled. "We need to get our people out."

Lexa tilts her head to the side just a fraction of an inch as she stares at the sky-fallen, eyes sharp and calculating as she takes in the blonde's tense muscles. Her measured breaths that speak of pain but determination. "Do you have any plans as of yet Clarke of the Sky People?"

Clarke shifts on her feet eyes taking in the maps she had drawn. "Here." She points to the spot she had jumped into the dam with Anya, mind flashing to the feeling of water surrounding her. "Too high of a climb, Anya and I came down that way, no way up." Her fingers trail the tunnels sketches, both from her own mind and from Lincoln's own sketch book. "The tunnels wrap around the mountain base here, they tried to take me back into the mountain here." Her fingers trace over the door as her heart aches with memories. "Before Anya saved me. There were locking mechanisms on the door."

"If we can disable the electricity then we could knock the doors in or pull them out." Raven speaks as she looks up from her radio, Indra glares at the interruption. "I can try and figure something out. I'll need to look at the schematics for the mountain." Dark eyes shift to the blonde. "Your mom brought the ones from a hundred years ago right?"

Monroe steps forward, setting down a rolled up map before Clarke can answer. "I grabbed them before we left, this is all they had. Burned coming down but you can see the wiring."

Raven eyes it before clenching her jaw in annoyance. "Nothing. No use, I don't see a router or anything on the outside. Bell might have to shut it down when he gets the fog down too." She eyes
the map and catches Clarke's blue eyes. "We got this Clarke. All of us."

The blonde shifts on her feet, teeth clenched and eyes dark with emotion. "We don't have much
time."

Raven smirks, fingers continuing to work their magic on the wires. "Hurry up and save the world.

Clarke's own lips twitch slightly and the grounders in the room watch them. Lexa's eyes calculating
and eyeing them curiously, Indra jaw clenched, Nyko hands tucked into his vest, Ryder gaze wary
and Gustus standing tall and imposing beside Lexa. His eyes focused on Raven's tools. "Raven what
do you think they're using for power?"

The mechanic rolls her eyes to the side, lips imploring as she speaks to the blonde. "Princess, you
were in there, what do you remember?"

Clarke shifts, eyeing the schematics. Finding the dam where she and Anya jumped. "Water. They
use the dam for power."

Raven grins in an almost manic glee. "Find some generators and turbines princess." She shifts,
turning her gaze back to the radio. "Find them and I can get them down."

Clarke nods, turning her gaze to Bellamy. "You need to memorize the map I made, get familiar with
it so you can get in there and finish quickly." Bellamy nods his head, gaze ready. He was ready to
save his people. Clarke shifts. "Monroe, you were good at Chemistry right?"

"Not as good as Jasper but I'm alright.

A determined gleam shines in blue eyes. "Good, they have the acid fog, think you can figure it out?"

Monroe shifts on her feet, thinking of Atom. "They create the acid fog?" Clarke nods, jaw tight.
Monroe stiffens, her face twisting in rage at the mountain men. "I'll get it done.

Lexa speaks now, stepping forward as the sky people converse and plan. "We have the army, when
you get the fog and doors down we can attack. We can get our people back."

Clarke almost smiles. "Good. It'll be a few days, depending on if we can figure out how to shut the
fog down. We can move forward when it's down."

Lexa's own lips twitch. These sky people were smart, they worked off one another. She had felt
Ryder's curious gaze on them as they spoke as if one mind. The mechanic not even looking up when
she spoke to the Ursa. There's static over the radio and Raven winces. "Sorry. They still have the
jammer up. I'm trying to see if I can bust through a channel." She shifts the wires, pulling her lip
back into her mouth as she focuses on the radio, ignoring the grounders eyeing her.

Clarke shifts. "Raven can work on the electricity so the doors are disabled but how do we get in the
mountain?"

Lexa steps forward, grabbing a map from the table behind them and spreading it out next to Clarke's.
"They have a large door here." Her fingers drag across the map. "It is the biggest door, we will send
most of our warriors through there."

Clarke nods. "Most of my guards will have to be front line, the mountain men will have guns. Fastest
way to take them out is to have the guards with guns shoot them."

"There is not much cover there." Lexa raises her eyebrow, eyeing the girl.
Bellamy steps forward. "Use pieces from the Arc as shields, it withstood space I think it can withstand bullets." He eyes the map. "The shields can be at the front with our guns right behind them." He moves his finger along a rock structure on the map. "They think we'll be fish in a barrel but they're wrong."

Octavia huffs, shifting on her feet. "The door looks heavy, how you getting it open forcefully?"

"Once I knock the electricity out the locking mechanisms should be off, then we just deal with hundreds of pounds of steel door." Raven doesn't look up as she continues to shifts wires and channels inside the radio.

"We have hooks and ropes, my men can get the door open if your mechanic can unlock it."

Raven smirks as she splices two wires. "I'm awesome, I can do anything."

Indra scowls at the mechanic. "Watch your tone." The dark woman's voice is gruff, warning. Octavia almost reaches for a sword right there as Lincoln shifts on his feet.

Raven ignores them, never looking up. "I flew a junker down here, I split ammo and a blew up a bridge. I think I can."

"The门 looks heavy, you getting it open forcefully?"

"That's comforting." Bellamy grumbles out.

Lexa eyes them. "Blow the mountain like you blew up the bridge?"

"The door, it'll help open it." Clarke shifts her gaze from the Commander to the schematics again.

Lexa nods. "We will take this plan to the other Clan leaders once it is finalized." Green eyes turn to Lincoln. "You can get Bellamy into the mountain Lincoln?"

Lincoln nods at his Commander. "I will use the Reaper tunnels." He swallows. "Take him in and then we invade once the door is open." Indra scowls at him, gaze full of hatred.

Lexa steps forward. "Right now our army is outside their fog zone." Her fingers brush a circle around the mountain. "Once you get in there Bellamy, Lincoln." She stares at them. "You do your jobs and help us get into that mountain to save our people."

Lincoln bows his head, murmuring 'Sha Heda' quietly as Bellamy stands taller, jaw tense and eyes ready as he nods.

They all stand quietly for a second, heads running over their plan when there is a loud static sound that makes Gustus reach for his sword only to have Raven shout triumphantly. "I am awesome." Her eyes twinkle. "The jammer is down." She shakes her head disbelieving, she hadn't done much, when a voice comes across the radio.

"This is the Hundred. The mountain is not safe. If anyone can hear us, the mountain is not safe. This is an S.O.S."
"That's Jasper." Clarke steps forward. Eyeing the radio, guilt running through her veins as her heart races in anticipation.

"Harper is missing. S.O.S. This is the Hundred. The mountain is not safe. If anyone can hear us, the moun-" Raven moves her finger over the radio, silencing it.

With broken eyes she looks up at Clarke. "It's on repeat. Jasper and Monty must have taken down the jamming signal."

Clarke's jaw clenches, Harper, Harper was gone and her people were in trouble. Her face hardens and she looks up, blue eyes blazing with a thousand suns. Promising to explode and burn down the mountain. "Bellamy." Its an order, a plea, a question and an answer.

Bellamy nods, jaw tight and heart aching. His people were in danger. Missing. "On it Princess. Lincoln?" He turns to his sister and the man they had fought to save. Lincoln nods, shifting on his feet as he, Octavia, and Bellamy leave. Raven stares at the radio as Monroe continues to scribble away on a piece of paper in the back corner, working through her mind on the gas as her knee shakes from the revelation that their friends were in more danger.

Lexa steps forward. "They are invading the mountain now?" Indra and Ryder take off after the two sky people and Lincoln, ready to stop them at the tone in the Commander's voice.

Clarke nods, face twisted in anger and pain. "The sooner we get them in the sooner we can get our people out."

"Clarke, you must think clearly." Green eyes focus on blue, trying to convey knowledge. Lexa had always waited now, always knew to wait. Before the Heda chose her she had been impatient, brash but she had changed. Became patient and practical. "Sending them in unprepared could be a death sentence. The fog is not down. The doors can not be opened yet."

Clarke trembles, blood racing thick through her veins as she stands taller. "My people will be ready, have your warriors ready."

"Sometimes it is the only way." Blue eyes threaten to spill tears of anger and frustration but they remain dry and shining.

"You told him he needed to memorize the map, what will he do now that he is moving sooner than expected?" Green eyes shift to a soft grey green as she fights to see the future but nothing shows. The gods show her nothing.

"He's smart, I trust him." Clarke stares at the brunette with challenge in her eyes. "He studied the map. He will get in and he will shut down the Acid fog.

Lexa clenches her jaw, waiting for the gods to show her what will happen next. What plan of action to take and she feels as helpless as she first did when Kostia was taken from her. "Hopes are not the same as truth. He has not studied that map enough to invade."

"Bellamy is a war buff. He knows what to do. We can get them in and when he radios us everything will work. It has to." There is a desperation in her eyes and voice, almost crazed.

"You are risking everything on him, if he fails." Lexa stares at the blonde not understanding the devotion the blonde has. The faith in him.
"He won't. I trust Bellamy. He can do this."

Jaw tight Lexa speaks, ignoring the other two sky-fallen in the room, vice low and dark. "We won't have much time after he invades the mountain."

"Is your army ready?"

"They have been ready. We will discuss strategies with the other leaders. I pray you are right to put you hope in him." The Commander turns and leaves, muscles tight in her shoulders and a migraine forming in her head.

Clarke leans forward with a sigh, hands gripping the table in a white knuckle grab. Raven looks up, eyes worried once the rest of the grounders are gone. "We got this Clarke."

"I'm sending Bellamy in there." Blue eyes stare at the dirt under her nails as her voice trembles.

"Hey, he can make his own decisions. He'd do this with or without your planning." The mechanic sets down the radio, standing slowly, fingers gripping Clarke's shoulder and squeezing. "We staying here?"

Clarke runs her hand through her hair, straightening her stance. "We need to get the guards ready, Bellamy's idea about the shields could work."

"I'll take Monroe to Camp with me, she and I can work on the chemistry of the fog and the radio. You staying here?"

"I have no idea. Take my mom with you."

"She won't like that, leaving you here alone." There is a hint of amusement in the mechanic's voice and gleaming eyes that are full of worry and pain.

"I have Octavia, Lincoln will be back soon. I'll be fine. The grounders," Brows furrow as she searches the recesses of her mind, thinking to the looks on the villagers and warriors faces. The way they fell to their knees when the bear, when the Ursa, had roared. "They almost seem to respect me, I'll be fine."

The mechanic snorts. "You didn't get eaten by the bear. I respect the shit outta you too Clarke."

The blonde nods, releasing her grip on the table. "Okay. Let's find them and send them in. Stay by the radio?"

The mechanic rolls her eyes, lips twitching. "Always, we'll head out tonight or tomorrow to get started on the shit ton of work we have."

Clarke finds her way to Bellamy and Lincoln in the dead of the night. Bellamy is dressed in the dark colors and fur of a grounder and she stares at him in shock. He smirks at her. "Like coming home."

"You look different." Her voice is tight as she stares at him, he looks like family but also like the enemy once was. How the grounders were once their opposition. The ones hunting them and she can see the way he moves uncomfortable in the clothes. Knows his head is in the same spot.

He shrugs, throat tight as these clothes bring up too many emotions. "I think O wears grounder better than me." He pulls at the fur collar of his coat, lips twitching. "Anyway Lincoln and I are heading out now, you need anything?" His eyes are nervous yet determined and Clark stares at him, mind racing with possibilities of failure.
She steps forward, pulling Bellamy into a hug, fingers tightly gripped in his borrowed clothes as if he wasn't coming back. As if this was a last goodbye. "Be careful." Her voice cracks and her heart thunders. He was going into the lion's den she had barely escaped; and the lions were hungry.

His arms are tight around her back, squeezing her like he knows her train of thought. Like he can tell by the way her fingers almost tear the stitching in his clothing. "Don't worry Princess, I'll be back before you know it." He turns his eyes to Lincoln, finding his sister pressing her forehead into the tall warrior's as he pulls back from Clarke, eyes twinkling in mirth. "I think O might be more worried about him than me." He winks at his sister as the girl scowls and pulls Bellamy into a bone-crushing hug that forces the air out of his lungs.

His hand goes to the back of her head, cradling it and her fingers tighten around his shoulders before she's pulling back, voice stern and full of worry. "Come back stupid." He nods, swallowing and turning his eyes to Lincoln. The man dips his head and the four young adults turn their eyes to the left to find the wary ones of Indra and Ryder watching them. Neither warrior makes a move to stop them as Bellamy and Lincoln begin walking into the forest, the two former prisoners of the Arc watching them go.

"They'll be fine." Octavia speaks lowly green eyes intently watching the forest before she turns, her shoulders pulling back and the worry leaving her face. Clarke almost stumbled back by how much the girl looked like a warrior. She had changed from the reckless free girl who jumped into a river with a grin. She had evolved. Became who she wanted to be and Clarke briefly wonders how different she looks from when she first stepped foot onto the ground. Gone was her smile. "Let's get our part of the plan over with."

"You're staying with me here for now, Raven and Monroe are taking my mother and her guards back on the radio and the fog."

"So i'm your body guard?" The is a smirk in Octavia's voice and delight in her eyes.

The pain in Clarke chest settles, lessening to a dull ache. "If you think you can handle it."

"Princess, i'll be your knight in rusty armor." Green eyes spark in a mirth so much like Bellamy's and both girls lips twitch as if to grin before reality sets back in. Those few seconds were a reprieve from the inevitable war.

Their eyes search the forest before falling on the small fire burning in the center of the camp. Warriors sit around it, speaking lowly and eyeing the former Arc citizens. Abby's eyes connect with Clarke's and she's standing, walking swiftly over to her daughter. "Where have you been?"

Clarke body burns under her mothers gaze and her limbs tremble in an almost rage at the tone in her mothers voice. The blonde fights to keep that rage inside, it feels as if something is begging to break free of her and a hand lands on her shoulder. Octavia tilts her head to the side and then Clarke relaxes, turning back to her mother. "We were planning in the Commander's tent."

Abby's eyes widen and she steps closer, hands itching to touch the cut on her daughter's face. The cut those grounders had made. The cuts the Commander had ordered. "Without Kane and I? Clarke I am the Chancellor I need to be there, you cannot speak for our peo-"

"That title means nothing down here! The Grounders respect me, in their eyes I am the one to look to." That burning feeling, that rage bursts inside of her and her forehead aches and swims. What the hell was happening?

Abby shakes her head, staring into the eyes of her daughter and not recognizing her. "You are just a
child Clarke, you do not need these burdens."

That thread snaps, that rage flows from her as her head throbs. "Just like I didn't need the burden of my mother causing my fathers death? Just like I didn't need the burden of hating my best-friend for almost a year when he didn't do a damn thing? The burden of burying him hours after learning the truth and forgiving him? The burden of being the only doctor for a hundred other children? We're no longer kids or prisoners, we are not your people to care for anymore." Her chest heaves as these words are spoken in a low rage filled tone. "The council proved that when they sent us down here without supplies. Without a way to survive." She steps froward, feels Octavia at her side, reassuring. Always there. "We survived. On our own with no help from the Arc or it's adults. We will never be the kids you sent down here."

Her mom stares at her opened mouth in shock, Kane dips his chin slowly, accepting the truth he already knew. He had seen the way everyone looked to Clarke. How the ones living in the drop ship seemed to answer to Clarke first, looked to her and Bellamy like they had all the answers. Kane steps past a flabbergasted Abby. "Whats the plan then?" His voice is quiet, passive.

Clarke almost relaxes under his acceptance. "Raven and Monroe need to get back to the Arc. They know their jobs, Wick and any other chemist can help Monroe and Raven." Her eyes flicker to her mother before landing back on Kane. "You both need to go back to the Arc. It needs you two to keep the peace."

Kane tilts his head, knowing the answer to his question but asking anyway. "What about you?"

"I'm staying here. I need to be here to explain the plan to the other leaders." Her shoulders threaten to fall under her words, under the burden and responsibility she is taking.

"Without protection?" Abby steps forward, eyes worried and still unseeing of the woman her daughter has become.

"I have Octavia, I won't need more than that." Green eyes are bright as she stares past Clarke and at the Chancellor, eyes blackened out she looks more like a native of the Earth than a girl from the sky.

"They do not trust us Clarke, they would slaughter you in a heart beat." Abby's voice is full of worry and a stilted anger of judgment.

Octavia stiffens behind Clarke, insulted and beyond pissed. "They aren't savages mom. They won't kill me. They need me."

Abby shakes her head, eyeing the way her daughter stands, the pain in her posture. "They wanted to torture Finn."

"He killed innocents! Eighteen innocent villagers that weren't armed!" Clarke's chest heaves and her ribs feel like they'll break against her lungs. "I know they won't kill me because I was paying the price of eighteen deaths and more and they didn't finish."

"What's to stop them from trying again?" Her mother is scared, worried and pissed. Protective. Every bit of mother rolled up into one tone.

"Everything." Blue eyes seem to tear down the defenses in worried brown.

"I'm leaving Byrne." Clarke opens her mouth to protest but Abby speaks again. "Either her or me Clarke." The blonde nods, taking defeat like a true leader. Lips twisted into a scowl that is almost too close to a sneer of anger. "Is Bellamy coming back with me or staying with you?"
Clarke swallows but plows ahead, knowing what will happen next. "He's going to the mountain."

"What?" Shock, disbelief and anger color her voice as she steps closer to her daughter.

Clarke stands straighter as Octavia steps closer to her and she speaks without hesitation. "We needed an inside man. Bellamy volunteered."

"You sent him in there without telling me?"

Blue eyes burn with a fire of defiance. "Bellamy can handle himself. We were on a time crunch. Jasper sent out a radio transmission." Her voice cracks. "They're bleeding them already." Abby opens her mouth to argue. "I need you at the Arc mom, the people will need you."

Abby's faces twists in an argument but Kane sets his hand on her shoulder. "Okay. Keep me updated Clarke."

Lincoln's body is tense as he leads Bellamy to the tunnels, his stomach churns and heart aches. He wants Octavia by his side. He wants to turn and run from these tunnels. "I never did thank you."

Dark eyes look briefly at the dark haired Sky leader. "You saved my sister. Made her strong."

The Grounder shakes his head. "She was already strong." Dark eyes find Bellamy, almost making him stumble with the emotion in there. Emotion that let Bellamy know Lincoln loves his sister, somehow, someway he fell for his sister and Bellamy is relieved as well as nervous. It had always been Octavia and Bellamy. But now, now Octavia was growing up and it made his heart ache with happiness but also sadness.

The entrance to the tunnel looms over them, dark and ominous. Foreboding with a trouble that set both men on edge. "What happened?"

The dark man's jaw tightens and his eyes are haunted. "They took us to the mountain men, I was chosen for the program they called Cerberus, the Reapers." His muscles tremble in memory of the shocks and the drugs.

"Three headed dog." Bellamy mumbles, mind skipping back to school. The former Trikru member furrows his eyes and Bellamy shakes himself from his reverie. "Cerberus, a three headed dog that protects the underworld."

Lincoln nods stiffly and leads the bound man through the tunnels, his mind flashes with memories of running through the tunnels, hungry. Craving. Remembers the squelch of blood as he ate people and his stomach rolls, threatening to spill here and now without Octavia's steady presence. Bellamy pulls on his binding as the sound of reapers fills the tunnels. "Unhook me, we'll fight them off."

"No. There are too many." The normal stonic warriors eyes are almost crazed and Bellamy slams him post on the wall, shattering it before grabbing it. Lincoln tackles him as a Reaper comes through the tunnel. The Reaper eyes Lincoln and the man bares his teeth. "Escaped his bonds. He's mine."

Fear touches Bellamy heart because these reapers, they were suppose to be mindless killing machines like Lincoln had been in the car lot. Not coherent. Not able to speak and understand what they were doing.

"Put him on the log." The reaper's voice is commanding and his eyes are surprisingly clear. Bellamy glares defiantly at him even as his insides roll. They knew what they were doing yet they continued to steal people from their homes. From villages they used to protect. He can see the shame in Lincoln's eyes as he forces Bellamy onto the log.
The tunnel is silent, eerily so as they travel to a large door. The sky man amongst grounders stiffens, shoulders tight and gaze seeking Lincoln's. The man is steady, almost like a statue but his eyes are focused on the door until it clicks open. A doctor comes out and directs the Reapers to stand back. They listen, the perfect guard dogs. The doctors strip Bellamy down until he is in his underwear. His eyes glare defiantly back at them as they force him to his knees. Eyes scan over him and he feels bile rise in his throat as another doctor comes out of the door, they begin leading the other stripped grounders through the door as the doctor begins to inject the reapers with the red liquid. Bellamy's dark eyes find Lincoln and he motions to the door only to have Lincoln fall to his knees. Bellamy jerks against the hold they have on him, fighting to get to Lincoln as his guilty broken eyes find Bellamy's before staring at the ceiling as he is injected with the drug. Bellamy struggles until they knock him upside the head, world spinning as the man he trusted his sister's life with, left him to the lions.

Clarke paces along the fence, head racing as Octavia sharpens her sword, hands steady. "Lincoln should have been back by now, it's been a day." Octavia speaks, lowly, worriedly voice belaying the panic.

"He'll be back." Clarke words are calming, the opposite of her pacing as licks her lips. Looking up and stilling as Lexa and Indra are walking past her, talking quietly before walking into a tent. The dark woman's face is twisted into a scowl of hatred as the topic. "Indra's taking a group to Camp Jaha."

Green eyes look up sharply, hand continuing to move steadily. "You want me to go?"

Clarke sighs, mind and body so tired. "You're the only one I trust with them, the guards will screw everything up. My mother will do something."

Octavia tilts her head to the side. "I'm on Trigedakru duty?"

Lips twitch in something but pale face remains drawn. "Just make sure the Arc people don't screw up the alliance."

"I'm leaving you here alone?" Green eyes sharply rove over Clarke.

Clarke rolls her eyes at the worry in her voice, Octavia trusted some of the warriors but others, the ones who hadn't seen the Ursa were nerve racking. An unknown factor in a new place. "I have Byrne. Go when they decide to leave. I'll send Lincoln to you when he gets back."

"Good." With a sharp nod the girl looks back down at her fingers. "I'll send someone if Bellamy calls back on the radio."

Clarke watches the warriors warily watching her as she stands near Octavia. Sees their eyes flit over the brown dried blood still across her forehead. The mark of the Ursa. Children give her distance, scrambling behind one another when she turns her head in their direction. Her heart aches as they watch her. They were children, small and innocent. The hairs on the back of her neck raise and her muscles tense. Instinct is telling her that something dangerous is coming up behind her. Clarke turns and eyes The Heda. Something deep within her recognizing the power within the woman. "The other clans arrived or sent their general. You are to explain your plan." Octavia looks up from sharpening her sword having known the woman was there and Lexa dips her head, allowing the girl to come as they leave for the Commanding tent.
stories Bellamy told her of a Round table, magicians and swords. Green eyes flit over to Clarke as the blonde stands between two men at least a foot taller than her yet she commands respect. The way her body is positioned and the aura that bleeds off of her as her hands clasp behind her back, a trait she picked up from Bellamy. A trait Octavia recognizes with heartache. "Once he gets the fog down and my mechanic gets the door unlocked we attack." Her words are strong and resound around the room as if daring someone to object.

One of the men snort in annoyance, eyeing the blonde like she is a fly on his shoe. "We have an army, we should not be waiting."

"Did you not hear me?" Blue eyes blaze with a fire Octavia recognizes and she leans back, waiting for the man to be put back down and in his place. "They have acid fog, I don't care how big your army is, they will be dead within seconds."

"We can attack from the tunnels." He growls out, brown eyes dark with hatred as he thrusts his finger along the sketches.

"You've dealt with the Reapers for years, how many warrior will you lose in the tunnels?" Knuckles whiten as they twist into fists, Clarke blood thunders in her veins, rage at this man flood her system. The Ursa boils low in her, threatening to come out and level the floor.

"All you offer is no!" He slams his hands on the table as the other Clan leaders watch with rapt attention and tight lipped expressions, holding their tongues. "You are wasting time sky-girl. We should just attack, we have the biggest army since the bombs, right outside their range."

Clarke glares up at the man, hands twisted behind her back. Bryne watches her closely as her voice turns cold and angry. "I'm sorry do you have a problem with me?"

He steps closer, hatred in his eyes and disgust curling his lips into a sneer. "My brother was one of the three hundred warriors you burned."

She tilts her head to the side and Octavia holds in her smirk. "He shouldn't have attacked my ship."

He stares in defiance at her and the entire room is silent, watching the Ursa chosen sky girl stare down a man three times her size like a true warrior. "The spirits would not have chosen such a weak girl.

Clarke steps forward, standing shorter than the man but her posture bleeds intimidation, causes the other leaders to straighten their shoulders unconsciously. "You doubt your spirits?"

He clenches his jaw, eyes full of rage. "I do not doubt my spirits, I doubt a whelping girl who fell from the sky and thinks she can lead."

Something burns in the blondes eye's as she stands toe to toe with him, blue eyes dark and dangerous. "I am the Ursa." Her jaw clenches. "Do not test me."

His eyes slip to the Commander, taking in the way she watches them, mostly the blonde, with eye full of respect and admiration as well as anticipation. He clenches his jaw, eyes back on the blonde impostor. "You are brave under the Commander's protection."

"Quint." The Heda's voice is sharp, unforgiving. "Enplenti."

He bows his head, stepping away from the girl with a scowl. Clarke's body sings and she steps closer, blood thrumming as the man backs down. Lexa's shoulders tense as the blonde eyes the man, Bryne's hand goes to her shock baton but Octavia shakes her head, hands clasped behind her back.
and a smirk twitching on her lip. No one messed with Clarke. She was manipulative and stubborn. "I am my own protection Quint."

His jaw flexes and he has the urge to snap and punch the girl but instincts are begging him to back away from the spirit clearly flooding the girl. The Ursa was rising to a challenge within the girl and every warrior in that room felt it. The strength. The anger. They had heard stories about the Ursa. A strength and rage that could rip an entire forest apart. He fights his instincts, he would never bow down to a sky demon. "You think you are strong enough to protect yourself but you are weak. A weakling who fell from the sky."

"I survived the virus your people sent to mine." She steps closer as her voice hardens and grows almost echoing with power. "I landed on Earth with one hundred teenagers and we survived. We killed three hundred of your men and only lost half of ours. I escaped the mountain and survived your torture. I am anything but weak." Her eyes burn with a fire that dares him to speak.

He swallows, ignoring his instincts. "You are weak in the head, you let a murderer live." His hands tremble at the injustice. The lack of payment for the eighteen dead. For the three hundred dead. For his brother. "We should have killed him instead of leaving him in your camp."

"I was your murderer." Her voice threatens to crack but she controls it as Lexa, Octavia and the other clan representatives watch her. "The one who burned three hundred of your people alive, I was a replacement and your spirits saved me. The crime was paid."

He glares at her, shoulders trembling in a rage that threatens to burst free of his skin and cause the blonde to bleed. "Life has no value if death has no price."

"I paid the price." Her wounds throb pitifully as if to remind her of the pain endured. The hours up until the Ursa had saved her.

"You think those small cuts paid the price of eighteen innocents?" He sneers at her, fingers itching to grab his knife and bury it into her until he could feel her blood running over his fingers. Until he could make her pay. "Three hundred warriors? You should have cut and burned for three days. Suffered."

"My price was paid and I am helping hundreds of your people escape the mountain, something you haven't been able to do for decades. And when I free your people our debt will be free. You need me." The remaining Clans hear the truth in her words and grit their teeth at it but they remain silent.

He scoffs, brave and defiant in the face of the other Clans. In his hate of her. "We have an army, your inside man will be dead."

"You don't know him, he will do his job." Words almost catch in her throat at the image of Bellamy hanging bloodied from the ceiling.

"He is a risk, a worthless hope that will fail."

"Enplentei Quint, Klark. I have heard enough." Lexa slips forward knowing when to step in and how to choose her words. How to diffuse the situation. "Clarke, he is correct with his caution. Bellamy is a dimming hope, he has not contacted you."

"He can get this done Heda. I know he can." Blue eyes beg and burn with trust and hope.

"But I do not." She shakes her head minuscule, a barley there motion. No images flashing in her brain. "We will attack when I decide."
Clarke clenches her jaw. "Then excuse me, my part is done here. When your warriors are burning from the acid come get me." She glares at Quint before leaving, Octavia on her heels.

"Damn Clarke, that's one way to piss off some warriors." The hairs on Octavia's back stand on end and she waits for the explosion.

"The fog will kill them." Her words crack and her jaw trembles in anger and anguish. Hadn't enough people died already?

"I know." A step closer and hand on shoulder, comforting and familiar. "But Bell will come through."

"I know." Clarke looks up to spot Indra leaving, feels the ache coming that will set in when Octavia's familiarity is gone and she is alone in former enemy territory. "Go with them, make sure Raven eats and the Arkers don't do anything stupid." Octavia nods in a sharp manner, eye flickering to the dark skinned woman. "Make sure Finn is locked away, our people would use any excuse to attack the grounders and the grounders will kill him. We need their army."

"Got it. Lock Finn in tower and knock some heads in." Octavia winks though there is an air of seriousness under the girls demeanor and teasing words. "Have diplomatic fun, piss off more warriors who can kill you will a pinky." Octavia jogs to catch up to the warriors and Clarke shakes her head. Byrne comes to stand beside her, feet silent. Years of walking on noisy metal allowing her to tread carefully. Almost silently sans the few stray twigs snapping and cracking. "You were stupid in there. Brave but stupid." Eyes flicker to the blonde she had once drug into camp covered in mud and blood. Guilt snaps and crackles through her veins at the thought of harming Abby's daughter and killing the blonde's companion. The grounder.

"The grounders don't accept weakness." Clarke muscles are tighter than the entwined metal coils that kept pieces of the Arc together. She holds herself together with pure determination, blood and the need to save her friends. Anything else and she would be falling into a pit of pain and despair. Would show a weakness that would be exploited.

"He will try to kill you." The woman eyes their surroundings, hand on her baton and fingers itching to pull her gun as her heart remains steady and calm.

"You have an idea?" Clarke eyes the older blonde, waiting.

"Your mother would hate it." A twitch in the soldiers jaw.

"But?"

Lips are licked before an almost determined twitch of lips forces the woman's lips into a smirk. "But it would show you are not to be trifled with."

Clarke steps closer, waiting and curious. "What is it?"

"He is following you, I can see him about twenty paces to the southwest behind the wall." Eyes flit to Clarke before surveying their surroundings again. Waiting as villages eyes them, their hands close to swords and knifes. "Bow and arrows on his back, and knife on his thigh. He will intimate you by shooting at you, herding you. I will follow, disable him if anything happens."

"You're willing to risk my life and my mothers wrath?"
Byrne smirks, understanding something Clarke's mom never could. "I respect your mother, but it is time these warriors learn that the sky people are strong to. We prove it to them. He thinks of you are a weak child, show him you are strong. I have your back."

Clarke nods shifting her gaze to the forest before letting out a deep sigh before trekking to the edge of the forest, not looking back. She stops a few hundred yards in, resting her hand against the tree and breathing deeply, waiting. The hairs on the back of her neck stand up and she spins, instinct telling her she is being hunted before she spots a flash of Quint's dark clothing. Holding back her grin she takes off through the forest, counting paces in her head before the man is shouting, cocky and caught in the thrill of the hunt. "Not so brave now are you sky girl?"

Clarke continues to run, spins around to look for him but he is gone. An arrow notches beside her head and she sprints away, heart thundering. Tearing through the forest at a jog, her stomach and ribs scream and the stitches threaten to rip and then she hears footsteps, heavy as if pained or untrained. Byrne is panting, face pale and tight with pain as she stumbles into the tree beside Clarke. "Clarke, run."

"Byrne?" She steps forward, eyes worried. The woman's arm is gone right below the bicep, blood dripping to the forest floor with alarming speed. Clarke drops to her knees even as her instincts tell her to run. Byrne was out here for her. She ties a tourniquet and heaves the woman to her feet. "Come on."

"Leave me, run now. It's coming." She presses another pistol into Clarke's hand, blood slick across it, determination deeply etched in a pale weakened face. "Go." The woman nods at her and Clarke clenches her jaw.

"May we meet again." Strong yet almost wavering, the Arc's mantra leaves her lips.

"May we meet again Clarke."

With one last look at Bryne as the woman draws a knife, Clarke takes off through the forest, one gun on her hip another in her hand. Within a few minutes something slams into her side and the gun goes flying from her grip, too slick from blood as her body tries to right itself. She grunts as she hits the ground harshly, feels a few stitches rip open with a sharp pull. Quint sits on top of her hips, pinning her down, her right hand is crushed under his knee and her left scrambles for something as he growls at her, hands moving to his knife. "This is for my brother." He slips the knife into his hand and Clarke grabs a branch, slamming it into his head. He shouts out slumping to the side with his own howl of pain. Clarke rolls away standing quickly and drawing her other gun. She is on her feet pointing the weapon at the man and breathing through her nose. "Jomp em up en yu jomp ai up." Lexa speaks lowly as she rips the knife from his wrist.

"Thank you." Clarke breathes out. She sends a glare his way as he kneels before the Commander. "Byrne's dead. He killed my guard."

"She lies Commander. I saw no guard." His eyes beg the commander to understand to believe him, words ringing with truth, over this demented sky demon.

Lexa shifts on her feet, sees the pain and anger in the blonde's face from losing another of the Arc.
"He is your kill Clarke." She motions with her hand to the man kneeling before them. Clarke's fingers tighten on the gun and she sees the blood coating her hands, Byrne was dead. Clenching her jaw she pulls the gun up to his head, her finger rests on the trigger and she fights. Debates. Kill him or don't. Who is she now? What is she? Does she kill point blank? Blood for blood? The hesitation is burned away when a roar echoes through the forest. Lexa's eyes widen and she whispers in a voice full of fear that sends chills down the blonde's back. "Pauna." Clarke's heart races as she turns around towards the sound. Her heart thunders and the hair on her neck is raised. Feels a threat. Feels a deep ancient instinct telling her to flee. That something dangerous was coming. "Run." Lexa says before she ripping out her sword and slicing into Quint's leg, right behind his knee. He lets out a scream and the three of them begin to run like the devil is on their heels.

Octavia huffs as the guards glare at the Trigedakru. Clarke was right, they needed this alliance but there were more than a hundred people who would fuck it up. Octavia walks in with Indra's group. She almost laughs at how scared some of the others look. Like the grounders were the monsters from under the bed when in reality it has always been the adults, the leaders of the Arc that were the monsters. They see the punishment of the Trigedakru as barbaric when they suck the air from a persons lung and send them into the cold abyss of space for having a second child. When they send a hundred kids down to earth with no supplies. She keeps her sword on her back as Kane greets them, speaking partially in Trigedasleng and Octavia sighs in relief, at least one Leader got it. She follows the others into the hallway. Watches the warriors tense inside the walls of the Arc. She knows how they feel. Trapped. Lost. Contained.

The young girl who once had curious green eyes sighs and watches the Arc guards carefully. This was a bad idea, she slips out quietly when Kane shows up, to find Finn and keep him away. Her feet carry her to lock up out of instinct, where the boy is situated inside a jail cell. He is sewing clothing with a withdrawn expression. His eyes shoot up when he hears a click. "Octavia, what're you doing here?"

"Making sure you're not out there." She shifts uncomfortable in his presence, he had killed Nyko son. She doesn't meet his eyes.

"You can't look at me either?" He sighs out, fiddling with the needle. "Kane put me in here when the grounders showed up. Safety reasons."

Octavia shifts ignoring his question. "Good. Stay in here."

"Where else would I go?" He whispers, eyes broken before searching behind her sadly. "Where's Clarke?"

"Planning a war to save our people." She shifts on her feet, voice hard and unforgiving.

"People are going to die, she could die." His eyes take a quality she became familiar with inside that village and her muscles seize as her hands itch to draw her sword.

"Everyone dies, Clarke can take care of herself. She doesn't need protecting." Green eyes are sharp as she glares at him, body tense.

He licks his lips, chest aching. "I was just trying to save her."

"When has Clarke ever needed saving?" Octavia growls out, her blood boiling as it floods her body, turning her eyesight into a red haze as her chest quickens with rage filled breathes and fingers twitch to harm. "You kill eighteen innocents for no reason."
"I was looking for Clarke!" He shouts, feet jerking as he stands to his full height, eyes dark and foreboding.

"Don't put this on her shoulders, she almost died for you." Her voice is unrecognizable and he almost flinches back at the rage in her eyes. "Do not put this on her shoulders."

He slumps down, defeated and so so tired. "I don't know what else to do. I panicked, Clarke was gone and I thought they had her."

"Children were shot in cold blood Finn! For no reason!" This time she clenches her fists into the material on her thighs, nails biting into flesh.

"I thought they took our people!" Veins bulge in his throat as he shouts.

"So you shot them? You're no better than the mountain men." She growls out, eyeing the man in front of her with eyes dark and cruel. Veins bulging and ghost hanging off his shadow. So different from the bright eyed and smiling boy he once was. "I don't recognize you."

"I don't either!" His eyes are broken, so lost. So different than what he had once been. This war had torn him apart, changed the core of him. "I watched grounders slice into our friends. I heard them scream and I saw a ring of fire and then nothing. Everyone was gone. I looked for them, not you, I was out there looking for them. ME!"

"Everyone wanted to find them! Doesn't mean you shoot a innocent village!" Her chest heaves as she glares at the man, she had came back. She had searched for them and found Bellamy. Saved them.

"No one is innocent!" His words crack and his chest stutterers, his eyes flickers in grief and guilt, like he is trying to convince himself as much as Octavia.

"Children are."

"Trained to kill from a young age? To draw blood." His throat bobs quickly.

"Trained to protect themselves from people like you. You used to be a peace maker Finn." Green eyes bore into him.

"And you used to be a curious rule breaker, things change. People change." He pulls at his hair, breath stuttering in his lungs as his shoulders lump. "War changes people. Just go, i'm sure you have things to do."

She stalks away, a part wanted to forgive Finn but he killed innocents. Eighteen dead. Ripped apart by bullets controlled by too tight hands and crazed eyes.

Inside the metal of the fallen Arc, Raven sits with hands tangled in wires and determination in her expression as she works on fixing another radio. Tweaking it to be ready for Bellamy to call in.

Monroe stretches her arms out, body exhausted before she reaches across the table jumping when the mechanic speaks. "Nuh-uh Rufio, leave my tools alone."

Monroe tilts her head in confusion. "Rufio. Seriously?"

"Yeah, three horns." The mechanic looks up with a loose smile. "Add some red in there." Eye flickering to the table the mechanic motions with her hand as her other continues to work slowly with wires, never stopping. "And don't touch my tools, you can move the chemicals to that bench but
don't move my tools."

Monroe rolls her eyes but shifts to the table, mixing chemicals with a cautious expression before grinning and slipping her foot to knock over one of Raven's wrenches, one that was hanging between the brink of falling and staying on the table. It clatters loudly against the floor and Raven jumps, knee brace jerking against the table as she turns to glare at the chemist warrior who eyes spark in amusement.

The forest blurs by as three sets of feet pound against the forest floor. They leave a trail of blood in their wake, the red dripping down from Clarke's stomach as screams sound behind them, loud enough to cause them to quicken their pace before they stumble through a tunnel. They stumble to a stop as the smell hits them. Blood and mutilation cover the entire space. The warrior pulls his sword out as Lexa grips her own with tense eyes. Clarke holds her gun and searches for an exit until the sound hits them.

Trees crumple like they're paper and the sound that hits them is deafening as a dark shape launches itself over the fence with a roar. It grabs the warrior, slamming him into the ground with the sickening crunch of bone as blood splatters. It opens it's mouth to roar at them and with a twitch of her finger thunder echoes all around them as bullets rip into the creatures face and neck. It falls with a pitiful sound and Clarke spins already moving as she yells at Lexa before she is running at the fence and vaulting over it. She slams into the ground and rolls with it, shoulders jarring into the ground as stitches rip open and burns ache. She stumbles to her feet and looks up as Lexa jumps over the edge, feet planted all wrong as she slips on the iron fence and slams into the ground with a sickening crunch and rolls. Her face is ashen and Clarke races forward, slipping an arm around the woman before she's dragging her. With another roar the beast jumps over the edge and it's body jars the ground as it rolls and hits a wall. Clarke drags Lexa through a door when the woman in jerked from her grasp. "Go." Lexa screams as the Pauna pulls at her leg. "Leave me." Even as she screams at the blonde to go the Commander clenches the edge of the wall with her hands, knuckles white.

"No!" Clarke plants her feet on the door openings edges and grips her gun, aiming it at the creatures face before firing. Lexa winces, ears ringing as shot by shot hits the beast in it's face before it lets go with a roar, scrambling back. Clarke moves quickly, jerking the woman forward and slamming the door shut before she grabs the sword and places it across the door, all in one motion with a heaving chest and ringing ears.

With a none to gentle push Lexa slips to the ground, resting her back against the wall, breaths coming in hitched movements as her face sweats with pain. Clarke stumbles, clothes drenched in blood as she pulls her tank top apart with the brunette's knife before falling to her knees. Her head swims as she pulls the woman's arm forward, after a sharp nod Clarke rips the shoulder back into it's socket with a sickening pop and crack of bones moving against one another. Lexa arches her back off the wall but remains silent, teeth clenched together as white spots dance across her vision. Ever the stonic silent warrior.

Slipping the cloth over Lexa's shoulder Clarke ties knots and shifts a limp arm into position as Lexa speaks. "You should have left me." Her words are tight but they ring with a command.

The blonde scoffs at the woman's stupidity as blue eyes flit up to a face unmarred by war paint. She looks younger but just as dangerous. "Most people say thank you." She finishes tying the last knot with efficiency born from experience.

Lexa grunts as the pain throbbing in her shoulder finally dulls. "You are not weak yet you showed weakness, you couldn't kill Quint and you couldn't leave me to die." She shifts against the wall, praying the blonde understands the weakness she showed.
Blue eyes are sharp as she stands. "I need you Lexa, you're smart. Heartless but smart. I can imagine one of your generals in charge. They'd do the same as Quint."

Lexa stares at this sky girl before shifting to her feet, using the wall for support in a show of weakness and pain she hates. "My generals would not lead, another would be chosen when I died."

"Chosen?" Images of the Ursa roaring flit through her mind. Unimaginable pain until clarity as that roar had cleared every doubt in her mind. Had shown her unimaginable things. Like a drop of water in the desert it had brought salvation.

"By the Heda." Fingers dances across her face as if to touch a reminder there. "The Heda chooses the Commander."

"Like the Ursa chose me?" Clarke stares at the brunette, silently wondering if she had gone through torture like Clarke. How did these spirits choose? How did they decide?

Lexa tilts her head in confusion, did the sky people not have spirits to guide them? "Yes, how are your leaders chosen?

Shaking her head Clarke sighs. "Not like yours, they campai-" A roar rips through the cage and Clarke face steels with determination as the door rattles. "I am not dying down here." Every bit of intensity on her face is that of Clarke but the Ursa is hinted. Shown in the bristle of her hairs. The bared teeth with an icy composure.

"Death is not the end. Do not fear. Our spirits will choose another." Even as the words leave her mouth, even as her body and mind are devoted to her belief, to her spirit, Lexa's voice still rings with a slight quake.

"I need you spirit to stay where it is." Blue eyes bright with sheer power the blonde grips Lexa's uninjured arm. "We're not dying. Come on!" She jerks the woman forward and rips the sword free. There is a dull thud as the Pauna breaks through the door and with the strength of shear will Clarke shoves Lexa out of the room and swings the door shut. As the latch comes down there is a thud and rattle followed by a deep thundering roar. And they run, bodies aching but moving by force of will until the blonde stumbles. Blood is thick and sticky on pale torn clothing. The warrior reaches for the blonde, brow furrowed before she spots the red staining clothing. Lexa forces the blonde to remain sitting. "You are bleeding." Jaw tight Lexa reprimands herself for not realizing sooner. Clarke had fixed the brunette's wound soon after it had happened yet Lexa hadn't done anything for the blonde's pain. In the face of the pauna it had been Clarke who had showed true strength.

"I ripped my stitches." Clarke pulls her shirt away, wincing in pain as the blood makes the cloth stick to the wounds. She presses fingers around them before sighing. They were too far from camp to walk without Clarke stumbling. Lexa couldn't help with her shoulder so Clarke points to the knife. "I need you to burn them closed."

Staring at the blonde, Lexa speaks slowly, as if Clarke didn't understand the severity of the request. Abby had seemed to think a great deal about the marks left on bodies. Maybe the sky people did not take pride in their scars. Their shows of strength and ability. "They will scar horribly."

"I don't care. Do it." Lexa feels something bloom in her chest at the look in blue eyes. So she gets a fire going and watches as her knife turns red with heat. Clarke holds her shirt up and breaths through her nose, that look still in her blue eyes. Like she isn't afraid of the hot knife coming at her. Like it won't hurt. She hadn't screamed when the burning had started at the pole. Maybe this was why the Ursa chose this sky girl, the one with determined eyes and a challenge in her bones. A defiance Lexa hadn't seen in outsiders before. Without warning Lexa
presses the knife into bleeding wounds and Clarke's throat closes as she grits her teeth in pain. Back arching off the ground and fingers scrambling for purchase before the knife is over the fire again. Muscles relaxing she pant under the watchful green eyes of the Commander. When the knife is hot again Lexa presses it into the other wound. Smells the burning flesh and when she finishes the last two. When she leaves the knife cooling blue eyes roll to the sky and Clarke slumps against the ground. Lexa sighs, stokes the fire before sitting watch over the stubborn sky girl.

Chapter End Notes

I know this is following the plot of the TV series, but I have the chapters outlined and I promise it will change but I need the things that happened in the show to happen here also, they are key points for future chapters where Clarke finds herself as the Ursa and what it entails.
Octavia stalks forward, sword on her back and a challenge in her bright green eyes. "Got room for one more?"

"Step back sky girl." Indra's tone is distasteful and dismissive.

Jaw tight at the dismissal Octavia stands taller, shoulders straight in defiance. "I can fight."

Indra shakes her head in disbelief and annoyance. "If you want a fight you will get one. Pin."

With a twitch of her chin a warrior steps forward. His stance is loose and ready.

Octavia pulls her sword eyeing the man before rushing forward with a swinging blade and lungs full of cool air. A clash of metal on metal rings and Octavia's sword is blocked and dodged before a knee strikes her in the gut and an elbow to the back shoves her away from her opponent. She stumble but catches herself with a well placed foot, swinging again wildly only to receive a fist to the face. Lip split open she stumbles and he swings again, splitting her cheek open in a deep gash as she falls to her knee before he slams a knee into her face without hesitation. With a grunt she hits the ground and the man turns around, grin on his face at the defeat of a sky demon.

Like a devil set on revenge Octavia stands, coating in mud and blood with defiance in her bright eye. "You think i'm done?!" The warrior turns with a raised eyebrow and a twitch of his lips as she stalks forward with the anger of a pissed off pantha. Before the warrior can throw a punch or a taunt a fist strike his face, hard and true before another follows. Blood coats his fingers and he slices forward with his blade, hears and feels the ring of it connecting with the sky girl's blade before he slams the butt of his sword into her skull. She stumbles and he hits with precise movements to her ribs again and again as she gasps for breath. She stumbles to her knees and he tilts his chin, taking a step back but the girl is standing again jaw tight and eyes burning with a fire. Spitting blood on the floor before raising her sword again in challenge.

He tilts his head with an almost smirk yet sneer before he rushes, slamming hit after hit into the girl, she takes some and dodges others before she plows the hilt of her sword into his face, splitting the skin there. When he tastes blood the warrior growls, bringing a sharp knee into her ribs and then a fist into her already cracked and bleeding face before he wrenches her shoulder to the side and hits a shin into her stomach, letting go as she rolls to a stop. He creeps forward, standing above her and she stands again, spitting blood in his face when he goes to hold her down. One more fists strikes true and she rolls with a pained moan, panting as she lays there. The man moves to make a final blow. "Pin, enough, even a fool knows when to quit." Pin's breathing is slightly labored as he stares at the girl with the anger and stubbornness of a pantha before he turns and leaves.

Kane creeps forward as the warriors leave to hunt dinner, eyeing the blood and mud caking the girl. "Why would you do that?"

With a pained grunt the girl stumbles to her feet, thinking of her people. Her hundred. Of Lincoln. "What doesn't kill you make you stronger." Her words are gruff and pain filled but stubborn.

With sharp winces Octavia is treated until the door opens with a slow hiss of air. The nurse scurries away at the sight of the grounder and Octavia stares at the woman with curiosity and confusion until the woman speaks. "You fought like a child. All anger. No training. You projected your moves."
Octavia huffs in annoyance, pressing on a cut on her arm, wincing as she applies salve to it. "I know. I suck."

Indra eyes the girl, remembering the flash in green eyes. The spirit, much like yet considerably different than the flash of fire in blue eyes. "You have a spirit like no other. I have a proposition for you, do you know what a second is?" Her voice is level, calm and almost bored, as if this does not matter to her.

"An apprentice, but why?" Octavia eyes the woman with baited breath.

"First rule never question me." Indra smirks, waiting for the reply yet it never comes as the girl eyes her.

They wait in silence and then Indra turns to leave, if the sky girl didn't want to accept then it was her own loss and death sentence. An untrained warrior was a dead warrior. "Wait." Octavia stares after the woman, something blooming in her chest. A sense of peace. "I'll do it."

With a sharp inhale Bellamy awakes. His body is shivering cold and he sweeps his gaze around the room, chest heaving. He was inside the mountain. In a cage and Lincoln had betrayed him. He kicks at the door. Shouting in anger and frustration and the woman next to him send him a sharp look and even sharper words that he can't understand. "They take the ones who fight." He continues to kick at the door of his cage, almost crazed. "Do you want to die? Stop!" She hisses at him.

He stares at her in confusion, his mind calming as he takes in deep breathes. "What?"

"They take those that are strong." There is disgust on her face and she speaks. "You are a sky person?" She spits in his face with hatred as he nods.

He wipes his face and glares at her. "Guess no one told you we're in a truce." He speaks lowly and the woman glares back at him, Bellamy face returning the anger she shows.

Time passes and he almost kicks again and again at his cage but he holds it in, looking at the doors and the locks. Struggling to make a plan when two men step forward, they look around the cages like they're looking at a line in the cafeteria. One of them tilts his head at the girl by Bellamy and he sighs before kicking at the door in anger, mind already made up. He wouldn't let them hurt her when she already looked like death.

She stares at him in shock as the men laugh. "We got a live one here." The shock him and Bellamy grunts, falling forward with a glare at the men.

Hours later he wakes to a girl with dark hair and too soft eyes. "Maya?" His head swims from his position.

She stares at him in shock. "How do you know my name?"

"Clarke said you were friends with Jasper." He looks up at his binds, shifting his hips. It only serves to send himself swinging slightly. "I'm guessing you woke me up, feel like getting me down?"

She nods her head sharply, disconnects the wires and looks around for the lever to bring him down when the door opens. One of the guards walks through and stares at her in shock. "Maya what are you doing down here?"

Her eyes flicker to the monitor which is on a flat-line, the man's heart monitor hanging off his chest. "I wanted to see what was so special about him but he's dead."
The man snorts, coming closer as he presses a button to lower the dead savage. "Braver than most people I know Maya, but be careful, they are dangerous."

"I know." Maya speaks lowly and watches as Lovegood loosens the man's feet and suddenly he is moving. Kicking at Lovegood and they struggle. Until Lovegood has him pinned below him and panting. Maya clutches Lovegood gun in her hand, having picked it up from the floor. "Let him go!"

He only laughs at her. "You won't shoot me Maya, the sound would bring the others." He reaches down to grab a scalpel before pulling it to press into the savages throat when his hand is grabbed.

The woman Bellamy had spoke to early holds Lovegood's arm in a death grip and Bellamy presses his hands into the man's throat. Pressing and pressing until his face is purple and he falls dead to the ground. Bellamy pants, turning to nod his head in thanks at the woman before walking towards Maya. Blood dripping down his face. "Are you okay?" His voice is broken from Lovegood hands but soft and worried. Maya nods stiffly and he takes the guns from her. "Help me get him down the chute and undressed, we need to save my people."

Atop horses Octavia, Indra and three other warriors ride back to Ton DC, Octavia is dressed in the dark colors of the Woods Clan and she feels at peace. Belonging. Back at the Arc Raven, Murphy and Monroe were placed on Finn duty and a level headed grounder in charge of the troops to keep the peace. They ride into camp with masked expression and Indra growls as she sees Gustus standing next to the Commander, her arm in a sling. Sliding off the horse the scowling woman stalks to the injured woman. She was gone for one damn day. "What happened?"

Lexa offers a hint of a smile as she turns around. "Pauna." Indra's heart stops for half a second before quickening as she searches over the woman for more damage. "I am well, Clarke saved me." Indra clenches her jaw but nods to the blonde Ursa, who stands with a pain stiffness and bloodied clothing. She would owe the blonde for saving her Heda. Octavia comes to stand near them and a small nod from the blonde in bloody clothing calms the new warrior's worry. "Come, we have much to discuss." Lexa's voice is commanding yet calm.

In the room stands the remaining Clan members, Quint is missing and Indra takes note of that as well as one of the generals from the River Clan. "Yesterday Clarke was assaulted and threatened by Quint, during the attack a Pauna came for us." Sharp intake of breath and the Clans representatives eye the Heda and then the Ursa. To live after an attack by the immensely strong Pauna, it was unheard of. "We lost Artku to the Pauna before Clarke's quick thinking saved us. She has another idea. A plan." In Lexa's voice there is anticipation and hope. Pride. Astonishment and Indra stares at the Ursa with an almost sneer. This sky girl caused to many troubles and Anya wasn't here to pull Lexa from her head if she fell for the blonde.

Without preamble the blonde steps forward and her expression forces them to listen, drags them in and commands their attention as her aura bleeds authority. "We have an army inside the mountain. Our people are waiting in there, hundreds of yours locked in cages." The air is tense at those words. Cages, locked away like animals. "We get the fog down and they can take the mountain down from the inside. Once Bellamy frees them we can win. The mountain men won't know what hit them." Leaders who had fought wars and have seen more death than life, leaders who had made decisions that were questionable stare at the girl who fell from the sky like she was something they had never seen before. Their eyes dance with anticipation. They could win. With the Heda and the Ursa at the lead they would win and they knew it. Their blood sang with the anticipation of battle, of winning and the freedom of their people.

The forest is quiet as a set of three warriors, one first, her second and another warrior patrol the ever
quiet woods. It was quiet, too quiet as they paved the safe trail for a lane of warriors. The Ursa sits atop a horse, golden hair shining bright in the forest, an identifying color that could be seen from the hills and trees. Blue eyes sweep the forest as the hairs on her neck rise in threat. Something was here. Something was hunting them. "DOWN!" Her order rings out the same time a gunshot pierces the air. One of the guards slumps slightly as he ducks him body down in the Ursa's command, he moves just enough that the bullet tears into his upper shoulder, the force of it carrying him to the ground. Without a thought the blonde is digging her heels into the horses flank and tearing after the shooter's position with one last order. "Put pressure on the wound!"

She comes upon a scene that makes her want to puke, the mountain men were hunting her. One dead on the ground and another in Octavia's arms. "STOP!" The order forces Octavia to halt, her own body recognizing an order from a higher leader. From a spirit. "We need him. We need to know what's going on inside." Octavia clenches her jaw but nods and they ride the rest of the way to camp. Octavia's hand digging into the mountain man's wound as Clarke's own body supports the injured warrior, hand pressed into his wound. They burst through the gates and then the med-bay without loud orders leaving lips. With Clarke hauling an arm over her shoulder as another warrior helps her place the wounded warrior on the bed. Abby stares at the blood coating her daughter. "Not mine. Save him." Blue eyes are dangerous as they look from the injured warrior to the mountain man. "He has radiation poisoning, he can't take the suit off. Keep him alive."

Jackson offers a scoff of disbelief. "How do you expect us to help him if we can't take the suit off?"

"Figure it out. Ask Raven, but keep him alive. I want to question him." She eyes the warrior, the blood trickling out of the wound as her mom checks the exit wound. "Keep them both alive." Indra eyes the wound on her warrior's shoulder, it was high, not too dangerous but leaking enough blood to cause worry.

The warrior's eyes find the Ursa's and his dark eyes begin to flutter shut, bright blue the last of the color as he begins to fall unconscious. The Doctor shakes his shoulder and he moans, eyes fluttering. "You're a fighter, fight!" His eyes are pained but he dips his head in a nod, eyes moving to the Ursa and then to the General. Clarke moves to the bag Octavia had grab, she rifles through the pictures. Her chest aches in pain and anger. There were pictures of Clarke and Lexa in here. Of them walking back to the village. Of Clarke eyeing the forest in suspicion. She grabs a warrior, yanks him in front of her and his eyes widen in shock, staring at the Ursa like she would eat him.

"I need you to take a message to the Commander." The warrior nods his head at her dangerous eyes and oppressive aura. She slides the picture into his shirt. "Give her this and give it to her alone. Tell her I sent you. Tell her they tried to assassinate me and she may be next." The warrior's eyes darken in anger at those words and he nods his head. "Grab a horse and be swift about it. There may be more out there." He dips his head and tears through the camp with a purpose. Clarke's blood sings in anger.

Hours later Clarke is pacing the medical bay, hands on her gun as she waits. She can hear the warrior coming to, his wound stitched, Clarke's instincts saving him from more damage. From the grips of death itself. Finally Abby comes back and her eyes are pained as they find Clarke. Kane comes to stand before her and Abby's words are quiet and sharp. "We tested his blood in case he needed a transfusion. It showed similar flags to our own blood."

"What does that mean," Kane's voice is quiet and his chest stills.

Clarke reaches for her gun, itching to make the guard bleed. "It means they already started bleeding my friends."

"Clarke what are you going to do?" Abby reaches for her daughter's hand and Clarke jerks away.
Stalking toward the glass at the man as he stares at them with curious eyes.

"Make him talk." Her words are tight, an almost growl as she comes to stop before the man.

Abby jerks her daughter away from the man. "We are not monsters. We're not going to torture him!"

Clarke's body hum and her guard reaches for his sword, ready to take down both the Sky people for his Ursa. "They are bleeding my friends! They are killing them."

"We don't know that yet." Abby pleads with her daughter, trying to force her to see reason when there was none.

"He has their blood." Clarke's own blood boils. "You are ignorant if you can't see what they're doing."

"We will not torture him Clarke. It is not our way."

She jerks away from her mom. "No. You guys just float people for trying to save their people." She stalks to the door. "I am going to save my people and Lexa's at any cost." Her words ring in the now silent room as she leaves.

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Raven eyes the pacing blonde once again. She would wear a hole sooner or later and the mechanic opened her mouth to say as much when Monroe kicked her foot, sharp eyes telling her to remain silent. Clarke continue's pacing, her presence almost suffocating in it's anger. The Ursa pressing out of her and her guard is tense in the doorway. There is a screech over the radio before a familiar voice calls for them. "Clarke? Raven?"

Clarke's heart stops and her eyes widen with relief as Raven grins widely beside the radio. Clarke grabs the radio from Raven's offered hands and speaks with relief. "Bellamy. I knew you could do it. What's going on in the mountain?"

Bellamy shifts his gaze to the portrait surrounding him. "Our friends are stuck in the dorms. The mountain men are planning something." His voice is tense and angry.

"Find the fog. Turn it off." Clarke's voice is sharp and commandingly yet pleading. "You have an army inside the mountain Bellamy. The grounders in the cages."

"A Trojan horse."

"Exactly." She grips the radio tighter, swallowing thickly. "We can do this. We can save them."

"We'll get it done but Clarke, they took Karsten. He's dead." Bellamy's voice cracks and Clarke feels tears prick her eyes. Dead. "I don't know how. I've been stuck hiding from the guards."

Clarke slams her hands on the table, blood rushing through her body, heated and angry. "Okay. Raven has the schematics, keep working Bellamy." With steel cold blue eyes Clarke plans. "I'll buy you some time, have them focus on me so you can slip by in there. It's been three days Bell. The grounders are ready when you are."

In the darkness Bellamy nods, trusting the blonde with his life. "Got it Clarke, we'll get them out."

"I know. Bellamy?"

"Yeah?"
"Be careful." Her words are pained but promising and she hands the radio back to Raven.

Her presses his forehead into the wall, Maya's eyes on him. "You too Princess."

"Hey, where you going?" The mechanic reaches for her, calloused yet soft fingers settled on Clarke's arm gently, careful of her wounds.

There is a glint in Clarke's eyes that reminds Raven of danger and fun. "To buy him some time."

She stalks to Indra, her guard hot on her tail. His body quaking with the anticipation bleeding off of the Ursa. "Bellamy's alive and we need to buy him some time." Octavia's green eyes spark in happiness and a grin crosses her face as her own body thrums with determination. "I need your help." She shifts her eyes to the other warriors. "All of yours."

Indra smirks, feels the power and energy radiating off of the Ursa like it could infect them all. "Lead the way Sky-girl."

Clarke spins, walking with a grounder unit at her back and blood rushing through her veins. Something hums deep within her at the feeling of having strong warriors at her back. She feels invincible, like they were made for this. Made to fight and feel this way. The anticipation of an oncoming fight. Of a win. Of something. The man stiffens when she walks in. "You won't kill me."

His words tremble slightly at the end. At the look in the blonde's eyes.

"No. I need you to deliver a message." She smirks and her body seems to radiate power, almost forces him into a corner as she motions to his suit on the bed. "Get dressed."

He slips on his suit quickly and watches as the warriors glare at him before the glass door opens with a hiss and he is in the same room with them. He stands behind the blonde and the dark haired girl at her side with two beefy hands on his arms. They dig harshly into his muscles, almost forcing him to jerk away in pain and yell out but he holds his tongue. They lead him outside and guns are drawn on them. "What are you doing Clarke?"

"He is to deliver a message to the president." Clarke's shoulders are tilted straight and back, body oozing power and determination

"Take him back to his cell Indra." Abby orders the grounder, eyes sharp as she stares at her daughter.

The dark woman tilts her chin defiantly. "No."

Emerson trembles between the power play. Watches it play out. "Clarke take him back."

"No," Clarke's words are strong and defiant. Commanding and there are guns on both her and the grounders and all she feels is a need to crack the guns under her hands and roar. Feels her blood singing with power and chest aching for release.

"As Chancellor I order you to take the prisoner back." Abby's voice is strong but her eyes waver, flickering over her daughters face, blue eyes dark and dangerous under the dirt and blood smeared in small places. Under the dark mark of the Ursa.

Clarke steps closer, and her body thrums with power. Pulses with it and it is almost suffocating. "You may be the Chancellor but i'm in charge here."

"Clarke, people could get hurt." Dark brown eyes flicker to the guns drawn on the grounder who stand defiantly and proudly behind the blonde Ursa.
"Not if you get out of my way." Blue eyes blaze with a fire Abby had never seen before in her daughter yet recognized.

The woman clenches her jaw, stepping back and waving her hand. The guns lower and she stares at her daughter, disappointed and so angry. "You have no clue what you're doing."

A strong jaw lifts and the wind brushes the blonde tresses behind it. "I know exactly what i'm doing." Then she's walking past her mother and to the gate. She stands in front of the man. "We have an army, larger than you can comprehend and we're coming for you. And thanks to you." She clicks the high frequency emitter with a twist of her lips. "We have a way to fight the reapers. I'm coming for your President." Emerson nods and moves to leave but Clarke stops him, grabbing his suit. "It's an eight hour walk to the mountain correct?" He nods, the blonde presses a button, releasing the air. "You're going to do it in six." Indra smirks behind the blonde, glaring hatefully at the man who had a hand in killing many of her people.

"How do you expect me to get the message to the president?" Emerson's voice is nervous and Clarke offers him a grin full of too many teeth and a feralness that sets him on edge.

"Figure it out." The man takes off into the forest and Indra stares at the blonde leader with almost pride, who knew she had that much gumption. "That should buy us time. Indra is the army hidden?"

"Where no one will find it." She shifts back on her feet, her body humming with the power coming from the blonde. If the warriors doubted that the blonde was truly the Ursa before, they did not now. Not with the feel of her power pulsing against them and readiness them for a fight. "I will go tell the Commander, she will call the leaders in. You must be there."

"I'll come tomorrow, I have plans to finish here." Clarke turns to the brunette who was the first to take to the life on the ground. "Octavia?"

"I am Indra's second." The blonde nods at the pride and strength in the girl's voice. The feel of finally belonging shows in the warriors eyes. And Clarke feels happiness and pride for the girl.

The night passes to quickly and Clarke paces inside the room where Raven is. Her hands twist and knead with a nervous energy. "Bellamy check in yet?"

Raven glances up from where she is once again tinkering with wire, her dark eyes are slightly exasperated. "No. You've been here as long as I have."

"How many frequency emitters do you have?" The blonde continues to pace like a caged animal and Raven almost throws her wires across the room. Silently on the other side of the room Monroe offers the mechanic a wry turn of her lips before leaving to get more supplies from the Mecha station.

"Four if you count Emerson's." Dark eyes stare at the blonde who suddenly comes to a stop and spins to face her.

"That's it?" Disbelief and apprehension coat her voice and her muscles tense, mind racing before she starts pacing again, hands tightly clasped at the hem of her jacket. There is a slight stiffness to her walk that Raven knows to well. Pained.

Raven glares at the leader, standing slowly to grab her shoulders. They are tense and almost trembling. "Clarke, sit your ass down and breath. Frequency emitters are hard to make. Lucky we made three." Her thumbs brush across the blonde's collar bones careful of the stitches there. They are soothing and slowly Clarke sighs, dropping her head before staring at Raven with a twisted expression.
"I can't sit down, I have a meeting with the Clan leaders and I have to tell them the fog isn't off and we only have four frequency emitters." Her shoulders tense again under Raven's hands and the mechanic sighs lowly as Clarke continues to speak. "They want more. They need more."

"We can only do so much!" Raven's hands almost tighten but she stills them, her own shoulders now tight and Clarke winces in sympathy at what the mechanic must be going through. "Monroe has been up two nights straight with Wick trying to figure out the damn fog. I've slept maybe five hours between fixing the radio, making emitters and figuring out the damn dam!"

Clarke sighs clutching her head, Raven's hands fall from her shoulders to an elbow, gentle. "Sorry, sorry. Everything just." The blonde sighs low in her chest. "I feel like my head is about to explode."

"I know." Raven brushes soothing fingers across Clarke's arms. "You're doing fine. Bellamy's talked to the president, well former, and he's helping them get the others to safety. Right now they're taking the hundred. Bellamy's looking around. Everything will be fine."

"I'm crawling around ducts." The voice comes in, and both girls spin their head to the radio, chest stilling before they stumble over to the device.

"Bellamy you needed to check in an hour ago." Clarke's voice is harsh with bottled nerves and worry.

"Calm down Clarke, I had to wait for Maya to fix the portable radio." Bellamy calms her with slightly exasperated words before he grunts, shuffling along the small ducts. "Now i'm crawling through air ducts to find our friends." He shuffles through the ducts when he hears the drilling, his face twists and his heart clenches in his chest. "I think I've found them."

Clarke's heart thunders and she hears a scream die from over the radio, hands clenched white on the edge of the desk she and Raven stare at the radio. "He's dead." Bellamy's voice is gruff and angry as he peers through the grates of the air vent. His hand trembles, almost pulling the gun out before he stills. Clarke's hands tremble in rage and grief as Raven feels bile rise in her throat.

"Emerson." Clarke can hear Cage's voice and she wants to kill him. Jump through the radio. "What happened?"

"Clarke sent me with a message." The man's voice is wary, like he's waiting for the hat to drop.

"She did?" There is amusement in Cage's voice and Clarke's fingers dig into the metal of the table.

Emerson shifts as the treatment is injected into him. "Yes, she said she's coming for you. Her and her savage army."

He laughs like the idea is preposterous and Raven's eyes flicker to Clarke, the girl's body tense with rage. "She can't get through the doors even if she gets past the fog." He pauses, tilting his head, lips twisting into an almost manic proud grin. "Take them out with the missile at Ton DC, might as well kill half of them. Show them why they do not fight back. Ever." His words are sharp yet relaxed, as if he isn't sentencing hundreds of people to death and Clarke feels the urge to dig her hands into his throat and squeeze.

"Of course sir."

Bellamy crawls away quietly, aching for the loss of another of his hundred but worried. "You hear that Clarke?"

"Yeah." She stares at the table, jaw ticking and eyes blazing with danger and fire.
"Where's O?" His movement stills as his stomach drops and heart aches. If she was in the missiles path he would stop it himself.

"Here, she here." Clarke's voice doesn't even waver and Raven keeps her mouth shut, eyeing Clarke in confusion.

"Good. What's your plan?" Relief floods his entire body and his muscles feel like noodles now, like he worry had aged him.

"Riding to Ton DC." Clarke pulls in a deep breath before releasing it with a slow drop of her shoulder. Calming. "Bell help our friends. I'll worry about the bomb." Bellamy murmurs something in reply and Clarke flips the switch, hands pressing into the table as her mind races before she is standing to her full height.

"Why did you lie to him?" Raven steps closer to the blonde, eyes sweeping over her tense frame.

Clarke shakes her head, a finality in her eyes. "He doesn't need to be worrying about Octavia right now."

Clarke turns, ready to leave when Raven pulls her into a hug, fingers tight yet gentle across the battered leaders back, her fingers tremble as she dips her face into Clarke's shoulder. "Don't get blown up."

She clings to Raven, fingers grappling at her clothing for the half second she allows herself to feel this familiar soothing calm before she is pulling back, nodding at the mechanic with a thick throat. There is a pressure behind her eyes and in her chest pooling into her stomach as she grabs Ryder and then her own horse, spurring it to run as fast as it can, her mothers eyes on her the entire time.

The poor beats pant beneath the Ursa and her guard as they ride fast and relentlessly to Ton DC. Finally the gate comes into view and Clarke is jumping off of her horse and walking quickly over to the other. Ryder struggles to keep up with the girl as Octavia and Kane both stare at her in worry. Octavia's hand is gentle on her wrist, questioning. "Clarke?"

"Bellamy's fine, he's okay." Octavia sags in relief as Clarke continues forward. The Commander looks up, lips almost twitching as she speaks with an almost sarcastic teasing drawl. "Clarke has graced us with her presence."

"Can I speak to you alone?" Clarke's body almost trembles with force of keeping the Ursa under control. Keep her from causing a panic and screaming for retaliation against the Mountain Men. From screaming at everyone to run. Lexa's eyes focus on her, not even hesitating before she nods.

"Of course." She tilts her head back and Clarke steps closer.

"Tell Octavia to patrol the woods. Please." There is a desperation in her voice and the Ursa is trembling under her veins, almost pressing out in its anger at the Mountain Men.

Lexa offers her an odd look before looking to Indra, voice sharp. "Have your second and the others patrol the woods for mountain men. Prove herself."

