(Not) An Office Romance

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(Not) An Office Romance

by HedaClexaKomBlackhill

Summary

Lexa Woods, CEO, widow and mother of two takes her children to a fundraiser where she meets photographer Clarke Griffin. They click immediately and Lexa is looking forward to exploring a relationship with the blonde. What Lexa doesn't know, is that Clarke is actually one of her employees. Clarke decides to omit that detail, knowing that the CEO would not be so inappropriate as to date her subordinate.
The meet cute.

The park was full of children and their parents, the air thick with the sounds of families having fun. Lexa held tight to her children's hands as she let them pull her through the crowd.

"Mama!" Aden pointed to the jumping castle, his eyes wide.

"Alright, let's go." Lexa laughed, letting herself be dragged over to the small queue.

The park was home to the annual Arkadia Women and Children's hospital family fun day fundraiser. Lexa would usually only attend the gala and drop a nice cheque, but this year her twins were old enough to finally enjoy the family fundraiser as well.

She handed the entry fee to the woman while Aden and Costia slipped their shoes off and ran full tilt into the inflatable castle - both children squealing in delight.

After the jumping castle, they rode the Ferris wheel, ate corn-dogs and cotton candy and got their faces painted. Lexa's phone didn't interrupt them once, and for one day she was just like any other parent with their kids, enjoying the fresh air and sunshine. She loved it.

"Would you like a picture?" Lexa turned toward the slightly gravelly female voice, her mind short circuiting briefly as she laid eyes on one of the most attractive women she had ever seen. The blonde held up her camera, waiting for Lexa's approval.

"Please." Lexa smiled. She knelt in the grass, Aden on her lap and Costia climbing on her back, her chin on Lexa's shoulder.

The blonde took several rapid shots, checking them in her camera. She was about to declare them done when she noticed that she had lost the attention of the small family before her, she took the opportunity to take several more candid shots. She wrote 'card 2.347-361' on a business card and held it out for the brunette. "Get in touch through the week to arrange prints, all profits go to the hospital."

"Thanks." Lexa glanced at the card. "Clarke."

"No problem - you're going to want these pictures by the way - you have beautiful children."

"I certainly do." Lexa agreed. "Although I can't take credit for their looks - that's all on my late wife." She pulled both children into her sides in a hug, kissing their cheeks.

"I'm sorry." Clarke's eyes widened, worried she had upset the stunning brunette.

"You didn't know." Clarke's eyes widened, worried she had upset the stunning brunette.

"You didn't know." Lexa assured her, she missed her wife everyday, but the wound was not as raw as it had once been.

Clarke couldn't resist snapping one more picture of the family before her. "I actually don't do this much anymore." She gestured to her camera with one hand. "But if you ever wanted a family shoot - well, you have my number."

"I might just take you up on that." Lexa nodded, glad for an excuse to see the blonde again.

"Or if you don't want a shoot - you have my number, if you ever want to get a drink?" She tried, laying all her cards on the table.
"I'd love to." She pulled one of her own cards from her bag and quickly added her cell number to the back. "Here." She handed it to Clarke.

"Lexa Woods." Clarke read. "You're one of the hospital's biggest donors."

"I am." She agreed. "Arkadia is where this pair were born. I owe the team there a lot." She smiled.

"Would you mind if I took you to meet my mother?" Clarke asked.

"Awfully soon, isn't it? I mean you haven't even asked me out yet." Lexa smirked.

Clarke flushed bright red. "I'll admit, didn't really think that one through." She laughed. "No, my mother is the new head of the hospital - she will kill me if I don't introduce you."

"Lead the way." Lexa nodded. She pulled Aden onto her hip, Costia preferred to walk, and followed Clarke.

"Mum?"

"Clarke!" Abby smiled widely at her approaching daughter.

"I found someone you should meet." Clarke said. "Mum, this is Lexa Woods. Lexa, Dr Abigail Griffin - new head of the hospital."

"A pleasure to meet you, Dr Griffin." Lexa said, letting go of Costia briefly to shake Abby's hand.

"I should keep going, but I'll talk to you soon Lexa." Clarke grinned before melting back into the crowd.

Lexa chatted to Abby for several minutes, promising another large donation for the hospital's research fund.

"It was lovely to meet you Lexa, I'm sure I'll see you again."

"No doubt." Lexa agreed as they parted ways.

"Mama, ponies!" Costia squealed, pointing at the corral set up for pony rides.

"Baby girl, you're allergic to horses." Lexa reminded her.

"I'm not!" Aden reminded her.

"Can Aden ride the pony for me?"

"Please?" Aden added.

"Okay." Lexa chuckled.

Costia pouted through the whole experience, watching her brother in the saddle as he rode the black and white pony around the ring.

Costia eventually grew bored of watching her brother, turning her attention to the crowd behind them. "Lincoln!" The little girl yelled, startling Lexa.

"Hey munchkin." Lincoln said as he made his way over to join them. "Hey Lex." He hugged her around the shoulders before scooping Costia into his arms.
"Uncle Lincoln!" Aden yelled as he made his way back over to them.

"Hey buddy." Lincoln lifted Aden too.

"I'm surprised you're here." Lexa commented, a family fun-day was not where she expected her adopted brother to show up.

"I'm just here to pick up Octavia. One of her friends roped her into helping out for a few hours." He laughed.

"Does this mean I can finally meet the elusive Octavia?" Lexa teased.

"Sure, come on." He grinned, leading the way with the twins still in his arms.

Octavia was supervising the giant slide. Costia's eyes lit up at the sight. "Mama, can we go on the slide? Please?" She begged.

"Sure." She nodded for Lincoln to let her go while she dug into her pocket for cash. She passed a bill to Octavia who eyed the brunette warily.

"How many times is she going?" Octavia joked. "Because it's a buck a slide." She held the hundred dollar note up for Lexa's inspection.

"It's all I've got left." She shrugged. "Consider the rest a donation."

"Wow, thanks." Octavia grinned.

"Mama!" Costia yelled from the top of the slide, needing Lexa to watch her descent.

Lexa waved up at her daughter, waiting for her to slide. Costia however wasn't moving, she stood frozen at the top of the slide, gripping her mat and staring down at Lexa. "Maybe I should go check on her." Lexa decided.

"Hey you've paid for a hundred slides, do whatever you want." Octavia waved her through.

Lexa climbed the stairs quickly, not wanting Costia's anxiety to increase while she waited. "Hey monkey, want me to slide with you?" She suggested.

"Can you?" Costia nodded.

"Of course." Lexa took the mat and laid it at the top of the slide, she sat before helping Costia to sit on her lap. "Ready?" The four year old nodded. "Arms up!" She wrapped one arm around her daughter and pushed off sending them sliding.

"Wheeeeeeetttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttt
"I have to work my real job on Monday, but I could fit you in on my lunch break?"

"Can we make it an early lunch? I have a conference call at twelve thirty."

"How about eleven?"

"Perfect, I'll text you the address."

"Mama, can I go again?" Costia asked, tugging on Lexa's sleeve. "I can go myself this time." She promised.

"Go for it." Lexa chuckled. "Aden, do you want a go?" She offered.

"Only if you go with me." He said, leaning against Lincoln's shoulder.

"Let's go." She grinned as Octavia waved them through again.

"See you Monday Clarke." She waved.

Clarke however was still chatting to Octavia when Lexa and Aden reached the bottom, so took the opportunity to snap another few shots.

"So you know Lincoln?" Clarke asked.

"Lexa's my little sister." Lincoln grinned. "Clarke and Octavia are old friends." He told Lexa.

"Actually she's my sister from another mister." Octavia joked.

"We grew up on the same block, we hated each other until we were nine, until one day we were faced with a common enemy - Cage Wallace, and we've been best friends ever since." Clarke explained.

"That's a cute story."

"Oh we're adorable." Octavia assured her. "If you think that's cute, you should hear the story of how we met our friend Raven."

"Perhaps over lunch?" Lexa said to Clarke.

"Raven's story requires hard liquor - so you'll have to take me on a real date to hear that one." Clarke teased.

"Is it a good story?"

"The best." Octavia promised.

"Then perhaps I will." Lexa smirked.

"I have to keep going - I can't just fill my camera with shots of you and your kids." Clarke sighed.

"Then until Monday. Let me know what you want for lunch - my assistant will get it for us."

"Will do. See you." She waved to them as she disappeared into the crowd.

"I am so telling Anya." Lincoln teased.

Costia insisted on sliding three more times While the adults chatted, Aden was happy to only go the
one time with Lexa, he then insisted on being held while Lexa chatted.

"Okay, I think it's time to head home." Lexa decided, knowing that their highs couldn't last much longer, and she would soon have two overstimulated, overtired children on her hands.

"But we didn't get to play with Lincoln hardly at all." Costia pouted.

"We'll see uncle Lincoln tomorrow for family lunch." Lexa reminded them. "And we'd better see Octavia too." Lexa warned her brother before looking to Octavia. "You're not busy tomorrow are you?"

"Not really." She shook her head.

"Good. Lunch is at one." Lexa told her.

"Should I bring anything?"

"Lexa always over-caters." Lincoln shook his head.

"Okay. I guess I'll see you all tomorrow then." She nodded with a smile that seemed only partially forced.

Lexa nodded, glad that the matter was sorted. "See you both tomorrow." She looked to her children as she took their hands once more. "Say bye." She reminded them.

"Bye uncle Lincoln." They chorused.

"Bye munchkins." Lincoln grinned before Lexa began steering them toward her car.

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Lincoln: Octavia has just been asked to babysit her niece today.
Lexa: How old?
Lincoln: She's nine.
Lexa: Is there a reason for her not to bring her niece?
Lincoln: Are you sure you don't mind?
Lexa: Not at all, do either of them have any allergies?
Lincoln: Nope. I'll let O know to bring Charlotte.

Lexa set her phone down and focused on preparing lunch, now for one more person than she had expected. The twins ran into the kitchen a moment later from playing in the living room.

"Can we help?" Aden asked.

"Of course." Lexa helped them onto chairs So that they could reach the bench. "Costia, you're on mash duty. Aden, can you stir?" She passed each of them a bowl.

"Is everyone coming for lunch?" Costia asked.

"They sure are. Anya, Tris, Nanna Indra, Ontari and Lincoln and Octavia." Lexa listed. "Oh, and Octavia's niece Charlotte."
"Will they be here soon?"

"Very soon." Lexa nodded.

Anya was the first to arrive, as usual. Tris took charge of her cousins as she always did, leading them into the yard.

"How are you Lex?" Anya asked, watching her sister closely. Anya had always been protective of her little sister, since the day Indra first brought Lexa home, both arms in casts and littered with scabs and bruises, courtesy of parents who didn't know how to love their child. Anya's protective streak had only gotten worse since Lexa was widowed and left to raise the twins alone.

"I'm good, I promise." Lexa assured her sister.

"Lexa?" A new voice called from the entry.

"Kitchen." Lexa called back, turning to greet her adoptive mother.

Indra had stopped taking foster children after adopting Lexa - three children was her limit. But once the three of them had left home she grew restless, and decided to start again. Her current charge was a teenager named Ontari, filled with snark and dressed exclusively in black - she reminded Indra of a young Anya.

"Hey Ontari." Lexa smiled, determined to crack the girl's facade.

"Hi." Ontari gave a forced smile before flopping down at the kitchen table.

"Lexa, Anya." Indra greeted her daughters.

"Hey Ma." They hugged her.

"Can I help?"

"Almost done, but if you wouldn't mind setting the table?"

"Ontari, you can help me." Indra ordered. With a sigh the teen stood and did as she was told.

"We weren't that bad - right?" Anya muttered.

"You were - I was an angel." Lexa teased, bumping her sister playfully.

"Sure you were." Anya rolled her eyes. "I'll go round up the monsters."

Lincoln arrived with Octavia and Charlotte just as Lexa was setting the last dish in the centre of her long dining table.

"Your house is beautiful Lexa." Octavia commented.

"Thanks - it was all Costia though."

Octavia looked at the four year old. "Really?"

"Costia senior. My wife. She decorated the house - I just haven't changed anything." Lexa clarified.

"Lincoln never mentioned you were married."

"I guess we don't talk about Costia much." Lexa said. "She died four years ago."
"I'm sorry - I had no idea."

"It's okay." Lexa assured the panicking brunette. "It's not exactly a topic anyone brings up readily."

"I guess not." Octavia agreed.

"O, this is my mother, Indra. Ma, this is Octavia, and her niece Charlotte."

"It's nice to meet you." Octavia said.

"Charlotte, why don't you take a seat beside Tris." Lexa suggested.

Octavia's niece looked at her aunt hesitantly. "Go on, I'll sit next to you as well." Octavia assured her.

Indra and Anya tag-teamed their interrogation of Octavia throughout the meal. To her credit though, Octavia didn't back down.

"So what do you do?" Anya asked.

"I'm a personal trainer." Octavia said. "I majored in kinesiology at college, most of my clients are referred to me by their physiotherapists or orthopaedic surgeons, I do a lot of rehab work."

"And how did you meet Lincoln?"

"I was out with my friend Raven, Linc was working security that night."

"You met at the Bunker?" Anya asked.

"Yeah, you know it?"

"I own it." Anya scoffed. "Well, I own most of it - Lexa owns a share too."

"A purely silent partner." Lexa agreed. "It's Anya's baby."

"Oh my gosh - it's my favourite bar." Octavia beamed. "Seriously, it's amazing."

"Thanks." Anya smirked.

Lexa noticed that Charlotte was not touching her food, and was instead just staring at her plate. "Are you okay Charlotte?" She asked quietly, not wanting to draw unwanted attention to the girl.

"I don't know that it is." She admitted, pointing to the pasta bake on her plate. "Are you okay Charlotte?" She asked quietly, not wanting to draw unwanted attention to the girl.

"I don't know that it is." She admitted, pointing to the pasta bake on her plate.

"That's okay. It's pasta, with a cheesy tomato sauce, a bit like mac and cheese." Lexa explained. "Try a little, and if you don't like it you don't have to eat it."

"Okay." She lifted half a penne noodle into her mouth and gingerly tasted it. She chewed slowly, evaluating the flavour. "I don't think I like it."

"Would you like something else?" Lexa offered.

"Mum told me not to be any trouble." She shook her head.

"It's no trouble at all, would you rather a pb&j?"

"Yes please." She nodded. Lexa took the girl's plate and went to the kitchen. She returned a minute
later with two sandwiches on a new plate. "Thank you."

"You're welcome." Lexa assured her.

Once everyone had finished eating the table was cleared and they moved to the back deck. Lexa decided to leave the interrogators to their pursuit and took herself into the yard with the children. Costia and Aden ran straight for their treehouse, scrambling up the trunk and closing the hatch behind them. Tris climbed the second tree, inching her way along an outstretched branch to jump onto the deck surrounding the treehouse. Charlotte climbed onto the tyre swing.

"Need a push?" Lexa asked, but Charlotte shook her head. "Are you okay?" She asked.

"I wanted to stay with mum." She sighed.

"I'm sure she wanted to stay with you as well." Lexa offered.

"She did, but she had to go to work." Charlotte sighed.

"Will she be home later?"

"She said she'd be done after lunch, but that I should stay with aunt O for the afternoon."

"Would you like to call her and see if she'll come pick you up?"

"She doesn't have her car, and she hates borrowing grandma's car." Charlotte shook her head. "It's okay, I'll wait until O is ready."

"You're a good girl Charlotte." Lexa smiled. "I hope your mum knows how special you are."

"She does. She saved me, my old mum was not good, but my new mum is much better, and she has promised I can stay with her forever."

"You were in foster care?"

"Mum was my foster mum for a little while, but then she adopted me."

"I was in foster care too when I was little, so was Anya and Ontari."

"Really?"

"Indra adopted both Anya and I."

"What about Ontari?"

"She's still being fostered by Indra, Indra offered to adopt her, but she said no."

"Is Indra a nice mummy?"

"She is the best one I've ever had." Lexa nodded.

"Clarke is the best one I've ever had too."

"Clarke is your mother?"

"You know her?"

"We met at the hospital fundraiser yesterday." Lexa nodded. "I met your grandma Abby too."
"I wasn't at the fundraiser. Big crowds make me anxious."

Lexa's heart melted, Charlotte was just so sweet. She reached out and ran a hand through her hair soothingly. "I used to have trouble with crowds as well, I still don't love them, but I handle them much better now."

"How did you learn?"

"I just had to force myself to go out into crowds. It gets easier with time and practice."

"Oh, okay." Charlotte sighed.

Lexa stroked Charlotte's hair again. "Don't worry, it'll happen for you too."

"Do you think I could get better with them before I start junior high?"

"I think you could, if you wanted to."

"Mum used to work for herself, so she was with me all the time, but she took a new job at a big company and now she is always at work, and it's all my fault."

"I'm sure that's not true."

"She took the job so she can afford to send me to private school, a smaller one that will be less crowded."

"Does she like her new job?"

"She says she does. And she says she won't always be as busy as she is right now."

"Then I think you should let her keep her new job. She wants what is best for you, and that proves that she is an excellent parent."

"But I miss her."

"I know." Lexa agreed. "I'm sure she misses you too. But as you said, she won't always be this busy."

Charlotte nodded and leaned against Lexa, wrapping her arms around her. Lexa returned her hug, holding the girl close.

Charlotte stayed close to Lexa for the remainder of their stay. Lexa found the nine year old to be completely endearing, so was more than happy to keep her company.

"Alright munchkin, time to go." Octavia said as she walked into the kitchen where Charlotte was perched on the island while Lexa stacked the dishwasher.

"Okay." Charlotte said as she slid down from the bench. "Thanks for having me Lexa."

"Anytime sweetie." Lexa promised, giving her one last hug. "I'm sure I'll see you again, Octavia - assuming the interrogation didn't scare you off?"