Indra offer an even sharper nod, eyes glaring at Clarke before barks the order at Octavia who eyes Clarke with confusion and worry.

The two girls chosen by spirits move into a room lit by candles and all Clarke feels is an almost panic before she forces the words quickly from her mouth. "Lexa the mountain is sending a missile, we need to evacuate." Desperation in her voice and shoulders.
"Are you sure?" Lexa's eyes are wide and visions pass in front of her. *Burning bright, flames, blood, screams.* She blinks and all she sees is what remains of Ton DC. There is nothing she can do and her chest hurts. These vision were useless when they couldn't come soon enough. Never offering enough time or always offer a twisted view.

"Yes I overheard it when I was talking to Bellamy." Something in Lexa's eye cause the Ursa to flail inside of Clarke. Recognizing the look of pained acceptance.

Lexa shoves a cloth into her hand, eyes almost broken before they clear and smooth over into pure determination. "Put this on, we must leave."

Clarke jerks back, face twisting into desperation. "No, we have to evacuate everyone."

Lexa's eyes blaze with understanding. "And when the Mountain Men see we have evacuated they will know about Bellamy." Lexa almost steps forward but holds herself back, instead meeting wavering blue eyes with steady green. "We can't risk this Clarke.

"People will die. I can't let that happen" There is a last ditch effort in her words. A pleading desperation to do what is right in this moment instead of needed.

Lexa does finally step closer, taking the time to calm the blonde even as her heart ticks quickly, reminding her they were running out of time. "When you asked to speak to me you made your choice. Somewhere inside you knew. We do what we must, do not show weakness now Clarke. Strength is understanding what must be done and doing it."

Heart heavy and aching they run out of the tent, leaving behind their people. Lexa turns one last glance to Ton DC, to see it one last time before is becomes burning and broken like in her vision.

"I should have warned them." Clarke's broken words pull the Commander from her mind and she turns to see pained blue eyes flickering back to the village. Hesitating.

"There isn't much we could do." Lexa thinks to having the Ice Nation join in the coalition and Costia's braid hidden in her armor. Thinks to broken brown eyes and dark hair. Tan skin and the pure embodiment of the forest in one girl and the pain in her chest doesn't lessen one bit.

Blue eyes flicker to the village and Clarke is brought back to the drop ship. Half her people hidden inside and the other half outside, trying to get to safety. To their home but they couldn't and Clarke had shut the door on them. Closed it with a tearful face and cracking heart. Too pain ridden but resolute and broken. "I could have saved them." She thinks to the people in Ton DC right now and her former hundred.

Lexa spin, jerking Clarke further into the forest with just her tone and eyes. "And risked the entire war." Her eyes are understanding yet full of pain and loss somewhere deeply hidden in those green eyes. "We do what we must to protect those we can. In the long run their sacrifices will not be in vain. Victory stands on the back of sacrifice."

Clarke nods the decision made, but she lets her eyes flicker to the village once more to ingrain it upon her memory. To sketch and write as more people she didn't, couldn't, save and she stops breathing and the world stops moving because right there, taking to one of the guards is her mother. Her mother. Her mother, is standing in a village that is about to be bombed and Clarke moves without thinking, feet tripping down the hill before Lexa latches onto her shoulder. "Clarke you cant go back now, it is coming." There is a panicked hint in the commander's face but Clarke is already forcing her eyes back to the village, focusing on her mother as Lexa speaks. "Stories say that when it hits it is as wide as the lake, we must get further away."
Clarke shakes her head eyes desperate and wide. "My mom is down there. I can't let her die." With those final words she rips her hand from Lexa with a strength born of time running out and she races down the hill, stumbling but quick and sure.

"Clarke!" It is a sharp hiss and then Lexa is clenching her jaw and turning around, racing out of the woods and away from her people. No vision to tell her if the blonde lives or dies. No vision to tell her how many of her people will live.

Clarke latches onto her mom, momentum carrying her to bump into the woman before she is yanking her up the hill. "Follow me." Her hands are tight and insistent.

Abby stares at the almost panic in her daughter face, reaching up to cradle her cheek in worry. "Clarke what's going on?"

She jerks on her mom's arm, forcing her to move. "Please just trust me mom, hurry!" The panic in her voice sends Abby into mom mode and she is racing up the hill with her daughter in the dark when there is a light and this godawful sound. Clarke continues to pull her along even as they watch it in silence. Until suddenly it is no longer silent.

It rips through the night like a plague, roaring and flaming. The sound is deafening and rings through their head and ears. It soars with precision, tearing every thing in its wake and they are thrown with the bright light and heat. Thrown away from the now burning town. Abby stumbles and falls into her daughter and farther away Lexa bumps into a tree, head swimming and ears ringing.

Octavia patrols the woods, scowl on her face as another second taunts her. So like Murphy before he was banished. Voice too loud and brash. He falls silent when he moves to investigate a noise and she follows him, stumbling upon a reaper tying the second to a log. And her blood boils before she is slipping through the forest quietly, ready to attack until she recognizes a tattoo. Recognizes the body of the man in front of her.

"Lincoln?" Her stomach drops and chest stills as she wait for him to turn around. To be there monster he was while on it but he isn't. He is calm, unraging and Octavia's heart stops because that means he knows. Remembers what he is doing and is still doing it.

"Octavia." His voice cracks and he stares at her, gaze broken and almost disgusted with himself.

"Let him go." Her words are strong and demanding even as her throat trembles and eyes water, both in grief and anger.

"I can't." His words crack and they almost shatter her resolve but she stands her ground, green eyes stormy.

She shakes her head at him, stepping closer. "What are you doing?"

He turns broken eyes on her, so disgusted with himself and loathing and full of so much pain as his words crack and break leaving his throat. "I'm not strong enough to fight it."

She stands, shoving him away from the boy. "Ge smak daun, gyon op nodotaim." She stares at him, almost begging with her eyes for him to listen.

His lips tremble and twitch. "I can't fight it, don't you understand?" His heart breaks in guilt and grief. "I betrayed your brother."
Octavia steps closer, as if this small information could save him. Could bring him back. "Bellamy's alive, he contacted us. Everything's okay." She leaves out the 'you can come home.'

The hunger, the need. The addiction courses through him and begs him for release. "No. It's not."

"Don't give me that. Don't give up." Her words crack and break in grief and anger.

Her gut aches and muscle throb. His body craves it. "It calls for me."

She shakes her head, hand tight on her sword. "No! Fall down get back up! Come back with me or die like a coward."

He grabs for the boy and Octavia punches him across the face, heart shattering. "Come back when you decide not to be a coward. Grounders don't give up!" Before he can answer her the is a deafen sound and suddenly a bright light before a resounding boom echoes around them. They tear through the forest like the devil is on their heels.

Clarke reaches her mom, pulling her up as the woman's head swims. Clarke looks her over for injury, the soot staining the sky. "Are you okay mom?"

"You knew." Disgust, anger and shock and her mom jerks out of her hold, brown eyes accusing. "You knew and you let them die. Please, please tell me this wasn't you. That this was Lexa."

The look on her mother's face almost makes her crumple to the forest floor. Worse than any cut, any bullet, any wound she could have. "I. Mount Weather couldn't find out about Bellamy, I couldn't."

"You killed them!" Abby backs away from her daughter, looking at her as if she's seeing something new. "You can't just wash this innocent blood from your hands Clarke."

"Mom." Her throat aches as she chokes out the word.

"No. They're burning because of you. Who are you?" She stares like she is seeing Clarke for the first time.

"I'm still me mom." Blue eyes beg for understanding.

"No, the Clarke I knew wouldn't have let innocent people burn." She shakes her head in revulsion. "She wouldn't be more grounder than my own daughter. I don't recognize you at all. Their blood is on your hands and you can't wash it away." With that the woman turns and leaves.

Clarke's heart fractures and the world around her rings. Everything feels like it is crumbling and she stumbles, watches the flames dance. There is a voice in her ear and hands on her shoulder but it take five shouts and three shakes to get her to come to. To see Lexa staring at her in disbelief and relief. They wait it out in the forest when the gunshots ring out and they hear screams. "There's a spotter, we can take him out." Something is burning within Clarke's chest, a need for revenge. Not justice.

"Killing him won't make you feel better." Lexa's words are calm yet understanding.

"He deserves to die." Clarke's words are final as they begin to hunt through the forest as night continues to light up from the fires behind them.

With a drawn sword Lexa spin, almost slicing into Lincoln as he comes upon them. With a nod they all continue their path to the shooter.
Clarke and Lexa are creeping around one side when there is a scuffle and the man is stepping out from behind the rock, Lincoln in his grasp. "Step closer and I'll kill him." There is blood dripping from his head, a wound the former reaper had inflicted and Clarke's entire body stiffens. "Try to kill me and he dies." His heart hammers in his chest as he holds the tall man hostage.

"Do it Clarke, your people need you." Lincoln's voice is steady, ready to die for his people.

With soft heart broken eyes she takes a deep breath, a buzzing in her veins as everything seems to slow. She could shoot the man in the head and risk killing Lincoln. She could set the gun down and hope Lincoln or Lexa could kill him or she could do this. She could take a deep breathe and finish this with minimal damage. With trust in her abilities she aims. "You are my people." And she exhales, pulling the trigger.

The man lets out a pain grunt as Lincoln falls to his knees, blood dripping from his chest and Lexa is staring at Clarke like she is seeing her under a new light as Lincoln lets out a pained shocked laugh as the man falls with wide eyes. "Nice shot."

Clarke stands there, body recoiling and rolling as the mountain man lies prone on the ground, dead. Her veins burn with guilt and pain and fire. "Did it make you feel better?" Lexa's voice is knowing as she stares at the blonde.

"No." There are tears in her eyes and fractures in her heart as her left hand trembles with the weight of the gun in it.

"Relax Clarke." Lexa is lounging back against a bed of furs, dressed in a loose shirt and face unmarked by her kohl.

Clarke is standing, fingers pressed into the table as she stares at the map once again. "I can't. Our people are counting on us, what if I missed something. What happens if Bellamy doesn't get the fog down?" Her words become more worried with each syllable. "If Raven can't get the door unlocked?"

She comes to stand behind her, almost close enough to touch but far enough away to not crowd. "You are a good leader and you are doing what I did before my first battle." The scar across her hip burns and the vision of a felled mountain still shows in her mind. "Worrying over thing you cannot control. Decisions made in battle are rarely planned."

Clarke's fingers press tightly into the table, fingers threatening to rip the paper there. "If Bellamy doesn't get the fog turn off then we are screwed."

"You care for him." Lexa's words are tight and Clarke stares at her in confusion.

"He's one of my people, of course I care for him." She thinks of sitting against a tree in the forest, a slowly cooling body across from them and forgiveness between them. An understanding. She thinks of rallying almost a hundred kids together to flee and then to fight. Of shutting the door on him and finding him alive days later. An understanding that they would do anything to get what remains of their hundred back. Of letting him go into the mountain by himself.

Lexa eyes the emotion in the blonde's gaze. "No, this is more."

Clarke's jaw unclenches and she speaks into the night. "I helped send him into that mountain. If he dies it is on me."

Lexa offer the sky leader a glass of water, sipping on her own as she watches the blonde struggle.
through emotion. "Warriors do not worry about what they cannot control."

Clarke chuckles almost bitterly. "No, but I am not a warrior."

There is pride in Lexa's voice as she stands taller. "You are an Ursa. You make warriors bow at your feet." She tilts her head to the blonde. "Do not worry."

Clarke shakes her head, eyes begging Lexa to understand. "I don't want them to bow."

Lexa eyes the girl who had ordered three hundred of her warriors killed. The girl who had brought a reaper back and demanded an alliance. The girl who would have sacrificed her life for the one she loved. "Clarke to lead you must think with your head and not your heart." She wants to think the girl understands this but knows that the kills she has made were with her heart. The pain had showed on her face. "We will fight tomorrow and all will be well. I have seen the mountain fall." *The door is open and her people are walking out. There is smoke billowing behind it and the cry of a spirit in her ears, blood thick on her face* and she knows they will win.

"We are sending people to their grave." Clarke's mind flinches to the fifty of her own dead. To the 250 dead in Ton DC and many more.

"They know what this entails. We must be leaders they look up to." Her voice rings with conviction, pride and authority. "We tell them to fight and die for us and they do. We are who they look to in times of need and crisis." She steps closer, eyes understanding yet imploring. "We were born leaders and chosen by the spirits."

Clarke's hands tremble and she stares at Lexa, eyes pained. "What if I don't want to tell them to die."

She stares at this girl who had seen death yet still wants nothing to do with it. Stares at her like she is a mystery to be solved because she does not want warriors to die for their cause. "Then you tell them to fight. Any warrior would gladly fight and die by the Ursa's side. Now rest or eat Clarke."

Octavia sits, staring into the fire with eyes darker than the coals burning in the fire. Clarke sits across from her, searching over the warrior's face for an explanation. Before she can ask the dark haired girl is speaking. "I know you Clarke." Her words are dangerous and her voice holds uncontrolled rage, dread drips in the blondes chest, pooling in her stomach as she leans forward. "You let those people die."

The dread comes spilling out of her stomach, twisting and writhing in guilt as she swallows, staring at Octavia and begging for the brunette to understand. "I had no choice. Bellamy needed to be protected at all cost."

The mention of her brother doesn't seem to faze the warrior as rage claws and threatens to break from her chest in tightly wound muscles and accusing eyes. "250 innocents." Children. The unspoken word hangs in the air between them and Clarke's stomach drops. The Ursa is sitting in the background, understanding but waiting.

"I know okay?" Her voice cracks, lungs trembles like she can't take in enough air. She let these innocents die knowing it would happen. The three hundred warriors, that was war. That was her and Raven and Jasper pulling three different strings of fate together but this. This was on her and Lexa and it was eating Clarke alive because she could have warned them all instead of going to Lexa. But she couldn't. Couldn't risk the lives of her 47 and Bellamy. They needed him inside to save everyone. "You think my heart doesn't ache. I let innocent die Octavia. I am coated in the blood of innocents and I do that to protect my people." There is a pain and penance in the catch of her throat
and the roughness of her voice. "I had to."

There is no forgiveness or understanding in hard green eyes. "You left them to die."

"Not you." Clarke stares at Octavia like that holds all the answers. "I made sure you were out before Lexa and I left."

There is almost disgust in the twist and snarl of Octavia's face. "Innocents Clarke. Dead! I don't care if you'd have left me, innocents died." She stares at Clarke like she doesn't recognize the girl buried under the blood and ash and death. She gets up swiftly, ready to get away from the blonde, storming to leave only to have Clarke block her rage filled path.

Clarke almost reaches to touch her like Octavia had so many hours ago but there is a warning and a promise in green eyes. "Octavia, you can't tell anyone, if they found out." She left the sentence hanging, trying to find the words.

She stares at Clarke in rage and an unrecognizable look. A look she saw in her mother's face and she is reminded of the girl who landed on Earth and took the first step. The girl who knew the pains of leaders making decisions without thinking. Leaving the pain of innocents lost behind. They had been a hundred strong once. An innocence in their freedom on Earth before it was torn away. "The alliance would break, I'm not stupid Clarke."

Clarke feels the danger lurking off of Lexa as she watches Octavia leave for the forest. "She won't tell. She's loyal."

"Loyalty is not a luxury we can afford." Lexa watches the second of one of her greatest warriors like she would kill the Commander in her sleep. Like she would spill secrets like a waterfall.

Clarke's veins flood with anger and protectiveness and the Ursa just fuels her rage. "I trust Octavia. She will not tell." Danger coats every word. A challenge for the Commander to disagree.

Clarke turns around when Lexa only clenches her jaw, eyes hard as they stare past Clarke and into the fire, leaving when she hears the words spill into the night air like Clarke can't catch them. "Frag em up." And all she sees is red, it threatens to take over her vision but she holds it, waiting for the moment even as it trembles in her bones. She watches Gustus like a hawk and sees him go, following after Octavia like he wasn't going to slice her throat open and give the ground the blood it had grown hungry for. Used to.

She stalks him like one would a wounded prey and all she sees is the red of her anger. Boiling in her blood and overtaking her. He pulls back his bow and she feels the urge to drag claws through him, the urge to maim him for threatening her family. To make him bleed and pay and scream. The Ursa is pissed, feeding off and feeding into Clarke's rage. Octavia as family, broken and angry but still family. She settles for a gun pressed to his head instead of claw tearing through his chest. "Move." A low command that holds a deadly promise.

She shoves him through the tent flap, kicking his knee from under him as Lexa turns to stare at them. She feels the rage rolling off of Clarke. The challenge of the Ursa and the Heda screeches within her. "Leave us." Her eyes are dismissive and hard.

He moves to get up and Clarke slams her gun into his head, causing the man to stumble under the force of it. He scowls at the blonde, but the aura around her has his almost cowering. The spirit overwhelming. He understands why the Ursa chose this girl. "No. He stays here!" Blue eyes are almost too dark to recognize, dark with anger and trembling with an urge to kill the man who had
gotten so close to killing Octavia.

"Octavia will not be harmed." Clarke glares at her and Lexa sighs at the defiance and suspicion in her gaze. "Gustus the girl is not to be harmed, your orders to kill are null."

The man scowls, standing and shoving past Clarke even as his instincts beg him to cower and show his neck to her. Clarke creeps forward, muscles tense and coiling with uncontrolled rage. "You can not kill everyone you don't trust!" The Ursa presence pulses around the room, almost suffocating.

"Yes I can." The Heda rises to the challenge but Lexa stamps it down.

Clarke has no such luck, the Ursa fueling her rage. Swirling around her like the tornadoes she had read about. "You think you're invincible. That you can take out those you don't trust like it's nothing. Like you don't feel anything." Clarke keeps stepping closer and closer.

"Feelings are weakness." Lexa stares at the leader like she is speaking about the weather. Calm and almost monotone. Yet stiff almost as if a mantra to keep herself from cracking. "I feel nothing when I kill those that stand in the way of my peoples safety." There is truth and promise in her words.

"Octavia does not stand in the way, she wouldn't endanger Bellamy like that." The Ursa calms under Clarke's influence, still pulsing with the anger it felt from the blonde.

"That you know of. Your feelings for her are your weakness." A sharpness in Lexa's tone and a hardness to green eyes.

"My feelings are the reason I know she can be trusted." The Ursa roars within her as she stalks forward, woken like a beast slumbering. "But you, Lexa, you are the liar. You tell me feelings are weakness. But they make my people stronger." She thinks of her hundred working together and laughing and living and free. Longing for that bursts within her chest and she knows she would do anything to save them. "They keep them loyal." Miller pulling her into the drop ship and staring at her in complete trust. Her blood thrums and she can feel the Heda wishing to claw at the Ursa. "But you're a hypocrite." Lexa's back touches the table and her breathing stills as the Ursa's presence seems to suffocate her. Pressing and pressing until it is all she can feel and Clarke is all she can hear. "You felt for Anya's death." Her heart aches at the mention of her former first. "You hold her braid and you are still haunted by Costia." Lexa's heart thunders in her chest, aching and throbbing at the name and the Heda is rolling in the suffocating presence of the Ursa. A spirit so long repressed. Decades without one until it is here, free and raging. "You let everyone burn in Ton Dc and you felt it."

And in this moment the Heda, Lexa, concedes. Leans back against the table in a true moment of weakness. "Not everyone. Not you." Whispered and cracking and so broken.

And Clarke stalls, the Ursa falls away at her shock and they are left, simply Lexa and Clarke, standing in the room alone as they struggle to figure this out. "Then if you care about me, trust me." Clarke stares at Lexa, imploring. Eyes soft and hoping. "Octavia isn't a threat."

A thick swallow and Lexa stops conceding. "I can't." Low and cracked as Lexa waits.

Blue eyes blaze and Lexa is reminded of the day in front of the pole which felt like months ago. "If you touch Octavia, harm her, I will tell everyone of the missile." With those final word Clarke spins and leaves Lexa to compose herself. To force tears down and swallow her emotions. To not show her weakness to the emptiness of the tent.

Bellamy lets out a shout of excitement, lips twisting into a half grin. "Found it!"
Monroe and Raven clap their hands together in a loud high five as Wick grins across from them. "Okay, it's Sulfur gas, which will kill and burn you Bell." Monroe's voice is calming but bridging with excitement as her body trembles in anticipation.

"So try to stay away from it Shooter." Raven grins wickedly but her lips tremble in worry.

"Just five vats of it behind me." He mumbles out, his heart elated but worried as his eyes flicker to the large machines.

"Okay, find a control panel Bell." Monroe's voice is soft and calm. Balming the worry eating at his gut.

Raven leans forward mind racing and Wick is writing on the board across from them, tweaking with some more wires for emitters. "Okay look for a-

"Raven this is Bell, no science talk." Monroe's eyes are teasing yet worried. If Bellamy made one wrong move he was dead.

"Yeah keep it dumb for me." He stares at the machine in front of him. The many buttons across the screen and he wishes he had paid more attention in the little science classes he had instead of history.

"Look for a pH indicator." Wick's voice comes from behind them as he creeps closer to the two girl's, standing beside them.

"Can't I just blow it up." His eyes sweep over the screen and he fingers the gun on his hip.

Raven snorts, shaking her head as Monroe's eyes widen to impossible levels at their leaders question. "That would melt your face off Shooter."

"And possibly kill everyone in the mountain including you." Monroe's voice is slightly hinged in panic. Their people were in that mountain with Bellamy, if they couldn't do this they all died.

With a low sigh he slips his hand from the gun and stares at the bright screen like it was a puzzle. "So no bullets."

Wick chuckles at the differences between them all. Bellamy was all history buff and no science. "Nope, look for a pH indicator and you'll find that neutralization. You want it to be moved to base."

His fingers move across the screen, tapping buttons until he finds the index page, licking his lips he wishes for someone to be beside him. "Is everyone ready?"

"Once it's down we fire the flare and get to work." Raven eyes the radio, slipping her gaze to the flare on the table.

"Okay." He presses buttons until finally it begins to lower, heart racing like a horse in his chest. "It's down. It's down." He grins, face splitting into excitement and relief. "Its at 7."

Raven's grin is equally as wide. "We'll make you a science geek yet Shooter." Wick laughs loudly as Raven is swung around by Monroe.

"Fire the flare!" Wick screams at the braided haired girl who stumbles from the tent with excited feet. The flare races through the air and Wick swings Raven around before they stop, face to face. In each other face before Wick kisses Raven, her finger slip to the nape of his neck and they pull apart, eyes closed. Monroe comes barreling through the door and Wick smiles, opening his eyes to stare at the trembling girl in the doorway. "Done?"
"Yeah! Let's go love birds." Monroe shoves a bag into each of their hands as Raven heart aches but there is a lightness to it.

Clarke creeps into the room, she can't feel the Heda lurking around in the air and wonders if that's all their life will be. Feeling spirits racing and raging in every person. "Octavia has nothing to fear from me." Lexa's voice is soft and her heart aches at the lowness of it.

"Thank you." Quiet and so grateful yet understanding. "I know how hard that was for you." And for once in the last few weeks Clarke's heart is calm. And since that day on the pole, the Ursa is calm.

"You see our way as harsh." Lexa turns her gaze to Clarke, pulling her lip into her mouth before sighing. "Your torture. The bombing. The truth is our ways are harsh but it is how we survive." And surviving seems much more important than living.

Clarke stares at her, wound throbbing but heart aching more so. "Maybe life should be more than just surviving." Her eyes flicker down, wounds aching. That was all they had done since landing on Earth. Fight for survival. Fight until it felt like they were drowning in blood, fear and pain. And Lexa stares at her, heart racing and chest catching on Clarke's words. Blue eyes flicker up to stare into green. "Don't we deserve more than that?"

Lexa steps forward, hand rising to cradle the back of Clarke's head and her gaze flickers to dry lips before meeting blue again and moving in slowly. Clarke falls into the kiss, eyes closed and heart racing before calming. A sense of something washing over her as she return the kiss. Soft. Unlike anything she ever expected the Commander to be capable of. Her fingers move to grip the woman's ribs, tightening in the jacket there as their breaths shorten. The Ursa and the Heda are silent. In this moment it is just Lexa and Clarke and discovering something new. Lexa moves, nose brushing against Clarke's, pausing before coming in for more and that moment of brief clarity, brief waiting causes Clarke to pull back with an aching heart. "I'm not ready." A soft head shake. "Not yet." Not in the middle of a war. Not when she still didn't know up from down in this crazy world but oh. Oh she knew she wanted Lexa, this new feeling but it could wait. Lexa swallows, nodding her acceptance when shouts ring out and they both race from the tent, hearts stopping at the sight above them. The flare. Bright against the sky and beckoning.

Lexa grins at Clarke eyes blazing with a fire of a thousand suns. "Sound the horn!" The horn echoes around them and Clarke feels the Ursa rising at the sound and the Heda thrums in Lexa excited veins. "GON WAR!" Her eyes are a bright frantic green and her chest heaves with a battle to come.

They march, side by side. Clarke's hands feel heavy but there is a memory tied to the heaviness of the wrist protectors given to her. A familiar feeling tied to the light guard on her shoulder that Lexa had given her. She felt and looked more grounder than Arkian and the Ursa lusts for vengeance, memories had assaulted her when she felt the cool buckles of her defenses. Not from the bracelets but from the meaning of them. The last Ursa had been a great warrior many years ago. Long before Lexa and long before Mount Weathers thieving ways. And it calms her, this familiar long forgotten feeling that burns in her stomach from the Ursa and her past.

They march within range of the mountain and the door sits, waiting to be opened. Almost teasing yet beckoning at the same time. Monroe makes quick work of it. Drilling quickly into the door, grounders and guards at her back and anticipation in her blood. They would save her people. The fluid is in the hole and they wait for the signal from Raven, listening closely bodies pulsing with anticipation. Clarke and Lexa stand side by side, muscles tense and bodies unwavering until there is bangs and the lights release. Slowly dulling and the lock is down. Clarke offers Lexa the button and together they press it, waiting on baited breath.
Nothing happens and Clarke presses again frantically, Lexa's finger as insistent as her own. It does nothing and Clarke moves to get closer, button in her hand and mind on the door. There is a glint on the mountain top and the hairs on Lexa and Clarke raise but the blonde ignores it stepping closer before Lexa is ripping her back behind the rock and bullets rain down on them. "Kill the snipers." Her lithe body presses into Clarke before she is shoving away from the blonde and the rock, Lincoln moves to follow the others but Lexa yanks him back, eyes wild and body pulsing in anger. "Stay With Clarke!"

"We need to set it off now!" Clarke moves to go again but Lincoln holds her back, body shaking as everyone hides from the bullets. "Lincoln our people are in there!"

"They will kill you and you are my people!" He holds her and they watch as Sargent Miller tries and fails to get close enough. Warriors falling and dying under the metal of the Arc and bullets. "Don't move." His strong arm releases her and he is lighting an arrow and pulling back the bow as Monroe aims shots at the snipers to close to the edge. Two men fall when the arrow connects with the red vial. Murphy lets out shout as a bullet connects with his arm before he is firing with a snarl on his face, gun having been given back when volunteers came to take the mountain down. And it all happens slowly yet to quick to comprehend.

The blasts rattles the ground, shaking their feet beneath them and shouts of triumph ring out and men make to move forward when guns continue to fire. They hold back and test out the snipers until they finally stop. Warriors creep forward until they find no resistance from above the mountain door. With bulging arms they begin to pull the mountain door open, slowly but surely.

The Ursar spirit pulses, rallying her warriors up, swirling around them all with anticipation and Clarke feels the blood lust in her. The need to kill. It pulses like the wounds on her body and when the door creeps open Clarke yells a battle charge in a langue only the Ursar could know. "ATTACK!" It echos, threatening the ear drums at the intensity until another shout rings out, just as strong and just as commanding.

"Stop!" Warriors still, falling back as their Commander comes down, bloodied but alive with a mountain man by her side.

Blue eyes flicker to Emerson and Clarke wants to rip him to pieces for walking here with no suit. Her friends marrow running through him like it was his own. Like he didn't kill and maim her people to get it. "What is this?" Her words crack, confused and defiant. Hoping it is not what she thinks this is. What her head tells her it is.

People begin to slip out of the mountain opening and Clarke recognizes the tattoos. The brokenness to their gait and her heart stops. Had they won or lost? Warriors pull their weakened brethren into their arms with wary eyes and drawn weapons until the last of the Earth born warrior is out, smoke billowing behind the door, thick and dark outlining the mountain. "They're surrendering." Lexa's voice is almost emotionless. The Heda spirit doesn't pulse within Lexa, it is a soft and fractured thrum. An Clarke trembles at the brokenness of it.

"Not quite." Emerson offers a slight smirk, eyes sparking at the tension between these two women. As he glares at Clarke with a sick satisfaction because he had outsmarted her.

Clarke stares at Lexa with sweeping blue eyes, can see the pain hidden in her eyes. Yet there is not guilt, only sorrow. That is her answer and she shakes her head, hoping and praying she is wrong."What did you do?"

With a thick swallow Lexa speaks, chin tilted defiantly and strong even as her spirit trembles. "What you would have done. Saved my people." No guilt in her words or face, only a broken truth and
acceptance.

Clarke shakes her head, stepping closer, her blood sings and the Ursa searches, pulses for answers. "Where are my people?"

Lexa swallows again, squaring her shoulders like the world is pressing down on them. "I'm sorry Clarke they weren't part of the deal." The deal to save her people. To save hundreds.

Emerson smirks, stepping away from them. "You made the right choice Commander." There is a smugness to his words and Clarke was to gut him then and there. Spill his blood until he is begging for mercy.

Clarke steps closer, almost close enough to shove Lexa back. Close enough to kill Emerson. "You can't just abandon us! You saw us take the mountain down together." Blue eyes are pained, angry and so very sorrowful.

Lexa's jaw is tight, eyes twisted in pain as she speaks. "I saw it fall just as I saw hundreds if not thousands of my people die." The images burst behind her head, the mountain burning but her people's bodies littering the floor. Hundreds of them fallen and bloodied. Full of metal, bullets and greif. Dead. "There are only 47 of your own, I must protect my own always. My people come first." They always had and always would for Lexa. She put her people's needs before her own. Before Kostia and before Clarke. "I made this decision with my head. Not my heart." And somewhere, high above the sky a hawk screeches in sorrow and pain as these words leave the Heda's lips.

As anguish, rage and understanding paint blue eyes a bear roars somewhere deep in the forest, full of that same rage and pain as it echos around the trees like a warning. As the Warriors of the twelve clans leave, their trust in their Heda absolute as they eye the Ursa that has so much pain across her face. "Don't do this."

"Sound the retreat." Lexa's voice is low and commanding. Unforgiving and unwavering.

"Commander not like this, let us fight." Lincoln begs, voice cracking as he steps closer. Clarke was his people and that made her people his people. Those teenagers inside the mountain who were being killed right now.

"It is done." Lexa's voice is absolute and strong even as her inside quake, beg and scream.

"Let me fight." Lincoln steps closer, almost begging. "They can't do this on their own."

Lexa stares at him and swallow, tilts her chin up and stands strong. "All my people must leave."

"Lexa please, you told me the mountain would crumble. Our people would be saved." She clings to the hope that Lexa's vision would come true, that the mountain would go down in a blaze of smoke and ashes. Would burn. Their people saved and alive.

"I am sorry Clarke, my people come first. A wartime decision." The heart break shows in the Commander's eyes as she tilts her head, two warrior dragging Lincoln away, with a thick swallow and a hawks screech in her ear Lexa takes a step back, hating herself all the while. "May we meet again."

And Clarke, she stands there, chest fracturing as tears fill her eyes. An unheard roar sounds in her ear, the anguish of the Ursa. Feeling the blonde's pain. Loss. Betrayal. Monroe stands there, gaze turning to the turbines even as their people fall back and leave the two of them standing there. "We should grab Raven."
"Our people are inside. Bellamy is inside. We can't leave them." Clarke stares at the closed mountain door, the green light glaring at her as she searches for answers. "There has to be another way."

Monroe shakes her head, tears in her eyes and loss on her shoulders. "Clarke we lost the Army. Our guards went back. Sargent Miller went back. Murphy passed out from his bullet wound. We're all that's left out here." Her words are shattering and she aches because they are it.

"We can still win. We can save them." Conviction and an almost manic hope.

"How?" The girl grips her gun tightly, the metal cutting into her palms enough to bruise as she stares at Clarke like she holds all the answers.

Clarke shakes her head, thinking with furrowed brows and a clenched jaw. "I don't know. We need. The tunnels. Octavia will still be down there." Blue eyes search Monroe's face almost begging. "Are you coming with me?"

Monroe shakes her head almost guiltily and Clarke's eyes fall and her face twists before Monroe speak softly. "Raven and Wick are still up there. Radio silent. Clarke that last turbine exploded different than the others." She shakes her head, the black and almost too thick smoke that billowed out of it was dangerous. "Something went wrong. I want to save as many of our people as we can but Raven and Wick are farther away."

Clarke nods, understanding. Saving their people includes Wick and Raven. "Find them, help them."

"If anyone can save our people against the mountain men it's you Clarke." Monroe's voice holds no doubt, unwavering faith and it causes Clarke to both stand taller and shrink.

Clarke swallow, mouth tight before sighing and speaking with a broken voice. "May we meet again."

Monroe grin at her, face twisted into some kind of happy yet remorseful goodbye. "May we meet again." With a sloppy salute the girl is running through the forest, heading to save her science buddies.

Clarke stares at the mountain, door shut tight before she turns, heading to the tunnels with a steady faith. She rushes down the tunnels as quick as possible, feet pounding down the memorized path before she stumbles to a stop, sword at her throat, sharp enough to kill. She lets out a sigh of relief. "Octavia. I knew you'd stay." There is relief in the blonde's voice as her body relaxes, she wasn't alone.

Octavia spins with a glare, green eyes sharp. "Screw you of course I stayed, I know where my loyalties lie."

She ignores the jab, instead focusing on the problem at hand. "We need to get in there." Clarke stares at the door with longing and anguish.

Octavia shakes her head in anger and disbelief. "If that was possible don't you think I would have done that by now. "Octavia's hard green eyes turn to the tin, where a body lays.

Clarke recognizes the thing for what it was. They dumped the bodies here and Clarke stiffens, eyes filling with tears as she shakes her head. "Fox." Clarke's voice cracks and her shoulders tremble.

"Why'd Lexa sound the retreat?" Voice sharp and eyes even sharper than her words Octavia glares accusingly at Clarke.
Clarke's heart aches. "She made a deal with the mountain men to free her people." Her words crack and her chest aches. "She left us on our own." Octavia begins to hit the door, face twisted into rage. "Stop, they'll know we're here." Clarke stares at the door, they couldn't get past it. Locked.

The warriors chest stills and she stares at Clarke. "What about Lincoln, he wouldn't go along with a plan like this." She stares at Clarke, waiting for the ball to drop. She had heard the gunfire and she prays he is alive.

"He didn't, they took him forcefully." The Ursa howls inside her blood, egging her on feeding on her anger as she aims the gun at the lock.

Octavia grabs her hand, shoving it away with a harshness born from panic. "What are you doing?!"

"I'm getting through that mountain one way or another." The need to save everyone forces her shoulder down but she stands tall, eyes burning and searching.

"That's your plan?" Octavia's voice rises with disbelief. "Bellamy's counting on you! Everyone is always counting on you." Rage, disbelieving cripple her words and they are accusing and bitingly sharp.

"Well what do you want from me?" Voice pitched higher than normal and eyes threatening to spill.

"You trusted Lexa." Clarke wants to call here a hypocrite, point at Lincoln and Indra but holds her tongue as her throat swells with emotions. "You let a bomb drop on Ton DC you let all those peo-" Face twisted in anguish Clarke interrupts her.

"I am doing the best I can!" Her voice cracks and her chest trembles.

Octavia clenches her jaw, face tight in anger and anguish. "It's not good enough."

The door beeps and both girls aim for it. Clarke's gun pointed at center mass and Octavia's sword drawn, knife in one hand. Bellamy steps through the door and Octavia is rushing forward. Pulling him into a hug as Clarke steps slowly through the door. He clings to his sister, his hand cradling the back on her head as he closes his eyes until he opens them and looks to Clarke. Octavia pulls back from him and he turns his gaze to her, smiling as she is pulled into a hug by Jasper and Monty.

"I knew it, you two are too scrawny to drill." Octavia murmurs as she hugs the two skinny boys. Clinging to them like they are her salvation.

"Where's your army." Bellamy looks behind Clarke, eyes confused.

She stares at him, shaking her head with a too tight throat. "Gone, just like yours. Say you have a plan." She begs him, waits for him to grin and say yes he does. But his face remain drawn and twisted in grief.

He sighs, hand coming to push his hair from his sweating forehead. "Not really we need to get to Dante. Maya says he's in quarantine still."

She nods her head sharply when she is bowled over by both Jasper and Monty. They cling to her and through the pain of her wounds she tightens her hold. Thankful to hold two of her previous hundred. She eyes Maya, the girl in a hazmat suit and she whispers, an almost silent. 'Thank you.' The girl nods her head, own teeth twisting into a soft smile.

Maya's alarm beeps loudly and Jasper's face turns almost frantic. "We just changed it. All the supplies are on level five."
Maya's face is twisted in grim acceptance. "All the soldiers are on level five. I'm an accomplice. They'll kill me."

Octavia shakes her head, already planning. "We need to split. You guys go to Dante. Jas and I will protect Maya." She meets the dark eyes of the girl behind the mask, a promise there.

The rest of it passes in a blur. Clarke's body and mind forced to the extremes, as she listens to Raven scream as they drill into her. Monroe and Wick fighting against their restraints and Miller screaming obscenities at them. Harper jerking against her chains, eyes begging Raven to just look at one of them. Focus on one of them. Then with a bang and tears filling blue eyes Dante falls to the ground with a gasp and something in Clarke cracks as Bellamy stares at her in disbelief. Cage breaks on the other side of the radio. "Release my people or I will irradiate level five." Clarke's voice is strong but broken. Stern yet wavering as she demands freedom.

Cage's chest heaves and he races to the other room. "I can't do that." He says before he grabs Raven off the table yanking Abby up onto it as people scream at him.

"We can donate!" Kane yells at him, begging.

Cages twists his lips, tears in his eyes his father's death on his mind. "It's too late." He waves his hand and the drill goes in.

"Monty." Clarke's voice cracks and the Ursa isn't in this moment. She is hidden under all the emotions Clarke is tangled with. Children playing on the screen as Octavia and Maya run from guards. Quick yet not quick enough.

"It's ready." Monty says softly like the floor will swallow him if he speaks any louder.

"Clarke they are innocent." Bellamy stares at her, gaze broken. "There are children." He thinks of Lovegood. Of a boy without a father and his heart aches.

"I know!" Her words are fractured and her hands threaten to shake. "But our people are in there."

"They helped us Clarke." He almost begs, know that everything is coming to this moment. "People in there. Innocents. Children, they don't deserve to die."

Clarke shakes her head as her mothers screams fill her ears. "Neither do our people."

"We can't kill them all!" She is reminded of telling Lexa she can't kill everyone and her heart skips a beat because irony is not lost on her. "There has to be another way. Clarke, there is no coming back from this, if you pull it." He knows, feels it in his bones every time he thinks of throwing the radio in the river.

Clarke's mom screams and her fingers clench on the table, staring at the screen. At her people when she spots movement across the screen. Octavia and Maya are kneeling on their knees and she hears Bellamy mutter 'my sister my responsibility' and she knows that ghosts already weigh his shoulders down. Three hundred and twenty from the Arc. Charlotte. Roma. All the ones they lost and Clarke makes a decision, knowing Bellamy is doing this to save her from facing ghosts alone. Her finger pull down the lever with a stutter in her chest. She was already drowning in hundreds of ghosts, what was three hundred more for a girl with already broken shoulders? Bellamy's eyes are wide and he stares at Clarke like he is seeing her for the first time, his hand still hovering in the air, reaching for her own but to late.

Her eyes are full of tears and her chest threaten to cave in and her shoulder quake but she stands
strong for the minute and thirty seconds it takes for them to choke on the radiation before she is walking down the hall. Monty's fingers grip his shirt edges as he walks around the dead and Clarke's feet almost stop working until Bellamy's hand lands on her elbow, leading her through with sad eyes. Every body is another weight to her shoulder and she can feel the toll it takes as she walks through a graveyard of children and burns. They creep through until they see Jasper. He's holding someone in his arm and Clarke's heart finally shatters. "What did you do?" Clarke can't swallow. Can't breath as he stares at them with eyes broken, anguished and so very angry. His sharp gaze turns to Monty. "How could you let this happen!? I love her." He rocks her against his chest her word ringing in his ear. None of us are innocent. "I love her."

Monty grips his shirt tighter, caving in on himself. "I'm sorry." And with those final words they walk past him, feet heavy until they are in the room containing her people. Her mom catches her eyes and rips her into a hug.

"I tried mom. I tried to be the good guy." Her words crack and shatter her mother's heart.

"Maybe there are no good guys." And Clarke sobs into her mother's shoulder, three hundred more dead eating away at her. Monty pulls Harper from her chains and hugs her tightly as Monroe helps Wick slings tan arms over their shoulder's. The chemist-warrior shoots Clarke a grin, mouthing that she knew Clarke could save them and it makes the blonde's chest ache like there is something pushing against her ribs. Reunions are made and the remaining hundred stare at Clarke like she was a legend but they look to her like they used to. Trusting, calm and happy. Danny falls into her arms, the girl squeezing her tightly and it's like a barrage of hugs as the hundred reunite with their leaders. Together once again.

The walk back is exhausting, especially with forty weak teenagers. Bellamy walks in front, leading their people home. The word brings an ache to his chest but they trudge on as he eyes his people. Subdued and tired but they're his and Clarke's. So small from the original number but they were alive. His eyes find Clarke's as she brings up the rear of the fifty something people. Her shoulders look like they have the weight of the world on them and he is suddenly angry and grateful at the same time. She pulled the level, dooming herself to this pain alone and his hands shake. He could have bore it with her. Helped ease the ache and as they come to the gates he hears the desperate cry when they are spotted and he waits. Watches the reunions until it is just him and Clarke outside the gate. Raven handing Jasper his goggles back and Bellamy's jacket wrapped tightly around Kate's thin form. Harper with a gun in her hands and Miller beside his dad, his father's jacket wrapped around his shoulders. "We deserve a drink." His eyes flicker to her. "They're saved Clarke. It's over. We won."

She almost chuckles but it splinters in her chest. They had won but at what costs? She stares at him hoping he understands. "Have one for me."

"Clarke." He reaches for her. "When I got those three hundred people killed you told me you forgive me. If you need forgiveness I am offering it. You're forgiven Clarke. Please." His eyes are filling with tears and his voice shakes, cracking.

She shakes her head, eyeing the happy reunions and her heart positively aches. "I can't Bellamy. I can't go in and look them in the eyes. All I will see is what I did to save them."

"Clarke." He says her name like a prayer, like a question and hope.

"I bear it so they don't have to." Her words almost tremble even as her hands do. Dante's words deep in her head and his death on her hands.
"Please, everyone wants you back." He begs, eyes close to spilling tears and his shoulders threaten to crack and quake. "Come in. Come home. Please."

She swallows thickly and the Ursa is far from her. Almost gone as her emotions threaten to force her heart in two. "Take good care of them."

"Clarke, I can't lead without you." He steps closer, wanting to touch her shoulders but holding back. Knowing the weight of the world already rests on them. "We're in this together."

"Tell my mom I said goodbye, make sure Monty has extra blankets." Her words crack and Bellamy wants to cling to her. Tie her down and hug her, tell her he know all these things but she needs to stay. Needs to come home. "Raven needs to be pulled from her station, to eat, sleep. Don't let her work to the bone."

"Clarke." His words finally crack and a tear spills from his left eye, trailing down his face to fall to his hand.

Clarke's own eyes almost spill her tears out and she swallows, voice hoarse with unshed tears. "My mom will want to come look for me, stop her. Don't let her come after me by herself and please Bellamy sleep."

He shakes his head in denial. "Clarke."

"Please." Her word crack and a tear finally slips down her face.

"Don't leave." He shakes his head and all around them commotion continues even as Clarke and Bellamy break.

"I need to." She begs him to understand because her body feels like it is fracturing under her skin. It feels like it is not her own. "Please understand that."

He grabs her suddenly, pulling her into a hug too tight to pull from but tight enough to make her stop trembling for half a second. "I understand. I don't like you going alone but I understand." And that makes another tear fall from her face because he gets it.

She clings to the familiarity of it and sighs into him, pressing a soft kiss to his cheek. "May we meet again." Her voice cracks and she lets him go, turning around and walking away without looking back.

He stares after her. "May we meet again." The words feel like ash on his tongue and he knows he's not going to see her anytime soon. Feels it in his bones.

Clarke doesn't know where her feet are taking her, just that they ache and she wants to sit down. The forest is dark and she stumbles in a hole, tripping until she land on her knees. Her chest heaves and there is the crunch of feet on a branch. She stands quickly and her eyes shoot up and she stares into deep expressive brown. Her head begins to throb where her black kohl once was. The pattern ingrained into her memory. The place where the bear had touched her last burns as blue stares into brown. There is a low rumble and Clarke feels it in her chest as the bear watches her.

"Kill me. Please." She begs her. The bear tilts its head, staring into blue eyes with soft brown. "Please, I've killed so many. There is so much innocent blood on my hands." She falls to her knees again in front of the creature and it stares at her with eyes too intelligent to be just a beast. "Is this what you chose me for? To take down the mountain?" Her words crack and shutter. "Is that all you chose me for?! To kill? To save your people?!" The bear stares at her and huffs lowly, shifting on its
feet, and Clarke's lips tremble. "Kill me, I can't do this, I am stained in so much blood." The bear steps closer, hot breath warm on Clarke's face and suddenly she is tackled from behind. A reaper with bloodshot eyes and heaving chests tries to knock her unconscious.

She struggles, gun already on the ground and all she does is fight to survive. He rips her stitches open and she screams, kicking and punching until she finds a rock and hits him harshly against the skull. He is knocked unconscious and the bear stares at the man with blood soaked chin and tilts her head to the side before stepping closer and brushing a soft nose against the girl's tear stained cheek and she understands the silent communication because her job is not done. The Ursa is a spirit of the forest and the people are not free. Not all of them are saved.

And Clarke works. With blisters on her hands, death on her shoulders and guilt in her veins she works. No one checks the mountain. No one checks the place where too many horrible things happened and Clarke works. With aching shoulders she drags Fox, Karsten and Brian back to the drop ship. Back home where she buries them by the already lost. And she aches with every dirt thrown on their bodies. They were gone and she buries them only to go back to the mountain. Only to dig hole upon hole upon hole with bleeding hands until the graves are done. They are large. Too big for one body but large enough to be a mass grave. They are claw ridden and deep. And she buries them together, like they died. There were too many bodies for single graves and her heart aches as the smell hits her. As she drops a soccer ball into the grave with the children and she aches. The dead are gone. 'The dead are gone' her mind whispers and whisper as ghosts weigh down her shoulders and blood coats her hands. The graves are done and the mountain is still stained. Still a monster under the guise of safety.

The dead are gone and the living are hungry. Clarke's mind whispers as she makes her way into the pits of hell. The dead are gone and the living are hungry. Her mind yells at her and she opens the door, eyes taking in the chains and her mind whisper again. The dead are gone. The graves were dug and the dead were gone. Buried and already lost to deaths clutches. And the living are hungry. She stares into the crazed eyes of the man before her, needle marks on his neck and hunger in his eyes. All around her men and woman glare at her through glass windows, blood across their teeth and hunger in their eyes as they stare at her from their chains. The living were hungry and she was here to feed them.

Chapter End Notes

Alright, I wanted this story to follow the season mostly because I liked what they did with it but also because the first scene of the next chapter is what I had first written for this story and these first few chapters were leading up to it in an important way. It will be a time jump in the next Chapter. Let me know what you think. Thanks for reading:)
Legends Ring in Truth

Chapter Summary

Years have passed and the legend of the Ursa has become but that, a story told to children. But now there are legends that if you ever need help you pray to the Ursa spirit and the Ursa and her band of howla and patha arrive. They bring food and medicine but are gone before the light touches the ground. The warriors that follow the Ursa are said to have death in their eyes, bones crunching under their feet and ghosts clinging to their shoulder. Their leader, the Ursa, is dragged down by ghosts as she helps those in need with a back full of marks of the dead and eyes haunted by war.

Chapter Notes

The time jump is the original idea I had for this story and the very first scene I had written for this story begins with the paragraph in the Summary. Everything in the previous four chapters (Mostly what happened in the show just reworded) was leading up to the end to this chapter.

The screams of the damned echo like ghosts throughout the once full mountain facility. Months of neglect had allowed dust and dirt to cloak the rooms and still an almost rotting smell clung to the cafeteria. Despair and hatred clung to the cages but that was not the current location. Deep below the other floors resides tables of metal and straps. Doors of glass and steel and full of semi conscious men and women that howl and lunge in hunger. Beside a blonde who stands with death on her shoulders and hidden in her eyes, is a woman of twenty summers and a trembling frame. Pale skin is clean of dirt and blood, scattered scars make a constellation across her face as her brown eyes narrow at the man in front of the Ursa. "What of him?"

Blue eyes scour his pale face and bloodshot eyes, the trembling in his muscles and the quickness of his breaths. The sweat perforating the room and clinging to his skin. "Another day or two of withdrawal, we just need to keep his heart beating and fluids in him."

His muscle bulge as he struggles to get to them, strapped to the table like a lab experiment. "With the needle, like the others?" Brown eyes flicker to Clarke and the former reaper trembles in weakness.

"Yes." She turns her gaze to the semi full bunker. Half of the men and women were still struggling without the 'red' as they called it. "He must stay strapped to the bed or he'll pull out the needle."

"How much longer?" There is an anxiousness to her words and taut pull of her shoulder.

Blue eyes flicker up to take in the dark haired woman's worried expression as she speaks. "Another week at most. After they're over withdrawal they will be like you."

Dark eyes become hard and disgusted as her fingers shake, so unlike the steady hands the warrior had once had. "Weak."
"Alive and healing." Blue eyes soften behind ghosts and death as she settle a gentle hand on tense shoulders.

Clarke slips to the floor, cradling her head in her hands. There are almost silent footsteps across the floor before a man crouches down beside her. His face is matted in scars and his green eyes are pained. "His fight was over." His voice is gentle, soft spoken and fits nothing to his broad body and scar-riddled skin.

Sharp blue eyes bore into the man, almost biting with self-hate and guilt. " I couldn't save him. Our fight is never over."

The man sits beside her, gripping his elbow in one hand that trembles slightly before he speaks. "The rest will survive, they're keeping food down." He nods his head sharply, staring into the space before them. Dark and empty. "They are stronger. It has been months."

With a steel clenched jaw Clarke offers a sharp nod before standing, there is the flutter of the Ursa, almost demanding yet calm and the former reaper trembles at the feel of it. They had been cut off from the spirits so long in their haze that feeling one now was a blessing. "Come, gather the others." Her words are soft yet a hint of an order.

Clarke walks to the main room in the tunnels and slowly twenty five other frame trickle into the room behind her as she stands with a dark blue jacket and ripped pants. "We're going to burn the stuff that made you do things you never thought you would do before." Her words are sharp yet hopeful and they follow her into the supply room where she unlocks three manual lock and a key pad before grabbing gasoline and a liter. She pours the gasoline on the red liquid and watches twenty-four heaving chests and trembling limbs. The Ursa dances in her chest enraged by the red liquid before Clarke is holding a flame in her hand, blue eyes full of understanding but no remorse. "Today you are free." She tosses it into the middle of the room and it goes up in flames. Hot, bright and burning." Twenty-five eyes, once bloodshot, watch the red liquid burst from the glass and burn. Burn away like it was nothing. Some feel anxious, longing and others. Others almost sag in relief against the walls. A weight on their shoulders breaks and falls away as they watch the monstrous liquid fall away like it hadn't ruined their lives and they feel free.

They stand there, breathing in thick clouds of smoke that billow out of the room before Clarke is hitting the extinguisher and they stand outside a room blackened by heat. They stand behind the Ursa with loose and free shoulders and they wait. They were the last of the reapers. The last to live. The last of their godforsaken kind. Clarke slips clear blue eyes over them and knows she can be done. The reapers are gone, rehabilitated or dead. The mountain men are buried and mass graves marked by logs and large crosses. The mounds back at the drop ship are marked by name and twenty-nine crosses rest next to the mound, buried into the ground above empty plots.

Everything was done. There was nothing left for Clarke to do, yet her chest still aches. Her muscles still burn and throb and her throat dries. "We're done, everyone is back. You can go home." Her words crack as they leave her throat because where would she go next? Not to the Arc. Not to Polis. Not to the drop-ship and there was no way she could stay in the mountain. Not with the nightmares and the memories. Not with death clinging to it like a desperate child.

The brown eyed woman steps closer, dark tattoos sharp on her clavicle and chin tilted up in challenge and acceptance. "We are home with you."

Blonde tresses shake pitifully and Clarke steps back, the Ursa so far from her right now. All that is in this room is a broken girl weighed down by death and war. "I am not your family."
The man with sharp green eyes steps forward to stand beside the woman. "Our family already believes us dead, we are monsters. Monsters stay together." He steps closer, grips Clarke's forearm, his voice gentle yet truthful as his green eyes dance with a fire.

The woman sets her hand on the man's resting on the blonde's forearm and slowly the others step closer as the woman speaks with conviction. "We are with you until the end." Clarke stares at the twenty-five warriors. They are frail and weak but so strong. There hadn't been too many reapers in the tunnels, most dead before Clarke could get to them and save them. No-one had visited the mountain to save them beside the blonde and here she stood with the remaining reapers, as one. In the pits of hell they sentenced themselves to burn with the blonde.

She stares at the hands reaching and her shoulders straighten, the Ursa flares and in return the warriors stand tall, ready. And Clarke finds a new purpose, a new mission. "Then we will go find my people. The ones that landed far away."

"We will need horses." The woman with sharp brown eyes, named Isole, stands taller. Frame stilling with the thought of a new meaning in life beside surviving.

Blue eyes flicker to the woman with skepticism yet trust. "How do we get twenty-six horses?"

"The horse clan is a few weeks walk to the north." The former reapers begin trembling with anticipation instead of weakness as brown eyes spark with a fire and the Ursa roars inside of Clarke, pulling and pushing and echoing with approval. "We walk there with supplies to trade if needed. But they will gladly give the Ursa who felled the mountain anything."

"We will trade." Clarke voice is sharp and final. "I don't want hand outs." Blue eyes circle the group and her chest doesn't ache now, just a soft throb and she knows they are doing what is needed. "Are you guys ready?"

Each former reapers looks to her with trusting eyes as they dip their heads and Isole speaks with a conviction that sets Clarke's heart racing in possibilities. "Yes."

"Then lets go." She fingers the gun before holstering it across her thigh. Her hands shake as she grabs a few more guns, slipping them to the warriors. "We use these in dire situations."

Brown eyes stare at the gun in suspicion and contempt but the woman places the gun in a holster, wrapping it around her thigh, her eyes find the weapons lain at the corner of the room. Left over from the mountain men stealing them from their families. Their Clans. "We use bows and swords every other time."

With clean clothing of fur and leather on their bodies, swords at their backs and knifes on their hips they exit the mountain. Packs on their shoulders full of supplies as they leave the mountain without looking back.

They travel through the forest until the trees thin out and the land becomes rock. They travel until they follow the directions given to them. Until they find the village of metal and fire and there are guns pointed at the twenty-six riders. An average built rider slides off the large chestnut horse, patting it's shoulder as it snorts. There is a dark hood over her head and she slides it down, almost wincing at the bright sun before she holds her hands up. The ten guns that are aimed at them do not waver even though the holders are almost bone thin and tired. "I am not here to hurt you." Her voice is gentle and a presence seems to wash over them. Calming. Protective.

Their shoulders drop before they stiffen, rising their gun higher. "What do you want?" There is a
man stepping forward and his eyes are wary and hard under a sun-burnt face and high cheekbones.

"You are from the Arc?" The man dips his head but continues to eye her in suspicion as the blonde speaks. "We're here to tell you about Camp Jaha. Most of the stations landed in the forests. The Chancellor and company made a home there. Well protected."

He eyes them in suspicion, the sword and bows n their backs, knife on their thighs, hip and saddles. "And what makes you think we'll trust you?"

With a tilted chin and a pained expression the leader speaks, blue eyes sparking. "Because i'm Clarke Griffin and my mother is the chancellor."

"Clarke?" A woman's voice sounds from behind the crowd and Clarke jerks because she recognizes that voice from childhood memories. Recognizes the hope in the soft lit of her name. A woman pushes her way through pale skinned bystanders, slower than a wounded animal and her dark hair pulled back in a tangle of braided knots.

"Callie?" The blonde's voice cracks but she steels herself as the woman stands at the gate, staring at each other. "These warriors can help you get to camp Jaha."

Callie races forward, slipping through the gate with ease and ripping Clarke into a tight hug. The warriors stiffen but stay on their horses, watching their leader sink into the hug of this woman.

Clarke grips the green eyed Baladan's forearm, his deeply scarred face is twisted into look of respect and promise. "We will get all fifty of them to safety." Behind him, twelve warriors check over their mounts, placing bags of food and water bags against the saddles as they prepare to walk beside their wards. Children stare at the huge creatures in wonder and Clarek squeezes Baladan's arm tighter, swallowing thickly. "I promise Clarke, they will be safe."

"The journy will be long Baladan." Her heart aches because in the five months they have traveled together they had never been separated, it was the Ursa and her twenty-five warriors.

"Just a month, we will return home soon." His green eyes are bright and Clarke smiles because they had no house or village, their home was with one another on the move.

"Be swift, be safe." He pulls her into a hug and she squeezes his shoulder before pulling back and eyeing her warriors. Her family. "May we meet again."

"Meet on the sunrise we shall." He claps her on the shoulder before shoving into Isole with a wide grin. "Make sure our leader eats."

The woman shoves him back, tattoos dark against her skin. "Leave already paktraka breath."

With one final hug to Callie, who almost begs Clarke to come again, they are off. Horses loaded down with food and warriors and guard surrounding the forty something villagers. They leave without looking back and Clarke turns to her remaining twelve.

Isole shift on her tan horse, grunting as her muscles creak, they had slept on the horses, riding through the night. "Klark." The brown eyed woman's voice is questioning and the blonde lowers her eyes to face the warrior and tilts her head to the side in question. "How far from the next ship?"
"The village we spoke to said over the ridge after the river. We've yet to come across a river." Clarke shifts in her seat, biting her lip and closing her eyes as she focuses the Ursa energy, trying to understand the path they were meant to take next.

Isole shifts, the horse beneath her letting out a tried huff, the warrior softly pats the animal's shoulder, shifting dark eyes back to the leader of their small group. "We've yet to pass a river, we should stop for the night."

"No." The is danger in Clarke's voice as she eyes the thinning forest around them.

"Klark." Isole turns shocked eyes to the girl bonded to the Ursa spirit.

"The Spirit is restless, my gut is telling me we need to keep moving." Clarke shifts on her horse, stomach trolling and twisting and churning. "Something's not right here."

"What do you feel?" Dark eyes sweep the forest for any danger, listening to the quiet lull of silence.

"Something dangerous. It's pressing down, almost suffocating." Clarke clicks her heels into her horses sides and the others follow her example, trusting in the blonde. "We need to get out of here as soon as possible."

Isole gently taps her heels into her horse, trotting to keep up with Clarke, her posture is stiff and tight with worry as eyes sweep the forest for danger. "Can you feel how much longer we must travel before the feeling is gone?"

"No."

"Is it another spirit?" She eyes the tightness of her saviors muscles, the wary look in sharp blue eyes.

Clarke shivers, it didn't feel like a spirit, no, it felt like danger. Like the pauna only worse. It felt familiar, like the Ursa recognized it but it was wrong. So wrong and dangerous and twisted. A rival. "No, it is a creature. Far more dangerous that the pauna." Clarke shivers at the twisting in her gut. "We keep moving."

Hours later the sun is rising and they stumble through the river, horses leaning down and drinking deeply, riders watching the forest and Clarke relaxes. The oppressive feeling was gone, leaving behind hope for the Arc people. They would find another group, two weeks of traveling had sent them farther west than they originally thought. The sun is hot against their skin and Clarke pulls her hood back up to cover her eyes from the damaging sun. The other do as well, covering whatever skin they can from the harsh rays of light. "It looks like half a mile to the ridge and the station will be below it."

Her twelve warriors nod, shifting on their horses in anticipation, hands ready at their knives for an attack as they send their horses into a slow trot. The time passes and they find the ship with relative ease. The metal is hidden under layers of mud and buried halfway in a cliff-side and there is a crudely made fence, higher but smaller around than the last. But also sharper, more deadly and Clarke spots the wires resting in the dirt and her instincts are cracking and buzzing in excitement. She holds her hand up and they stop. She grabs a broken branch from the ground and tosses it forward, with a loud bang the branch explodes into a burst of dirt, wood and powder. "They set up traps." Clarke whispers lowly before sitting taller on her horse. "My name is Clarke! I am from the Arc."

She waits and waits and waits. "Come out, we can help you!"

There is the clang of metal and a head is pocking through the slates of the station, barely visible above the fence. It is a girl younger than Clarke herself, maybe fourteen if that. "Who says we need
your help?" There is a slight defensive yet sarcastic clipped tone to the young girl's voice.

Clarke shifts on her horse, trying to meet the eyes of the girl. "There's a camp the rest of the Arc is going to, I've been coming to find the fallen stations of the Arc."

There is suspicion in the girl's eyes as she eyes Clarke's clothing and the warriors beside her. "Who was the last chancellor?"

She almost says my mom. Kane but this girl hadn't seen camp Jaha yet. Hadn't witnessed the new power in charge. "Jaha."

The girl relaxes her face, suspicion still dancing in her hazel eyes. "What's your last name if you were on the Arc?"

"Griffin."

The girl's face twists into shock. "Jake's daughter?"

Clarke stiffens at the name of her father but nods, forcing her eyes not to water. Not to remember the way he looked when he died. "I was part of the hundred they sent to Earth before the Exodus ships."

The girl opens her mouth to speak when there is a loud crash in the forest and Clarke's spine stiffens, chest heaving as her instincts tell her to either run and hide or fight to the death. "It's coming." The girl says, eyes wide before she is opening a metal door and racing forward. "Get in here now. Follow me step for step."

"The horses." One of the warriors speaks, hand tangled in his mounts mane.

"The path is wide." The girl's eyes are frantic and she's pulling at the leads on Clarke's horse. "Just. Just keep them inside the white flowers." And the girl leads them from their spot, letting the horses be lead through the open gate before she races forward, setting thin metal plates gently on the ground before racing back toward them and shutting the gate with a final clang. Inside the gate there is little room, maybe twenty feet by thirty feet of grass, the rest is a piece of the Arc buried halfway into the ground and the large cliff side. "If the horses can stay quiet they can stay out in the grass. There isn't much room for them inside." There is a frantic fearful set to her eyes and voice.

"What's coming." Clarke's instincts are screaming at her, the Ursa stiff and roaring her warning.

"A monster. Killed almost everyone over the last few months." Her gaze flickers to the patched piece of the fence before she swallows. "I finally finished the land mines and set them up. It's kept it at bay so far."

"Klark." One of the warriors, a man with shaggy black hair and a beard full of braids hisses. He points the forest from where he stand on the metal of the station, keeping watch.

Clarke climbs up beside him and her breath stills, standing before her is a creature as big if not bigger than the pauna. It's claws are long and thick, seven inches in length and it's teeth are yellow with age and as long if not longer than her fingers. "Has it ever gotten over the walls?"

Shifting anxiously on her feet the girl looks back to the hatch on the station before shifting to the repaired spots in the fencing. "It's broken through them before but it's never gotten through the landmines."

Her warriors tense and Clarke holds her breath, the Ursa in her roars because this is no spirit. This is no kindred spirit that helps. This is an animal driven by blood-lust and everything seems sharper as
her heart races. "Is everyone inside?"

"All but you guys. If it gets through the fence and landmines it'll eat the horses and whoever is out here." She licks her lips, thinking of the last attack that left them without a guard. "It hasn't gotten to the back part of the station yet.

The beast sniffs at the ground, huffing in thick fogging breathes. "It's smelling the gun powder." The girl whisper and Clarke nods, tense, watching as it steps over the spot it had just smelled.

Clarke shakes her head, it was smart. Too smart. "How long have the mines been set?"

The explosive building teenager shrugs thin shoulders, staring at the creature who had ripped at least thirty of their people to shreds in the last few months. "Two, three weeks maybe."

"It's been watching you." Aidan, dirty blonde hair twisted into thick braids speaks in awe. His tan face twisted in fear and shock. "Planning."

"It's going to get past the gate isn't it?" She sounds so defeated and as her thin shoulders slumps Clarke and Isole exchange glances and plan.

Isole stare at the young girl before she and Clark both nod at the desolate girl. The blonde turns to her. She would not let them die, not like this. "Make sure all of your people are hidden in the back. If it gets through, we'll take care of it."

"Nothing works on it. It's too big." There is a resignation set to her shoulders and Clarke grips them, she had seen that look to many times to dissuade her.

"Have you made grenades yet?" Briefly her mind flashes to the explosions outside the drop-ship. To three hundred burned alive and she trembles as the three hundred turn into Ton DC burning.

"A few." She shrugs helplessly, fingers twisting together. "I usually chucked it at it when it got to close."

"Get them." The girl nods, running back into the station as Clarke steady her gaze at the lumbering creature that was coming for them. "Isole, have the others take the horses as far away from the gate as they can, tie them to the metal. We can't have the thing getting them."

Minutes later, arrows and guns aimed they wait. Listen and begs for an explosion but none come. Instead they are greeted by the fence caving inwards with the sickening crunch of metal and a loud reverberating roar. Clarke feels it rattle in her chest before they are firing. Bullets and arrows raining down on the beast. Nothing seems to work, bullets rip into it's heavily muscled frame and she is reminded of the pauna and it inability to die. With an adrenaline heaving breath Clarke throws a grenade below it's foot, watching it stumble before she screams at her warriors. "Aim for it's back legs, disable them!" It stood on two legs, roaring at them with thick matted black fur and black eyes. It stands on two legs, roaring at them with thick matted black fur and black eyes.

It falls to three legs when it's left back is torn apart by arrows and bullets and Clarke it grabbing a sword, blood humming before she ducks behind it, swiping at the tendon in it's back right leg. It howls as blood splatters the ground and she rolls away from a sweeping paw with five long sharp claws. It roars at her again and chest heaving, blue eyes bright Clarke roars back. Running forward under another deadly paw, roar echoing around the forest, eyes bright with challenge Clarke slices the creatures throat open. Teeth barred. It falls, blood dripping from the killing blow. Chest heaving Clarke raises her sword to the sky and her people scream, their own weapons thrown to the sky in victory. A young engineer, too experienced in death and explosives stares at her in awe, whisper quietly. "I prayed the beast would fall. For someone to come save us." Her words go unheard as she
watches with awe hazel eyes.

The next day after a night of rest Clarke eyes the eighteen children, all that was left of this station were ranging from fourteen to three. Isole grips Clarke's forearm. "It will not take long. These ones are less in number and weight, they can ride the horses some of the way. The boy fashioned a sled, we will not be long."

Clarke squeezes the woman's are tightly. "You will meet up with Baladan and his group most likely, when you do hurry to the Arc. It will be quicker with twenty horses than seven."

"We will meet on the sunrise."

Clarke nods sharply. "May we meet again." She pause, eyes twinkling. "On the Sunrise." Brown eyes spark gently and the woman squeezes the blonde's shoulder gently, whistling sharply to her six riders she tilts her head. Grabbing two of the younger children, age three and five, she climbs onto her horse, helping them on as they place supplies and light children on the sled behind two other riders and their mounts. "Be swift and be safe." Clarke's voice rings out and her riders all bow their head and wave goodbye before they are leaving.

Isole shoots her one last look, grinning willfully. "I have a gift for you when we meet on the sunrise!" With those last words she disappears into the forest, hooves tearing apart the ground of the now free forest.

Far across the forest, two weeks into their journey twelve riders leave the camp they had created. Fifty slumbering bodies begin to rise as the sun shines through the forest. A hundred yards in front of them, unknown to the former people of the Arc rests their new home, above the hills. Baladan stands, horse nudging his side as his twelve riders leave through the forest, he walks gently over to a slumbering woman. "Kallei." His voice is soft and the woman stirs, opening her eyes in confusion. "We must leave you now." The woman sits up in shock and he holds his hand up in a calming manner. "Your new home is just across the hills, I promise you this. A few minutes walk. We must leave you now."

"Why now? What's going on." She shakes her head, looking around their camp to find all the other riders gone, long gone.

He smiles gently, eyes sparking in honesty. "I must get back to Klark. We are still searching."

She shakes her head, standing up slowly, thinking of the blonde and then Abby. Her new home. "How do we find Clarke? Find you guys?"

"You will not." He shakes his head in an amused remorseful way, yet there is a happiness to his expression. He has no physical home, just people. "We have no village. We are riders, but we will find more of your people and we will bring them here. I promise you this Kallei of Stars."

"May we meet again." Her voice cracks and she offers her arms.

"On this sunrise or the one in our next life." He grips her forearm with a smile before mounting his horse, with a final nod he is leaving the camp as Callie wakes her people.

Clarke falls to her knees, hungry and broken. One of the warriors grabs her shoulder, a cloak of a pantha on his shoulder, dark and sleek in the night. "Rise." His voice is gentle, soothing.

"I don't want to." She shakes her head, once again at a loss with no directive. "I have no reason to live. I saved you. I sent my people home."
The man grips her shoulder tighter before nodding gently in understanding. "Then we find another purpose."

"Like what?"

Isole steps forward, bowing low at her knee to present her with a cloak, made from the pelt of the monster Clarke sliced into saving eighteen children. "Peace." Her words are gentle and behind Isole stands the rest of her twenty-five, tall and promising and here. Finally home from their last two month journey of taking thirty more people to Camp Jaha. The last of the Arc that fell from the sky and survived.

Clarke shakes her head with a frown on her face. "There will never be peace, too many differences. Too many deaths in this world."

Baladan smiles with a sly twist of his lips, eyes dancing. "Then we will have a long purpose."

Years have passed and the legend of the Ursa has become but that, a story told to children. But now there are legends that if you ever need help you pray to the Ursa spirit and the Ursa and her band of paktraka and pantha arrive. They bring food and medicine but are gone before the light touches the ground. The warriors that follow the Ursa are said to have death in their eyes, bones crunching under their feet and ghosts clinging to their shoulder. Their leader, the Ursa, is dragged down by ghosts as she helps those in need with a back full of marks of the dead and eyes haunted by war. There is rumor of peace between the lands now.