"You will, don't worry it'll take more than that to scare me off." Octavia grinned.

"Good to hear." Lexa laughed.
"See you later, thanks for inviting me."

"Bye Lexi." Lincoln hugged her as they stopped by the front door.

"See you Tuesday." She nodded.

Lexa had barely closed the door before Anya was at her side. "So, what do you think of her?"

"Octavia? She seems okay, a good match for Linc." Lexa shrugged. "Not an ideal babysitter though."

"Yeah, I noticed that." Anya agreed.

"I think she'd be okay with our kids, but Charlotte needs a lot of attention otherwise she almost disappears." Lexa sighed. "Octavia didn't even notice that she wasn't eating."

"Do you think she's okay?"

"She will be, she was adopted out of the foster system last year. Her adopted mother is Octavia's friend Clarke, I met Clarke yesterday at the fundraiser."

"And you like her?"

"We flirted." Lexa admitted.

"So she's hot?"

"Very. I'm seeing her tomorrow."

"You don't mess around do you?" Anya smirked.

"She was taking photos - I've agreed to buy some of her prints - she took some great shots of me and the kids so we're going to go through them so I can choose the ones I want."

"Cute." Anya teased. "Over a meal?"

"Early lunch." Lexa nodded.

"I can't believe you didn't tell me earlier that you have a date tomorrow!" She slapped Lexa's arm jovially.

"I've been known to date." Lexa rolled her eyes.

"Not recently." Anya scoffed. "Hey Ma! Lexa's got a date!" Anya yelled back into the house.

Indra appeared from the kitchen. "A date?"

"With Charlotte's mother." Anya smirked.

"Charlotte? Octavia's niece?"

Lexa sighed and led her mother and sister through to the kitchen, ready to be subjected to a whole new round of questioning.
Monday morning dragged by slowly for Clarke. She had plenty of work to get done, but she found herself watching the clock, waiting for eleven. Lexa had texted her to confirm their plans, and to ask her what she wanted for lunch.

Finally, just before eleven she grabbed her tablet with the pictures on it, and pushed away from her desk.

"I'm going for a meeting - I'll be back in an hour." She announced as she left her office.

"Okay." Jasper mumbled, not looking up from his screen.

Clarke sighed, there were six people in her team, and she loved their dedication to the job, but they were all oblivious to their surroundings most of the time.

It only took a few minutes for Clarke to go from her basement office to Lexa's top floor office. As the elevator ascended she tucked her Trigeda Enterprises security pass into her pocket - she was pretty sure that Lexa was the sort of boss who would never date an employee. Clarke had never thought she'd be the type of person to date her boss, but Lexa seemed the exception to the rule.

"Can I help you?" Clarke was stopped by who she assumed was Lexa's assistant.

"I'm Clarke Griffin, I have an eleven o'clock meeting with Lexa."

The assistant pursed her lips as she picked up the phone. "Ms Woods, there's a Clarke Griffin here to see you - she claims to have an appointment." She paused. "Of course." She responded as she placed the receiver back down. "You can go through."

"Thank you." Clarke nodded as she passed the assistant's desk and pushed through the heavy door to the office.

"Clarke, hi." Lexa stood and rounded her desk as Clarke entered, a wide smile fixed on her face.

"Hi yourself." Clarke grinned. She had liked relaxed jeans and t-shirt Lexa, but corporate power suit Lexa was something else entirely.
"Thank you for fitting me in." Lexa said.

"No problem at all." Clarke assured her.

"I hope it wasn't a hassle for you to get here?"

"Not at all, I actually work not too far from here."

"Perhaps we could have lunch again sometime?"

"I'd like that." Clarke smiled.

Lexa moved them to the sitting area of her large office, a large chesterfield lounge faced away from the floor to ceiling window, bathed in sunlight. It was more comfortable than Clarke expected based on the hard-stuffed leather appearance of the lounge.

"I brought the pictures." Clarke unlocked her tablet and opened up the file with the pictures. Lexa took a seat beside Clarke, glad that the relatively small screen provided the perfect excuse to sit close to the blonde. "These are excellent - you're quite talented."

"You made my job easy - such a photogenic family." Clarke bumped her shoulder against Lexa's playfully.

"The twins take after Costia - she never took a bad picture." Lexa smiled sadly.

"Can I ask what happened?"

"Cancer. The doctors found the tumour while she was pregnant, and she flat out refused to do anything that might risk the twins. By the time they could be delivered safely, it was too late to save her. She passed away five weeks after the twins were born."

"I'm sorry, that must have been awful." Clarke leaned into Lexa's side, offering comfort.

"It was." Lexa agreed.

"I'm sorry for bringing it up."

"Don't be." Lexa gave a weak smile. "I loved Costia, and I miss her still, but I won't shy away from the truth - she was a huge part of my life for so long, denying that will only destroy me." Lexa explained.

"I guess that's true." Clarke agreed.

Lexa seemed to mentally shake herself out of their topic of conversation, and refocused on the tablet in Clarke's hands. She flicked through the images attempting to find her favourites - not an easy task.

"I love this one." Lexa declared, stopping on one of the candid shots Clarke had taken. Lexa was kneeling in the grass with Aden on her lap, gazing up at her with a huge grin. Lexa's face was turned to kiss Costia's cheek, the little girl giggling at the camera.

"It's very cute." Clarke agreed.

"I think I want a giant copy of this one, for the living room." Lexa mused. "And one for my mother as well." Clarke noted down the numbers of each picture and the print sizes that Lexa wanted. It took them about twenty minutes to go through all of the pictures and for Lexa to make her selections.
Once they had finally finished, Clarke set her tablet aside while Lexa unpacked their lunch from the bag on the small table before them. "I wasn't sure what you like, so there's pad Thai and chilli basil chicken." Lexa offered the two boxes to Clarke.

"Either is fine." Clarke smiled.

"Split you?"

"Perfect." Clarke took the Pad Thai and the chopsticks Lexa offered.

"So I met your daughter." Lexa began.

"Yes, she came home raving about you." Clarke chuckled. "Thank you for looking out for her." Clarke sighed. "I love Octavia, she's my sister in all but blood, but she is such an extrovert, she sometimes forgets Charlotte is the opposite."

"Charlotte is a sweetheart." Lexa shrugged. "She was no trouble at all."

"She really is. That's not to say we haven't had our bad days, but they're few and far between."

"She raved about you as well - told be you're they best mum she's had."

"She was in seven foster homes before I got her, so I'll take that as a compliment." Clarke joked.

"Seven? How long was she in the system?"

"Four years before me, and six months with me." Clarke said. "I promised her after our first meeting that if she wanted it, I would be her forever home."

"That's sweet of you. Not enough kids get that - too often they're bounced from home to home until they fall through the cracks."

"Was that your experience? She mentioned you told her you'd been in foster care."

"No, I was one of the really lucky ones - I was dropped off with Indra for a couple of days, while a more permanent solution was found, after I was taken from my parents. A few days turned into a week, then two, then a month and I never left. She adopted me after my father died the following year." Lexa explained. "My sister Anya had a much harder time - she was in the system for six years before Indra took her in."

"Was Lincoln adopted too?"

"No, he's Indra's biological son, we happen to have the same birthday, so we used to tell people we were twins - almost no one believes that anymore." Lexa chuckled. "Is Charlotte your first foster kid?"

"She is." Clarke nodded. "I hadn't really thought about it, taking on a kid, but I was dating this guy, who at the time I thought was really sweet. Anyway he mentioned that he had a daughter, I asked when I'd get to meet her, he told me she was in care." Clarke began. "I thought we had a future, so I decided that it would be a nice gesture if I arranged for his daughter to stay with us. When he found out, I found out what sort of person he really was. I never thought that he'd be so against raising his own kid, so I was most of the way to having her home with us, before he found out." Clarke paused. "He told me I had to choose, him, or Charlotte - I couldn't have both."

"That's horrible." Lexa said.
"Yeah, it wasn't a tough choice. I packed his stuff and kicked him out. I brought Charlotte home two
days later."

"His loss."

Clarke laughed. "I've always thought so."

"Did he fight you on her adoption?"

"Not really. But I've got an uncle who specialises in family law, and he doesn't lose, so Finn never
really had a chance."

"I'm glad Charlotte found someone like you."

"I'm glad I found her. I'd always figured I'd have kids eventually, but it was such an abstract notion -
Charlotte changed my life, I'd do anything for her."

Lexa smiled. "Like take a corporate job?"

"She told you that?"

"She's worried that you only took the job to afford to send her to a private school."

"I loved my job, loved working for myself, and I made enough when it was just me - but with
Charlotte now, I need stability. I need to know that there's a paycheque at the end of the month. So I
took a corporate job, because it's what's best for her." Clarke agreed.

"That's sweet of you." Lexa smiled.

"You'd have done the same for your kids in my position."

"I would have." Lexa conceded.

"So you were a photographer?"

"I was an artist. I paint, but photography was usually a better meal ticket. Weddings, corporate
events, promotional work - there are more jobs for photographers."

"What do you paint?"

"Landscapes mostly." Clarke picked up her tablet and flicked to her artworks.

"These are beautiful." Lexa marvelled.

"Thank you." Clarke smiled.

They fell into a comfortable silence as they ate their lunch. "Swap?" Clarke asked, holding the pad
Thai out to Lexa.

"Thanks." Lexa handed her the chilli basil chicken. "So tell me about yourself." Lexa prompted.

"What do you want to know?"

"Everything." Lexa shrugged. "Where did you grow up?"

"Here in Polis. My dad was an engineer for Polaris tech, and obviously you know my mum is a
doctor."
"Do you have any siblings?"

"Octavia pretty much counts - I think she spent more time with my family than her own when we were growing up." Clarke chuckled. "But other than O, no. I'm an only child."

"And did you go away to college?"

"I went to NYU for undergrad and then Yale for my MFA." Clarke said. "My parents encouraged me to do what I love, but they also put a lot of stock in academia."

"Did you enjoy it?"

"I did. Eventually I plan to go back, earn my doctorate and then teach." She said. "Probably not until Charlotte is in college now, but eventually."

"I can see you as a college professor - you'd be good at it."

"Thanks." Clarke laughed. "What about you?"

"I was adopted by Indra when I was seven. I have an older sister - Anya and you already know Lincoln." Lexa began. "I went to Georgetown on a scholarship, and started Trigeda Enterprises in my final year as a simulation project, and it went really well, as you can see." She gestured to the office around her.

"Yeah, you've done quite well." Clarke agreed. "I love your office." She sighed. "I'm jealous of your windows."

"You don't have a window?"

"No, but that's standard for the basement."

"You work in a basement?"

"Yeah, it's to control the lighting variation."

"I don't think you've told me what you do now."

"Now that I'm a corporate sell out? I'm a graphic designer."

"The corporate life can't be that bad, surely?"

"It's not really - except when I get called in on weekends."

"Does that happen a lot?"

"Only once so far." Clarke shrugged as she set the empty take away box on the table.

"That's not so bad. But I understand, I hate it when I have to work through what's meant to be my time with the twins."

"I'm sure that happens more than you'd like."

"Not as much as it could." Lexa said. "To a certain extent I can control my hours - and I don't sleep much, so I work for a few hours while the kids are sleeping."

"The advantages of being the boss." Clarke teased.
"Absolutely." Lexa agreed.

Clarke glanced at the clock on the wall, and realised that she'd already taken an hour of Lexa's day. "I should go." She stood with a sigh.

"Do you have to?" Lexa pouted.

"You have a meeting and I told my team I'd be back five minutes ago."

"You won't be in trouble will you?"

"No, I doubt they'll notice actually. But I do have plenty to do before I pick Charlotte up."

Lexa stood, finding herself suddenly in Clarke's personal space. They hovered for a moment, neither wanting to make the first move. It happened like a dam burst, neither could say who moved to meet the other, but a second later their lips met in a soft kiss.

"When can you see you again?" Lexa asked as Clarke pulled back - she didn't care about playing it cool, only one other person had made her feel the way Clarke did - Costia. And Lexa was not in the habit of ignoring her instincts.

"Friday? We could go for drinks?"

"Is it pathetic that I think Friday is too far away?"

"How about lunch on Wednesday instead?"

"How about both?"

"You drive a hard bargain Lexa Woods." Clarke kissed the CEO once more.

"That's a yes right?"

"Yes, you dork." Clarke chuckled. "I really have to go though." She leaned forward to kiss Lexa a second time, not quite ready to give up the brunette's presence just yet.

Lexa wrapped her arms around the blonde, keeping her in place. She swiped her tongue along Clarke's lips, begging for entrance, which Clarke granted. Both women consciously held themselves back from anything beyond making out, their first date was not the time to get carried away - not due to any social standards of propriety, but because Lexa had a meeting and Clarke had a job to return to.

Finally Clarke broke the kiss again. She stepped out of Lexa's embrace. "I'll see you for lunch on Wednesday."

Lexa couldn't help but pout. "That's too far away."

"Absence makes the heart grow fonder." Clarke teased.

"That's never been my style." Lexa joked, stepping back into Clarke's space.

"Oh?" Clarke feigned ignorance as to what Lexa was doing, even as the brunette backed her toward the wall.

"My style is all about the hostile takeover." Lexa promised.

In the instant before Clarke's back hit the wall the blonde reversed their positions and Lexa was the
one to coldie with the wall, Clarke's whole bode sandwiched against her front. "You talk a big game Woods - but you're not the top you think you are - and I can't wait to prove it." Clarke smirked as Lexa barely contained a whimper. The blonde darted forward for one last kiss, on Lexa's cheek, and she was gone. Lexa was left panting and trembling against the wall, her whole world spinning.

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Clarke fought to keep the blush from her cheeks as she hurried back to the basement. Harper, Jasper and Monty were all seated around the communal table used for both meetings, and lunch.

"Clarke, where did you disappear to?"

"I told you when I left, I had a meeting."

"I usually come back from meetings all flushed too." Monty agreed with a grin.

"You're impossible." Clarke rolled her eyes.

"Spill." Harper demanded as Niylah joined the group.

"Fine." Clarke mock sighed. "I did a freelance photography gig on the weekend - it was a charity thing. Anyway I met this woman - like an eleven on the hotness scale."

"The scale only goes to ten." Jasper countered.

"Yeah well no one told her that. She's a clear eleven." Clarke assured him. "Anyway we flirted, pretty shamelessly, while I took pictures of her and her kids. I snuck out and used my lunch break to go over the photos with her - also make out a little."

"Good job Griff!" Niylah cheered.

"I'm going back to work now." Clarke laughed, shaking her head at her team.

"Yeah right, she's going to fantasize about the lunch date hottie." Jasper teased.

"And even if I do - I'll still get more done this afternoon than you will." Clarke retorted as she walked into her office. She logged back in and reopened the design she'd been working on for the new publishing house the company had just bought out.

She was interrupted too soon for her liking by her phone. She considered not answering it as she glanced down at the screen, but it was Charlotte's school.

"Hello?"

"Ms Griffin?"

"Speaking."

"This is Maya Vie, I'm the nurse at Charlotte's school."

"Is she okay? What happened?"

"She's in my office as she's not feeling well. She has a fever too."

"I'm on my way." Clarke promised.
"See you soon." the nurse ended the call as Clarke began packing up.

She saved her files to the cloud so she could continue working from home. "I hope you lot can be trusted for the afternoon?"

"Fantasies got to be too much for you?" Harper teased

"My daughter is sick. Ill be working from home for the rest of the day - possibly tomorrow as well."

"Nice excuse." Jasper laughed.

"Call me if you need to." She waved to the group as she headed back to the elevators. The elevator doors opened, but it was not empty as Clarke expected. Lexa was thankfully alone in the elevator. Clarke stepped in and pressed the button to close the doors, not wanting anyone to overhear Lexa's reaction.

"Ahn, I'll have to call you back." Lexa ended the call she'd been on and looked at Clarke. "Hello Clarke."

"Hi Lexa."

"You seem to have a company ID."  

"I do." Clarke agreed.

"I can't be seen dating an employee Clarke."

"I know. But if we keep it quiet, no one here has to know."

"And you planned to keep it quiet from me too?"

"It's not as though I'm using you to get ahead. I'm already the head of your graphic design department - and I'm not looking to move elsewhere. I already have flexible working hours so I can be with Charlotte as much as possible. Your HR department put together one hell of a job offer." Clarke shrugged. "But I thought you be the noble type who won't date an employee, and I like you too much to let a little thing like that get in the way."

"Okay. But no one here can know." Lexa warned.

"Scouts' honour." Clarke saluted.

"We're you ever a scout?"

"No." Clarke laughed. "But I'm still not going to tell anyone."

"Okay." Lexa agreed. "Where are you going?"

"Charlotte is sick, so I'm going to pick her up then work from home."

"Oh. Okay." Lexa nodded.

"Where are you off to?"

"The airport. I have to go to London."

"Does that mean our Wednesday lunch date is cancelled?"
"Postponed." Lexa sighed. "But I will be back Friday morning at the latest, so I will see you Friday night."

"You're sure you won't want to spend that time with your kids after being away?"

"They're coming with me." Lexa explained. "But they'll probably be tired, and I'll owe Denae the weekend off." Lexa thought. "How would you feel about a pyjama party? You, me, all three kids?"

"That sounds excellent." Clarke agreed as the elevator stopped. She darted forward to kiss Lexa one more time before the doors opened. "See you Friday." She grinned before heading into the carpark toward her car.

Lexa shook her head, the blonde was definitely going to be her undoing.
Second date

Chapter Summary

Clexa have their second date.

Chapter Notes

Thanks for being patient, end of June is a crazy busy time for me at work - but it's all over now, so hopefully updates will be a little closer together, but I can't commit to a regular schedule (because I'm a workaholic who often works 12hr days...), but I'll try to update as a little more often.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Lexa: I'm officially back. See you tonight.

Clarke: Leaving the office now. Charlotte and I will be at your place by five.

Lexa: I won't mind if you're early ;)

Clarke: See you soon. xx

Clarke set her phone down and reversed out of her parking space.

Charlotte's school wasn't far from her office, and a few minutes later she was pulling into the parking lot. She headed into the school to collect her daughter. She knew that Charlotte was old enough for Clarke to simply wait in the car, but Clarke liked to check in with Charlotte's teacher.

The bell sounded as Clarke approached the classroom, and she was swarmed by children as they left for the weekend. Clarke stood still as the tide of children rushed past before making her way to Charlotte's classroom.

"Mum!" Charlotte ran to hug her.

"Hey, my angel, did you have a good day?" Charlotte buried herself tighter into Clarke's hold and shook her head. Clarke looked over to Charlotte's teacher.

"Charlotte pushed another child off the playground." Ms Green sighed.

"Charlotte?" Clarke pulled back so that she could look at her daughter.

"He was being mean - he said no one will ever want to be my friend, because even my own parents didn't want me." She sighed.

"That's not true." Clarke promised. "I want you, and I always will."

"I understand that this is a difficult situation, but Charlotte can't keep lashing out like this." Ms Green
"Ms Green is right, baby girl. You can't hurt other kids, even if they're being mean to you. You need to walk away." Clarke said.

"I tried that, but he kept following me. I didn't mean for him to fall off the playground, I just shoved him a bit so I could get away."

"Okay. We'll talk more about this later." Clarke sighed. "Thank you for letting me know Ms Green."

"Have a good weekend Charlotte," The teacher waved as Clarke led her daughter out of the classroom.

"Would you like to look at another school?" Clarke asked. She had decided not to move Charlotte from the school she'd attended prior to her moving in with Clarke, she had hoped that the familiarity would help her.

"I thought you wanted me to stay at this one?"

"It seems like the bullying is getting worse." Clarke said sadly. "I think maybe it's time we looked for a new solution."

"Okay," Charlotte nodded. "I'm sorry that I pushed Murphy." She hesitated for a moment. "You're not going to send me away, are you?"

Clarke stopped and turned Charlotte to face her. "Charlotte, I need you to listen to me, okay?" Clarke began, waiting for the nine-year-old's nod before she went on. "What did we frame and put on the wall at the start of the summer break?"

"My certificate of adoption."

"Exactly. That means that you're my daughter, and I'm your mother. Nothing can ever change that. I promised you that I will never send you away, or let anyone take you from me - you're my girl." She pulled Charlotte into a hug. "I love you."

"I love you too." Charlotte said.

"Now that that's sorted - let's get home." Clarke lifted Charlotte and carried her the rest of the way to the car.

"Charlotte? How would you like to go to a pyjama party?" Clarke asked once they arrived home.

"Are you coming too?"

"Yes."

"Where at?"

"Lexa's house."

"Will there be lots of people?"

"No, just us and Lexa and her twins." Clarke promised.
"Okay." She agreed. Clarke was glad, she had held off telling Charlotte about their plans, until she was sure Lexa would be back in time. She didn't want to disappoint the girl if their plans had fallen through, but she had also worried that Charlotte wouldn't want to go. Charlotte was a definite introvert, she disliked large crowded events, or new people, so after a full week at school it was likely that Charlotte would object to going anywhere at all.

"Go change into your pjs and pack an overnight bag, just in case we stay over."

"Okay." Charlotte headed for her room while Clarke made her way into the kitchen.

Clarke had learned through the numerous texts they'd sent through the week, that Lexa was a health nut. Which is why she had declared herself in charge of snacks for the night. If it were up to Lexa they'd be eating carrot sticks with hummus - which is great at a garden party but not appropriate for a movie night.

Once Charlotte has changed and packed Clarke had finished bagging up their snacks for the night. "Okay, I'm going to get changed, and then we'll get going."

Clarke changed into plaid flannel pants and a long sleeved grey top with a scooped neckline, leaving a hint of cleavage on show. She swept her hair back into a messy bun and gave herself a quick once over in the mirror - she was ready.

She was in the car and on the way to Lexa's when her phone rang. "Hi mum."

"Hi Clarke."

"Hi gran!" Charlotte called.

"Are you driving?" Abby asked.

"Yeah, we're on our way out."

"Oh, I was just calling to see what you girls have planned for the night."

"We're going to a pyjama party." Charlotte said.

"Both of you?"

"Yeah, with mum's new friend."

"And which new friend would that be Clarke?" Clarke could hear the smile in her mother's voice.

"Lexa." Clarke admitted.

"Lexa Woods?"

"Yes."

"Be careful."

"Of a pyjama party?" Charlotte asked.

"We'll be fine mum." Clarke rolled her eyes. "See you on Sunday."

"We're not done discussing this Clarke."
"For now we are."

"Okay, fine. See you Sunday. Have fun at your party."

"Bye gran!" Charlotte called as the call ended. "Mum, why did gran say to be careful of Lexa?"

"Because she is worried that if I date Lexa both of us will get attached, and if we broke up it would hurt both of us." Clarke explained.

"Are you going to date Lexa?"

"Would it be okay with you if I did?" Clarke was glad for the red light that allowed her the time to meet Charlotte's eyes in the rear view mirror.

"I guess so. I like Lexa." Charlotte said. "But I never liked it when my old mum used to date."

"I promise, you're still my number one, okay?" Clarke assured her. "I know I haven't dated since you came to live with me, so this will be an adjustment for you, but I want you to try, okay? If it's too much, you let me know."

"Okay."

"Good girl." Clarke smiled. "Love you."

"I love you too." Charlotte said. She was quiet for a long moment. "Is this your first date with Lexa?"

"No, we had our first date on Monday." Clarke admitted.

"Are you going to marry her?"

Clarke chuckled. "We've known each other a week baby girl - let's not move too fast. For now Lexa and I know that we like each other, it's much too soon to think about marriage."

"Okay." She nodded.

The rest of the drive happened on relative silence. It was only a few minutes later that Clarke was pulling up outside Lexa's home.

"Clarke." Lexa greeted them at the door with a huge smile. "Hi Charlotte, lovely to see you again."

"Hi Lexa." Charlotte said.

Lexa led them inside, stopping first in the kitchen so Clarke could unload the snacks. "How much do you really honk we're going to eat?" She asked, watching as a seemingly never ending store of junk food was unpacked onto the bench.

"Mama!" The twins yelled as they ran into the kitchen. They fete followed a moment later by a young woman who Clarke assumed must be their nanny.

"Their bags are unpacked and the laundry is ready to go when Caris comes through on Monday. Is there anything else you need?" The woman asked Lexa.

"Thanks Denae, that's everything. Enjoy your weekend." Lexa said. "Costia, Aden, say bye to Denae." She prompted.
"Bye." They both ran to hug their nanny before she left.

"See you on Monday." Denae promised. "Be good for your mama." She stood after releasing the twins and with only final wave to her boss, she was gone.

"Alright, come here monkeys." Lexa ordered, scooping the twins into her arms. "I'd like you both to say hello to Clarke and Charlotte."

"Hi!" Costia waved eagerly.

"Hello." Aden said with wide serious eyes.

"Hi." Clarke smiled at the children. "Are you ready for our movie night?"

"Yeah." They both grinned.

"What movie are we going to start with?" She asked. The twins both shrugged adorably. "How about you go through with Charlotte and pick our first film?" They nodded as Lexa set them down.

All three children disappeared into the living room to make their choice. Lexa took advantage of them being alone to pull the blonde closer. "Hello." She smirked before leaning in to kiss Clarke. Clarke allowed herself to get momentarily lost in the kiss, before pulling back.

"Hello yourself." She murmured, her forehead pressed against Lexa's. "How was London?"

"Not as bad as it could have been." The brunette chuckled. "But not worth missing our lunch date for." She pouted.

"We work in the same building, I think we can arrange more lunch dates." Clarke laughed.

"Good." Lexa nodded. "Now let's take this mountain of junk food and watch our first movie."

The twins picked the first moves, Charlotte picked the second. The five of them cuddled together in the best of pillows and blankets. At first Lexa had the twins and Charlotte was beside Clarke, but by the second film Charlotte was between the two adults and Clarke had Costia in her lap.

The credits for the second film rolled and all three children were fast asleep. Clarke carefully manoeuvred Charlotte onto the couch and tucked her in before helping Lexa to get the twins upstairs to their beds.

Costia grumbled incoherently, half waking, as Clarke tucked her in. "Shh, little one, go to sleep." She soothed, brushing her curls from her face. The girl calmed and snuggled into her stuffed lion toy, a sleepy smile on her face.

"Costia likes you." Lexa commented as they made their way downstairs.

"I like her too. Your kids are little sweethearts." Clarke smiled.

"Thanks. It's nice to meet someone who doesn't run away at the mention of twins."

"Yeah, I've had a few dates that fizzled out as soon as I mention Charlotte."

"Their loss is definitely my gain." Lexa grinned, pulling Clarke closer.

"Smooth, Ms Woods." Clarke chuckled as she closed the gap between their lips. They made out like
teenagers left unsupervised, leaning casually against the island bench in the kitchen. It was lazy and comfortable, as if they had all the time in the world. Neither pushed for anything more in that moment, they had an unspoken agreement to go slow, and there was something to be said for a good old fashioned make out session.

Clarke was the first to pull back, resting her forehead against Lexa's, content to simply share her space for a while. Lexa smiled lazily, still a little dazed by the feel of Clarke's lips against her own. The moment stretched comfortably, both content to bask in their own silence and proximity.

"So how was your week?" Lexa asked finally, pulling away from Clarke and going to one of the cupboards. "Hot chocolate?"

"Yes, please." Clarke nodded. "My week was good. Charlotte was sick for a couple of days, so I worked from home Tuesday. Which basically means I was curled up on the couch with Charlotte and my tablet - it was surprisingly productive actually." She chuckled. "Rae came over for dinner on Wednesday, Charlotte adores Raven, so that was a big night."

"Are you ever going to tell me the story of how you met Raven? Both you and Octavia have hinted at it."

"It's best told with a liquor, but I guess hot chocolate will suffice." Clarke laughed. "So I've told you about Charlotte's father, and how he reacted when I told him about my plan to foster Charlotte. What I didn't tell you was that after that initial fight he stormed out, and I followed him." Clarke sighed. "He jumped on his bike and sped off, so I followed in my car. I followed him to an apartment I didn't know he had.

"I knocked on the door and was greeted by Raven." Clarke shook her head. "Raven is equal parts genius and sass, possibly slightly more sass actually."

"And you are?"

"I'm Clarke, can I talk to Finn please?"

"That tells me nothing - who are you?"

"I'm Finn's girlfriend."

"His what?"

"His girlfriend, he stormed off in the middle of a discussion, and I want to finish it."

"Finn! Get your ass over here!" Raven yelled back into the apartment.

"Clarke? What are you doing here?" Finn looked anxiously between the two women.

"I think you should be explaining why there's a pretty blonde claiming to be your girlfriend." Raven demanded.

"Uh, well-" Finn stuttered.

"Who are you?" Clarke asked.

"His fiancé. Raven." She held up her ring as proof that she had the greater claim.
"Has he mentioned his daughter to you?" Clarke asked.

"What daughter?"

"She's been in foster care for several years now."

"You have a kid in the system?" Raven looked hurt. "And you've just left her there?"

"She's seven. Her name is Charlotte." Clarke told Raven. "I thought it would be a good idea if I fostered her - but he didn't take the idea so well."

"Finn, you had better start talking." Raven practically growled.

"Uh, she's not really my kid. I mean technically yes, I'm her father, but I mean I never wanted a kid - and then her mother went off the deep end and she went into the system, and I mean she's not my problem."

Raven pulled her ring off and threw it at his head. "You're a piece of shit. I don't know how you've hidden it so well, but fuck - you're a lying, cheating, lowlife."

"It's not like that - I don't even know the kid."

"Get out." Raven ordered.

"Let me just-"

"No, get out. I'll put your shit in a box and leave it outside tomorrow before I go to work. I do not want to see you again."

"And you can give me back the key for my place." Clarke held out her hand.

"Seriously, you're throwing away everything we built because some bitch fed you a story?" He snarled.

"Finn, give Clarke her key and get the fuck out of our lives." She glared until he did as he was told, walking back toward the elevator like a kicked puppy. "Would you like to come in?"

"Sure." Clarke followed Raven inside.

"Coffee?"

"Aren't you meant to hate me?"

"Nah, you didn't do anything wrong." Raven shrugged. "Fuckboy screwed us both over, it's not as though you knew he was engaged."

"I can't believe he was engaged to you, but didn't tell you about Charlotte."

"I grew up with him, he knew I would react like I did. Fuck." She sighed. "Are you still going to take on his kid?"

"Yeah. I'm due to pick her up the day after tomorrow." Clarke nodded. "I met her yesterday, for the first time. I promised her that she can stay with me forever, if she chooses."

"Good. I'd have to hate you if you were only willing to take her for him." Raven laughed.
"He's the only reason I started the process, but she deserves to have someone on her side." Clarke shrugged. "Plus I've already told my family and they're excited to meet her."

"Please tell me you have one of these huge, perfect TV families?"

"It's not big, but we're close." Clarke shrugged.

"I'm going to like you. I can tell." Raven laughed.

"We ended up talking all night - I called Octavia to bring us beer and pizza, and she stayed too." Clarke smiled at the memory. "It was one of the best nights of my life, and Raven has been around ever since."

"That is quite the story." Lexa conceded.

"I know it's an unconventional way to make friends, but that's just Raven." Clarke laughed.

"She sounds like fun. I look forward to meeting her."

"Awfully cocky there aren't you? Assuming you'll get to meet my friends and family?"

"Well I've already met your mother, and your daughter, and Octavia." Lexa shrugged. "Plus I'm working on the assumption that this is going to keep happening." She gestured between the two of them.

"I'd say that's a pretty safe bet." Clarke smirked.

"Mum?" Charlotte's voice called, she sounded worried.

"I'm here." Clarke responded, going through to the next room.

"I woke up and everyone was gone." Charlotte sniffed, tears threatening to spill.

"I'm sorry baby, I thought you were out for the night, or I would have stayed." Clarke sat on the couch beside her daughter. "You know I'd never leave you. I was just in the next room talking with Lexa." She soothed.

"I'm sorry." Charlotte said.

"You never have to apologise for your anxiety, my love. I'm sorry that I wasn't here." Lexa joined them a minute later, Charlotte had situated herself in her mother's lap, her head pressed to Clarke's chest for the soothing sound of her heartbeat. "Hot chocolate?" Lexa asked, setting three mugs on the side table.

"Thanks." Clarke smiled.

"Sorry I interrupted your conversation." Charlotte told Lexa.

"I'm with your mum on this one kiddo, no apologising for your anxiety - it's not something you can help." She assured her as she handed the girl a mug of hot chocolate.

The warm milky drink, along with Clarke's comforting presence, soothed Charlotte back to sleep a short while later. Clarke refused to leave her a second time, she stayed on the couch chatting with Lexa with the sleeping girl in her lap.
"I should take her home." Clarke said finally, it was already past midnight.

"It's late, you're welcome to the guest room if you want?" Lexa offered.

"Thanks, that's probably a good idea." Clarke conceded - she was far too tired to drive home. She followed Lexa upstairs to one of the guest rooms. "The bathroom is next door, use whatever you need." She said. "And there are extra blankets in there." She gestured to the cupboard.

"Thanks." Clarke laid Charlotte in the bed and pulled the covers up over her before making her way back to Lexa in the doorway. "I had a great time with you and your kids tonight. I'm hoping we can fit in another date soon?"

"Have you got plans tomorrow?" Lexa quirked a brow.

"Nothing concrete." Clarke shrugged.

"How about brunch and a trip to the aquarium - I promised the twins I'd take them."

"Charlotte would love that - she loves cuttlefish."
Lexa grinned. "They're almost as cool as squids." She chuckled.

"You're an adorable nerd." Clarke kissed the still grinning brunette.

"The aquarium has penguins." Lexa continued. "And otters."

"I have a nine year old cuttlefish aficionado, I've been to the aquarium before Lexa."
Clarke couldn't help but smile at Lexa's enthusiasm. "Go get some sleep. I'll see you in the morning."

"Goodnight Clarke." Lexa leaned in for one more goodnight kiss, letting it linger and deepen.

"Goodnight." Clarke husked as she pulled away. She waited until Lexa moved down the hall, pausing at the twins doors, to check on them, before shutting her door.

Clarke wrapped her arms around Charlotte, and was unsurprised when the girl did the same to her a moment later - Charlotte had a tendency to cling like a koala whenever her anxiety flared. "Night my angel." Clarke murmured as she pressed a kiss to her forehead.

"Night mum." Charlotte mumbled, still mostly asleep.

"Love you." Charlotte didn't respond, but Clarke felt her relax fully into her as she drifted further into sleep.

Clarke lay awake as Charlotte slept. She hadn't dated much since Finn. At first she was busy adjusting to being a mother, and then she was more concerned with ensuring Charlotte was cared for than romantic entanglements for herself. But Lexa had come out of nowhere and stolen her heart, the few dates Clarke had been on had fizzled out at the mention of her daughter, but Lexa took Charlotte and her anxiety in her stride. She was clearly a great parent herself, and her twins were easily some of the best kids she'd met.

It was their second date and Clarke was already in too deep. She'd never been the u-haul on the second date type of girl, but with Lexa she saw a future - one she couldn't wait to start.

Chapter End Notes
I'd love to know what you think :) Is there anything you want to see? I'm open to requests.
Chapter Summary

Our ladies take their kids to the aquarium, and Clexa have another lunch date. There's also bonus Abby and a little bit of Raven.