Clarke arrive in the dead of night with a dark brown cloak, furred hood and kohl on her face. Her warriors wear pelts of paktraka and pantha, the dark pelts allowing them to blend and move with silence and stealth as the creep along the forest floor like the ghost that are said to haunt them. Clarke feels the prays to the Ursa, feels them like a soft begging in the back of her mind. A new direction and she goes where she is needed. But four days ago there was a prayer from the sky people. Octeivia kom no kru has been taken and Clarke is to free her. She can feel Lincoln's soft words full of desperation.

With a flick of her wrists her rider move forward on their own feet, pulling down the barriers to this nomad village she had tracked down. She steps over the land minds like she can smell them and her warriors follow her steps, trusting and swift as they send arrows into the skull of these nomads who stole without a care and killed with grins and blood lust. Sword in hand the blonde, hair hidden under a dark hood, breaks open the lock to the prisoners, the ones of River, Ice, Tree and Sky. She watches as the remaining nomads try and fight back only to have her ghost warriors move swiftly and kill them all with a smooth twists of their wrists. There are children left in the hold, clinging to one another and the adults in the room. She eyes them, bending down low to whisper to them in a soft voice as the eyes of the older ones watch her warily. She catches sight of Octavia, face busted open and eyes still defiant before the children are flocking to the green eyed girl. The former sky and tree warrior eyes the leader in a dark brown pelt and hood. "Who are you?" Her voice is sharp and wary yet curious.

With a swallow and a too hoarse voice the woman speaks. "A Ghost." Octavia lifts her chin, eyeing the face hidden under the hood as warriors behind the leader move with ease. Freeing the rest of the 'slaves' and bringing the children forward. They tear down the huts. Dismantle everything in little to no time before the are forcing the material into sled like contraption and placing food and water and supplies on it. A horse is brought forward, large and imposing from the stables the nomads had kept. "He will carry your supplies. Travel safely."

Octavia steps forward but her instincts keep her from grabbing the woman hidden under cloak, the
voice is almost familiar but rings with power and is deep and slightly hoarse as if un-used to speaking. "Who are you?" She questions again, hoping for an answer from the woman who brought warriors to save the already lost.

The brunette can't make out the face of the leader as she steps back and motions her hands to her people. They slowly vanish into the forest, leaving two horses to drag their sleds of supplies and three saddled. "Take the children to safety. They are orphans. You are a warrior of the trees and sky. Lead these people home."

One of the ice warriors stares at the cloaked figure before dropping to his knees in shock, eyes wide and mouth open. "You are a legend."

"Legends ring in truth." A wry twist of her lips has white teeth flashing.

With that she steps into the shadows and disappears without a sound. Octavia listens and searches but there is nothing. It is like the forest swallowed them alive. "Who was that?" She tilts her chin to the forest, hands wrapped in two children's own tiny fingers.

He stays on his knees, staring into the forest with wide eyes. "She leads ghosts. Warriors cloak in wolves and panthers." Around them children are wrapped in thick cloaks and warriors and villagers stolen from their homes ready themselves for a journey as they listen to the man. "The one who felled the mountain. The Ursa."

"The Azgada pray to the Ursa." Isole head lifts when Clarke says this. The woman born of ice has a chest that stutters under the words and a heart that aches.

"What is wrong?" Her word catch in her throat because she may be at home with Clarke and the riders but her first home was of the ice and snow.

The prayers echo around her head and the Ursa grumbles in agreement, they were meant to keep peace between the land. To answer prays to the spirits. "There is a sickness attacking them, sent by the Clan of Caves."

Isole's heart cracks and she wants to fall to her knees. The Cave Dwellers, skin pale and face twisted into scowls. Spears in their hands and blood on their chests. "They are going to war?"

"Yes."

"Are any other Clans helping?" Isole hopes and prays and know Clarke can hear it. Can feel her desperation.

Blue eyes dip in regret and Clarke reaches forward to set a hand on the girl born of ice. "The Ice Nation is on its own. The Ocean Clan faces a sickness of their own. Tree Clan are not coming to aid. The Heda is stuck in Polis under treaty meetings with the Boat and Wind."

"And the people of the Sand?" The is a desperation in her eyes as her fingers tighten on the hand resting on tense shoulders.

Clarke frowns, information flooding her brain from the spirit. "Do not care for the ones of Ice."

"Klark." She almost begs, pleads to go to her people alone. To take the cave dwellers on by herself and slice them to pieces for threatening the people of the ice.

"We will go Isole." There is a sad twist to Clarke's lips, as if this pains her but she will do whatever it
is to help the brown eyed woman. "They are your people."

She clutches desperately at Clarke's fingers. "You are my people."

"They were yours first." And Clarke understands because there is a place in her heart where she would drop anything for the remaining hundred. For those of the sky. "We ride out tonight. Hopefully we can end a war."

They arrive a week later to find blood on the stone streets of the Ice Nation and the sound of battle. The Outer wall was breached and the trading posts destroyed. Clarke dips her chin and her riders disappear into the shadows, horses left half a mile back, hidden well. Clarke feels Isole at her back, Baladan's quick anger and remorse at being to late for those on the ground. With swift and quiet feet they sweep through the outer section. "This was only for trading and guests who stay only a few nights." Isole's voice is gentle and so pained.

Baladan turns curious eyes to the woman before finishing his sweep. "It's divided into parts?"

"The outer, Trading Wall." Her heart aches as she speaks of her home. "The middle living wall, all the population lives there."

Clarke words are quiet yet suspicious. Any amount of weapons could be hidden in there. If this was a trap made by the queen and those of the Caves. "The inner wall?"

"Holds a fort meant to be a last protection." Isole's eyes promise truth to the blonde, begging to for Clarke to understand.

Clarke twists her lips at the woman, she trusts Isole with her life. It is unforeseen circumstance, especially when they involve someone she hasn't met, that she suspects. "The queen lives there?"

"No, the healing center, the water supply and the animals as well as valued items are kept there." Her eyes flicker to the smoke billowing in the air yards ahead of them. "If ever to be breached that was the place to keep important items left from the world before the bomb. If they broke through both walls then the warriors will be defending the villagers inside the inner wall. I pray that it has not been breached yet."

Without any more words they finishes sweeping the outer wall and find no enemies before they make it to the middle section. Aidan steps from the shadows, blood in his dirty blonde hair. "Took out five guards, Cave Dwellers. They were looking for more villagers." He twists his face in disgust. "One was forcing himself upon a young girl."

Clarke's blood boils. "Where is he?"

"Dead, as well as the others." There is hatred in Aidan's eyes, burning darkly.

She nods her head at him, she would have killed them the same as he did if the blood splattered across her dark armor was any indication. "Good. It's clear then?"

"A large number of them are trying to break into the last wall." His eyes flicker to the loud banging they can hear coming from far away. "They haven't gotten through yet, Asha took Sar and they are continuing to sweep this section for more Cave Dwellers."

Clarke doesn't take her eyes off the wall. "Everyone else ready?" Aidan offers a sharp nod and Clarke's fingers twitch, another of Clarke's riders, Romona, already leaving and gathering the others. "Isole how do we send a few in?"
The woman's eyes dance across the buildings before around the wall. "I can take some through a secret tunnel. We will defend from the inside."

"Good, take Aidan and Mikil." She turns to stare into determined brown. "Be swift and safe."

Isole grips Clarke's arm, quirking her lips in anticipation. "Until the next sunrise."

"Until the next sunrise Isole."

Clarke focuses on the group of eighty or more warriors tearing at the wall with a large trees as a battering ram. Warriors pull at the gate to no avail and Clarke takes a deep breath before releasing it. Her warriors move forward, feet silent as twenty of the riders and Clarke begin to pick off the outside men with knives and a swift twist of their hands. They deplete the number by a third when they fall back with a sharp turn of Clarke's head, finding their way to the top of building her archers ready their aim before half of them are firing, when they begin to reload the other half fires.

Clarke grabs a few knives, throwing them into the skulls of her enemies as a few others do the same. Spears smash into the side of the buildings before one clips one of her warriors. Fifteen of the hundred cave dwellers remain and Clarke falls with her warriors to the ground below, three staying above to shoot any who got too close for comfort. Clarke's sword slices open one man's neck and she has gotten so used to the feeling of blood on her hands that she doesn't flinch.

Before they know it the battle it over. Clarke tilts her chin and her warriors split off, searching for any remaining Cave Dwellers. The blonde rips her throwing knives from the skulls of her enemies as her other riders collect arrows and watch for more enemies. Slowly eighteen of her riders trickle back into her sight. "They are all gone?"

One of the warriors speaks lowly, grin bloodied from where he was hit in the face. "Ran into a few small groups. Killed them before they could call for help."

"Good, each level is clear?" Her eyes flicker to the woman who last swept the levels.

Asha looks to Clarke, eyes expressive and wide. "I left two warriors at the hole in the first wall and two at the hole in the second."

Clarke nods her head quickly, eyes surveying the damages already done to the Ice Nation's streets. "Take two others to keep patrolling the middle ring, Sar take two to patrol the outer section." Both women nod their head sharply. "We are here to protect." Her eyes bore into each of her warriors, trusting them to do what is needed. "Disban all the intruders." The six of them vanish into the shadows without another word.

Clarke turns to her remaining twelve and they follow her to the gate of the third wall, they watch the roofs and alleys as Clarke lets out a long whistle that jumps high in the middle and low at the end. Slowly the gate lowers and Clarke walks through the door, a grinning Isole in front of her and Ice Warrior spears aimed at them. The gate shuts swiftly behind them and Clarke finds the Queen standing beside her warriors and her people. "My warriors are patrolling the sectors and guarding the hole's in your walls."

The Queen eyes her own warriors. "Take some of your men and help, you are not to harm the one's with the fur of night. Kill any cave dweller you find. Bring me the general if you find one." Her warriors offer sharp nods before they are gone in a flash of grey and steel. "Why did you come here and why did you help?"

"I heard the prayers of your people. The sickness sent by the Caves, I came to help. I didn't not
expect the battle to happen so soon.”

The queen turns to her people, eyeing the already sick. "Neither did I, most of my warrior fell to the sickness, they still fought to save their people." She turn's pale eyes to Clarke, skin whiter than the snow and hair darker than the night. "You shall come into the fort, I wish to speak to you. Your warriors can come as well or they can help the villagers."

"Aidan, take a group and meet with the others patrolling." The man offers a quick nod of dirty blond hair and she turns to another warriors. "Mikil take another group and help the villagers with what they need. You are a healer, do your best. Isole, Baladan, you are with me." The two fall into step beside her as she follows the queen.

When they are inside the walls of the fort the queen turn to Clarke. Clarke turns to her second in commands. "Sweep the fort for any enemies."

Once they are alone the queen seems to crack, shoulders dropping she stands with a broken spirit before falling to her knees before the blonde. "I am in your debt for saving my people Ursa."

The blonde shifts almost uncomfortable before speaking. "Clarke."

The Queen's eyes light up in amusement but she nods solemnly. "I am in your debt Clarke."

Clarke swallows thickly, words ringing in her head. Prayers rattling in her chest. "Are you going to war with the Trigedakru?"

"No. We have more things to worry about than the Commander." The queen eyes her with empathy, light eyes understanding yet wary. "I know she betrayed you, it is all the twelve clan spoke of. We feared your people may attack us yet they haven't."

Clarke licks her lips. "Two and a half years of peace."

"Peace that will be broken." The Queen's eyes are sharp as she stands to face Clarke, a few inches taller yet thinner than the blonde.

Clarke steps closer, eyes sweeping over the queen before the room to search for enemies. "By who?"

"The Desert Clan." Pale eyes flicker to the door, thinking of the ones she had lost today and the more she would lose. "They wish to come inland and they have large weapons at their backs and death on their mind."

The truth rings in her words and Clarke's heart races, the Ursa thrumming at the threat to those under her protection. "How many are there?"

The queen shakes her head, clenching her jaw. "Plenty. All the nomads are joining them and they bring their slaves." The Queen spits out the last word, knowing well enough that many of her people had been taken by the nomads and used and beaten. "The traitors, the lost, and the mutated will as well. They will attempt to control Polis. The will make for the Commander. If they kill her the twelve clans be disband and we will have war among all of us." She steps closer, eyes wide with revelation and things to come. "They will go after the Sky camp first for its technology before taking on other Clans."

Clarke shake her head in confusion, staring at the queen like she doesn't fit the stories she was told. Cold hearted. Murderous and unforgiving. "I thought you wanted war."

The queen clenches her jaw, shoulders straightening. "I do not want a bloodshed. What is coming is
not a war, it is a planned massacre. There is no place in this world for that much blood." Her voice drops and turns to steel as she speaks her next words, as if she would do anything to defend. "I have a beloved now. A daughter as well. I do not wish for a massacre or a war when their lives are at stake. I will not risk my warriors lives for nothing. If we go to war it will not be to cause more chaos and death. There will be a cause not a want. Not a lust for blood and death."

The Ursa floods the room in anticipation because whether they liked it or not war, death, was coming and they were going to fight. "Then how do you propose we stop this?"

"You are the Ursa." She almost presses her hand into Clarke's shoulder before she pulls back. "You have a right to the committee. You confront the Desert Clan, speak of their plans. They will fall into line or move quicker than they are prepared." The Queen can feel the soothing yet demanding presence of the Ursa and for once in the last three weeks she had hope for the survival of her people.

"And if it comes to a bloodshed? To war?" Clarke's words are harsh but she knows it may very well come to that. To blood spilling across the ground.

The Queen drops to her knee again, slicing a knife across her palm and holding it up to Clarke. "Then the Ice Nation stands at the back of the Ursa."

Inside of the blonde the Ursa roars in approval. Clarke slips a knife into her hand, despite the doctor in her screaming she presses her own bleeding palm into the bloodied palm of the queen, the Ursa standing inside of her and roaring with acceptance and hope. "And the other clans?"

The Queen stands, blood dripping from her palm, a mixture of her own and Clarke's. "The Horse Clan is unioned with my nation by my younger sister, she is well loved there. They will support you."

With a bleeding hand Clarke pulls her hood down, blonde hair bright against the soft colors of the fort. "You think we can take on ten other Clans."

"No, just the Desert." The Queen licks her lips, knowing what was coming could mean the end of some Clans, maybe even her own but they had to fight, even if the other Clan's despised the Queen she would not let the Desert destroy them. Not simply because they could, not without a reason. A purpose. "But their leader may very well turn other Clans against us."

"How can I trust you?" Blue eyes are suspicious, the Ursa trusts the Queen but Clarke was wary and curious.

"Have you ever loved anyone Clarke?" The Queen watches as blue eyes turn pained as she thinks to her family and the dead, her jaw clenched under tan skin. The Queen nods her head gently. "Then you understand my willingness to protect what is mine. I will die for them."

Understanding all too well Clarke stands with straight shoulders and prayers and hopes in her chest. "Then we meet with the council in Polis. I took down the mountain and freed many of their people over the years. They will listen to me."

Chapter End Notes

Most of the time the Ice Nation is the Big Bad, so I decided to change things up. Let me know what you think.
The names of these warriors do mean something. Possibly tied later into the story like Isole's Ice Nation origin.
Isole-rule of ice
Berodach Baladan- son of death
Aidan-fire
Asha-hope
Sar-pain
Mikil-quick, nimble
The forest is silent as eight riders travel through the dense trees. Blue eyes flits every now and then to watch the shadows, her back and heart feels empty without the rest of her riders, the nineteen of them left behind to protect the Ice Nation as the Queen traveled with Clarke. The closer they travel to the capitol the more Clarke's heart aches. She knows the Queen must be nervous, leaving behind her people with only her own warriors, Clarke's riders and some Horse Clan warriors to protect it. Knows the pain resounds in a broken chest cavity.

"We're close." Baladan's words are tense, he feels the nerves. The caution. The Capital was large and in it held danger. Held someone that could lead to the end of peace. But it also held the one who had left them in the mountain along with Clarke. The one who had betrayed those stuck in the mountain's grasp. The dirt path slowly grows into a stone path, the are signs leading up to the capital, archers in the trees that tense at the color of the Queen's cloak and the cloak that rests on Clarke's shoulder. Larger than any pelt they had seen and darker than the night. The gate comes into view and there are weapons aimed in their direction. "I seek audience with the council."

Hands tighten on spears and bow strings as one guard grits his teeth. "And who seeks council?"

Clarke removes her hood, staring at them with piercing blue and letting the Ursa's presence be know. Many warriors fall to their knees, trembling with fear and shock. "We thought you were dead. Died in the mountain when you felled it." The warrior peeks up through his lashes, head still bowed as he stares at her in awe.

"No." Clarke tips her chin up, eyeing the warriors of Polis. "I am alive and have been helping your people. I hear your prayers." Their eyes widen at the truth to the rumors. To the stories. "And I must speak with the Commander and her council. I have urgent news."

"Of course Ursa." He nods hastily before eyeing the woman standing beside Clarke and her warriors. "The Ice Queen did not give notice she would be here." There is a wary lit to his voice, knowing of the Queen's part in The Commander's beloved's death.

Clarke feels the Ursa bare it's teeth inside of her. Angry at the suspicions of their motives. "She is in my presence. She stays with me." There is a deep warning in her tone as blue eyes dance over the warriors sharply.

The leader of the warriors stands, swallowing away his trepidation as he ducks his head. "Of course Ursa. Follow me." He eyes the warriors dressed darkly behind her. "They are not allowed in the council room."

"They will make themselves scarce." She eyes them and they slip into the shadows to listen and find out what it happening in each of the clans. To gather information.

Lexa turn her head when she feels a familiar presence but she doesn't have time to prepare herself before Clarke is sweeping into the room, the Ice Queen beside her and Lexa feels true fear because Clarke must hate her and the Ice Queen has always thought she could lead better than Lexa.

Lexa swallows down her fear, swallows the Heda screeching in her ear and stands tall. "Clarke, to what do I owe your presence?"
"I seek your council." Clarke eyes the ones in attendance and the Queen nods her head sharply to the man with a sneer on his lips and Clarke's eyes narrow as she moves them back to the Heda. "I have urgent matters to discuss."

Lexa nods sharply, every instinct screaming at her. "You may proceed." She eyes the Queen with barely concealed hatred. "I did not know the Ice Queen seeks council as well."

The Queen tilts her head to Clarke, letting the blonde speak. "She is with me, and I seek council." Clarke's eyes flicker to her palm, blue eyes eerily calm, and Lexa catches the matching scars that they don't bother to hide. Holding her breath in shock Lexa nods sharply. Clarke looks to those sitting around the table. "I do not know most of you, I am sure you know me. I am Clarke of the Riders, the one who fell from the sky and tore down the mountain. I am the one who freed your imprisoned people from the nomads. I am the Ursa and I seek council." Her words are strong, quiet yet they echo around the room, demanding attention.

Many of them stare at her in shock and the desert man the Queen had nodded to clenches his jaw, eyeing the blonde in suspicion because the Ice Queen was with her, staring at him like she could see his secrets. "What is it you wish to know Sky-child?" His words are harsh, disrespectful.

Clarke lets the Ursa reign free, lets her presence press into the man until he is trembling and almost bowing under the spirit's persistence. "I am the Ursa and I did what your people could not, I would show respect." The Ursa flares beneath Clarke, angry and affronted at the man's blasé attitude.

His shoulders tremble as he forces them to stay strong and straight under the pressure of the spirit's presence. "My apologies Ursa." His eyes are hateful and the Queen's fingers tap lightly against Clarke's elbow before the Ursa can lunge forward. Clarke's shoulders relax slightly but the Ursa presence is almost suffocating and Lexa is watching them with pained suspicious eyes. "What do you need?

She tilts her head to the side, staring at him with calm demanding eyes. "What are your plans?"

"Plans, what plans?" He looks confused as do the others sitting in attendance, his knee bounces against his wrist before he stills it.

Clarke lifts her chin, jaw tight, eyes burning in accusation and anger but her face a mask of stone as she shrugs her shoulders, letting the Ursa presence press into him once again. "The ones to come inland, take what is not yours. When will you lead the massacre?"

His face remains passive but his heart races. His hands almost reach for his knife. "You are blind Ursa, I do not know what you speak of."

Clarke can hear the pounding of his heart, see it in his throat and the twitch of his fingers as she speaks. "I freed slaves from a nomadic village a few weeks ago." She tilts her head to the side almost smirking at the anger in his eyes. "Some of the nomads were." She pauses, letting the Ursa bleed through with a feral grin as she shrugs. "Loose tongued."

He leans forward with his teeth barred. "You lie."

She remains calm and standing strong under his glare but her eyes are harsh. Unforgiving. "I am the Ursa and my job is to protect and promote peace. Why would I lie?"

"You are blood tied to the Queen." His eyes flicker to her hand as do the others of the council. "I can see the wounds on your hand. She can influence you."

Clarke lets out a sharp laugh, holding her hand out for the others to see, she has nothing to hide.
Lexa shifts uncomfortable near them. Hands itching to grab her knife and bury it into the Queen. "You are spouting feeble attempts to pull the attention from you. The Queen is behind me, not controlling me. I ask again, what are your plans?"

His fingers brush the hidden knife in his sleeve and he schools his features, swallowing and glaring at the Ursa who came from the sky. "I have no plans, I wish to trade metal scraps for food and water."

"Do you think everyone here will believe that?" She steps closer, blue eyes harsh and teeth white as she bares them. "Especially when your men are moving inland. When you have command over the Cave Dwellers? Over the nomads and the lost? How many of your slaves that fight for you are from the Clans around this table? Did you think you would get away with it?" She wants to loom over him but allows her words to sink in, watches his eyes brighten in anger and hatred.

He stands with a snarl and steps closer, muscle itching to attack as his instincts scream at him to run. "Who would believe the girl who fell from the sky? You do not want what is best for our people. You want to protect your own, the sky demons." He spits the name out with contempt. "The Commander should not have let you live, not when you killed so many of our own." Lexa watches them with sharp eyes, visions of blood and death flying behind her eyes and she can't tell if it is Clarke or the man that will bring death on them all. "I would not endanger my people, I would not bring a war when we have peace. It is you who is trying to cause upset among us." He motions with jerky hands to the woman standing tall beside and slightly behind Clarke. "You who stands beside the Queen who has tried to overthrow the Heda on many occasion. Where do your loyalties lie? Why do you wish to cause turmoil and chaos when there is none? I did not trust you two winters ago and I do not trust you now, especially with the Queen tied to you."

She moves to step closer but there are fingers on her elbow and Clarke's eyes flash to the Queen who begins to back away from the room, shoulder tense but body loose as she almost begs Clarke to follow her. "We are done here Clarke, they do not believe us." There is a warning in her eyes, not of her own self but of those in the room.

Blue eyes are hard as she stare at each and everyone of the clan leaders in front of her, her muscles tremble with anger and the Ursa is suffocating as she presses around the room angrily. "I have saved many of your people, mark my words he will bring death."

"It is you who brings death Demon Ursa of the Sky." He spits her title out with a sneer. "You who killed thousands already. Hundreds of our people dead by your doing."

Lexa follows after Clarke and finds her some time later, alone. Clarke looks up like she knew she was coming. Like she knew Lexa down to her bones. "You believe he is bringing war." Lexa's words are tense as her green eyes search the area for the Queen of the Ice Nation. She was no where to be found and Lexa relaxes somewhat, eyeing Clarke.

Clarke stares at Lexa like nothing yet everything has changed in the last almost three winters. Lexa stares at Clarke, takes in the dark cloak over her shoulders. The muscles under thin cloth and the way Clarke seems to emit a calm aura yet writhing with turmoil. "He will kill everyone Lexa." She says her name like it was a warning. "He will bring down a reign of blood and death and your council will not listen."

Lexa finishes taking in the differences of this Clarke, there were similarities to the young girl that once stood before Lexa demanding a truce to take down the mountain. Her eyes still blazed with a fire that could never be extinguished and there was still that stubborn tilt of her chin but now there was more power behind her. More danger. "They have known him longer. They trust him more."
Lexa wants to believe Clarke, wants to trust her but three years is a long time to plan revenge. A long time to come back to Polis with the Queen at her side and a blood tie to the woman who stole Costia from her.

Clarke shakes her head, staring at Lexa like she can't see the entire picture. "They shouldn't. I planted the seed of doubt and I hope you will listen." She doesn't step closer but her sharp fiery eyes bore into Lexa's. "He will kill you Lexa." There it is again, her name spoken like a warning. Like there was trouble with every syllable of it that left Clarke's lips.

Lexa shakes her head, forcing herself to remain calm even in the face of Clarke. In the face of the woman she betrayed all those years ago. "The Queen has tried to kill me yet you side with her." Lexa shakes her head, hating to have to doubt Clarke because of her own actions all those years ago. "What is the difference?"

Clarke eyes sharply meet Lexa's, dark and storming. A foreboding feeling settles in Lexa's body. "He is after blood, she was after something else."

Lexa wants to rage and throw her dagger between the Queen's eyes. Wants to take her knife and reopen the blood tie wound on Clarke's hand. Wants to dig the Queen's blood from Clarke and stop this awful feeling in her bones. "She was after domination." Green eyes burn into Clarke, angry and desperate.

Clarke tilts her head to the side like Lexa's anger was bouncing off of her. Like Lexa wasn't trembling in rage before her. "How many of your clans were at war when you came in command?"

Lexa stares at Clarke in confusion, her rage simpering. "All of them."

Clarke speaks lowly, as if trying to pull Lexa in. Convince her of everything. Make her understand. "She believed she could bring peace, be better than you." Blue eyes hold understanding but are imploring. Wanting to be understood herself.

Lexa shakes her head, eyeing Clarke like the blonde had been told lies. "The spirits chose me and she ignored them." Fought every step of the way to come into rule of the Clans. "I brought the coalition upon us." Her green eyes are bright, to the point of almost begging Clarke to listen.

There is regret in Clarke's face but truth in her words as she speaks lowly. "And she did not fight after there was peace."

Lexa face twists, eyes burn and every vessel in her body seems to explode as her muscles tremble in rage. Her voice loud yet so deathly quiet. "You are saying she killed Costia for peace?"

Clarke clenches her jaw and swallows because she knows what it's like to lose someone and be told it was for the betterment of the people. Her father's face, drawn and white flashes through her mind. "I am not saying her death was in vain."

Lexa shakes her head, eyes full of rage and anguish. "You are spitting on her death, dragging it through the dirt. Kostia died because the Queen wanted blood." Memories and visions explode behind Lexa's eyes and she can't tell what is the future and what is the past as images of blood and screams dance in her head. "She wanted me to march to her camp so she could kill me in my fit of rage. And now, now you are telling me she did it for peace." Lexa shakes her head, tears of anger and anguish in her eyes. "You are delusional and your head filled with lies. Look into the spirit inside you and find the answer."

Clarke steps closer, eyes pulling Lexa in but the Heda fights it, shaking her head before Clarke's
words rip through her ears. "I am and I have! The spirit trusts the Queen, you are the one lost to your emotions. Clouded by them. You are thinking with a broken heart and not your spirit." Clarke shakes her head because she understood Lexa in this moment than she ever had before. "That will be your demise."

Green eyes harden and Lexa just lifts her chin up, throat tight as she glares at the blonde. "Why do you care Clarke?"

Blue eyes harden and Clarke step closer, presence suffocating. "Because for some spirit-forsaken reason I don't want you to die. I hate you Lexa, enough to want to burn you to the ground but I do not want you to die." And she leaves Lexa there, head spinning as she watches the blonde leave.

Clarke walks into the room they had been given, muscles bunched in emotion. The Ice Queen is at her side, eyeing the walls and listening to the ones of Polis like there is an assassin in their midst. "Mikil, Asha." Both warrior stare at her with conviction, willing to die for their Clarke. "The Commander's life is in danger. Peace is in danger." They understood, knew that peace remained possible if the Commander, if the Heda was kept alive.

"Then we will stay and watch over the Commander." Asha speaks with a born conviction, eyes burning bright with promise.

"You cannot be seen."

"I am quick Clarke, they will never see me." Mikil's grin is toothy and proud, his beard twisted beneath bright teeth.

"The best way to remain unseen is to be seen." Asha speaks with a low smile, face twisted in the innocence of a shop girl or healer and Clarke shakes her head because while Mikil hides in the shadows and his swift feet, Asha moves with the crowd, letting everyone see her yet they do not. Mikil was the swift shadows and Asha was the opposite. A bright light one saw but never truly acknowledged.

The Queen shifts, too nervous in the capitol of the ground. A place too far from the Ice, from her people who were still recovering. "And what of us?"

"We recruit." Clarke shifts her eyes around the room, calculating and planning each step with ease. "Baladan has already left to inform the Sky People of danger when we arrived here. They will be prepared for any attacks."

The Queen nods quickly, it was a smart move that no one had even realized the blonde had done. It was time to turn the tides on the Desert. "Which clan do we recruit first."

Blue eyes connect with the Queen's own light colored ones and she smiles because planning was everything. "The first to fall should be the first to know."

The Queen looks up sharply because she had warned Clarke and here the blonde was already planning. A twitch of pale lips is the only acceptance of the plan even as she speaks of it. "We are going to the Sky camp."

"Tomorrow." Clarke's shoulders tremble because everything in her screamed at her to run away from the fallen Arc, not towards it. "Tomorrow we follow Baladan's path."

"What are we doing tonight?" The Queen's nerves dance at the thought of staying the night in Polis, the city built for the Heda spirit and all it's bodies, past, present and future.
"We watch the leaders." Clarke's fingers clench and unclench because that meeting had not gone as
planned, they had planted seeds but the Desert man did not cave. He brought up too many counter
arguments to use against Clarke and she hated it. "They could decide where they stand tonight.

The Queen shifts, dark hair spilling from her hood. "And the Commander?"

"Stands with the Tree People." Clarke looks at the the pale skinned leader, her skin almost glows in
the night. "She fears you fill my head with lies."

"And you?" The Queen dips her eyes imploringly. "Do you believe her?"

"I believe in the prayers you have and the hope." Clarke can feel the echoes of the Queen begging the
spirits to save her people and keep peace. It rattles in her chest because there was a desperation to the
Queen's prayers when she first heard them. As if she hadn't prayed in too long. As if she had stopped
believing once upon a time. "I believe they will try something. I do not trust you but you are right
about the Desert." The Queen's face does not fall but she nods her head in understanding because to
trust one too soon always lead to betrayal.

The Queen speaks only low enough for Clarke to barely make out the word. "Polaris." Clarke eyes
her in confusion and the Queen dips her head, speaking slightly loud enough for only those in her
vicinity to hear. "Names hold meaning, hold power. I am Polaris, the Queen of the Ice. In debt to
Clarke, the Ursa. The Feller of the Mountain." Her light colored eyes are bright and digging into
Clarke's skin. Pulling at her. "Trust is needed and names hold power."

"You are trusting me with your name?" She knew how dangerous it was. That everyone simply
knew the Ice Queen as her title not as her name. Knew it was held tightly to protect those she loved.
Those who raised the girl Polaris, not the Queen.

"I trust you with my life just as your warriors do." The cut on Clarke's hand throbs in time with the
Queen's, a promise. "We die or we stop war. I would rather die known as Polaris than as the Queen
with the Heart of Ice."

Clarke swallows because she had spent years keeping herself from the Arc. From her people,
keeping them safe from the danger of having Clarke in their midst. "There will be attempts on your
life."

Polaris shakes her head, almost snorting in broken amusement. "There always have been."

Clarke swallows, know it is the truth because the ground was not kind. "Have you said goodbye?"

Polaris seems to almost crack, face paling more than normal and heart aching as she swallows,
clenching her jaw. "They know my wishes. They know my heart."

"You didn't tell them you could die on this mission." Clarke knows the way the Queen clenches her
fist tightly, knows it all too well. The way her shoulders are pulled too tight with the world's weight
on them. Death on them and hope beaten into the ground.

Polaris looks at Clarke with sad twisting eyes that understood the dangers and feebleness of the
world all too well. "I could die tomorrow or in the next few seconds. Death is inevitable."

Clarke sweeps her eyes to her warriors who stand with tall shoulders and the fear of death behind
them. No longer looming over them. They would die one way or another. Together or apart and she
speaks softly. "Just as the sunrise is inevitable. In our next life or this one. It is there and steady."

"I will see my family on a sunrise in this life or the next?" There is almost amusement yet reverence
in eyes lighter than the sky.

Clarke sky blue eyes are dark and full conviction. "The spirits will always see to it."

"You have faith for a sky fallen." She stares at this woman who twisted every belief the Queen had ever had about spirit as she speaks. There were warriors who begged for as much faith as this woman had.

Clarke looks up and there is a duality to her eyes, like there is something else in there and the Queen know this girl is so intermingled now with the Ursa that they are two becoming one. "The spirits have faith in me, I only return it."

Instincts force Clarke to open her eyes, the lump in the bed has a shadow standing above it and Clarke slips forward, catching the arm of the intruder. She twists sharply and hears the Queen move from behind her as the sound of bone snapping fills the room as she yanks their arm out and behind the back of the assassin. The shadow lets out not a sound but it trembles through the aching pain Clarke inflicted. Without blinking Clarke presses the blade she stole form the person against their neck. Light fills the room as the Queen lights candles, her body is crouched low to the floor, prepared for archers or more would be killers. "Who sent you?" Clarke's words are harsh and she presses the knife more fully into his throat, he does not make a sound. Clarke twists the arm she had dislocated and there is a barely concealed groan of pain. "It will hurt much worse if you do not speak."

Clarke rips the hood down and a man with hateful green eyes glares back at her. "Clarke." The Queen begins to shift to her feet, the single window in the room is covered and she steps forward, tilting her head. "Give me the knife please." Clarke tosses the knife to the Queen without hesitation because this man had tried to kill one of them. She steps closer brings the knife to the man's chest, he stills, glaring at her an with a swift flick of her wrist the knife slices through the man's ratty shirt. It flutters to his sides, exposing his chest and he glares at them, teeth bared and he lunges for the queen.

Clarke twists his arm, hears the bones grinding and she kicks his leg out from under him, making him kneel before the Queen as she grabs the braid on his head and pulls back, exposing his throat. "Behave." Clarke's voice holds danger, promise, and the man shivers because the Ursa presence wasn't there but his instinct were still yelling at him to run.

The Queen presses the knife into a burn mark across the left side of his chest. "He is a betrayer. Branded with the mark and cast out." He bares his teeth again and the Queen tilts her head. "The Commander will gladly take in a traitor who dared step foot in Polis."

Clarke wants to drag the knife across his skin and make his scream for even thinking of killing them. He wanted them dead because they were fighting for peace and that caused both Clarke and the Ursa's hackles to raise. "Where is the Commander now?"

"Her house or the council building."

Clarke yanks him to his feet. "Let's go." He struggles and Clarke tightens her grip on his arm, bones twist and crunch and he stumbles.

They march through the streets of Polis, guards following them closely but instincts forcing them to remain distant. Clarke steps through the door of the Commander's house, not well protect and she turns her head to the stairs where Lexa is coming down with a knife in her hand. "Clarke, what are you doing in my home?" She eyes the Queen in barely concealed suspicion, never taking her eyes from them.
Clarke shoves the man forward, kicking his feet out from under him. He stumbles and lands on his knees before the Commander. Guards tense, waiting with sharp weapons and orders. "He attempted to kill one of us tonight."

Lexa's eyes are sharp and dangerous as she turns to glare at the man before looking up to survey Clarke for damages. "Which of you?"

"He was in the tent with a knife in his hand." Lexa's eyes flash at Clarke's words because that meant Clarke was sharing a room with the woman who took away Costia. A woman who could see the emotions Lexa had for Clarke. A woman who used to read Lexa like a book. Clarke's voice is hard as she glares at the man at her feet, eyes moving to bore into Lexa. "I didn't stop to ask which of us he was going to kill." She taps her toe into his side harshly, forcing him to flinch to the side. "I expect answers or punishment. This will not be the last of assassins Commander."

Lexa tilts her chin up, eyes watching the man but staring at Clarke as if trying to convey something. "The Queen has many enemies."

Clarke scoffs, shaking her head. "As do you."

Lexa's nostrils flare and she almost steps forward, almost welds her knife with a shaking hand. "Is that a threat?"

"Get it through your thick skull that there are sleepers in Polis." Clarke's eyes are wild and Lexa barely keeps herself from flinching back because Clarke was never this wild. This crazed turmoil of energy and anger. "Warriors ready to kill and you will be next Lexa. The coalition will fall when you do. War is coming and I am fighting for peace." Clarke spins after one last look to the Commander, the Queen following her as she leave. Clarke briefly catches sight of Mikil. Knowing it is only because he wishes her to know he is here.

Her remaining three warriors she brought to Polis fall into line beside her from the shadows. Sar, Aidan and Romona stare at her waiting for Clarke's words and their next move. "Status."

Aidan's eyes burn, he wants to grab the assassin and gut him. "There are nomads in the night shelters for travelers." His hands tremble with a rage known to him, a rage to take those who dared harm innocent. "It is kept away from the inner city but there are many there."

Sar shifts on her feet, dark hair falling in her even darker eyes. "The Desert bug was watching his back last night. Shifty. The Clan leaders stay in a different inn than traveler's. It is well guarded by Polis warriors." Her eyes flicker to the far side of Polis. "He met with a few nomads by the sea last night. None other than myself followed him."

"So they didn't believe me." Clarke's voice is hard and she shakes her head because how stupid could these people be.

Romona shifts forward, gaining Clarke's attention before she speaks. "On contrary they were planning last night. Knew he left." She shifts eyes to the queen. "The Horse Clan leader spoke like he had no idea of the desert."

Polaris nods with an almost smile. "He is smart. Thinking. He will gauge who is on our side and work from the inside out."

Clarke tilts her chin for Romona to continue and the almost dusty blonde speaks. "The Ocean Clan left with kind words to him. She had to get back to her people. The Wind Clan did not seem at all concerned about the desert moving inland. More space for his people to have if the desert moves out.
The River Clan was cautious, speaking of blood and death. I do not know which side he stands on."

Clarke's shoulders are still tense with anger and suspicion but she calms her chest because some of them were cautious and soon they would see what the Queen saw. What Clarke saw. "They are suspicious, it means my plan worked. We needed them questioning him and now that they know he left last night to do something they'll be even more suspicious."

Romona's soft voice fills their ears as she leans into the pole beside her. "Will they know of the nomads attempt on your life?"

"That is up to Lexa." Clarke swallows, throat aching and chest almost trembling but she holds everything down, forces everything under her anger. "We leave for the Arc now. Mikil and Asha will keep her alive."

They leave Polis without looking back, their mounts legs swift against the ground as they race to the fallen Arc. Every fiber in Clarke's body is begging her to turn around, too run away from the camp that held to many memories and too many lost. The five riders are silent as the Ursa seems to stew inside of her head. Her shoulders tremble and her chest rises and falls faster than healthy. Sensing her nerves, her emotions, her horse snorts. Shaking his head and jostling Clarke from her mind. She pulls in a deep breathe and lets it go, feels her muscles relax. There are still faces covered in boils in her mind. Children curled around their toys and death. Her shoulders ache and throb, marks burning across them despite being years old. A phantom pain that licks at her body and mind. Calls her a murderer.

There is a rustle in the forest and they still their horses, eyes searching the vast area as they lean low into their mounts back and shoulder, making themselves smaller and harder to hit. The person steps from the shadows and Clarke fingers her knife but the woman falls to her knee before the Ice Queen. "Mai kwien."

The Queen's face softens and she slips off of her horse, silent as ever as she eyes the woman who had once been a warrior in her guard. "Echo. I see you have made a home with the sky people."

There's a new jacket on her shoulders and boots on her feet not from the ground.

The woman stiffens as if expecting something as she ducks her head low. "My life was debt to Belomi."

"I am not accusing you my child." She speaks as if Echo isn't the same age as her, as if the woman at her feet needs reassurance. "Just curious. I thought you were dead."

"I was captured by the mountain." Her chin digs almost into her chest as her jaw tightens and shoulder stiffen. "I shamed our warriors."

The Queen's finger dig into Echo chin, pulling it up high. Eyes staring directly into Echo's. "You survived the horrors of the mountain, I am proud to call you my warrior." Her fingers brush the hair from Echo's face. "Your mother was worried."

Echo turns her head to the side, refusing to meet the Queen's eyes. "I did not want her to see me broken."

A soft broken look crosses the Queen's face as she presses her palm into Echo's cheek gently, turning her to meet eyes once again. "We are all broken." She pulls Echo to her feet, eyeing the way the woman stand before nodding assessment. "Come, we have much to tell these sky people and I would like one of my own by my side."
Echo stands tall, nodding to her Queen before she looks to Clarke and swallows, bowing her chin gently. "Ursa."

"Please, Clarke for now." Clarke watches the confusion flit across the woman's face and Clarke swallows because she had been Clarke with her Riders. Always Clarke who was also the Ursa, but her people never looked at her like Clarke would break them and cast them aside. They looked at her like she was family. Like she was just as broken as they were and her heart aches for her twenty-five riders. For the rest of her people because they saw her as more than a title, they saw her as Clarke, the Ursa, the one who stumbles when she woke in the morning. Never Clarke who fell from the sky or the Ursa who tore down the mountain. "I am the Ursa when it is needed."

"Clarke." Echo's voice is gentle and she dips her head swiftly, not as much as she had for her Queen but enough to show respect. "Bellamy has told me stories of you.

Blue eyes widen and Clarke just about stumbles off her horse, Romona barely conceals a snort of amusement at Clarke's movements. "He has?" There is trepidation in her words.

"You were very stubborn when you first landed on earth." Clarke's shoulders drop in relief because she thought the woman would mention the mountain and she relaxes as this woman speaks of Clarke like she used to be. "Challenged him." There is a bright light of amusement in Echo's eyes.

Memories flood Clarke's head and she feels a smile dance across her lips without her permission. "He didn't want rules."

Echo's teeth flash and she stares at Clarke. "Yet you broke them all still."

Clarke's eyes twitch in amusement as the Queen lets a half smirk twist across her face before she speaks, interrupting the two women. "Echo, we must speak to the leaders. You may tease Clarke later."

They head to the gate, Echo leading them and there is a tenseness until Echo wave her hand dismissively, glaring at the two men on gate duty. The gates open and Baladan trots forward, clasping his hand on Clarke's shoulder. "You missed today's sunrise." His lips lift into a teasing grin and she feels her own respond.

"I made it before sundown Baladan." Her fingers tighten on his arm because she had missed him. She wants to bury her face into his shoulder and sigh in relief because Baladan was safe. Instead she settles for a too tight grip and a teasing grin. "Be happy."

"I am." His gentle grin turns worried as his eyes search behind Clarke. "Mikil and Asha?"

"Polis."

"They will do well there." There is immediate relief at the knowledge that the two are alive and well, even if they hide amongst snakes. He releases Clarke's forearm, pressing his fingers to her shoulder gently before stepping back. "Kallei of the sky has proven my innocence, they had guns aimed at me."

"You are lucky your face is so recognizable." Aidan voice is a soft lit of amusement and Baladan shoves the younger man back, growling playfully at him.

Baladan's teeth are barred like a wolves and the dark grey wolf's cloak only adds to the image as his eyes dance. "Watch your mouth pup, I can make you look worse."

Sar and Romona laugh throatily behind Clarke and Echo stares at them in confusion before Clarke
begins to lead the way to the metal of the fallen Arc, knowing it like she hadn't left it three years ago. "Is my mother still in charge?"

Baladan ambles forward, walking along side Clarke, the Queen on the blonde's other elbow. "Yes, she makes the orders but they have a council to vote." He tilts his head like the concept is confusing. "Who is on the council?"

Baladan narrows his eyes as he thinks to the people Callie had introduced him too. "Your mother, a man named Kane and-"

"Clarke?!!" There is the sound of feet on the ground and a sudden body slamming into her.

Clarke stumbles but the familiar smell of oil and steel causes her to tighten her hold on the slim woman clinging to her. "Raven." Clarke sighs into her neck because it had been almost three years.

Raven pulls back, sweeping her eyes over the blonde. "You're not so skinny anymore." Her grin is pained but happy and wide.

Clarke laughs lightly. "Can't say the same for you." Where Clarke had gotten more muscular Raven had stayed the same slim yet toned figure. Hands calloused yet soft and arms thin but strong.

"Bitch." She shoves Clarke shoulder before gripping it tightly. "Thought you were dead." Her words crack near the end and Clarke swallows, shrugging her shoulder and there is understanding in dark eyes before she smiles lightly, squeezing the blonde's shoulder tightly and pulling her forward so she can swing an arm around her shoulder. "I see you picked up some more strays."

Clarke rolls her eyes and shoves against Raven. It feels normal. Like before. Before the mountain. Before Finn's massacre. Before Lexa. It feels like returning home and it aches because this wasn't her home now. Home was the ground with Baladan and Isole arguing three feet from her. Home was Mikil creeping along the trees after a deer. Home was Aidan's boisterous laugh echoing around the rocks and the trees and a horse nipping at her hair. But Raven felt like home, like before the mountain with the hundred around her and the ground steady beneath her feet and a tent with a hole on the bottom left side. A lumpy mattress and pencils beneath her fingers. Raven felt like returning to something old, familiar and loved yet painful. "I have more."

"You, Bell and O are the same. Between you three there should be a 'Welcome!' sign on the camp." At Clarke confused look she motions to Echo. "He brought her, O brought Lincoln and then a few months ago she brought a bunch of kids." Raven shakes her head, pressing firming into Clarke's side. "I'm telling you we run a rescue shelter."

"You, Bellamy and your mom hoped that O was actually telling the truth and not delusional but Kane talked her down from searching the forest for you."

"They wanted to find me." Her chest is aching and feels like its going to cave in and her fingers tremble.

Raven's eyes soften and her hand tightens around Clarke. "We thought you were dead Clarke. You took off out of here without supplies and you didn't look good to begin with." Raven swallows with a tight throat, like it pains her to think about it. "Abby searched the forest for you. Scored grounder
camps but no one had seen you. After a few months she gave up hope.

"Oh."

Raven rolls her eyes. "Yeah oh." She pulls at Clarke's wrist, the Queen watching the exchange with calculating eyes as Echo stands beside her. Aidan, Baladan, Sar and Romona stand with tense shoulders because the mountain still hurt. It still burned like an open wound and they had lost so many down there trying to save them and everything here reminded them of it. Their bones itch to move, to leave and never settle down. Clarke feels it echoed in her own bones. Trembling, begging. "Come on, we can surprise your mom." Raven pulls her into a room only to find Octavia sharpening her knife and staring at the dark metal.

"They aren't here Raven." The only sound after her words is the pull of metal being sharpened.

The mechanic rolls her eyes, shifting on her feet. "And why not?"

The warrior doesn't bother looking up, keeping meticulous eyes on her weapon. "They were discussing something of importance. Didn't want prying ears or eyes."

Raven scoffs, glaring at the door. "Bastards."

"You did lead a riot last time." Octavia's lips twitch in amusement.

"They were trying to schedule us." Clarke riders remain silent throughout the entire exchange and Clarke wonders is Octavia knows they're there as Raven grunts and tightens her hand around Clarke's wrist. "I don't do schedules O."

"Bell or Lincoln will let us know what happened." The brunette looks up, eyes not even shocked at finding the other warriors there. She stares at Clarke, gaze sweeping over the dark cloak and sword on her hip. "I knew it was you under that hood after you left. I thought you were dead." There is an almost accusation on her lips. "Everyone did."

Clarke wants to rage and scream, tell her there were plenty of times she wished she had died. Plenty of times they had come inches from death. "I am the Ursa. Stories floated around." Clarke swallows, shrugging her shoulders.

The warrior's fingers stop moving across her knife and her words are low. "We thought they were just stories. Your mom hoped though. Bellamy too." Octavia stares at her, hints of anger but slightly remorseful. "Then I saw you, thought you felt familiar. You left them grieving for you." There's the accusation. The real anger.

Clarke's body tries to crumbles, memories assaulting her brain. Raven's hand is warm and steady across her wrist, pulse thrumming under calloused fingers and it calms the stampede of her heart. "I was not who they wanted me to be." Her words crack even as she tries to force them steady. "I killed 250 innocents when I let Ton DC burn." Baladan and the others watch the two women argue like it was a strategy game. Like Clarke couldn't kill the other with a quick spin. "I killed everyone in the mountain." The memories are assauling her and everything is screaming at her to run, to turn around and never come back but she needs to protect them. Always needs to protect them and put them first, even if it kills her.

"You let Bellamy, your mother and everyone of the hundred deal with your disappearance."

Octavia's hands tremble for a second before she controls them, eyes dark and angry. Demanding. "How do you think they felt?"

Clarke throat closes and she tilts her head up, it feels like they're in the tunnels again. Right before
they entered the mountain. Before the lever was pulled. Before three hundred people were killed. Feels like the anger Octavia had then. "They're alive and that's all that matters."

She stands quickly, eyes bright with pain, grief, guilt and anger. "They grieved for you Clarke. How do you think they'll take your return?"

The look in Octavia's eyes makes Clarke want to waver. To crumble and hug the girl who grew up long before they all had. "I'm not here for pleasantries, I have information." Her words crack across her lips.

Octavia scoffs. "So business not pleasure."

Clarke's eyes flash and her shoulders straighten and her teeth bare because she could handle Octavia's pain and anger but she would not risk the people of this land. "This is no joking matter, a massacre is coming and we need to stop it.

Octavia recognizes the look, stills her chest and stands ready for anything. That look usually meant trouble was coming. "What's happening?"

She pulls in a shaking breath, the Queen, Baladan and her rider's steady behind her and Raven standing tall beside her as she listens closely. "I need my mom and Bellamy in the room too. I need to explain this in one go."

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Octavia stays steady even as an hour passes. "They'll be out soon." Her words are calming and they relax before the sound of a door opening greets them.

Lincoln steps out with a smile on his face before he sees the visitors, drawing his sword he comes to stand beside Octavia. "The Ice Queen."

Octavia grabs her own sword without hesitation and Clarke's warrior stand in front of the Queen, Clarke's hand gripping her sword as she glares at them. Raven stands in between them in disbelief at the drawn weapons. "Put your weapons down." Clarke's voice is dangerous and her hand is steady on her sword.

"You brought her here?" Octavia's voice is back to full blown accusation and rage. Disbelief. "What the hell were you thinking?"

Clarke stands in front of the Queen, her riders at her back and the room is tense. "She is here to help."

"The Commander doesn't trust her." Lincoln's voice is soft and he does not lower his weapon even as Clarke glares at them down. "She killed her beloved."

"The Ursa trusts the Queen." Clarke lets the spirit be known, had become so familiar with the presence that it felt like her own. She trusted the Ursa with her life, was almost one with the spirit. "Put your weapons down."

"When has your trust meant anything Clarke?!!" Octavia steps closer, like she doesn't think Clarke will shove her back. Like she doesn't think Clarke would disable the sword from her hand with little effort. Her words are harsh and spiteful. "You trusted the Commander and look what happened. Now you're trusting someone even worse." She steps closer almost pressing her sword into Clarke's and blue eyes narrow, muscles tense.

There is the soft quiet footfalls of boots and then Bellamy is shoving Octavia's weapon down with
Echo's hand on his elbow. "Enough. Echo trusts her. Clarke trusts her." Clarke's heart cracks at those words as he speaks to his sister before turning to everyone. "Put your weapons away." Baladan and the others look to Clarke and with her jerking chin they relax their muscles. He finally turns to her with bright eyes and that stupid grin. "Hey Princess."

Chapter End Notes

polaris is the true name of the north star.
Romona- wise protector.
"Mom." Clarke stares at the woman before her. Her hair was slightly lighter and there was a small grey strip that did nothing to hinder her mother's beauty. There were more lines around her eyes, not laugh lines, no, they were worry lines. Clarke heart aches because it had been almost three years and everything had changed.

There is disbelief in tired brown eyes and Abby's face twists in shock. "Clarke?" Her voice cracks and Clarke swallows thickly before nodding. Abby's eyes take in Clarke's face, the changes. Hair lighter than before and twisted back in braids, skin tan and new scars across her face and hands. Her daughter stood before her with strong shoulders, muscles coiling under clothing that looked more like what the grounder's wore. The mother's heart aches because she doesn't recognize her daughter. Not with blue eyes hardened by something. She did not recognize the woman who stood like the weight of the world was still on her shoulders but she was managing. She stood like being in this room was a tiring thing, like it would close in on her. Abby steps closer, fingers brushing Clarke's cheek. "You're alive?" Abby's hand shakes and her gaze hardens suddenly.

Raven's eyes widen because she recognizes that almost frantic angry look, remember the sting of a slap to her cheek. The mechanic stiffens but then Abby is jerking Clarke forward harshly, wrapping trembling arms around a daughter who used to fit in her arms like a mold. Now they didn't mold together like mother and child. Everything was different. Clarke doesn't feel that sense of a forgotten home. Not like when Raven hugged her and her heart aches because when had her mom lost her place as home? When had Clarke forgotten what her mother's hugs had felt like? "I thought you were dead Clarke."

Clarke swallows, hands coming to grip her mother's jacket like a babe clinging to it's mother's back. "I've been helping people."

Abby's eyes sharpen as she pulls back and she looks at Clarke, taking in the warriors that stand behind Clarke. They stick out in this room, dark fur coats thick and imposing, eyes watching and focused on Clarke, each of the exits as well as everyone else in this room. As if waiting for the ball to drop. "Why didn't you come back?"

"People needed me out there." Clarke's voice is low and Raven shifts at the dark look in Abby's eyes. Bellamy clenches his jaw behind her with Echo's hand on his elbow. His eyes are understanding yet broken and angry. As if wondering the same as Abby. Octavia's glare is harsh but there is a stubborn defiance to it, as if she doesn't want to let herself forgive Clarke. Lincoln is too understanding, loose and calm in this room full of tension.

"People needed you here Clarke." Abby shakes her head, fingers tightening on Clarke's shoulders. "How could you leave without telling us anything?"

Clarke shifts her gaze from her mother to the man she once led a group of broken teenagers with. "I told Bellamy, I knew he would explain it to you."
Abby's eyes flash and her glare is harsh and too angry. "Did Raven tell you she almost died?"
Abby's words are spiteful, meant to cause pain and guilt. "Did Bellamy tell you that if Echo hadn't
have come when she did we would have had a war over hunting grounds? That Finn had and
attempt on his life? Did Octavia tell you that she was almost skinned alive for being a traitor to the
grounders?" Abby's steps closer and closer until she is almost chest to chest once again with Clarke,
this time not a lost loving embrace. This is rage, pain and sorrow bleeding from her. All consuming
and pressing. "We needed you here Clarke. I needed you here and you weren't here."

"I didn't." Clarke shakes her head because her mother's voice was cracking with emotion and
everyone stands here with an awkward air as they listen to the two women. "I couldn't stay here
mom."

Abby scoffs, fist clenching and jaw ticking. " Couldn't or didn't want to. There is a difference." The
accusation is back in Abby's eyes, like she had spent these years angry.

"I couldn't look at my people faces and see all the people I killed!" Her words crack and the room
shifts because this wasn't Clarke. This cracking in her voice, the anguish in her eyes. Clarke was
breaking before them. "I couldn't look at Jasper without seeing Maya. I can't look at anyone without
seeing Fox lying in that chute or the mountain men bloodied and blistered and falling apart in my
hands." Octavia flinches back because she remembers Fox, small and happy. Small, bloodied and
dead. "I can't look at my people without having nightmares!" Clarke shakes and Baladan's hand
creeps forward, settling on her shoulder. The Queen's hand is tight on her knife as Clarke's warriors
shift. The blonde's chest heaves. "I bear it so they don't have to." Her words crack like they once had
all those years ago saying goodbye to Bellamy.

Abby shakes her head in disbelief. "You think no one has scars or nightmares about what happened
there? You think Monty doesn't dream about radiation? That Jasper doesn't wake up calling Maya's
name?" Clarke's chest heaves but she keeps her eyes on her mother, Baladan's hand gentle on her
shoulder as they all listen. "That Bellamy doesn't dream of the children blistered? That he doesn't
wake up and need to check on his sister?" Abby never takes her eyes from Clarke, the mother dark
and dangerous. "Raven, tell Clarke. Tell her about everything."

"Abby." Raven's voice holds a warning as she shakes her head, because Clarke was already
fractured before she came here and Abby was finding every crack and hammering into it.

"No, I want my daughter to see what she left." Her gaze shifts from the mechanic back to her
daughter. "She thinks she carries the only burden. She needs to realize she isn't special. That we all
lost something in that mountain."

Raven shakes her head, stepping closer, commanding and tense. "Abby, don't."

The medic ignores the mechanic. "Raven almost lost the feeling in her other leg. It had to overwork
itself due to the marrow loss." The mechanic flinches back, jaw tight and shoulders bunched. "The
electric shock almost killed her hours later. She has a murmur Clarke. A heart murmur and we're
lucky to have caught the problem before she died." Everyone is tense, remembering and watching.
Clarke's warriors stiffen, hands itching to stop this verbal assault. "Did she tell you that an explosion
brings her back to the dams? That the bang and smell of sulfur makes her mind flash back? Did
she?"

"Abby That's enough!" Raven's voice is harsh and she steps closer to a trembling Clarke, eyes dark
with anger and fingers resting on coiled muscles.

"No." Clarke's voice cracks. "If she wants me to hear it, I'll hear it."
Abby swallows thickly, pulling in a deep breath as if to steel herself. "You left us all here. Bellamy, Raven, Octavia, the hundred. Me. You left us here so you could go find yourself."

"I found the others of the Arc station!" Clarke shakes her head as her hands threaten to hit something, anything, because it had never been about finding herself. No, she never left to find herself because she would never like what she found. "I brought the reapers back. I did what no one else thought about!" Her eyes blaze with old anger and pain. "I spent months hunting for those of the Arc and you guys stayed here. We all have our jobs."

Abby shakes her head, heart aching as she stares at this stranger before her. "And yours is to go gallivanting around in the forest?"

"I am the Ursa." Her hand wants to press in her chest until it hurt, press like she can pull the Ursa from inside of her and show them. "It is my job to help those in need. To find peace."

"There is no peace for the burdened Clarke." Abby's dark eyes are almost gentle now, saddened.

Clarke stiffens because this. This was what her mother had always done. Pulled Clarke's decisions through the mud, bloodied and broken. "You would know, wouldn't you mother?" Her voice is a harsh retaliation.

Abby sighs, pinching the bridge of her nose, ignoring the eyes that divert their attention from the two women arguing. "I am furious with you Clarke. So furious and I know the others may or may not share my sentiment of that, but I did miss you. I am so relieved to see you." Tears fill Abby's eyes. "There may be no good guys but there needs to be an understanding. You left us here, things will not go back to how they were."

"I didn't expect them too." Clarke swallows, shifting on her feet. The Spirit is quiet in her chest, letting her feel all these emotion instead of masking and blending them with her own. "I didn't come here for pleasantries. There's a war coming. The Desert Clan plans to attack. Mom he will wipe you all out."

Abby's face stiffen's, eyes darkening. "That's the reason you came here? After three years?"

Clarke clenches her jaw because none of them understand this burning need inside of her. This need to fix what was broken and try and piece together the things she had witnessed and some things she had torn apart herself. "Mom, I need you to listen. He will bring death, you need to be ready."

Abby sighs. "I will speak to Kane about this. Go see your friends." She pinches the bridge of her nose again, feeling a headache coming. "And please, please don't leave without a goodbye." Clarke's eyes wavier, like she had been debating running and then Abby is stepping forward and pulling her into a hug with a sigh, clinging to her like Clarke might disappear. "I do love you Clarke."

Clarke swallows. "I know. Love you too."

The room falls into an awkward silence as Abby leaves and then Baladan rolls his eyes at these people who fell from the sky and ignored the tension in the room. "Come, Kallei showed me where your hundred stay." He pulls on her elbow gently, eyes bright under his scars.

Bellamy licks his lips moving into action. "They'll be glad to see you." He leads the way instead, Echo at his side and Clarke's heart aches because everyone was different. Bellamy walked like he had finally found a place in this world, like he wasn't drowning in guilt and pain and sorrow. It was there, hidden but he was managing it. Evolving and growing and living. And Echo stood at his side like she would never leave, Clarke felt relief and sadness because once upon a time she was
Bellamy's right hand, his go to for everything and she had left him. Had left them all without looking back.

Monty hugs her like he would never let her go. Jasper goes pale, eyes hardening under his dark shaggy hair. Miller grins wide and bright, eyes dancing in relief. Harper yanks her into a hug once Monty is done with her. The others of the former hundred crowd around them, laughing and crying and hands tight in embraces. Monroe stares moodily at Clarke, eyes flickering to her and Bellamy so often it aches. It hurts and feels like a wound reopening but it hits a cord of nostalgia. Of loss and home and grief and hope. Too many things tangled together to explain or express but they feel like what her home was. A hundred teenagers thrust into a war they didn't know how to prepare for. Stumbling, learning and surviving together. Bonding, hurting, happy and free. A homesick feeling that festers in her chest, but the smiles balm it and it eases. This wasn't her home, no, they had once been. Had once felt like she could never leave, but now home was wherever she and her riders were. Home was on horseback and the presences of her riders beside her.

Monty's grin is bittersweet. "You sent Jasper's dad back here." His soft eyes flicker to the tall not so gangly teenager anymore, the goggles still sit around Jasper's head but there is a hardness to him. His eyes are dark and dangerous. He was no longer the goofy boy who had screamed in joy across the river. "He is grateful." Monty's voice is soft, like it had always been.

"He doesn't need to be." Clarke speaks lowly, eyes moving to him quickly before finding Monty's face again as her heart aches. "They needed to come home."

"Well, it helped." Monty's fingers press into her palm, familiar and calming. "He hasn't forgiven us yet, but he is grateful."

"Does he talk to you?"

"Yeah, some days." Monty's eyes are slightly grimaced, as if it still hurts. "Other days he's too angry to talk. He trains with the guards."

Clarke shakes her head, stepping closer and pressing a hand into his shoulder. "I'm sorry Monty, your relationship."

"Was tested, but he'll always be my best friend." His eyes are truthful but full of so much pain as he shrugs his shoulders. He looks so different from that fifteen year old boy that fell to earth with a wide grin and soft eyes. "Nothing will change that."

Clarke bites her lips because the others are staring at Clarke like they're seeing a ghost. Some look angry, others understanding but they missed her. All of them had. "What happened while I was gone?"

Monty's smile is a twisted grimace and her eyes drag over each of the former hundred faces, taking in the changes like a thirsty man after water. She memorizes them, the new scar on Gomez' face. Harper's lips twisting and pulling at a soft bruise on her chin. "Bellamy leads the guards, Lincoln helps with hunting and forging skills."

"Have they been trained with swords?" Clarke's eyes pull at the new muscles on them, focusing on the knife at their thighs and the grins on their faces.

"Only a few, mostly the hundred." Monty's eyes twist to Jasper and Octavia. "The adults won't touch the swords."

"Monty." There is a warning in her tone, soft, broken and sorrowful.
"I know." His eyes are understanding and determined. "We're going to be fighting again."

Her eyes burn and her hands tremble in rage. "I hate it, I hate having to tell you this."

"It was going to happen one way or another Clarke." His eyes are too wise for his age, too knowing of the harshness of the world. Her heart aches because she had never been able to help them face the troubles of the harsh world. "War is inevitable."

"I can stop it Monty." Her eyes blaze in determination and the Ursa flares in agreement, pushing it to Monty, letting him feel that sheer force of will. "I will stop it."

His eyes are as broken as they were the day he thought Jasper had died as he stares at her. "We can't stop the inevitable Clarke."

"None of you have to die." There is a desperation in her eyes. "They just need to listen."

Miller snorts beside them, falling into the seat beside Clarke with ease, his hair is still cut short on his head under his beanie. "The adults still view us at the delinquents. I mean we have jobs. We hunt, but they still see us as the criminals they sent to the ground. As the kids who needed rescuing in the mountain." His eyes are dark and they bore into Clarke. "They see you as the one who killed everyone and left us all alone. They won't trust you."

Slowly the former hundred falls silent and their eyes are on Clarke, trusting and waiting even if she left them they still trusted her decision. They had always been in the hundred's best interest. "What's happening Clarke?" Harper's voice is sharp and her fingers flicker to the knife on her waist, as if she can sense the danger coming.

"There's a clan, they are planning to kill all they can." Her jaw is tense and angry. "They will most likely try to erase Camp Jaha first. We need to prepare."

"The leaders won't listen to us." Jasper's voice is harsh. "They don't trust us." His sharp eyes bore into Clarke's, unflinching and unforgiving.

"I will leave warriors here, we can train whoever will listen. We need to be ready."

"You mean we need to be ready, you're going to leave again." Jasper's eyes are haunting and angry as he glares at her, siding next to Octavia as she snaps at Clarke. Green eyes harder than gems.

"Octavia, I." Clarke clenches her jaw, throat constricting.

The Queen answer quietly. "The Desert Clan will wipe out all the clans. They have been planning in the three winters. Clarke must find allies for Camp Jaha because he may very well attack here first. Take out the most advanced and the others are left weak. Your guns could aid in any war, he will kill you all."

Jasper's eyes are dark as he tilts his chin up. "He can try. The grounds been trying to kill us since we landed. We'll survive."

Clarke stands, hands shaking. "No. Not this. The Ursa is restless, there is something that is coming. Something dangerous. We need to be ready."

They spend the night piled in one room and it feels so familiar yet so different. And she watches the differences in her people throughout the camp. Little kids look to Bellamy, Octavia, Raven and Monty like they're celebrities. Heroes in the midst of them and when the see Clarke, young curious eyes question her and when they hear her name they either shy away or stumble towards her, eyes
too bright and innocent.

Polaris stares at the young ones with pained longing eyes and Clarke's heart aches for the woman as they amble around the camp. Watching, listening and feeling.

The next morning Clarke gathers the former hundred and her warriors, planning before Abby can tell them no. Before the council can tell them they are too young. Too broken. Too inexperienced. There are shouts ringing through the camp and the hundred race after Clarke, the blonde's sword drawn and Baladan's bow pulled taut as they run to the gates. Little kids scramble away, into their parents arms and the Queen stiffen, letting out a low sound of distress that Clarke can barely make out. Clarke presses her fingers into the woman's shoulder as Echo steps forward with cautious steps, eyes on the forest as she rolls the bloodied thing over. All eyes are on the lump in front of the gates and the forest, waiting for an attack. Staring back at them are wide brown eyes hidden under tattoos and sand coated in blood. It is a head, black hair twisted into bloodied braids. "Who is it?" Clarke's voice is gentle, quiet as the camp slowly quiet and stills in fear.

"My elite Lieutenant." The Queen's voice cracks and she clenches her jaw. "Excuse me."

Polaris stands with a pale face and determined eyes inside one of the hallways, trembling with anxiety. "Can you feel them praying Clarke?"

Clarke clenches her jaw, eyes closing as she flickers through all these things in her head and chest. It aches and throbs and her head swims. There are hundreds of words pounding into her. "I don't. I can't, I don't know who they are. There are so many Polaris."

Polaris' hand slams onto the wall, knife embedded in it. Pale blue eyes flash with danger and promise. "I will kill him."

"He is trying to force you out." Clarke's voice is gentle, she steps closer, conflicted.

The Queen shakes, Clarke's riders stare at her in understanding and Bellamy stands stiffly by the door, thinking as he watches the exchange. Eyes calculating as he surveys the scene, mind always moving as he flicks through the history of the grounders he knew. "My daughter and beloved's head will be next!" Her eyes are wild and they are reminded of a feral animal, untamed and chaotic.

Clarke sweeps her gaze over Polaris, taking in everything about her before speaking softly. "I know."

"No you don't." She snarls, her chest is thundering as she stands in this crowded hall with too many people. It feels like it is closing in. "I will find them and I will kill the ones who think to take them from me."

Lincoln steps from the shadows, eyes conflicted and cautious. "You took many someone's from many people. Do you regret Costia?" The Queen's shoulders stiffen and her eyes harden. "Do you regret making someone feel the way you feel now?"

Pale hands tremble slightly, giving away just a fraction of the Queen's emotion. "Love is weakness and we all know that." Her eyes flash with pain and understanding. "The Commander knew that when she was chosen. When she loved her."

"Do you even take responsibility for that?" Bellamy speaks up next, Echo hand tightening on his arm as he steps closer. Eyeing the Queen contemplatively.

Clarke steps closer, because this tension between everyone won't help. The Queen stares Bellamy
down. "I take lives, many more than I care to count.

Bellamy scoffs, dark eyes boring into the woman before him, Echo's fingers tight on his forearm as
she looks between the man she loves and the Queen she swore to serve. "There is a difference
between fighting in a war and killing to kill." His words are sharp and Clarke's heart thunders
because death, death was not excused during times of war. Not like when the Arc had pardoned Finn
for the slaughter of innocents. Not the three hundred that had died on the Arc. or the three hundred
outside of the drop-ship. Not the two hundred and fifty in Ton DC. Not the three hundred in the
mountain. There was no difference between killing in times of war. Each death still left a bloodstain
that could never be wiped away and Clarke wants to scream. To clutch at her hair and scream until
her throat cracked and bleed like her heart.

"I am not excusing killing her, I am not an innocent being and I never will be." Her chin tilts up
defiantly, glaring into Bellamy, daring him to challenge her. "I killed Costia to pull the Commander
from the safety of the forest. It did not work."

Clarke stares at the Queen, heart aching because she knew this woman was capable of love but here
she was, un-regretful of taking people from their loved ones. Accepting of the blood staining her
hands and unrelenting in her cause. Octavia's eyes flash as she steps forward, hand itching to grab
her sword. "So you killed her so you could eliminate the Commander. That is treason." Her lips are
twisted into a sneer. "They don't like traitors."

Coiled muscles never loosen as the Queen stares down the ones who fell from the sky. Clarke steps
closer, waits on baited breathe for something to happen. "Altercations of the past are not forgotten or
forgiven but the coalition allows me to live."

"For now. Someone wants to kill you. Eliminate you." Lincoln's voice is ever calm, a balm to the
nerves and anger pressing down on them as he stares at them with too patient eyes. "They wish to
pull you from the safety of Clarke's side." Bellamy's lips thin because this was the words he had
planned, words he knew needed to be said. They needed the Queen and Lincoln had the same train
of thought.

The Queen stands, not arrogantly but strong. Defiant and confident. "I know who it is and I will kill
him."

"They are most likely dead." Bellamy's voice is low, dark eyes flickering to the Queen, Clarke
stiffens as he speaks. "There is no use in keeping them alive. He sent you the head of their guard to
goad you." Clarke wants to press into him, hold his mouth shut because the Queen shouldn't hear
this. Doesn't need this. No one should hear that their loved ones are dead. Her chest closes in
because no one deserved to hear of dead once loved ones. "He will not keep them alive. It's a risk of
them escaping or someone saving them.

The Queen shakes her head, glaring at Bellamy as her hand itches to take her knife and slip it into his
neck. Watch him bleed out for even suggesting that her family is dead. "He will keep them alive. He
will torture them." Her eyes are wild.

"No." Bellamy stares straight into the Queen's eyes, unforgiving and unwavering. "He killed them,
he will cut off pieces of them and send them to you to pull you from safety." The Queen's hands
shake and she reaches for her knife, Octavia stiffen but the Queen spins around, rushing out of the
doors without a glance backwards. Romona shift her gaze to Clarke before following the woman out
the door at a sedate pace.

"Do you think they're actually dead?" Baladan questions, eyeing the man curiously because hope
was the one thing most people had left in this horrid world.
Bellamy shifts his fingers until they're squeezing Echo's, he doesn't hesitate, shows no remorse. "No. They're alive, but the Queen must think the worst. If she is given hope, it'll crush her when she finds them dead later." He doesn't look to Clarke, doesn't even waver in his choices. So different than the boy he once was. "We need her here. You say he has an army."

Clarke steps closer, eyes hardening and confused. "What would you do if it was Octavia?"

His eyes find hers and he doesn't look away. "Fight until my last breath and find her."

Clarke shakes her head, eyes searching the man who had fought tooth and nail with her to get into the mountain and free their people. "Then how can you tell the Queen different?"

"Because everything is different when it happens to you." His eyes flicker down slightly, almost shamed but resolute. "We need the Queen alive and on our side. Right now we need to think with our heads, not our hearts." His voice is tight and Clarke flinches back because the last time those words were echoed to her it had hurt. There is no remorse in his eyes and Clarke trembles because he would let the Queen believe them to be dead.

Lincoln finds Clarke after she walks from the room, Bellamy's eyes had been tight and saddened as he watched her leave the hall that morning. "We searched the forest for her. Day and night." His voice stops Clarke in her tracks. "Bellamy never gave up and I didn't but I knew she wasn't here anymore." Clarke stiffens because hours early Bellamy had told Polaris not to find her daughter. Had been hypocritical and actually thinking with his head. Lincoln's eyes are soft and gentle as he speaks of his other half. "She was far away and you found her." There is gratitude and anguish in his eyes. "Thank you Clarke, for helping her on her way home."

Blue eyes flicker over the dark skin of the Earth-born warrior. "I heard your prayers." Her head echos with his soft words, anguished and pleading.

His eyes remain curious and gentle. "What is it like?"

Even as they speak the echos dance around in her head, reverberating and constant. "Crowded. I hear them everyday. Sometimes I can help." Her words crack but she stands tall under his soft gaze. "Other times I can't."

He steps closer, hand pressing softly on her shoulder. "You save our people."

Blue eyes bore into Lincoln's, dark, compassionate, understanding and final. A decision made. "I save those who need it."

Clarke finds the Queen of the Ice, standing with three guard's eyes on her, Clarke dismisses them with a glare and a chin tilt. They shake their heads but leave at the insistence of the Chancellor's daughter. "I've always thought better with my heart than my head." The Queen does not look up at the blonde, stiff fingers continue to sharpen the knife in her hands. Clarke stares at the Queen, decision made because her heart was what had led her to fighting till her last step for those stuck in the mountain. It was her broken and aching heart that led her to rehabilitating the reapers, not her head. There was once upon a time where Bellamy was the passion, the conviction, the heart and Clarke was the planner, the thinker, the head. Three years had changed them so much.

The Queen shifts her feet, staring expectantly at the blonde. "Does that mean?"

"We will find them, we will also recruit other Clans." Clarke's eyes a promising and determined. "But we will find them."
There is a renewed spark in the Queen's eyes, it had been just a determined but dull spark once before. "Where do we go first?"

"Polis. We pay a visit." Clarke's chest is heaving, not from exhaustion or difficulty breathing but from sheer determination. It shutters and trembles as the pleas reverberate in her chest and the Ursa roars a promise to those in need. "You have to be strong."

"That will not be a problem." The Queen shifts on her feet, eyes slipping suspiciously to those around them, because they would have forced Polaris to stay her. Sent guards to watch her. "What of your people here?"

"I'll leave Baladan here, Callie trusts him and he's one of my best." Her heart aches to bring her riders together, something festering inside of her. Dark, dangerous and anxious. "He'll train them. Help them."

She shifts because Clarke had helped save her people and her they were leaving. "They are on the Desert's map."

"And Baladan will help with that." Her hands ache and she wants the Desert Rat that plans a massacre to die. Wants his blood spilling into the harsh, hot sand he lives in. Not this soft dirt they reside in. "Bellamy, Raven and Octavia will help him."

Polaris' eyes a almost gentle. "And the ones who have missed you?"

Clarke adverts her eyes and tilts her chin like she could lie without blinking. "I will see them again."

"There is hesitation in your words." Polaris watches the blonde, how her eyes flicker in doubt.

"There is hesitance in the world." Clarke voice is tight because life was never final, it was never permanent. Always in danger and always too weak. Too soft. Too easy to snuff out.

The Queen shifts, feeling the hesitation in the air. The death to come and knows the Ursa can pick up every death and prayer she missed. "It is not wise to distance yourself from the ones you love when death is inevitable."

"It is when all you can see are the people you killed to save them." Clarke's words crack and she swallows thickly.

"They are alive, do not dread over the dead. Embrace the living."

Clarke finds her mom, Kane nods her way before leaving quietly, sensing the tenseness to the blonde. "I need to go."

Abby's eyes aren't shocked, but they hold a shattered resolve. "You just got here Clarke."

The blonde forces herself to keep her eyes connected with her mother's, to break this news that her mother seemed to suspect already. "I know, but there's a massacre coming. An all out war. I need to get people on our side."

Abby steps closer, reaching out to her daughter. "Clarke, we don't need to involve ourselves in a war between the grounders."

"They will drag you into this mom." She jerks back quickly, gaze sweeping over her mother's form. "They will threaten you and kill you. We became grounders the day we landed on earth. We are a
part of this war whether we like it or not." She stares at her mother, so close to begging her to understand. To trust her. "The question is are you ready to fight or will you roll over?"

"We have the weapons to defend ourselves." Her fingers twitch to pull her daughter closer, too keep her inside this camp where she can protect her. "They are no threat."

"There is always a threat mom." Tears almost fill Clarke's eyes as she steps closer. "We're on Earth. Each breath we take is a lucky shot. We can't risk it, we have to be ready."

"You're sure they will attack?"

"Positive. This is the first place they'll attack, it's the most technologically advanced camp." She aches, aches to protect the ones she once knew inside and out. "You have guns and the others have swords. They'll want to take you out first."

Abby's eyes flash and there is an almost gleam to them. "Or make an alliance with us."

"They take slaves mom, they stole Octavia and children." Her teeth gnash on her lower lip, holding onto her anger because this, her mother thinking they could side with the Desert, it was wrong. "You don't want an alliance with them."

"You're allying us to the Woods Clan again, the Commander betrayed us once." And Clarke stiffen because her mom says it like Clarke hadn't stood there and had every dream shattered, hadn't felt the roar of the Ursa and heard the painful screeching of the Heda far away. Like Clarke couldn't remember the pained and stiff look on Lexa's face, full of shame hatred but no remorse. Like Lexa's last words hadn't cracked Clarke wide open.

"You think I don't know that?" Blue eyes sharpen and her words are hash, unforgiving. "I know mom, I was there. But we are allied with the Ice Nation, soon I will get others. The Commander." Clarke stumbles over the name, catches herself because it still causes pain. "Is on the outside, believing the Desert to have no plans. We are not allied to her but we will not begin a war with her people." Clarke teeth flash testily. "There has been enough deaths and I am trying to prevent as many as I can."

Abby scoffs, because Clarke was rallying troops, collecting fighters. "By enticing everyone into a war that may or may not happen?"

"He will kill everyone!" Clarke almost slams her hand on the nearby table as she explodes with anger. "There will be blood soaking the ground and rivers. He will not stop until the forest is his. Until the others fear him. He has been planning this for a long time mother." She almost sneers the word out, knowing her mom hated it. Knowing it would press her buttons and let her know how pissed Clarke was. "If we do not fight there will be a massacre. More dead than you can ever imagine. The life of a few for the lives of many outweigh the damage."

"Lives are not to be thrown around like chips at a poker game. They are not expendable." Her voice grates on Clarke, she spoke like she hadn't done the same. Hadn't bargain one life for the many.

Clarke barks out a laugh. "The Arc lived on that motto, don't call me a monster when you did the same thing. When you had your husband floated so there wouldn't be mutiny. As much as I hated the Arc's way, I understand them now." Her chest aches and something cracks inside of her once again. Those words broke her. "I killed those in the mountain to save everyone outside of it. And it hurts, stings but I am living with it. What I can't live with is sitting by and watching thousands of people die because a man is greedy, I don't know how you can."
Abby reaches for Clarke's face, thumb cradling cheekbones as tears fill her brown eyes. "This is not our place. Not our war."

"We live on the ground mom." Clarke fingers pull her mother's hands from her cheeks. "It became our lives when that happened."

"I don't like this, I haven't seen you in three years and you're leaving again." Her fingers tighten on her daughter's cheeks, constricting and desperate. "I want you to stay, I know I can't make you. I know you're as stubborn as your dad, but I want to spend more than a few hours with you."

"I am fighting for peace, I have always been fighting for peace." Clarke bites her lip because she couldn't promise anything, not when life was this dangerous. This short. "Maybe when this is over."

Abby nods, choked up because this wasn't her Clarke. Clarke of the Arc died a long time ago. This was Clarke of the ground and Abby ached to keep her daughter close to her, to protect her, but it was too late. Her daughter had seen too many horrors for her to protect her from. "May we meet again."

There is hope, devastation, loss and promise in those four little words.

"May we meet again mom, on this sunrise or the next." And Abby's eyes sting and her heart hurts because those words sound like a goodbye.

With watering eyes Clarke bumps into one of the repair men and looks up into too familiar eyes. "Princess." Finn's face breaks out in a grin and Clarke stumbles back, tears vanishing as her chest tightens. "Hey, you okay?" He has that same worried face he's always had.

Her throat feels like it's closing in all she can see is Finn looking at her, face moving from a twisted look of feral rage to one of relief and pride. 'I found you.' Whispers in her mind and her shoulders tremble, muscles and scars aching because she had saved him when he hadn't deserved it. "Finn.

What're you doing here?"

He stares at her with narrowed eyes before tipping his head to the side. "Can't exactly step foot out of Camp Jaha. The grounders would kill me."

Everything is tense and awkward, three years ago she had ran away from this all. Left it all behind with only the scars on her to remind her of life here. Of the things she had done. "Oh." She barely mutters, the Ursa shifts restlessly inside of her. Nervous with Clarke's own frayed nerves.

"Glad you're alive Princess, you had us worried." He grins like nothing has changed and she almost flinches back. There are new scars on his face but he still has that boyish charm about him. All she can see is blood covering his face and a gun exploding in her ears.

"I'm not staying." Her words are terse, quiet as she searches for an exit. An excuse to run from this conversation.

"What?" He steps closer, eyes soft like they had always been. "You've been here what, a day at the most? You can't just leave." His muscles are bunched in worry and suspicion.

Clarke clenches her jaw, close to faltering back. "There are more important things than talking with everyone in Camp Jaha."

"Are you running away because of me?" He steps closer, almost touching her and she wants to flinch away. Never look at him again. Her father's watch burns on her wrist, tainted by Finn's love. "I didn't ask you to take my place Clarke, don't shut me out." His hands almost reach for her. "Don't leave again."
She snaps shoving him back with hard eyes and muscles coiled and ready to strike. "I don't care that I have scars covering my body because I took your place, I would do it again because Raven needed it and I couldn't bear to kill you. I'm not shutting you out, I am trying to survive." Her words catch in her throat and her eyes are too wild. "Not everything that involves me has to do with you. I left Camp Jaha because I killed 350 innocents in the mountain. I let 250 burn in Ton DC. Don't patronize everything I've done with your ideas." She stares at him, angry enough to make him flinch back. "Do you even feel for the eighteen you killed?"

His eyes flash and his jaw tightens and he steps closer, looming over her in height. "Don't talk to me about that Clarke, please." His eyes are dark and haunted. It makes something in her crack because there is anger in those eyes.

"Don't talk about how you killed eighteen innocent people?" Her finger almost shoves him back again but she doesn't touch him, doesn't want to feel him under her hands because all it would bring was nightmares. "How you didn't listen to Murphy? How you don't even acknowledge it?"

"Shut up!" His hands shake and his eyes are wild. "You have no idea what I feel."

"I don't." She shakes her head. "I feel every life I have ever taken. I wear the marks of the ones from Ton DC and the mountain on my back. I am covered in scars of the dead." Her voices cracks down the middle, quiet yet harsh and hurt. "And I still feel every single death. I dream about them, I am remorseful and saddened that I have killed so many." She swallows, staring at him. "So no, I have no idea how you feel. I have no idea how you can act like you didn't kill eighteen people."

He throws his hand out with a loud scream, metal clangs. "Because it kills me inside! Because I would rather think about who is going to win in the next football game every week than about how blood stains my hands. Rather think about cleaning than how I watched the life fade from someone's eyes." His eyes bore into her, dark, crazed and trembling.

She shakes her head, staring at him because he still looked like the boy who had landed on Earth with a smile. Like he hadn't changed. "Do you regret it?"

"I regret killing them for no reason." His eyes are dark and his hands shake but there is a sheer determination in them. "But if they had had you, I wouldn't regret it."

"Do you tell yourself that you killed them for me?" She finally shoves him back with a ferociousness that hinted at anger, hands burning. "Is that how you sleep at night?"

He stumbles back, catching himself and jerking closer to her angrily, hands twisted into fists. "I did do it for you! I was looking for you!"

"I didn't ask you too!" Her words are a low growl and she glares at him in anger and pain.

"You didn't have too!" His eyes are filled with memories of them together and that insatiable need to protect what was his. "You were all gone, nobody else cared!"

"Everyone cared!"

"Not like I did!" His hands weave through his hair, tightening on the strands as he stares at her with wild eyes. "I would have burned down the world for you Clarke."

"And now?" Her words are quiet, low as she stares at him.

"Now I see you set the world aflame already." He stares at her, shaking his head because this wasn't Clarke. This woman before him was broken and unhinged. She was angry and wild. "Everything's
changed. You've changed."

"We're not the people we were when we landed on earth." She thinks to the changes in them all, Bellamy, Raven, Octavia, Jasper, and the others. They've changed so much. "Do not expect me to be the naive girl you fell in love with."

"I lost that girl long ago." His eyes are watery. "I've stopped worrying about it." He runs a hand through his shaggy hair, stepping back. "If you're leaving then at least say goodbye to the others, they've missed you. Mourned you."

Clarke clenches her jaw. "Don't tell me what to do Finn."

"I'm not, i'm just saying." His eyes are dark and expressive. "Try to stay alive Princess." Clarke flinches at the nickname, turning and walking away from the man she once knew as a peaceful boy with a penance for jumping into fights to stop them.

"You're leaving." There is not an accusation in the words spoken and Clarke's shoulders slump in relief before she sharply nods her head and Raven twists her lips into a heartbroken but wry grin. "Hurry up and save the world right?"

Clarke lets out a wet chuckle, eyes filling with tears and memories. "I'd still chose you first."

"Good to know Kenai," There is this wicked teasing grin stretching across Raven's face and Clarke shakes her head, lips turning slightly into a soft smile. Raven always did know how to make everything better. Whether it was quoting broom closets or referring to cartoon they all had watched once upon a time on the Arc.

Clarke's eyes search Raven's face for any anger. Any doubt. "I need to get more Clans on our side."

"You trying to convince me or yourself that's why your leaving?" She leans heavily on her right leg, raising her eyebrow in question, cutting through all of Clarke's layers like she knew all the blonde's secrets.

Clarke drops her shoulders, biting her lip before sighing. "Both."

"At least you admit it. Dark eyes spark in amusement before she tilts her head, eyes taking in Clarke's loose but ready stance. "You gonna take any of our own with you? I know Lincoln and O are looking to get out of here."

Clarke eyes sharpen without her permission and her chest stills, because just the thought of putting anyone in danger makes her stiffen. Makes her want to scream. "It is not a safe mission Raven. Most of us won't make it."

Raven steps closer, eyes searching over Clarke but already knowing the answer. "Then why are you going?"

"I can't sit still while the people die." Clarke's jaw tightens and she swallows the tightness of her throat down, squeezes the words from her lips like they might just get stuck. "I must protect them."

Raven sighs, rolling her eyes to the sky because she already knew that. Knew Clarke wouldn't sit still. "That you or the bear speaking?"

"Both." Clarke's heart ache and races and she wants to stay here and cling to the hundred, wants to run in the other direction with haunted memories on her trail. She is torn but needs something. Needs
an escape, needs to do something useful. Something to help those all around her that struggle and pray and break.

"O can take care of her self, same with Lincoln." Raven's eyes are dark but gentle, imploring yet commanding.

With lungs that feel like collapsing she speaks, voice strained but final. "Nether of them have Clan ties, they were banished form the trees." Clarke drops her eyes guiltily before flickering them back to Raven, blue so dark and expressive that the mechanic's breath stops for that second they meet. "They won't be welcome by the other Clans."

Suddenly there is an angry presence beside them, stepping from the shadows and Raven jerks slightly back at the surprise intrusion and sends a playful glare at the warrior that managed to sneak up on her. Clarke swallows and hold her breath because Octavia's green eyes are so betrayed, angry and confused. "So that's it, you don't want us to tag along so you make up some excuse." She steps closer, eyes swirling dangerously as her fingers itch for the steel on her hip. "Deciding things for us Clarke?" Octavia's voice is biting.

Clarke didn't startling from the unexpected intrusion but she stiffens because life was confusing and this just made it even more so. Conflicting and a tangled mess of emotions. "The only reason my riders are accepted anywhere is because they were reapers and are now sworn to peace. They were lost to their Clans. The Ursa is sworn to peace, if I take what everyone believes are traitors with me. Clarke's eyes are sharp but guilt filled because Octavia and Lincoln had lost their home staying to save the 47 from the mountain. Had been stuck there because Lexa had left them. Had left Clarke. "I will lose those whom I am trying to bring to our side."

Octavia scoffs, eyes like sharp knives as they bore into Clarke, twisting emotions in the blonde's chest and gut. "Typical."

"Octavia." Clarke's voice is almost pleading but clinical. "In their culture you betrayed them. You are traitors to the Commander. To her orders."

Octavia stiffen, eyes burning brighter than ever as she hisses at Clarke. "I wasn't going to let them die in that mountain!"

"I didn't say you were!" Clarke voice isn't as harsh, as shrill and angry but her shoulders heave. "Octavia, there are villages of traitors out there. The ones who are lost." Her voice gets lower, almost defeated. "Nomads."

Octavia crosses her arms as Raven watches the exchange with a raised eyebrow and lips pressed together. "And?"

"They don't like me, as much as I work for peace I have never been able to do much for them." Her eyes flicker guiltily and with remorse to the trees over Octavia's shoulder. "I can't un-banish them."

"What do you want me to do?" Green eyes watch the blonde Ursa with suspicion.

"Go to them." She doesn't order, to close to begging. "In their eyes you are one of them. The desert is recruiting them because they have no home."

"You want me to offer them a home in Jaha?" The first warrior of the Sky-fallen stares at her incredulously.

Clarke swallows thickly, heart falling and catching in her chest as an anvil press down and down. Suffocating and all consuming. Her head swims. "No, not here, Mount Weather." Clarke suppresses
a shiver. "I've locked all the doors, so there is no way back into the mountain without my help." Her hands threaten to tremble. "But the land around it, no one has claimed it in the last three years."

"Why?" Octavia's eyes are full of curiosity but also that burning suspicion, like she would never trust Clarke again.

Lincoln steps closer, from the shadows, hand falling to Octavia's silently. "Because it is the Ursa's land. She defeated them with a flick of her wrist." His eyes stare at her with gratitude. "Did what my people could not. She killed them all, so the land is hers."

Baladan pipes up from the shadows, eyes dark at the mention of the mountain. "It is also said to be haunted by the ghosts of the reapers and the mountain men." There's a wild morose grin on his face. "Who would want to tangle with the ghosts of the cannibals and the vampires?"

"So you want me to bring the people who betrayed one Clan or another near our home?" Her voice is tinged in disbelief, like Clarke's plan is almost suicidal.

"Not all those who betrayed laws did it for the wrong reasons." Clarke shifts her eyes to Lincoln then back to the warrior. "You're an example of that."

Lincoln nods his head and Octavia grudgingly, barely, dips her chin before staring defiantly at Clarke, ripping holes into the blonde's plan. "And the ones that did?"

Her heart races at the thought of bringing in betrayal, of making the wrong choice and loosing her people. Of being the cause of more deaths. "They will show their true colors before the desert attack."

Octavia rolls her eyes because Clarke was naive if she thought they would all want this. That Abby and the Council would agree to moving them closer. "So what, we're offering them a home, just like he is?"

Clarke's mind flashes to the man's eyes, foreboding and glaring at her. Threatening to her attempts at peace. To her people. All her people. "He's offering blood and war and death. He's offering living under his rule. We're offering them a home, a place to call their own." Something they hadn't had in a long long while. Clarke just hoped they wanted it enough. "Without the need to fight or have war. Without being under the rule of a tyrant."

"Who will be in charge Clarke?" Her muscles loosen as her mind begins to wrap around the thought of nomads, but her eyes are still calculating as they glare at Clarke. "You can't expect them to follow Abby."

Clarke swallows. "I do not think they would follow me." Blue eyes flicker to Octavia too raw and truthful for the brunette's liking. Octavia stiffens and Raven grins widely as Lincoln's eyes soften in understanding. "But you, you're everything and more that they are and that they need."

She shakes her head, staring at the blonde like she has three heads. Lincoln looks proud and ready, eyes watching Octavia lovingly. "You want me to lead a group of traitors?"

"I lead a group of former reapers." Baladan touches Clarke's shoulder, letting her know the sentence was okay. It had not ached and hurt even as the blonde's shoulder had stiffened. "It is not what we were but who we are. Right now they are homeless and homesick. You can offer them an oasis."

"And if I refuse?" Raven is grinning widely behind the warrior, already knowing the answers. Already planning and happy. Excited.
Clarke's lips almost threaten to upturn slightly because Octavia's eyes weren't harsh any more, they were curious but determined. "Then i'll try to find someone else, but they'll trust you and Lincoln more."

"Fine. I'll do it." Sharp green eyes flicker to the Ice Queen, still distrusting. "I still don't understand why she's going with you. If they hate traitors they must hate her for killing the Commander's beloved."

"We're blood tied." Clarke speaks lowly, so the workers of the Arc won't overhear. Won't tell her mother that Clarke traded blood with the Queen. There was too much on the line for her mother to judge and question and suspect betrayal. "They will not question her." Lincoln eyes their hands, nodding sharply at the words because blood was everything on the ground.

Raven clasp her hands together, grinning widely since the beginning of the speech. "Okay, now that that's over, what's next?"

Clarke bites her lips. "You need to be prepared for assassination attempts, attacks, anything. Keep your eyes open, keep any large weapons hidden." Clarke eyes the fences of Camp Jaha. Too many holes. Too many weaknesses. They may be electrified, but that didn't stop arrows. Raven sees the sharp eyes on the fence and nods quickly in understanding. "They don't need to know what you have packed up your sleeve."

Raven's eyes soften, and she stops moving in excitement. "Clarke?"

"What?" There is apprehension on her face.

"The mountain." Raven's words almost crack the blonde, almost crack the mechanic's own protective shell because treacherous things had happened in there. "It has weapons we can use."

Clarke trembles, eyes glazing over and the scars marking her shoulder burn. "I won't use a bomb Raven. We're not nuking them." Her words are shaking but harsh.

"Not what I was thinking." Raven's eyes soften, stepping closer to press near Clarke as Lincoln and Octavia watch with calculating eyes. Lincoln's gentle and understanding, Octavia's too bright. Too angry and accusing at the blonde. "If I can get into the back up vats in their chemical room, Jasper and I can make sulfur smoke bombs. Keep it hidden until the time comes."

"There's ammunition in there too." Bellamy's voice sounds from behind them, he stares at Clarke like he can't find out where she fits again, stiff shouldered, understanding but trust broken. She had left him here alone, a kiss to his cheek and four final words. "We've tried to no avail to get into the mountain. It won't budge."

Clarke's shoulders tremble because she had locked that mountain, never wanted anyone to see the inside again. "Baladan can get one person in, you can use the chutes to transport thing." Clarke shivers, hands trembling and she hopes Baladan will be okay, that his mind won't betray him like her body is betraying her right now. "He'll know the tunnels well."

His eyes are wild, hands twitching slightly. "Too well, but I will get you through." His eyes shift to Clarke, hand settling on her wrist, understanding in his eyes. Forgiveness. "When will we bring the others here?"

"They stay with the Ice." Clarke's heart aches for her riders, she wants the snores of them to grate her ears, Isole and Baladan's playful arguing. Baladan's soft smiles and longs for Isole's too bright grins, soft hands prodding into Clarke teasingly. She wants Nox's stories, arm gesturing wildly and eyes
darker than the night but just as soothing. She wants to be on the forest floor, fire burning in front of her, the smell of sweat, horses and food in the air with Aidan's stomach growling loudly. She wants the playful competitions back, the traveling from village to village with supplies and a need to help. She aches for home. For her riders. "They will protect them until the time comes."

"Isole will not like that." There is a wide grin on his face, teasing and knowing.

Clarke's lips twist in a homesick way, aching yet soft with memory. "She will be fine."

He laughs loudly, eyes bright and teasing. "You and I must be thinking of two different women. She will want to be at your side."

Her heart thunders and aches but she smiles slightly at him, head tilting to the warriors who wait beside him, silent and ready. "I'll have Aidan, Romona and Sar. I will be fine."

His eyes dance. "I pray you are the one to face her first when she arrives here."

Clarke wants the same thing, peace and Isole scolding her with worried eyes and a soft grin. No blood on the ground. No deaths on their shoulders. "Hopefully when they arrive there will be no blood shed."
"You were gone a day." Mikil eyes are concerned as he drops from the roof tops, curious and trusting. Clarke's eyes flicker to the Queen as an answer and Mikil nods sharply, understanding something had gone wrong as Asha pulls Sar into a tight embrace. "We'll watch the Heda."

"Mikil, be careful." She stares at him, aching to have all her riders with her now. Aching to have them in her sights where she couldn't possibly lose them. "There are to many sides we don't trust."

"I trust you and our riders only." His eyes are soft and trusting and have enough faith that it causes Clarke's heart to clench because he looked at her and saw her, not as the Death Bringer. Not as the Ursa or Clarke Griffin, daughter of chief medical and Chancellor. He and the other riders saw her as Clarke. Just Clarke. "Everyone is an enemy until proven otherwise."

Asha shifts on her feet, releasing Sar and stepping closer to Clarke, drinking in the familiar presence they had sorely missed that night. "The Commander will be in her house. Why are you here?"

Clarke clenches her jaw, eyes swirling with anger. "She needs to send warriors to the territory lines. The desert is invading the forest slowly, soon we will be surrounded."

Asha shakes her head, hands itching for the knife tucked into her belt. "It will spread the guards thin. Put her at risk."

Clarke tense. "I know, you and Mikil will watch her. If she dies there will be chaos."

"There is talks of uprisings." Asha's voice is low, eyes darting around. Danger lurks in Polis like it hadn't before. It was no longer the safe city it had once been.

"I know." And despite her best efforts, Clarke's heart races and her stomach drops. "Protect her." Asha slips into the crowd with Sar eyes following her every move. "She'll be fine Sar."

"S'not her i'm worried about." Sar voice dips low and her eyes bore into Clarke once she looses sight of her beloved. "I trust you with my life, but we are moving into suicidal territory."

Clarke steps closer, brows furrowed as Mikil slips back onto the rooftops of the city. "How?"

"You bring us to Polis, where political unrest is happening." Sar shifts, eyes darting around, Polis looks like danger hidden behind each corner, streets full of cloaked figures and shopkeepers with shifty feet and watching eyes. "Where the Desert Rat has his tiny little mice filling the city." Her eyes shift around, searching for those invading rats because they were here somewhere. Hiding and waiting. "If you send guards away from the city then it will fall."

"Then what do we do?" Clarke is close to pleading with Sar. Clarke needed more ideas, needed help because it felt like the world was resting on her shoulders once again.

"Calm your heart. Use your head. You want to save the Queen's beloved and daughter, but you do not think it through." Under a different command Sar wouldn't speak her mind, but this was Clarke. The woman who listened. The Spirit who heard. Who wouldn't clench her jaw at a challenge to her ideas. "We will go to the clans as you said but we must send groups to find the spies. Octavia cannot get all the nomads or the lost, no matter how much you hope."
"I know this already Sar." Clarke clenches her jaw, eyeing her warrior and narrowing her eyes but listening.

"The Commander will not believe you, just as she had yet to believe you the day before." Sar's eyes are calm as she steps closer to the blonde, her body hums with the proximity and Clarke's seems to emit an antsy air that sets everyone on edge, ready to fight and run or do something other than stand here. "She betrayed you, she is cautious."

Clarke listens but her blood rushes and thrums as it floods through her vein, heart racing as she bites her cheek and the Ursa doesn't roar in her. She's calm where Clarke rages, snaps and roars. "I should be cautious of her not the other way around." Her words are as sharp as her eyes.

"She broke a promise as Commander, retaliation is in progress and has been building for three years." Sar's eyes are hard, cautious yet full of danger and understanding. "It's coming, and she will need all her guards here because soon citizen will fall under his spell."

Clarke's eyes narrow, for as long as she had known of Polis, she knew the citizens had loved Lexa. "You think they'll betray her?"

"She's is untrustworthy." Sar shifts on her feet, fingers pressing into the scar in the crook of her elbow as her hands threaten to tremble. "She broke a promise to you, consequences have yet to come."

"Sar, the desert is invading the forest, we must do something."

"They're already among the forest and Polis. Our backs are targets." Her eyes are angry, there is danger all around them and sooner rather than later the ball will drop and everything will come crashing down. "She will not listen."

Hardened blue look up at Sar, the dark spots of her eyes that are impossibly angry. "I'll make her listen."

Clarke bursts through the door like she had so many times long ago and Lexa is thrown back into the past when Clarke would storm past doors and boundaries without a care, her face twisted into the same determined expression and blue eyes set hard and burning. Her shoulders stiffen and green eyes flash. "Clarke, you greet us with your presence so soon after going home."

"I went to the Sky Camp." Her words are sharp because home wasn't there, where it hurt and ached. "I must speak with you."

Lexa's eyes flicker to the two men sitting at the table. "I am in a meeting, which you have interrupted." The two Polis guards by the door are watching Clarke, fingers on their swords but their eyes flicker between the two of them, lost on who to follow. They were loyal to a fault for the Commander but the Ursa broke every bond they ever felt. The Ursa saved them all when the Commander had let the mountain live. The Ursa had a presence and a purpose that pulled warriors in and already their loyalties were tested.

"I have important matters to discuss." Her eyes flash dangerously so, with Aidan standing behind her, head tilted to the side and a smirk twisting at his lips. The Queen is beside Clarke, eyes watching the two men behind Lexa while Romona and Sar eye the guards suspiciously. "I'm sure they'll understand."

The Boat Clan leader shift in his seat, grinning widely, nets thick on his thighs. "I wish to hear what she has to say."
"And if it for the ear of the Commander only?" Clarke barks at him sharply, Romona sends her a sharp look. They needed the Clan's on their side and Clarke's harsh tongue would not help matters.

His grin widens, thankfully he is not insulted. "Then her ears alone shall hear it." He winks at her. "But I have a feeling you wish to talk to me and our friend here." He pats his hand against the shoulder of the Horse Clan General who grunts low in his throat, refusing to look at the Queen behind Clarke's shoulder.

Lexa stares at Clarke with a tight set to her jaw and shoulders. "Since The Ursa Clarke has demanded my presence she shall receive it." Her eyes turn to the two men. "You may wait here if you wish." Both nod and remain seated as Clarke follows Lexa from the room. The door is slammed shut behind the two of them, Lexa's hand pressing harshly into the wooden frame. Aidan snorts on the other side of the door, surveying the room as Sar sits near the two other Clan representatives here. Romona stays near the Queen, who stands stiffly in the room. Eyes red rimmed but steeled in an emotionless glare. "What is the meaning of this Clarke?" Lexa's words are as sharp as her eyes.

Clark shifts on her feet, straightening her back as she stares down the Commander. "The Desert sent the head of the Queen's elite Lieutenant."

Lexa's chin tilts up, gaze burning. "You are sure of this?"

"He had sand in his mouth." Clarke clenches her jaw, the Queen's low sound of distress echoing in her head. "It was a clear message."

"Anyone could have done that." Lexa's words are tense, muscles coiled tightly, her throat catches as it does when the thought of beheading crosses her mind. "A slayed Lieutenant does not mean much, why are you here?" There is a dance of images behind Lexa's eyelids. *Visions of death and blood. Above it all, with a fierce growl and eyes sparking in anger, stands Clarke, lips twisting into a bloodied sneer as blood trickles from cuts on her body. She is the vision of death and Lexa's heart stalls because Clarke could kill them all or she could save them all. The visions did not show her the loser, only a piece of the future. And she wants to trust Clarke, wants to put her faith in the woman like Clarke had done so long ago in Lexa, but her heart and head have never agreed and they wouldn't start now. Not with Clarke standing before her stronger than the day Lexa had left her."

"The Desert stole the Queen's beloved and child, he killed her elite and sent his head to us as a message." Clarke's muscles tremble with each word leaving her lips, her tone almost ordering Lexa to listen. "His people may have already invaded more than one Clan's territory."

"The Queen's child." Lexa whisper, eyes glazed. "A beloved and a child." There is disbelief in her word, face slack with confusion.

"Now is not the time to be thinking of revenge." Clarke's words are harsh, snapping Lexa from her mind.

Green eyes flash harshly and Lexa stiffens. "I will not harm a child!"

Clarke stiffens at the accusation in Lexa's tone. "I didn't say you would, but I need you to focus because I am trying to save your people, all of them."

"And I am trying to prevent a mutiny!" Lexa's hand tremble and Clarke almost opens her mouth but that moment of slight failure to control her emotions stops Clarke in her tracks and Lexa continues with tense shoulders. "The desert is not a large army but he holds more power than the other clans, he has ties in Polis that continue to grow and if I upset the balance the Coalition will fall. I will not have everything fall into chaos and blood." Lexa steps closer and the roles are reverse from so long
ago, Lexa no longer backing away into a table but stalking forward with trembling hands. "My people need to see me as strong. They need to see me as resolute. I will not send them into battles to break the coalition because that is what any enemy wants. They will use that as an excuse to overthrow me and I will not let them lead everyone in Polis into the ground."

"You're not helping because of political reasons?!" Clarke steps closer, Ursa pulsing beneath her and the Heda cries out in retaliation as they stand toe to toe. They hadn't been in one room together in a long time and their spirits rebel against one another, the emotions of the two women skewing everything. Skewing the innate peace un-tethered spirits held. "That's bullshit. Your people need you to defend them from a tyrant."

"I cannot send you any of my warriors." Lexa's face is stone but her eyes flicker with remorse and pain. "The forest is not to be seen as allied with the ones who break the coalition."

"He has an army rising." Her words crack as they leave her throat and she stand impossibly closer to the Commander. The Heda. Lexa.

Lexa almost adverts her eyes but her training, her way of life forces her to keep her eyes connected to Clarke's, even as she fractures every hole the blonde ever had again. "His people are not plentiful."

There's something dangerous lurking in Clarke as she glares at Lexa. "How many have you sent to the deserts? Lost, as traitors?"

"I do not see how this is relevant." Lexa's eyes are dark and her eyes flicker to Clarke's cheek before finding her eyes again.

"He has taken them in, all the nomadic groups, all the lost." Lexa's eyes widen a fraction of an inch and Clarke plows on, never stopping. "He's been collecting them for years and they all hate your guts. They want you dead for throwing them out and now, now he is pulling the strings of hundreds of people."

Lexa's eyes darken and there is a deeper tenseness to her shoulder. "They betrayed the clans, they couldn't stay in clan land. The sand was their only hope."

And Clarke's stomach skips because that's what her mother and Jaha had said when they sent them to the ground. They were disposable. Expendable and the ground was their 'hope'. Their 'last chance' and Clarke's chest burns as she speaks. "It was their prison sentence."

"I know where their camps are." Why shouldn't she, she's the Commander, she must keep track of where enemies may lie yet she had missed the Desert taking in the lost. "But there are children there."

"Tell me."

"I will not condemn children to death." Her words are sharp and Clarke flinches back, children with broils across their face flashing in her mind. Her stomach rolls because it had been a few months since the last vision of death from the mountain.

Clarke steps closer, face open like it had quit being. It holds truth and promise. "They will not die and you will have no ties to them."

"They saw you came in here to talk to me." And Lexa shifts, because this could tear everything down. "They will know."
"As are as they know you threw me out for speaking ill of the coalition." Clarke's lips twist and her throat spasms. "For hating you."

"Clarke." Her words shake and her eyes waiver as they bore into Clarke's.

"Lexa." Voice soft, like it once had been and Clarke is staring at Lexa not like she once had but she is staring all the same. Like the world may end if Lexa doesn't listen. "It's coming, faster than you know. I need your help."

"I do not trust you Clarke." Oh but she wants to. Her stomach churns with it and she swallows, continuing. "I want to but I cannot."

"You think I trust you?" Clarke eyes are bright with a fire Lexa had watched burn brighter and brighter so many years ago. It blazed with a new flame now, dark and more angry than before. It held a promise of danger. "I don't. You left me in the mountain. I don't trust you, but I need you."

"I make no promises."

"You were never good at those anyway." Clarke's eyes are harsh but there is an undertone of pain, hidden beneath an angry blue. Lexa's heart cascade, clenches at those words because there was so much emotion in those seven words.

With an aching heart Lexa shift her shoulders back, hardening green eyes. She can't help, hands tied by the title of Commander, tied by the obligations of the Coalition. "The Boat Clan is not friendly with the Desert, it is said that he has stolen many of the boat people and children." But she can offer up words, all that she can.

"You did nothing of it."

Eyes darken and flicker full of anguish to the floor before finding Clarke again. "There was no proof, children and warrior went missing plenty."

"When the reapers and mountain men stole them!" Clarke is explosive and angry, limbs trembling in the rage pouring out of her.

"The ground is a battle Clarke." Her words are as calm as they had been so many years ago. "And we must choose wisely."

"It isn't a matter of choice!" Clarke voice is loud and echos through the room. Sharp angry and too loud. Lexa clinches her jaw instead of flinching back as Clarke glares at her balefully. "We do what we can, no matter what."

"And that is where we differ, I must choose my battles wisely." And oh Lexa's eyes speak volumes, filled with so many emotions as she speaks. Too shattered by the things she seen and done but as stonic as ever. "You may do as you wish."

"You told me to be someone my people would look to and die for, where is that woman?" Clarke shakes her head, every memory of Lexa sharp and tainted as she glares up at the woman before her, both hardened by the years that had passed.

"My people no longer wish to die for me." And Lexa's words don't crack as they leave her throat but they threaten to, soft, broken and self loathing. "Not all of them."

"They question you." Clarke whispers softly, eyes sweeping over Lexa as the reality of their situation fills in.
"I broke a promise, I left the reapers in the mountain. I left the mountain men alive." Lexa's eyes are pained and angry but she swallows, pulling her shoulders back as she stares Clarke down like the blonde is hunting for a weakness. "They feel conflicted and angry by this."

Clarke eyes widen in astonishment. "They don't trust you any more."

"I made the choice that was best for my people, wartime decisions are seldom the one everyone agrees on." And Clarke does flinch back at this as Lexa eyes darken, not in remorse but pain. "My people hate the mountain, I left it standing and you tore it down."

Clarke heart stutters in her chest faltering as images of the past dance behind her eyes. Screams and blood. A bullet ripping through a man's chest. "I did what I had to to save my people."

"As did I. The road you choose is not a safe one Clarke." Lexa's eyes bore into Clarke's and Clarke's heart races, there are too may emotions and memories tied into that green that tangles, mixes and shatters everything Clarke ever thought when she landed on earth. Once upon a time those eyes hadn't made her flinch in betrayal and anger. Once upon a time those lips weren't so thinned by a stonic barely contained look of apprehension. Once upon a time Clarke had kissed those lips and said not yet, had let the promise leave her lips and all she want to scream now was 'never.' But Lexa's eyes are defensive but imploring and almost uneasy as she speaks and Clarke's heart aches. "Try and stay alive."

Clarke shakes her head, staring at Lexa like this isn't the first times she's seen her broken and worried. Stilted in her emotions. "And the road you choose is the wrong one, people are going to die and we need to fight."

"My choice must protect the coalition, the Clan's people must come first." And her hands don't tremble even as she tucks them into her lower back, shoulders too stiff and jaw too tight to be anything but a stubborn anger and resolution.

Clarke shakes her head sneering in anger, emotions always so close to the surface. "The clans will attack one another when this goes down."

"I must not choose a side or everything will fall." And she's seen it too many times not to be sure of it. Polis burning to the ground and in ruins and chaos before she comes back to the present, the laughter of children strengthening her resolve when she stood in the streets. "Polis cannot remain without a leader."

Clarke shakes her head, teeth grinding. "I'm leaving, I need to gather the Clan's to help. You won't stop me." There's that burning defiance in Clarke that set Lexa's entire being on fire, every inch of her screams at her to react but she stands tall and stiff.

"I do not wish to. I know what I must do and you know what you must do." Lexa dips her eyes low, eyes on Clarke before she blinks slowly, gaze full of promise. "The coalition will continue to be an illusion until it is torn down."

"What then?" Clarke stands, chest still and heart threatening to beat out of her chest.

Green eyes burn with a dark promise. "Then I fight."

Clarke leaves the room, storming out out it with a door thrown open wide and loud. Lexa on her tail lips thin in anger. "Escort her from the building." Lexa's eyes are hard, the Queen reaches for a knife as Romona stiffens with the emotions pouring off the two chosen by spirits. "She threatened the Coalition."
The two guard reach for Clarke and her warriors rise with hands itching to do something. Clarke shakes them all off, with a tilted chin and a glare to the guards. "It's fine. I can walk on my own."

Her warriors follow her out and the Queen send a last nod to the Horse General as the Boat Clan smirk's widely beneath sun-kissed skin. Eyes dancing as he looks to Lexa, she glare at him and his lips split into a broad, teeth baring grin. Almost too wide for his face. "I suppose our meeting is over then Heda?" His words are loose and happy.

Her gaze searches over him, calculating and stern. "We will continue to provide red-meat if you continue to provide the poison."

"Pleasure as always Heda, but we must be going." His lips are twisted into a wry grin.

Her eyes narrow. "And what did you see today."

His eyes dance once more. "The Ursa stormed in here demanding war, the Heda shut her down and threw her out." He shrugs, eyes still too bright. "Simple problems of leading."

Lexa glares at him, he may be an ally but knowledge was dangerous in times like these. "Do well to watch yourself."

He bows at the waist with a flourish, the Horse Clan general watching him with a wide expression, shifting his feet. "It has been a pleasure but there are more trades to be made." He tugs at the Horse General's thick wrist. "Come, the Commander has guard detail to work on. Dangerous times."

"Watch your tongue Eran, it may get you in trouble some day." Her fingers brush the knife on her hip as she glares at him, ties of the coalition did not mean trust.

"Of course Heda." He leaves the room, slipping out of the building and down the alley quietly and knocking in a sharp rap on a door. It opens to reveal Sar, Clarke behind her, suspicion on her face. "My dear Sar, so long has passed yet you still remember." His eyes are still too bright, too happy and jovial.

Sar snorts, tilting her head as she allows the two men through."It is hard to forget the code."

The Horse Clan shift nervously, his young large frame filling the doorway and the smiling Boat Clan laughs. "I know of your secret horse whisper. Do not worry. Sar is smart. An old adviser if you will." The General relaxes and the Queen offers him a stiff nod.

"Nothing has changed in the Ice?" Her eyes are imploring and un-naturally worried.

"No." He ducks his head, meeting her eyes with a gentleness of most of the Horse Clan. "Some of the Riders patrol the surrounding area, there was an invasion in one of the smaller villages. Missing trainer and child."

Polaris stiffens, eyes pain. "I know."

His eyes soften and he ducks his chin in remorse. "I prayed they were rumors. I must report back."

Polaris stare at hi before nodding with a loud swallow. "Thank you, be safe."

Clarke stands beside the Queen and he turns his gaze to her. "Stay strong Ursula, the roads ahead are always dark." His eyes bore into hers, a deep brown so dark the pupil almost hides beneath it. "But there is always light if you look or it. We are still on track."
The Queen steps forward, pressing her fingers into his shoulder as Clarke nods minuscule. "Thank you for protecting my people." Pale blue eyes dig into him sharp and grateful.

"No one deserves to die, I had hope the war was over, just as my father has." He gauges their reactions before he slips out of the room without another word, disappearing into the night.

Clarke turn to the Boat Clan, eyes calculating. "You already know of this?"

"It has been a long time coming." His eyes no longer dance, they focus on Clarke with a piercing intensity that sets her on edge. "Desert has always wanted more. Longed for more."

"And you?" She waits for the demand of land, Weapons.

"I want my people to live in peace without battle. Without blood and death." His eyes are swirling and he presses a finger to the tattoo and scar on his forearm. "I want to raise children without having to worry about their head falling to my feet. Bloodied and staring at me helplessly."

The room stills, they all wanted that. A small hope in a bundle of danger and death. "So you'll help us?"

His sun-tanned skin pulls tight into a grim yet determined expression. "My warriors will gladly take down the Desert's."

Clarke bites her lip, shoulders tense. "They are invading the forest already."

"We live in the water, but I can send warriors here." His fingers dance across his thigh, quick and spastic. "We'll need a place to rest."

Sar nods her head from Clarke's peripheral and Clarke relaxes because Sar trusted him and Clarke trusted her. "Camp Jaha would have room but the other Clans may not like it."

His lips twist into a wry grin, teeth flashing. "As far as they know we are working on trades and I don't trust your people enough so I brought warriors."

"What do we trade?"

"Fishing technique, nets, fish and you give me wood and metal for boats. Materials for tridents. Our forge does not burn as bright as yours does." His dark brown eyes swirl with mirth. "There are no rules to trading with those not in the coalition."

"Thank you." There is a small twirl of relief and hope blooming in Clarke's chest. They could do this.

"No reason to thank me." He stares at her like he can see the sinew of every muscle. The trail of all her thoughts. "I want my people safe and the Desert threatens it."

The Queen shifts with nerves behind Clarke, ready to leave this god-forsaken city as Romona and Aidan shift from their post watching the door and alley. "Do you know of any other clans?" There is a desperation in her eyes, a need to fix what she can. A hint of the girl who once landed on earth and evolved.

"The Wind will like the territory if the Desert leaves. They won't pick sides." He shrugs because Coalition did not mean peace. Coalition did not mean no sides. "Ocean is peaceful, you could abide by their need for peace." His eye brows jump to his hairline as he smirks. "After all you are the patron of peace and healing, they will listen to what you have to say."
"And the other clans?" Clarke grips her fingers tightly on the table, staring him down. An all too familiar feeling was coursing through her blood. Too alive and terrified to not have that anticipation of a battle. The worry of the aftermath.

"There are some that are rumored to be in the City of Light, it is near impossible to reach. We haven't seen any in a long while." His fingers brush across the map Sar had laid on the table. "The Mountain Clan live in the snow to the west. They keep to themselves, do not like petty squabbles. The Cave Clan has already chosen their side as have the Horse. The Woods or as you call them Tree is unavailable." His eyes spark. "The Commander cannot offer up her clan. You know well the Ice has chosen. The River Clan lives by the Horse but they are on the Commander's side. If she will not involve the Woods Clan they will not involve themselves." His dark eyes seem to lose their light at the revelation of decreasing numbers. "There are two more Clans, Iron and Vine Clan or as we call them the tree livers. The Iron Clan live behind walls forged from metal and create the best weapons. The Vine Clan live in the tree tops past the Horse Clan, their feet never touch the ground." His finger tighten on the knife at his thigh, over hand presses harshly into the map. "If you can sway them the desert would never see them coming."

"And the Iron?" Clarke stares at the map like it was the only hope in this battle. Could they really get enough Clan's or warriors to fight the Desert?

"Seldom involve themselves into skirmishes of the other clans. They provided weapons and warriors for the mountain and coalition but their leader has not been seen." He finishes marking the clan's on the map, slipping the charcoal back to Sar. "They send generals to the meetings."

Clarke speaks as the other stiffen. "Can we trust them?"

He snorts, brushing the dark coal marring his finger tips across his thighs. "You could ask them, but they won't let you past their gates. All their people live inside of it."

"No villages?"

"Villages lead to weaker points in fortresses." He points to the rough circle he had drawn on the map. "Corralled in the Iron City they have no threats."

"No freedom either." She eyes the spot, knows that the villagers must want the freedom. The feeling of being outside a wall. Away from the thumb of those caging them. Would they help if she spoke of peace? Of freedom? She worries her lip again, meeting the man from the boat's eyes.

He sighs, wiping the sweat from his brow. "That as well. I hope this helps you, but I must report back to my leader."

"I thought you were the leader?" She had watched him pull all the attention to himself in the room, calm the Horse Clan leader and speak as if he had done this all before.

"I'm the leader's brother, most believe me to lead by default but I am simply the image." He flashes his teeth in a wide grin, a common feature that he must do often as the lines around his eyes wrinkle. "I am the person, she is the mind."

"Thank you." She watches him shift, staring at her and pulling her apart with his eyes like he knows it.

His feet shift back and his eyes are soft. "I pray we win this oncoming disaster Ursa."

"I know." She can feel it pounding in her head, the insistent prayers to her. "Me too."
"I will bring supplies to the Sky Camp in a few days time, prepare your people." He slips a satchel over his shoulder, winking at Sar.

Clarke nods quickly, rolling the map up with deft fingers. "I will."

"Goodbye."

"Save travels." Clarke whispers gently, shoulders still stiff but not stone.

He snorts again, pulling his hood on his head as the nets on his thigh jingles with trinkets. "Safe journey bear-girl."

He leaves and Clarke whips around as her riders and the Queen step closer, waiting. "Romona, you're the fastest on a horse. Ride to Jaha, give the message to my mother, Baladan, Raven and Bellamy."

She shifts the bow on her back, pulling on thick leather gloves with the fingers free. "We'll meet on the trail."

They exit the building and creep through the alley as Clarke looks up to find the sky. "Follow the stars."

"Always do Clarke." Her eyes are bright. "May we meet on the sunrise."

"May we meet on this sunrise or the next." Clarke' eyes are solemn.

The Queen shifts on her feet full of nerves and anticipation. "Now what?"

"We look for clues to your beloved and child." Clarke's lungs are stiff with nerves and she forces an exhale out. "We collect Clans along the way."

The Queen's hands tremble, but her face is impassive. "How will we know?"

"I'll listen to the prayers." Clarke closes her eyes, pulling in a deep breath even as her lungs threaten to give and spasm. "Villagers will speak if they've had missing people lately, the Desert's nomads likes to steal them for fodder."

Sar grunts, eyes the Queen and Clarke with apprehension. "So we are looking for a hair in a pile of clothing?"

"We will find them." The is a desperate conviction in Clarke's tone, eyes too wide and bright.

The Queen steps closer, fingers itching across her hip and eyes narrowed as her hand trembles. "Every minute we don't know where they are the more they will be harmed."

"I know Polaris." Clarke has that look in her eyes, the one from so long ago. The promise and determination that Clarke had once given to her hundred whole heartedly. "But we will save them and we will save everyone else from the desert."

"We leave Polis now?" There is anticipation in her tone, deep and begging.

"The Commander would not offer her aid." Clarke's clenches her jaw as they make their way to the gates in the once crowded streets of Polis. Now there is danger lurking and empty streets. "I've warned her of their invasion and Mikil and Asha will continue to guard her and report to Baladan. It was all we could do."
"We must hurry." The Queen quickens her steps. "Every minute wasted is another we could spend looking." Clarke shifts, walking next to them but worrying her lip almost raw.

"The Commander will be here to fight with when we get back Clarke, let us go." Sar's words pull the two women from their talk.

Clarke scowls at Sar, eyes hard. "I'm not worried about her."

Sar snorts, shaking her head with a roll of her eyes. "You are."

Clarke clenches her fist as they slip through the gates, guards eyeing them. "I'm worried about the Coalition and Polis."

Sar stares at Clarke, tilting her head to the side and shaking it gentle. "The lies leaving your lips are obsolete."

"Where do we go next?" Aidan questions, shifting on the horse and fixing his gaze on the blonde leading them. Every village they had come across was full of villagers, very little warriors and Clarke had treated those she could, looking for signs of the two stolen and any influence of the Desert. There was nothing to be found. The villages were quiet and full of wary adults that kept children inside the gates and weapons drawn but no Desert warriors. No nomads and no trace of Polaris' daughter or beloved.

Clarke's eyes are wide as she speaks with a thick tongue. "The Ocean as fast as we can."

"Clarke." Polaris' voice is tight, hands trembling. She want's to cut this feeling away, this weakness she had exploited in others.

"It's a feeling Polaris." This tugging in her gut that hadn't been there before. "The Ursa is directing me to the Ocean. We go there first, as fast as we can."

The horses trot idly as they cover the ground as swift yet steady as possible, they ride like it is another form of breathing. Bodies molded to their mounts and moving as one. Years of riding their horse had given them an understanding and a bond. The queen shift on her horse every so often, used to the sleds pulled by the wolves and not the bouncing of this large beast gait. Her body longs for the ice again, this stickiness in the air leaving her skin sweaty and hair matted. Romona grins wryly as she watches the supposed cold hearted Queen shift on her horse again. Her knowing eyes find Clarke, the blonde's gaze intent ahead as she leads the way, instincts guiding her and her dark horse listens to her every breath. Feels the muscles and follows suggestions without a falter in its step. Moving as one Clarke leads them on their way to the Ocean. "I knew the Commander when she was just Lexa." Romona watches the falter of both rider and horse, too in-tuned together to really separate, even in their surprise.

Clarke turns to Romona, failing to look uninterested and unaffected as she narrows her eyes. "You grew up in the Tr- Woods Clan?"

Romona holds her smirk in, she had known Clarke long enough to read the subtle signs. "Yes, the same village as the Commander before she was chosen by the Heda."

"Why are you telling me this?" Clarke's words are bitten out with frustration but Romona takes no offense as she watches the twitch in the blonde's hand. Aidan remains silent as he rides beside a glowing Sar and a curious Queen.

Romona tilts her head to the side, taking in the sudden stiffness of the rider. "Because you look at her
"She broke her promise." Clarke's hands tremble as they grip the reins tightly. Creaking leather greeting their ears. "She left me to defeat the mountain."

"You feel the Ursa inside of you yes?" Clarke nods stiffly. "Right now we are following your instincts, same as Lexa did when she allied with you." Romona's words don't soften but her gaze is gentle and truthful. "Same as she did when she left you at the mountain."

"She betrayed me at the mountain, there is no excuse!" Clarke's legs tighten on her mount's flank and it grunts gently, shifting to canter faster as Clarke's emotions rage. "She promised to get them out. If I hadn't been chosen as Ursa my people would have died inside that mountain."

"The Spirits led her and gave her the information. Instincts, visions told her of the consequences. You tore down the mountain. Same as you follow your instincts now. The spirits knew the mountain would fall." Clarke clenches her jaw but remains silent as Romona keep a watchful eye on the blonde, three years had given her enough time to read her and Aidan shoots the rider a scowl because the former woods warrior had made the blonde tense and unresponsive. The horses speed up and Romona grits her teeth. Emotions were too high, Clarke still broken and tense over the betrayal, but the spirits led them all and Clarke was no different than Lexa. The spirits guided them but the two made their own decisions.

They stop near a river as night begins to set and Clarke stomach does not settle, it rolls in turmoil. "We can't stop."

Sar's eyes widen and her fingers pull her flask from the river as she stares at Clarke in shock. There was no moon tonight. No light to guide them. "The darkness hinders us."

"She's telling me we have to go. We need to hurry." She pauses, feeling inside of her, under the Ursa pulsing inside of her are the prayers. Loud and overlapping. Frantic. "How long have we been on the trails?"

"A week." Sar watches Clarke, blue eyes are glazing over and limbs move jerkily. "We'll make it to the Ocean soon. Then we must head home."

Clarke shakes her head, scramble to mount her horse with stiff trembling limbs. "We've spent to much time at the smaller villages."

Sar eyes the blonde, blue eyes are almost glazed over and the rider speaks, skeptically eyeing the blonde. "We helped them."

"Time. Time is running out. We have to hurry." The Ursa pulses and the horses snort, shifting on their feet and Polaris is on her horse with a start, chest heaving in worry, Romona beside her.

Aidan climbs atop his horse and spurs it from the river to Clarke's side and Sar throws the water jugs back on her saddle before jumping into the soft leather. "What's the deadline for?"

"Danger." Clarke's only response is almost monotone as her body seems to hone in on something before her horse is bolting forward. Few times had they seen her like this. Once when looking for a station of the Arc that was under duress of starving and another when a village had caught fire, Clarke's glazed eyes leading them into the unknown. Influenced by the Ursa. Conscious and responsive but mind set on what the Ursa suggested heavily.

They tear through the night and the scenery flies past them as they follow in Clarke's steps, Polaris shifts uneasily above her horse, heart and stomach churning nervously. The stars shift around and
around in the sky and the sound of hooves on the wet ground is continuous before there is movement in front of them. Without warning Clarke is flying off of her horse, launching herself from the saddle and slamming her body into a warrior patrolling the woods. His body makes a loud thud as branches crunch under them. She slips behind him as he gasps for breath, his fingers already on a knife as her arm wraps around his neck and her eyes are no longer glazed. "This is where she wanted me." She digs her elbow into his windpipe as she presses a knife into his ribs. He drops the knife with a grunt as she presses the tip of her own knife into his skin,

Polaris' eyes are searing and she jumps off her horse, stalking over to the warrior pinned to Clarke's chest. "Look at the cloak." Stitch into the pale cloak is the Ice Nation's coat of arms and on the left breast is the emblem of a horseshoe. "My beloved's." The Queen's voice drops to rage and worry.

Clarke bares her teeth as she spins and shoves his back into the ground, hand at his throat and knife pressing hard enough to draw blood from his neck. "Speak." He tilts his chin up away from the knife tip defiantly and Clarke growls, shoving him harder into the ground and digging her knees into his gut harshly. "I am the Ursa, do you know what I've done?" His eyes flicker momentarily and he swallows. "Tell me your clan."

His eyes harden and he glares at them, Romona's hands tight around a bow as she aims an arrow at his head. "I have no Clan." He spits out, glaring at Clarke in hatred.

"A nomad then." Her eyes flash dangerously and she presses harder with her hand, fingers tight on his wind pipe. "No clan to start a war with."

His teeth bare and his eyes are bright with a wild energy. "You kill me and the Sovereign will have your head."

Aidan grins with a hint teeth. "Wrong answer." Before he slams his boot into the nomad's temple, there is the distinct dull thunk of concussion as he falls unconscious. "Tie him or kill him?"

"Prisoner. Tie him to a tree, disarm him." Clarke shoves herself up off the body, rolling her shoulders and wiping the blood off her knife. "We'll need answers later."

Polaris is vibrating with energy and Aidan hands her the cloak after he pulls it off the nomad, she cradles it with shaky fingers and tight draw to her lips. "Their camp?"

Aidan grunts as he ties the man to the tree, gagging his mouth with swift knots as he speaks. "If it is a normal perimeter check then it should be a few hundred yards in any direct. Straight is the best answer."

Polaris turns to Clarke, hoping for a better answer. "The Ursa?"

The blonde shakes her head, gritting her teeth. "She can only lead me so far."

Polaris stands with a vibrating energy, hands tight on her weapons. "Let us go. Now."

"Sar, Aidan, distract the village when we get to it." Clarke tucks her knife back into her thigh sheath before rolling her shoulders again as she pulls another knife from her saddle, tucking it behind her belt on her lower back. "We'll need the distraction to break into whatever prison they will have."

Sar grits her teeth, fingers clenching and unclenching. "If it is holding her beloved it will be heavily guarded, not even a distraction will pull most of them away."

"That's why we have Romona." Her eyes flicker to the forest born warrior. "I need your stealth."
There is a grim determination in her eyes and she tightens her hand on her bow. "I have my arrows, they won't see me coming"

"Good, take out any you can. We'll bring the horses as close as we dare." Clarke slips her eyes over each of her warriors. "If you're in distress let out the signal."

Aidan grins widely, face twisting into excitement. "May we meet again on this sunrise."

"Or the next." Romona intones, dark eyes calculating as she searches the forest.

Sar grits her teeth, hands tightening on her sword. "With every suicide mission I fear we will be forced to meet on the sunrise in our next life. If it is so, I will see you then."

Clarke twitches her lips because these were her people. Her family and they would be together always, even after death. "May we meet on the sunrise in this life or our next." It's a promise, a hope and a goodbye all tied into words that had become their tether.

Polaris' eyes watch them and she shifts anxiously. "Preferably this one with my beloved and child."

They leave the horses standing still under a low canopy of trees, before creeping closer to the village. Around them are broken down walls of stone, the remnants of an old city long before the war happened a century ago. Sar shifts on her feet and Aidan takes off on his horse with a wide grin, opting to ride as a quicker target. Romona scales the trees, whistling lowly to Clarke, tone jumping and tipping, letting the blonde know the location of the most secure place. And Clarke moves forward flitting through the information. Right, left, straight, right, straight. Her mind races before calming, hand on her sword as Polaris stay to her right, fierce and ready.

They hear the shouts as the villagers and warriors discover Sar and Aidan. Clarke takes down the guard with a well thrown knife to his chest as the building comes into view, too many guards to be coincidental as they turn to the noise. Some chase to the sounds far across the little camp and the two rescuers burst through the door, a body behind them hidden by the shadows as the door slowly closes. They move as one, taking down the next guard inside easily.

Polaris catches his dead limp body and lowers him to the ground, silent to keep from alerting the others. They creep through the halls, dark and quiet and there are suddenly six on them in the shadow filled halls. With a struggle Clarke trips backwards over something and stumbles down some stairs. She barely manages to keep her feet under her, knees jarring and hands pressing into stone as the warriors rush down after her. She feels the floor level under her feet and brings her sword up in time to stop the heavy slice aimed at her neck. She brings her knife forward, relying on pure instinct. It connects with his ribs right as he slams the hilt of his sword into her face. He falls with a low grunt when Clarke twists the knife as it's jarred from her hand, blood dripping down his lips as Clarke stumble back, head ringing. One warrior jumps down the step, unprepared for Clarke to sweep her sword quickly even as her eyes struggle to focus, cutting into his throat as blood sprays across the room. Hot and sticky.

The other lunges at her with a long sword. She dodges, barely able to maneuver in the small confined area and feels his knuckle break across her cheek. She hits the wall, back stinging and he rushes forward with a growl. Her shoulders shove against the wall as she pushes off it and her body slams into him with extra force, the noise resounding as his own body hits the wall they were opposite of. He brings his elbow down onto her shoulder and she huffs in pain, bringing her foot down onto his toe before shoving harsh knuckles into his back, right above his kidney.

A pained groan leaves his lip and his breath catches in his throat before she drive her knuckles into the muscles above his vocal box. He grunts and chokes as he shoves her back. Her feet scramble to
find footing as she collides into the wall on the other side, the hallway too small and too dimly lit. He's wheezing across from her, her medical knowledge and hands too good. She brings her sword forward and swipes with all her might at him. She flinches back, reaching for his own sword as the blade catches against the leather guarding his chest. His hands bring a long sword forward and he brings it down in an arc at the blonde, muscles rippling at the force. Clarke slips under it easily enough as it clangs into the wall. The hallway too tiny for his long sword and even larger frame.

She ducks behind him and brings her sword to cut into the back of his knee. He stumbles with a low groan, falling to one knee even as he spins mid motion and slices across her right arm. She hisses in pain before running him through with her sword. Her shoulders heave as she fights to catch her breath, ribs and back aching, her fingers tighten on the sword before the sound of footsteps on stairs greet her and she's bracing herself as a body slams into her smaller frame. It lifts her off the ground and they go skidding down the hall. Rolling over one another and across the hard ground.

They scramble around for weapons, Clarke's sword still in the guard down the hall and her knife in the other. Her fingers find the one on her belt, curling around it like a gentle caress. She pants, staring the man down as blood drips down her right arm, left hand ready to slip the knife into any opening. He glares at her, devoid of any clan colors or insignia and she knows he's another nomad. Another lost that the Desert had snatch up and offered salvation. "You don't want to do this." Clarke speaks quietly, hand at the ready. He ignores her, scowling before stepping forward, his sword comes down and she ducks near the wall, rolling from under it as it strikes sparks against the stone. He charges at her and she slips under his arm, shoves the knife into his rib and slams his hand into the wall with a thrust of her own.

He grunts, sword falling with a clatter but he continues forward, ripping the knife from his side and dropping it with a snarl. Forgoing weapons he charges for her, hand twisted harshly into claws as he shoves into her hard enough to make her head snap against the wall. A low groan leave her throat before her knee is coming up and crunching into his crotch. The warrior lets out a deep grunt as his hands loosen from Clarke's throat and she stumbles to her knees, panting for air. Her hand scrambles around for a weapon as he charges at her, gait wobbly. She latches onto the rock below her fingers and stands quickly, thrusting her hand in a wide arc. There is a crunch as it meets his temple and he staggers, eyes dazed. Before he can shake the dizziness away she wraps one hand around his chin and head, twisting viciously. There is a resounding crack in the tunnel and she feels the crunch of his neck breaking in her hands. His body falls limply to the ground and Clarke pulls in deep lungfuls of musky air.

There are bruises already forming across her back and with a deep sigh she stands, grabbing her two knives and reaching across the dark floor to pull her sword from the cooling guard. The blood drips slowly down her right arm as she stands in the narrow hallway. There are three directions to go and her head aches from connecting with the wall. It is too dark to tell where the stairs were and with a sigh she looks behind her, the hallway is opening into a large room and with quiet feet she heads towards the open. As she gets closer, slowly the room lighting up an almost natural light, she spots a form in the middle. Her fingers tighten on her sword and she sticks to the shadows, stepping closer and closer until her feet freeze and her chest stills in shock.

Tied in the middle of the opening, light streaming in cracking windows is someone Clarke had hoped she'd see again soon, but not like this. "Isole?" Her whisper is soft, upset and confused before the blonde is stepping forward, forgetting for half a second. The brown eyed woman shakes her head minimally, pulling at her binds like she means to escape and Clarke stops, stills her movements and allows the Ursä to feel as Isole stills and ducks her chin into her chest, eyes still on Clarke. Clarke shoves her feelings down, the anger, the worry and focuses on feeling with the spirit inside of her.

Isole doesn't tremble even as her body threatens to give up on her. "I can't, I don't." Clarke's words
are soft, broken because the Ursa could only go so far and right now it was telling her there were too many warriors. There was a dullness to Clarke's thoughts as her head throbs in tune with her heartbeat. Brown eyes flicker to the alcoves above them, Clarke hidden from the view of those atop the alcoves due to the pillars. Isole is once looking past Clarke, not acknowledging her. And Clarke could read Isole like a book, understood the woman better than herself and her shoulders stiffen. This was looking grimmer by the second. There were archers ready to shoot Clarke when she went for Isole, and they both knew it. Something dark and dangerous filters in her chest. Broiling, rolling and twisting like the fog across the lakes.

Clarke pulls in a deep breath, smells the sweat, metal and blood of this place. Her heart slows, her head stops throbbing and her muscles tense before relaxing. Blue eyes sweep around the room and she nods her head to Isole. Dark eyes almost widen before they narrow in anger. There is a harsh look in the former ice warrior's gaze, almost yelling at Clarke to not do it. To choose a different path. And Clarke inhales sharply a few more time, vision narrowing on her target and her escape route. Her hands clench and unclench before her body is loose like an arrow leaving a bow. Racing forward there is an extra force of will, of a bear protecting it's family and suddenly Clarke is in the open, torch light dancing across her pale hair. There is the soft snick of arrows being released as Clarke slams her body into the captured rider's, forward and up with enough force to send them sprawling across the floor and under one of the awnings. There is pain but they are hidden from the warriors gazes.

There is blood on the floor, slick and red but Clarke is cutting away the bindings and yanking her rider to her feet. Arrows fly at them and Clarke presses Isole into the wall as she cuts the binding on her feet before they slip down the hall, Clarke pressing a knife into the worn rider's hands. Isole is weak from hunger and pain but she keeps up with Clarke, bare feet pounding against the stones as the tunnels grow darker and darker. Clarke has her fingers pressed into Isole's forearm as she pulls in lungfuls of air. Nose twitching as the Ursa finally works inside of her, spirit tugging her in directions. Nose picking up scents she should not be able to smell as her head clears.

She inhales sharply again and again, seeking a new scent, running on instincts before she finds it. With quick steps they find their way down the dark halls until the moonlight begins to fill the stones with an ominous throw of shadows. With one last inhale she finds the woman she is looking for, ten warriors dead at her feet. There is blood coating the floor in a slick sheen. Pale blue eyes are wild with desperation and chest heaving as blood drips down her body, half of it not her own. She spins with a flash of teeth bared in a snarl. When she recognizes Clarke her feet shift and she nods sharply, chin tilting to the door. Clarke grips her sword tighter and nods with a soft tilt of her chin, stepping closer with Isole beside her. The Queen kicks down the door with a splinter of weak wood and the three race through it before swords are drawn on them. There are eyes wide in shock and training forces the warriors to pull their swords up in time to save their necks as these three women tear through the room with a vengeance. There's the clash of metal on metal over and over again. Two bound bodies lay limply in the corner. Dead or unconscious and Clarke fears for the worst as the seven warriors surround them.

The Queen rips into them like a feral wolf, teeth barred and moves wild and strong, too unpredictable for them as she takes the hand off of one of the warriors before shoving the knife through another's chin. There is a knife in her shoulder and blood splattered across her face but she doesn't flinch or slip back, she attacks and attacks. Blood spraying and coating the floor from her sword as Isole snaps the shoulder of a man before twisting his neck harshly, bare feet slipping in the blood now coating the floor. Clarke buries her sword into the gut of another and rips up, tearing through his liver as he chokes on his blood before spinning and slicing open another warrior's throat when Isole shoves him towards Clarke. The Queen is pinned beneath another warrior before her hands finds his crotch and digs in, ripping up as the man howls in pain. As he rolls over she takes a knife and buries it in his eye with a shout of rage before she stumbles to her feet, the room is silent as she limps towards the two
bodies. "Sophia." Her words are an order and a plea, wrapped together tightly and pained.

Grey eyes flutter open under a small rounded face with too sharp of cheek bones as the woman kneels near the bodies. "Nomon." There is a gap between small teeth and blood splattered across the young child's face. Ratty and bloodied brown almost dirty blonde hair is plastered to pale cheeks and forehead.


Grey eyes steel and her chin, so like her mother's, tilts up defiantly. "I will be fine, mama Amia was hurt."