Chapter Notes

Sorry it's been so long, I tend to work twelve hour days so finding time to write is hard. I'll be updating my other story (What my Mother Doesn't Know) in the coming days as well.

They visited one of Clarke's favourite Cafes for brunch, the kids seemed to get on, and although neither woman was ready to admit it out loud; they felt like a family. They all chose variations of waffles and laughed their way through the meal. It was easy, it was comfortable - it felt right.

They arrived at the aquarium while it was still early enough that the crowds hadn't arrived yet. Lexa and Charlotte bonded further over their mutual fascination for all things cephalopod, leaving Clarke with the twins.

Aden and Costia appreciated that the various creatures were pretty, but they weren't as excited as their mother. Or so she thought until they reached the outdoor exhibits that housed the penguins and otters. Costia squealed in joy at the otters, and Aden began waddling around showing off his best impression of a penguin.

Clarke joined in, giggling as she waddled after the four year old, finally catching him and tickling him.

"I'm a penguin too!" Costia declared, waddling past Clarke, clearly wanting the blonde to chase after her as well. Clarke obliged, catching the girl and lifting her up while tickling her. "Stop, I can't breathe!" Costia squealed.

"I can see seals!" Aden called.

"What?" Clarke asked, there hadn't been seals on her last visit.

"Over here!" He tugged on Clarke's arm, pulling her toward a new glass walled enclosure. Exactly as Aden had said, the enclosure housed a Handful of seals, including several juveniles splashing and playing with each other.

"Seals are Aden's favourite animal." Costia's told Clarke earnestly.

"Really? I like seals too." Clarke said.

"Are they your favourite?"
"No, we haven't seen my favourite sea animal yet, I'll tell you when we see them." She promised. "I asked mama for a pet seal, but she said I can't have one." Aden pouted.

"That's probably wise." Clarke nodded. "A pet seal would make your bed all wet - and they stink of fish." She scrunched up her face.

"Oh, yeah." Aden said, brightening considerably. "I wouldn't want a stinky fish room." he agreed.

"What did you find?" Lexa called as she and Charlotte finally left the squids to join them outside.

"Seals!" Aden cheered, running over to Lexa to drag her back the the barrier. "Look mama!" He beamed.

"I see them monkey." Lexa agreed.

"Did you find all the cuttlefish baby girl?" Clarke asked Charlotte.

"Uh-huh. Lexa knows a lot about squids, she's even seen a colossal squid in a museum in New Zealand!"

"A colossal squid? Really?" Clarke raised an eyebrow at Lexa, sure the brunette was joking.

"I did. Te Papa in Wellington has the only complete colossal squid on display in the world - I had to go to Sydney for business, and it's only a three hour flight across the Tasman sea." Lexa shrugged.

"You went to New Zealand just to see a squid?"

"The whole exhibit was fascinating - actually the whole museum was." Lexa nodded.

"Nerd." Clarke laughed before kissing Lexa's cheek, pulling her into a one armed hug.

"Maybe, but I don't hear you complaining." she shrugged.

"Nah, I think you're adorkable." Clarke smirked.

"Clarke, I'm a penguin!" Costia yelled, clearly wanting attention.

"Then I'll have to catch you!" Clarke resumed chasing after the twins as they all waddled like penguins.

"You have a beautiful family." Lexa turned toward the voice that had spoken. An older woman watched Clarke chasing all three children.

"Thank you." Lexa said honestly. She knew it was too soon to properly call themselves a family, but watching the scene before her, she knew that was exactly where they were headed.

The woman gave Lexa another smile. "You're a lucky woman." She said before she walked away.

"That I am." Lexa said to herself.

"If you keep talking to yourself, people will think you're crazy." Clarke told her.

"I was just told by a sweet old lady that we have a beautiful family." Lexa countered.

"That's sweet of her." Clarke nodded. "Alright sea-monsters, it's time for the shark tunnel!" She declared, getting the group moving once again.
"Clarke, I don't like the sharks." Aden said, tugging on Clarke's wrist.

"Why not?"

"They're scary."

"Not these ones, they're all vegetarian sharks, like Bruce. That's why they live in the aquarium."

"Really?"

"Of course." Clarke nodded. "But how about you climb up on my back, and I'll keep you safe, just in case?" She crouched down allowing Aden to climb onto her back.

After the Sharks they went through a tunnel under the ray tank and Clarke proved that she knew all the words to Mr Ray's song from Finding Nemo, much to Costia's delight. While Clarke entertained the twins, Lexa and Charlotte watched the rays, fascinated by their movements.

"You know there's a spot off the coast of Hawaii where you can swim with Manta rays." Lexa told her.

"Have you done it?"

"Not since before the twins were born, but I want to go again." Lexa wanted to promise to take Charlotte with her, but even she knew it was ridiculous to promise a cross continental holiday before she and Clarke had even made anything official.

"When I get better at swimming I want to do that."

"That sounds like an excellent goal. Maybe you could learn to scuba dive?"

"Do you think?"

"Of course - it's lots of fun." Lexa promised.

They left the rays behind and moved into a winding tunnel lined with smaller tanks filled with brightly coloured tropical fish and corals.

"Nemo!" Costia pointed at a tank of clownfish.

"Just down here are my favourite sea animals." Clarke told them. Aden was still on Clarke's back, and showed no signs of wanting to get down. Costia moved from tank the tank, inspecting each one in the hopes of guessing what Clarke's favourite sea creature was.

"Is it this one?" Costia pointed.

"Nope, it's not the lion fish." Clarke shook her head.

"It doesn't look like a lion." Aden said.

"All the spikes look a little bit like a lion's mane." Clarke explained.

"Oh, okay." Aden nodded.

"This one?" Costia pointed to another tank.

"Jellyfish are cool, but no."
"I know which one it is." Charlotte told Costia. "Do you want a hint?"

"Uh-huh." The girl nodded.

"It's around the next corner." Charlotte said.

Costia started to run ahead. "Costia, don't go where we can't see you monkey." Lexa reminded her.

"Sorry mama." She waited for the rest of the group to catch up before rounding the corner. The next portion of the tunnel was lined with seahorses. "Seahorses are your favourite?" She asked Clarke.

"They are, would you like to see my favourite one?"

"Yeah." Costia nodded. She followed Clarke to a tank filled with corals and sea grass.

"In here, it's really good at hiding, can you see it?" Clarke waited as both twins focused on the tank, watching for movement.

"There!" Aden pointed.

"What is it?" Costia asked as it drifted further into view.

"A weedy sea dragon." Clarke told them.

"It's no squid, but I guess it's pretty cute." Lexa conceded.

They watched the various seahorses for a few more minutes before finally finding themselves at the end of the aquarium - and in the gift shop.

"Since you've been so good, you can each pick one thing." Lexa decided.

Aden picked a plush seal toy, one that Clarke was fairly certain he wouldn't be putting down for a while. Costia chose a book about penguins, showing Clarke each page and wanting to know what it said.

"Charlotte, what are you going to pick?" Lexa asked, noting that the nine year old had yet to make her selection.

"I get to pick something too?"

"Of course you do." Lexa nodded as she led her over to a section filled with squids.

"It's so cute!" Charlotte grinned, holding up a plush squid.

"Is that what you'd like?"

Charlotte thought for a moment and nodded, hugging the toy close. "Yes please."

Clarke and Lexa had parked side by side in the car park, they loaded their children into their respective cars before pausing to say goodbye to each other.

"Thanks for coming with us, I had a great time." Lexa said, wrapping Clarke into a hug.

"I had fun too." Clarke smiled. "Let me know when you're free for lunch through the week?"

"I will." Lexa nodded before leaning in to kiss the blonde. "Text me later?"
"I will." Clarke leaned in for one final kiss. "See you later." She smiled.

- 

When Clarke announced to her mother that she was planning to take in a foster child, Abby was conflicted. On one hand, she knew it was an amazing thing that Clarke had agreed to do. On the other hand, Abby worried that Clarke was doing it for all the wrong reasons. When Clarke and Finn broke up though, and Clarke insisted on going ahead, Abby knew her daughter was serious. The first time Abby met Charlotte she understood. Clarke had met the girl a few times before bringing her home, and after their first meeting she had claimed she would eventually adopt the girl.

Abby decided after their first meeting that she wanted to be as involved as her daughter would allow. She also insisted that her weekly brunch with Clarke continue, with Charlotte as well. Abby met Clarke and Charlotte at their favourite cafe on Sunday morning. "Hi." She greeted them, standing to hug each of them as they approached.

"Hi, how are you?" Clarke asked, hugging her mother.

"I'm good, how are you two?"

"Good." Clarke nodded.

"How was your evening with Lexa?"

"We had a lot of fun."

"Did you have fun Charlotte?"

"Yeah, we stayed over and then yesterday we all went to the aquarium!"

"You stayed over?" Abby raised an eyebrow at her daughter.

"It was too late to drive home, so we took up Lexa's offer to sleep in her spare room." Clarke assured her.

"And the aquarium?"

"We had a good time, Lexa is a total nerd, and she and Charlotte had a great time going through all the exhibits, didn't you?"

"Yeah, Lexa knows lots about squids."

"That does sound like fun." Abby nodded. "Things are going well then?" She looked back to Clarke.

"Yes, very well." Clarke agreed.

"So you're going to continue seeing her?"

"Yes." Clarke nodded. "I really like her."

"Just go slow, okay?" Abby cautioned.

"We're both adults, we know what we're getting into." Clarke promised. "Now, can we please talk about something else?"
"Marcus is coming to town this week." Abby said.

"How long for?"

"Wednesday through Saturday evening."

"I want both of you to come over for dinner one night then." Clarke decided.

"I'll let him know."

"Thanks."

They chatted easily through the rest of brunch before taking a walk through a nearby park. Charlotte went to play on the swings while Clarke and Abby sat on a bench to watch her.

"So, tell me about Lexa." Abby said.

"She's amazing. We've been on three dates and I'm halfway in love with her already." Clarke sighed happily. "She is amazing with Charlotte's anxiety, and her kids are the sweetest little things."

"So you're seeing a future with her?"

"More clearly than with anyone I've dated in the past."

"Just promise me you'll be careful, I don't want to see you and Charlotte getting hurt."

"I will be." Clarke nodded. "But I'm pretty sure you're worried for nothing."

"So I can expect to have a daughter-in-law in the not too distant future?"

"That's not outside the realm of possibility." Clarke agreed. "But not for a while."

"Of course not, you've been dating for a week." Abby chuckled.

"Morning Clarke, how was your weekend?" Harper asked as she paused in the doorway to Clarke's office.

"It was fantastic. How was yours?"

"Not bad - had to go for brunch with my in-laws, and that's always trying." She shrugged. "I take it from your goofy smile you saw your lunch-date hottie again?"

"I did."

"Guys - Griff went out with LDH again!" Harper called to the rest of the team. "So, spill." She demanded.

"We were meant to go out Friday night for a proper date, but she had to travel for work last week, so we decided to have a night in rather than a night out. I took Charlotte round to her house and we had a movie night."

"And then?" Monty pressed.

"And then we stayed in her guest room because it got too late, and then on Saturday we took the kids out for breakfast and then to the aquarium." Clarke sighed happily. "She's perfect."
"Lesbians - two dates and they're ready to tie the knot." Niylah joked.

"I'm bisexual - so apply your lesbian stereotypes elsewhere." Clarke responded, sticking her tongue out.

"She sounds great, really - we're happy for you." Harper said.

"Thanks. You should have seen her with Charlotte's anxiety - she was amazing." Clarke continued. "And her kids are the sweetest things."

"Oh god, you've really got it bad." Niylah rolled her eyes.

"I do, I really do." Clarke agreed with a laugh.

"Well, we all want invites to the wedding." Jasper said.

"I'll think about it." Clarke laughed, shaking her head. "Now, get to work, we have deadlines to meet." She dismissed them.

"Slave driver." Jasper grumbled.

Clarke looked at her computer and noticed she had an email from Lexa.

From: Lexa.Woods@trigeda.com
To: Clarke.Griffin@trigedadesigns.com
Subject: For review PRIORITY-medium

Lunch? I'm free from 1-2pm.
xx

Clarke grinned like a fool as she quickly sent a reply. After hitting send, she opened up her review folder to go over her team's current designs. She spent the rest of her morning going through the review designs and either sending them back with notes, or sending them on to the relevant departments for further review. Just before one she locked her computer and left her office.

"Lunch date, again?" Monty smirked.

"Yeah, I'll be back in an hour." She waved as she headed for the elevator. She made sure to stop the elevator in the lobby, just in case her team happened to look at the elevator. - she didn't want them to know that her date was in the building. However when the doors opened in the lobby she was greeted with a surprise.

"Clarke!" The blonde held the elevator as Lexa's twins, accompanied by their nanny, stepped inside.

"Hi Costia, hi Aden." She grinned. "Are you visiting your mama for lunch?"

"I have a doctors appointment - so I have to leave them with Lexa for an hour or two." Denae explained.

"I'm heading up there now - I'll take them up, save you from coming up just to go back down?" Clarke offered.

"You wouldn't mind?"
"Not at all." Clarke assured her. "Come on." She held her hands out for the twins to take hold of.

"Thanks Clarke." Denae smiled as she stepped back off the elevator. "See you later." She waved as the doors closed.

Aden tugged on Clarke's hand until she lifted him up. "Are you tired little one?" She asked him as she settled his head on her shoulder.

"Want cuddles." He mumbled in response.

"Okay," She agreed.

The elevator opened and Clarke made her way to Lexa's office. She was waved through by Lexa's assistant, apparently having the twins with her helped.

"Clarke, monkeys." Lexa greeted all three of them as they arrived. "Where's Denae?"

"I ran into her in the lobby, I offered to bring the twins up to save her having to come up. You don't mind so you?"

"Not at all - I trust you." Lexa shook her head.

"Mama, up!" Costia said, tugging on Lexa's hand. Lexa obliged, lifting Costia to her hip and kissing her cheek.

"How was your morning?" She asked her.

"We read stories and we went to the park." Costia said.

Aden nodded along to his sister's story before letting out a long yawn and snuggling closer to Clarke. Clarke stroked a hand through his hair then smoothed circles into his back. "Tired little one?" He nodded. "Take a nap, I've got you."

Lexa's heart melted slightly at the sight of Aden so comfortable in the blonde's arms. "How about you monkey, are you sleepy too?" She asked Costia.

"Nope, I don't need a nap." Costia insisted.

"Okay, just snuggle then." Lexa nodded, knowing that Costia would fall asleep shortly after her brother. She looks back to Clarke. "Are you busy this Saturday evening?"

"No, what did you have in mind?"

"The hospital fundraising gala, I was wondering if you'd like to be my date?"

"I'd like that. Assuming I can get a sitter for Charlotte."

"If you're having trouble, I'm sure Anya wouldn't mind watching her - she'll have the twins."

"I'll keep that in mind. Thanks."

"Are you hungry?" Lexa's asked.

"We already had lunch." Costia shook her head.

"I know monkey, I was asking Clarke." Lexa chuckled.
"Oh, sorry mama." Costia burried her face in Lexa's shoulder.

"It's okay monkey." She kissed her cheek. "Clarke?"

"Yes, lunch would be great."

"I hope you do t mind - I brought us some leftovers."

"Did you make them?"

"For family lunch yesterday." Lexa nodded.

"Sounds great." Clarke grinned. She checked to make sure that Aden had fallen asleep before setting him down on the couch.

"There's a tub under the couch with blankets." Lexa told her. Clarke pulled the slim storage tub out and grabbed a thick snugly blanket which she tucked around Aden.

"Want to snuggle with your brother?" Lexa asked.

"Nope, wanna snuggle with you." She insisted.

"Okay." Lexa agreed. She handed Clarke a container with a fork before sitting on the couch.

With only some slight manoeuvring of Aden the four of them managed to fit comfortably on the couch, Lexa and Clarke presses side by side as Aden stretched out.

"This is delicious." Clarke complimented as she tasted the meal.

"Thanks, Costia helped with the sauce." Lexa smiled.

"I stirred it." Costia confirmed.

"That's the most important bit. You must be a big help to your mama in the kitchen."

Costia nodded. "Aden is too, he's good at mashing."

"Your mama is lucky to have two excellent kitchen helpers." Clarke assured her.

They ate in comfortable silence, interrupted occasionally by Costia. By the time they had finished eating Costia was almost asleep. Lexa carefully placed her daughter beside Aden, covering them both in the blanket. They cuddled together almost instantly.

"That is the cutest thing I have seen today." Clarke said.

"They've done it since they were babies." Lexa nodded.

"It's sweet." Clarke sighed.

"Can I ask you something?" Lexa asked.

"Sure."

"It's probably too soon for this conversation, but I don't care. My kids adore you, and I'm pretty fond of yours too, So we should probably talk about is, and where this is going." Lexa began. "Where do you see us going?"
"Charlotte keeps asking me when she will see you again, and for the record, I adore your kids too." Clarke began. "So I agree, we should talk about us. Honestly, I see a future here. I think we're building something, and I want it to work."

"Me too." Lexa grinned. "I'll be honest though, I haven't had a proper relationship since Costia died."

Clarke shrugged. "You have four year old twins - I'd be more worried if you had." She said. "My last serious relationship was with Finn - Charlotte's father. And you know how that ended."

"Okay." Lexa nodded, clearly thinking. "So we've both been single for a while. We should probably take things slow."

"You're right." Clarke conceded. "But for the record, if you asked I'd probably elope with you."

"Good to know - I'll keep that in mind." Lexa chuckled.

"Mama, what's a-lope mean?" Costia asked, sitting up.

"It's when someone runs away to get married." Lexa explained.

"You're running away?" Costia scrambled over her brother to climb into Lexa's lap.

"No baby, it was a joke. I'd never run away without you."

"Promise?"

"Promise." Lexa nodded, hugging the four year old tighter.

"I should get back to work, but we will continue this discussion later."

"Okay." Lexa agreed.

"Thanks for lunch." Clarke said as she leaned down to kiss Lexa. Before Clarke pulled back Costia also leaned forward to kiss Clarke on the cheek.

"When will we see you again?" Costia asked, reaching out to hug Clarke.

"Soon little one, maybe on the weekend?"

"I'm sure we can arrange something." Lexa agreed.

"Okay." Costia nodded as she let go of Clarke.

"Talk to you later." Clarke said.

"You have to say goodbye to Aden too!" Costia insisted.

With a smile Clarke brushed Aden's hair aside to leave a kiss on his forehead. "See you later little one." She straightened up once more and with a wave was gone.

Clarke: are you free Saturday night?

Raven: for you, always.

Clarke: can you watch Charlotte for the night?
Raven: hot date?

Clarke: bingo

Clarke's phone rang almost as soon as she hit send.

"Hi Rae."

"Do you actually have a hot date?"

"I do."

"You have three minutes and forty eight seconds until this laser a auto calibrates. tell me everything."

"Is your computer free?"

"Yeah."

"Google Lexa Woods CEO."

"Shit Clarke!" Clarke was pretty sure she heard Raven spit a beverage. "She's a goddess!"

"Yeah, she's amazing." Clarke agreed.

"Where did you find her?"

"That hospital fundraiser I helped out at a couple of weeks ago."

"And it's taken you this long to arrange a date?"

"It'll be our fifth date, assuming we don't have another lunch date this week, which I hope we will."

"Wow, you've got it bad. Five dates in a fortnight, way to not play it cool at all Griffin."

"So is this going to be your first evening date?"

"No, but it will be the second date without the kids."

"She has a kid too?"

"Twins, they're four."

"So these dates, where did you go?"

We've had two lunch dates, one with her kids one without. And then we had a movie night at her place on Friday night, then on Saturday we all went to the aquarium."

"Cute." Raven made a gagging noise. "So it's serious?"

"It is."

"What does Charlotte think?"

"Lexa is her new favourite person."

"You're being careful right?"

"We're being careful." Clarke rolled her eyes.
"My laser is done. But this conversation is not. I'll bring beer and pizza tonight."

"Charlotte will love that." Clarke agreed. "See you tonight."
Clexa go on a proper date

Chapter Summary

Raven and Clarke talk, and Clexa go to the gala for a proper date.

Chapter Notes

Again I'm sorry that updating takes me so long, my life is pretty busy, but don't worry, I'm not abandoning this fic :) I had to chop this chapter in half because it got too long, but that just means that the next one is almost written, so it should be up in a week or so.

Raven arrived, as promised with beer and pizza just before six.

"Rae!" Charlotte ran to hug her favourite aunt as Raven let herself in.

"Hey squish, how's life?" Raven leaned forward to kiss the top of Charlotte's head, returning her hug with her elbows as her hands were mostly full.

"We spent almost the whole weekend with Lexa! She's really nice, and smart, and funny." Charlotte listed. "And mum thinks she's pretty, and they kissed."

"Really?" Raven laughed.

"Uh-huh, I think they're in love with each other, but I asked when they're going to get married and mum said she isn't sure they will." Charlotte continued.

"Clarke?" Raven called as she put everything down on the table.

"Hey Rae." Clarke greeted as she came downstairs.

"Take this, and start talking." Raven handed her a beer.

"Charlotte, baby, what did you say to Aunty Rae?" Clarke laughed as she took the beer and hugged Charlotte to her.

"That I think you love Lexa, because you kissed her, but you said you're not getting married." Charlotte teased as she squirmed out of Clarke's hold.

"Love, I told you that getting married is more complicated than just loving each other." Clarke sighed.

"So you're not denying the love part. Interesting." Raven smirked.

"We will discuss this later, Reyes." Clarke huffed. "Charlotte, can you get plates?"
"It's pizza mum." Charlotte rolled her eyes and grabbed a slice.

"They grow up so fast." Raven gave a false sob, wiping fake tears.

"You're ridiculous." Clarke laughed as she also grabbed a slice.

Once the pizza was gone they relocated to the lounge. Clarke let Charlotte watch one episode of Cosmos before bedtime. It was Charlotte's new favourite series, introduced to her by Raven during one of their movie nights. Raven was sprawled comfortably against one end of the couch while Charlotte was snuggled into Clarke's side at the other.

Once the episode was done Clarke sent Charlotte upstairs to get ready for bed.

"So, now are you going to tell me about your undying love for CEO hot stuff?" Raven demanded.

"It's bad Rae - I've never felt this way about anyone. I've only ever taken to two other people as quickly as I have to her and her kids."

"Who?"

"Charlotte and you, you dork." Clarke shoved Raven.

"I know, I just wanted to hear you say it." Raven grinned. "So is she as serious about all this as you are?"

"She is. We had most of the whole defining the relationship talk in her office earlier."

"Most of it? Please tell me it was because you did the nasty on her desk?"

"No, Costia woke up midway through, and started asking questions."

"You had sex with her kid in the room?"

"What? No! Costia woke up half way through our conversation and it wasn't a conversation we could have with a very inquisitive four year old in the room."

"But you think she's on the same page as you?"

"I do."

"Keep practicing that phrase, I'm guessing you'll need it soon enough." Raven smirked.

"You're impossible. Why do I put up with you?"

"I'm awesome and you know it. Don't even try to deny it." Raven scoffed.

"Is mum telling you all about Lexa?" Charlotte asked as she came back.

"She sure is." Raven nodded.

"Can Raven meet Lexa?"

"Yeah, can she?" Raven turned her best puppy dog eyes on Clarke.

"She will, soon, we can invite Lexa and the twins over sometime to meet her." Clarke agreed.
"This weekend?" Charlotte asked. "We can have another movie night."

"I'll ask Lexa. But it can't be Saturday night."

"Why not?"

"You're sleeping over at Rae's that night."

"I am?"

"You are, I'm going to Gran's hospital gala."

"What's that?"

"A big fancy party." Raven stuck her tongue out. "We will have much more fun." She decided.

"Oh, okay." Charlotte nodded.

"Say goodnight to Rae."

"Can I stay up a little longer?" Charlotte pleaded.

"Nope. Come on." Clarke waited while Charlotte hugged Raven before herding her upstairs to her room.

"Night Squish." Raven smiled as she returned Charlotte's hug.

Clarke got Charlotte into bed and tucked in. "Goodnight, sleep tight." She kissed her forehead.

"Stay til I fall asleep?" She asked.

"I always do." Clarke smiled. She sat on the edge of Charlotte's bed, carding her fingers through the girl's hair to soothe her to sleep.

Despite wanting to stay up later, Charlotte's eyes closed almost immediately and within a few minutes her breathing evened out and she drifted off to sleep. Clarke placed another kiss to her forehead before leaving the room.

Raven was stretched out on the couch when Clarke returned, every bit as comfortable in the blonde's home as she was in her own. "She went down easy?"

"She goes down much easier now." Clarke agreed, Raven had experienced much of Charlotte's early days with Clarke, and the anxiety that Clarke worked hard to help her overcome. "Some days I can almost forget about her anxiety. And then I accidentally do the wrong thing." She shook her head.

"Don't be so hard on yourself. She's light years ahead of where she was even a year ago."

"She fell asleep while we were watching movies at Lexa's the other night. I tucked her up in a blanket and left her on the couch while I helped Lexa take the twins to their beds, and then we went into the kitchen to chat, and she woke up and panicked."

"How did Lexa handle that?"

"She was totally cool, Charlotte apologised and she told her not to apologise for her anxiety. Lexa was a foster kid, I think she understands Charlotte in a way I can't."
"You need to marry this woman. She sounds perfect."

"She might be." Clarke agreed. "I told her I'd elope if she asked me. I was mostly joking, but I probably would."

"Loser. You can elope, but only if you take me with you."

"That's not how eloping works." Clarke laughed.

"Eloping or not, you still need witnesses." Raven reminded her.

"I'll keep that in mind." Clarke nodded.

"So is the sex good?" Raven asked, blunt as ever.

"We haven't gotten there yet." Clarke admitted. "We've only had one date without the kids, and it was over lunch in her office."

"And she didn't fuck you over her desk?"

"It was also our first date - so no." Clarke shook her head. "We've made out like teenagers though, and that was pretty good." She laughed.

"Good." Raven nodded. "Well you'll have to make sure I get to meet her soon, I need to be sure she's good enough for my girls."

"Mum likes her." Clarke said.

"She's met your mother already?"

"She's one of the hospital's biggest donors."

"Well of course your mother likes her then." Raven laughed. "I still need to meet her."

"You will." Clarke promised.

"Good." Raven nodded. "Mind if I sleep on your couch tonight?" She stretched out further, reaching for the blanket draped over the back.

"Yes, I mind." Clarke said, snatching the blanket from her friend. "You can sleep in the guest room like a normal person."

"But your couch is so comfy." Raven pouted.

"No, it's not. And the last time you slept on it, I had to listen to you whinge for two days afterward because you were stiff and achy." Clarke reminded her. "Up, now." She swatted at the brunette until she finally stood and shuffled upstairs to the spare room.

"Night Princess."

"Night Rae."

Saturday arrived quickly. Clarke and Lexa managed to fit in two more lunches through the week, which delighted Clarke's team, as it gave them plenty to gossip about. Raven collected Charlotte in
the early afternoon, leaving Clarke time to get ready. Octavia arrived with Raven, but stayed to help Clarke prepare.

Lexa arrived just before seven to collect her, she was dressed in a floor length black strapless dress that emphasised her slight curves; her hair out and swept over one shoulder. "You look amazing." Clarke smiled as she opened the door.

"As do you." Lexa agreed, looking over the blonde's dress, a royal blue gown with a neckline that was almost too low to be decent and that hugged tight to her curves. "Shall we?" Lexa offered her arm as she walked Clarke to the car.

The gala was held at a hotel in the city, Lexa's driver dropped them off a small way from the red carpet entrance, allowing them to sneak past unnoticed.

Abby was greeting the guests as they arrived. "Ms Woods, lovely to see you again, and Clarke, how unusual to see you here." Abby teased as she pulled her daughter into a hug.

"Please, call me Lexa, Dr Griffin."

"Of course, Lexa, and you should call me Abby." Abby agreed. "I'm impressed you managed to get Clarke to attend - she's avoided these for years." She joked. "I'll come find you both a little later, enjoy the party." She waved them off so she could greet the next arrivals.

"You don't like these events?" Lexa asked worried that she'd forced Clarke into something she didn't enjoy.

"My mother used to drag me to a dozen of these types of events every year, and every time she'd try and set me up with some awful date. Since Charlotte arrived though I have been able to avoid them altogether." Clarke assured Lexa. "It's not the event I dislike, it was the constant set-ups, but my mother didn't set us up, and you're much better than they ever were." She snuck a quick kiss to Lexa's jaw. "If I didn't want to come, I would have told you." She promised.

"Okay, good." Lexa agreed. "I normally drag Anya to these things with me, and she then hangs around the bar all night."

"Not a terrible plan, but mum will never let me hear the end of it if I don't make at least one round of her friends."

"Lead the way." Lexa nodded, more than happy to follow Clarke around the room. The blonde had clearly spotted her first target, leading Lexa through the crowd purposefully.

"Uncle Marcus." Clarke let go of Lexa to hug Marcus.

"Clarke, what a pleasant surprise." Marcus greeted, returning her hug.

"Lex, this is my uncle Marcus - he was my dad's college roommate. Uncle Marcus, this is my girlfriend Lexa."

"Senator Kane, good to see you again." Lexa shook his hand.

"And you Ms Woods." He grinned. "Hang on to this one, she's a catch." He told Lexa with a laugh.

"She certainly is." Lexa agreed, her arm going around Clarke's waist once more.

"I thought mum said you were leaving this afternoon?"
"I had to add another meeting on Monday." He shrugged.

"So you'll be at brunch tomorrow?"

"I wouldn't miss it." He kissed her cheek. "Go enjoy the party, I'll see you later."

"See you later." Clarke waved as Marcus moved off to talk to someone else.

"Senator Kane is your uncle?" Lexa asked.

"Not really, but he was dad's best friend, he made it a priority to keep an eye on us after dad died. He's one of my favourite people." Clarke explained.

They continued their circuit of the ballroom, each stopping to greet people they knew, surprised by how many mutual acquaintances they had. "How have we not met until recently?" Clarke wondered. "We seem to know all the same people."

"Clarke? How nice to see you again." Clarke turned and immediately stiffened in Lexa's hold.

"Mr and Mrs Collins, I didn't know you'd be here." She said through a fake smile.

"Oh we wouldn't miss one of your mother's events." Mrs Collins chuckled. "How have you been?"

"Well Charlotte keeps me busy, but I wouldn't have it any other way - she's such an amazing little girl." Clarke beamed, and Lexa noticed the couple in front of them stiffen.

"And who is your friend?" Mr Collins asked, clearly trying to change the subject.

"This is Lexa, my girlfriend." Clarke said. "Lexa, this is Mr and Mrs Collins - they're Charlotte's biological grandparents."

Lexa guessed from Clarke's forced tone that the Collins were as involved in Charlotte's life as their son was. "Good to meet you. Charlotte is a very special child."

"Yes, well."

"Oh we wouldn't miss one of your mother's events." Mrs Collins chuckled. "How have you been?"

"Well Charlotte keeps me busy, but I wouldn't have it any other way - she's such an amazing little girl." Clarke beamed, and Lexa noticed the couple in front of them stiffen.

"And who is your friend?" Mr Collins asked, clearly trying to change the subject.

"This is Lexa, my girlfriend." Clarke said. "Lexa, this is Mr and Mrs Collins - they're Charlotte's biological grandparents."

Lexa guessed from Clarke's forced tone that the Collins were as involved in Charlotte's life as their son was. "Good to meet you. Charlotte is a very special child."

"Yes, well." Mrs Collins huffed. "Oh, dear, there's the senator, we really should say hello. So nice to see you again Clarke." She quickly steered her husband away into the crowd.

"Well they seemed nice." Lexa joked.

"Aren't they just?" Clarke laughed. "They don't acknowledge Charlotte as being related to them since Finn and Charlotte's mother weren't married." Clarke rolled her eyes.

"Of course." Lexa rolled her eyes. "Luckily for her blood isn't everything." She kissed Clarke's cheek.

"I'm sorry I had to invite them." Abby sighed as she rejoined them. "I hope they weren't too awful?"

"Not as bad as previously." Clarke shrugged.

"Unfortunately they're big donators - and I'm happy to help them part with their money." Abby joked.

"It's okay, they're not harming Charlotte - I can take their ire," Clarke said. "Plus I like making them squirm."

"Abby, this can't be your daughter?" A man in an impeccably tailored suit asked as she approached
"Robert, yes, this is my daughter Clarke." Abby laughed. "Clarke, this is Robert Carlton our newest addition to the board."

"Pleasure to meet you." Clarke shook his outstretched hand. "And this is my girlfriend Lexa."

"Absolutely wonderful to meet you both." He shook both their hands. "Abby, this really is a wonderful evening you've put together - well done."

Clarke and Lexa snuck away leaving Abby to her board member. "Dance with me?" Lexa asked, leading Clarke to the dance floor. Clarke allowed herself to be pulled closer to Lexa as they moved across the floor slowly, swaying in time to the music. They moved around the dance floor together for several songs, just enjoying each other's presence.

As they moved off the dance floor some time later, they found Marcus by the bar and chatted to him until the crowd began to thin. To Clarke, the fact that Lexa and Marcus got on so well was another giant tick in her favour.

"Shall we go?" Clarke suggested once Marcus had made his exit.

"Just as soon as I give your mother my cheque." Lexa agreed.

"Mum, come take Lexa's money so we can go," Clarke said as they approached Abby.

"Clarke Elizabeth Griffin - how much have you had to drink?" Abby sighed, Clarke was clearly tipsy.

"Enough." Clarke shrugged.

"Don't worry, I'll make sure she gets home safe." Lexa promised Abby.

"I'm sure you will." Abby quirked a brow at Lexa. "Thank you for your donation." She took the envelope Lexa offered. "Your support is important to our research."

"I'm glad I can help." Lexa said earnestly.

"Thank you both for coming." Abby said, moving forward to hug Clarke. "See you for brunch tomorrow." She paused and looked to Lexa. "Are you free to join us for brunch?"

"I can make that, if Clarke doesn't mind?"

"Why would I mind getting to spend more time with you?" Clarke asked. "I want you there. The twins too."

"Then we'll be there." Lexa decided. "Thank you for inviting me, Abby."

"No problem. See you both in the morning." She dismissed them so she could say her farewells to the other guests.

Lexa and Clarke headed for the door and down the front steps to where Lexa's driver was waiting for them. He held the door open for each of them. "Where to Ms Woods?"

Lexa paused and looked to Clarke. "Do you want to go home? I don't want to presume-" Lexa trailed off awkwardly.
"Charlotte is sleeping over at Raven's place. We could both go back to my place?"

"I need to be there when the twins wake up in the morning."

"Then let's go back to yours." Clarke agreed. "I am not done with you yet." She leaned forward to place a kiss just below Lexa's ear.

Lexa instructed the driver to take them directly to her house before focusing on Clarke once more. "Clarke, I should tell you, I haven't had sex since before the twins were born." She admitted.

"Okay." Clarke nodded, taking Lexa's hands in her own. "We can go slow, and if you want to wait a little longer, that's fine too - we can just cuddle?"

"I don't want to wait." Lexa assured her. "But thank you for understanding."