Polaris presses a kiss to the forehead of her child, eyes closed blissfully before turning to Clarke and Isole. Isole steps forward, hand pressing against the child's shoulder and other hand tightened on a sword she picked up as her eyes look for danger around them. Clarke steps forward, fingers pressing into the woman's throat with a softness that makes Polaris relax slightly. Her hair is a bloodied brown. Her skin looks almost pale under the soft light, yet tan, hidden under all the blood and dirt clinging to it. There is a sickness, a gauntness to her face, worse than Sophia's as Clarke listens carefully to her lungs. The breath is labored, but barely able to hear. Slightly raspy as they escape a nose caked in blood. Clarke pulls her arms down and flinches at the state of the woman's arms. There are three missing fingers on her left hand, the wounds weren't bleeding but her skin was too pale, the loss of blood plentiful.

Clarke slips fingers to find any more wounds and she her entire body recoils at the familiar feel of branded flesh, lumpy and too hot to the touch. "I need to get her someplace else. Her wounds could get infected."

"The others, the riders you brought with you." Isole's words are knowing as the child leans into her touch, watching Clarke and her mother stand over her injured mother. "Where are they?"

"West side of camp, distractions." Clarke shifts to her feet, eyeing the women in the room before coming to a decision. "Get them to safety, I need to grab medical supplies."

Isole presses forward, bare feet slick with blood as the child trails after her, Polaris gripping a bloodied hand, jaw and shoulder bunched tightly in anxiety. "You are a healer, we do not know what to do. You will stay with them, keep them stable until we have medicine. I will get it."

"Isole." Sharp brown eyes find hers and Clarke sighs before resigning to the inevitable. "How will you know what to look for?"

"We have had plenty of injured in our years together. I will know what to look for." She steps closer, hands gripping Clarke tightly. "Thank you for coming for me." Her words crack. "Until the next sunrise."

Clarke tightens her fingers around the woman's. "In this life or the next Isole."

"In this life." Isole's eyes dance before she is tearing from the room.

Clarke winces as she bends to pick up the woman. The Queen's hand on her shoulder stops her. "I will carry her, you are injured."

"I am fine." The blood and pained wince across Clarke face betrays her pain. With a sarcastic tilt of her chin to the other woman's shoulder she presses a cloth into the broken arrow in her side.
"You wince and bleed from your side, I can carry my beloved." Polaris bends down and with a slight grunt as the weight pulls at the knife still in her shoulder she stands straight. "I am fine, you will watch my daughter."

The halls are dark and reek of blood. The child grips the belt loop of Clarke's pants with stiff fingers as Polaris cradles her beloved with one arm, the other tense with a sword, blood trailing down it. Her eyes flicker from her daughter to her beloved and back to the hallway. Clarke moves to pick the child up and grey eyes glare at her with the ferocity of a wild animal and Clarke feels a smile tug at her lips as she hands the young one a knife. Teeth flash under pale lips and grey eyes brighten as small finger wrap around a too big knife with too much experience.

The prison is eerily empty and Clarke's hairs are standing on end as she pulls Sophie closer into her side. Thin fingers tugging harshly at her belt loop. The Queen's jaw is twitching in anxiety. She leads them down the halls until they reach a steel door, Clarke opens it with sharp eyes and a child pressed into her back hidden. There is a bright light, too bright to be natural and as they step out of the tunnels under the prison there is utter chaos. There are screams and panicked shouts as villagers and remaining warriors struggle to put out a fire burning away at a meat hut.

Ash covers the street and soot-filled water trickles down the hill, not a drop of villager blood spilled even as ten warriors slump dead against the walls, arrows embedded in their skulls and chests. The child presses closer into Clarke's back as the fire blazes on. There is a long soulful whistle that echos throughout the camp. Clarke whistles shrilly back and leads Polaris and Sophia to the edge of the camp, slipping through the darkness saturated with fire easily. She finds her group of three easily. Romona still in a tree, her horse standing below her as Aidan and Sar sit on their own mounts, the Queen's and Clarke leading nervously beside them. Clarke leads the child to Sar and with a wince helps the rider pull the girl onto the saddle.

Polaris seems ignorant of her injuries as she sets her beloved on the saddle and climbs up behind her with little difficulty, throwing the cloak they had taken back from the warrior over her beloved. Clarke winces as she climbs onto her own horse, Aidan shifting nervously beside her as Romona keeps her bow drawn and ready. The seconds tick by, her warriors waiting with baited breath for Clarke to lead them away and when Clarke is almost ready to jump off her horse and race into the fire Isole is stumbling through the forest with bare feet and a wide grin. There is fresh blood on her face and a cut above her eyes but supplies on her back as she makes it to them. She easily slips onto Romona's horse and the former forest warrior grunts low in her throat as she jumps from the tree to land on Aidan's horse. The man chuckles lowly but turns his horse to follow the others as Isole rides up to be on Clarke's right, he shoots the woman a wide happy grin but remains silent. "Told you I'd get them." Isole's lips curve into a small smirk.

"You were injured." Clarke bites out, shifting her eyes to the blood trickling down Isole's pale face. "As were you." Her eyes flicker to Clarke's side and the blonde rolls her eyes before they find the Queen, who looks between her daughter and the woman in her arms. Mostly her eyes fall back to her daughter, over and over again as Sar rides next to her. The horses trample through the forest at a leisurely pace.

There are no shouts following them and Clarke turns her gaze to the too dark forest before she speaks to Aidan. "Where is the nomad you tied up?"

The man tips his chin to Sar. "She took care of it."

"I got the information I needed and killed him." Sar's voice is unusually tight as she holds the child to her chest, blanket tucked around the child's frail shoulders. "He would have told the Desert rat everything."
And Clarke stares at the woman, knows he must have done something. Aidan speaks lowly, Romona's hand pressing into his ribs. "He knew that Asha was in the Capital, he knew Asha from before he was banished."

Clarke's eyes twitch and a growl builds in her chest. "He threatened her?"

Aidan's eyes are as vicious as Clarke's own as he glares into the night. "Very heavily."

"I killed him before he could kill her." Sar's words are unforgiving and furious.

"How'd he know you were hers?" Clarke flickers her eyes to the normally calm woman.

Fingers press into the necklace at her throat and her jaw ticks but Clarke nods, fine with the silent communication and the woman's need to be quiet. She gently holds the child in her arms. Grey eyes are shut and Sophia slumbers like she hadn't slept in a long while.

They ride until the camp is far behind them and the horses are panting with exertion. Clarke pats her mount with gentle fingers before sipping down with a wince. Her fingers press into her side before she is pulling at the saddle. Aidan comes up next to her. "I will get the horses, fix the Queen's beloved."

Clarke turns her eyes to the woman who lays her beloved down gently on a sleeping roll before pulling her daughter into her arms and breathing deeply, shoulders stiff but more relaxed than they had been in a long time. Clarke walks over to them. "Can I look over their injuries?"

The Queen nods quickly and Clarke kneels down to be at eye level with the young child. "Does it hurt anywhere?"

Her eyes flicker to her mother and the Queen's lips twitch but she nods softly. The little girl grips her mother's finger. "My stomach, but I think I am hungry."

"May I?" Clarke motions to the child's stomach and she get a suspicious nod and Clarke is gently pressing her fingers into a thin stomach before the girl lets out a childish giggle and flinches away.

"That tickled."

Clarke smiles. "Sorry." Polaris continues to observed each spot the child points at and Clarke checks, until Clarke relaxes with a soft smile. "She's fine, she just needs to eat and drink slowly. Some sleep and a bath will do her good."

The little girl's eyes narrow. "Well you stink too." Her chin tips up in defiance. "You need a bath."

Clarke chuckles as the Queen smiles and leads her daughter over to Sar, explaining the rest of the English gently. Clarke listens to the woman's breathing as Polaris comes back over. "Sar is good with her." The woman's shoulder slump in relief as she speaks.

"Children like her, she likes them." Clarke looks up. "I need fresh water, preferable warm." With a jerky nod the Queen sets off to do the task as Isole flops down beside Clarke. Clarke's eyes flicker up swiftly to take in her rider. "You need to clean your feet off, Aidan will have some boots for you."

The woman chuckles, shoving the bag full of supplies into Clarke's hands with a shake of her head. "Treat Amia, I'll worry about the other three and myself." Clarke raises her eyebrow and brown eyes twinkle with amusement. "I was competent before I met you Clarke. We'll be fine." With those words she press her fingers into the palm of Clarke's hand before standing and leaving.
Clarke's fingers and hands are steady even as her shoulders shake. The woman is stripped down, laying on the blanket almost nude and Clarke wants to retch and press her hands into her eyes until the image before her is burned away. Amia is a bloodied broken mess on the bed roll. Clarke takes the warm water and begins to gently wipe away the dirt and blood, unveiling more and more damage. Clarke slowly dips the hand missing three fingers into the water, the thumb and index finger twitch slightly but the woman makes no sound, eyes closed and face relaxed in it's forced unconscious state.

Polaris brings another bowl of warmed water, the metal hot from the fire Aidan plays with. Pale blue eyes are anguished as she leans down to help Clarke clean the grime from her beloved as Sar distracts young Sophia. Clarke's fingers gently removed the dirt from the hot puckered brands across the woman's hip bones, Clarke's own scars flaring in sympathy. The brands on Amia are the harsh sloping of the Desert's insignia, the sand dunes. They mar her collar bones, bright red and all too familiar to Clarke who wears the insignia of a murderer burned into her skin. Clarke removes the blood caked to the woman's sides, gashes red with slight infection and her hands tremble, this was too familiar. Polaris makes a low sound in her throat and Clarke turns to look at the queen holding her beloved's hands. "Her palms." The words crack as they leave pale lips and Clarke looks down, heart pounding her chest with anguish. The brands stained the middle of her palm, a tortured reminder that the desert did what they pleased with her. Marked her as their prisoner. "I'll kill them all." Polaris' voice trembles with rage.

Clarke shakes her head, looking up at the woman who ruled the Ice. Who burned with a fire like no other. "Polaris." She understands but there is a warning in the dip of her voice.

Eyes wild with anger turn to Clarke. "They'll die and bleed by my hand. By my sword and teeth." The words are low but dangerous. "I will rip out their throats with my teeth if i need too!" Her normal steady hands tremble in rage. "I'll burn them to the ground."

"Polaris." Clarke's word are biting but the queen stills in her rage and Clarke stares at her. "There are children, innocents. You don't want their deaths on your hands."

"They will pay Clarke. I promise that." Her muscles are too tight and full of rage. Unkempt and crazed.

"He will pay, we will win and he will pay but we will not kill children." Clarke's chest is closing in on her as she speaks, words catching in her throat. "We will not burn down the entire desert. Not all of them are guilty."

Polaris stares at Clarke and Clarke can see the danger there, the thing that set most people on edge about the Queen. An almost animalistic feralness and lack of emotion. "Not all of them are innocent Clarke."

"You don't want children's deaths on you hand. They will haunt you until your dying days Polaris. Believe me." And Polaris watches the pain and grief and guilt swirl in Clarke's eyes before she ducks her chin in agreement. Silent but still pulsing with rage.

They continue to clean the horse trainer, finding more brands on the blades of her shoulder, bones prominent beneath the angry red marks. "Most of these will need to be stitched." Clarke painstakingly brushes dried blood and dirt form the numerous cuts marring her body. "I can reset her nose once we're done." Clarke finishes wiping the blood from Amia's mouth only to pry her lips open and gasp in shock because there is blood coating the inside of her mouth. "They tried to cut her tongue out." Clarke's hands tremble. "They tried to silence her." Slowly bruises show under all the grime, finger prints around her neck, purple and stark against sickly pale skin.
"Clarke." Polaris' voice is choked and shatters the air from Clarke's lungs. "They burned her feet. They burned her with fire." The Queen's eyes are glazed as she stares at the blistered flesh that she had found.

"We need to get her to the nearest stream, it should still be warm enough to be safe." Clarke steadily finishes cleaning the long wound that was edged in red and heat. "Don't press into the blisters, the dirt needs to wash away carefully in the stream. If we press on it they'll burst and it will be more painful for her. A better chance of infection." Clarke stands up on shaky legs. "Aidan I need you to carry her to the stream. Be careful with her ribs and left wrist, they're broken."

The man carefully lifts her up, laying a fur blanket over her as they make their trek to the stream a few yards away and Clarke yanks off her boots and pants before wading into the water, the Queen follows suit as Aidan walks in fully clothed, leaving the blanket on the bank as he lowers her into the water. Clarke holds a thin cloth as she steps closer and there is a sharp intake of air before water splashes everywhere. Aidan lets out a surprised shout as the woman in his arms drives a knee into his ribs and latches onto his neck as she slips over his back. Her feet bury into the mud at the bottom of the stream as her arms tighten around his neck despite the pain in her features.

Aidan grunts with wide eyes, there is fear etched into the wrinkles of his eyes. His life is in her hand and they all know it. She grips his throat tight enough to make black spots appear in his vision. With a single twist she could break his neck and he holds his hands by his side limply watching Clarke and Polaris as the woman holding him screams for Sophia, eyes glazed with exhaustion and pain. "Where is she!? I will kill him."

Polaris steps closer to them. "Amia, let them help you." Polaris stares at the woman with pleading hands. The woman stares at Polaris before she releases Aidan with a soft shocked exhale of air; stumbling forward with a wince. She is caught by Aidan's hands, Polaris rushing to her side as her body falls limp. Dark eyes flutter open as Aidan carefully slips his arm under her knee, surprisingly they are bright with awareness. "He'll come for you." Her eyes roll in the back of her head and Aidan finishes lifting her with a calm precaution.

"Is she clean enough now?"

Clarke inspects the woman quietly, wiping away dirt and letting it flow down the steam until she is clean of the nomad's prison. They walk to the edge of the stream and Aidan wraps Clarke's offered blanket around the wet woman. They make the trek back to camp and the other advert their eyes are Clarke and Polaris strip the woman of her thin undergarments they had left on her and dry her off. They slip dry undergarments onto her as Clarke begins to stitch the gaping wounds, dribbling moonshine on them to disinfect them as she carefully rubs herbs around and in the wounds. Once she is done the woman is slipped into loose but warm clothing and tucked into a sleeping roll, she is still too pale for comfort as Clarke wraps a seaweed infused cloth around her left hand, over the spot where her fingers used to be as she binds a splint to the same wrist. Thick blankets are tucked over her as Clarke moves to brew a seaweed tea.

Brown eyes flutter open as Clarke presses the cup to Amia's mouth. She sips at it before seemingly recognizing it and taking a longer drink with a grimace. Her eyes find Sophia's and she relaxes back into a pain filled sleep. Clarke sighs as the woman closes her eyes, Polaris sits down beside her, having come from comforting Sophia.

Across from them Isole is stitching up a wound on Sar's side, the injured woman glaring at the ground as Aidan huffs and laughs with the two of them, throwing his wet clothing over a rock by the fire. Romona gently pats down Sophia's wet hair, the young child having taken a dip in the stream to
clean up. Now she was curling into the pelts and listening to Romona tell story after story.

"You need your own wounds cleaned." Polaris offers a cloth and Clarke wipes her own face down with a wince before the Queen take the initiative to clean the split knuckles on Clarke's left hand. "Is the arrow still embedded in your side?"

Clarke grunts as she presses some herbs to the split in her cheek and lip. "It broke off when I helped Isole escape, I left it in so I wouldn't bleed out."

"You're lucky it was not poisoned." The Queen mutters out, pulling up slowly on the blonde's shirt as she focuses on the arrow. The wound was through and trough, the head already broken off.

"I knew it wouldn't be poisoned, they were waiting for me." Clarke's fingers tighten in the dirt as Polaris fingers the skin around the arrow, looking for any problems before she begins. Clarke's lets out a sharp breath at the pain. "They knew I was faster than them. Something was happening, they were baiting me and I don't know why."

Polaris lets out a low sound of confirmation as she pries the remaining arrow from Clarke's side, right above her hip. Pale hands still and the Queen stares at Clarke. The blonde closes her eyes with a soft sigh as the Queen's gaze moves to the scars on Clarke's hip before pulling the shirt slightly higher. "You've been tortured. Same as her.

The pale puckered skin stands out greatly on Clarke's slightly tan skin, forever etched into the sigil of a murderer. The burn scars on her clavicle are raised and white, thick from healing. Polaris stares at them, eyes flickering to her beloved, pained. Clarke's fingers brush across the raised skin of her own body. "Yes."

"How much pain is she in?" The Queen's fingers still on the scars before she begins to stitch the arrow wound together. "Will she be in?"

"More than I ever was." Clarke swallows because it had hurt, god it had hurt. But she had fought through it, through the blood dripping down her and the press of scars on her back. Covered in small marks of the dead she had fought. "But she is strong. She protected you and your daughter."

"She should not have had to! I should have cut them from my life long ago." Her words are harsh, unforgiving and full of so much guilt and pain. "My daughter was a mistake that turned into a blessing. She was the only thing I could love and I should have given her up completely." Pale blue eyes dig into Clarke, keeping her attention and winter pale hands tremble. "I knew she was a weakness so I gave her to the horse trainer. Told Amia to take my daughter and to stay as far away from me as they could." Her gaze falls to the stars in the sky with a thick swallow. "I lasted a few moons before I ached for my child."

The needle digs into her skin, pulling the hole together tightly, Clarke bites back a wince. "How old is she?"

"Six winters." Polaris stares at the blood coating her hands with a haunted look. "Six cold winters."

"What happened?"

The Queen's eyes glaze with memories before she finds Clarke's again, her chin tips up and she stares right at Clarke, no remorse. "I killed Costia six and a half winters ago, before I knew I was pregnant. I knew what weakness was and how it ended. I couldn't let that happen to her." Her eyes turn haunted. "But it did."

Clarke grips a shaking hand as she speaks, the look bites at her heart. Reminding her so long ago of
Lexa. OF green eyes broken by greif and guilt. "They're alive, safe."

"At what cost?" Pale skin is pulled tight into an anguished expression. So full of guilt. "They are loved by me."

Clarke leans closer, grips the thin pale fingers under her hand. Right now the woman before her did not seem like she could lead an entire army, let alone tear apart the Woods Clan like she had tried. "We will take home or take them to my camp, they will be safe."

"The ice is no longer safe for them." She aches for the cold, for the thin air in her lungs and the icy wind biting her flesh. The snow beneath her feet and the wolves dragging her through the snow as they lead the hunt. "No longer safe for your warriors or my people."

Clarke eyes dart, thinking and calculating as she always had done. "He is wasting warriors up there, keeping them there to watch you."

There is suspicion in pale eyes. "What of it?"

"We can leave our people up in the City of Ice where he will waste warriors watching them, or we can bring them all down here. Place them in camp Jaha." Clarke swallows, the two sides warring inside of her. Bring them home or leave them there. "The journey here would be dangerous."

Polaris' shoulders slump and her hand falls from the stitches she had finished. "Most of my warriors are dead." Her jaw clenches and she lets out a harsh breath. "Most of the remaining would not leave the Ice."

There is relief but pain in Clarke's slumping shoulders. "Then they stay there."

"We need my remaining warriors." Her fingers grip her own thigh tightly, jaw clenched. "But I do not want to leave my people un-protected."

"We're figure it out." Clarke tilts her gaze to the sky, the Ice Nation was almost decimated by the Cave Dwellers, by the sickness and their spears. "They may be safer in the Ice than down here. We have time."

"Not enough."

"Never enough." Clarke pauses, looking to the two new members of the group. "You can go back with them to Jaha if you want."

"No." Fingers dig into the scar on her palm as her eyes bore into Clarke's. "I am indebted to you."

"You can leave, stay with your family." Bloodied fingers pull her own shirt back over her head with a wince. "Death is coming."

There is a fierce determination in Polaris' eyes are she stares at her daughter and her beloved. "They will be safer away from me and I will help end this before it starts, before they can be hurt even more."

"Nomon." Sophia's grey eyes are searching and Polaris falls to her knees beside the small child, petting dirty blonde hair back from a pale forehead. "Nomon."

"I am here my sweet. I am here." The young girl throws arms tightly around Polaris' neck, squeezing with enough force to cause the Queen to grunt and fall from her crouched position to her butt. She
clings to her daughter, pulling in deep lungfuls of air, face buried in her neck. "My sweet girl."

"The Sand man said he'd kill you. He said you would die." She clings to her mother with the desperation of one who had almost lost what they love.

Polaris rocks them back and forth, hands tightening in her daughter shirt, wrinkling it. "I am here. I am here."

"Nomon Amia, she did not scream." Soft grey eyes that bring and untold amount of memories and pain to the Queen's heart stare back up at her through her daughter's eyes. They hold pride, love and determination.

"I know." Her words crack in her throat.

There is a defiant tilt of an already strong chin and bright grey eyes. "She didn't let him touch me."

Polaris has tears filling her eyes before they fall in small streaks down her cheeks. "Ai get in." Polaris clings to her daughter, trembling. "I know." She rocks her back and forth, pulling in shuttering breaths. "Ai get in."

Grey eyes too knowledgeable and young look up into her mother's pale blue. "Is she gone?"

"No. No. She's sleeping." She shakes her head, hands shaking as they pet at her daughters cheeks, dry as her own soak with tears. "Clarke saved her."

There are tears in her child's eyes now, and a hopeful lit to her voice. "She will be fine?"

"She will live." Polaris' words are tight but her daughter doesn't catch the rephrasing of words. Nor the pain in her mother's voice, but there is a bone deep relief makes the child sag into her mother's chest.

"I am glad." She pulls back from her mother. "Can I sit by her, would that be alright?"

Polaris' brushes the dark blonde hair from her daughter's face, so unlike her own dark locks. "She is your nomon, you needn't ask."

"You are my Nomon too." The young girl presses a sloppy kiss to her mother's wet cheek. "Will you come with me?"

Her throat closes around her words and she chokes through her tears. "Always sweet one."

Polaris stands, her daughter yanking her towards her beloved. Pale fingers brush brown hair from a sweaty forehead. Clarke nods at Polaris' imploring eyes. "She's fine, there is no infection so far, but we must get her to my mom before it sets in. The fever will burn hotter and we don't have the right medicine."

"Mochof Klark. Mochof." Her words are so broken yet full of life and gratitude. And she doesn't look like the Queen who cut of Costia's head and sent it to Lexa. She doesn't look like a woman who was said to have a hart of Ice. She was a relieved mother, broken by exhaustion and relief. By gratitude and love. She clings to her daughter and her fingers keep brushing the horse trainer, her beloved. The two people that others would use to bring her to her knees.

Clarke watches them with an aching heart as the riders pack the camp up. Her heart throbs because to love someone that much hurts. To love them to the point where losing them is like losing yourself hurts and she aches for her father. For Wells. For the man Finn used to be before he changed. She
aches for those she had lost and knows she will soon lose. There is a hand on her shoulder, soft yet firm. "They'll be fine." Isole's hand is familiar and calming.

"I know." Blue eyes find brown, before looking to the cuts there. "You didn't let me check you over."

"Aidan fixed me while you fixed Amia." She offers the girl embedded with the Ursa spirit a soft smile. "I am fine."

Clarke shakes her head, stepping closer to Isole and begging for answers. For an explanation. "You are one of my most trusted riders, they had to do something to you." Her words crack and images dance behind her head. Images she had conjured up once they had settled in the temporary camp.

"I am fine." There is pain in her eyes. "They used brands but that is it."

Clarke's fingers find Isole's and squeeze. Brands, brands were the thing of nightmares. A firm reminder etched forever into your skin. Worse than any cut. "Why?"

"They wanted me alive when you came." Her jaw is tight and she squeezes Clarke's shoulder with a soft comfort. "More leverage over you."

Clarke's heart breaks and her words crack as tears threaten to spill form her eyes. "I'm sorry."

"You don't have to be." She squeeze Clarke's shoulder again, smiling softly. "I was there to protect them, he will get his dues."

There is a darkness in Clarke's eyes. "He will."

__________________________

They stand at a crossroads, Romona has a bow loose in her hands as Aidan holds an unconscious Amia to his chest. Sar tilts her head to Clarke and Polaris, Sophia asleep against her own chest. "We'll make it with little difficulty." There is a promise in Sar's tone and the Queen nods with a stiff jaw as she shifts on her own horse.

Clarke clenches her jaw as they stand there. "Go with them Isole, they will need the protection and they both know you." Her fingers tighten on the horn of the saddle as the body behind her snorts.

"They will be fine." With a wave from Isole and Clarke's tense nod the three horses set off with their riders to the sky camp. Isole's fingers poke at Clarke's shoulder before their own mounts begin moving forward. "I am not leaving you to do all the work by yourself, I trust my Queen but you attract danger."

Chapter End Notes

I know the Clexa isn't happening as fast as you all may want it to but it will come in later chapters, I have chapter plans written out and it looks like this may be one of my longer fics yet. Clexa is coming but it is in a far set chapter. Lexa betrayed Clarke and they are in the middle of a 'war' again. Times where trust is an issue and hands are tied, it will take a while for them to be in the set of mind to even remotely trust one another again. Mostly this is a plot based story line that will have their relationship coming when the time is not right but slightly better. If I need to I can unmark this as Clexa until they form something close to a romantic relationship again. Bear with me if you want or
don't, I still want to thank you all for your reviews. I may not reply to them but I love each and every one of them. Work and school has been crazy and I love you all the more for letting me know what you think. I apologize that chapters aren't coming out as fast as they can but like I said, work and school. A double major and a job aren't that fun to do back to back. Thanks for all the feedback:) I hope you all have amazing day/night and thank you for reading this story.

CLANS
Wind(Past the desert where the wind is harsh)
Desert(In the desert, near the nomads)
Mountain(hidden up in one of the mountain, not near Mt. Weather)
Woods/Tree(Lives int he forest)
Ocean(lives near the ocean)
Boat (lives on boats in the ocean)
River(Lives near/partially on the river near the Horse)
Horse (Lives in plains, breed horses. Closest clan to Ice and River)
Cave(lives in the caves near the Ice Nation)
Ice(lives in the cold area, uses dogs instead of horses)
Iron(lives in an Iron gated city, forges weapons)
Vine(lives in tree houses across from horse clan territory)
Clarke seeks help from the Clans, not everyone is accommodating to the Ursa who came form the sky.

Trees begins to thin out, the dirt shifts loosely under the hooves of the horses and Polaris' eyes are wide as the beast below her grunts and shifts to get his footing. Isole chuckles loosely at the look on her Queen's face. "I missed the howlas the first year also."

Polaris sits stiff on her mount. "These beasts are too large. Too loose footed."

"They're faster than your sleds though." Clarke speaks lowly, rolling her shoulders back to pop them. "We're almost there."

Polaris' eyes are scornful. "I dislike the sand." Her fingers tighten on the reins of her horse, longing for the cold.

"We'll be fine." Isole's fingers tighten around Clarke's sides and Clarke kicks the horse into a faster step as she speaks. "The Ocean Clan is peaceful."

"Even the peaceful can be provoked Clarke." Polaris' eyes turn to find Clarke, hands tightening on the reins. "You know that."

They continue through the dirt until it shifts to loose rocks with the scent of salt in the air, Clarke pulls it in with eyes fluttering shut before she catches herself. Isole buries a grin in her shoulder as the queen wrinkles her nose. "Only a little longer, then we'll be at the gate."

Polaris' scoffs. "I do not know if that will be better or worse." She tightens her thighs on her horse nervously, the horse snorts and speeds up before Polaris' pulls back on the reins. It lets out an annoy noise, huffing as it falls into step beside Clarke and Isole.

"You were never that optimistic three summers ago my Queen, what happened?" Polaris shoots her a glare and Isole ducks her chin, grinning widely, brown eyes bright as Clarke's shoulders shake in gentle laughter. They continue their journey as the sun begins to grow lower and lower in the sky, Polaris curses under her breath as her horse stumbles over the uneven rocks. "You're making him nervous my Queen."

"He's making me nervous." Pale blue eyes flash and she glares at Clarke and Isole. "You've given me the horse with weak legs."

"Relax your grip on the leather and loosen your thighs." Clarke's eyes sparkle in mirth. "You're given him mixed signals, remain calm and he will too."

"Easy for you to say, your horse is coordinated." Polaris' bites out.
"You should have seen Sar the first day my Queen, she grew on boats." Polaris shoots her another glare that Isole cheekily grins at. "You are better than she was at least."

"I could have your tongue Rider."

"But you wouldn't." Isole laughs at Polaris and presses her fingers into Clarke's side, causing the woman to twitch away with a snort. "Sorry." Isole grins before her eyes widen at the sight in front of them, down through the rubble of rocks. "It's larger than I thought."

In front of them stands a gate made of sharp metal and twisted wires, shells are intertwined within the chains and wires. The stone walls loom high over them connected to the gate and standing atop the wall are warriors with spears and tridents in their hands. Few grip nets in their fists as they stare defiantly back at the three women coming closer to the gate.

"They look peaceful right now." The queen mutter lowly, eyes narrowed and hand itching to grab her sword.

Clarke sighs, looking at the Ice Insignia on Polaris' back before watching the hands tighten on the spears above them. "We can't blame them for being weary."

"Stop where you are." A woman drops from the wall, landing lightly on her feet despite the height. She is slightly shorter than Bellamy and would tower over the three women had they not been on the backs of their horse. "Why are you here?" She stands with her warriors above her, ready to fight.

Clarke shifts on her horse, straightening her shoulder. "We came to seek assistance."

A thin eye brow raises in amusement. "I will not offer it without hearing your reasoning. Leave your mounts and weapons outside the gate."

"You aim spears at us, why should we come in unprotected?" Polaris voice is sharp with her suspicion, fingers twitching across the reins in her palms.

"It is the ways of our people, peace is key." She does not step back as Polaris glares at her, tilting her head she motions to the warrior atop the gate. "Leave your weapon outside the gate and show us you mean no harm."

Clarke climbs off her horse, slipping her sword off her back and clicking it to her saddle without a word. Isole climbs off from Clarke's horse, following her lead as she clips the sword to the sheath there, her toes bounce across the ground before she stills them. They begin to strip the knives from their belts and boots. The queen sits stiff atop her horse, knuckles white. "Clarke, I never go anywhere unprotected. Not even in Polis."

Clarke looks up sharply, eyes narrowed. "Do you want to stay out here?"

"That gives them a better chance to kill me." Pale eyes continue to flicker over the spears aimed in her direction, one slip up and they could kill her. "I am not the favorite of many clans. They wish my death upon me."

"We'll be fine." Clarke presses gentle fingers into the woman's knee. "The spirits would tell me if anything is wrong."

"Spirits only go so far in this life Clarke. Do not rely upon them always." With gritted teeth she connects her feet to the ground and begins to strip herself of her weapons. The woman in front of them, skin as dark as the night and hair weaved into tight braids stands before them with cautious eyes and nets clinging to her thighs as she watches them take all their weapons off.
With a scowl Polaris' leaves a knife in her boot and steps forward. She is stop by the woman's hand as she tilt her head to the side, jerking her chin to the boot. With bared teeth Polaris rips the knife from her boot and shoves it in her saddle bag.

When they are finally free of their weapons the woman motions to the gate and it opens with a loud creak as she leads the three women through. Polaris' hands grip the sleeve of her jacket tightly, almost trembling as Isole surveys the inside of the village. It was large, most likely the central village, the Ton DC of the Ocean Clan. "My name is Lana and this is Alti." Her dark eyes watch Clarke closely before moving to the queen with a hint of warning. "These walls are peaceful, please keep it that way."

Polaris shifts, eyes darting to Lana with disdain. "Peace is an illusion."

Lana turns, her dark braids trailing down her back. "Considering your not a peaceful being I will not take that to heart."

"There are no peaceful beings Lana." Her words are sharp, every but of warning as the ocean dweller's. "Simply patient beings. Every one has a breaking point."

"You've always been good at finding those Polaris', the Commander's weakness." Lana's words are calculating as she leads them through the town. "You exploited it and she reached her breaking point." The queen opens her mouth and receives a reprimanding look from the woman before them and the queen of the Ice snaps her mouth shut with a glare. "I am not done talking yet Polaris." She says her name like she knows every secret the queen has ever had and her eyes spark. "She reached her breaking point but she chose peace over revenge. She chose her people over your death."

"Yet when the time comes she will kill me, I have no doubt about that." The Queen pulls her hands to the small of her back, squaring her shoulders and scowling after the woman. "Is that what you call peace or patience Water Dweller."

Lana lets out an undignified snort as Clarke and Isole walk beside them quietly before they stop by the ocean's edge. "She will not kill you, I've seen the Commander. Her head rules over her heart. We all know this." Her eyes flicker to Clarke before finding the queen's tense shoulders. "Killing you would open up a dangerous environment." She turns to Clarke, dismissing the queen as she stares at the blonde. ""You're the Ursa."

"Clarke."

"Klak." She says her name thickly, feeling it on her tongue. "You are collecting warriors."

The blonde furrows her brows. "How do you know?"

"Word travels fast Spirit of the Bear." Dark eyes swirl with amusement and behind her Polaris' eyes narrow. "Eran sends his regards."

Clarke shifts her feet, eyes narrowed. "Boat Clan?"

"Yes." She tilts her head appraisingly, eyes sweeping over the blonde. "Apparently you impressed him."

Shifting under those eyes Clarke jerks her chin up. "Will you join us like he did?"

"Alti is as peaceful as it gets in this world." Her hands fold behind her back in a tactic Clarke recognizes too often in leaders. "I do not wish to risk that."
Clarke speeds up, walking closer to the woman, hair billowing in the wind. "If he takes Polis and kills the Commander all the Clans will suffer."

Lana scoffs, dark skin stretched taut with anxiety. "If we join you my Clan will suffer. I do not advance the battlefield without knowing all the sides."

Clarke's head spins and her shoulder drop. "So you wont help us?"

Lana sighs, hands tightening before she brings them to her thigh, eyes looking out to the sea. "I never said that Klak."

Isole stiffens behind her, glaring at the woman's head. "You are pulling us around, speak clearly not in riddles."

"Patience Rider, you know well what the Desert and Nomad are capable of." Dark eyes flicker to the bandage on the woman's neck, hiding the brand of the desert.

"I also know we need all the help we can get." Isole steps closer, fingers twitching for a weapon not there. "Clarke is asking for you help and you speak in circles."

"You must learn to listen, I will not advance without knowing all the side." She steps toe to toe with Isole, Polaris shifting behind Isole and Clarke's fingers curved into a fist as the woman speaks. "I will not unnecessarily risk my people. So come and tell me what you know, my scouts should be coming back soon."

The children in city stop to look at them as they begin to walk again. Their eyes wide as the Ice Insignia stares back at the from the Queen's jacket. "Azgeda." They murmur quietly, curiously. Some creep closer to eye the three women following their leader. "Lana." The shortest of the children speak loud enough to gain the woman's attention. A smiles twitches at her lips and he stands taller under her gaze as she stops in front of them. "Why Azgada here?"

Lana forces her face into impassiveness. "Use the language of the warriors young one."

He grits his teeth, squaring his shoulders. "Why is Cold Clan here?"

Lana smiles softly. "Ice young one. Azgeda is Ice people."

He scowls at her, shooting Polaris a glare before finding his leader's eyes defiantly. "Why here?"

Her eyes narrow and she faces his scrutiny with sharp eyes. "To discuss politics and battles."

"Azgeda Natrona." He bites out and Polaris stiffens beside Clarke.

"Callan." Lana's voice is hard. "Do not speak to guests that way. Hold your tongue."

He glares at Lana before spitting at Polaris' feet. "Em Ripa. Ripa kom Kostia."

"Chil au Kalen." Lana stares at him until he ducks his chin, the other children watch with curious eyes. "There is more than you can see, when you know that you will stop this foolishness."

The child ducks his head before turning and running, the others at his heels. Polaris stares after them, hands shaking. "I am the monster in their nightmares?"

"History Polaris." Her eyes are still hard as she stares after the children. "I will not let the children grow up without knowledge of the Clans. They know of the mountain and of the Coalition. You killing Costia was leading to the coalition." She pulls in a deep breath. "It helps them understand to
place their people before their own needs. Their revenge."

Polaris shakes her head, scoffing. "You want them to be like Lexa."

"No. I want them to forge their own paths, to understand the world as it is." She lets out a sharp sigh before walking away from them. They follow her as she continues to speak. "Lexa did what was best for her people, they know that. Same as Clarke did for her own. We must put our people's need before our own selfish needs." She leads them past the stone cobbles and through stone buildings. "This life is not an easy one, it is not wise to coddle children."

"So you raise them to be peaceful?" Polaris' eyes are distrustful. "Callan didn't seem peaceful."

"They learn that war is not always the answer. They learn that death happens everyday, at our hands, the hands of our enemies and the hands of the ground. To be peaceful does not mean pacifistic, it mean understanding what you must protect and willing to protect it. Willing to build armies to keep peace." Dark eyes find Clarke's. "Our army is strong, our city is strong. If someone threatens us we would retaliate, no one has threatened us yet."

She opens a door and Clarke stumbles in. "He's coming. He'll wipe everyone out."

Lana watches Clarke closely, eyes narrowed. "He knows we are peaceful, why would he attack us?"

"Same reason you take out the riders on horses in a battle." Blue eyes bore into almost black. "The stronger they are the more damage they can cause against you."

Polaris stiffens, leaning against the wall and sweeping her eyes over the room as Lana shakes her head. "You think he will take us out before we can offer our aid?"

"Wouldn't you?" Clarke steps closer, thinking to a ring of fire and the smell of burning flesh. "Tear down the armies of the many one by one and he's left with the largest army. Your people threaten that despite being peaceful."

Lana turns away from Clarke, pressing her hands into the table, it creaks under her force. "What is you plan of attack then? Will we travel to the desert when they have the advantage? Where our horses and warriors will die of thirst?" She spins around, staring at Clarke like she's a puzzle. "Will you have us leave our villages without defense?"

"No." Clarke closes her eyes, pulling in a deep breath as she meets Lana's eyes. "The desert is already here, they've been slipping under the nose of all the clan. Of the Woods Clan."

Knuckles whiten as long finger clench into a fist. Lana's face shifts dangerously. "They have already invaded the forest?"

Polaris shifts off the wall, shoulder tightening as Isole shifts to the ball of her feet when Clarke nods. "Yes."

"Then they have seen you come here." Dark eyes glint angrily and she steps closer to Clarke, causing Isole and Polaris' to reach for weapons that aren't there. "You've doomed my people by coming here."

"What?" Eyes dart over Lana's face.

"He will know you came here if he has scouts in the forest, they would have been following you. Now he knows you came here!" Lana's eyes are wide and her chest heaves. "He will attack my people now despite the size of my army. You've doomed my people b asking for my help." Fist
clench until hey are white knuckled. "He will kill us all."

Clarke shakes her head. "He already planned to."

"Was this your plan Ursa?" She spits the title out, stepping closer as Clarke holds her hand up to keep Polaris from moving forward. Isole watches the Ocean leader, never taking her eyes off even as her muscle coil. "Back me into a corner until I'm forced to help you."

"No!" Clarke eyes blaze. "I would never endanger the lives of children."

"Why do I not believe you Ursa?" She spits the name out again, face twisted in rage. "I will help you. I want peace as much as you do, but you must learnt to think. You've endangered lives senselessly because you do not think."

Clarke's hands shake and she swallow, mind foggy with memories. "I'm sorry, I didn't mean to endanger your people. The truth is they were already sentenced to die. He will kill all of us without a thought."

"And how do you know this?"

Clarke's fingers clench the cloth above her stomach. "I can feel it in my gut, the Ursa spirit, he unsettles her." Lana's shoulder slump at this and the fight seems to leave her.

"You are welcomed to stay the night to rest, I will send scouts to your camp Jaha. Eran will be there and they will discuss strategies. I will provide warriors but my own will also stay behind to defend my village." Long dark finger knot in the net at her thighs. "If he plans to attack us like you say he will I will not leave my people without defense. You collecting warriors is what he wants. He wants the villages to be without warriors. To be easily defeated."

Clarke knows this, she stares straight into Lana's darkened expression, because this was war and they needed the numbers. "Thank you."

Lana shakes her head, sighing. "Show your gratitude in the end, when my people seek reasons for their families deaths." She looks up with accusation at Clarke. "We have been without war for three summers."

"It hasn't been peaceful, just quiet." A quiet that trembles on Clarke's shoulders, suppressing and nerve-racking. "You know as much as I do that the silence is the worst. After this we will have peace. We have to." Desperation glints in Clarke's eyes and her shoulders tremble, Isole's fingers press into her elbow, soft and reassuring.

Lana's hands press the braids from her face, catching on a shell before she tucks it behind her ear with a sigh. "I pray you are right Ursa, death is the a finality we cannot come back from."

"But death is not the end." It leaves her lips like a last ditch effect, broken and defeated.

"It is in this life." Lana watches Clarke's shoulder, see the tightness in them as she fights her composure. The Ocean Leader continues to speak quietly. "You may go on to your next but you will be dead in this one and the living mourn the dead."

Polaris clings to her sword like someone would force it from her hands as they climb atop the horses. Lana dips her head in goodbye before the gates creak shut behind them. Isole grips Clarke's side as they kick the horses into a gallop, Polaris' shoulder don't relax until they are far away from the gates of the ocean, her fingers tighten on the reins of her horse as she darts her eyes around the forest.
"Where do we go next?"

Isole leans to the side to pull out a notebook, her fingers flip through the page and she presses it into Clarke's hand. "The closest are Vine and River Clan."

"The River is sided with the Commander." Polaris moves her horse close to Clarke and Isole's as she leans over to look at the map, face twisted into a scowl. "They will not take audience."

Clarke grits her teeth. "Then we ride to Vine. Two possible locations."

"Datak scouted that area." Isole presses her fingers into the two boxes marked by the Vine Insignia. "He said he found evidence of two possible villages, most likely they moved from one to the other."

"They haven't been spotted since the mountain." Clarke's finger press into the page. "Are we sure they'll be there?"

"Datak saw evidence a summer ago, like Eran said if we get them on our side we'll have an advantage." Isole moves her finger from the Desert insignia, fingers tremble before she draws a line through the Vine. "The Desert will have to travel through some of their territory. They can take some of them out or warn us, the desert won't expect it."

"And if a desert scout follows us to the Vine?"

Isole grins with a flash of teeth. "I've met Vine people once, they'll take him out before he can finish entering their territory."

Polaris shifts uncomfortably, fingers clenching on her sword. "And us?"

"Hopefully they'll give audience to the Ursa." Isole pokes Clarke's shoulder as she takes the map back. "Her presence is a bit hard to miss."

They ride as swift as they dare on their horses, Clarke sniffs the air and her horse snorts, paw at the ground as they come to a stop. "Something's wrong."

Polaris darts her eyes around the forest before they narrow at a speck in the distance. "Smoke."

"It's too thick to be a camp fire." Clarke kicks her horse into gear and Isole bites her lip to keep from yelping out as they shoot through the forest, Polaris following after them with a scowl as her thighs tighten on her horse's sides.

There are shouts and scream and the clomp off hooves through the forest as the riders make their way to the smoke. Clarke's chest heaves and her eyes burn as they come to the burning village. There are warriors screaming with anger as they fight men without insignia's. Clarke jumps off her horse, followed quickly by Isole who slices down a warrior aiming for a downed villager. Clarke bares her teeth, blocking the wide arc of a sword and kicking out with her feet. The woman grunts and Clarke slams the hilt of her sword into her face. Her mask falls away and Clarke's eyes widen in shock. Before her is a lost one, deformed by the radiation she howls at Clarke. Coming at her with a knife.

The blonde slips under her crazed swings and buries her sword into the woman's throat. Blood splatters over Clarke's face and she backs away, looking at the village as they fight back. None of the attackers wore the Dunes of the Desert. Rage boils in Clarke's veins because he was sending the lost to fight his battles while his people stayed far from death. "Stop fighting for him." Clarke yells out, eyes wide.
A warrior tackles her, the brand of a Natrona stains his cheek. "We will never stop fighting." He drives a fist into her face and she brings her knee up into his ribs. A grunt leaves his chest and he slams his elbow into her chest. Clarke coughs out a gasp, bile rising in her throat as she struggles for air. Her fingers find the hilt of his dagger at his waist and she rips it free, driving it into his side as he brings a fist covered in metal to split her cheek open. His eyes widen in shock as Clarke grunts through the pain, twisting her wrist. Blood drips down her hands as she rips the knife free from his flesh. He choked on the blood in his throat, glaring at her. "You will fall Ursa. I promise this." He gurgles out before bringing a knife to dig into her side. She rolls away, his body hitting the ground as dead weight. Her fingers press into the wound as she throws her knife at another warrior running toward a villager.

Polaris slips her sword through the chest of the last warrior, grunting at the woman glares at her, teeth bared in hatred. Clarke pulls in a deep breath, chest aching where she was struck. Isole stems the blood flowing from her brow as an elder steps from the shadows, eyes flitting over the dead bodies before finding Clarke. "Leave us demon."

Isole's hands tighten on her sword, eyes dark under the blood on her face. "We saved your village."

"You are sky demon and of the Ice." He spits at their feet. "Traitors. Leave before you bring more death upon us." Clarke back away as more villagers come forward, her eyes are wide with shock and guilt.

A man steps forward, his face bruised but eyes gentle. "Wise one, she tore down the mountain."

"And her people allowed them to step onto the ground without their suits." He growl at the younger warrior before him. "They are a plague. A curse. She is bonded to the Ice, the betrayer. Natrona"

A woman spits at Clarke and Polaris' feet, eyes full of hatred. "The skai kripa only brings death and destruction where she comes."

A healer steps closer, standing between the two elders and Clarke. "You should leave, I thank you for your help but the elders do not agree with your way."

The queen sneers at them, finger tight on her sword. "Without her your people would be dead and trapped by the mountain."

"The sky blood is why the Commander had to take the deal. If they would not be here the mountain would not have stepped foot on the ground." Another warrior steps closer, hand finding a knife in the folds of his jacket. "We could have torn them down on our own. The coalition was strong and she makes it crumble."

The healer clenches his jaw. "Leave us Sky-born, we do not require your assistance." His hands shake as he darts his eyes to the elders surrounding them, old weathered hands gripping knives. "Leave before they make you."

Clarke backs away, grabbing Isole's sleeve and jerking her back as she moves to steps closer. The queen sneers at them as she climbs on her horse. "Thank you for your hospitality."

"Leave us Ice dweller, you only want death." The woman glares at them, wrinkles hardened on her face. "Same as the sky demon."

Clarke kicks her horse forward and Isole's fingers are tight on Clarke's sides as the blonde's chest heaves. Polaris glares at them, eyes full of disdain as she keeps her hand on her weapon.
"We still have a few days journey to the Vine if we keep this pace." Isole keeps her hands to Clarke's hips, away from the stitched wound on her side. "The sun must stay to our right."

Polaris scowls at the sun as it begins to set. "We won't find them unless they want to be found. They hide in the trees like tree-rats."

Clarke sighs, hands tightening on the reins. "We'll see their houses in the tree."

"They are hidden well in the foliage." Polaris scoffs out, face drawn into anger. "If the desert cannot find them what make you think we can? What makes you think they will side with you?"

"We have to try." Clarke's words crack as they leave her lips and she does not look to the queen.

The is a hardness to pale eyes as she glares at the trees in front of them. "Just like we tried with that village?"

"Polaris." Clarke grits out through her teeth and Isole's fingers tighten on her hip.

Polaris speaks before Clarke can continue. "I will not hold my tongue, we saved their lives and they chased us away like we were scavengers."

Clarke's fingers tremble as she clenches the reins in her fist. "Not everyone will agree with me or what happened at the mountain."

"It has nothing to do with the mountain. You tore it down when all our people failed. If the Commander or another warrior had done it they'd be trusted everywhere." Pale blue eyes bore into Clarke's dark blue. "They act that way because you fell from the sky."

Clarke shifts under her calculating gaze, Isole's warmth keeping her mind from flashing back into the past. "Most of what they said was true Polaris."

"No, what they said were stories told to make them feel better, even without your blood they walked the ground. They used fog to kill us. You broke the mountain and saved us all." Polaris grit her teeth. "They don't like your origins, branwada elders."

"It's fine."

"It is not, you fight to save them all and they shun you." Polaris' eyes glint. "I owe my beloved and daughters lives to you. I owe my people's lives to you and your riders. I promise you this Clarke of the Riders when this is over you will have the Ice on your side always."

"You aren't in my debt Polaris." Clarke looks up at her through broken eyes.

"No, but I am on your side." There is a dangerous glint in her eyes, dark and foreboding. "When this is over there will be those who challenge you. The Ice will fight beside you."

"Thank you." Clarke stares at the Ice Queen and she nods her chin as Isole's grin flashes behind Clarke's shoulder as they stop to camp for the night.

The sun continues to rise high in the sky as they stop at a river to let their horses drink. "We're getting closer to home." Polaris says it low, with longing as she stares at the forest around her.

"You can go there if you wish, Isole and I must head to the mountain after this." Clarke stares at her, eyes glazed. "He's coming, I can feel it in the air. The Ursa can taste it. Give it a few weeks. He's planning something."
"That is what I fear." She searches the forest, paranoid at the thought of the desert following them "If he did not live in the desert he would be dead already by our hands."

Clarke drinks from the flask she had just filled. "It's why he has the advantage, his clan and the lost are the only ones to survive there long."

Isole fiddles with a knife before she begins to sharpen it, her legs languidly dangling from the dark horse's sides. "Are we in the tree monkey's territory yet?"

Clarke chuckles as she passes the flask to Isole, the rider drinks deeply before tossing it to her queen. The woman rolls her eyes but fills it before hooking her own flask to her horse. "You were never this lazy in my ranks." She tosses the flask back at her former warriors as Clarke climbs back into the saddle.

Isole snorts. "I am not lazy my queen, simply resourceful." There is a glint in her dark eyes as Clarke bites back a laugh and the queen glares at her before forcing her legs to climb on her horse. The day continues with the sun beating down on them before darkness falls, they continue until they find a small clearing. The horses munch on the grass quietly as they throw out their bedrolls and start a small fire, they eat dinner quietly all lost in thought.

Clarke and Polaris slowly fall asleep with Isole keeping watch. Isole's hands tremble and she glares at them before she picks up her knife and begins to sharpen it. Slowly her hands steady and her eyes continue to sweep the forest for danger. A boy drops from the trees silent as a feather a few yards from their camp. The horses snort at him and he makes wide berths around them before rummaging through the packs of the three, he makes no sound as he pulls things from the packs that rest beside the tree. He lets out a soft coo as he ducks behind a tree and Isole shifts, searching the forest for the sound before there is another coo a few yards away, sounding from the bushes. Isole grabs her sword and investigates with almost silent footsteps. The boy tosses a bag to the trees with a soft grunt and it is caught by another hiding in the branches. His teeth widen in a grin as he grabs another bag and throws it up. One of the horses snorts and then there is a hand on his shoulder spinning him around. He ducks under it, digging his nails into flesh and kicking out with his feet before scrambling up a tree with a loud screech.

Polaris lets out a shocked shout of pain at the nails rake down her forearm and Clarke grips her sword as she jumps to her feet, their two horses snorting and huffing in annoyance. "What happened?"

Polaris scowls at the trees. "They stole our packs."

Clarke shifts her grip on her sword, eye brows furrowing. "Where's Isole?" Polaris shakes her head, looking to the horses and the single pack on the ground.

Clarke scents the air before moving to look behind a bush. Isole is slumped to the ground and Clarke growls as she presses her finger to feel her pulse. "They were children, small. Smart." Polaris fingers the cuts on her arm as she speaks.

"They were the Vine people?"

Polaris shifts her eyes back to the trees, no longer worrying about the desert but the Vine children. "I believe so yes."

Clarke taps Isole's cheek and the woman remains unconscious despite Clarke's prodding. "She's out, They must have given her something."
Clarke's fingers prod her for any wounds before she picks the woman up, Polaris narrowing her eyes at the shorter woman. "I'll remain awake, you can sleep."

Clarke snorts, covering Isole with a blanket. "That didn't go so well last time."

Polaris nudges the last pack with her foot. "I doubt we have anything else for them to take."

Clarke continues to sharpen her sword with muscle memory, her eyes are focused on Isole. The woman breathes slow and steady. When the sun begins to rise Polaris press a water flask into Clarke's hands and sits with a soft sigh. They remain quiet until the woman by their feet grunts and rolls to her side, pressing fingers into her eyes. "What?"

"You were rendered unconscious by children." Polaris speaks lowly. "I told you you were getting lazy."

Clarke glares at Polaris before pressing the water to Isole. "How do you feel?"

The woman shrugs. "Best nap I've had in a while." She grins at Clarke. Clarke rolls her eyes and nudes her with her foot. The woman gulps down some water before standing. "What did the tiny tree monkeys do?"

"They took our packs." Polaris grunts out. "We're getting them back today."

Isole bites out a laugh. "Who's the unlucky one climbing the trees."

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Clarke grips the branch above her head and scrambles up the bark. Her hands find purchase on another branch and she huffs as she pulls herself up again, Isole's laughter below her. "I did not know bears knew how to climb trees."

Clarke curses under her breath as she slips before regaining her footing, her hands grip the branch with white knuckles. "The children did not wear boots when they stole our supplies." Polaris stares at Clarke with barely hidden amusement.

Clarke glares at the branches in front of her. "I don't want splinter in my feet."

Polaris finally grins, one side of her lips lifting wryly. "An observation Clarke."

"You can climb up here then Polaris." Clarke grunts as she kicks off the lower branch, balancing on her stomach as she pulls herself up another branch. "Without shoes."

"I like my feet on the ground." Polaris digs her heels into the dirt, scowling at the high branches. "You are doing well. You fell from the sky once, another time should do no damage."

Clarke rolls her eyes, heaving out a breath as she forces her body up another branch. She struggles not to look down at the two women below her. She wasn't afraid of height but there was a difference of seeing how far you'd fall and knowing the chances of dying.

"Any monkey children Clarke?" Clarke can hear the grin in Isole's voice, can picture it even though she can't see it right now.

Finally the branches begin to thin out and she steadies herself against the trunk. "I can't see any evidence of a tree house or people." She clings to the truck, eyeing all the branches. The way the leaves diverge from some branches and look almost bare while others are thick and overlapping. The difference is only visible up here and Clarke grins, a path. Much like there were paths in the forest
floor, these branches held the history of the on-goings of its inhabitants. "I think I found something."

Clarke follows after it, Isole and Polaris' eyes on her as she grips the branches with tight hands and edges from one branch to the other the overlaps its almost bare brother. She continues with caution, hands wrapped tightly around the thin branch above her head as the branch below her feet waver and trembles. "The longer you stay on the branch the more it will tremble. Move Clarke." Polaris shouts out with a gentle order.

"Easy for you to say." Clarke mutters, moving a little quicker until she is gripping another trunk of a tree. She pulls in a deep breath, fingers shaking before she continues after the trail. There is a two foot gap between two thick branches and Clarke frowns. Her eyes dart around for nay other way before she closes her eyes and sighs. Her hands shake before she creeps closer, she's almost at the edge when she lunges. She hears Polaris and Isole suck in a breath as they barely spot her jumping. Clarke lands with her feet on the branch before they slip. She falls forward, fingers gripping at the larch branch as her legs splay out on either side of it.

There is a sharp boisterous and relieved laugh below her. "The first flying bear." Isole grins out.

Clarke grunts as she cuts her hand on the bark. "Don't tell Baladan."

"It would amuse him Clarke." There is that infectious mirth in Isole's voice that makes Polaris grin and Clarke scowl.

"Isole I know amusing things about you." Clarke grits out as she stands on shaking knees.

Isole scowls up at her. "Truce then flying bear."

Polaris shakes her head. "At least she is not a flying tree-rat."

Clarke follows the trail for a while, Isole and Polaris commenting below her as they lead the horses after her on the ground. The branches thicken and thin in some parts and Clarke eyes the trail before stepping on another branch, her finger grip the branch above it before there is a cracking sound. With wide blue eyes she quickens her step but it is too late. The branch snaps.

Clarke lets out a shout of surprise as the branch below her feet disappears, her fingers scrambling for purchase on the branch she holds onto but it breaks under her weight. She hits the one below it with a wheeze and dots dance across her vision before she slips from that one and hits another with the sound of breaking wood and pain filled grunts. Her arms wrap around it as her head swims. Her ribs throb under her and she groans as she tries to find her bearings. She can hear Isole below her, calling out in worry. She wheezes, struggling to catch the air that had been forced from her lung, as her eyes flutter open green pop open right above her. "You did well for a ground dweller."

"Thanks." Clarke chokes out at the girl lounging on the branch above her, green eyes amused.

"I have been following you." The is a wicked gleam to her eyes as they dart down to the two women below them. They aren't visible and Clarke can hear Isole struggling to climb up the branches. "I have orders to ask what it is that you seek."

Clarke groans as she sits up, hands tight on the branch under her. "Audience with your leader."

"Why?" The girls green eyes are curious and suspicious as she surveys Clarke.

"I need council, your leader may be able to help."

"Follow me then. I will lead you to the alcove." The girl shimmys up the tree and Clarke groans as
she stands up.

She looks down at Isole. "I'm fine, I found a Vine Dweller. They're taking me to their leader."

Isole grunts as she slips from the tree. "You could have spoken sooner, I thought you were dead."

Clarke presses her fingers into her ribs, feeling for any breaks. "I'm fine, are you going to follow me?"

"Always." Isole grips the reins tightly, looking in the leaves for Clarke's blonde hair. "Shout once in a while for us non tree climbers."

"Be safe."

"Try not to fall again Clarke." There is amusement and worry lacing her voice. "Your head won't take much more damage."

"Thanks." Clarke let out sarcastically, lips twisting.

"Always."

Impatient green eyes glare at her. "Come, we will not keep my leader waiting." Clarke nods before following after her, swaying more than once as she tries to keep her balance. The girl in front of her jumps across gaps and swings from branch to branch, huffing when Clarke steps across them slowly, hands gripped tightly on the wood. "Too cautious, let go and follow me."

Clarke grits her teeth, digging her fingers into the wood. "I'd rather not fall again."

"Your fear is what holds you back." The girl balances on one foot, eyes light. "Let go."

"You saw me fall, I won't be lucky again."

"You fell because you were too cautious. Let go of your emotions and move on, listen to the branches." Clarke narrows her eyes at the girl suspiciously. "Each sound means something different, a creak means it can hold your weight but not for long. A creak and shudder means it will crack. Follow me." She swings across another gap and Clarke jumps instead of swinging, calloused hands grip her forearms. "Almost, swing next time."

"I've never done it before."

"That's the fun in it. Next time you can try it." She easily climbs to a higher branch. "You made this mistake when you fell, you thought the trail was one level, it is many levels." A proud grin flits across a dirt ridden face. "You followed a false trail."

Clarke glares up at her as she pulls herself higher, ribs throbbing as she groans. "Any more levels?"

"Depends on the way we go." There is that mischievous glint in green eyes and Clarke scowls.

Finally Clarke climbs on last level and groans as the green eyed climber yanks her to her feet, pulling a few leaves from her hair. "We're here." She grabs Clarke's forearm and yanks her through a wall of leaves. Inside sits a man with dark tattoos dancing across his face in the image of leaves and vines. "I brought the ground dweller."

He dips his head. "Thank you daughter, see to it that their packs are found and returned."

"Of course." Her eyes dances as she backs away from Clarke. "She only fell once."
The man keeps his face impassive but his eyes swirl with mirth as he stares at his daughter before turning to Clarke with a suspicious expression. "What is it you wish for?"

Clarke stands tall despite the scratches on her face and the leaves clinging to her hair. "Have you heard of the Sankru leader and his plans?"

"There have been rumors." He leans back in his chair, wood creaking under his frame. "But we have kept to ourselves."

"He's planning on invading the forest and taking those he can." She stares him down, his dark green eyes watching her as he leans forward in his chair, listening intently to her. "I fear he will go for the clans after he takes Polis."

He leans back, shaking his head. "It would be unwise of him to do so."

"I need your help." She steps closer, fingers twisted together behind her back.

"Why is that?"

"I want peace, I've been fighting for it for three years." Rage trembles in her bones and she can feel the Ursa broiling in her blood. "He threatens that. He will tear down all the clans and I need your people to help stop him. He will not expect you to fall from the trees."

He narrows his eyes are her. "You will lead him to our home?"

"No." She shakes her head, hands itching to latch onto something to keep them from shaking. "In Trikru territory he has many spies, but they would not think to look up in the trees. You could be our scouts and our secret weapon. We need your training and knowledge."

"I will speak to my guard, we will decide who to send." His fingers lace together in front of him as he stares at Clarke, green eyes bright as they watch every single thing Clarke does. "My daughter will retrieve your bags for you and lead you to the ground."

"Thank you."

"Do not thank me, I will only send a few. My people have not been involved in battles for too long, I fear many would die if I order them to the war." He stands, towering over Clarke as he steps closer. "The Coalition is falling apart each day, you will make sure my people remain immune after it breaks. I do not want to kill but I will if it is a necessity." And Clarke understands the threat, the promise he just made on her life.

The man stands lithely on the branch above Clarke, despite his size he is agile as he drops down beside her. "They'll travel by the trees after you." Many more tree climbers drop to the branches surrounding Clarke.

"We'll take them to camp Jaha." Clarke flicks her eyes to the people surrounding her in a circle, branches not even creaking as they shifts from on to the next. "We need to go through strategies there."

A small child drops from the branches above them, there is dirt and leaves caked on his face in a dark pattern and his teeth flash as they bite his lip. "There's a messenger on the horizon."

The man stiffens, crouching as he lets out a shrill whistle before speaking. "Colors?"
The kid presses a scope into the mans hand, pointing to the south. "Ocean."

He nods to the child before he vanishes in a flurry of limbs as the small human scales up the branches. "Is this your doing Ursa?"

Clarke shakes her head, looking to the south. There is nothing beyond the branches of the forest but she knows somethings wrong. "We'll meet them away from your home."

"It is wise." He tucks the scope into his belt. "You've got twenty of my best."

"Twenty-one." The green eyed girl drops from the branches to land silently on the branch her father rests on, she has a pack on her shoulders and darts strapped to her belt. "I'm leading."

"Ivy." His voice is sharp, full of warning.

"I'll be fine father." She presses her fingers into his shoulder. "I'm one of the best."

"Ursa." He barks out and Clarke stiffens, meeting his eyes. "My daughter will come back to me or I will have your head."

Clarke shifts, swallowing before meeting his gaze. She had learned to stop promising thing. Death happened and no one could prevent it. "We're going to battle."

"A battle I am helping with." He steps closer, his daughters finger pulling at his shoulder as he glares at Clarke. "See to it my daughter comes home."

"I can take care of myself father." She kisses his cheek. "Wish us luck."

He softens under her gaze and grunts. "Stay alive."

Ivy leads Clarke to the ground wish branches creaking under Clarke's amateur hands. Clarke drops to the ground with a grunt, rolling to minimize the damage. Ivy laughs as she lands next to her with bent knees and a grin. "We know our way to the Woods Clan, we'll follow you for as long as we can."

Clarke stands, rubbing raw palms on her pants to remove dirt. "Jaha is a days walk northwest of Ton DC."

"See you there." She jumps back into the trees as Clarke climbs on her horse. Isole passes her a water flask as they nudge there horse into a trot. Behind them the Vine warrior swing and run from tree to tree. Silent and without a leaf falling or branch creaking. The forest thickens before they spot the horse resting right outside Vine territory. The warrior sits stiffly atop his horse, shifting as they come closer.

Clarke stares at him, looking from the shells braided into the horses mane to the thick boots on his feet, layered in animal fat. "Who are you?"

"Lana's scout." He looks at Clarke, eyes staring at her blonde hair before he nods. "I've been sent to tell you the Mountain Clan seeks audience in Polis."

"Why would she send you here?" Polaris' eyes narrow and her gut churns.

The man does not shift under her gaze, the swirling waves stand out on his jacket as his horse snuffs nosily at the ground. "The more warriors you have the less chance her own will die."

Clarke nods, shifting as Isole's fingers dig into her sides nervously. "Thank you."
He nods before turning his horse around around. "I must be back." He leaves with a swift kick to his mount's side and there is a grating feeling in Clarke stomach as he vanishes over the hill.

They make their way to Polis at a swift trot, the tree dwellers swinging from the trees like monkeys as the horses race through the damp earth. Easily keeping up with the three riders. "Is this a race Ursa?" Ivy's voice is loud from in front of them, echoing as she swings from one branch to another higher one.

Clarke rolls her eyes as she searches the trees for her. "We need to be in Polis before the Mountain Clan leaves, we need to ask him to help our cause."

"Do you not have enough warriors already?" Clarke spins her head to the left as her voice comes beside her despite the speed they are running. "Do you crave more?" The voice is now above her in the high tops of the trees.

Clarke grips the reins tightly. "We need all the protection we can get."

"We will meet you at Jaha then Ursa." The voice bounces as she swings from another branch above Clarke. "Use the beast's speed and get to Polis."

Clarke nods and they take off at a swift run. Clarke lifts up in her seat and bends down, Isole following her as Polaris grumbles. The wind whips at their face and Polaris fumbles with a map in her hand. "At this pace we'll pass the Ocean Clan by nightfall. Can they keep the pace."

Clarke nudges her heels into her horse's side, clucking her tongue gently. "They've been trained to."

They slow down as night begins to fall and Polaris eyes the forest with suspicion. "We haven't seen the scout."

Clarke looks around, blinking so her eyes adjust to the darkness. "Did he go this way?"

"It is the only way to the Ocean." Polaris grips her sword, baring her teeth. "We passed the trail to it a few clicks back."

"He is a scout, their horses are meant to be fast." Even as the words leave her lips Clarke shifts at the nervous energy between them. "We don't even know if he was meant to go back to Alti."

"It does not set right in my chest."

"We'll keep watch." They remove the saddle form the two horses, brushing them down and leading them to a nearby stream as Polaris tenses at every noise in the forest. Clarke's stomach rolls and her instincts tell her they are alone for now. The fire is small when they come back, Isole presses two fresh rabbits over the flame.

She nods to them as they come closer, hitching the horses up as they rest the saddles beside them. Clarke's horse snorts and paws at one of the saddle bags until the blonde pulls out some fruit, she presses it to the snout of both mounts and they greedily eat the soft fruit. Huffing and snuffling at her now empty hands before they bend down to gnaw at the grass.

There stars are hidden by the canopy of trees and Clarke leans against one of the tree trunks as Isole stretches out beside the fire, hand gripping a dagger as sleep takes her. Polaris shifts until her back is pressed into a tree across from Clarke. Slowly her eyes drift shut, fingers tight on her sword. Clarke understand the feeling, the loss of power when you fall asleep.

Clarke wipes dirt from her watch, checking it to keep the time. Four hours later she is crouching
beside Isole, shaking her rider awake she tits her head to the tree. The woman stretches with a yawn. "We leave at sunrise."

"Got it." Her brown eyes search through the canopy before she finds the stars. "You should have woke me sooner."

"It's fine."

Isole rolls her eyes but pushes Clarke to her sleeping bag. "Kept it warm for you." There is mirth bright in her eyes.

Clarke chuckles, shifting to lay under the first layer of the sleeping rolls, turning until her back is to Polaris and her eyes on Isole."Thanks."

Isole press her fingers to Clarke's cheek, poking it teasingly. "Up hibernating bear."

Clarke stretches and rolls to her feet, Isole presses the water flask into her hand. "Thanks." she pulls a long drink from it, watching as Polaris packs their stuff away.

Isole and Clarke move to the horses, leading them to the water. They drink their fill before they are lead back to camp and saddled up. Clarke tightens the girth on her horse, checking all the buckles before heaving her body up onto the tall beats. Isole follows after her, tossing her bag to Polaris. The Ice queen scrambles up her horse, scowling at them as she hooks the bags to her saddle. They leave as the sun peaks across the horizon.

"Half days ride as long as we do not stop at any villages."

They ride in silence, Isole leaning into Clarke as she cleans the leather of her sheath, hands unable to remain still. Clarke shifts her shoulder back and Isole grabs onto her waist as they jump over a fallen log, Polaris making a sound of indignation as her horse vaults over it. Isole chuckles and looks forward. There is the glint of something on the horizon as Clarke laughs and turns her head to Polaris opening her mouth to rib at her.

"DOWN!" Isole's scream rips through them and she shoves Clarke to the side, trying to get her ducked behind the horse's neck as she grips the reins and turns them sharply to the thicker trees. There is a whistle and Isole turns her head behind her, to the glint in the distance as something brushes past her face, there is slight prick of pain before Clarke screams out in front of her. Isole whips her head around and kicks the horse's sides.

Her eyes are wide as she scrambles to hold Clarke on the horse as her body slumps to the side, there is an arrow embedded in her shoulder and the blonde shoulder heave with ragged breathes. "Stay awake Clarke." She kicks the horse in the sides again, forcing it to run faster yet no more arrows rain down on them. Polaris is beside her, head low on her horse's neck as her hands grip her sword. Isole presses a hand to Clarke's shoulder as the blonde slumps forward with a grunt. Blood coats the rider's hand and her eyes flicker to her friend. "You'll be fine."

Polaris sticks close to her horses back and they head for the gates in the distance. "They are not firing anymore."

Isole presses into Clarke's back, one arm around her waist gripping her close as her other presses into the wound. Clarke' horse knows where to go so she lets the reins hook into the horn. "They must think they killed her."

Polaris glances their way with a glare at the arrow. "Or it is poisoned."
"It doesn't explain why they aren't shooting at us anymore." Her shoulders shake but she keeps Clarke's body hidden from those that were behind them. "Something wrong."

Pale blue eyes are burning. "It was an ambush, they were ready for us."

"Did the Ocean Clan betray us?" Isole's hand tightens on Clarke.

"I do not think so. The man bore Ocean Insignia but he was too coarse." Polaris grits her teeth because they should have known. Should have followed their guts. It told her something had to be wrong but they ignored it. "He left to soon."

"He lead us into a trap." The gates come into view and Isole clings to Clarke, chin digging into the uninjured shoulder. "Hold on."

Word of the Ice Queen's presence reaches Lexa immediately and with a hand fingering her knife she makes her way to the front of Polis, the city bustles around her and her guard remain tense as she travels through the center of the city. Too many citizens move around her and Mikil jumps from roof top to roof top with suspicious eyes. When Lexa comes upon Isole and Polaris her words are scathing. "It seems the spirits want you in Polis." Her guard stiffen as they catch sight of the queen.

Polaris glares at Lexa, eyes moving to the guard's hands on their swords. "We were on our way to meet with the mountain Leader."

Lexa's eyes find the blood on Isole and green eyes dart around for Clarke. Not finding her they shift to the healer's tent they stand outside of. Lexa's jaw clenches and she throws the door open before stepping in with swift steps. Isole storms in after her, a growl on her lips as she almost yanks the Heda back. The only thing keeping her from tossing the Commander form the hut was Polaris' hand on her elbow. Lexa watches as the healers surround Clarke and her fists clench against her thigh, digging in as her jaw threatens to crack under the pressure of clenching it.