By the time they pulled up in Lexa's driveway they were making out like horny teens. They broke apart just long enough to make it from the car to the front door. Clarke pressed Lexa to the door as soon as it closed behind them, sliding her thigh as much between Lexa's as their dresses would allow - enough to make Lexa moan.

"You must be Clarke?" They froze. Clarke flushed bright red and hid her face in Lexa's neck.

"Anya." Lexa sighed.

"I take it you had a good night then?" Anya smirked.

"We did." Lexa agreed. "Clarke, this is my sister Anya. Anya, this is Clarke."

"It's nice to meet you Anya." Clarke said as she turned to face her.

"You too - Lexie won't shut up about you." Anya said, making Lexa blush.

"I don't shut up about you either." Clarke promised Lexa, kissing her cheek.

"Don't let me keep you, by all means, carry on - but perhaps wait until you get to the bedroom?"

"Thanks Ahn." Lexa chuckled before leading Clarke upstairs to her bedroom.

As soon as the door clicked shut behind them Clarke once again pressed Lexa to the door, while the brunette reached around to unzip Clarke's dress.

"Mama?" They froze once more, Clarke holding her dress up. "Clarke?"

"Monkey, why aren't you in your own bed?" Lexa asked while Clarke giggled into her shoulder.

"I missed you." Costia pouted. "Can I sleep in here tonight?"

"It's okay." Clarke murmured.

"Sure baby." Lexa nodded. "Clarke and I just have to change into our pjs first, okay?"

"Okay." She nodded.

Lexa pointed Clarke toward the bathroom and grabbed two sets of pyjamas from the dresser before following. "I'm sorry." Lexa pouted, in a fair imitation of her daughter.

"It's okay, really." Clarke assured her, leaning in to kiss her once more. "I guess tonight just isn't our
night."

"It could be." Lexa said, her eyes flicking toward the shower.

"With your four year old in the next room?" Clarke laughed.

"Clarke, it's been almost five years." Lexa reminded her.

Clarke rolled her eyes. "Get in the shower." She chuckled as Lexa slid out of her dress and then her underwear. Clarke followed her a moment later, pressing her body to Lexa's under the spray of hot water.

Lexa could not stay quiet as Clarke's hands wandered across her skin. The blonde kissed her to swallow as much of the sound as possible before letting one hand make its way to between Lexa's legs.

Lexa bucked her hips, moaning into Clarke's mouth as one finger grazed her clit. "Please." Lexa whimpered as Clarke teased her entrance. She pushed one finger inside, setting a slow rhythm.

Lexa squirmed and whined under Clarke's ministrations until she came with three of Clarke's fingers buried inside her. Clarke did not stop until the brunette's legs buckled under her, forcing Clarke to catch her. She smiled dazedly at the blonde. Clarke shut off the water and carried Lexa over to sit her on the vanity.

"Mmm, you're strong." Lexa murmured.

"Hardly, there's nothing of you." Clarke teased. She dried Lexa with the huge fluffy towel that hung by the shower. Lexa swayed slightly, exhausted after her orgasms.

Clarke dressed Lexa and then herself in the pyjamas on the vanity. Lexa pouted as Clarke dressed herself. "What about you?"

"You can barely stay upright babe. You can do me next time." Clarke chuckled.

"You're sure? I can-" Clarke caught Lexa's flailing hands and kissed her knuckles.

"It's fine." Clarke assured her. "Come on, let's get you to bed."

Clarke opened the door as she half carried Lexa to the bed. "See, I told you! Mama and Clarke!" Costia told her brother, who was barely awake beside her.

"Costia, did you wake your brother?" Clarke asked.

"Yep." Costia nodded. Clarke couldn't help but giggle.

"Okay then, let's all get some sleep." Clarke told them as she helped Lexa into bed. She slid in behind her, wrapping her arms around Lexa. The twins curled up with each other, as close to Lexa's front as possible. One of Clarke's hands snuck under Lexa's tshirt, resting against her skin.

"Goodnight monkeys." Lexa mumbled. "Love you."

"Night mama, love you too." Costia said, Aden already asleep.

"Night Clarke, love you." The words slipped out before Lexa could stop them, she froze, tensing in Clarke's hold.
"I love you too." Clarke chuckled, she kissed Lexa's neck. "Goodnight." Lexa relaxed back into Clarke's hold with a contented sigh. She was asleep within moments. Clarke stayed awake just a little longer, her mind churning with what had just happened - not because she was freaking out, but because she wasn't. She couldn't quite believe that she had told Lexa she loved her, barely three weeks into knowing her - and that she meant it. Finally Clarke let her thoughts go, pulling Lexa a little closer she too succumbed to sleep.

Chapter End Notes

Let me know what you think, I love hearing from you. Come chat to me on tumblr if you want; ineedhappyendings.
Clexa introduce each other to their families. Also they have no idea how to go slow.

Clarke woke with a much smaller body in her hold. Through the night the twins had wedged themselves between her and Lexa. Costia was awake and staring at her.

"Are you awake?" She whispered loudly.

"I'm awake." Clarke chuckled.

"Mama and Aden are still asleep, but I'm awake, and I'm bored."

"We're going out for brunch soon, but how about we go get a drink?" Clarke chuckled as Costia nodded eagerly. "Let's go then." Clarke carried Costia down to the kitchen.

"Stranger mama!" A little girl with long dark braids, and wide eyes yelled from her seat at the table as Clarke and Costia entered the kitchen.

Anya turned from the coffee maker and nodded to Clarke. "That's Aunty Lexa's new girlfriend Clarke. Clarke, this is my daughter Tris." She introduced.

"Nice to meet you Tris." Clarke waved. "Now, what would you like to drink?" She asked Costia.

"Juice." Costia decided. Clarke grabbed a tumbler from the cupboard and poured a small amount of juice.

"Coffee?" Anya offered.

"Thank you." Clarke nodded taking the mug.

"How was the gala?"

"It was fun. We spent most of it chatting to my uncle Marcus - he and Lexa already knew each other, actually we knew a lot of the same people it seemed."
"How long have you been Lexa's girlfriend?" Tris asked.

"About a week I guess?" Clarke answered.

"Do you love Lexa?"

"I do." Clarke nodded. Anya raised an eyebrow and Clarke shrugged, it was the truth.

"Does Lexa know?" Anya asked quietly once Clarke had given Costia her juice and sent her to the table.

"She said it first." Clarke nodded.

"Look Clarke, I love my sister, it's been my job to look out for her since the day she first came to live with us." Anya paused. "She was this underfed, waif of a kid, seven years old with two broken arms and bruising all over - I swore no one would hurt her again." Anya began. "Costia senior was her first love. She promised me she'd never hurt Lexa, and I believed her. I don't blame Costia for the pain she caused - how could I? If she'd had any choice she wouldn't have gone anywhere, but that doesn't change the fact that Lexa was hurt."

"Am I getting the shovel talk?" Clarke interrupted.

"Yes." Anya nodded. "I don't want to see my sister hurt again."

"I have no intention of hurting your sister, I'm head over heels for her, which is crazy because we met less than three weeks ago. I have never felt like this about anyone, including a guy I almost married." She shrugged. "I'm pretty crazy about her kids too, I want this to last."

"I believe that you believe all of those things." Anya said. "But I have to warn you anyway." She shrugged. "Hurt her and I'll make you wish you'd never met." She finished simply.

"Seems fair." Clarke nodded, looking Anya over. "You look familiar."

"You used to frequent The Bunker." Anya shrugged.

"You worked there." Clarke said, placing Anya's face. "I barely get to go anymore." She sighed.

"I own the club." Anya nodded. "You should bring Lexa sometime - she loves to dance - I mean she's terrible, but she loves it." Anya laughed.
"I will definitely do that," Clarke agreed. "I guess that explains why Lincoln is a bouncer there."

"Actually, most of my bouncers are off duty cops." Anya shrugged. "And the few who aren't are old army friends of mine."

"You were in the Army?" Clarke asked.

Anya nodded. "Special Forces, for just over ten years, I got out about seven years ago." Her eyes flicked to Tris. "I was due to deploy to the Middle East when I found out I was pregnant. I tried desk duty for a while, but the idea that I could still be sent over there, have to leave Tris behind - I couldn't do it. I took an honourable discharge instead and opened The Bunker."

Clarke nodded, she understood, but wasn't quite sure what to say.

"Tris and I have to go." Anya announced, changing the subject. "Will you be okay with Costia?"

"Yeah, we'll be fine." Clarke assured her.

"Tell Lexa I'll see her later." Anya pushed off from where she had been leaning on the bench. "Tris, put your bowl in the sink, we have to go." She said to her daughter.

"Is Costia coming with us?"

"Not today - you have soccer." She reminded her. "Come on, or we'll be late." Tris jumped up and did as she was told.

"Bye Costia, bye Clarke." She waved as she followed her mother from the room.

"Clarke?" Costia asked.

"Yes?"

"Where's Charlotte?"

"She slept over with her Aunt Raven, I'll have to pick her up soon."

"Will you come back here?"
"I have to have brunch with my family." Clarke explained.

"Can we come with you?"

"I've already asked your mama." Clarke nodded.

"When do you have to go?"

"Soon."

"We should wake mama and Aden, so they have time to get ready." Costia decided.

"Okay." Clarke laughed. "Let's go." She followed Costia back upstairs to Lexa's bedroom.

Lexa was on her side, Aden curled against her and one arm around him. Costia scrambled into the bed and poked her twin. "Aden."

Clarke sat on the edge of the bed and placed a hand on Lexa's shoulder. "Lexa?" She said.

"Shh sleeping." Lexa mumbled.

"You need to wake up, because Anya's gone, and we have to go to brunch with my mother." Clarke said. "And you agreed to join us last night."

"Brunch with your mother and the senator?" Lexa looked at Clarke through bleary eyes.

"And Rae and Charlotte." Clarke nodded.

"Okay, I'd like that."

"Good, time to get up then." Clarke grinned.

"Why do I have to get out of bed?" Lexa whined.

"Because otherwise I'll have to go without you."

"Nope." Lexa she grabbed at Clarke. "You can stay with me too." She decided.
"At some point I need to collect my daughter from Raven." Clarke reminded Lexa.

"We can't leave Charlotte." Lexa agreed.

"Mama! Clarke said we can go to brunch." Costia said, poking her mother's face.

"And you want to go, do you?"

"I want waffles." Costia grinned.


"Waffles?" Aden blinked awake slowly. "If Cos gets waffles, I want waffles." He mumbled.

"Then we have to get out of bed and go with Clarke."

"I'm up." He insisted, not moving from Lexa's embrace.

"Come on." Lexa scooped him up and deposited him on his feet.

"Can I have chocolate on my waffles?" He asked.

"Sure baby." Lexa nodded. "But only if you go get dressed." She nudged him toward the door. "You too monkey, go get dressed." She told Costia. Alone with Clarke once more Lexa reached out for the blonde. "Thank you for inviting us to brunch with your family."

"You're very welcome. My mum likes you, and you've already got uncle Marcus' approval, and obviously Charlotte's."

"So it's only Raven I need to win over." Lexa finished.

"Exactly. And you've already won Charlotte over which is half the battle with Raven - she's very protective."

"Then I like her already." Lexa grinned. "I'm going to get the twins ready. Help yourself to my closet - unless you're planning on last night's dress again?"
"Thank you." Clarke grinned. She found a pair of leggings and a knit sweater to change into before going to see how the twins and Lexa were getting on.

Lexa was helping Aden to button his shirt as she passed his door. Costia was sitting on her bed waiting for Lexa. "Want some help?" Clarke offered.

"I can't decide what to wear." Costia nodded.

"Okay, what were you thinking?" Clarke asked, examining the few choices that were scattered on the bed around Costia.

"Is it too cold for this?" Costia held up a brightly patterned dress.

"Not if we pair it with tights and an undershirt." Clarke rummaged through the dresser until she found what she was after. She handed everything to Costia before going to her closet to look at shoes.

"Loving your fashion choices, monkey." Lexa said, leaning in the doorway.

"Clarke helped me." Costia beamed, twirling to show off her look.

"How about you get ready while I do Costia's hair?" Clarke asked as she approached Lexa.

"Good idea." Lexa agreed, wrapping Clarke in a hug.

"Lex?" Clarke prompted when Lexa didn't let go.

"Last night, I was blissed out and half asleep, and my I love you just slipped out."

"I figured." Clarke chuckled and pressed a kiss to the corner of her mouth. "If you want to pretend it didn't happen, that's fine, but if you're worried that I only said it to make you feel better, don't. I love you Lexa."

"Really?" Lexa stared at Clarke, her eyes shining.

"I know it's way too soon, and we're meant to be taking things slow, for the kids, but whatever. I love you."

"I love you too." Lexa grinned as she closed the gap between them to kiss Clarke.
"Mama, are we going soon?" Aden asked.

The two women broke apart reluctantly. "Yeah, we're going as soon as I'm dressed." Lexa nodded.

"Go, I'll do Costia's hair." Clarke kissed Lexa's cheek before stepping back so Lexa could leave. "Costia, how would you like your hair?"

"Braids." Costia decided.

"Alright, let's do it." Clarke took her brush and bands from her dresser before sitting on the edge of her bed.

Costia's hair was thicker than her own, but not as thick as Charlotte's, so she was able to work with it with relative ease, quickly working it into two French braids and tying them off. "Beautiful." She said once she had finished.

"Thanks Clarke!" Costia hugged her.

"You're very welcome little one." Clarke kissed the girl's cheek. "Let's go check if your mama is ready."

Aden was sitting on the bed while Lexa muttered to herself and rummaged through her closet. "I think mama needs help too." Costia giggled.

"Lexa?" Clarke asked.

"I don't know what to wear."

Clarke chuckled and looked over her shoulder. "Which is your favourite pair of jeans?"

"These ones." She grabbed a pair of well worn black jeans.

"Okay, good, and how about this sweater with them?"

"It's not too casual?"

"Not at all." Clarke assured her, she sat between the twins and waited while Lexa quickly changed and pulled her hair back into a ponytail.
"Ready?" She asked, looking at Clarke and the children.

"Yeah, let's go." Clarke took the twins by their hands and followed Lexa down to the car.

-  

They met Abby at the same cafe they had gone to for brunch the previous weekend. Raven and Charlotte were already seated, chatting to Abby when they arrived.

"Mum!" Charlotte waved, running to hug Clarke.

"Hey baby girl. Did you have fun with Rae?"

"She took me to the observatory, and we got to use the really big telescope." Charlotte nodded.

"The one that isn't open to the public?" Clarke asked, raising an eyebrow at Raven.

"All above board, I swear - Sinclair owed me a favour." Raven laughed, holding her hands up in surrender.

"Good." Clarke nodded to Raven in mock seriousness - she knew Raven wouldn't put Charlotte in danger really - before turning to her daughter. "Did you see anything interesting in the telescope?"

"We saw a comet, it was really pretty. And we watched the international space station go over." Charlotte was still buzzing with the excitement of it all. "Hi Lexa." Charlotte paused, realising that Lexa was just watching them all.

"Hello Charlotte." She let out a surprised chuckle as Charlotte let go of Clarke to hug her as well.

"Lex, this is Raven. Rae, this is Lexa and her kids Costia and Aden." Clarke introduced.

"I've heard a lot about you - from Charlotte and Clarke." Raven said.

"They've told me a lot about you as well." Lexa agreed with a smile as she shook Raven's hand.

"Mum, I believe you have briefly met the twins, at the fun day?" Clarke said as Abby nodded. "Costia, Aden, this is my mum Abby."
"Hi." They waved.

"Alright, sit up and we'll see about getting you pair some waffles." Clarke told the twins.

"If I sit up do I get waffles too?" Lexa teased.

"Sure, you loser." Clarke laughed, before stealing a quick kiss from the brunette.

"Mum, you shouldn't call people names, if you don't stop Lexa might not want to be our friend anymore." Charlotte admonished, causing Raven to crack up.

"Yeah Clarke." Raven agreed.

Clarke looked to Lexa for support, but the brunette was pouting at her, her eyes wide.
"You're all ridiculous." She muttered. "Lexa knows I don't really think she's a loser, I was teasing her affectionately, like Aunty Rae teases Aunty O." Clarke told her daughter. "Right Lex?"

"Your mum is right." Lexa nodded. "Plus, if I'm a loser, then she'd be even more of a loser since she works for me." Lexa poked her tongue out at Clarke.

"Oooh, Griff, I like this one, keep her." Raven laughed.

"Sorry I'm late - my assistant bombarded me and couldn't be persuaded to leave until I'd read the memo he'd received." Marcus apologised as he approached the table. He quickly rounded the table greeting each of them in turn. "Abby. Good to see you again Raven. Hi Charlotte. Clarke. Lexa, and are these your twins?"

"That's right, this is Costia and Aden." Lexa nodded.

"Lovely to meet you both."

"Marcus is my Uncle." Clarke told the children.

"Hi." Aden smiled.

"So, are you allowed to tell us what you're in town working on?" Clarke asked Marcus.

"A couple of union meetings that no one else would take, and one with the UN." He shrugged. "How is your new tech-buyout going Lexa?"
"They're putting up a bit of a fight over the rebranding, but I think they'll go for it in favour of the capital Trigeda can provide for their projects - some of their projects are truly exciting, even if I can't talk about them just yet."

"They don't like the rebrand?" Clarke asked. "What don't they like?"

"Honestly, I think it's just that they don't want to change. But they have to line up with the rest of Trigeda's brands."

"So it's not my artwork they hate?"

Lexa laughed. "No, your art is great."

"You're still enjoying corporate life then Clarke?" Marcus asked.

"It's not as bad as I thought it would be." Clarke shrugged, before looking back to Lexa. "I do actually like my job - I swear." She joked.