The blonde is slumped to the side as blood stains the sheets below her, seeping through her shirt as the healer cuts the shoulder and neck open to reveal the wound. The skin around the arrow head is red and oozing. The healer presses the arrow all the way through and Clarke moans low in her chest. With skilled fingers the healer saps the head off the end before pulling it out with ease, Clarke's fingers grip the blankets, fisting them as she whimpers low in her throat, eyes furrowed in pain. Still unconscious. "What is the meaning of this?" Lexa's words are harsh and she almost takes a hesitant step forward.

Isole's hands shake and her finger tighten around her knife, the guards filling the doorway stiffen. "There was an attempt on her life."

Green eyes are dark with anger and she look at Isole before turning back to Clarke, watching the blonde like she would disappear if Lexa looked away. "By whom?"

"If we knew do you think we'd be standing here?" Isole's voice is sharp, her hand trembles. As one of the guards steeps forward two shadows shove past him.

Mikil slips beside the Commander and Asha comes to stand beside Isole and Polaris. Asha pale eyes are worried. "What happened?"

"Clarke's life was attempted." Isole's fingers loosen on the knife and she pulls in a deep breath. "Status report."

Asha's shoulder square and she stands tall under Isole's gaze. "There have been three attempts on her
life. All thwarted by myself or Mikil."

Isole turns her gaze to Lexa, fists trembling as her eyes flicker behind the Commander to Clarke before they find green again. "They should have let them attack you, maybe then you'd believe us." Lexa clenches her jaw but holds her tongue.

"Clarke told us to not let them kill her, we couldn't let them get too close Isole." Mikil's voice is tense as he shifts on his feet, gaze flickering to Clarke before the Commander then back to Isole.

Lexa eyes them, seeming to see them for the first time. "You're the girl from the merchant shop."

Asha smirks, shrugging her shoulder with falsely bright eyes. "Stopped a knife from hitting your back, sorry for bumping into you Heda." There's a twist to her lips that makes Lexa's shoulders stiffen.

Clarke moans low as they press on the wound, the healer murmurs softly but Clarke moans again. "Isole." She groans quietly as she pushes hands away from her shoulder with glazed eyes. The hands reach again and Clarke shoves them away, dull blue eyes looking around the room.

Isole steps closer, meeting Clarke's eyes. The blonde relaxes and pulls in a painful breath as Isole speaks softly, looking for more wounds on the blonde. "Yes?"

Clarke moves to sit up but the healer shoves her back. Clarke glares at her before looking to her rider. "You hit?"

"No." Isole raises her eyebrow. "You were in the way."

Clarke snorts. "Good, are we in Polis?"

"Yes."

Clarke moves to sit up again and the healer growls at her, pressing hard into her shoulder. Clarke groans and scowls at the woman before finding Isole again. "Mountain Clan still here?"

Isole stiffen, feels Polaris step closer, eyeing the guards nervously. "As well as enemy intels yes."

Clarke lets the healer wrap her shoulder before she lets her feet touch the floor. There is a hand pressing her back again and Clarke shakes her head. "I'm fine, thank you for your help." The healer rolls her eyes, shoving Clarke's jacket into her hands and walking away muttering about warriors. Clarke slips her feet to the floor and grips the jacket in one hand as she pulls her injured arm through the sleeve, her now bloodied and torn shirt that threatens to slip off the remaining shoulder. "You know what to do Isole."

Isole grits her teeth. "There was an attempt on your life, we are not safe here."

"Go." Blue eyes meet brown and Clarke tilts her chin. "I need you to do this."

Her rider growls low in her chest. "If you die I will kill you in your next life Clarke."

Clarke snorts as she slips her left arm through the sleeve and finds Polaris as Isole heads for the door. "I need you to go with her, you've seen what the Sankru can do."

Polaris' eyes find the blood on Clarke before finding blue eyes. "Try not to die, I don't want to owe you after death."

Lexa shifts and Clarke steps closer to her. "I need to talk to you."
Lexa keeps her eyes on Clarke, looking for any more injuries before she nods. "Follow me, I know a safe place."

Clarke keeps her right shoulder as still as possible as she zips her jacket partially up. "Let's go then."
Clarke follows after her, Mikil disappearing in the shadows and Asha following them on the street.
Lexa's guard shift nervously behind them, eyeing Clarke with suspicion. They come upon a house,
the stone is even and rubbed smooth as Lexa leads her through the doorway. The floors are stone,
slightly off center as Clarke follows after Lexa, passing wooden tables and maps until Lexa opens a
thick wooden door. The room is in the far back of the and has no windows. It would be pitch black if
there were not candles on the walls of the room. Lexa looks at Clarke before shutting the door,
leaving her guards outside. "Clarke."

Clarke spins to face her, favoring her shoulder as she stares at Lexa. "Do you believe me now?"
Lexa almost steps closer, her hands tremble and she wants to reach out and press her fingers into
Clarke' cheek. Feel the warmth beneath it because the blood coating the blonde made Lexa shake. "I
believe your life is in danger."

"So is yours." Clarke shifts her shoulder back, meeting Lexa's eyes. "Mikil and Asha stopped all
attempts on your life."

"And you believe all these attempts were made by the desert?" Lexa scoffs, shaking her head and the
Heda screeches inside of her.

Clarke furrows her brows, shaking her head, her shoulder is throbbing painfully. "There's no one
else who would do this."

"There is one person who wants me dead so they can lead." Lexa steps closer, tilts her chin up. "You
knew this three years ago and you know this now Clarke."

Clarke steps closer, standing toe to toe with Lexa. "It is not the queen."

"Clarke she could be behind this entire thing." Lexa's jaw ticks and she pulls in a deep breath. "She
is convincing, conniving. She is playing you to get to me."

Clarke stiffens, scowling up at the Commander. "I trust her, her reasons are true.
Lexa wants to step closer, shake Clarke until she let this notion that the Queen was an ally go. "What
are her reasons?"

Clarke gaze hardens. "Why?" Lexa's jaw is tight and she turns her chin slightly to the right.
Clarke sighs, shaking her head. "Revenge is never for those of the right mind."

Lexa stiffens, fingers twitch to grab something. Anything so that her hand would be doing
something. "Her death would be justice, not revenge."

Clarke shakes her head, scoffing. "People think they aren't the same, that they aren't entwined, but
your justice seems like righteousness to you and it may be but it is not for justice, it is for revenge."
She flicks her eyes to look over Lexa's face. "You an I both know this."

Lexa's shoulders tremble and she swallows thickly. "And if she killed the one you love?"

Clarke snaps, eyes wide and teeth lips pulled back over her teeth. "I saw the father I loved floated by
my best friends father and my mother. I hated my best friend until the day before he died."
Her hands
tremble and her voice grows lower. "I let 250 innocents burn to save my people. I was betrayed at
"the mountain, my people left to die." Lexa swallows thickly as Clarke's eyes burn brighter and brighter. "I killed over three hundred to save my people in the mountain. Life is not fair. I could go on a vendetta for justice, revenge. It is all the same. Make your decisions Lexa, because right now it sounds like a broken heart speaking and not your head."

Lexa's eyes are hard and she glares at Clarke with anguish and no remorse. "I always think with my head."

"Then get it on straight and see the bigger picture." Clarke snaps, voice raised before it lowers to a soft anger. "You were always good at that."

Lexa pulls in a shuddering breath, scowling. "What is your point?"

"The same thing I have been telling you." Clarke voice shakes with disbelief and rage. "The Desert is coming and he will bring a war, worse than the mountain and you continue to ignore me. You need to choose a side, we will need your help."

Lexa turns her gaze to the side, fighting every instinct that tells her to back away from Clarke's anger. "You have gotten the support of some of the other clans."

Clarke slams her fist on the table, eyes wild. "We need all the help we can get, he is coming and he is going to hit us hard."

"You've told me this already and I have answered you. I cannot fight while the coalition is in effect." Lexa adverts her eyes, pulling her hands behind her back and her face becomes impassive and Clarke stiffens, recognizing this diversion. "Octavia and Lincoln are in the nomads lands. The banished." It sounds almost bored but Clarke knows it isn't.

Clare steps closer, blood boiling and Lexa pulls in a sharp breath. "You will not harm them. They are my people and if you touch them you will regret it."

Lexa doesn't fold under the threat but the Heda chirps warningly inside of her. "Why did you send them there?"

"The lost need hope." The blonde swallows, licking her lips. "Octavia can offer that."

"Lexa shakes her head and the candle caste shadows across her face, reminiscent of the war paint she once wore so long ago. "They will not abandon the Sankru's ways, you are foolhardy to think you can sway the ones who have been tossed from society."

"And you are too stubborn and pigheaded to see that's exactly why they can help. " The Ursa is swirling with Clarke, they are one in their anger and desperation.

Lexa fingers a scar on her forearm, it burns as she speaks. "They were banished for reasons Clarke."

"Some of them stupid reasons." She thinks to Lincoln and Octavia. Octavia staying to save her people and Lincoln begging to save their people. An act of humanity and defiance that had them cast aside.

Lexa's arms tremble and the Heda is ruffled inside of her. Chirping angrily. "And some of them strong reasons."

"It doesn't matter, they will prove their true colors and the Sankru will lose some of his warriors while we help them."
Lexa stares at her in disbelief. "You expect them to fight for us." And the way she says it sets Clarke on edge because it wasn't her and Lexa. No Lexa wasn't involving herself in this fight. Not yet at least. Not until the Coalition was broken and she could act freely. Still it causes Clarke's hackles to raise and she wants to rage and scream at the woman.

Instead she settles for a low icy tone. "No, I don't expect that." Lexa stiffens under her harsh gaze. "I am not ordering anyone to fight. When the time comes only those of their own free will will fight."

Lexa shakes her head at Clarke's naivety. "That is how many die Clarke."

"It's how many more survive." And her eyes are bright as she stares Lexa down. "Better to have ten warriors ready to die than twenty scared to die." Lexa freezes staring at Clarke in astonishment, green eyes wide. This wasn't the girl three summers ago who broke at the thought of leading, at the thought of people dying for her.

Clarke shuts the door with a soft click, her gut is churning from talking to Lexa, heart thundering in her chest as she walks to recline on the bed in the far corner of the room with a soft grunt. She briefly checks the wound on her shoulder before there is a sharp knock on her door. Reaching for her sword she speaks, creeping to the wall beside the door. "Who is it?"

"It's me." The tone is full of annoyance. "Isole snuck me in."

"Octavia?" Clarke opens the door cautiously and the warrior barrels in, another on her heel. They both have their hoods pulled high and Octavia shuts the door right behind them, Clarke keeps her sword in her left hand. "They'll kill you if they find you here."

Octavia glares at her as she shoves the hood back. "Why do you think Isole snuck us in." She motions to the figure beside her sporadically, throwing her pack on Clarke's bed. "I brought someone to talk to you."

"Clarke meet one of the lost." Octavia motions to the person before her as she shoves Clarke's sword down and pushes her way to the fire, grabbing the hot drink there. Slowly the hood is dropped and Clarke spots the natrona mark burned into her cheek. "She wanted to meet with you right away."

The woman stares at Clarke, feels the Ursa's curiosity pulsing as she surveys the sky-fallen. "You are suppose to help people, why didn't you help us?" She steps closer, eyes swirling with pain and fury and her hand touches the knife at her waist. Clarke stiffens but Octavia's hand presses onto her left, keeping her sword down. "Were we too lost for you?" The woman spits the questions out, scowling at Clarke in the darkened room. "Not important enough?"
Clarke trembles, shakes her head because she can feel the lost ones prayers pulsing and beating against her skull even now. "I wanted to help you, but I couldn't unbanish you. I don't have the power." Clarke looks her right into her eyes, feels Octavia stiffen beside her. "I can give you a home."

The woman scoffs. "Our homes were taken from us, you offer us nothing but false hope." She stares at Clarke like she was a drunken idiot, shaking her head. "You think you could win in this battle."

Clarke stands taller, shoulder pulling back as her chin tilts up. "We will win."

A disbelieving snort leaves the woman, she stares at Clarke like the teachers on the Arc had looked at the children who spoke of things they had no knowledge of. "Then you do not know the definition of winning. When the chips fall and the blood stains the ground, are you winning then Ursa?"

"When peace is reinstated." Clarke stares at her, hands shaking as she puts her sword away. "When there is no war, then I will have won."

She shakes her head sadly, eyes misty. "Then you will always lose, peace is an illusion."

Clarke steps closer, bright eyed and confident. "We can achieve it. I will tear the Desert rat down."

Dark eyes dance with disbelief and sadness. "You think he will be the last?"

"No." Clarke shakes her head, chin held high. "But I will not let him kill thousands of our people."

The woman barks out a laugh. "Your people are of the sky."

"My people are my people, the ones who I grew up with, the ones I fought with." And the Ursa spirit is consuming, almost suffocating as it fills the room under Clarke's words. "The ones I travel with and the ones who pray to me as well as the ones who have lost hope." She steps closer, meeting the lost woman's eyes. "They are all my people. All the Ursa's people. I feel their prayers die out when their hope vanishes. When they die I feel it." Her words crack and she swallows through a dry throat. "It is my burden."

The woman stares at Clarke, the silence ebbing at them but she dips her chin. "I do not speak for the lost, we have no leader." She looks up through hard eyes. "I will not send our children to fight in a war where they will lose on both sides just to be banished to the sands again."

Clarke swallows and her hands threaten to shake. "The mountain is the right of the Ursa." And saying that tastes like ash on her tongue. Brings death dancing before her eyes. "I will give it to the lost, to your people."

The woman is silent for a second but Clarke can see the hope hiding under the suspicion. "And when the clans think to attack us while we lay open and defenseless?"

"They will not step foot near the mountain." Clarke trembles finally, body shaking in grief and guilt and Octavia watches her break under her own words. "The memories of the dead taint it. Ghosts of the mountain and of the reapers."

The woman tilts her head to the side, there is no anger or disgust written on her face as she stares at Clarke. "So you want us to live where the dead haunt the living?"

Clarke looks up with a trembling smile, broken and truthful. "The dead haunt the living everywhere, there are simply more near the mountain."
The woman nods and steps back towards Octavia. "As we have told Octavia, we will not fight."

"Then you don't fight." And there finally that silver of hope lighting up the lost woman's eyes as Clarke speaks. "But if any of yours move against us for the Sankru, we won't hesitate to kill them.

The woman shakes her head, placing her knife back into it's sheath. "They won't choose sides."

"I don't expect them to."

There is that suspicion in her eyes again. "You expect nothing of us?" Clarke shakes her head and the woman stares at her in shock. "Then why would you offer us your land Ursa?"

"I have failed the lost, too many of their prayers were unanswered." Clarke's voice cracks and she turns her head to look to the side, struggling to catch her composure. "Too many of them lost hope in the spirits. That is my fault, I can help them. I can give them a place where no one will dare fight on." And tears fill her eyes, all she ever wanted was peace for everyone and she can offer the lost it. "If I can offer you a place to stay, a place for those I failed then I will. I will offer it so they have a safe place and so the Desert Rat doesn't have the lost fighting in a battle he craves.

The woman snorts as it dawns on her. "So you want to lower his troops, take away the lost?"

Clarke jerks her head up with red-rimmed eyes, sharp and wavering. "If I learned anything it is that children shouldn't fight in war."

"I learned that not everyone is battle ready and when you toss them into the battle field there are causalities. Deaths that could have been prevented."

"I don't want anymore deaths on my shoulders when I can stop it."

"You keep the Commander and other clans from attacking us and we will move to the mountain." And her voice sound different than when she first walked in, her shoulders aren't as tight. "It will take time."

"I can send some horses and warriors to escort you."

The woman scowls at Clarke. "You wish to cage us."

Clarke shakes her head. "The desert rat won't take kindly to loosing his potential subjects."

The woman holds out her hand, grasping Clarke's elbow. "Then we accept. We will not fight for you Clarke of Riders, but we will not fight for the Rat of the Desert."

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Hours later Isole kicks Clarke's foot. The blonde rolls over on the floor, groaning as her shoulder jars in pain. "Yes." Blue eyes opening slowly, fluttering as she struggles to fully wake up.

"We head for Jaha Clarke, you've slept the night and some of the day away." There is a grin twitching at Isole's lips. "You are leading our group are you not?"

"Yes." Clarke stands slowly, rolling to her knees and keeping any movement from her right shoulder as it throbs. She reaches for her jacket as Isole swings Clarke's bag over her shoulder. "The Vine warriors make it there yet?"

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"I would think, but we cannot be sure until we get there." Isole shifts astutely on her feet. Clarke stares at her suspiciously and Isole rolls her eyes. "I have missed the other riders."

Clarke lets a soft small fall across her face. "Me too." She zips her jacket up and pulls her sword over
her belt as they leave the small room.

Climbing on her horse, with Isole behind her Clarke feels eyes on her. The hairs on her necks stand on end and she scans the town before finding green eyes watching her. Lexa stands on a balcony, eyes boring into Clarke, behind her Mikil stands on the roof, tipping his chin to Clarke. There is an awful gnawing feeling in Clarke's gut. She finds Asha in the crowd, tilting her head to the Commander. Her rider follows the wordless order, disappearing into the crowd to return to Lexa's guard instead of Clarke's. Lexa's eyes never leave Clarke and the blonde turns away from those searing eyes, nudging her horse through the gate as Polaris follows after them.

The second the touch the forest they spur the horses into a gallop, the faster they got to Jaha the better. Polaris keeps her hand tight on the reins and her sword, pale blue scanning the forest for a hint of metal. "How long will this take?" Polaris is stiff in her saddle.

Isole's fingers tighten on Clarke's hip as she grips a knife, shoulders tense as she waits for the threat to her friend to show itself. "The day if we keep this pace."

Polaris clenches the reins nervously, her horse shakes her heard snorting at the woman's untrained ways. "Can they keep this pace?"

"They've been trained and breed to."

"Good." Polaris' eyes nervously dart to and fro. "I've always hated the forest, too many hiding places. We should have stayed with the Vine warriors, they had an advantage in the tree."

Isole shakes her head. "Would have missed Mountain Clan, he left today."

Clarke looks up with hopeful eyes. "We have his support?"

Isole's lips twitch and Clarke can hear the smugness in it. "I abided by his quiet nature."

Clarke snorts, turning her head to catch Isole's eyes. "You mentioned Baladan."

"They are a close family." Isole shrugs with her grin widening. "Where Baladan fights they fight."

"Will he turn the tides in our favor?" Polaris rides slightly behind them, shoulder bouncing as she tries to get into the rhythm of the fast pace.

"Hopefully, the only one left to actually get is the Iron Clan." Her fingers squeeze Clarke's side again, her voice is low and thoughtful. "No one has seen them in three summers since the mountain.

"Should we ride to them?"

And the roles have switched in the three summers Isole had been gone from her queen as Isole comforts her Queen. "We have Horse, Sky, Ice, Boat, Ocean, Vine and Mountain."

Isole meets the Queen's eyes, history swirling in both eyes. "Hopefully that is enough."

Clarke rolls her left shoulder, pulling her right closer to her chest as she loosens the reins. "We have the lost, they will not fight for the desert."

Isole stiffen, tense from her muscles to her voice. "He still has the slaves."

Polaris meets Clarke's eyes are the woman looks back at her. "We pray they will revolt in the middle of battle."

Isole presses closer to the other rider, teeth bared. "We have enough. We can win."
There is a sharp whistling as the sun creeps closer and closer to the horizon. Polaris and Isole stiffen and Clarke grips her sword. The whistle gets closer and Isole turns her head behind her. "BOLAS!" She warns them as the rock and rope connects to her side. It tangles in her arms and the momentum throws her off the horse, Clarke reaches for her but she's too slow. Isole hit the ground with a thud, head and shoulder snapping into the ground as a sickening pop and crunch echoes from her bones. Her body rolls uselessly to a stop as Clarke tries to jerk her horse to get Isole's prone form but before they can turn around there is a soft click and then a harsh clash as something snaps around her horse's leg. The horse slams into the ground with a sharp cry as Clarke flies off of him with a shout. A few yards away from them Polaris is shoving Isole's unconscious body onto her horse and scrambles up behind her. Clarke watches as Polaris grips her sword with one hand and Isole's waist with the other as she turns to face Clarke. Her pale eyes are wide with fear and she kicks her horse to race to Clarke, chest heaving.

"NO!" Clarke screams at her as she rises to her feet, blood drips down her shoulder and her head swims but there are arrows burying themselves into the trees beside them. Whistling before one finds Polaris' thigh, the woman doesn't flinch as her horse continues to prance in place, each arrow landing near it making it flinch. "GO!" Clarke waves her arm. "Get out of here."

"Clarke!" Polaris' eyes are wide and her chest is heaving as she uses her own body to cover Isole's as arrows fly over their heads, pressing the unconscious woman closer to her horse's back to prevent more injury. "They will kill you!"

"Go now!" Clarke brings her sword down on a warrior's wrist as he jumps from behind a tree, slicing to the bone before she kneels him in the groin. "Warn Jaha and Polis. We can still win!" Polaris watches as more warrior come from the shadows and she drops her head to Isole's back whispering a prayer that buries itself in Isole's back and Clarke's head. An apology before she kicks her horse to take her away from Clarke. *Let Clarke live, forgive my cowardliness. Clarke drives her sword into a warriors chest and rips it sideways, shoulder screaming in pain as her heart clenches in her chest, watching Polaris ride away at her order. The warrior collapses with a howl and three more warriors are on Clarke, some have the dunes on their shoulders and others are bare of insignia. Her horse is screaming as it struggles to rip its leg from the trap that had forced him to throw Clarke. Clarke rolls under their swings. They are wild and angry as they try to bring her down. Her shoulder throbs in pain as she stops a sword aiming for her stomach, with a grunt she throws her knife into his neck and runs to her horse. With both hands wrapped around the hilt and her shoulder screaming as she brings her sword down in a heavy arc. Sparks fly as she hits the chain to the trap and watching as it springs loose. Her horse rears on its hind legs and his hooves connect with one warrior's neck, snapping it as he slams his hooves back into the ground. Clarke reaches for him but is tackled. She grunts and throws her head back o connect it with the warriors own head. Blood pours down her as she breaks his nose. She twists her hips throwing the stunned man off of her and kicks out with her foot, there is a sickening crunch as his knee pops to the side and he screams in pain. Clarke rolls to her feet, eyes finding her horse. He rears on his legs, striking any who near him as his frantic eyes search for his rider. She begins to run to him before a warrior steps in her path, twin swords gleaming in the fading sunlight. There is a whistle as they stare one another down before an arrow flies to her horse's flank, piercing it as he whinnies in pain. Clarke hearts stops as another warrior jumps forward with his sword, trying to catch the horse. "RUN!" Clarke's order causes the horse to quiet before he takes off through the forest. His broad and bloodied shoulders slam into two warriors, throwing them to the ground as he swiftly limps away as fast as he can. Leaving a trail of blood behind him as his rider fights three opponents.

There is too much blood dripping down her right shoulder and her head is throbbing as she blocks another hit, kicking out with her foot again and rolling under the next swing. Her chest heaves as she
throws a knife at another warrior. Blood splatters across them and the other two snarl at her like animals, jumping forward to tackle her. Her ribs sear in pain as she bring her elbow down onto one of the warriors solar plexus. She rolls away from Clarke with a choking breath and more warriors appear from the shadows. A foot connects with her stomach and she chokes out a gasp before another drives into her ribs. She lashes out with her sword, feels the blood dripping down her arm before there is a boot slamming into her wrist. With a scream she releases her sword instinctively cradling her wrist ti her chest as another kick connects with her stomach again. She chokes on bile, coughing as she throws her hand wide and yanks on the first foot she finds. The sun slips lower down the horizon as the warrior hits the ground with a thud, only to rise with a roar and lash out with his foot. She raises her hands to block it but it's too late, the boot connects to her temple and she falls limp. Head rolling to the side as darkness creeps upon her.

The warriors spit at her feet before jerking her up and tying her hands together, her limbs are loose even as she tries to jerk them away. They throw her onto a horse as she finally falls unconscious, slumping forward without a sound.

Chapter End Notes

   Lana-adrif, calm waters
Clarke wakes slowly, her body throbbing and she bites her cheek to keep the groan in. A hand grips her chin, shoving her head back so she can look at the man before her. His skin is weathered, tan and rough. The sands had not been kind to him as a pink scar shows on his neck. "You are awake. Good." He releases her chin and backs away, he is in a loose tunic but the insignia of duns stands proud against his chest as he bares his teeth at her. "I heard you were gathering an army to fight me."

Clarke stares at him, the images moving as she tries to focus on him. The pain in her shoulder is pulsing and her head throbs, arms forced above her head like so long ago. "You are the desert leader?"

"You let your eyes fool you. You think I look weak but I am strong." His face is sunken in as he steps closer to her, vein throbbing in his throat. "My people are strong. We will kill all who oppose us." He brings a knife towards her cheek and she fights the urge to jerk away from the sharp edge. "You've doomed entire Clans due to your stupidity. The Horse and the Ocean will fall just like your Jaha and just like the Commander."

She brings her chin up, glaring at him. "You won't win."

"I've invaded the forest already, you know this." He taps the knife against her cheek. "My people have told me all you know of us and they will act now." His lips twitch. "I have taken you from your plans and as yours fall mine will rise."

"I took down the mountain." Clarke glares at him, blue eyes burning into his light brown. "I can take you down."

"The mountain was an obstacle, I am more than that branwada girl." He presses the knife into her skin, dragging it slowly down her cheek, over the scar from so long ago. "You bleed so little for the death of so many." He brings the knife to himself, looking down at the blood before moving quicker than a snake and shoving the knife into her already wounded shoulder. Clarke jerks against her bonds, letting out a scream of pain before she can clamp her mouth shut, she writhes in pain, chest stuttering as she struggles to catch her breath. He watches the blood trickle over the knife and down her shoulder. "I didn't get to cut you that day." He rips the knife from the arrow wound and her chest jerks with it, jaw trembling as he rubs his fingers over the blood on the knife. "I watched as a bear touched you and they fell at it's feet like cattle."

She is reminded of Quint, the hatred in his eyes. "I did what I had to to save my people." Her words are low as she stares at him, swallows the bile rising in her throat at the nausea from her head wound. "Whoever of yours was in the ring of fire threatened my people."

He sneers at her, fingers tightening on the knife. "And now I threaten your people and all those who
thought to help you then or now."

Clarke shakes her head, focusing on his face and trying to bide her time. The more he spoke the better her chances were. "The Commander betrayed me at the mountain."

He brings the knife to dig into the palm of her right hand above her head, she clenches her jaw and glares back at him as her arm trembles. "She freed you in promise of the mountain falling and then she left." He drags the knife slowly down her palm, letting the skin split and ooze blood. "She abandoned the promise." He presses the knife into the center of her palm, harder and harder. Her hands are pulling tightly at the bindings on her wrists, hoping he doesn't stab through her palm. "She spared your life for no reason." He brings his arm back and Clarke waits for the pain but it never comes, he embeds the knife right above her hands and her chest jerks in shock.

Her hands tremble and she fists them, feel the blood dripping down her wrist. "I took down the mountain."

"As the Heda said it would perish." He sneers out, prying the knife from the wood as his eyes darken. "But your people became a new threat. She let the sky live and they replaced the mountain. So much technology can bring death."

Clarke growls low in her throat, anger boiling in her blood. "Yet you're the one calling war and planning a massacre."

He pats her head like one would a dog or child, staring at her condescendingly as he begins to resharpen the knife. "Victory require sacrifice."

Clarke scoffs, shaking her head. "You're a fool."

He scowls at her, wiping the knife off. The sharpened edge gleams in the light. "I want something, you will give it too me." He points the knife at her, eyes wild.

Clarke shakes her head, baring her teeth as the Ursa growls in her bones. "I won't tell you anything."

He laughs, grin wild with too many teeth bared at her. "I don't want you to tell me anything. I want you to scream." He steps closer, pressing his body into hers, she refuses to squirm. Her knee raises to slam into his groin in retaliation and defiance but he laughs as she just jerks against the rope tied to her knees, as if knowing she would try that. She stands on her tip toes, forced high by the ropes on her wrists and knees, glaring at him as he strokes the knife along her cheek, collecting her blood as it drips to her chin. "I want you to feel pain and then after that I will get exactly what I want from you." Clarke shudders under his gleaming gaze.

He cuts her shirt away from her body and stares at the scars marring tan flesh. "It was your torture that made this all happen to begin with." Tilting his head he presses the knife into her bare skin on her left arm, the scar slightly faded but twisted from the stitches. "We should start at the beginning." He drags it slowly across her skin, splitting it open as red flows down arm. It seeps into her chest bindings and his eyes follow it. "You didn't scream much until the brands." He presses the knife tip into stomach, slicing it sideways like they had so long ago. This time a whimper doesn't leave her but bile threatens to spew from her as her head swims. "But I can try to make you." He then stares at the scar on her ribs, burned by Lexa after escaping the gorilla. "Shall I burn them too? Would that make you scream girl?" Clarke spits in his face, glaring at him. This wasn't torture in Finn's place, this wasn't justice. It was some wicked man's revenge.

He wipes the spit from his face before slicing once again along her ribs with an angry twist of his wrist. Clare grits her teeth, keeping eye contact with the man as she glares at him. Her fingers tremble
as they grip one another above her head. He presses the knife into her hip next. "I remember this scream. I wanted to be the one to tear it from you." Clarke glares at him, swallowing and then gritting her teeth in preparation. He sighs sadly and drags it slowly across the scar. Her head tips back to snap into the pole and her head swims as bile rises higher and higher in her throat before she bites her lip, stamping down any sound and the need to puke. He follows the path of the next scar, it twists from her hip an almost touches her back. He caresses the skin before digging the knife in. "You didn't reach a thousand cuts before the rain hit."

She blink at him through eye hooded with pain. "I won't scream for you."

His nose wrinkles and he presses the knife into her sternum, above the chest wrapping and she shivers. They had left her shirt on when they had tortured her three summers ago. They had left her a shred of dignity and here the Sankru leader was, torturing her in only pants and a thin chest wrap, priding himself in it. "I'll make you scream, one way or another sky demon." He presses harder into her sternum, watching the blood pools at the tip of the knife before rolling down to be caught by her wrap. He presses the next knife above her collar bone, dipping the knife down he slices right above her heart. She inhales sharply, biting her cheek so hard blood pools in her mouth.

He presses the knife into the puckered scar across her collar bone. The brand of a murder. Fitting at the time." He pokes the knife at the center of it until a small bead of blood appears. "You'll soon wear the desert as a warning and a promise to all who oppose me." Rain begins to pelt from the sky and he laughs loudly. Tipping his head to the sky as the sun is shadowed by the clouds. "They want me to stop." There is glee in his face. "The spirits want to save their precious Ursa." He brings the knife to cut into her thigh, slicing through her pants easily as it splits open her flesh and Clarke grits her teeth so hard her jaw pops and her eyes squeeze shut as nausea hits her. "Are they urging me to the brands?" He presses close to her, his body heat radiating from him and Clarke fights the shiver that craws up her back and across her neck as she glares at him. He presses the knife to her side again, trailing it slowly before slicing out. This one is deeper than the rest and her eyes squeeze shut as blood wells out of it and flows down her skin, soaking into her pants. He fingers the stitches Isole had put in after saving the village. Slowly the knife cuts each stitch out, his fingers spread the cut wide, ripping through healed flesh as Clarke jerks back and bites her tongue. Her breath catches in her chest and she releases it with a shaky low grunt as he steps back. He fingers the healed scars that hadn't come from the torture. His fingers stop their exploration when they find the brands on her hip bone.

He turns to the fire that burns behind him, slipping the knife into his belt he crouches down to poke at the fire. Clarke let her head fall back against the pole. Her calves are killing her, aching from the position she is tied in. Her head throbs in beat with her heart and her body radiates pain that she knows will get worse as he continues. Her stomach drops each time he pokes at the fire and she listens for the sound of others, she finds none. It is only the two of them in the village right now. Briefly she wonders where his warriors are at before it is gone, all her muscles stiffen as he stands up, a metal pole in his hands. He holds it with a pleased smile. "This is the one I used on you rider. She didn't want to scream either."

Without her permission Clarke's breath quickens in fear and anger as she glares at him. Her hands itch to strangle him, to make his face purple and watch his eyes grow more panicked before he dies, slowly. Instead he stares at her with dark eyes, hateful and happy. He motions to her hand. "I'd open it if I were you, makes it easier."

She spits in his face, saliva dripping down his chin, tinged in blood. He wipes it away with a sneer before he is grabbing her right wrist and pressing into it with harsh fingers. She manages to keep it closed until his finger finds the cut and she holds in a scream as she jerks away from the grip. It only
tightens and as he spreads her palm wide, blood dripping down her wrist he presses the brand into the center of her palm, right above the cut. It hurts as much as Clarke remembers and she jerks her elbow down as much as she can, catching him in the chin. He backs away, spitting on the ground. His eyes are wild as his blood trickles down his lip. He presses the brand into the fire, watches it grow white hot before he is stalking forward and Clarke fights the urge to jerk away as he glares at her. He rips the edge of her pants down, watches as the scar of a murder becomes visible and he presses the brand above it.

Clarke's skin sizzles and she bites her lips, holding in a whimper before he presses harder. She can feel the brand inside her bones, aching and searing even though it isn't touching her bones. He presses with more force after each second that passes and she doesn't make a sound. She lasts until he puts all his weight in it, splitting the skin with cuts as well as burning it and it pulses in pain deep within her as a scream rips through her throat. He keeps it pressed there a few seconds longer before stepping back. Clarke's eyes flutter and he puts the brand back in the fire. "I knew i'd make you scream." Clarke trembles as the rain cools her wounds, her head falls back to the pole as she glares at him. "Don't worry, it'll all be over soon." He picks the brand up and steps closer. She can feel the heat radiating off of it as he hovers it above her body, trying to decide where to press. She feels it pass over her cheek and barely conceals her flinch before he moves to the cut on her sternum, the only mark of his own he had made. With a twist of his lips and bright eyes he presses the iron into her flesh. Black dots dance across her eyes and she swears her chest is going to cave under the pressure.

He pulls away and her head falls forward, the second her chin touches the mark she jerks back with wide eyes and a whimper. She swallows the bile in her throat as the Desert rat grins at her, too proud. With each breath her mind grows foggier, she can barely feel the pain anymore as he presses the brand into her other hip. He pulls away when blood begins to flow again and Clarke jerks forward, head swimming before all the bile she had kept down comes up and splatters across the ground. He jerks back with a sound of disgust before grunting out a chuckle. A mixture of blood and bile drips down her chin as the rain begins to wash it away.

He moves closer with the brand, it is hot against her cheek and she glares up at him defiantly before there is a deafening roar ripping through the forest. The gates behind him are thrown open. One flies across the sodden ground, embedding itself into the wet earth. Clarke looks up with wide eyes. Before them stands the Ursa, saliva dripping form her maw as rain makes her fur dark and slick, leaves stick all over her and dirt is caked around her front paws as she stands tall on her hind leg. Her chest is heaving and her eyes are darker than Clarke had ever seen them. She looks more animal than ever before as she roars again, blood and spittle flying across the ground before she begins charging forward with thundering steps. Hope blooms in Clarke's chest before the shout of warriors sound, shattering it.

Spears fly down from the trees, some meet their mark and others embed uselessly in the mud. Blood wells from the Ursa as she bats the spears off of her, throwing one warrior into the trees with a sweep of her paw. Clarke struggles against her binding and the man in front of her smirks as they watch spears draw blood and a bolas wraps around her hind legs. She roars, dark eyes finding Clarke as she rips her thick claws through the rope, batting another warrior through the trees with a sickening crunch of bone. Clarke yells, eyes wide. "She is your spirit. The one you look to in times of need."

He spins to face Clarke, eyes wide with rage. "She is no spirit of mine. Any spirit who chose the sky over the ground lost our faith."

Clarke jerks in her binds, frantic eyes on the Ursa. "Stop!" A spear splits the Ursa's side open and Clarke howls in agony, her own side searing with pain.
"There are no spirits anymore." He turns from Clarke to watch his warriors duck and roll from the Ursa's claws as she struggled to make her way to Clarke. "They do not rule us."

Clarke throws her head back, black dots dancing in her vision as the Ursa fights for her life, dozens of warriors throwing their spears and arrows at her. Her chin falls forward onto her chest and she blinks tears from her eyes. "They never did."

"We feared them, now they will fear us." He stares at her grimly, motioning to the Ursa. "First with the fall of the Heda, then the fall of the Ursa. Can you feel her dying?"

Clarke screams in frustration, thrashing against her bindings as another spear lodges itself in the Ursa's shoulder. It rips the muscle there, embedding deeply and its pain echoes inside Clarke. "Go! Get out of here!" The Ursa is dripping in blood, fur slick with rain and blood. Warriors crouch in the mud as she backs away with deep sorrowful eyes connecting with Clarke's. The warriors continue to throw spears, herding her to the other warriors that hold clinking chains. Clarke lurches forward, gaining the leader's attention as she screams. "GO!" The Ursa spins in the mud, throwing three warriors to the ground as she ducks her head and barrels forward. She plows through the gate, head turning as her eyes connect with Clarke's once again. There is a deep aching pain in her chest and tears fall down her face. There is an agonizing roar that echoes around the forest as the Ursa leaves Clarke to her fate. The roar seems to shake the warriors, few slip in the mud before a sharp order from the man in front of Clarke has them chasing after her, some on horses others on foot.

"Your spirit animal abandoned you." He sneers, clenching his fingers around the knife. "How does it feel?"

Clarke stares at him with wild blue eyes, her body trembles with rage and she swears she's more animal than human right now. "The spirits will stop you."

"I'm killing the spirits as we torture you." He steps closer. "There aren't many that tie themselves to humans, but when they do they become weak. Connected to this plane of existence. " He gathers blood around his fingers and touches her forehead. She lurches forward but he pulls back with a dark look to her forehead, the blood is sticky on her head, most likely forming the Ursa's mark. "You will be the fall of the Ursa and the Commander will be the last of the Hedas." He splits her left palm open with his knife, she doesn't flinch, glaring at him as hatred boils in her stomach. Churning and consuming. "We will kill the Heda and then the Commander. We have lived too long under the fear of the spirits."

Clarke tilts her head back against the pole, glaring back at him. "Your people prayed to the spirits in times of need."

He scoffs at her, shaking his head. "And what help did they offer us?"

"I am the Ursa." Clarke jerks against her binds, her vision wavier, flickering between the man in front of her and the wet forest the Ursa runs in. And Clarke feels comfort, if she was going to die the Ursa offered the forest as her last sight instead of this man's deranged face. "Her spirit lead me to those that needed help!"

"And those that prayed but were never helped." He digs the knife into one of her scabbed wounds, drawing more blood. "What of them?"

Clarke drops her head to her chest, squeezing her eyes shut in grief. "We can't save everyone."

"Spirits pick and choose." His eyes are wild and his hands shake with anger. "They cater to the needs of those they deem important."
She lashes out, ropes digging into her wrists, thinks of saving Lexa. Leaving Mikil and Asha with her. Of letting Murphy live so long ago. Sacrificing herself for Finn. "We help those we can, whether they think they deserve it or not!"

"So you will help me?" His grin is wicked.

Clarke glares at him disgusted. "No."

He scowls at her, nose wrinkled. "Am I not important?"

"You will be the cause of death to many, my job is to provide peace." She can feel the deaths of those in the villages, can feel the pain of those that had suffered by his hands. "I help to those who need it. You are not doing this for the good of the people."

His eyes are wild and bloodshot. "I am doing this for the good of my people."

"The slaves you create?" Her voice is harsh but there is no one to hear her besides him and the dead. "The people you threaten?"

"They were tossed from their homes." He presses his hand to his chest, smearing blood across his tunic. "I took them in. Offered them salvation. I am their Sovereign."

"You offered them fear." She spits out, eyes full of hatred that make him sneer back at her. "And those who fear will rebel."

"Not when the fear is strong enough."

Blue eyes burn and the Desert Rat shivers, briefly reminded of the stories that spoke of the Ursa after the mountain. The fire in her eyes and the thunder in her blood that made most warriors fall to their feet. "When you threaten something they love they will do anything to protect it."

"Not when it mean their protection is lost by defying me." He wipes the rainwater from his face, eyes dark and malevolent. "I protect their loved ones."

Even with the blood dripping down her and the pain in her face she glares defiantly up at him. "No, you threaten them."

"It is the same, fear is a method of control."

"They will protest and defy you." She thinks to the lost she had possibly saved already and her smile is bloody. "It will happen sooner than you think."

"I will kill the defiant ones." He presses a blade into her throat, drawing blood. "And you will be here to watch me to kill them all. To kill your spirit and kill the Heda then the Commander. To kill your sky people and the ones you call your riders." Blood drips down the knife as he presses more forcefully, eyes shining. "The Ice will regret siding with you, as will the Ocean and Horse clan."

Clarke opens her mouth to retort but there is this gut-wrenching pain encompassing her and she gasps for breath before the pain crescendos and she lets out a loud scream, thrashing against her bindings. The man grins like a hyena, pulling the knife back before Clarke can injury herself on it. "They've gotten your Ursa, I can see it on your face. Written in pain. She will die soon."

But this isn't the Ursa, it isn't the echo of pain that isn't hers. This is a soul-shattering pain. A loss of life that she can feel with prayers slamming into her head and shattering her heart. "You cant kill a spirit." Her words are weak as her shoulders slump, her body trembles before stiffening again, pain
lacing her expression as the muscles in her neck pull tight, pressing her head into the pole as she gasps for breath.

"You can, if they are tethered to a being on this plane." He watches her try to fight the pain and he trembles with excitement, the first step was to kill the spirit then the host. "Lucky for us, she is tied to you. Forged into a bear's mortal bones and flesh. By the fire and blood of your torture you were bonded, you make her weak." Clarke screams out again as loss rips through her, it aches deep within her soul, within her bones. Forcing her to thrash and cry out. It isn't her torture that makes her break but that of another. "You made her mortal, we let her bones rot and her spirit will stay trapped forever."

Clarke's eyes flutter, pain laces blue as hazy images of warriors cloaked in howla and pantha furs dance in front of her, blood and injuries evident in their saddened faces as they slowly collect in front of her. "No." It is a quiet plea as she watches her riders appear in front of her, transparent and pale. Tears finally fall from her eyes and her chin trembles. "May we meet on the sunrise." Her words fall from her lips with a choked cry as the Sankru Rat grins at her.

Clarke wake to fingers pressing into her chin. She jerks forward, latching onto the hand and biting viciously. Warmth floods her mouth before a hand is pressing into her jaw and a voice hisses in her ear. "Clarke, we came for you. Release me." Clarke opens her eyes with a flutter, releasing her teeth from Polaris' hand. The blonde shakes her head, looking up into Polaris' bruised and battered face. Too used to the copper taste in her mouth she sighs, dropping her head to her chest as the warriors behind Polaris' dip their heads. Deceased Ice warriors had come and gone during the night, greeting Clarke with soft prayers before departing, it seemed Polaris would be no different. "Clarke?"

Blue eyes flutter open. "I'll tell them." Clarke whispers roughly. Her body shakes with fever, thick with blood and sweat.

"What?" Polaris steps closer, the bruising dark against her pale skin.

"Sophia and Amia. I'll tell them." Clarke trembles as the rain continues to fall around them.

"Clarke you are speaking nonsense."

A figure steps from the shadows, arm cradled in a sling and Clarke makes a soft sound of shock and grief. "No." Isole furrows her brow as the fire burns behind them, lighting the night. "How? You escaped. Both of you." Her word are cracking and she fights the tears filling her eyes.

Polaris steps close as a shadow emerges from the darkness, face dark with warpaint and fury. "What are you doing? Cut her down." The voice is harsh and Clarke looks up in shock, forcing her head back against the pole so hard dots dance across her vision.

Polaris cuts the binding to her legs and Clarke blinks blearily until her hands are free and she's stumbling forward into Polaris. The Ice Queen grips her as Lexa keeps her sword drawn, eye darting around for trouble as her jaw clenches. "Clarke, what's wrong?" Pale blue eyes flicker over the bloodied mess of a woman.

"Dead. All of them." She presses her head against the most solid thing she can find, trembling like leaf in the wind. "I can see them. You were one of them." Clarke chokes out at them.

"You were hallucinating Clarke, thick with fever." Isole presses a blanket around her shoulders.

"How'd you find me, where's the Rat?" Her head swims and Isole passes her water.
Lexa clenches her jaw, trembling as she struggles to keep away from the blonde. "You've been gone two days, word of your kidnapping reached Polis and I rode to help find you." Lexa glares at the Ice queen's back. "The Ursa contacted the Heda and I was led here. We set the village aflame but there was no one here."

"Trap." Clarke mutters.

"Which is why we must leave." Lexa intone stiffly, eyes finishing their assessment of Clarke, dark with rage and fire.

They make their way to the horses and Polaris helps Clarke up before climbing on behind her. Isole makes a face at the Heda before climbing on in front of her, Lexa stiffer than a board as they flee, hands tight on the reins. "What happened to your face?" Clarke lets her head loll against Polaris' chest even as the ride jostles her wounds.

Polaris grunts. "The Commander did not take my leaving you in the forest well."

Clarke blinks in confusion, almost snorting before coughing harshly into her chest. "She beat you up?"

Polaris' eyes are hard under the mass of bruises covering her face. "I deserved it."

"You saved Isole." Clarke eyes flutter shut but each step of the horse forces her away, bolts of pain making her tremble. "I asked you to."

"I should have fought." Hands tighten on the reins as the woman of Ice stiffens.

"He would've killed you both." Clarke pulls the cloak tighter around her shoulder, eyes blinking shut, ghosts of the dead shadowing her vision. "He wants me to watch him kill everyone."

Polaris nods quickly. "Explains why you were still alive."

"He wants to kill the Ursa. Then the Heda and Lexa." Clarke shivers against her chest, the dark cloak warming her cold bones slightly. "The sky people, the clan. My riders." Clarke closes her eyes, tears leaking out of them. "Already dead."

Polaris swallows thickly, hand wavering as if to comfort Clarke before her eyes find the Commander's and she closes guilt ridden eyes. "He can't kill us all."

The woman in question nudges her horse closer to Clarke, green eyes always flickering to Clarke face, taking in ever twitch of pain and shiver. "Why does a spirit need to hide?"

Wide blue eyes find Lexa's and the woman stiffens. Fear clouds the normally bright blue, leaving them wild and chilling. "He's going to kill you both."

Lexa eyes are soft with compassion yet full of so much rage. "Clarke, spirits cannot die."

Clarke chokes out a grunt as the horse falters in its steps in the mud. "Tethered to a mortal, they can die in their solid form." Blue eyes find green, slowly they loose the pained glazed look, sharper and full of trepidation. "He'll kill her and then you to stop the Heda from finding another."

Isole grits her teeth, digging her fingers into the Commander's side, Lexa stiffens yet her eyes do not leave Clarke as Isole speaks. "Anyone get the feeling that was too easy, there was no resistance."
"He wanted you to get me, distraction." She shivers, burrowing deeper into the cloak covering her. There is a dull pain echoing from the Ursa followed by a soft relief. "You focus on me not his warriors."

Lexa stiffens, blood pulsing with anger, face splotchy and hot. "What's happening Clarke?"

Blue eyes flicker to the forest, the fading of the riders and she convinces herself it's a hallucination. A dream much like after her first torture. "He's sending people to the ones who fight with us. "The horse, the ocean and my people. Polis."

Lexa bares her teeth, the feral anger that Lexa had controlled years ago. "He won't have enough warriors."

Clarke scoffs, burns screaming at her and she stares straight at Lexa, forcing the woman to listen. "Haven't you figured it out, he's been planning this since the mountain. He'll have enough people. The cave dwellers already helped him. The Wind Clan may as well be on his side as well as the remaining lost ones and his slaves.

Lexa grits her teeth, the Heda furious in her veins. "The slaves will not attack their own homes. Clarke shudders, eyes going dark as they flicker with horror. "You'd be amazed at what fear can do."

The Heda lands on Lexa's shoulder, screeching loudly. "The Ice Nation has fallen." She swallows, eyes flickering to Clarke with remorse. "The Ursa's riders with it. The Horse Clan is under attack."

Clarke closes her eyes, reality almost making her crumble. She had seen them, felt their deaths and she had prayed it was a dream. Isole stiffens, she looks to Clarke and her brown eyes fill with tears. Thinking that intense pain had been Clarke's torture, not the death of her fellow riders. "They will not die in vain, the desert rat will meet his end at one of our blades."

Clarke stiffens her shoulders even as her fingers tremble, Isole's fingers deft as they finish stitching the wounds. "Which clan is next?" Her words are stilted with anguish.

"The ocean was on his way here." Lexa sets down a map, nudging it closer to Clarke while adverting her eyes from Clarke's battered skin to the map, face flush with rage. "If they are not under attack they will be. He will go after Jaha or Polis with the warriors he has hidden here."

Polaris speaks up, passing salve to Isole, pale eyes darting from Lexa to Clarke. "Polis is more populated but has less guards. Jaha has more advanced weaponry." She tilts her head to Clarke. "What decision would a man of death make?"

"Take out the Capital and hope is lost." Across the forest the Heda screeches and Lexa can feel its rage in her bones, echoing and fueling the woman's own anger as she speaks. "But revenge on mind."

Polaris tilts her chin up, motioning to Camp Jaha on the map."Take out the last hope in winning and all else fails."

"He'll do both." Clarke speaks lowly, fingers fisting in the dirt as Isole ties another stitch. "He'll attack the Capital. He wants The Commander there." Blue eyes blaze with spite and fire. "He wants us to split up. He wants to kill you and the Heda Lexa. He'll be where you are." Her shoulders pull back and there is that strength Lexa had admired from her some many years ago, still prevalent and unwavering. "But they'll tear both places down as quick as possible. Take down both and all the clans lose hope. Already he has taken down the Ice nation capital and is working on the horse calm.
You take down their main village or city and the smaller villages around them fall into turmoil."

Lexa closes her eyes as the images dance across her retinas. The large fence and gates of Jaha, gleaming in the light and fire. The crack of a branch and shouts before the thunder of guns and screams. Blood splatters across the ground and Lexa pulls in a sharp breath as a warrior falls from the trees and cuts down two of the Desert warriors. There is the boom and shake of an explosion, shouts of pain and triumph. Death and fire in the air as a blood curdling scream rings through the daunting silence after the explosion. Lexa pulls from it with a sharp breath and wide eyes on Clarke. "Jaha is under attack." Her voice is hoarse, strained as she breaks the news to Clarke.

Clarke closes her eyes, trembling as she slips a cloak over her shirt, body screaming in pain. Isole's eyes find the blonde as Clarke climbs onto a horse, her hands trembling. "Your people?"

Clarke sighs, teeth clenched as her throat constricts. "Bellamy, Baladan and Raven will take care of them. I must take care of the Rat."

Isole steps closer, hand finding Clarke's knee. "Your people."

"My heart can only rule for so long." Tears fall from Clarke's face, chest threatening to cave in as Lexa climbs onto her own horse with a nod of painful understanding. "My head tells me that the Rat must fall, he must die or all hope is lost."

Isole nods, sheer determination in her eyes. "I'm with you until the end."

Clarke's lips threaten to tremble into a sad smiles but she nods sharply, ducking her head in grief. "May our next sunrise be together."

"I would have it no other way Clarke." There is a pain and familiar loss in Isole's eyes.

Polaris shifts, swollen eyes moving to Lexa with desperation before they find Clarke. "My daughter and beloved?"

Clarke searches the images of the dead just outside her peripheral vision, not finding the two loved by the queen with a heart of Ice. "You can go to them if you want."

The Ice queen shakes her head. "I still have duties to you."

Clarke tilts her chin to the map, gaze boring into Polaris. "You were never in my debt, go."

Pale blue eyes are pained but resolute as she climbs up behind Clarke. "I do not want them to live in a world ruled by a madman. My heart is torn in two but I will follow you Clarke, Ursa who demands peace."

Lexa shifts, climbing on her horse, Isole's hands settling on her hips as the Commander speaks. "Then we leave for Polis."

Polis is easy to enter, too easy as Lexa stiffens in her saddle. A shadow drops from the roofs and Lexa draws her sword but Clarke is relaxed as Mikil emerges from the shadows. There is dirt caked to his boots and relief yet trepidation swirling in his eyes as Asha steps from the alley way beside them, scarves wrapped around her head.

Mikil's eyes find Clarke and his fingers press forward into her knee with relief and an anguished guilt. "We lost her a few days ago. Knew she was going for you."
Her white knuckled grip relaxes and she finds her short fingers landing on his hand and squeezing tightly. "It's fine, what's been happening?"

Asha steps closer, searching the others and catching Isole's soft nod. With slumping shoulders and eyes full of relief she comes to Clarke, fingers pressing into hers and Mikil's. "It's been quiet, very quiet." She steps back and shifts eyes over to Isole and the Commander before finding Clarke again. "The streets are empty, people know something is coming."

Llexa grits her teeth, tightening her hands on the reins as Isole shifts with nerves behind her. "Armies invading or not?"

"No." Mikil steps back as he speaks, pulling out a map and notes, passing them to Clarke as Asha passes her sketches of boats. "There haven't been too many people coming in or out, just shipments from the Ocean Clan."

Clarke stiffens, the arrow wound on her shoulder a harsh reminder that insignia could be stolen. "Were they checked?"

"Yes." Mikil's eyes darken with anger as he catches her thoughts. "But they could have been compromised."

"Find those loyal to our cause, now." Clarke shoves the maps into her satchel and jumps off the horse, gripping the reins to keep her balance as black dots dance across her vision. "Once he hears we're in the city everything will go to hell."

Mikil nods sharply at Clarke, pressing a hand to her shoulder and then to Isole's knee. "On the next sunrise." His smile is grim and the three riders return the mantra back to him with worried eyes.

He vanishes back into the shadows and Asha follows directly behind Lexa and Clarke as they creep through the streets, horses left in the alley way with Isole and Polaris watching their backs. Asha grits her teeth, sweat beading down the back of her neck. "We're trapped in a howla den."

Clarke swallows thickly, hand throbbing as she grips her sword. "Yeah, but we can fight back. We can win this."

Asha blinks at her with already anguished eyes, the loss of the other riders heavy on their hearts. "At what loss?"

They continue to the middle of the capitol in darkened streets and silence echoing around them until the creaking of a door gathers their attention. With stiff joints Isole slips over to it, pushing it open so Asha can roll through, sword drawn only to meet the raised eyes of Lexa's most trusted guard. "Mikil told us to wait here." Her eyes are dark and green like the summer grass and skin dark and splattered with freckles as she holds her hand out to help Asha to her feet. "What's the plan?"

"Keep the commander alive." Clarke voice is hard, harder than they had ever heard it. "He will want to kill her and the Heda."

"I can take care of myself Clarke, you are injured." Lexa steps closer. "He is after you also."

Clarke fingers the leather on her sword, staring the Commander down. "Like you said, you keep the Coalition alive. We'll need it once the fight is over."

"The Coalition is broken." The words are tight and Lexa's face is drawn with anger. "It shattered when they attacked the Ice Clan and Horse."
Clarke pins Lexa with an accusing look. "Yet not when the Cave attacked the Ice?"

Lexa almost adverts her eyes from Clarke but she lifts her chin slightly and speaks almost monotonous. "Territorial disputes are not effected by the Coalition." And Clarke glares at her, reading between the lines of Lexa's face. The anger and almost guilt at allowing the Ice people to be decimated due to her rage and pain from Costia. "The Coalition was for peace and truce during war. It lasted as long as it could. Now I fight."

"There may be need of another Coalition." Clarke stands tense in a room full of warriors, shoulders taut enough to pull at her stitches. Too fresh and all too familiar. "Try to stay alive."

"My guards will give their lives for the Commander." The woman's dark freckled face is drawn with determination. "I'll send word to the trusted that a battle is coming. How long do we have?"

"They lie in wait inside Polis and possibly the docks. There may be many more in the forest surrounding Polis." Lexa's eyes burn with fury. "We do not know how many he has turned to his side or brought to invade Polis."

"Word will get out." The woman steps closer to her Commander, shoulders back and meeting Lexa's gaze head on. "Your fighters will wear the insignia of the Commander."

"You will be targeted."

"But we will die wearing you sigil." Her right fist presses into her chest, muscles locking in place. "We die defending the Commander from mutiny and attempts to usurp her."

Lexa holds out her hand and the woman relaxes her fist to grip her Commander's forearm tightly, fingers digging into skin. Lexa grips the warrior's forearm just as tight, knuckles paling and eyes bright with pride and respect. "And in your next life the Heda with treat all those with respect. In your next life you will be born with greatness you have achieved in this life."

"My next life will not be for a long time Heda." She releases her Commander's arm and steps back, dipping her chin in a promise. "And neither will yours."

The guard leaves with swift feet, tying a dark green strip to her left arm, a gold gear in the middle. Reminiscent of the mark of the Commander, the gear Lexa wore into battle above the wings of the Heda. Five guards stand around the room, waiting for their orders, Mikil already gone to warn more of the trustworthy. "We have mere minutes or all night."

"Check your weapons and come with plans." Polaris steps forward, eyes stark against the dark bruising around her eyes. "We need to find the most fortified spot. I do not know Polis as well as you."

Clarke pulls out the map Mikil had passed to her. "Here." She flips it open, unfolding three pages until a detailed map of Polis lies before them. Tan marking highlights different parts of the page with a rat scribbles next to the key. "These are known locations of the invaders, we'll stay far away from them."

"Won't they expect that?" One of the guard steps closer, a scar covering the left half of his face. "The safest place is the last they would look. Right in front of their eyes."

Clarke shakes her head, there is an aching in her chest. A longing and a memory of a time in a war room planning. Bellamy stiff beside her, Raven tweaking a radio, Monroe murmuring behind her and Lincoln and Octavia standing tall as they fired plans off one another. "The risk is too great. They could have it scouted already, eyes out for either of us."
"Split up into groups, one in each." Another warrior steps closer, shifting eyes nervously to the Heda before facing the Ursa head on. "We send a warrior with similar feature of the Commander with you, Ursa. They would follow you and she'll get to safety."

"I am not leaving Polis." The Heda burns angry and ready inside Lexa, green eyes as hard as those of her spirit. "Do well to watch your tongue."

"Sorry Heda, I simply want to keep you safe."

"I've fought many battles before." The room is almost suffocating in the overpowering presence of the Heda as it presses into them, as Lexa seems to grow taller as she speaks. Clarke shifts into a defensive position, the Ursa quiet and Clarke wary. "I can handle my own."

"Then we must fortify out own base." The same warrior speaks, eyes a light brown and face twisted with short stubble, not yet long enough to give a hint of a beard. "Gather weapons and guards."

"This is not a waiting game young warrior." The man steps from the shadows, larger than even Baladan, face covered in soot and lips and eyes stained red. "You strategize well but the moment he invades it will be a bloody and long battle, no strategies will save you."

"The more prepared we are th-" His words are cut off by a sharp rap on the door, a low beat that makes Asha open with caution before a warrior gets through, his thin chest heaving with each pant.

"They're here. The guards on the gate opened without hesitation." There is blood caked to his panicked face.

The mountain of a warrior steps closer with caution. "You fought them."

"Some of them." His fingers press into a wound bleeding sluggishly in his side. "I ran here to warn you."

"You branwada. You lead them straight here. To the Commander." The man cuffs him on the head before shoving everyone out the back door with a snarl. "Go, now. They will come through the front."

Lexa grips his thick forearm tightly. "Moch of." Lexa's eyes are pained before she runs with the guard through the streets, sticking to the shadows as Asha stays close to her. Polaris, Isole and Clarke bringing up the rear with quiet footsteps and drawn weapons.

The clash of metal and screams stain the night-sky and they run forward without thinking. A battle lust none could fight. They were born for this. Made for the clash of metal and the sting of pain. The smell of blood and despair was already in them.

"We use the night as much as we can." Polaris' face is drawn and stern as she orders them. "Use bow and arrow to kill those far away and knives for those close. We need to keep it quiet."

One of the warriors draws his bow and notches an arrow, eyes searching the darkened night. "Where are we heading?"

Lexa speaks now, jaw clenched. "The battle will be at the gates and in the market area. Easy entrance and even easier fighting grounds." With a tilt of her chin she leads them through the streets.

Three warriors loose arrows as they come around a corner, Lexa grabbing the other and slicing his throat open, fingers clamped around the tall man's mouth. Blood staining the desert dunes on his left breast. And Clarke plucks a knife from the dead warrior's belt, throwing it into a guard patrolling on
the wall. He falls into the alley by them with a grunt. Polaris is dragging his body behind a crate the second he hits the ground, all working in sync together as they congregate back eyes search the wall and roofs before continuing down the barely lit street. Clarke keeps fingers tight on her knife as does Lexa. The others either hold their swords or bows, their feet are silent on the cobble streets. The next warriors they come upon have dark cloaks on, faces bitten by the wind and sun and the Dunes of the desert on their shoulders.

Without hesitations three arrows are loosed and two knives thrown. Each falls with a grunt, knees cracking against the ground as the warriors of Polis run forward to finish the job. Lexa ripping an arrows from the woman's chest with a hand over her mouth, slicing it along her throat as Clarke does the same with the knife in the man under her, fingers bruising on his cheeks as she spills his blood into the cracks of the worn street. Isole rips her knife from the warrior's chest, wiping it on his jacket and standing cautiously, eyes on the shadows. Polaris throws water on the street lamp, dousing the flame as they continue forward.

Clarke leads next to Lexa, shoulders brushing as Polaris and Isole stand to Clarke's right and the Polis warrior's to Lexa's left. Their bodies are crouched as they stalk through the too empty streets, boots silent on the uneven streets. Bloodied imprints left behind them. The next group they come upon leave dead Polis warriors, necks spliced open wide and red, in the doorways to a house. Lexa throws her knife without hesitation, rage and anguish burning in her veins and it strikes the leader dead in her eye before three arrows release beside her and Clarke charges froward without a sound beside Lexa as Isole throws her knife with deadly accuracy at another warrior just as Polaris runs a warrior who falls from the rafters of the awning.

Lexa's chest heaves with sharp breaths and she cuts the braid from her warrior, trailing a bloodied finger to mark down the bridge of their nose before she stands taller. Her muscles are bunched and Clarke understands the rage in her bones. The need for blood to spill across the streets by her own knife. That battle lust that will be never ending because the dead were gone. And this, this left that unsatable hunger inside of them.

The three dead warriors briefly filter in the peripherals of Clarke's eyes but they are gone before she can turn, necks dripping in blood but standing proud. Clarke's heart stutters in her chest as more dead filter just out of her reach, the prayers are dying in her head, silenced by the dead and the loss of hope. Her wounds ache but her blood boils and she sprints down the street after a stalking Lexa. The alley's are empty and they find the desert warrior's atop the fence, spears in their hands and eyes on the alleys. Together the group moves as one, three arrows release, Clarke chucks a knife as do Isole and Lexa. Polaris ducks behind a pillar as a spear comes her way. They hold their breath as Lexa's knife and Isole's bury in the same man, causing him to collapse with a pained grunt. The arrows bury into the chest and heads pf their targets as Clarke's borrowed knife embeds itself into a woman's chest, splitting the dunes in half. One of the men teeters on the edge, the arrow in his chest trembling as his fingers pry at it with labored breaths escaping his clenched teeth. He trips over one of his comrade's limp arms and with a shout he falls.

Lexa shoves Clarke and Isole back as the three Polis warriors roll behind a pillar, shouts ripping through the night before fire blazes a bright arc across the sky. The flaming arrow buries deep inside the haystack beside them and flames eat and engulf what they can. Smoke billows all around them as it catches from one house to the next and they crouch, sprinting through the alley's as more and more shouts reach them. The silence had been broken and there would be no more stealthy kills for either side. This was where the battle began. Where they fought for their lives.

Lexa grunts as a flame licks at her shoulder, caught on the red sash. Polaris dumps the rest of her flask on the flames and the Commander grits her teeth as the blackened sash reveals hot metal and blistering skin under it. "We fight on." Her words are through clenched teeth but she receives a nod
from each person. Clarke stares at the slightly burnt sash, can see the strain on the muscles from the heavy shoulder plate and her own aches in sympathy. The shoulder plates showed a leader in the battle. Clarke does not miss the weight on her left shoulder. She shakes herself before continuing after the others. the sky is lighting with the slow rise of the sun and the burn of the flames.

A group of warriors come around the corner, they wear no insignia and there is a brand on their cheek, the dunes. Clarke shifts her eyes to them, the desperation and rage in their eyes. The defeat. "You're slaves."

"You're dead." The man leading the group steaks with a heavily accented lit. With a thick swallow he charges forward, only to be met with the resistance. His swings are wild and Clarke blocks each hit with a pained hiss between her teeth. She can feel the tear of her stitches as the others fight the slaves around her. Lexa disarming two in one moment, blade slicing through the tendons of their shoulders with frightening accuracy as Isole bowls over the slave fighting her, shoulder digging into his ribs. "You don't have to fight for him. You can be free."

His eyes are dark and dull as he raises his sword up over his head. "We will never be free." Clarke blocks the swing but he moves quickly, aiming at her head and she reacts on instinct, knife from her right hand meeting his throat. Clare lets out a low whimper.

She stares straight into his relieved eyes. "I'm sorry. I'm so sorry." With shaking fingers she pulls out the knife. "Yu gonplei ste odon."

The other slaves fall to their own deaths and Lexa stares at them with glistening eyes. "They wouldn't stop fighting."

Isole stares down at the blood in her hands. "They were scared of him."

"We end this now." Lexa's hand is tight on her sword and her eyes are dangerous. Swirling with rage and anguish. "Resistance will be in the market place."

Polaris stares at the sky. "The sun is rising, we must hurry."

Clarke's stomach drops and her heart crescendos. She stumbles forward with a gasp and Isole is bringing her sword up to block an attack coming at the blonde. "Clarke!" Isole stands by her, sword drawn and eyes wide as they watch fro more attacks.

Clarke swallows, shaking her head. Her chest aches and she feels empty. "Somthing happened."

Isole lowers her stance, keeping Clarke behind her as the battle continues on in front of them. They had taken out as many as they could before they were surrounded. "Are you okay?"

"I'm fine." Clarke's eyes search the area, trying to find the source of her numbness. There was so much death around her.

Isole's dark eyes are worried as Clarke struggles to catch her breath. "What's wrong?"

Clarke shakes her head, pressing her hand into a wall to stand straighter. "I don't know."

"Keep your head on and fight." Isole stares at her with wide eyes, worried and begging. "Don't die."

"You too." With those final word they continue into the battle. Clarke aching inside, worse than any wound.
With a grunt Clarke buries her sword into a warrior's chest, ripping it out and swinging wide behind her. There is a spray of blood and her chest heaves, wound throbbing but adrenaline pumping through her. Clarke moves like she is ten times bigger than those around her, muscles rippling and a force to be reckoned with as she brings her sword to slice through the throat of another warrior and she wishes for the guns they had first started with so long ago. The guns they had lost and damaged along the way.

Lexa is vicious in her attack, precise and lethal. She moves like her feet aren't touching the ground, swift and deadly. Her green eyes always track back to Clarke and her warriors as they fight in this mess of a battle. As she moves from warrior to warrior, their body falling the second she turns her back on them.

Clarke throws a knife to a warrior running at Polaris' back and slams her elbow into the woman beside her, cracking her nose and flipping her over her shoulder. Her sword already meeting the woman's neck. A knife skims Clarke's cheek and she lets out a surprised sound before ducking under an arm. There were too many of them, with wide eyes and heaving chest she searches for her people, they are no where to be found. The panic starts to crescendo in her veins, there is no kill switch to bring down the enemies and save her people.

She trembles as she snaps the neck of a man stumbling her way, she whirls his body around to take the knife thrown her way. It looks bleak for the. For the resistance to the Desert. They're surrounded on all sides, they had lost, were close to failing everything. Overwhelmed by the numbers. Clarke's fingers tighten on her sword and there is a shout ringing through the battle. "FREEDOM!" Like a switch flipped desert fighters drop shawls from their heads, spinning to attack those they were once fighting with. Deep red material was sashed around their heads, necks or shoulders. The burn of the Natrona, the lost, stands out on scared skin. The burn of the desert on the others as they yank at the shackles on their wrists and weapons in their hand stiffen before fighting against their captors, some earning death swiftly. Clarke feels something bloom in her chest and her lips pull into a wide grin and she skewers a man with her sword, taking the edge of his blade across her bicep.

In the flash of red and shouts of battle Clarke spots Lexa's own red sash, bright and rallying against the desert. There is blood across her face and determination in her eyes. There is a flash of tan and large dunes on the back of a jacket. Clarke stiffens, sees the face of the man that had caused all of this. His eyes skim over her, almost like he doesn’t see her and she follows after him, rage burning inside of her. Images hot against her head; her warriors dead, Amia broken, bloodied and so scared. Then Sofia tears dripping down her face, the Ice Nation demolished. News of the Ocean failing and the image of the slaves she had killed early this morning. The last image burned into her head is Isole's burns, the sloping of the desert that makes her own burns flare with pain.

Lexa rips her sword from the warrior in front of her, images flitting across her eyes. *Clarke staring wide eyed at her fingers, there is blood covering her. Her calloused hands are dripping in red. There are tears in her eyes and ghosts reflecting off the blue.* Lexa searches wildly for the blonde, there is a desperation in her eyes as she find golden hair. The blonde is ripping through the ranks and stalking after someone. "Clarke!" Lexa duck and runs as fast as she can, taking a knife to the shoulder as she shoves her way though the mess of a battle. The blonde ignores her until she is grabbing her and spinning her around, they stand in the middle of the battle, the slaves surrounding them accidentally as they fight the Desert warriors. "Clarke, you cannot go wherever you are, all I see is blood and death." Lexa's hand is tight and eyes wide. "You will die."

Clarke stands with stiff shoulders. "Then I die, but I will take him down with me."

Lexa yanks her back, hands tight and she feels for Clarke. Wants to kill the Rat as much as her but those images haunt green eyes. "Clarke, this is no game."
Clarke glares at her, determine, angry and scared. "Death is not the end.

"You told me he could kill spirits, when he kills the Ursa it will be your final death." Her hands tighten on Clarke. "You are tied to her.

Clarke clenches her jaw, lip trembling. "Then I die, I have fought for peace too long for it to go up in smoke by a power hungry rat."

Lexa moves to grab Clarke again but a warrior slams into Lexa as Clarke slips under a fighting pair. Lexa kills the man with a howl of frustration, green eyes searching for the golden hair. She looses sight of her as the bodies swarm and blood trickles in a river down the cracks of the cobbled streets. There is this dropping feeling in her stomach and she feels suddenly numb. Her heart stops and Lexa can hear the cry of the Heda in her head. Furious and desperate. Catching sight of the girl Lexa shoves her way through the fighting to bare her teeth as she looses sight of bright golden hair again. With precise yet wild swings she makes her way after the blonde, Asha's wide eyes desperate as the Commander gets farther and farther from her. She is pinned down by three warriors and the rider fights to get to the Commander only to loose sight of her.

Clarke chases after the Desert Leader, killing any of his warriors she can along the way. Her chest is heaving with each breath and she can barely run in a straight line. Sweat beading down her forehead, skin flushed with fever as her stitches rip yet she keeps on him. She rounds the corner and finds two people, a girl a little younger than Clarke and the Desert Rat. He has a gleaming blade pressed into the girl's neck and blood drips down to stain her work tunic. She whimpers and Clarke's heart thunders in her chest. This was a citizen of Polis who had most likely never fought in the war, scarred out of her mind and at the hands of a madman. "Can you hear her prayers?" There is an arrow embedded in his shoulder and he sneers savagely as the red continues to collect in his clothing. "What will you choose Ursa? Kill me or save the girl?"

Clarke watches him with sharp eyes, reminded of a time so long ago with Lincoln begging her to save her people. She tenses because every fiber in her being is fighting one another. "The life of one for the life of many." Clarke whispers lowly. The girl's eyes widen as do the man's. Clarke drops her sword, feels the weight of a knife in her sleeve. "Let her go, take me."

He releases the girl with a grin. The hairs on Clarke's neck stand on end as the girl stumbles to her and the man takes a step back, hand on sword as his eyes swirl with glee and hatred. Clarke throws the knife without a sound, throwing her entire body in it with pain flaring in her wounds; glaring at him with a burning hatred. He lets out a sharp yell as he twists to the side, the knife embedding itself on his shoulder. There is a blinding pain in Clarke's abdomen and she grunts in shock. Her eyes connect with the hard steel of the girl once held captive. "Say hello to your killer, you'll die slowly." He sneers out and presses fingers into the knife on his shoulder with a wince.

"What?" Clarke coughs, eyes wide at the betrayal of the girl she had thought to save, hands pressing into the hilt of the knife. "The Ursa will be back, she'll find a new person. I will not be the last."

"But aren't you?" He steps closer, too triumphant for her comfort. "Do you want to see the heart of the city one last time?" He ties Clarke's hands together as she stumbles from blood loss and they march her through the streets. The fighting is dying down, alleyways full of bodies or blood and it is not the majestic safe city it had once been years ago. It is not the city Lexa wanted Clarke to come and see. It is fire and death. Stone stained in red and the flags of the Commander burning orange and too quick.

The heart of this now bloodied and broken city, one Clarke had not had the liberty to see in it's glory, was attacked from the inside like the parasites the Rat and his followers are. Fallen to bloodied ruins.
"You will die beside her in a spectacle that will be known by all."

In the middle of the stones, cover in blood and half lidded eyes, lies the Ursa. Clarke can feel her now, that numbness fading away from her. She can feel her once again in her own bones as well as in front of her. Tethered and dying. She is tied down, weighted by boulders and chains. Beside her in a cage rests the Heda. Strong wings flapping chaotically as screeches fill the air. "Lexa will kill you all."

His eyes are already bright with triumph. "You fell into the trap easily, following me away from the safety of your warriors. And Lexa, your Lexa followed after you. She is on the run, soon she will die as well."

He presses a knife to Clarke's throat as someone aims an arrow at the head of the Ursa. "For too long we have been ruled by the spirits!" His voice echos around the rubble. Bodies cover the streets and blood runs like a river through all the cracks, collecting in thick puddles. The ones who fought the Desert warriors are either dead, on their knees with knives to their throat, in cages or dying. "They choose who is to led and we have lost lives because of these spirits wishes! We have been abandoned by them, those chosen thought to be righteous and godly." He presses forcefully into Clarke's throat, red dripping down the handle and staining his skin. "They bleed the same as us. I know you can feel the presence of these spirits. Suffocating and consuming." Clarke makes no sound, hands tied behind her back and blood thick and flowing form her wounds. The Ursa pulses beneath her veins, weak and angry. Clarke can feel her, inside of her soul and in front of her. Both weak and dying. The Heda is strong, pulsing, screeching and tearing at the metal of the cage. Blood in its beak and talons raw and bleeding. Their presences press into the ones around them frantically. Clarke stares at these people, some with deformities and others with broken eyes and a lost look about them.

"You will not win." Clarke says this, loud enough to echo around them. "You want destruction and death, the spirits fight for peace."

He laughs loudly, eyes twisted into a sneer as he presses the knife to her skin again, his hand tremble at the power he holds over a godly spirit. "Where were they when the mountain stole out people from us?"

Clarke grits her teeth, pressing into the knife defiantly as she stares at the people in front of her. "The Mountain is no longer a threat, I tore it down. I killed those who stole your people."

He shakes her roughly, eyes catching those of his reluctant followers, of the ones who betrayed him and he digs the knife further into her skin. "You fell from the sky, a demon the spirits chose. A mistake on their part."

Isole, bloodied and broken comes from the shadows. An arrow and bow in her red stained hands. "The sky people fell from the stars and Clarke destroyed those who oppressed us." Warriors of the Desert draw their weapons but hesitate, all it takes is a second for her to kill him. If they miscalculated her arrow may meet it's mark. She stalks closer to him, muscles pulled taut. "The spirits chose correctly, Clarke became the Ursa and saved our people from the mountain." There is a hushed silence, eyes darting between them.

"You dare aim an arrow at me." He tilts his chin to all the warriors around him arrogantly, their weapons drawn. "They will kill you before you can release it."

"If I fall, you fall." Her muscles do not shake, she stands tall and proud. "You will die, in this life and never see your next."

She exhales and Clarke shakes her head, eyes wide but she is too late. Isole's fingers loosen and the
arrow is released. The feathers brush Clarke's cheek as the arrow head buries itself into his eyes, Clarke keeps eyes contact with her rider, sees the relaxing of Isole's shoulders. The acceptance as his grips slackens on Clarke and he falls the same moment Isole grunts, two arrows entering her body. The others stand around in shock, their puppeteer dead at the feet of the spirit. Clarke scrambles forward, over the man's body and sliding to kneel beside her rider. "ISOLE!" She pulls a knife from her rider's belt and slices the bindings on her own wrists and presses into the woman's side, can feel her flickering life force as the blood coats her hands. "You idiot."

"He is dead, threatened you." Isole's finger grip Clarke's as they press around the arrow in her chest. "He threatened all we have fought for."

Clarke's hands are dripping in blood and her shoulders tremble, as Isole gurgles on her own blood. "Don't leave me, don't die." Isole coughs and blood splatters across Clarke's face and dread build in her stomach because this is it.

"Death is never the end Clarke." Her breathes are coming in quick sharp raspy pants. "We will meet on every sunrise in this life and our next."

Clarke presses her forehead into Isole's temple. "You will be in your next before me."

"And I will wait at each sunrise, with the rest of our riders." She presses a brief, bloodied kiss to Clarke's lips. "Fight Clarke, keep strong."

"The sunrise." Clarke whispers. "Wait for me." She presses her forehead to Isole's shoulder, watches her chest still and Clarke lays her gently on the ground. Standing tall she faces the crowd with bloodied trembling hands. They stand, confused and lost without their demanding leader, there is a knife in Clark's hand and suddenly it is embedded in the archer's skull. Clarke's entire body shakes and tears fill her eyes. It did not make her feel better. It made it worse. A deep aching pain. "Where do you loyalties lie?" She is calm but longs to rage and shout at them. They all remain wide-eyed, most fall to their knees at the spark of anguish and rage swirling from her, pressing into them. Clarke walks toward the Ursa, calm and broken. She releases the chains binding the beast down and with a great roar the Ursa rises and the ones remaining standing fall to their knees.

There is a shout and the girl who had stabbed Clarke races forward, ducking between the kneeling bodies until she is on Clarke. "RIPA!" She attacks Clarke with wide erratic swings. No one interrupts, they remain on their knees, watching the fight unfold as the Ursa stands on four legs, watching over the human it had chosen.

Clarke ducks under the first swing, aiming a hit to the girl's ribs. Too full of rage the girl ignores the pain, slice into Clarke's are and kneeing her in the stomach. Clarke grunts full of pain and lashes out with her elbow, catching the girl in the throat. She chokes back in back, coughing and struggling to keep from bending at the waist as she lashes out with the knife again and again, wild and full of anguish. Clarke slam's her elbow into the girl's face, cracking her lips open and the girl tackles her, bring the knife down only to have Clarke shove her off with sharp hands. The girl's kicks out, Clarke rolls away and grunts as she gets to her feet. She slams into the girl and slams her head against the ground as a knee rises to catch her in the gut, aggravating the wound already there and Clarke cries out, rolling away with heaving pants. Her muscles tremble and the girl rises with a shout again, rushing at the blonde. Clarke clenches her jaw, bends low and as the girl reaches her she grabs the wrist with the knife, slips it away from her body and works with the girl's momentum, throwing her over her shoulder. The girl lands with a pained grunt and Clarke is on her, pressing the knife into her chest with a loud cry and tears in her eyes. The girl lets out a soft exhale, head falling to the side. Clarke rises slowly, limping over to the Ursa and the caged Heda.
The Heda bursts from the cage the second Clarke opens it and with a limping gait Clarke races after the bird, the Ursa remaining sitting in the center of all the warriors, huffing at them. Polaris grunts as she races after Clarke, some slaves following her. They find Lexa back into a wall, blood dripping down her body and a warrior pinned to her chest. She faces off against fifteen warriors, chest heaving with hands tight on the man in her grasp. He is wide eyed and littered already with many cut, Lexa's small frame easily hidden behind him. Her eyes are already threatening to flutter shut. "ENOUGH!" Clarke yells out. Half of the fifteen spin around and Clarke stands tall. "Fall down, now."

One of the warrior sneers at her, the dune's stitched onto his sleeve. "Your Sovereign is dead."

"You lie." They scoff at her and the Heda screeches, scratching out the eyes of one of the warriors and there is a ground shaking roar from the center of Polis.

Clarke steps closer, eyes dark and promising. "If you do not fall back I will let the Ursa have you." She glares at them, hand tight on her sword.

One of the slaves behind her speaks. "It is true. He is dead."

"Tie them up." Clarke's command is sharp and Polaris nods, stepping forward with slaves at her back. The warriors drop their weapons and they are cuffed with thick metal shackles. Clarke steps forward, shoves the man-shield Lexa has to the Ice Queen and slips Lexa's arm over her shoulder. "You'll be fine."

"You are not dead?" Lexa murmurs quietly, she shakes her head in confusion. "I saw the vision. A life for a life, it was foretold by spirits."

Clarke bits her cheeks, drawing blood. "Isole gave hers for his." She helps the woman stand, her own wounds ache but Lexa is dripping blood down her coat thickly. "We should get looked at, c'mon." Lexa nods gently against Clarke's shoulder, hand tight on her shoulder as she takes most of her own weight back, taking the pressure off of Clarke's wounds. Together they help one another back to the center of the bloodied city.

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Clarke and Lexa stand side by side in Polis. There are shouts from the gates and they wait there tensely, stiffly until Clarke's heart stalls. Coming towards them are riders, cloaked in bloodied paktrak and pantha. Hope blooms in her chest as the flag of the Ice nation flashes from the shoulder of a warrior. They stand there, Clarke vibrating with energy until they make it to the gate. Lexa nods sharply and it opens slowly. They walk through and Clarke swallow thickly as Nox steps closer, half of his head is covered in bandages but he sweeps her into a hug, squeezing tight. Despite the pain she clings to him just as tight. Polaris make a loud sound of shock before she is surrounded by her remaining people, her hand on their shoulders, grazing any one of them she can touch. Datak steps closer, his right arm is in a sling but he throws his left around her, hugging her as tight as Nox had. Astrid, black hair shorn close to her head and towering over Clarke stumbles until she can heave Clarke close to her. The woman smiles bittersweet at her. "We felt it was over, Polis seemed the smart place to find you." Mirai sweeps in, with bright red hair and tiny but thickly calloused hands pressing to Clarke's shoulder and a nod followed by a thick swallow of emotions as she presses too many braids into Clarke's hand. The blonde closes her eyes and dips her chin into her chest.

Lexa stands there stiffly as the Ice Nation enters Polis, every fiber in her being tells her to run or kill them all, her eyes find Clarke and then she looks to the bloodied ground behind her. There was already too much death today. With almost slumping shoulders she pushes down her thought and
Clarke presses her forehead into a furred shoulder, her fingers tremble and she stands there, shaking with grief. She says nothing as she stands outside of Polis in the forest with the injured Ursa. It grunts low in its throat, the stitches Clarke had used on her stand out starkly against the shaved areas and as pitiful as the Ursa looks Clarke feels relief and falls to her knees, letting out an anguished howl. She presses her forehead into the ground and her fingers tangle in the fur of the Ursa as she finally breaks. She had lost over half of her family, of her riders to this godforsaken war.

The tears fall fast and harsh, thick with anguish as she sobs her heart out. The Ursa sits there, confused. It nudges her chosen, pressing until the girl's face is staring up at her and with a quiet huff the Ursa presses her nose into Clarke's forehead. Clarke stiffens, but relaxes as everything washes over her, calmness. Relief. Life. Death. Her head cleared of all clutter and she breathes calmly for the first time in years. "Thank you." Clarke whispers quietly, fingers loosening from thick fur and she stands on shaking legs. "The stitches should fall out on their own." Clarke watches as the Ursa stands on its hind legs, tall and looming over Clarke, it tilts its head to the sky and roars. It tears through the forest, louder than Clarke's own cry and the forest fall silent. Clarke presses her fingers into the Ursa's forehead, smoothing over the fur there before the creature ambles back off into the forest.

The blonde begins her walk back to Polis, the gate comes into view and Clarke hurries through it as she spots familiar green eyes moving into a healing hut. "Octavia." Clarke looks over the girl as the door shuts behind her, she had a bruise on her face and a cut to her arm but she looked fine. "Camp Jaha?"

Octavia looks over Clarke quickly, eyes stopping on all the bandages before she tilts her chin up. "They didn't get past the gates. Guards warned them but they advanced so they shot them down before throwing some of Raven's grenades." There is disaster in the warrior's eye, a battle worn expression they all hold. Too many dead flashing in their vision. "Lincoln and I showed up with the lost to help from the outside."

Relief is tinged in confusion as she stares at the new consultant to the lost. "I thought they didn't want to fight."

"They didn't." Octavia shakes her head with a wry grin. "But they followed Lincoln and I, something about not being forced to fight making them want to help." Octavia slips her eyes over Clarke again, worry thick in her torn expression. "You good?"

"Yeah." The words cracks leaving her throat. "You?"

"Nothing that won't heal."

"Yeah." Clarke whispers lowly, there is a dark lock of braids in her fingers that hadn't left her hand since. The door is thrown open and Baladan stumbles through. "Bal." Her voice cracks and his eyes dart around the room.

"Clarke." He swallows loudly, looking behind her but finding no-one. "Who?"

Clarke swallow, throat tight. "I haven't seen Mikil or Asha since the beginning."

"Sar is looking for Asha." Octavia takes that moment to leave, eyes soft with understanding. "Romona is looking for the Queen and Mikil. Aidan is helping the healers."

Clarke's heart settles somewhat. "Nox, Datak, Astrid and Mirai made it from the Ice." Baladan stares
at her with a grief stricken expression, tears filling his eyes.

His eyes dart behind her again and he stiffens. "Where's Isole?" Baladan's words ache and tremble.

Clarke stares straight into his eyes, fingers tight on Isole's braid. "She killed the Desert Rat."

Baladan shakes his head sadly. "No."

"He was going to kill me." Clarke's words break across her lips.

His eyes close and his knees tremble. "Her killer?"

Clarke ducks her head. "Dead." There is a dark broken look in her eyes, she had killed the archer without a thought. A nameless warrior doing what he was told and she killed him.

Baladan steps closer to her, hand finding her shoulder gently as he shakes. "We've lost more than half of our people."

"We were never meant to survive the mountain." The voice comes from the bed across the room, the trembling frame sits up. "We've been living on borrowed time for too long."

Clarke stumbles over to the cot. "Asha. We've been looking for you."

"I know." Asha leans into Clarke touch as the blonde pets back her hair. "The Commander was captured."

"She's fine." Clarke eyes dart over her rider, cautious and worried yet relieved. "Bruised and battered but alive."

Asha drops her chin and turn away from Clarke. "I failed."

"There were too many warriors." Fingers tighten on Asha's shoulder. "You did what you could."

Asha leans into the hands, expression worn and pale. "Mikil lead half of them to the council room."

Clarke turn her head, staring at her second in command. "Bal."

"Already on it. I'll tell someone to send Sar this way." His fingers brush Asha's temple gently and he grins at her beneath the mass of scars on his face. "You're beauty is still outstanding dear Asha."

Asha snorts, pressing a hand to her side as it aches. "Much prettier than you dear Baladan."

"I would hope so, I looked like a horse's rear before my attack." There is a gentleness to him that Baladan had always managed to allude. She rolls her eyes playfully at him. "I'll be back, with Mikil."

Clarke watches him go and she turns back to Asha the woman's eyes are wary. "Sar's alive?"

Clarke takes relief in the warmth of Asha's hand, the paleness worrying her. "Yes. Baladan brought her."

Asha relaxes back into the cot. "I feared he may have just said her name to abide my fear."

"No. She's here. She'll come for you." Clarke motions to the necklace around Asha's neck, the pendant falling over her heart in her slumped position.

Asha turns her head to bore into Clarke, tears threatening to fall from her eyes. "I am sorry."
The Ursa had eased some of her pain in the forest but it aches still, deep and resounding. "Nothing to be sorry for."

"I felt them die."

Clarke's eyes water and she closes them, squeezing Asha's hand. "Me too."

Asha grips her hand just as tight. "How many?"

"There's only Nox, Astrid, Datalak, Baladan, Sar, Mirai, Romona, Aidan, you and hopefully Mikil." Clarke closes her eyes, the images of her dead riders flooding her mind. "We'll. We'll have a funeral for them."

"The mountain." Asha' grunts out and it sounds like a defeat but a victory. "By the tunnels."

"Ash."

"No." Dark eyes stare up at her, teeth gritted. "It was where our souls were trapped, it is fitting our souls will be released there."

Clarke shakes her head in confusion. "You're not dying, stop saying our."

Asha meets Clarke's eyes. "I wish to see Sar before I go."

"NO!" Clarke screams, glaring at the woman on the cot before her. "You're not dying. I'm not loosing anymore. You'll be fine."

"We both know the chances."

Clarke trembles and every good thing the Ursa had done for her unravels, all those bad feelings come rushing back. "Sar will kill you."

"I wish to leave her as much as you want them to leave." Asha's voice cracks and her fingers find the necklace, trembling. "I wish for another day with my beloved."

Clarke clenches her fist around Isole's braid. "Stop it."

Asha looks up at Clarke with sympathy. "Clarke, death is inevitable."

Clarke grabs her hair. "You're not dying!"

"My lungs are heavy and my inside broken. I will die."

"No, just, just talk to Sar." Clarke stands on shaky legs, to many braid already in her pouch. "Keep talking to her. You will not die, I promise. We're not losing anymore."

Asha lets out a thick sigh. "Lies are not promises one should fight to keep."

Clarke leans closer. "Promise me you'll fight."

Asha glares at her, fingers tight yet trembling on the bedspread. "I am fighting."

"Promise me you'll stay alive." Clarke leans closer, eyes frantic. =

"Lies are not promises to be kept Clarke."

"Promise me, for Sar."
Asha stares straight into Clarke's eyes, chin tilted high. "I will fight until my last dying breath."

"Asha."

"I will not lie Clarke."

Clarke shakes her head. "You'll be fine."

The door opens and Sar bursts in, not even faltering in her swiftness as she spots Asha. She falls to her knees beside her beloved. "You're alive." She presses her forehead into the pale woman's temple. "I feared the worst my love."

"You always fear the worst." Asha's fingers press into Sar's cheeks. "Lay down with me."

Sar shakes her head, face twisted in relief and worry. "You are in pain."

"You ease it, lay with me." Sar scrambles up into the bed gently, laying down beside her beloved, hands gentle as they settle over her.

Clarke stands quickly, nodding at them both before leaving the room with limping steps. Baladan shows up in the distance, heaving a body over his shoulder with grime determination as he makes his way to another healer's tent. Clarke steps to Octavia. "Where's my mom?"

"Thick of the city, why?"

"I need her now." Clarke's eyes are wide with frantic energy. "We're going to the mountain."

Octavia steps closer, reaching out for her. "Clarke."

"There's machines in there, machine they need to save lives." The blonde trembles, hands tight on the pouch at her side. "I can open it up and we can. We can save lives."

Octavia steps closer to Clarke, hand surprisingly gentle as she settles it over Clarke's. "Will they even make it to the mountain?"

"We can keep them alive."

"Jaha's closer." Octavia stares at Clarke with worry, green eyes flickering over the breaking blonde. "It has similar machines."

"Okay." Her hands tremble and she sighs. "Okay."

"I'll get your mom." Octavia squeezes her bicep, pushing Clarke softly to the left. "Get everyone ready."

"Thank you."

Clarke rushes into the tent. "Sar, we need to move her."

Always blunt Sar looks up with pained eyes. "She's dying."

"I know, but we can save her." Clarke looks desperate and Sar stiffens.

Sar stares into Clarke, straight through her until Clarke is caught in her dark eyes. "Your word?"

"You have my word, we'll save her."
Sar clenches her jaw in grief, pressing a kiss to her beloved's head. "I pray you are right."

Clarke lets out a shuddering breath. "I know."

Clarke finds Raven in the thick of the crowd. "I need you to go into the mountain. You can take Hunter, mom trusts him. Jaha and Polis need the machines in the mountain.

Raven stares at Clarke, eyes flitting over her before she nods. "I can rig something up in a jiff. Saw some things down there that might help lug it all around."

"Just get it here please, there are too many injured."

"We’ll get it done Clarke." Raven steps closer, worriedly checking over Clarke. "Everything will be fine. Do what you need to."

"I can't go with you." Clarke's chest threatens to cave at the thought of the mountain. "Mom already took Asha to Jaha for treatment."

"Your mom saved my life. She'll save Asha's." Raven gives her a tight hug before climbing onto the horse next to Baladan. They both nod to Clarke before they take off, Hunter right behind them.

Clarke walks to the healers tent, muscles burning in pain and anxiety. Lexa is exiting the tent with a dip of her head, back stiff with hidden pain. "We're clearing the streets of the injured. The dead will be moved tonight."

"How many?"

"Too many to burn just tonight." Lexa's eyes are full of unshed tears and there is a soft broken cry of the Heda as it flies above Polis. "The Horse Clan has sent a representative. They were attacked as well but word of his death is spreading."

"Will there be retaliation form the desert people?"

"Most of those in Polis are being detained but I fear it for those we can't detain." She looks at Clarke, pulling in a deep breath. "For now we will attempt to care for the injured."

"I'm sending people to the Ice, for my riders."

Lexa nods, hands for once loose at her side instead of strained behind her back or tight around her sword. "For now we mourn, we burn the dead and try to save the living. We'll worry about repercussions later, when the blood isn't fresh."

Clarke looks at the devastation, refusing to look at Lexa. "I'll be back."

Lexa steps closer, soft in ways she had hidden before. "Stay safe Clarke."

Clarke swallow, barely nodding, throat thick. "You too Lexa."

Lexa stares at her as if debating speaking again. With jittery fingers and broken eyes the woman finally speaks. "You saved me, thank you."

"You would do the same." Clarke give the woman a half smile, swallowing down her emotions. "May we meet again on the next sunrise." Her words catch in her throat, everything about those words throbbed with pain.
"May we meet again Clarke." Lexa steps closer, dipping her head down gently. "Under the stars or in the sun."

Clarke rides that night and images dances in front of her. It is Isole, unharmed.

She stands with a wide grin she waits at the sunrise, luminous and strong as the spirit she is, mouth open and a chilling howl echoing. The wolf spirit. Strong, resilient and loyal. Waiting. Behind the dark wolf with ice blue eyes stands the warriors. The riders who stood by the broken girl who became everything the ground needed. And they wait, ghosts of their past free and calm in their death. At peace as they wait for their friend. Their leader and their companion. As each sunrise passes the number will slowly grow. And they will wait, ready to greet the blonde at the sunrise into their next life. Forever tied together by trial of life and souls even in death. Clarke lets the tears fall as the sun sets, they would be waiting for her as long as she could hold it off. The ground still needed her.

Chapter End Notes

A/N: This is not the end of the story, simply one part of it. The next chapter has many more adventurers to come with a few more Clexa scenes than other chapters and a surprise visit from someone we haven't heard from in a while. Let me know what you think, thanks for reading.
Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Clarke stands on streets stained brown, snow thin and riddled with weapons and blood. The once tall walls on the Ice Nation are crumbled at her feet where she and the others stand with hesitant steps. Polaris steps close, pressing pale fingers into the wall with a bowed head, her shoulders tremble and she clenches her fingers into a fist. "Too many of my people dead." Her words come out in a rough drawl, catching in her throat. Clarke steps closer, fingers shaking as they walk through the first wall. Inside it is abandoned, bloodied stains left on the cold ground. They continue, finding dead Ice warriors along the way, Polaris pressing fingers into their chest, trembling as she speaks low words to their bodies. A prayer to meet their next life with the same greatness and loyalty they showed in this life. To live well in their next life. Clarke grips the edges of her jacket with white knuckles as they come across a dark cloak.

She bends down, rolling the body over and finding one of her riders. It is Natara, her black hair matted with dried blood, blue eyes open to the sky and throat ripped open, thick and jagged. Clarke presses fingers to the woman's cheeks, staring at her a long while before brushing her fingers over her eyes, forcing them closed as she whispers word of praise and grief too low for anyone to hear. The cold had kept their bodies relatively together, they were semi-frozen and Clarke grits her teeth before they continue to the rest of the once bustling city.

They find more of her riders and each one send a stab through Clarke's heart. Each dark cloak another of her loved ones. And she sees them when she closes her eyes. See them coming to her bloodied and broken as she is tied to that post in front of the desert rat. Her body boils with rage and she wants the once alive man to suffer, to bleed for each of her people and she understands the need for vengeance. The need to cut into the one that had taken so much from you. She aches like she had for too long, each death an added weight to her bowing shoulders.

Polaris fairs worse than Clarke, with each Ice warrior, villager and child she comes across her face cracks and her eyes fill with unshed tears. Each death splits the supposed queen with the heart of ice open. Each receive a soft press of fingers to their chests, low promises in their ears and a thick swallow before she wraps them in thick soft white cloaks stained in red. They rest them on pyres, the queen weaving knives and jewels into the wood. Thick pelts and food. "In your next life may you find those you lost. In your next life may you stand victorious. In your next life may you live proud, loyal and free. Let these offering bide you until you greet the air of you next life, with the blessing of your queen and the spirits I bid you safe journey." Polaris tilts her chin high as she finishes speaking, taking the torch from Clarke and pressing it into the fire, her eyes find Clarke's before turning to the large pile of her people, strong jaw trembling. "May we meet again in our next life."

Teary-eyed and with a now stiff set to her jaw, Polaris watches the fire with shaking shoulders, eye never leaving the flames even as the other set camp and night falls around them. She watches them, standing guard over them like her presence could protect their spirits on their journey. The flames roar well into the night. A bright beacon that grows dimmer and dimmer as the moon falls slower and slower. Dawn begins to creep on the horizon, the edges of the fire dying down, a pile of ash and smoldering coals. Wagons are hitched to the horses, Clarke's dead riders on them, covered with thick blankets. Clarke swallows, coming to stand next to the queen. "I have to burn them at the mountain."

The Ice queen stares at the ashes, hand clenched tight into fists as her throat trembles with emotion, to caught up in grief. "You should go before it is too late."
The blonde's lips twist into a concerned bow. "Polaris."

"I will accompany you, pay my respects." She continues to watch each glow of the embers dull until it is cold, fading from an orange glow to black. "They fought to save as many as my people as they could, I owe them gratitude."

Clarke steps closer, feel the coolness that should be the woman's body heat. The Ice dweller's pale skin is covered in goosebumps and she lacks a thick coat. Clarke shrugs off the blanket around her shoulders, holding it to the woman. "What about your city?"

"We will rebuild." She doesn't turn away from the embers as Clarke drops the blanket on her shoulders. "My people will find solace in Polis for now, until the rain has washed the blood away and the wounds aren't so fresh. We will rebuild like we must."

Clarke's eyes find the pile of ash and embers, throat tight. "I am sorry."

"Death is inevitable Clarke, we simply control whether or not we fight to live." Fractured pale eyes bore into Clarke as she finally digs thin fingers into the blanket. "Their fight is over and they will live their next life in greatness and we will live ours now."

They stare at one another before Nox is stepping close to Clarke and Polaris, pale green eyes sorrowful. "The horses are ready."

Clarke blinks before turning to look at her rider, his eyes are bright with tears and his face flushed. "Thank you, we'll move out as dawn hits. It should take a day or two at most if we keep a steady pace."

"We'll get it done by today, we can run the horses, they were bred for it." His eyes wavier and his entire form shivers. "I don't. They need to be burned as soon as they can. We will be quick."

Clarke steps close to him, setting a hand to his shoulder. "Go eat something and check the hooves, we will be quick." He gives a sharp nod and practically runs to the horses.

They ride to the mountain, pace quick and hearts racing. The smell of death follows them and each hour that passes make each rider stiffer and stiffen in grief. The sun has set but they carry torches, continuing to race to the mountain with tight shoulders and drawn faces. when the moon breaks high in the sky they finally spot the dark looming shadow of the gate. Clarke's eyes water in grief at the smell of the dead and her shoulders shake as they come upon the area she had grown to fear so long ago. The place she and her riders had run from. They collect branches and logs, Datak's broad shoulder growing closer and closer to his ears as he hunches them with each chop of the wood, eyes full of rage and grief. Mikil grunts with each swing of the ax into the broken branches, stitches stark against the pale skin of his forehead. Clarke drags each branch, angling it just right and biting her cheek as the pyre slowly grows to accompany fifteen of their people.

Clarke stares at the bodies outside the mountain, the tunnels loom behind her and they haven't run into any people yet. Not the lost nor Octavia. Not Raven or any of the sky. It was eerily empty, the ones with the Ursa stitched on their dark cloaks feel the ghosts at their backs, their leader with closed eyes pulls in a shaking breath. Swears death flickers in the edges of her vision. Sky, ground and mountain, all dead and all greeting the edge of her eyes with anguish eyes. She shakes her head sharply, Aidan gripping her shoulder with a concerned twist to his lips. She dips her chin and he
steps back, helping Romona and Nox load the dead onto the pyres. Astrid and Mirai pick up another of her riders as Clarke carefully cradles Isole's body, stitches burning as they pull across her body, strained. She is stepping to the woodwork with shaking knees and stiff shoulders before she gently sets Isole onto the wooden platform, tears dripping down dirty tan cheeks. The dead are wrapped in the thick dark pelts they had hunted themselves. The pelts that had shown them as Clarke's riders. The Ursa's shadows of pantha and paktraka. The blonde holds a thick bundle of fifteen braids in her left hand as each of the remaining warriors press a flame into the wood, Sar, Baladan and Asha the only one's gone from the ceremony. Left in Camp Jaha to mend.

Behind them hidden in the shadows stands a bear and a wolf. An ursa and a paktraka, thick coats gleaming in the smokey air. They rest on the forests edge, watching the precession. Clarke places the last torch in the wood. "May we meet on the next sunrise, in this life and every life after." As the words falls from her mouth and the flame join her other riders the wolf behind them releases a long anguished howl. It tears through the air and draws the attention of those by the mountain. Tears pool down tan cheeks and Clarke whips her head to the forest, finding a dark pelted wolf standing by the Ursa. The Ursa dips its head low with sorrowful eyes as the wolf stares Clarke down, tilting its head to the side before it dips its head and disappears into the shadows, the Ursa leaving in the other direction, ghosts of riders slipping into paktraka and pauna, racing ahead of her with roars and howls that echo in Clarke's heart.

She stares at the shadows, waiting for them to shift into something. To her nightmares, to her people, to the spirits. But they remain shadows, only shifting when the light cascades near them. She waits for the brush of her people's spirits, their very souls, pressing against her again. The reassuring edge of their face in her eyes. They never come and her gaze finds the fire, tears dripping down her chin as the remaining riders stand still, most shoulder tense and some shaking as they stand vigil in the land that haunts their minds.

"Clarke." The voice is soft and draws the blonde from her head. Slowly blinking she turns around, eyebrows dropping in question at her Second in Command. Baladan's dark green eyes are full of tears, throat thick as he swallows from his approach in the night. "There are problems in Polis."

Blue eyes harden and nimble fingers reach instinctively for the knife at her hip. "The Desert retaliating?"

"No. The people of Polis, they call for the Heda's head." Clarke drops her head to her chest, squeezing her eyes shut. They had been gone a week, a week of riding horses and burning the dead. A week of an aching chest and burning eyes.

She raises her chin and looks to the smoldering ashes of the once bright wooden pyre. Baladan follows her gaze and stares at it with anguish before turning back to her, his eyes spill over with tears and Clarke sighs low in her chest. "I'll head to Polis then." Mount Weather looms behind them, ghosts licking at their backs as they turn away from it and the soft glow of a smoldering fire. There is no rest for the wicked.

Clarke makes it into the gates of Polis a day later, horse panting beneath her thighs only to be apprehended by warriors when they cross to the center of the almost empty market place. She jerks
against their hold but a blow to her head has her slumping and head ringing. Her riders fight valiantly but the people were prepared for them, taking down her riders and tying them together. Clarke's wounds itch and burn and she throws her head back with a guttural scream, breaking a man's nose and throws her shoulder into the man in front of her. They go down and her riders do the same, throwing their weight around until they are pressed into the ground, boots digging into their backs.

A man stands tall in the center of the crowd. A burn rests on the side of his face and he leads Lexa to the street. Her shoulders are tight as she glares at the man, lip split but her fingers curve like claws at the sight of blood on Clarke's head, rope tight on her wrist. "I told you I would face you accusations alone." Her words are sharp and the man ignores the Commander, tilting his head to have someone push Clarke forward.

The blonde holds back a yell as they shove her to her knee, wounds flaring. Even as the rope is pulling at her wrists she bares her teeth at them defiantly. "Lexa." Clarke hisses out, eyeing the crowd. "What happened?"

Lexa bares her teeth, hands itching to free Clarke as she straightens her spine, glaring at the crowd with defiance, green eyes sharp. "I told you Polis was unrest, they doubted me."

The man standing in the center of the crowd, eyes Lexa with caution. The woman stands tall despite the man's eyes, though her do stay on Clarke as he speaks with placating hands to the crowd. "Calm. Do not raise your weapons to me."

"What are you doing to the Heda and the Ursa?!

"For three summers we have followed a Commander that betrayed us all, the Sankru did not go about it correctly." His voice rings around the crowd, soothing and gentle despite the blood on his knuckles.

Baladan jerks in his hold, teeth bared and nose busted. "Release her or face death Natrona!"

"Silence, I am not the natrona here, they are." His eyes are sharp as they shift to Clarke and Lexa. "The Commander made a deal with the mountain men, risking our lives."

One of the Polis guards glares at the man, wrist cradled in his other hand, blood dripping down his teeth. "She saved hundreds of your peoples lives, none died in battle and all those bleed were freed."

The man's eyes are wide as he stands in the middle of everyone, the rope to Lexa's binds in his hands. Lexa is surprisingly still, Clarke's bright blue willing her to fight. "She sacrificed two hundred and fifty of our people."

Another native of Polis steps close, her hands on a knife. One of the others standing beside the man leading the uproar grips a sword, chin daring the woman to use her knife as she speaks, spitting out the name with dangerous eyes and too tight fingers. "The mountain killed them, a missile."

"A mountain she left standing." He is surprisingly calm standing in the face of the people, with the Commander tied beside him and the Ursa spitting blood at his feet as the crowd grows anxious. "A missile she knew about."

"The mountain is gone." One of the younger warriors speaks, face a matted mess of blood and bruises. "The Ursa felled it."

Another speaks up, shouldering her way through the crowd, turning on the man who had dared take down their Heda and Ursa. "How could she know of the missile?"
"She has visions of the future, she and the Ursa got out." His eyes are pained but his chin head high. "Two of the only surviving clan representative. It is not a coincidence."

"Heda?" A man whispers, staring at her in confusion, brows furrow down over his eyes.

"You lie." Another growls out, stepping close tot he man. Tension rings through the crowd and people reach fro weapons.

"ENOUGH!" The Ice queen screams, her eyes are wild as she jerks in her own bonds. "We do not need more death."

"The Sovereign was right, the Commander doomed us all." His eyes dart for his followers, the ones that hold the riders down and he shift nervously. "She left the mountain standing."

Polaris bares her teeth at him. "The mountain has fallen. You would do well to watch you tongue." She jerks at her binds, dropping the man holding her like a rock as she stands tall, forehead dripping blood from the man's nose. "The Commander will be dealt with by the clans, not angry villagers."

The man turns grasping for someone to stay on his side. "You want the same thing, the Commander gone."

"I am on the Commander's side." The crowd falls into wary silence and her chilling eyes find each and everyone of them before landing on Clarke and Lexa. "If any oppose her they call war with the Ice and I will not be merciful." The crowd stands stunned, the Queen of the Ice had wanted the Commander dead and gone once upon a time. In their silence the remaining ice people step from the crowd, cloaked in white, eyes hard as they stand behind their queen, ripping riders from the villagers grasps and cutting their bindings. "Any opposing the Commander can challenge her or I to a duel, let it be known that we do not fear death."

The silence is deafening as Clarke and her riders are freed from their bindings, Clarke shifting with glares and raw wrists. Baladan stands by her side, her riders flanking her as they watch the crowd warily, Polaris leaning forward to cut away Lexa ropes with a cautious set to her shoulders.

Lexa rolls her shoulders back as the rope is cut away and stands in front of her warriors and villagers, head tilted high as she addresses them. "It is true I knew of the missile." There are angry murmurs through the crowd and Clarke's riders grip their weapon as Clarke comes to stand by Lexa, trembling with rage. "But without their sacrifice the mountain men would have killed us all. I saw them eliminate us just as I saw the mountain fall."

One of the warriors speaks thickly, his hands tight on the man that attempted a revolution after devastation. "Two hundred and fifty innocents died Heda."

"I know, I bear their deaths just as I bear the death of my warriors." She closes her eyes, jaw trembling and her throat dries as she swallows down her emotions. Fire burning behind her eyelids. "This world is not a kind one, the life of a few for the many. It is not an easy decision." Lexa's eyes flash dangerously and she seems to loom over them all despite her height. "I will do whatever it takes for the good of my people, any more attempts or questioning of my command will be met with a blade. For now we rebuild Polis."

Clarke shuffles near Lexa, watching the people wearily as they disperse, dipping their head to their Heda as the guards detain those who tried to usurp her. "Do you think they'll try anything again?"

"Some will, they will not be the first or last." Lexa's hands a too tight against the knife at her hip and her breathing short even as her face remain stonic. "My guards will handle them."
Clarke eyes the people of Polis with caution as she unloads her saddle bags, she itches for her riders. For Isole's warm presence by her side, Locke's toothless grin and boisterous laugh. Natara's scowl that waivers with each joke Loki would attempt to tell. She longs for all of her riders, not just this tiny piece left behind by war. Not this tiny sliver of family that make her relieved yet anguish at the same time. Datak falls into step beside her, light eyes swirling with trepidation as they lead their horses to the stables his dark skin is broken out in a sweat. "I don't like Polis." His voice is low, too low for anyone else to hear as his shoulders threaten to climb to his ears. Eyes flickering to every person like they would jump from the shadows and take him. His body threatens to bolt, climb the gates like they weren't looming things of metal. Clarke stretches her hand out and the man with limbs that move like jelly latches onto her offered hand, shoulders relaxing from the climb to his ears.

It is almost comical the way they stand, Clarke, shorter than most standing tall like the world would fail to knock her over and Datak, larger than life but like a young foal in new surroundings. His fingers are tight around hers, his breathing calming but he presses close to her, seeming years younger than his twenty summers. "Count the doors with me Datak." Her voice is gentle as they lead the horses past curious people of Polis. He scowls at her. "We need to know how many doors down the stables are."

"We never stay long enough to need to count." His shoulders begin to climb to his ears again.

"I need to help the Commander with some things before I go." Her fingers squeeze his.

His chin tilts high, shoulders stiff. "I won't leave you here alone, I don't trust them."

She squeezes his fingers again. "I won't be alone." She finds his suspicious eyes and offers a gentle smile. "You could go with Baladan back to Jaha, Octavia will need help building a place for the lost."

Light grey eyes brighten with an hint of hope. "Will my mother be with them?"

Clarke's heart stops and she shakes her head. "I don't know."

"I lost her." His elbow digs into her ribs as he presses closer to her side. "They were lost as well."

"We've been gone a long time Datak." Her voice cracks but he doesn't catch it.

"So were Amia and Sophia, but they came to Camp Jaha." He stares at her incredulously. "I heard stories Clarke."

"There's always hope."

His eyes brighten and his shoulders finally loosen. "Will Isole be there too? With Natara and Jinx?"

"No, they're gone." Clarke swallows, throat too tight. "Their spirits had to go away."

Her frown petulantly eyes dark and shoulders once again stiff. "I want them back, they should come back."

Clarke chokes on her breath. "Me too."

They make it to the stables and begin to settle in the horses with the others of their riders when Datak
speaks again. "Twenty-six."

"Hmm?"

"Twenty-six doors from the center of town on the path." He doesn't look up from where he set the saddle bag down. "Two from the gates. Don't forget."

"Thank you." He shrugs at her words, brushing his fingers along his horse now, rag in his other hand as he cleans her.

Baladan comes from the shadows, green eyes on Datak with a soft look of love, he brushes Datak's braid from his eyes and the young man shoves Baladan's hand away with a scowl. "Don't touch my braids."

Baladan's lips twitch but he nods seriously. "Sorry pup, they were falling in your eyes."

He waves his hands to ward Baladan away. "Locke will braid them when he comes back." His eyes don't move from the task at hand so he doesn't see the flash of despair on both Clarke and Baladan's faces.

Clarke chokes back a sob, pressing her nose into her horse's flanks. Baladan speaks first, throat tight. "Locke will be away for a long while, why don't you have Romona braid them."

Datak wrinkles his nose. "She'll put feathers in them."

Baladan quirks his lips into a teasing smile. "Not if you ask her not to."

Datak looks up with wary eyes. "Locke always braids them."

Baladan swallows, his hand settling on Clarke's shoulder as they shake with silent grief, his own eyes threaten to spill tears. "I know pup."

Datak gently runs the cloth over the horse's sweat soaked skin. "Twenty-six."

Baladan tilts his head curiously. "Twenty-seven?"

Datak sends him a glare that makes Clarke smile. "No, twenty-six doors from the center of town, two from the gate. Clarke will forget. She always forgets the number."

"No I don't." Clarke scowls playfully, heart lightening at the normalcy of this.

"Yes you do, we stayed by the River Clan territory and you forgot to count trees." His eyes are narrowed. "You were lost."

Clarke scoffs, eyes bright. "I was exploring."

Datak rolls soft grey eyes, looking to the other rider. "She was lost Baladan."

Baladan snorts, face twisted in glee. "Yes she was pup."

"But we found her just like we'll find the others." Datak nods like it's the end of the conversation.

Baladan grips Clarke's hand with his own as he speaks chin trembling. "In our next life, we're never to far apart."

"They need to come back to this life." Datak wipes at a spot of mud on his cloak, cleaning it away
painstakingly before beginning to clean his horse with gentle care again.

"My horse needs a cleaning as well Datak." Romona drops down from the shadows of the ceiling, feathers fluttering in her hair as she lands lithely on her feet, knees bent.

The young man scowls. "Do it yourself."

Romona flicks a feather at the boy. "You know he likes you better."

He brushes it off his shoulder with a scowl. "I don't fall from trees onto his back."

"No, I suppose you don't." Romona tilts her chin in goodbye as Clarke passes by Datak, offering her fingers for him to squeeze. He does so to both her and Baladan before turning his attention back to the animals in front of him and snipping back at Romona.

The second they are out of the stables Baladan's entire demeanor changes from teasing to stonic. "Do we travel or remain?"

Clarke stares at the light sky, still in awe after some many years on earth. "We need to make sure peace is continued between all the clans."

The remaining warriors fall in from the shadows. Nox tilting his head in contemplation as Astrid and Mikil flank him. Aidan shoving his way through them, Mirai rolling her eyes at the antics as she speaks. "Travel between them when we're done here?"

The blonde shakes her head, reminded of a time spent under the mountain with these rider. "None of you have to follow me."

The remaining of her riders, sans Sar, Asha, Romona and Datak grin and speak as one. "We follow the Ursa wherever we need to."

Clarke shakes her head, fists trembling. "We've lost too many."

"We'll see them again on the sunrise." Baladan grips her shoulder. "As always. When do we leave?"

"We must be here for the meeting of the clans. I have to be up there." She squeezes his finger, taking comfort in the gesture they both needed. "Help Lexa with Polis."

There is a man dressed in all silver coating, mask resting closed on his face. Identity hidden from all of the leaders but the Commander. "The lost reside in the forest how do we know to trust them?"

Clarke grits her teeth, barely keeps from baring them as she swallows her emotions and speaks. "I am the Ursa, they are under my protection."

The man waves his hand around in annoyance, Clarke bites back a growl of frustration at him. She can feel his contempt. "You let 250 burn in Ton DC, you have no interest in our people."

"They are my people. All of them." Clarke back stiffens and she sits straighter, legs begging her to stand tall in the face of this man's posturing. "If we are to speak of the lost then we need their leader in here."
Clarke forces back a lurch at the man, she longs to erase any remaining of the Desert but this was a man chosen by the other leaders and advisers. By Lexa. "The have Okteivia kom Atlantis. She is the leader of the once lost. The chief of the City of the Lost."

"The traitor?" The River Clan leans forward, face twisted in contemplation.

"No." Clarke bites out, her eyes flicker to Lexa who sits at the head of the table like they hadn't tried to overthrow her three days ago. Like the people of Polis didn't have her bound in the center of the city. "Octavia is the one who brought the lost together when all other clans abandoned them. She's under my protection. Under the spirits protection."

"We have no say in who the spirits chose." It is the Iron Clan representative again and Clarke wants to roar until he falls to his knees in submission. "Why should we trust you Klark kom Skaikru?"

Clarke tilts her chin high. "Ai laik Klark kom Rydas."

A deep sound reverberates from his chest. "You are not skaikru then?"

"I have no clan, my interest lies in the safety and peace of all clans." Her hands fist as she stares him down. "I have no Clan ties."

He scoffs, shaking his head with a slight jingle of the chain around his neck. "You were once of the sky."

"I am from the sky. Isole was from the ice. Baladan is from the mountains, Romona from the woods and Sar from the boats. My others were abandoned by their clans as well. " Clarke squares her shoulders as each name falls from her lips, gaining confidence with each utter of her riders as she fights the urge to stand up and step into his personal space. "My riders are my connections to the Clans. To all of my people. I care for them all, I feel all their prayers and each of their deaths."

The Vine leader looks up at Clarke, there is no malicious intent but curiosity. "Some think the Commander should not lead any more, what is your opinion?"

Weeks ago she would have stood up and dragged Lexa to the street herself. "The Commander was chosen by the spirits, she has the best interest of her people in her thoughts." Clarke meets green eyes across the expanse of the table, mind reeling. "She brought the queen into an alliance after the queen killed her beloved. She left my people in the mountain to save her people. Her first interest will always be the clans. Her people."

The man who had lent his warriors to Clarke continues to question her diplomatically, settling the tension in the room with each calm word. "And that does not bother you?"

"The Skaikru can become a part of a new coalition." Clarke swallows tilting her jaw up and letting the Ursa's presence flood the room. "One not founded on war but one for peace. There does not need to be any more deaths. We don't need to send children to war."

The man in the suit of Iron shifts, the overlapping metal not even making a sound as his voice rings with disbelief. "You believe this, Ursa?"

Clarke stares at him with desperate eye. They tremble with an aching need. "I long for it, I see it. It will happen." The Vine leader dips his head respectfully, having his daughter home helped him side with the Ursa.
There is a thick silence before the man of Iron speaks. "And if we don't agree to this?"

"The spirits chose me for a reason." Clarke's voice falls dangerously low and everyone in the room stiffens. "I erased the stain of the mountain men from the ground. The Desert rat is dead because of my rider. I will do whatever it takes to keep peace, never doubt that."

The River Clan leader looks up, eyes cautious as he shifts in his seat. "Will there be retaliations for leaving your people in the mountain?"

"I saved the skai-kru at the price of the mountain men." Her jaw tightens, images flooding her brain like they always do. "It is not forgiven or forgotten but understood and actions will not be taken against you."

"Then we will not take actions for Ton DC." Lexa's shoulders loosen slightly, Clarke the only to notice as the Iron Clan speaks. "They died for the mountain to fall." His eyes harden. "Even if the Commander did nothing of it."

Clarke lets her face twist into a glare, her inside itching at this man who knew nothing of their battles. Who hid in his City of Iron like a coward. "The Heda saw the mountain burn, it simply had to be me who burned it. She made the choice she had too."

Clarke stands at the ocean's edge later that night, the wind throws her hair in a disarray but she doesn't move even as it bites at her cheeks, too lost in thought and memories. There is the soft sound of sand and gravel behind her. "They have located Octavia." Lexa's voice is soft, face clean of any paint.

Clarke keeps her arm wrapped around her stomach, staring at the dark waters. "Are her people okay?"

"I sent Indra." Lexa comes to stand beside her. "All will be fine."

Clarke eyes the stiff set of Lexa's shoulders. "You don't like that I have them back in your territory."

There is a wry twitch to Lexa's lips. "They are in your territory not mine."

Clarke holds back a snort but shakes her head, it feel like years ago in that tent. Like there wasn't a betrayal, blood and death between them. "But you don't like it."

"The banished were banished for reasons."

"I was prisoner for reasons as well." Clarke lips her lips, turning her head to face Lexa. "Believe me I know what they feel."

"Your people imprisoned you?" The brunette stiffen, eyes darkening and her hand grabs the handle of her knife unconsciously as Clarke turns back to face the ocean.

Clarke has a small smile twitching at her lips. "All of the hundred except for Bellamy and Raven were in the Sky-box. In prison." Clarke flicks her eyes to meet Lexa's. "Everyone deserves a second chance." Lexa dips her chin in acknowledgment, swallowing thickly.

"They need not fear retaliation, the Ursa has spoken for them." Her face twists just like it had in that
tent when she spoke of Octavia's safety. Eyes bright and so honest. "They are safe."

The blonde swallows down any memories, any emotion. "Good."

Lexa lets the wind through her hood, dragging it further down her shoulders. "They reside near the mountain."

"It's the only territory I own." Clarke turns her eyes back to Lexa, raising one brow. "Ask what you really want to."

"Will your people inhabit the mountain, over take it?" The stiff set is back to her shoulders and jaw.

Clarke shivers, hand shaking and a gunshot echoing in her ears. "There's too many memories in that place." Clarke then shrugs, licking her lips. "My mother and Raven have been getting medical supplies out of it, I know she would want to turn it into a hospital."

every emotion has a barely there twitch on the clean face of the Commander. Curiosity, caution and confusion. "But you will not let her?"

"Baladan is the only one who has the key to the mountain." The blaring of alarms is harsh against her ears but she knows it's in her head. Shaking it she stares at the dark ocean instead of stained white walls. "The only one who can get in. He takes them there and takes them out."

"And you don't know how to get in?"

"I like to forget." Clarke searches Lexa's face as she speaks. "We're in a coalition, the mountain won't be used against you."

Lexa tilts her chin up diplomatically, voice even. "Promise are not always kept Clarke."

Clarke snorts. "I know that more than anybody Lexa." She rubs at the bridge of her nose. "I'm done fighting. I'm done losing people."

"Death is not the end."

Clarke's lips quirk bitter sweetly. "No, its not."

Octavia shows up with a girl no older than fourteen at her side, stalking through the gates without a care in the world. Clarke lifts her eyebrow and Octavia rolls her eyes. "I picked a second."

Clarke smiles at her, holding out her hand. "I'm Clarke."

The girl stares at her with wide brown eyes before stepping forward with a tilt of her chin and narrowed eyes. Clarke can see the defiance in her gaze and it makes her lips twitch, reminded of a younger Octavia. "Nani."

"It's nice to meet you."

"Likewise Ursa." Her voice is thick and the English slow but there is a determined gleam in her eyes.

Clarke winces and Octavia smirks as she speaks. "Can't drop that title can you?"
"Shut up." Clarke grumbles before she stares past Octavia. "Didn't bring anyone else?"

"They were nervous, I don't blame them." Octavia eyes Polis, the blood had been washed from the streets and the bodies picked up. "The Arc made me nervous after it landed too. Demons are hard to fight when they're a place." Octavia stiffens, the one who banished them resided in Polis, just like the guards stayed in the Arc.

Clarke shivers, hand twitching and back stinging. "Yeah." She shakes herself. "How's the camp going? I can send my riders there to help."

"We're good." Octavia's eyes are brighter than Clarke had ever seen them and she lets her eyes trace over Octavia. Her shoulders are more taut than three years ago and she stands like she finally found her place in the world, new scars on her body but a new freedom as well. "We have tents up for now."

"Good, if you need anything."

Octavia's eyes flash and the is a dangerous quality to her voice. "I can take care of my people Clarke, don't worry."

Clarke stiffens and Nani looks between them warily. "Sorry."

"No." Octavia closes her eyes and rubs at her face. "Sorry, three years of pent up aggression, I always sucked at communicating."

"It's fine." Clarke swallows, shifting her feet. "Asha?"

Octavia loses the tense shoulders and offers Clarke an almost smile. "She's fine, Sar is forcing her to stay bed ridden until Abby's okay. Harper gives me run down when she stop by."

The blonde's face crinkles in confusion, Harper had seen the worse side of the mountain, resting near it had to be off putting. "Harper stops by?"

"The hundred, most of them have moved to help out. Moved there." Octavia shrugs, eyes guarded. "The rejects band together I guess."

There a shout at the gate as Clarke opens her mouth and the two women throw each other a look before they push their way through the crowd, Nani on their heels. Lexa stalks through the parted crowd before climbing up the wall, Clarke following after her without hesitation. Octavia climbing up the ladder as well, Clarke boots almost knocking her in the head in their haste. On the other side of the gate, standing under them is the man who had sent them down to earth in the first place. "I want to talk." His voice is even and he stares at them with hands held out wide and cautiously.

Clarke stares at hi, new lines on his face but he was the man she grew up with. "It's Jaha. He used to lead our people."

Lexa eyes him with a wary lit to her words. "The man the sky camp is named after?"

Octavia shifts, staring at the man like she can get answers from him without speaking and Clarke feels her gut drop as she speaks. "Yeah."

Lexa clenches her jaw and stands straighter. "Drop all your weapons and you may enter." There are two men beside him, stark with polished boots and clean jackets, but hands weaponless.
The three men drop all their packs into the hands of the guards and are patted down before they walk in, no weapons found but two hand guns on the two silent men. Jaha eyes them all, finally meeting Lexa's eyes. "Commander, you haven't changed in three years."

"Why are you here?" Lexa calmly asks, the Heda is sending to many images for her to focus on and Clarke steps by her side. Presence a familiar comfort in the turmoil of her head.

Jaha stands tall, eyes too bright. The three woman stiffen, Octavia more so, hands itching to her sword. Nani grips her sword tightly, waiting for Octavia's order as Jaha speaks. "We're from the city of light. And we've brought an peace offering." He smiles, eyes boring into Lexa's as he opens his hands in a peaceful gesture. "Join us or die."

Chapter End Notes

Sorry for the long wait, more fun to come:). I own nothing mentioned in this story. Thank you for reading and sticking with me for a year.:)
Clarke stares at him, blue eyes narrowed. "Jaha what are you doing?"

His face is calm even as weapons are aimed at him. Octavia stands stiff, sword drawn and gaze murderous as he blinks at them slowly. "The grounder betrayed you. I knew they would eventually so I planned. For almost three years I have waited. We have nuclear weapons and missiles, a way to fight back." He stares at Clarke before turning to Lexa. "The City of Light wishes the grounders to join under us." Lexa keeps her eyes on him, hands steady as they keep a 'halt' gesture, her warriors waiting on baited breath, watching her. Waiting for hand to drop. To give permission to attack.

Clarke grits her teeth as she catches the clench of Lexa's jaw and the tension in her shoulders before she speaks. "And the sky?"

He smiles in that way of his that sets Octavia on edge and sends Clarke stepping closer to Lexa. "Are already joined."

Clarke jerks towards him, anger flaring. "My mom wouldn't agree to that."

He chuckles, tilting his head back. "But I did."

Octavia bares her teeth, hands tight on her weapon as she takes a step forward. "You are not in charge."

He shakes his head, calm. "I once was. I know what is best for my people."

"You want domination." Clarke bite out before her eyes widen, she stares at the dusters on their packs, hand clenching into fists as something clicks in her brain. "Did you send the desert clan?"

He shrugs, nonplussed by all the sharp weapons aimed his way and the murder in their eyes. The danger lurking in Clarke's. "I simply gave him the means to an end. He wanted warriors and I provided them. He was to leave Camp Jaha alone."

Octavia scoffs. "He didn't, he betrayed you."

He smiles at her and Lexa listens, waiting for the other ball to drop. "No. None of the people of the Arc died. He kept the camp from aiding Lexa during in the take down of Polis." He looks around at the people of Polis before he finds Lexa's face. "Which I see has failed. Polis still stands."

Clarke shakes her head, spitting out the words like they taste bad. "You helped him."

"The grounders betrayed us." His eyes flicker to Lexa, angry before the emotion disappears. "They needed to understand that was the mistake they made. They will follow the City of Light or die."

Clarke's hands shake and the Ursa is flooding her veins, anger flaring up and her eyes darken.
"You're willing to kill thousands of people?"

"We're trying to make the world what it once was." His hands motion to the street around him and everyone stiffen except for the two men by his side, their eyes are slightly glazed, expressions slack with no emotion. "Thriving and alive. The City of Light is the key."

"The world fell because of the way it was." Lexa straightens her spin as she speaks, the former Hedas memories flooding her mind. "The war happened because the world was corrupt."

"No." He shake his head, smiling slightly. "Alie eliminated them. Humanity was becoming detrimental to the earth. She reset the scale but it is happening again unless I stop it." His eyes are imploring and honest as he stares at the blonde. "You must have faith Clarke.

Clarke shakes her head in disbelief. "I have faith in the spirits. In my riders, not some woman that is pulling your strings."

He sighs low in his throat. "I am trying to save the world Clarke. I will not hesitate to take drastic measures."

Clarke grits her teeth. "Like bombing an entire culture."

He stares at her, lips forming a thin line. "You didn't have a problem in not evacuating Ton DC nor in radiating the mountain." Clarke's entire body stiffens and Lexa steps close, her people moving with her. "You've killed hundreds to save the thousands."

Clarke eyes tremble and her chest stutters as she bites out. "Because they were going to kill us, I didn't make any decision lightly."

"No." He sighs, too relaxed in their threatening presence, it sets Lexa on edge. No man would be that calm in the face of death unless he had a plan. "But it was made. I am willing to make the hard choices as well. The people of the Arc will survive under my rule." He turns to the Commander. "You have two days to decide if you are willing to concede and live under our rule."

Lexa speaks, voice dangerous and eyes full of malicious intent, ready to test his plan. "We're not finished here Jaha."

He smiles slowly. "Yes we are. I put the ultimatum down. Concede or die." His lips twitch. "Remind you of a time long ago?"

Clarke steps close, backing Lexa. "We have bombs Jaha. Mount Weather is full of them."

He chuckles. "No one has been in Mt weather for years." He shrugs his shoulders, too calm. "It is obsolete."

Clarke lets the Ursa flood with dangerous energy but Jaha does not buckle like the grounders would have. "I have the only way inside. Back down or I will kill you."

Tilting his head slightly he sighs in disappointment. "I don't believe you will Clarke. You're already burdened by the dead."

Clarke's entire being trembles and Lexa's eyes are hazed over as she searches for a correct out come, Octavia close to her side for defense. "Don't do this Thelonious, what would your son say?" Clarke's voice cracks.

"He's isn't here." His voice drops low and dangerous, not longer calm. "He died."
The blonde steps closer, blue eyes searching. "He wanted peace. Not war. You killing everyone would be his worst nightmare. He hated that you had to as chancellor. That you had to execute people by floating."

He shakes his head. "Then he would hate who you've become Clarke. A killer." His eyes aren't calm any more, they are full of anger and pain. "Murderer of innocence. Children. I am giving them notice. Unlike you I offer choices." He turns back to Lexa as her eyes focus. "Two days Commander."

Lexa growls, stepping in his space, too much blood and death in her visions. "You will not leave this city Jaha of the Light."

"But I will. If I don't check in with my people, the bomb destroys Polis." He shrugs, too relaxed once again. "Either way they believe me dead, my life will be one of the few to save the many."

Clarke glares at him, full of so much hatred and pain as her body stiffens. "Lexa, let him go."

Lexa searches her visions but all she can see is the blood in the streets. All she can hear is Clarke screaming in anger, Raven's voice cracking over a radio and all she can see is Jaha's triumphant smile in front of them. "Clarke."

"Raven is in the mountain, she'll track the missile if it's coming to us." She tilts her chin high, Lexa searches her visions but all she can see is that one defining moment, Raven's heartbroken voice. Clarke's howl of rage before it fades. They are in a strange place, Thelonius in front of them and a woman in red pressing her fingers against Clarke's hair. Then Lexa standing in Polis, thin and tired but alive. Her people below her. It does not show the victor and her heart aches to find Clarke but the vision fizzles out as the blonde continues to speak. "She'll kill them."

Jaha chuckles lowly, tilting his head in their direction. "Miss Reyes isn't a killer."

Clarke bares her teeth, every bit of instinct of the Ursa. "No, but she has saved lives more times than I can count. She'll do what she needs to to save lives." Her fingers itch across her knife. "We all will. Do not test us."

"The City of Light is a place of order and peace." His hands are held out in a placating manner, dark eyes sweeping the crowd before falling to Clarke and Lexa once again. "Fall into line, life will be far better than here. More advanced."

Octavia scoffs, chest burning with righteous fury. "Advanced isn't always good."

He stares at the girl who had been hidden under the floor. The girl who had forged her path the minute she landed on the ground and he blinks away the ache in his chest. The memory of his son. "You have two days to decide. Fall under our rules or fall under fire. The Arc isn't involved with these decisions Commander." He turns back to the former chief engineer's daughter. "Clarke, your mother understands, soon you will too."

Clarke advances on his, presence large and thick with rage. "My mother hasn't agreed to any of this!"

"She would do the same as I have. She has always done what is best for her people." Even in the face of an angry spirit his face remains calm, though he tilts his head to the left as if listening to something and Clarke flinches back at the reminder of her father's death and her mother's hand in it. "The grounders have been destroying the earth too long. Their ways are harmful."

Back burning and memories haunting her mind Clarke trembles as she speaks. "You can't pull a
genocide."

He meets her gaze head on, steady where she trembles. "We do what we must to preserve life. One life for the many. You know this as well as I do." He leaves camp, warriors aching to attack him but they let him leave with tense muscles and the threat of too many dead on their minds.

"Clarke." Lexa's voice is low and wild as she drags her to a secure building, ordering her warrior to not attack. Frantic and as wild as the spirit that encompasses her.

"We'll get into the mountain." Clarke's entire body shakes as the door shuts behind them. Octavia leaning against it stiffly, watching them with Nani by her side. The girl has the same scowl as Octavia, the only difference being bright brown eyes instead of green and a thin scar from her ear to her left eyebrow. "A few of our trusted, we have no idea who he has in my camp or Polis."

Lexa stares at her with disbelieving eyes, villages and cities exploding behind her eyes. Screams of anguish and pain. "You want to use a bomb?"

"No. But we have that as a threat." Clarke runs her fingers through her braids, pacing like a caged lion. "Raven and Monty will figure the bombs out."

"War isn't to be fought behind buttons and bombs." Lexa throws her knife across the room, eyes wild. All she can feel is the dead of Ton DC. All she can see is the loss in her peoples eyes and the same guilt in Clarke's eyes. "Where is the honor?"

"Cowardliness is the only reason." Clarke stops her pacing and steps closer to Lexa, searching her face before meeting her gaze. "The only way to make anything happen is to have a similar threat. He has bombs but so do we."

Lexa lets out a low scoff, part skeptical and part sorrowful. "You cannot negotiate with people like him Clarke."

"We can try!" Clarke's voice crack and Octavia remains stonic and still against the door. "We can't just sit here and do what he wants."

"He will wipe all he can out." Lexa can feel the heat on her back and see the death in front of her as she squares her shoulders. "We must prepare."

Clarke trembles, death to close and familiar. She can feel it licking at the edges of eyes. "How?"

The presence of the Heda fills the room and Lexa's voice is low and dangerous. "We go to the City of the Light and kill him."

Clarke shakes her head, eyeing the rage filling Lexa's eyes. "Leave Polis unprotected?"

"The clan leaders will hide in villages, if he plans to bomb Polis then it is best to have the leaders hidden. If they die then the people will riot." Every muscle in her body is tense as she speaks. "Polis can be evacuated if needed."
The frantic look begins to die in Clarke's eyes, her mind swims but she chokes out her words, Ton DC too close in her eyes. "Send them to Camp Jaha, he won't bomb it."

Lexa stiffens, stepping closer to the blonde. "You are sure of this?"

"He wants his people to come home." She spits the word out, too many thought crashing through her head. "He wants to lead them again, he won't kill them all." Clarke pulls at the braid down her temple, scowl etched across her face. "The leaders can have meetings there. Feed false information to whatever traitor he has in there."

As a plan forms between the they both calm from their initial rage and fret. "Raven will remain in the mountain?"

"She'll watch for bombs." Clarke closes her eyes as she speaks, pulling in a deep breath and releasing it with her next words. "Everything will be fine."

"We leave today." Her fingers tighten on her sword and she waits for Octavia's burst of assurance and Clarke's questions that never come.

The blonde shakes her head, staring straight into determined green eyes. "Polis needs its leader."

"It would do well to have me gone, they are in a state of unrest. Distrust." Clarke's entire body stiffens but Lexa continues on, ignoring the signs from the blonde. "The Council of Clans can handle it for now, they will vote." Lexa clenches her jaw. "The queen may very well keep them in line."

The blonde nods her acceptance, face twisted. "We need someone to ride to Jaha first." Clarke scowls as she spits the name out, Octavia matching her expression as she shifts angrily against the door before they all exit the building.

Lexa shifts, motioning for her guards. They patrol around them, eyes on the shadows and the two spirits. "He is not worthy to have one named of him."

Clarke jaw clenches but she nods before shifting her feet, pushing down the rage. "Where is the City of Light?"

"Past the desert." Green eyes scour the shadows. "We'll need a few warriors.

Clarke finds the farthest shadow and give a quick tip of her chin, sending it running. "Nox grew up in the desert, he'll know where it is and how to navigate the desert safely."

"The less we take the better." Lexa tucks her hands behind her back as they walk through the lines of her people and warriors. "Time is not on our side."

"Just Nox, the rest of my warriors will remain behind." Clarke looks up, spotting Aidan and Mikil on the rooftops. They give her a quick nods, vanishing once again into the shadows. "Help with the mountain and Polis."

"We ride to the edge of Wind Clan, we'll meet up with the traveling fishermen of the Boat Clan." Lexa eyes the shadows suspiciously, keeping her voice low. "It will be quicker to get to the City by water than land."

"I need to go to the mountain first, I need to see Raven."

Lexa spins, bring them both to a stop. "Clarke we have limited time."
"I need to speak with her." Clarke takes a step back, dipping her chin to look at Lexa softly. "I'll be back before night fall."

Lexa barely keeps from baring her teeth, her muscles tense and it rips at the wounds she had received weeks ago. "We need to leave the city now, the journey could take more than a week and he gave us two days."

Clarke raises her chin high, squaring her shoulders. "Exactly why I need to speak with Raven, she'll protect them as best she can."

Lexa clenches her jaw. "Clarke."

"I'm going, i'll be at Nox's meeting point by nightfall and we can leave then." Clarke watches the emotions spiral in Lexa's eyes as the blonde speaks. "Nox will lead us in the desert. It'll give you guys time to pack the right supplies."

Lexa's shoulders drop in defeat when she sees a vision of Clarke riding off into the night despite everything. "By nightfall Clarke, we don't know if there are any more traitors out there. I'll have the fastest horse saddled for you"

Clarke looks up at the sound of hooves on cobble stones. "I'll be fine." Datak come trotting over atop his own horse, Isole's horse saddled behind him. Clarke's still healing from the desert's attack on her. "Beside mine is already saddled." Clarke presses trembling fingers into the bright blue paint on a black pelt before she swings her legs up on the horse, grunting at the flare of pain and the pull of her slowly healing wounds. Her entire body tingles and trembles at the exertion on her already weakened form. "I'll be back Lexa."

"Ste kliir Klark."

Clarke searches her face before nodding down at the brunette. "Yu seintaim Leksa."

The moment is broken by the loud clomp of hooves on the stones as Lexa opens her mouth to speak and Octavia pulls to a halt, face bright with anticipation. "Not leaving without me."

Clarke watches as Octavia's second comes barreling to a halt next to them, her horse too large for her tiny frame. "I need you at Camp Jaha."

Octavia huffs out a low growl. "Float that, you don't command me. I'm coming with you."

Clarke feels Isole's horse shift under her, muscles tightening and loosening in preparation for a run. "I need you in the Arc Camp, they trust you more than they trust me. They'll listen to you Octavia."

The leader of the lost lets out a loud shocked laugh, deep with scorn. "What makes you think that?"

Guilt and pain paint blue eyes and Clarke meets Octavia's gaze head on, Lexa watching from the sidelines. "I was gone for three years, I left them alone and you and Lincoln were the bridges between ground and sky. They trust you."

Octavia scowls, shifting on her horse. "Fine, try to stay alive."

Clarke smiles. "You too." She turns to her remaining riders, Baladan bringing his horse next to her own. "You're with me Bal, the others will follow Octavia." She meets deep green eyes. "They'll listen to whatever you say."

The brunette raises her chin, defiant as always. "On your order?"
"No, they trust you." Clarke relishes in that familiar gleam in Octavia's gaze, not depleted by the years separated. "They'll listen because you're you."

Clarke stares at the small almost invisible device in her hand, small enough to be lost with a gust of air across it. "You sure it will work Raven?"

The mechanic snorts, rubbing away at the grease on her palm. "No doubt, just get it in there."

Clarke bites her lips, staring at the tiny thing resting in the palm of her hand with consternation. "If it doesn't work we're screwed."

"When have I ever lead you wrong?" Raven grumbles, finishing wiping her hands before she looks up at Clarke. "Everything will work. Just get into the City of light."

"It is a suicide mission Clarke." Baladan's voice is wary as he stands between them, tenser than before.

"Which is why only a few of us are going." Clarke slips the device into its case, smaller than her thumbnail, before she slips it into the hidden pocket of her pants with a sigh. "I've told Nox he can stay here. He won't."