"But you'd rather be an artist, right?" Charlotte said. "But you can't be an artist, because of me."

"Charlotte, I would rather be your mother than anything else in the world, okay? No job is worth more to me than you." Clarke told her daughter seriously.

"I know." Charlotte muttered. "But you liked being an artist."

"I did, and I like being a graphic designer too." Clarke promised her, hugging Charlotte around the shoulders with a smile.

"Charlotte, tell Uncle Marcus what we saw last night." Raven suggested just to change the subject.

"The space station!" Charlotte told him, seemingly forgetting the topic of a moment ago.

"You saw the space station?" Marcus asked.

"Rae took me to the observatory, and her friend let us use the big telescope." She nodded.

"That sounds like a good night - maybe even more fun than the gala that we went to."
"You saw Uncle Marcus at the party last night?" Charlotte asked.

"We sure did." Clarke nodded.

"And what about you two, Costia and Aden, what did you do last night?" Marcus asked.

"Aunty Anya and Tris stayed over, and we watched movies and ate pizza."

"That sounds like fun." He grinned.

"So you have a sister as well as your beefcake of a brother?" Raven asked Lexa.

"You've met Lincoln?" Lexa asked.

"Well, yeah, he is dating Octavia." Raven shrugged. "Is your sister hot too?"

Lexa laughed. "Anya and I were both adopted, you know that right?"

"Don't avoid the questions Woods." Raven continued, pointing at Lexa menacingly.

"Yes, Rae, Anya's hot." Clarke rolled her eyes. "She's the bartender that you like at The Bunker - she owns it."

"You think my sister is hot?" Lexa said.

"I think you're hotter." Clarke shrugged with a grin. "But you can't deny that Anya is attractive."

"I guess." Lexa scrunched up her face. "But she's my sister, so it's weird." Clarke laughed and kissed Lexa's cheek.

"So how long have the two of you been dating?" Marcus asked.

"We met at the hospital fun day fundraiser - the weekend before last, so not long." Clarke admitted.

"You seem serious though?" He said.

"Yeah." Clarke agreed, taking Lexa's hand.
"Are you ready to order?" Their server asked.

"Waffles." Costia grinned.

"I'd say we're ready." Clarke laughed.

The rest of their outing passed with ease, both Clarke and Lexa fount themselves on the receiving end of teasing about their relationship and lesbian stereotypes.

"Are you two busy this afternoon?" Lexa asked as they headed for the parking lot after brunch.

"No official plans." Clarke shook her head.

"Well, I've met your family, want to meet mine?" Lexa said, looking slightly nervous.

"I've known Lincoln for months, and I met Anya this morning - we had a good chat actually." Clarke smirked.

"She gave you the shovel talk, didn't she?" Lexa flushed red.

"She did. You're lucky to have someone looking out for you like that." Clarke assured her.

"As if Raven isn't going to give me the same talk the moment she gets the chance."

"Actually I'm a little surprised she didn't just do it in front of everyone."

"Mum, what's the shovel talk?" Charlotte asked.

"It's a special conversation people have with the loved ones of a person their dating, usually they threaten physical harm in retaliation to any emotional pain you may cause."

"Why would you hurt someone you're dating? Aren't you meant to love them?"

"Exactly." Lexa agreed. "The shovel talk is a silly idea."

"Lexa's sister said she'd hurt you?"
"Only if I hurt Lexa - which I'm not going to." Clarke nodded.

"Oh, okay." Charlotte nodded as she got into the car.

"Anyway - it's Sunday, which means my family are coming for lunch. Would you like to come too?"

"Charlotte? Want to spend the afternoon at Lexa's?"

"Yeah!"

"I'd say we're in then." Clarke grinned.

"Perfect. I'll drive by your house, so you can collect your car?"

"Sounds like a plan. Should I pack an overnight bag too?"

"Please." Lexa leaned in to kiss her girlfriend.

-  

Clarke entertained the children in the lounge room while Lexa prepared lunch for everyone. Charlotte read a book Raven had bought her the night before at the observatory while Clarke and the twins coloured in.

Anya had never made a habit of knocking on Lexa's door, but rather let herself in and yelled to announce her presence.

"Lexie?" She called before noticing Clarke and the children. "Well hello again Clarke. Hi monkeys." She nudged Tris toward the twins.

"Hi Anya." Clarke smiled.

"Hey Ahn." Lexa called from the kitchen.

Clarke made sure that the children were all settled before following Anya through to the kitchen.

"You are in trouble." Lexa informed her sister, brandishing a wooden spoon at her.
"You tattled on me? Not cool disney." Anya shook her head.

"Disney, really?" Clarke pulled a face. "And I did not tattle - Lexa figured it out all on her own."

"It's the blonde hair, blue eyes combined with your general disposition, you're Disney." Anya nodded. "And you should know I've been looking out for you for over twenty years." She told Lexa.

"And I appreciate it, but I'm not seven anymore. I can take care of myself." Lexa rolled her eyes.

"I know." Anya conceded.

"Lexa?" Indra called as she too let herself in.

"Hi Ma." Anya called back.

Indra joined them in the kitchen a moment later, Ontari's sullen and silent at her heels.

"Ma, this is Clarke." Lexa introduced. "Clarke, this is my mother Indra."

"It's a pleasure to meet you." Clarke smiled, reaching out to shake Indra's hand.

"You are dating my daughter, correct?" Indra fixed Clarke with a stern look. Clarke nodded. "Lexa is special, do not hurt her."

"I know she's special." Clarke agreed, stepping back to stand beside Lexa again, wrapping an arm around her. "I'm not going to hurt her - we're both in this for the long haul." She kissed Lexa's cheek.

"And this is Ontari - our foster sister." Lexa added.

"Lovely to meet you, Ontari."

"Hey." Ontari nodded, her scowl still firmly in place.

"How long have you been with Indra?" Clarke asked, taking a genuine interest in the girl.

"Just over a year." The teen shrugged.

"That's good." Clarke nodded.
"I guess." Ontari answered.

"So Clarke, what do you do?" Indra asked.

"Until about six months ago I was a full time artist, now I'm a graphic designer."

"Why the switch?" Anya asked interestedly.

"I needed greater financial stability for Charlotte." Clarke shrugged. "I was doing fairly well as an artist, and we were comfortable, but there was still a risk there."

"You only made the switch a few months ago? How old is Charlotte?" Indra asked.

"She's nine, and she's been with me for two years. As I said, we were comfortable when I was working for myself, it's why I took my time to find a job that I would enjoy, and that gives me the flexibility that I need as a single parent."

"Lexa?" Lincoln called as he wandered through the house.

"Hi Lincoln." She hugged her brother. "No Octavia this week?"

"Her brother is in town." Lincoln shook his head.

"I know, but she agreed to see him?" Clarke asked.

"Yes?" Lincoln nodded.

"That's unexpected." Clarke shrugged. "Octavia's brother is Murcus' chief of staff." Clarke told Lexa.

"Ontari, will you set the table please?" Lexa asked.

"Sure." The teen took the cutlery Lexa offered her and headed for the dining room.

"Mum, can I stay in here with you?" Charlotte asked.

"Of course you can. Did you finish your book?" Clarke asked.
"Yeah, it was good." She grinned.

"I'm glad. Make sure you thank Rae later."

"I will."

"Okay, lunch is ready, let's go." Lexa herded everyone through to the dining room after making them each grab a dish to take through.

"So Clarke, have you ever been married?" Anya asked.

"No. I dated a guy once who I thought I would marry, but it turned out that we had very different priorities." Clarke shook her head.

"Ahn, lay off interrogating Clarke - I'll vouch for her." Lincoln chuckled.

"You spoil all my fun." Anya glared at him.

"It's okay, I don't mind." Clarke laughed.

"Good." Anya grinned. "So this guy you didn't marry, what happened?"

"It's not a story I'm willing to share in front of the children, but I will say that Lexa is aware of what happened." Clarke responded.

"Lex?" Anya looked to her sister.

"Clarke is right, and our priorities in this case do match up." Lexa agreed.

"Fine." Anya sighed, and Clarke suspected that she would be cornered later and interrogated on the subject.

"What about your family?" Anya asked.

"I'm an only child, although Octavia spent so much of our childhood with my family that my family consider as one of us. My mother is a doctor, she's currently the head of Arkadia Women and Children's hospital. And my dad was an engineer with Polaris, he died five years ago."
"And are you and your mother close?"

"We weren't, and especially right after dad died we had a lot of trouble communicating, but we've gotten better in the last couple of years. We have brunch every week now."

"That's good."

"Lexa, Costia and Aden joined us this week, and my uncle is in town on business so it was a larger group this week." Clarke smiled.

"Clarke's uncle is Senator Kane." Lexa added.

"He's a good man." Indra said with a nod. Clarke got the impression that Indra was a woman very sure of her opinions.

"He is." Clarke agreed. "We're not related, but he and my dad were college roommates and stayed lifelong friends, he was always around when I was younger and he's made sure to stay close since dad passed." Clarke went on. She looked across at Charlotte, checking that she was handling the situation. Charlotte was focused on her plate, picking at her lunch. "You okay baby girl?" Charlotte nodded. "Good."

"You said you were an artist?" Ontari spoke up.

"Yes." Clarke nodded. "I love to paint and sketch, but I dabbled in photography as well."

"What do you paint?"

"Landscapes and natural studies. I did a study on botanical art for my MFA as well." She continued. "Do you like art?"

"Yeah." Ontari nodded. "I like ceramics mainly."

"I've got a friend downtown who runs a ceramics studio, I'm sure he could fit you into his next course if you're interested. He usually runs one over the summer break."

"Really?" She looked to Indra hesitantly, still unsure of how to ask for something she wanted.

"I think that sounds like a good idea." Indra nodded. "Thank you Clarke."
"Remind me after we're done eating and I'll call him for you." Clarke smiled.

"Thanks." The teen gave the smallest of smiles.

"No trouble at all." Clarke assured her.

"So, Clarke." Anya began.

"Yes?" Clarke looked over at Lexa's older sister.

"Where are you working as a graphic designer?"

"Clarke is actually the head of Trigeda's graphic design department." Lexa answered.

"You work for Lexa?" Anya asked.

"I do." She nodded. "It makes lunch dates easier for us." She grinned.

"Isn't it a little inappropriate?"

"We met outside of work, and no one in the office besides my assistant knows anything." Lexa shrugged.

"I'm already head of my department, I'm not looking to be promoted anywhere else, I'm not using our relationship to get ahead." Clarke shrugged.

"Mum, do I have to finish all of it?" Charlotte asked, still picking at her lunch.

"No baby, you ate plenty at brunch." Clarke assured her as Charlotte put down her fork.

Lexa noted that everyone had finished so she collected their plates and began ferrying everything back to the kitchen. Clarke immediately stood to help.

"I'm sorry they're interrogating you." Lexa said.

"Don't be, I can handle it." Clarke snuck a kiss from the brunette.

"So Clarke." Anya said as she joined them. "Tell me about this guy you didn't marry."
"He was my father." Charlotte said from the doorway. Clarke opened her arms to her daughter, pulling her closer.

"I was dating this guy, he mentioned having a daughter who was in foster care. He made some vague allusions to wanting to be part of her life. I thought our relationship was headed down a serious path, so I looked into getting Charlotte home with us." Clarke said.

"But he didn't want to be my dad." Charlotte said sadly.

"When I told him, he told me I had to make a choice; him or Charlotte." Clarke hugged her daughter a little closer. "It wasn't a difficult choice. I kicked him out and brought Charlotte home that same week."

"So he was scum." Anya said.

"He had hid it well up to that point. I think it turned out for the best though, I definitely got the better end of the stick. I got Charlotte and Raven, and he got cut off by his parents." Clarke shrugged. "Right baby girl?"

"Uh-huh." Charlotte nodded.

"Are you done now Ahn?"

"Fine." Anya rolled her eyes.

"Clarke!" Costia squealed as she ran into the room, being chased by Tris.

"I've got you, little monkey." Clarke laughed as she swung Costia up onto her hip, out of Tris's reach.

"Tris - take your game outside." Anya warned.

"Yes mama." Tris nodded. "Come on Costia." She waved.

"I wanna stay with Clarke." Costia pouted.

"Come on, I'll come outside too." Clarke encouraged. "Charlotte will play too, right baby?"

"Okay." Charlotte nodded as Clarke herded the children into the yard.
"Where's Aden?" Clarke called back into the house.

"Here he is!" Lexa called as she joined them outside, Aden on her hip.

Clarke and Lexa chased the children around the yard laughing at their delighted screams. Tris scrambled up one of the huge trees, but slipped as she reached for a branch. Clarke spun at the sound of her panic, and caught her before she could hit the ground.

"Tris, are you alright?" Anya called as she crossed the yard toward them.

Clarke set the six year old down and checked her over. "She's okay." Clarke nodded.

"Thank you." Anya sighed.

"No problem." Clarke tousled Tris's hair. "Just be careful when you're climbing, little one."

"I will." Tris promised before running off again.

"Thank you Clarke, really." Anya said again.

"I'd have to be heartless to let her fall. Seriously Anya, don't worry about it." Clarke patted her shoulder before throwing herself back into chasing the children.

They gave up their game when the kids started to flag with exhaustion. "Come on, back inside." Lexa called.

Clarke made it into the kitchen first and began filling tumblers with water for the children, handing them out as they passed her.

Anya stopped Lexa before she could go inside. "She's good for you."

"I know." Lexa nodded, a wide smile splitting her face.

"Good." Anya nodded. "Because you realise she managed to get you outside long enough for the rest of us to do the dishes for once."

"You shouldn't have done them - I would have finished them off later."
"Lexa, this isn't about the dishes. She lets you forget your routine, makes you let loose - you need that." Anya shook her head - of course Lexa would latch on to the wrong end of the idea.

"Oh." Lexa said.

"Mama! Clarke says we all have to drink a glass of water!" Aden said, tugging Lexa's hand.

"Come on Lexie, you've been told." Anya laughed as she followed Lexa into the kitchen.

"Hey Clarke?" Ontari approached the blonde cautiously.

"I said I'd call Mike for you, didn't I?" Clarke smiled as she grabbed her phone. "I'll call him now." She waited as he answered. "Hey Mike, I'm hoping you can do me a favour." She began. "No! That was one time!" She laughed. "I was hoping you still had a space in your summer ceramic course?" She paused. "Thanks! You're the best. Flick me the enrolment details and I'll pass them on to my friend." Clarke shot Ontari a thumbs up. "Talk to you soon." She ended the call before passing her phone to Ontari. "Save your contact info in for me and I'll email you the form."

"Thanks." Ontari smiled, taking Clarke's phone.

"We should go." Indra decided. "It was good to meet you Clarke."

"You too Indra." Clarke promised.

"And thank you again for what you have done for Ontari."

"You're welcome." Clarke nodded.

"Tris, say goodbye, we should go home too." Anya called.

"I guess I'll join the exodus too then." Lincoln joked. "Thanks for lunch Lexa."

"No trouble." She smiled as she hugged her brother.

Clarke followed Lexa to the door to see everyone off. "Well that went well." Clarke sighed as Lexa closed the door.

"They love you." Lexa agreed.
"And all I had to do was get Ontari into a summer program and save Tris's life." She joked.

"From that height? You saved her from a broken bone at worst." Lexa teased.

"Whatever. They love me, and my family love you."

"And I love you." Lexa reminded her.

"And I love you too." Clarke looped her arms around Lexa's shoulders.

"Mama? If you love Clarke, does that mean you have to get married?" Aden asked.

"No, I don't have to marry Clarke." Lexa told him.

"But don't you want to?" Costia asked.

"That's a different question." Lexa laughed. "Do you want me to marry Clarke?"

"Yeah, she's nice and you smile all the time when she's with you." Aden nodded.

"Charlotte?" Lexa asked as she sat on the couch. "Would it be okay with you if your mum and I got married?"

Charlotte looked to Clarke. "It won't be for a while, but that's where we see our relationship heading." Clarke clarified for her daughter.

"Okay." Charlotte nodded.

"Good, it's settled then." Lexa smirked at Clarke. "At some point we'll get married."

"Good to know." Clarke laughed.

The five of them curled up together on the couch to watch movies for the afternoon. Lexa's mind was churning with the idea of marrying Clarke - she knew it was too soon, but she knew it was what she wanted, and Lexa was not good at waiting once she'd made up her mind.

Clarke knew that Lexa was lost in her own thoughts, but waited until they'd put the children to bed before asking her about it. "What's going on in there?" Clarke asked.
"I've learned to trust my instincts, it's how I built Trigeda, it's how I have gotten almost everything in my life." Lexa said. "And I know it's too soon - we met barely three weeks ago - but I'm not a patient person once I've decided I want something." Lexa sighed.

"Okay, so we step things up a little." Clarke agreed. "We both know where we're headed, but we also both know that we can't just skip ahead, we have to think of the kids here."

"I know - but patience isn't my strong suit." Lexa whined.

"Which is why we're going to step things up subtly." Clarke assured her.

"How?"

"Well, first thing, cohabitation." Clarke suggested.

"Would you and Charlotte move in here? Or should we look for somewhere larger?"

"Lexa, this place has four spare bedrooms. How much more room do you think we need?" Clarke laughed.

"I know, but Costia and I built this place - I didn't want to assume that we'd just stay here."

"I love your house - and I don't feel like I have to compete with Costia." Clarke promised. "I would love to make this our home."

"We can redecorate - I want you to feel at home here, Charlotte too."

"Honestly, there's not a lot of change, other than adding some new art, and my reading chair." Clarke shrugged. "But I'd love to redecorate the kids' rooms."

"They'd like that." Lexa agreed.

"You haven't seen Charlotte's room at my place, have you?"

"Not yet."