Her constant companion steps close, face down-turned in concern. "I will go with you."

"I need you here, protect Raven at all costs." Her fingers tremble and she can see the same loss in his eyes, the fear of losing more of their family. "She's our only hope at keeping the missiles at bay."

"Way to be make me feel wanted." Raven rolls her shoulders, rolling her tongue over her teeth. "No pressure."

Clarke offers a half smiles, a reminiscent of three years ago in a drop-ship with too much blood on the floor and wires under Clarke's hands. "You can do this Raven. Everyone is counting on you."

"Like I said no pressure." Raven shoves Baladan's side as she winks at Clarke. "At least you left me with company."

Baladan grunts, shoving Raven's hand away with a twisted smile before her turns to Clarke again. "You need to leave if you want to make it back before nightfall."

Clarke lets out a deep sigh and nods before Baladan pulls her in for a hug. She buries her face into his shoulder. "May we meet on the sunrise." His voice rumbles in her ear.

She squeezes him tighter, chest aching. "In this life and every one after it."

Raven pulls her in for a hug the second Baladan releases her. "Don't die, get blown up or get kidnapped again please."

Clarke chuckles, pulling Raven in for a hug. "Okay." Her fingers tremble across the mechanic's shoulders.

Lexa is coiled like a snake, ready to attack when Clarke comes to the meeting point. Nox is calmly sharpening his sword and gives her a quick nod. Lexa's gaze sweeps over Clarke and finding no
injuries that weren't already there she climbs back on her horse. "We can continue for a few more
notches, then we rest."

Clarke looks down at her clock, already calculating the time they should probably stop. "Okay, lets
go."

They follow the moon, keeping it to their right until it is high above them and they rest. Clarke pulls
the saddle off her borrowed horse and begins to brush it down. Before she can finish Nox shoving
her shoulder until she sits down by the pit. Lexa cleans her mount's hooves, watching with a cautious
curious gaze before Nox pull Clarke's jacket from her shoulders and then her shirt. Clarke rolls her
eyes. "I'm fine Nox."

He grunts, shaking his head as he unlatches a bag from his thigh. "Your wounds need treatment,
Isole would have my head in our next life if I let them get infected."

Clarke rolls her eyes, shoving her elbow into his side. "How's your head?"

He looks up at her, eyes dancing as his lips twitch. "Fine. How do you feel?"

Clarke scowls at him, teasingly shoving against his knee as he crouches next to her. "Fine."

Nox grunts out a laugh. "Always so hard headed."

Lexa turns away as he begins to wipe a wet cloth over her healing wounds, gentle and familiar. Soon
the smell of poultice fills the air and he lathers the paste over her wounds. Lexa turns at the hiss,
worried and cautious before she catches sight of fifteen fresh burn marks on an already severely
scared back. "Clarke?" Lexa's voice is barely a whisper but Clarke spin around anyway, hiding the
hundreds of flared kill marks across the entirety of her back. "Why?"

Clarke flinches back, pulling her shirt over her head, shaking Nox's hand from her elbow. "I've
killed."

Lexa stares at her, shaking her head, emotions swirling to close to the surface. "Leader do not mark
the hundreds dead due to war."

Clarke clenches her jaw, hands shaking before she forces them to still. "I killed them all."

"Not alone, you did what was necessary to save your people." Lexa steps close, eyes too
understanding but cautious. "A leader's back is not large enough to bear it all."

"They are my deaths to bear!" Clarke's voice is loud, echoing around the trees and her chest heaves.
"I could have warned Ton DC, I could have done something different than killing hundreds in the
mountain." Her entire form shakes. "Than killing children." She thinks to Bellamy's pleads in the
mountain before the lever was pulled. Too the guilt and desperation but acceptance deep in her own
bones. Forever weighing her down.

Lexa steps close to her, Nox already disappearing into the shadows. "You do not need to bear their
marks, they are not yours alone."

Clarke grips her thigh, staring Lexa down. "I bear it so they don't have to." The words crack as they
leave her lips.

Lexa shakes her head, too understanding with the burn mark across her left shoulder blade
memorized. One for each of the one who loved her and died because of it. The ones she couldn't
save; Costia, Anya and Gustus and the many others that had been lost the minute she became
Commander, those she cared for deeply. "You wear the marks of the dead when you don't need to."

"I wear them to remind me of what I've done, to remember each death." Her back burns with memories, walking through the mountain, dead at her feet. Ton DC, screams and moans of pain. Her riders standing before her, ghosts as the rain pounds down on her. Isole's eyes glazing over in death.

"A leader's back is not big enough to fit their orders." Lexa says it like a mantra, like her back doesn't bear a few marks she felt deep in her body. Like she doesn't remember each bombing, each dead in the fog no matter the lack of mark on her skin. The ones lost in the war haunting her visions. "You must not torture yourself over what you cannot change."

"You think I don't know that?" Clarke stalks closer to the woman chosen by the Heda spirit, blood boiling and skin crawling. "I have over five hundred burn marks on my back, believe me I know my back is barely big enough."

"You did not kill them on your own and you did not kill your riders." Nox is hidden behind one of the horses, waiting for the break. For the inevitable shatter of will as he brushes down his own horse.

Tan worn hands motion to the west as she glares at Lexa, everything coming to the surface. "Nobody seems to remember that the dead in the mountain contained innocents. I killed them and my riders died by my orders."

The brunette shakes her head, stepping closer and she stares at Clarke like it hadn't been three years with so many trials and error between them. "Our people must be willing to live and die for us, you know this!"

"I don't want them too!" Clarke manages to force the words out, throat thick with grief. Finally breaking. "I don't want their deaths on my shoulders, I don't want them to die for me. I never asked them to. I never asked her too."

Tears fall down tan cheeks, Lexa's eyes swirling with understanding, grief and pain. Both had been forced hands they didn't want. Deaths they could not forget. Roles they did not want to play. "You don't need to ask, they love you. She loved you."

"They died because of me."

"They died because of the Desert." Lexa steps close, hesitantly reaching for Clarke. When the blonde doesn't jerk back Lexa closes her fingers over Clarke’s, squeezing gently. "They died to protect those they could. You should not mourn the dead, death is not the end. You know that as well as I do."

Clarke lets the tears fall down her face. "It may not be the end but it doesn't mean it doesn't hurt." Clarke wipes at her eyes hastily.

Lexa swallows closing her eyes as her throat tightens. "I know."

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Nox comes over to Lexa, head held high as Clarke brushes down her horse, eyes glazed but slowly coming back to herself with the meticulous task at hand. "Your wounds need looked at as well."
Lexa looks up at the rider with narrowed eyes. "I am fine."

Nox's lips twitch, like the Commander couldn't order his banishment. Like she didn't have a spirit flooding her body and it sets her on edge. "Clarke would have your head if you are not checked over."

She meets his eyes, chin tilted in a stubborn defiance. "I am fine."

"Sit Heda, before Clarke makes you." His eyes spark, and his teeth flash as he speaks. "She is very stubborn."

Lexa grunts, glad it is only Clarke and Nox with her, she did not wish her warriors to witness her conceding. "I know." She pulls her armor off and the rider does not gloat or gleam in triumph.

Gently he cleans her wounds, doesn't mention the scars across her body or the edge of her ribs. He is steady and it calms her. He fixes some torn stitch like he had for Clarke before he rubs poultice on it then covers it. "You will live." He grunts out, dropping her shirt back over the wounds.

Her lips twitch and she stares at him. "I should hope so rider." Lexa adverts her gaze, jaw too tight. "Thank you." He shrugs but Lexa catches his eyes and he nods, understanding more than words said.

They tear through the forest as fast as they can, leaves crinkling under-hoof and branches snapping against their cheeks. The radios is silent on Clarke's hip and they are all too stiff with nerves and determination. They ride well into the day, the sun creeping overhead as they stop at a river and allow the horses to drink their fill. They do the same, Nox filling up the canteen as full as he can. He looks at the sun creeping through the canopy but remains silent. The horses munch on grass and they all eat a quick lunch and relieve themselves before they are on the trail again. They ride until the moon falls overhead, too bright and then they stop. It is a repeat of the night before. Clean the horses and take care of any problems with them, treat the wounds they have, eat, relieve themselves and then rest.

They wake at dawn and the day continues on like the previous. At least until the trees begin to thin out and Nox pulls a cloth over his head, the other two riders doing the same. Protection from the sun. The dirt shifts to rocks before it slowly gives way to sand. "Be mindful of the sand." Nox's voice is gentle yet stern. "We must rest more often and not run as fast." His fingers trail along his mount's neck. "They will be injured and we will be left without transportation." The pace is slow but they continue on a quick as they can. They rest many times, rubbing their mounts legs and drinking what they can spare. The horses guzzle down the water and snort at the sand on the ground. When night falls they huddle together as the temperature drops and Nox throws blankets over the horses. The three horses huddle together around the humans and Nox is pressed into Clarke side, Lexa hunched on Clarke's other side. They have a low fire going that they rest near but the cold is still there.

When the sun breaks across the horizon they are on the move again. Halfway through the day a wall of sand seems to be coming their way. "Dust storm!" Nox's voice is loud and he scrambles off his horse, Clarke doing the same. Lexa follows after them as Nox throws a large thin blanket over his horse, wetting the part that will go over horse's nose and mouth before he cinches it down to the saddle.

The two women do the same before they are pulling thin cloths over their head and wetting the cloth over their mouth. "What do we do?" Lexa's voice is hinged in worry and Nox begins to lead them to the top of a dune.
"We wait it out, stand together and keep the horses close together." The winds grow harsh and there is the roar of it before a soft clicking sound. Clarke looks up to see a drone hovering around them. She takes her knife and with a flick of her wrist the drone falls, sparking.

Clarke stares at the drone before the winds pick up and she huddles close to her horse. "They know were coming." She grabs at the radio on her waist. "Raven?"

There is a few seconds of silence that puts Clarke on edge before there is the crack of the radio. "Yeah?"

Three sets of shoulders loosen even as the wind begins to pick up. "Anything?"

"Nope, no missiles so far." There is a cautious angry edge to the mechanic's words. "He's waiting for something."

Clarke grits her teeth, letting out a sigh with her eyes closed. "He sent a drone, knows we're on our way."

Across the desert and deep in the mountain Raven closes her eyes, worry stabbing at her heart as Baladan stops tying knot in a long rope to look at the radio, chest stilling. "Shit."

The wind is loud in their ears, almost drowning the radio out with the roar of it. Clarke buries her head into her horse's neck. "Yeah."

"I'll keep the missiles primed." Raven hesitates, licking her lips but she keeps the questions and worry at bay as much as she can even as Baladan steps closer to her. "Good luck, be careful."

Clarke swallows, hand finding Lexa's as Nox huddles closer to his horse, pulling until they are all in a circle together as Clarke speaks. "You too."

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Hours later the sandstorm dies and the three human's shake the sand from their bodies as the roar of the winds silence. They have to dig the legs of the horses out as well as their own before they pull the thin blankets off their heads and shake them out. They offer the animals water and greedily they gulp it down, snorting all the while. "We should do a few clicks before we rest, we're a days ride from the edge of Wind Clan territory." Nox's eyes wearily find the spot where the drone had once been. The sand had covered it up and their footsteps are covered, sand blown over in the storm. Nox eyes the sun nodding his head in affirmation of the time and distance. Memory hazy yet true. Clarke pulls off her jacket, shaking it out as sand mercilessly digs into every nook and cranny of her clothing. Nox's lips twitch but he remains silent.

Lexa shifts uncomfortably but does not remove her jacket, she pulls the cloth from over her mouth and takes a sip of her water. "You are sure of this?"

"I grew up in the sands, even the storms cannot hide the sun." His gaze bore into green before he finds blue. "It is always steady. The sun will always rise and it will always fall." Clarke swallows thickly but Lexa nods, rubbing at her mount's legs before climbing up onto him.

Clarke slips her jacket back on, covering the skin on her arms once again before the sun can burn it. She pulls the hood over her head and shields her eyes from the sun. Nox begins to lead them, keeping the sun on his left and eyes darting between the horizon and his horse's neck. He sloshes his water jugs and swallows. They were halfway through the water and he knew the horse's would need another drink soon, just as they would. The sun is hot on their covered forms, merciless and he shifts. Too long had he been out of the desert, he became used to the humid air of the trees. Thick with
precipitation, the trees high above their heads. The riders had always traveled between clan lands but never had they ventured so far into the desert. His heart aches at the memories it brings, before his time as a reaper. Before the taste of blood filled his mouth and death weighed on his mind.

There is a soft pressure on his shoulder and he shakes his head and turns to face Clarke. She's eyeing him with worry, pressing out reassurance and love through just her touch. Her eyebrow twitches with a question and his lips tremble in an answer before she squeezes his shoulder again before dropping her hand back to her thigh with a slight dip of her head. That panic and anguish falls away from him and he breathes in the scent of the desert. Too dry in his lungs but not home, not like it once was. Lexa watches them curiously before taking a small sip of her canteen, her chin jerks when Clarke looks over and the blonde sighs before grabbing her much fuller canteen and sipping at it. The blonde's foot leaves the stir-up to nudge at Nox's calf and the man born of sands snorts. "I grew here, the sands do not affect me as they do you."

Clarke lifts her chin. "You haven't been here in three years, drink."

"We must preserve out water, I will be fine."

"I have an extra canteen, take a drink Nox."

He meets her gaze as they continue to ride as a steady pace. With a sigh he gives into her stubborn eyes and takes a quick sip of the water on his hip. Hooking it back to his belt he stares at Clarke before raising one of his eyebrows sardonically. Clarke snorts, shaking her head before looking forward once more. Lexa's lips are twitching but she hides it well behind the thin press of her lips.

The closer they get to the edge of Wind Clan territory the cooler the air gets and the smell of salt begins to taint the air. A rider comes from he hills, trotting easily in the sand. He keeps his gaze to the ground but pulls his sleeve up to show the mark of the Wind Clan burned there. Nox nods quietly and they follow after him Lexa, easily falling into step beside the Wind Clan rider. Clarke eyes the scaring at his throat. It had to have been deep, but he survived, most likely forcefully mute, yet it does not stop him from easily ordering them to follow him. The sun drops farther and farther in the sky before the blue of the ocean comes into view and they speed up easily. The Boat Clan greets them eagerly. Shoving them on a large wooden boat the stands still. Clarke stares at it with the awe she once had when she first saw a horse. There are blue dyed clothes the are tied down and Clarke's heart races. It's a sail boat and with reluctance they leave the horses with the Wind Clan warrior. Clarke's eyes are dangerous and her chest aches. The horse was once Isole's. "We will be back for them and they better be in the same condition as we left them."

The boat ride takes two days of Nox puking his guts into the ocean and Lexa meditating on the bow of the ship. Clarke breathing in the cool air at the stern of it until they hit the edge of land. "It's a half days walk to the City of Light." The Captain licks his lips, meeting their gaze and putting his fist over his heart. "Ste klir."

They set off across the sand, slowly it gives way to thick cobble stone. Boulders sanded and cracked, arranged until they formed a pathway to a city in the distance. The gates were high, white coated in silver. Beyond the gates stood high towers, buildings that were flashing in silver themselves. Carts full of technology, metal and wires are lead by camels and horses, they go through the gate once a mark on their arm is checked. Many of them leave with buckets of water tied down on their carts.

The guards at the gate are in dark slacks and a white collared shirt with badges across their chests
and golden sashes across their shoulders. Their faces are clean shaven and hair pulled back into tight buns or cut short to their head. Not a tattoo or scar in sight. Nox fingers one of his braids with nerves, every single thing about this place setting him on edge. "The plan?"

"I'm thinking." Clarke murmurs. She watches the gate slide shut, no creaking of hinges or rusting metal, she searches for a weakness. "Raven would have a plan already. This city is full of technology."

Nox grabs her elbow, squeezing it gently, gaze full of determination and trust. "You are Clarke not Raven, think like Clarke."

Lexa is stiff beside them, eyes glazed as she searches her visions. Forces them on herself while Clarke grits her teeth, speaking lowly. "He's expecting us already. Knows were here."

"Then how do we proceed?" He prompts, eyes flickering to the Heda as her face twitches. "Try through the gate with brute force or sneak over the fence?"

"We go through the gate and he takes our weapons." Lexa speaks lowly, eyes still closed as she searches. Fights for visions like she never had before. It reminds her of searching for Costia, the desperation to see what would happen. "We can try the fence, figure out a way to get through the guards."

The once Desert warrior eyes the fence, searching the top of it before nodding to himself. "I have rope and grapple in my bag."

Clarke nods sharply, sweeping her gaze from the fences to the buildings. "Then we hook it up on the fence behind one of the buildings. Can't risk being seen."

Lexa grips the knife on her thigh as she blinks back to reality. The only future it Raven's voice echoing in anguish and Clarke's scream of rage. It could mean to many things but it sets her instincts on edge, gut churning with worry and anticipation. "If he is expecting us then there is no element of surprise."

"We haven't seen a drone since we hit the ground after the boat." The blonde meets their gazes and the Ursa twitches within her in anticipation, her heart beats quick and her skin itches with adrenaline. "He still thinks were going by land. We're two days ahead of what we would be if we took the horses. We use that now before he can discover us."

"Good. Let's go." Nox creeps forward and Clarke grabs both his and Lexa's arm.

She stares at them, pulling in a shaking breathe. "Neither of you have to come. I can do it myself."

Her rider offers her as raised head and a grin stretching across his lips. "It is a suicide mission, why not go down together?"

Lexa straightens her shoulder before Clarke can reprimand Nox. "We will not die today. We'll go through the plan, get over the fence and hit the ground running."

They creep as low to the ground as they can, staying away from the guards before they are hidden in the shadows of the gate. Nox begins twirling his grapple, it whistles higher and higher before he releases it and it slings over the fence. He pulls until it latches onto the edge of the top and he waits, there are no sounds so he tilts his chin and Clarke goes scrambling up the wall, Lexa behind her with Nox bringing up the end. Clarke's feet hit the ground before there's and she sends them a look. "I'm sorry." She takes off running, dodging between building. Lexa's eyes widening before she is chasing after the blonde.
Nox tucks the grapple into the corner, hidden before he takes off after the two women. He finds
Lexa spinning down an alley way, frantically searching for Clarke. "She's gone."

"She left for a reason, we must find the man and kill him." He does not reach for Lexa but his eyes
are imploring and steady. "You said so yourself."

"That was before Clarke left on her own."

"Nothing has changed, she can take care of herself." He pulls his sword free, emotions running free
but clearheaded like Lexa wasn't in this moment. "You know this as well as I Heda."

Clarke ducks behind another building breathing heavily as she dodges through alleys, hand tight
around her sword on her him and right hand slipping into the small pocket on her pants, fingers tight
around a minuscule box as she begins to run between the buildings. She keeps running, not pausing
once. She weaves throughout buildings, all of them as fast as she can before she is in the center of it,
she slips through the door, running without looking. It shows with the frantic edge to her eyes and
the harsh breath leaving her body. She turns around a corner to find a guard looking at her. She spins
and begins to run away, she makes it down two corridors before she trips, slamming into one of the
computer modules. She hits the ground on her knees, rolling behind the desk as she draws her sword,
she places her right hand on the underside of the desk as she crouches lower. Footfalls sound and she
launches herself over the desk pressing off the top of it with her left foot and kicking out with her
right knee and catching one man in the neck. He falls with a grunt and she swings her sword down
with both hands.

He dodges out of the way and fires a gun at her. She jerks back, expecting a bullet but receiving
volts of electricity. It doesn't affect her at first, the Ursa fighting it and she brings her sword to slice at
his throat but jerks suddenly as the voltage grows more powerful, the man twisting a knob on his
gun. Her body stiffens and she falls to the ground, twitching and grunting before they deactivate the
electricity without blinking. She glares up at him as the other man rises, rubbing at his neck. They
move quickly but efficiently as they cuff her hands in front of her. He strips her of any weapons she
has, blinking at her before he is sure all of them are gone, leaving the radio on her hip like he didn't
know it was there. The men heave her to her feet, throwing her stuff in a bag before they move
through the city. Her feet drag across the floor and slowly her muscles tingle and begin to come back
to her. She tries to get her feet under her but it doesn't happen even for a second and they continue
dragging her to a building. Lexa and Nox are there in the middle of the room. They are bloodied and
scowling, hands cuffed in front of them and feet shackled. They had put up a fight before ultimately
falling.

Jaha walks out from behind them, smiling in a Clarke in a way that sets her on edge as they shove her
next to Lexa. She falls to her knees, leaning against Lexa's shoulder as her muscles spasm, still fried
from the taser. "I see you've come to visit me Clarke, Lexa. It has been longer than two days."

Clarke's throat feel thick but she still manages to growl out her words. "I know we're at a standstill
with the missiles."

"Possibly." He pause looking over her dirt ridden face over, there are smudges on the clean stones of
buildings of the city. A dark mark meant to be erased. "Have you changed your mind?"

She bares her teeth up at him. "No."

He sighs like he knew it was coming. "Then we will bomb Polis, you've worked hard to move
people out of it." He smiles, lips stretched to wide. "The leaders into the Arc, some of Polis to
Octavia's camp. Some to the mountain." Clarke stiffens, chest stilling at his knowledge. "But it won't
work, our people will throw them out Clarke. They are savages."
"You're the savage." Clarke jerks to her feet, taking a shaking step forward, Lexa stiff by her feet. Their hands are tied in front of them but Clarke's eyes are blazing with fire as she clenches her fist. "A monster. You threaten to bomb a capital if they don't bend to your will. Threaten to kill innocents and children."

"You would know about killing children wouldn't you Clarke?" His voice is swift and intent clear as he tilts his head. "Do you spot your reflection and see the monster you've become? More savage than you once were. Just like the grounders." There is a hatred there that Clarke had never seen before on the Arc.

Clarke speaks through a thick throat, memories haunting her. "We do what we must to protect what ours."

Lexa is close behind Clarke, face split open as she glares up at the man. "You hide behind your missiles, a coward."

His face almost splits with anger before a deep breath calms his features and the anger in his blood. "No, I'm a realist, I have a better chance of winning with missiles." His eyes find hers and he is once again the eerie calm from Polis. "I know what I have to offer. The City of Light is clean, an oasis in the midst of this monstrosity. Join us and you will see the light, you will become more."

Lexa raises her chin, baring bloodied teeth, taser marks burned into her neck. "We are what we are, nothing can change that."

There is a garbled voice in his ear that they can barely make out in the silence and he grins, eyes sparking dangerously. "Then you die a savage."

There is a finality to Lexa, a deep anger, green eyes blazing and chin raised high even as blood drips from her lips. "And you'll die a coward."

Clarke grips the radio in her hand, ripping it from her hip. "If there so much as a movement in any direction Raven will nuke where it came from, even if we're here."

"You fail to see Clarke." He smiles, like he know every step they make. Like he can see the future, not Lexa. "You have come here and I've sent one there." He motions to the radio as there is a garbled voice filtering to their ears from his. The second his is silent Clarke's radio clicks.

"CLARKE!" Raven's voice is loud and Thelonious Jaha smiles down at Clarke, lips edging creepily in a way they never had when Wells was alive.

"The war has just begun and you two are stuck here. Far away from the battle." He tilts his chin down, lips twisting even more "Just like I wanted."

"What did you do?" Lexa stumble to her feet, chains clinking as she steps close, itching to spill his blood. That inflection to Raven's voice was from one of her visions and she stiffens at the implications, turning her gaze to Clarke.

"Raven, what happened?" Clarke's fingers creak the plastic as they dig into the radio. "Jaha sent someone, be careful."

"I know." Raven's voice is grave and Clarke's stomach drops, throat drying. "He blew up the mountain Clarke." Her voice is thick with anguish and Clarke can hear the tears that must be sliding down her face. "I'm so sorry."

The blonde's voice waivers. "Raven?"
"Everyone in there is gone." Clarke's knee trembles and she drops the radio, she had failed. She had made it to the City of Light and failed all her people.

Clarke let out a loud anguish rage filled scream, lunging at Jaha only to be shoved down by the guards. "I'll kill you!" Her eyes are wild as she struggles under them.

"You can try. Detain them in solitary." He picks up the radio from the ground, ignoring the thrashing and the sound of the taser as they hit the thrashing Clarke with them. He ignores the sound of four tasers releasing before the blonde slumps, Lexa and Nox hitting the ground soon after. "Raven Reyes."

"Jaha." Her voice is thick with rage.

He tilt his head, listening to Alie in his ear before he speaks. "I have a message."

"I killed your last messenger." Her emotions are thick enough that he shivers at the promise of pain there, the anger.

"He was a pawn." He pauses, listening still before he finds words. "We have Clarke and the Commander. Soon we'll have the rest of her people. Camp Jaha will comply, get the grounders to as well or I will bomb them."

Raven grips the radio in her hand, baring her teeth at the black box. "Float you Jaha."

"Deliver my message, the mountain is not the last attack. I'll strike Polis next and if you still don't comply I will bomb the villages." He shuts off the radio before Raven can answer him. He looks to Alie, her face is still as passive as ever but her hands are tangles together over her hips. "Is it done?"

"She spoke the truth. The mountain has fallen, the systems are down Thelonious." She tilts her head to the side as she meets his gaze. "Our plan is in action."

He tilts his head down to her. "Your plan."

She smiles, meeting his gaze. "You are my vessel, it is our doing."

Later that night Jaha stands in the central room of the house, he fiddles with controls on the computer in front of him. Three cells with unconscious occupants are shown as well as a flickering topographic image of the Trikru territory. "We can't bomb the villages or Polis?"

There is a flicker of light across the central control scenes but the images from the satellites do not come through, glitching and fading to black and grey. "No, the explosion at the mountain jammed the signals. I am struggling to get through them." Her body flickers as well. "But they do not know this."

He stares at the flickering screen, calculating. "You think idle threats will keep them at bay?"

"They fear the missiles, they do not know we cannot fire them." She runs scenarios through her head. "Fear will keep them in line, for humans it always has. For now we must condition those here. Wait it out. We have all the time in the world Thelonious."
Chapter 13

Chapter Notes

The muse for this story went down the drain, I had no motivation to finish it. At all. But I did have some chapter summaries planned and small scenes so I pieced them together. It's not quite how I wanted to write the chapter. I had this chapter and another planned, but I thought I would post what I had now for everyone. To give them and myself closure, there's a million and one loose ends I meant to finish in coming chapters, more Clarke and Lexa scenes, them coming together but I lost the will to even write this story. Here's the compilation of the last few chapters I meant to write, the bold are ideas that I meant to follow through with between scenes. Thank you guys so very much for sticking with this story and sorry for the long wait and the abrupt closure. Warning: Severely unedited, some just dialogue scenes.

CHAPTER 13

Night falls over the desert. The temperature drops and the stars glow brightly in the treeless land. A beacon sits in the dark, a bright blinding light that seems to glow the more the sun sets until The City of Light shines, brightness hiding all the stars as the city bustles with last minute activities. Thelonius Jaha sits in the command room, head tilted to the side as he watches the survey camera's and listens to the woman in the red dress standing beside him. The other three men in the room wait, not seeing or hearing the woman speak, until the man turns around. "Clean them up, dress them. They are staining the city." The three men leave the room, their shirts starched stiff and bright white, jackets buttoned tightly against their chests, guns on their hips.

On the screen one of the doors is thrown open. The man inside of the room stiffens, bandage on his head caked with dried blood, shoulders stiff as he watches the three men come in. The taller of the guards move to cuff him and Nox jerks to the side, breaking the man's hold and snapping the fingers to his left hand, spinning to kick the stouter of the three hard in the chest. The third, smaller and much younger than the other two hangs back as they shout in pain before he pulls his gun free and fires. Nox releases a grunt as electricity flows through him before he falls to his knee.

The sounds of struggle reach through the other two cells, Clarke begins screaming and hitting the door, blonde hair wild as she roars for Nox. The door remains standing, metal thick and resistant to the rage of the Ursa. Knuckles split with each plow into the door and there is a sudden silence. The three men drag the dirty ground born man to the showers, striping him of all his clothes and tossing them into the garbage. They pull him under the spray of the shower head after they roll their sleeves up. The taller one leaves the minute the shower turns on, cradling his hand to his gut with a scowl.

Nox's makes no sounds, eyes half lidded and angry as they scrub his body with harsh strokes from a rough sponge. They rinse his hair, untangling the knots and scrubbing his face and the hair there, they are unconcerned with the stitches there. An obnoxious and clinical smell permits the room, reminding him of the mountain as they squirt more soap on him. His muscles won't listen, won't budge as they scrub hastily over the sand between the grooves in his body. Old wounds, half healed, bleed as they are split open from the rough treatment. The drain swirls with sand, blood and suds.

They spray him down again, washing away all the suds and leaving behind pink skin from the rough
treatment. They heave him between two of them before strapping him to a chair, scissors snipping easily through the freshly washed hair, all the braids having been taken out. Nox grunts in his throat but they pay him no mind, ignoring the stitches on the top left of his head until the snip the hair away from it. Their fingers prod the wound, taking in the five stitches there before they wipe it off with a rag that smells worse than the shine they used to clean wounds on the road. It stings as they finger the freshly cut hair around it before humming. The older stouter man take a razor to his beard, shaving it away without hesitation. His throat bobs and his eyes flash but he can do nothing.

They dry him off with scratchy cloths and rough hands. They rub the awful smelling liquid over his wounds, bandage them before shoving him into clothes. The pants are tight on his hips and the cuffs almost touch the ground under his bare feet. The shirt is a bright white, the sleeves tight across his biceps and wrists as the collar brushes his throat. The material is to smooth, there is a falseness to it that makes his skin itch and long for the soft fur and worn thin cotton shirts he usually wore. Socks are yanked up his feet and heavy shoes, shining black, are tied to his feet and then he is taken back to his room. The area reeks of chemicals, freshly cleaned as he was, burning his nose and eyes. The two toss him into his bed and move to the next door, the taller guard joining them with bandaged fingers.

Lexa is crouched in the corner, eyes wide and cautious. "Taze her." The heavier guard calls out.

The tall guard laughs, flexing his injured hand. "What for? The man barely put up a fight."

"She's the Commander, she'll be far worse than he was." He motions to the smaller one and the boy holds up the gun, pulling the trigger. Lexa ducks to the side, rolling under the strings connected to the gun and lashing out with her legs.

Both men fall with shouts of shock and pain and she moves, shoving off the two of them as they tangle themselves together on the floor in their pain and haste. Her foot plants in their sides as she launches over them aiming for the tall man's throat. Her elbow hits true and she keeps momentum, falling with the man and rolling out into the hallway, she spins to look for Clarke's door when her body seizes up. She grunts, muscles tightening when another man steps from the shadows, blonde hair cut tight to his skull, lips twitching on a smooth face. "So close." She glares at him, jaw locked tight and she can hear Clarke banging on the door down the hall, roaring her anger into the air, causing the door to rattle with each kick and punch. "Get her up, maybe next time you won't under estimate her."

The smaller of the three stands on shaking legs, limping over to her. The tall man with the dark hair still wheezes on the ground, clutching his throat with his uninjured hand as the stout man slowly rises to his feet with a grumble, latching a thick hand on to her arm and pulling her up. He drags her through the hall with a grunt, tossing her onto the shower floor, the drains still spinning with suds from the last shower. Lexa feels her fingers twitch and she relaxes her shoulders. Mentally taking stock of her body she is shocked yet again, the water sticking to her skin and the electricity finding all the spots that make her want to scream. It stops and her entire body is limp, tired. She heaves breathes through her nose, eyes barely able to glare up at her captors. "Figured you'd be coming around." The stout guard grunts out. He holds her upright now, and they strip her of her clothes. Her body at their mercy she longs to snap their necks. They do nothing except spray her with too hot water and release all the braids from her hair, throwing the items weaves throughout her hair to the ground. She jerks barely when they toss her undershirt into a pile, the braid in there make her squirm and long to draw blood. Her body disobeys her and she grunts low, lips pulling back over her teeth.

"Anton, hurry. She's getting jumpy." The taller man grumbles out with a wary look at the Commander, white suds down her face, the black run down the drain. They spray her again, rinsing the suds and war paint away. Her skin is pink from the heat, scars white against her skin and the
tattoos a dark black, sucking the light from the room. Blood from the wounds in Polis drip down her
sides and dark hair spills in wet strands down her back. They latch her into a chair after treating her
wounds and take a razor to her legs, her toes twitch and they tighten the straps. Her hair is brushed
and pulled back from her face as they dry it. Her fingernails and toenails are cut and their fingers
burn as they find every scar on her arms, muttering to themselves before they finish. Her hair falls in
soft waves down her back, they pull a dark grey dress over her shoulders, it clings to her waist,
spilling down her thighs to end at her knees. Her arms are encased in sleeves, too tight across her
shoulders as they slide flat shoes over her feet. They cuff her hands together before releasing her. Her
feet drag behind her, body still useless from the taser. They toss her on her bed same as they did
Nox. Her room smells like chemicals, too harsh against her nose.

The three guards lock the door with a relieved sigh before turning to Clarke's door, they approach it
with caution, listening for the woman to continue to rage. She does not. The stout man nods to the
other two, all three tasers drawn. They open the door, she is not in their field of view and one of the
men curses loudly. The tall man moves forward with a nod from the stout man and the second he is
through the door he is hit. Hard.

His side explodes in pain and he lets out a shout. There is a crack as her elbow meets his bandaged
hand. She shoves him into the other two as they come barreling into the room, using his momentum
and weight she follows the hole he created, slipping under arms and grabbing the fallen gun in one
move, spinning around she pulls the trigger. Twin clips soot out to connect to the stout man's head.
Blinking at the electricity coming out instead of a bullet she throws the gun at the younger male,
clocking him in the head. He grunts but manages to pull the trigger on his gun. They clip to her neck
and she shouts out in pain, reaching up to pull the strings from her throat but another set clips into her
shoulder and she falls to her knees.

The small man grunts as he releases the probes, cuffing her hands together. The tall man is moaning
on the floor, grumbling about injuries. His voice is hoarse and his throat red as his fingers are cradled
to his chest. The stout man is still down on the floor before the young man disconnects the probes on
his face. "She got you good." There are twin pink marks on his forehead. The smaller man reaches
for his radio. "Can we get some more hands and a sedation here? I really don't want to go through
this again."

A needle pricks her arm and she bares her teeth at them. "I'll kill you." The words are barely heard,
guttural rumblings of clenching vocal chords.

The young man huffs. "I've heard it before." He pats her shoulder and she longs to lunge at him.
"They always change their mind after they see the light." Her eyes flutter closed and he catches her.
The tall man finally stands, coming to help drag her to the showers. The stout man remains on the
floor, slowly getting feeling back. "I didn't think the three of them would be that bad."

"You first time on savage rehabilitation and not in the city with them?" The tall man's voice is
hoarse, his throat bobbing with each painful breath and word. The young man nods. "You'll get used
to it." He pushes Clarke up against the wall, letting her feet spill out in front of her when he lets her
go. He flicks on the shower and they strip her of her clothes. "Damn."

They look at the scar littering her body, some barely healed wounds. "What happened?"

The taller man chuckle catches in his bruised throat and he winces. "My bet, she pissed someone
off."

"Are they all like this?" This is the young man's first time rehabilitation at stage one. His first time
seeing them come in, bloodied and defiant. "The other two weren't as bad."
"They're savages, they always look like this. Always act like that. But they'll learn. They'll see the light and they will be free."

The young man furrows dark brows. "What if they don't?"

"They will." The taller man looks up from throwing her clothes away as the young boy scrubs the desert form her skin. "You weren't this chatty with Sarge here."

The small man shrugs, ducking his head. "Sarge likes quiet."

Rubbing at his throat the other man grunts out. "So do I."

They work in silence, drying her off, strapping her to the chair and shaving her legs and clipping her nails. Her hair is dried and her cuts cleaned. They pull a dark blue dress over her head, the fabric flowing down her back and arms, covering the wounds and scars across her back and arm. They slip shoes on her feet and drag her back to her cell. They toss her in her bed and give her another shot before hurrying out of the room and grabbing the Sarge's stout body from where he lays still prone on the floor as she comes to.

---

Show the conditioning, imagery manipulation and starvation. Cleaning them until they are raw and shoving them into a room with the AI.

They let them meet every day for lunch to view the progress. Nox trembles but sits up straight. They force etiquette lessons on them, force them in clothes that hide the damages to their body. Show the people of the light shaking heads at Clarke's battered body, touching scars they aren't meant to touch.

Show them slowly breaking, Clarke hallucinating hats real and isn't, the Ursa trying to help her.

Show Lexa having visions and meditating to remain who she is. They cling together to try and remain who they are. Show them growing closer and closer. Clarke losing her mind everyday, seeing the spirits of the dead and not knowing what is true. (Isole. The woman stands before her clean of any damage, the fur of wolves on her back. "You're okay." The woman says nothing, tilts her head to the side before more of the riders appear behind her. Clarke shakes her head, the images waiver before more people filter into the room. Grounders, hundreds of them. Some dirty and some clean, yelling but unheard. They're trying to tell her something, beating on the walls and screaming but she hears nothing. Focused on the people in front of her. Charlotte appears, Anya and Gustus. Each of them motioning to the door and yelling to her. She think Lexa is dead when she spots her but Lexa tells her she and Nox are alive and well, tell Clarke she will be fine, just hold on.

Lexa tries to break out, get out herself and goes after Clarke but it ends with a concussion and being chained to a bed.

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"There are issues."

"Yes."

"How do I fix them?"
"Condition the Commander, use Clarke if necessary." Allie stares at the video of Lexa meditating on the bed and then to Clarke talking to herself in her own room, bags under her eye. "If we control her we control all the clans."

"Use her like a puppet."

"All the people follow her, we control her and we control the people. She'll bring all the clans here and we will condition them. They will see the light."

Jaha looks to the all white room below him, a body prone on the bed as he smiles. "They always do."

---

**Before the Explosion**

There is a spark and a yelp of pain from the chair near the computer. Baladan looks up from meticulously cleaning his weapons cache. "You are fine?"

"Yeah, just crossed the wrong wires."

Baladan grunts then looks back down at his weapons. "News?"

"Clarke got off the ocean seven hours ago and is in the desert again. The tracker I slipped in her boot tells me she is anyway."

"Did she know?"

"No, but she doesn't need to." Raven twists two wires together, using a tool to slip the casing back over the wires. "Got it."

Baladan looks up from wiping down his blade. "What is it?"

"It was an iPod, read about them on the Ark. Only a few on there before they went obsolete. I rigged it up a new, better battery." She toys with it. "Hopefully we'll get to listen to some music, the Ark's system is shot." An alarm on the screen above their heads begins to blink. Silent.

Baladan stiffens. "What does that mean?"

"I don't know." Her feet slide to the floor with a heavy thump and she rolls her chair forward, her fingers trip over keys until she pulls up a video feed on the screen. "Someone used the old emergency access code to get in here."

Baladan grabs his weapons, shoving them in their places. "Where?"

"West corridor, three doors down." The man takes off running, boots quiet even in the metal halls.

There is another beep and Raven moves down the hall after Baladan, frantic, running as quick as her leg will allow it. There is a beeping, harsh, loud and then a countdown over their head. Shouts and grunts sound and Raven burst into the room, Baladan a knife in his shoulder.

With the advantage of surprise Raven slams a statue against the guys head and he falls with a thick chuckle, blood dripping down the cut. "You're too late, the mountain is going to blow up."
"You idiot!" She reaches down, yanking up his sleeve finding the numbers.

"It won't do anything. Allie is coming, she'll invade your systems, blow all your cities up."

"Allie?" Her brains filters through his words and she lets out a disbelieving chuckle. "An AI."

"She is more than that. The City of Light is the key, you will fail." Raven nods her head and Baladan slams the man's head into the ground.

"The timers set for five minutes, the dipshit couldn't figure out how to quicken it. We just have to wait."

Baladan scowls at her. "For it to blow up?"

"No, for Clarke to do what she promised, he set the explosion because Clarke is in the City of Light, and if she's in there she's doing exactly what I need her too."

He drags the now dead man to a chute, dumping him before he hurries after raven to the command center. "What is that?"

"She's planting a bug."

"But the mountain will blow up?"

Raven takes the copied numbers from the man's arm and types them in. "No, the upper part of it will, the visible part. We send the tech into the dark, shut it down and Allie will think he did his job. Slight of hand, like a fucking magic show."

"Clarke won't like this."

"Clarke isn't here, it'll work. She'll get over it." Raven bites her lip. "Eventually."

Her knee bounces as she resets all the detonation. "C'mon Clarke. Drop it. Drop it." There is a small chirp and the screen to her left wakes up. "Take that you fuckers!"

Monty comes running into the room, panting and sweaty. "I heard screaming, it's done? Clarke did it?"

"In t-minus three minutes their systems will jam when the upper levels blow up, hopefully they won't be able to tell it's coming from the bug and not the mountain."

Monty shakes his head. "Blow up the upper levels?"

Baladan ignores him and focuses on Raven. "It'll keep the bombs away?"

"At least for now, all else fails we release one from here."

"How long do we have?"

"Not long, we can't leave them in the City of Light long."

"I didn't plan on it."

Raven grabs her radio when a rumble shakes the entire structure as the timer hits zero. Alarms blare and Raven ignores them, silencing them easily she clicks the power button on the radio, licking her lips. "I hope she forgives me." The other two look at her and she releasing a shuddering breathe
before pressing down the last button. "CLARKE!"

Baladan's face relaxes when he hears Clarke speak. "Raven, what happened?" Clarke's voice is so angry, but terrified and Raven swallows thickly, tilting her head back as the blonde continues speaking. "Jaha sent someone, be careful."

"I know." Raven's voice comes out of her throat in a choked sound and she aches for Clarke, for what they are about to put her through to fool Jaha. "He blew up the mountain Clarke." Her words catch in her throat and she swallows, tears forming in her eyes at the thought of shattering Clarke's already broken resolve. "I'm so sorry."

"Raven?" The blonde's voice waivers over the radio, Baladan grips the table, knuckles with and face twisted as he holds his tongue.

Raven spits the words out with an aching heart, knowing how Clarke would take the words and that Jaha is listening. "Everyone in there is gone."

There is only silence and Raven pulls in a calming breath, fingers twitching across the radio. "Raven Reyes." The voice sends a flush of anger across her entire body.

"Jaha." She spits the name out, teeth bared.

There is a beat of silence before he speaks again. "I have a message."

"I killed your last messenger." There's still blood splattered across her forearm from the man, she ache to slam a vase into Jaha's head. To take him down a few peg.

"He was a pawn." His voice is that monotone with a superior edge that sets her teeth grinding. "We have Clarke and the Commander. Soon we'll have the rest of her people. Camp Jaha will comply, get the grounders to as well or I will bomb them."

Raven grips the radio in her hand, baring her teeth at the black box. "Float you Jaha."

"Deliver my message, the mountain is not the last attack. I'll strike Polis next and if you still don't comply I will bomb the villages." He shuts off the radio before Raven can answer him a she slams her hand on the desk.

"DAMMIT" Her fists clench and release and the other two in the room watch her. "He can't do anything, I jammed his systems with the bug, they'll think it's technical failure on their part." She rubs at her head. "Monty, get to work on the rover, we need to get to the City of Light as soon as we can." She looks up. "Baladan?"

"Yes?"

"Go to Camp Jaha."

The sun rises and with her second by her side Octavia marches to one of the outlying tents. Her fists pounds into the post, there is a shuffle inside the tent, before a head peaks through. The natrona mark is easily view-able on the edge of her cheek, hidden by her hair, dark hair, tangled with the bones of animals and feathers that sits in a messy nest. "What?"
Octavia clenches her jaw. "You attacked Daki last night."

"So?"

"So, I need an explanation."

"Why, you aren't our heda. You aren't our leader. We are nothing."

"This is Atlantis, it belongs to the lost." Octavia meets dark grey eyes head on. "Why did you attack Daki?"

"He murdered my sister seasons ago." Her jaw clenches. "He is lucky I only beat him." Her jaw tilts high. "You going to brand me? Whip me? Kick me from the Lost City?"

"No," Octavia's words are a soft whisper. Her chin tilts up and she swallows. "But I have a job for you."

"You want me to care or his wounds? You sky people are stupid. Weak"

"No, want you to train the younger kids. ..."

"Why?"

"Daki is the size of a mountain, you're smaller than most of the seconds." Octavia swallows, mind racing as she thinks of the right words. As she forces diplomacy through her action, she was never meant to be at the front line, speaking and soothing wounds and digressions. "They need to learn what you know. Train them."

She scoffs, throwing a feather tangled braid back from her eyes. "Sekons. One warrior takes one sekon at a time, your head is full of sky thoughts."

Octavia clenches her jaw, biting down her anger. "The children outnumber the adults two to one. Everyone is helping build the walls, get the camp where it needs to be. You have no job and the children have nothing to do. They need to learn.

"And where will we get weapons?"

"Clarke has a cache hidden here. One of her warriors will bring them her."

"The ripa weapons? The ones from their victims?" The woman scoffs. "Haunted with the blood and souls of the dead."

"We're all haunted by something, a weapon won't change that."

The woman stares at Octavia, before her eyes flicker to Octavia's sekon. "Fine, I will train the children. I will do it as I want, no interference."

"No deaths, and the children can stop if they want."

"Fine." The woman searches Octavia's face. "Okteivia."

Octavia watches as some refugees from Polis enter the tangle of tents and the low lying fence that is slowly coming too. "Halt." The refugee stop in their tracks, Octavia eyes each of them. "If you attack my people, the ones you call betrayers, I will cast you from the safety of our city. You have been warned. There are no natrona here, the is no clan ties. You are free here, but if you cross me or my
people you will pay."

The tension in the air is palpable, but Octavia receives nods from the group of people taking refuge in a camp meant to be a city. Lincoln is speaking in gentle tones to the ones coming in, none of them injured, but they are exhausted. Wary to be where the ghosts of the mountain men reside.

There is a scuffle a few hours into getting everyone settled, a man yelling out natrona as he lunges for one of the others. Octavia hooks a sword under his feet and slams her fist into his face, foot pressing into his chest. "They are my people, they are not natrona. Any who speak that word are not welcome here." She presses her foot into his throat. "You're lucky I don't kill you." She kicks at his ribs. "Leave. Now!" He scrambles to his feet, face bleeding and pride destroyed. The rest of the refugees duck their heads and her people, the once lost, stare at her with something like hope flicking in their eyes.

---

Harper shows up with Monroe. Monroe gets to work on building the fence. Coaxing some of the other lost to help her, the kids flock to Octavia and she awkwardly passes them off to others. Altia (trainer of the children) smirks at the awkward looks Octavia shoots all the children.

"You are closer to their age than I yet you are wary of them."

Octavia is tense muscles and wariness. "Never been around kids before."

"Surly you grew up with gofu in your home."

"No, I only knew my brother and my mother." Her eyes are dark. "I was hidden in the floor because my people would have killed my mother if they found me."

"So you are lost as well?"

"This is the only home I've known." Her eyes flicker to the barely there camp morphing into village. Altia watches Octavia before shrugging. "I don't know the meaning of home either."

"Why?"

"I was born Azgeda, my mother a traitor to the previous kwin. I was branded as a child. They killed her when they found us, lucky they didn't kill me."

"And your sister?"

"My mother was not hers, but our father raised us together. When he died by the kwin's hand her guard came for the natrona child." There's a dark gleam in grey eyes. "It was in my blood. My sister and I ran, I did not question why she came with me."

"She loved you."

"She died because of me. That's all it will get you, love makes you irrational. Weak."

Octavia looks to Lincoln. "But its worth it. In the end."

"I've no sister and there is a hole in my chest. It is not worth it."

"You have memories of her though, happy right?"

"Some days. But you forget Oktevia, I was never meant for happiness. None of us were."
"You can have it now."

"I do not believe that is possible."

Clarke mumbling to herself. Eyes closed. Lexa meditates until she can connect to her through the short distance between their room. "Clarke."

Clarke jolts and looks around the room. "Lexa?" Her voice cracks. "I'm so sorry." Her lips tremble and her entire body slumps against the wall. "I killed you too."

"I am not dead Clarke."

"You would say that." Clarke lets out a wet chuckle. "Death is not the end right?"

"Clarke, I am imprisoned next to you. Calm. Please."

"I can't, all my people are dead. I killed them all."

"If they are then it is Jaha's fault not your own."

"I can't do this anymore Lex. I've lost so many people."

"I know Clarke. I know. But we can get through this, we must be patient."

"I can't, I don't think I can deal with it anymore. Every time someone dies they come to me. I see them and they give me messages. 'Tell my mother i'm sorry.' 'Give my aunt my congratulations.' I can't do it anymore. I know what your people called me years ago, Commander of Death. Now i fear they were right all along. All I do is bring death wherever I step."

"Clarke, beja, listen to me. It is not your fault, their deaths are not on you. We all had a hand in this war, all of us are to fault. Do not bear the weight of their deaths on your shoulders."

"I don't know what to do anymore."

"What we have always done. Survive."

"Surviving hurts Lexa. It aches."

"It's is meant to, its how we know we are alive."

"I lost everyone."

"Clarke, tell me your farewell to your riders."

"Why?"

"Tell me."

"May we meet on the next sunrise, in this life and every life after."

"Then you are never alone Clarke, your riders wait for you in this life and every life after it. Do not give up now, we still have people to save."

"And after?"
"After, we rebuild. We mourn the dead and take care of the living. Together."

"Promise?"

"I will not abandon you again Clarke."

"Even if its for your people?"

"You are my people. Your people are my people and mine yours. I will not abandon any of my people."

"I'm sorry."

"Why Clarke?"

"I hated you so much."

"I did as well."

"I would have fought. I think I would have but I." Clarke stares off into space, eyes going foggy. "I think I proved I would do anything for my people. Killing an entire civilization or abandoning my allies. I think." She pauses. "I am glad I didn't have to make the decision."  

"We do what is right for our people despite consequences, it is an admirable trait Clarke." Lexa pauses, eyes still closed as they communicate through the spirits. "I am glad you did not have to decide either, I would not wish it upon your shoulders again."

"We were born for this Lex, you told me as much, I just fought it till the end."

"Then keep fighting Clarke, we will get through this and get revenge for our people. I swear it."

"Don't die, I couldn't. I couldn't take it."

Lexa stills, tears pricking her eye. "I feel the same Clarke."

---

"The progress Thelonious?"

"The Commander meditates." He glares at the screen. "We've tried noise, anything to disrupt her but nothing pulls her from the trance."

"Calm Thelonious, her will is strong but there are ways to break it. What of Clarke Griffin?"

Thelonious face twists into something like guilt before he blinks and its wiped away as if never there. "She is the opposite, she mumbles to herself. Acts like there are others in the room, she reacts not to outside stimuli but whatever is in her head."

"Why do you believe this is?"

"Her mind is broken." He stares at the blonde who had once been his son's best friend.

"What do you believe the cause of that is?"

"She's killed over a thousand people, I believe that has an effect on the psyche."

"Use her to break the Commander's trance, if needed use the man they brought with them to draw
Clarke out. Soon they will see the light."

"They always do Allie." He smiles up at her. "You will is mine and shall be done."

"Good, I am still working on fixing the systems damaged by the explosion at Mount Weather. Be sharp Thelonious, the Commander is not one to be trifled with and we are blind to the outside world now."

Thelonious has Nox shackled and strapped to a chair with food in front of him and only his right wrist mobile. He has Clarke pulled in screaming. Lexa remains in her room. The first part of their plan. A gun is head at Nox head. "Sit Clarke Griffin, unless you want another death on you."

"Nox?"

"I am fine Clarke." His words are soothing even though his face is gaunt with hunger and anticipation.

Clarke slumps in the seat poking around at her food. After a few minutes of this the gun cocks back and Clarke snarls, face twisted in rage and the fork in her fingers creak. Her muscles are taut, ready to move and intervene to save her rider. Her friend. Her family. "Eat Clarke, we wouldn't want your friend to suffer from your lack of manners."

Clarke trembles but Nox shakes his head and gently takes a bite of the food in front of him. Clarke follows his example, shoving a bite in her mouth, glaring at the gun like she could melt it with sheer force of will. "You kill him I will kill you all."

"That's not very hospitable Clarke, didn't the Ark teach you better manners?" Jaha's voice is tinged in a slight edge, a hint of something dangerous and crazed under his calm exposure and starched high collar as he stands beside the guard.

"The Ark was the first place to teach me betrayal and death Jaha." Her mouth curves into a snarl. "How many lives are on your shoulders? Of the hundred you shipped to the earth? The three hundred who you killed? And those before the culling? My father? Your son? Your mother? How many Chancellor Jaha?"

"Not as many as you!" His voice rips into a roar and he snatches the gun from the guard. "How about I add another one to your shoulders?" His finger twitches but his gaze drops to the side and he stares at Allie, the only one to see her.

"Calm Thelonious, she was baiting you."

"Baiting me to kill her friend?"

"No, to find your line. Look at her Thelonious, she is breaking, scrambling for a hold. A way to lord power over you she does not have. Do not give her something, calm."

He pulls in a deep breath. "May the light guide me through the darkness. May it clear away my grief and anger. May it show me the way to a better life." His heart calms with each utterance of the words and the guard take his gun back easily, already used to the ways of Thelonious Jaha. His dark eyes find Clarke. "You will see the light soon enough Clarke, and you will be free of this darkness that shrouds you."

Clarke stares at him without saying anything before she sips at the water with a shove of the gun by a guard against Nox's head.
Clarke is shoved back into her room, half lucid from the drugs in the food. Lexa's body tenses in the other room when Clarke's presence brushes her. She allows her spirit to go into the other room. "Clarke?" The blonde is limp against the bed, eyes half lidded. "Clarke, beja, speak to me."

"Darkness." Clarke murmurs, eyes flitting like she can't make out the room. "Leksa?"

"I am here Clarke. I am in the other room. You must fight."

"Kill Nox." Clarke blinks her eyes, trying to stay away. "Can't fight."

Lexa bares her teeth, itching to touch Clarke to brush her fingers over her face and chase away the thoughts that form the creases across her forehead and eyes. "We will get through this Clarke, I promise you. You must stay strong. Ste yuj Klark."

"Lexa?" Clarke murmurs quietly, sitting in the corner of her room, the door in her center of vision. She gets no reply and she furrows her brow. "Lexa?" The silence is eerie and she bolts to her feet, stumbling until she makes it to the door. "What did you do to them?!" She kicks at the door, screaming. "LEXA! NOX!" Her eyes are wide and dilated, bloodshot and her breath come in quick heaves. "Please." She utters quietly, pressing her head into the door.

Lexa is not in her room, across the hall she sits in an interrogation room. "How many are in your armies?" Jaha paces in front of her, calm and stern. She closes her eyes to meditate, ignore them and fall into Clarke's room like she had for the last five days. There is a jolt in her system and electricity flooding through her. "Can't concentrate with electricity coursing through you, can't meditate and hide away. Now tell me, how many of you are there? How many will try to kill my people?" He smiles thinly. "Camp Jaha is it still?"

She holds her tongue despite itching to scream at the sheer cockiness of him. The stupidity that will kill many people. She holds her tongue and reaches out with the Heda spirit, feeling Clarke's panicking and the Ursa attempting to soothe the blonde twisted mind. A shock lances across her chest again and she holds back her gasp of pain, gritting her teeth and glaring at the man. "Will you break if I torture Clarke?" Lexa doesn't flinch, doesn't move. "Or the man? Would you cave to keep Clarke's friend alive?" Lexa holds her tongue still and another shock skitters throughout her body. "I've seen Clarke's scars. Her wounds." He sneers at her. "Your barbaric ways have left mark on her. Blemishes that we will eradicate from her skin. You have destroyed her humanity." Jaha paces the room. "You are the monster here, twisting my people until they fall into line, leaving them to die. And they still follow you, still allow you into their trade. They are naive, but I see the truth. The light will set everyone free, eradicate the monsters inside of you and cleans your soul of the deaths and scars."

Clarke and Lexa end up being captive for two weeks (Show everything that happens in Jaha and the grounder camps as well as the mountain.)

"Monty!" Raven yells from under the rover she's working on. "How far are you?"

There a spark as electricity jumps from a wire to the man's hand and he yelps, shoving the finger in his mouth. "I've almost got them wired to the engine, how's the frame coming?"
"It'll hold, Baladan will come back tonight with the others and we leave tomorrow."

"Will they be ready tomorrow?"

"They better be." Raven growls out, finishing under the car and rolling out until she can scramble to her feet. "We just need to install the radio and fix the axle on One."

Monty nods, sliding down from the top of the roof. "You said Clarke mentioned drones and sandstorms, how do we handle either of those?"

"The drones are down, the virus I built is jamming her signal out of the City, she can't go out or bring anything in, but it won't last long before she finds it and her systems come back online completely. When she does she'll find part of the mountain still standing and us in the sand if we don't leave soon."

"Tomorrow then, what about the sand storms?"

"Hopefully we don't get one, we'll seal all we can in the rover, the tires are built for it."

"No ventilation?"

"Only when its sealed, I've already got them built, we screw them in now. Flip them up when the storm comes." There's a commotion and a group of people barrel into the room. "I thought I said a few Baladan?"

The ground born man rolls his green eyes, lips pulling against his scars. "I've brought Sinclair to watch the mountain for you as well as Riders to protect him if needed."

"Good, we can fit eight to ten comfortably in each rover."

"How many are we taking?" Bellamy's voice is gruff and his eyes wild.

"Two, I'll drive one and Monty the other."

"I'm going with you."

"Never doubted it Shooter, you're with Monty in Rover two. Your girlfriend too" Raven grunts waving the two over to Monty as she stares at the people gathered there. "Monroe, Harper, you're with Bellamy. Monroe the city's going to be equipped with shit like the Ark, probably better. Find the weak spots and report them to those in your rover if the radio goes silent. Allie may over-ride the virus by the time we get there." Monroe nods and Harper grips their hands together, fingers tight on the rifle on her shoulder as well. "Lincoln, O, you're with me. When we park get your asses out and sneak in, you two are grounders, you're good at it. Baladan, you are my eyes and ears. I'll be looking for the main-room, you need to have my back."

"Clarke told me to protect you, I won't fail Raven."

Raven smirks, dipping her head as her eyes flash. "Miller they'll be targeting those running, I want you on the turret above the rover. Shoot any aiming at us."

"And when they shoot at me?"

"The mountain had bullet proof glass. I've cut it and framed it. I've installed it in a cage above the turret, your hands will be the only thing exposed once we get it up."

"Awesome, whose my driver then?"
Raven rubs at her shoulder. "Monty, you'll be in his rover, mine's got a few mods on it that replaced the turret."

"Like what?" Octavia narrows her eyes.

"They're gonna have a gate." Raven smirks. "And you'll need a distraction."

"You're going to drive through the gate and escape how?"

"I'm not the one driving, I'll be in with Baladan by then."

"Who then?"

Someone steps from the shadows. Jasper's eyes are bloodshot and he swallows thickly. "Me."

"Why would you save Clarke? The Commander?"

Jasper narrows his eyes before rubbing at his bony chest. "I'm not going to fail." He shrugs. "Its a suicide mission, I'll be trapped in the line of fire, but you guys need me."

"Jasper, you're not dying." Octavia's voice is fierce.

"Maybe not, but I can do this." He shrugs. "I hate Clarke, I don't think I can ever stop, but Maya." His words choke off. "She said none of us are innocent. I want to prove her wrong." He swallows. "Maybe if all this war stops, maybe all the blood and killing can stop too. Maybe children can be innocent again."

Octavia grip his shoulder but nods and Monty brushes his fingers along Jasper back comforting. "Any one else Raven?"

"Two more of Clarke's riders. I like our chances with guns, but we need shadows."

"Who?"

"Romona and Mikil." Baladan's voice is even and the two step forward.

"One in my car and one in Monty's." They separate and everyone stands in their group. "We leave in the morning. I've got a signal from Clarke's tracker before she crashed the systems with my bug."


"Does it have to be so bumpy?" Bellamy grumbles out as his head hits the side of the door. Again.

"You complaining about driving instead of riding horses Blake?" Raven voice is terse over the engines, the radio clipped to the dash of the rover, working for now.

"Not at all." He grumbles out, stretching his legs.

They drive non stop, switching seats when the driver needs to rest. The others rest in the back, bumping against one another. They make it in two days, the long way around, skipping the water before they are shot at.

Raven lets out a loud whoop, waving at Monty through the window as everyone slaps the bullet proof glass up over the vents and windows. "Lock and load, we're in the right place." Monroe and Miller hurriedly snap Miller's cage into place before the man is in it, beanie tucked over his ear and his grin wide as his thumbs lock down on the buttons, ready to fire. Raven drives around the wall as
Miller begins to fire at those peeking their head above the wall. "Stay safe kiddies!" Octavia and Lincoln are out of the car quickly, Romona following after them as Miller shooting with one hand on the turret and another snapping his harness into place. He barely spots Monroe leading Bellamy and Harper to a weak spot in the wall, Echo tailing them as Mikil disappears in the shadows and rising dust. Bullets slap into the windshield and Jasper honks the horn, yelling at the top of his lungs as he turns the radio on loud. Spinning his tires again to throw up dust and hide those sneaking in as he barrels straight for the gate.

He hits a red switch with a skull on it and rockets burst from the top of the rover, jolting it as they speed from their holdings and slam into the walls. He hits a green button that drops the grill guard to the ground and the spikes drop out as he speeds to the smoking gate. He slips the mask down on the helmet Raven made him wear and tightens the harness one last time before he lets out a battle cry and slams into the gate. Instead of halting him, the rover goes flying through and his tires skid across stone as he screams. People jump out of the way and Miller and Monty continue to drive along the wall, shooting any they can. Jasper skids to a stop at the sheer amount of guards in front of him. "Bring it." His lips twist into a sneer under his helmet and he revs the engine.

Baladan shoves Raven into the shadows as guards run past them. "The signal?"

"Big building right there."

"It is swarmed with guards."

"Jasper will get them. Give it a minute. Romona?"

"She's taking out those on the west wall, Mikil will get the east and Echo the south. Miller and Monty have the north. The others will get those on the street as planned."

There's an explosion and then the skidding of tires on stone and bullet smacking into metal. "Let's go Bal." Raven shoves off the wall and Baladan follows after her throwing a knife into a guard's throat as he rounds the corner. He rips the gun from his hands and tosses it across his shoulders, throwing the pistol at the mechanic.

(Show them running into a group of guards before Lincoln and Octavia show up, tearing through them as Harper jumps into the frey. "GO Raven!")

Bellamy and Monroe as sniping guards and sabotaging the remaining networks, trying to take down the remaining technology.

Raven gets to the main room and she throws a smoke bomb in taking out the guards in there before Baladan slits their throats, she looks into the stuff as Monroe comes running into the room, all smiles. "Hey."

"You as good at Monty as overriding systems?"

"Not even close."
"Destroy any server you can find then, I'll start overriding it. Where's Baby Blake?"

"Taking down guards around the building."

"Good. Baladan and I will find the others after I finish this."

"Got it, good luck."

Raven hacks the systems and creates a stronger virus before releasing it. "Should do it, it'll piggy back off the virus Clarke place here for me before going on its own, by the time she realizes it she'll be fried." Raven grabs security cameras, flicking through them before she finds Clarke and the others. Ripping the keys off the guards she grins. "Let's save you leader."

Raven unlocks the door and grins at the blonde sitting on the floor. "Clarke."

"You're dead?"

Raven snorts. "I'm very much alive." She creep closer, grinning at the weary blonde. "And if you get kidnapped one more time I'm sticking you in a plastic bubble." The mechanic mumbles as she pulls the blonde to her feet and into a hug. "I don't care if you don't like it, i'm sick of worrying about you."

Clarke chokes back a relieved laugh, clinging to Ravens shirt and trembling. "Why would I do that when you save me?"

Raven rolls her eyes. "Of course you like being saved by dashing women, but I think we all tire of worrying about you." Raven pulls back. "Speaking of dashing women how bout we get the Commander out?"

"Please." They rip open the door as Baladan stands guard down the hall and Lexa lunges out of the room, her hand drives into Raven's diaphragm before Clarke pulls her hands down and yanks the woman into a hug. Raven wheezes on the ground as Lexa realizes who they are. Clarke smiles tearfully, hands trembling as she squeezes Lexa into a hug. "Thank for keeping me sane."

Lexa smiles halfway, eyes soft and hands moving to cover Clarke's wrists. "Anything for you Clarke."

"How-" Raven wheezes, clutching her chest. "Bout me?" Her face is twisted into a grimace. "Saved your ass."

Clarke releases Lexa and bends down to help the mechanic stand with a guilty wince. Raven grunts and wheezes leaning heavily on Clarke. "I apologize Raven Reyes." Lexa's eyes crinkle in remorse. "I did not realize it was you."

"Yeah, got that from the hand to my fucking chest." Raven coughs, rubbing at the spot the woman had hit. "You made of steel?"

Lexa furrows her brow shaking her head before looking around. "The others?"

"Taking down Jaha's people, don't know what the fucks going on here but they're crazy." Raven pulls out a key ring. "Saw another one down the hall, he one of yours?" Clarke grabs the key quickly, squeezing Raven's wrist gently before pushing her into Lexa's arms and running down the hall. "Guess so."

Clarke yanks the door open and there is a flurry of movement before Clarke is ripping Nox down to
a hug. He crumples into her and presses his face into her neck, relieved. Her fingers smooth over his now short hair and she laughs tearfully.

It is utter chaos when they get outside. Jasper has driven the rover over most of the guards and there isn't a single sound.

_Turns out some of the people fled and the rest were killed. Octavia has a bullet to the shoulder, Lincoln is bleeding from his head, Bellamy is limping, arm over Echos shoulder. Harper's nose is broken and she's missing a few fingers. Miller is okay as is Monty. Jasper has whiplash and a concussion. Romona has a bullet to the side, Mikil a cut to his thigh._

"This is all you brought?" Lexa is skeptical.

Raven grins. "All we needed."

Clarke stiffens. "Sweep the city, find Jaha and any survivors." They listen.

Jaha is found and Octavia drags him down the street, spitting at him. Jaha yells for Allie, for help. Clarke's chest stills and she glares at him, gripping a gun her hand trembles before Nox pulls it from her fingers and fires. Jaha's brains coat the street and they all stand silently. "Well, I'm gonna check on the virus first, crash it and then we can go."

"How many people were here Clarke?" Bellamy's voice is hoarse.

"A hundred maybe two hundred. I didn't see them all."

Echo grunts under his weight. "Thirteen warriors took out two hundred." There is a gleam in her eyes.

Romona grunts as Mikil wraps her side, blood soaked through. "Not quite two hundred. The smart ones fled, but they won't last long. The sand and heat will claim their souls."

Echo grins bloodily. "We did well though."

Jasper falls out of the door, throwing his helmet off to grin at them. "It's over right?"

Octavia smiles at him. "Yeah, its over."

"Thank the floating lord." His eyes are relieved and then there is a boom and a grunt of pain. "Ow."

Clarke yells, throwing a knife that buries itself into the guard laying wounded under the tire of the rover. He dies with a grunt and they all run towards Jasper. Clarke surveys it. "Clear through right shoulder." She presses onto it to stop the bleeding. "You'll be fine."

"I think my chest has a target." He grunts out.

"If you can survive that spear you can survive this." Octavia growls out, Jasper grunts out a laugh as they bandage him up.

The others finish the sweep of the city and kill the remaining guard before coming back to the rovers.
"I think there's a hand in my tire well." Raven grunts out in disgust.

Lexa looks morosely at the rovers. "I believe I would rather take a horse."

"They were taken back to the Ark." Romona speaks softly. "When you were captured they returned them to us as an apology and remembrance."

Raven laughs. "How about we all get the hell out of here? I set a missile to hit in about an hour."

"What the fuck Raven?" Bellamy shouts out.

"I didn't want another Allie or Mount Weather. We destroy this god-awful place and then we destroy the missiles in the mountain. Humanity fucked up with the missiles once already, no need to do it again."

Lexa nods. "I like your plan Raven Reyes."

"Thanks Commander." Raven grins. "So whose riding with me?"

Bellamy hurries over to Monty. "Thanks Reyes, maybe next time." They cram into the rovers.

**Raven, Jasper, Lexa, Nox, Clarke, Romona, Mikil and Baladan into one.**

**Harper, Monroe, Miller, Monty, Echo, Octavia, Lincoln, Bellamy, into the other. Octavia complains about Raven's driving over the radio, glad she's in Monty's.**

__________________________________________________________________________

They are back in Polis.

Clarke stares out at Polis, high in the balcony. "Do you think we can do this?"

"The Ursa and the Heda have only existed one time together in the past, when the clans were first formed." Lexa turns to look at her. "I believe we could do this with or without them Clarke, you and I were made for this."

"We'll be okay." It is a question and a statement all in one.

"We're getting there, the clans are rebuilding, the bad seeds will be taken, questioned and then they will find a home or perish. Our people will survive as will we."

"Everything's different."

"It is the way of life, with every fire new life flourishes after. We survived the burning, we will regrow."

Clarke's gaze sweeps over Lexa's, hopeful and fearful all in one. "And us?"

"We will rebuild what was lost." Lexa's eyes are hopeful as well, yet there is no once of fear. "We have all the time in the world Clarke."

__________________________________________________________________________

Clarke with her remaining rider. Datak, Sar, Asha, Romona, Baladan, Mikil, Nox, Astrid, Mirai, and Aidan
She stands with them as the sun rises and the ghosts, the spirits of her lost riders stand along side them, hidden from all but Clarke. But they can feel them, in the settling of their heart and the love in their body. It floods them all as the rays of light rises and brush over each of them, the spirits disappearing one by one until the sun is peaking above the horizon and they soak in its warmth. Content for now. "Til the next sunrise." Datak's voice is hoarse and sad, and his fingers clutch at his own chest as tears spill down his tan cheek. Nox grabs his hand and it continues until they are all holding a piece of each other, breathing through the loss and the love.

Three months later

_Last chapter ending, them healing before someone mentions a message from across the plains, from someone not of the thirteen clans, show the grow of the clans etc before the ending._

Clarke looks to Lexa after the messenger walks away. "We can handle whatever they throw at us."

"We've withstood more than new people from the west. For now we reach out in peace." Lexa folds her arms behind her back, tilting her chin to grin at Clarke as they let the sun wash over them on the balcony. "We can withstand anything the spirits throw at us, we were made for it Clarke."

Clarke shakes her head but her fingers reach for Lexa's. "Our people come first but." She licks her lips, letting out a soft sound. "But war can wait."

"Then we bide our time, our people have dealt with enough death, when the sun rises those in the west will follow it eventually, and we will be ready. Together."

End Notes

A/N: This idea just popped into my head and I decided to write it. Grounders are a spiritual culture so I worked with that. I don't believe an alliance could have worked if Finn stayed alive. The 100 writers had the balls to kill off a main character where others would have found an excuse for him to stay alive and I love that about the writers. But in my story I needed Clarke to be on that post so she needed to switch places with Finn.

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