"When she first came to live with me, and she was afraid I'd send her back all the time, I was constantly searching for things that would prove to her that I was committed. We spent two weeks decorating her room, every wall is covered with a mural, we've added to it since, but it helped us
bond." Clarke flicked through her phone looking for the pictures she'd uploaded to Facebook.

"This is amazing." Lexa grinned.

"Do you think the twins would like something similar?"

"Definitely." She nodded.

"I have some time off lined up for the summer break, it could be a good project to keep us busy."

"When is your time off?" Lexa asked.

"The second week through to the end of the break, why?"

"I take the twins up to the coast each year - you and Charlotte should come too."

"I like the sound of that." Clarke agreed.

"Good." Lexa grinned. "Because it would suck without you."

"You're sweet." Clarke chuckled.

"So when are you and Charlotte moving in?" Lexa asked, switching the subject back.

"We're going to do it slowly, starting with one or two nights a week, and step it up over the weeks until we just stop staying anywhere else." Clarke decided, kissing Lexa on the cheek.

"So that means more sleepovers?"

"Yes, more sleepovers." Clarke laughed.

"Yay." Lexa cheered quietly.

"Loser." Clarke teased.

"You love me anyway."
"I do." Clarke agreed. "Come on, let's go to bed."

"Clarke it's half past nine, I don't remember the last time I went to sleep before midnight." Lexa said.

"Lexa, I said let's go to bed - I didn't say anything about sleep."

"Oh-oh! Yes! Let's go to bed." Lexa grinned eagerly as Clarke dragged her upstairs."
In the final weeks of the school year Clarke resumed her research of other schools in their area, looking for one better suited to Charlotte's needs. She looked at a couple of local private schools, but she worried that Charlotte would feel too out of place there. She knew the girl was self conscious about her history, something that created a feedback loop in her anxiety.

"Have you looked at the school Tris goes to?" Lexa suggested over lunch, while Clarke continued to browse the glossy brochures each of the schools had given her.

"Which one is that?" Clarke spread the brochures so Lexa could see them properly.

"You don't have the brochure." Lexa confirmed. "I'm sending the twins there next year, it's a charter school." She grabbed Clarke's tablet from the table and brought up the website. "The classes are small, they have a zero tolerance bullying policy, the curriculum is varied. Tris loves it."

"It looks amazing." Clarke agreed as she scrolled through the site. "I'm going to call them." She grabbed her phone to make the call.

She was able to set up an interview for that afternoon with the principal. She left Lexa, with a promise to see her for dinner, and headed to collect Charlotte.

Clarke signed Charlotte out early at the office before making her way down to the classroom. Ms Green was in the middle of a lesson when Clarke knocked.

"Ms Griffin?"
"Hi, I need to collect Charlotte, she has an appointment." Clarke said.

"Of course." The teacher nodded. "Charlotte, collect your things." She said as she turned back to the class.

Charlotte grabbed her things and made her way over to Clarke. "Why'd you pick me up early?" Charlotte asked once they were out in the hall.

"We're going to look at a new school." Clarke said.

"So I don't have to come back here?"

"You'll finish out the term here, but I want you at a new school next year." Clarke told her.

"What if I don't like the new school?" Charlotte asked, she'd looked at some schools with Clarke when she'd first moved in with her, but in the end they'd decided against moving her.

"I think you will." Clarke assured her. "But if you hate it, we'll keep looking."

The school wasn't far from Lexa's home, closer to the waterfront. It was smaller than her current school, which suited Charlotte.

"It looks nice." Charlotte said as they pulled up, her eyes widening as she took in the red brick building and neatly manicured grounds.

"It does." Clarke agreed. "Let's go take a look around." Clarke took Charlotte's hand and led her into the school.

"Ms Griffin?" A tall woman with frizzy hair greeted them.

"Hi, yes." Clarke nodded. "I'm Clarke, and this is my daughter Charlotte."

"Lovely to meet you both, I'm Luna, the principal here."

"Hi." Charlotte said quietly.

"Let's have a quick chat in my office, then we can take a look around the campus, okay?" Luna pointed them into her office. "So, welcome to Harbourside." She smiled as she took a seat across from the couch that Clarke and Charlotte sat on.
"Thank you."

"What has brought you here today?"

"Charlotte isn't happy at her current school, and I've been looking into alternative options. My partner suggested I look into your school as this is where her niece goes, and where she has enrolled her children for next year."

"Who's her niece?" Luna asked interestedly.

"Tris Woods?"

"Lovely." Luna smiled. "Do you like soccer, like Tris?"

"I like science." Charlotte shook her head. "I either want to be a marine biologist, or an astrophysicist, although Aunty Rae says I should be an engineer."

"Wow, well a lot of hard work will get you to any of those goals." Luna promised her.

"Charlotte's aunt is an engineer with NASA, so encourages her scientific interests. My mother does too actually - she's a surgeon." Clarke explained.

"You're not scientifically minded?"

"I find it interesting, but not to the same extent. I'm more interested by art." Clarke shrugged.

"Charlotte, would you mind filling in some worksheets for me, while I chat to your mother?"

"Sure." Charlotte shrugged. She followed Luna into the next room.

Luna returned a few minutes later, taking her seat once more. "So what about her current school does Charlotte not like?" Clarke liked that she went straight to the point.

"It's too big, and she's been having some problems with a couple of the other kids picking on her." Clarke explained. "Charlotte has severe anxiety. We've been working on it over the last two years, and she's made huge strides, but she'd benefit from a smaller school environment."

"Is she seeing a psychologist?"
“Yes, one my mother recommended.”

“Do we know her triggers?”

“Abandonment is a big one, she doesn’t like to find herself alone. There are certain scents that trigger flashbacks for her as well. Sudden movements and noises can cause problems, although she’s doing much better with those.” Clarke said. “She likes routine, it’s why the scientific method appeals to her.”

“Okay, you mentioned flashbacks, is there something that happened to her?”

“I don’t know the full story, I’ve read her files, and I’ve had certain snippets from her psychologist as well.” Clarke sighed. “Charlotte came to me two years ago out of the foster system. I know she was with her birth mother until she was five, and I know she was in and out of too many foster homes. When she first came home with me she was almost non verbal - she slept under her bed and wouldn’t eat. It broke my heart to see.”

“Does she have any contact with her biological family?”

“No. Her birth mother passed away whilst Charlotte was still in foster care, and her father was more than happy to relinquish his rights so that I could adopt her.”

“And does she connect with your family?”

“She does. She has my two best friends as aunts, and she adores my mother. She has really come out of her shell with them, and now with Lexa and the twins, she’s learning to be a kid again.”

“That’s good.” Luna nodded. “You clearly love her.”

“From our first meeting, I knew she was meant to be mine.” Clarke nodded. “We’ve had our rough days, but she’s worth it.”

“And do you have other children?”

“Not technically, but we’ve been spending more time with Lexa and her children. They get on well, which helps.”

“And how has Charlotte reacted to you dating?”

“She loves Lexa, and I’ve made sure to discus with her what is going on. She remembers her birth
mother dating as a bad thing, and so she was a little nervous at first that I wouldn't want her around anymore, but we got past that pretty fast."

"Good." Luna nodded. "It sounds like she's made great strides toward healing, and I think that Harbourside will be the perfect place for Charlotte to continue that journey." Luna said. "Would you like to know more about the school?"

"Please," Clarke nodded.

"We focus on academic extension, we want our students to be challenged, and with smaller class sizes, and the best teachers, our students test as being one to two years ahead of their age group. We also allow for a certain amount of independent and self directed study. Perhaps most importantly though we consider the school as a community, and to that end we encourage all of our parents to get involved, share their skill sets with the students. Is that something you'd be willing to do?"

"I'd have to negotiate some time with work, but yes, I'd be happy to help out." Clarke nodded.

"Is there a particular subject area you'd like to help with?"

"Art? I have an MFA, and until a few months ago it was my career." Clarke shrugged. "I'm a graphic designer now, so not too huge a leap."

"That sounds perfect." Luna smiled. "Would you like a tour of the campus?"

"Yes please." Clarke nodded.

They stopped in the doorway of the room next door where Charlotte was finishing the last of the worksheets. "How'd you go?" Luna asked as she flicked through the sheets.

"I finished most of it." Charlotte shrugged.

"Great." Luna nodded. "I'm taking your mum on a tour of the school, would you like to come?"

"Okay." Charlotte nodded as she took Clarke's hand once more.

Luna showed them through the various classrooms, being sure to introduce Clarke to their art teacher, and stopping for Charlotte to meet her class for the coming year.

"What do you think?" Clarke asked as they made their way back into the office at the end of the tour.
"I like it." Charlotte was grinning.

"We can take care of your enrolment now, if you'd like?" Luna offered.

"Let's." Clarke nodded as she followed Luna inside.

Clarke filled in the forms while Luna ran Charlotte through some more tests. "All done." Clarke said as she handed the completed forms back to Luna.

"I'll get these processed, but here is your welcome pack, with all the information you'll need for next school year." Luna handed a folder over the desk. "In there you've got my contact, as well as Charlotte's teacher Mr Carter, just in case you have any questions."

"Thank you."

"You're very welcome. We can't wait to have you both as part of our school community next year." Luna said as she walked them back out to their car.

"Happy?" Clarke asked as she pulled out into the street.

"It looks really good." Charlotte nodded.

"And with Tris and the twins there next year you'll have a few people you know."

"Yeah." Charlotte agreed. "Are we going home?"

"We're having dinner with Lexa." Clarke shook her head.

"Okay." Charlotte nodded. "We spend a lot of time with Lexa now."

"We do." Clarke agreed. "Is that a problem?" She glanced back at Charlotte in the mirror.

"I guess not." Charlotte shrugged.

"Baby girl, talk to me, what's up?" Clarke said.

"Nothing."

Clarke pulled into a parking lot and located a small cafe. "Come on." She led Charlotte to an empty table.

"Hi, what can I get you?" A waitress was with them almost instantly.

"Your largest vanilla milkshake and your most chocolatey dessert, the more syrup and ice cream the better." Clarke told her.
“Coming right up.” She nodded. “Are you sharing both?”

“Yes please.” Clarke said. She waited for the waitress to leave before focusing back on Charlotte. “What’s going on in your head?” She asked.

“Are we moving in with Lexa?”

“We are. But slowly.”

“I never know where we're sleeping each night.”

Clarke sighed. “I've messed up your routine, haven't I?” Charlotte nodded. “I'm sorry baby girl.” She reached out for Charlotte's hand. “I'm going to talk to Lexa and we'll work out a schedule, so you know what's happening.”

“Here we are, one large vanilla milkshake and hot mud cake, with cream, ice cream and chocolate syrup.” The waitress smiled as she set them down. “Enjoy.”

“Thank you.” Clarke said.

“Why do we have to move slowly?” Charlotte asked.

“You'd be okay with us just moving in with Lexa?”

“I like Lexa, she's nice to me, and she never gets angry when I get scared. And I like the twins, they're silly and fun.” Charlotte nodded.

“Okay, how about I talk to Lexa and over the summer we'll properly move in.” She suggested.


“That's okay.” Clarke assured her. “If anything else is bothering you, just tell me, you know I don't get mad.”

“I know.” Charlotte agreed.

“Good girl.” Clarke smiled. “Now let's eat.” She laughed as she scooped up a mess of cake ice cream and syrup and ate it.

Lexa was still at work when they arrived at her house, but Denae let Clarke in with a relieved smile, more than used to the blonde after several weeks or her and Lexa dating. "Costia's sick." She said by way of explanation.

"Clarke!” Costia tried to sit up on the couch, but couldn't quite manage it.

"Hey little one." Clarke smiled.

"Will you snuggle with me?” she asked, her bottom lip pouted and trembling.

"Of course I will." Clarke agreed, shedding her bag. "Charlotte, I think Tris and Aden are out the
back, do you want to go play?"

"Okay." Charlotte agreed.

"Thanks baby girl." Clarke said as she sat on the couch with Costia.

Denae paused in the doorway between the living room and the kitchen. "Are you all good in here?" She checked.

"We're good." Clarke promised as she waved Denae out.

"Thank you." She sighed before heading out to the yard to supervise the other children.

"Clarke, I feel bad." Costia whined.

"I know baby." Clarke sympathised. "Do you think you could sleep?" Costia shook her head.

"Okay, come here." Clarke lifted the girl into her lap to rest in her head against her chest. "Close your eyes. Can you hear my heart?" Costia nodded. "Just listen, and keep your eyes closed, you'll fall asleep soon." She promised. Clarke kept one arm wrapped firmly around Costia, keeping her in place, and let the other alternate between rubbing her back, and carding through her hair, soothing her into sleep.

Clarke: (pic67) You have a sick little monkey.

Lexa: Is she ok? I'll come home now.

Clarke: She's run down and a little feverish. She's fine for now, but Denae was a bit overwhelmed when I got here.

Lexa: I'll be home in half an hour.

Clarke: She's out like a light. Take your time.

Lexa: Thank you for being there :)

Clarke: No trouble, glad to help xx

Lexa: I'll get takeout and we can have a cuddle pile.

Clarke: I love the way you think.
Lexa: Any requests?

Clarke: Chinese xx

Lexa: Sounds good. See you soon. Xx

Clarke: Love you <3 xx

Lexa: Love you too. Give my little monkey a kiss for me. Xxx

Clarke: (pic68)

By the time Lexa made it home Aden had joined Clarke on the lounge. Tris and Charlotte had come inside when Denae had to leave for the day, but rather than snuggling they were focused on building something with Lego.

"Hey my loves." Lexa greeted as she entered. She paused when she noticed Tris was still there. "Tris, where's your mama?" The six year old shrugged. Lexa took the food through to the kitchen before calling her sister.

"Wha?" Anya's voice sounded thick with sleep.

"Ahn? Are you alright?"

"I feel like death." Anya moaned.

"You too? Costia has picked up some bug as well."

"What time is it?"

"Around six. Do you want Tris to stay the night?"

"You can drop her round, if you can't handle her." Anya said.

"What if I come and pick you up, you can sleep off whatever plague you've got in the spare room?" Lexa offered.

"I'll be okay." Anya insisted. "You've already got your hands full with Costia sick, and looking after
"Tris for me."

"Costia is curled up fast asleep on Clarke, along with Aden, and Charlotte and Tris are entertaining each other. I'm going to serve up dinner, then I'll come get you."

"Thanks Lexie."

"Go back to sleep, I'll see you soon." Lexa hung up and began serving up the takeout. "Charlotte, Aden and Tris, up at the table please." Lexa instructed as she delivered their bowls to the table. She made her way over to Clarke and Costia on the couch. "How are my girls doing?"

"She's still out." Clarke said as Lexa reached out to brush the hair from Costia's face.

"Anya is sick too. I'm worried that she's too sick to be on her own, so I'm going to pick her up and bring her here."

"You're going now?"

"Will you be okay with the kids? The rest of them are eating."

"We'll be fine." Clarke agreed. "Go get Anya."

"Thanks." Lexa leaned forward to kiss Clarke quickly before grabbing her keys and heading out once more. "See you soon."

Costia grumbled in her sleep and wriggled a little further into Clarke's hold. "Shh, I've got you little one." Clarke soothed, rubbing aimless patterns into her back sending her further into sleep.

"Mum?" Charlotte called.

"Yes baby?"

"My tummy hurts." She said as she made her way over to the couch.

"Okay, come snuggle with us then." She opened one arm for Charlotte to nestle into her side. Clarke craned her neck to see the other two children. "How are you two doing?"

"Okay." Tris shrugged.
"Good." Clarke nodded.

"Where'd Lexa go?" Tris asked.

"To collect your mama." Clarke said. "Sounds like she's unwell too, so she's going to stay here."

"Will she be okay?"

"I'm sure she'll be fine, she just needs time to rest so her body can heal."

"Okay." Tris nodded.

Aden crawled up to snuggle with Clarke once he'd finished his dinner, Tris went back to her Lego creation.

Lexa arrived home not long after, she half carried Anya into the house, taking her directly to the downstairs guest room. "Mama!" Tris followed Anya and Lexa.

Lexa tucked Anya into bed, Tris immediately curled up beside her. "Thank you little monster." Anya mumbled as she put an arm around her daughter.

"Get some rest." Lexa instructed. "Tris, we're going to watch a movie, you can join us if you want?"

"I wanna stay with mama." She shook her head.

"That's fine. Come get me if you need anything, okay?"

"I will, thanks Aunty Lexa."

Lexa closed the door so as not to disturb Anya while she tried to sleep. She made her way back to the lounge, picking up Aden so that she could take his place at Clarke's side. "How is everyone?"

"It looks like Charlotte is coming down with it too. So far Aden is still holding out though." Clarke sighed.

"Have you eaten yet?" Lexa asked.

"No, I'll eat later." Clarke said.
"Okay." Lexa agreed. "Netflix?"

"Sounds good." Clarke agreed.

They spent the rest of the evening curled together on the couch, watching a random animated film on Netflix. All three children were asleep by the time the film ended. Lexa carried Aden upstairs first, then came back for Costia so Clarke could carry Charlotte up.

"I figured all three can crash in with us, that way we can monitor the girls' fevers through the night."

Lexa said as they reached the landing.

"Good idea, I'm going to put Charlotte down then go eat. Did you eat?"

"Not yet." Lexa sighed as they set the girls in bed.

"Come on, the kids will be fine for ten minutes while we eat." Clarke dragged Lexa back down to the kitchen. They ate the remaining takeout straight from the containers before cleaning the kitchen and heading back to bed. There was nothing romantic about Chinese take over the sink, but there was a certain comfort in the action, it felt familiar and easy, it was less like dating and more like cohabitation. Lexa loved it.

"Lexa!" Tris called from the doorway of Lexa's bedroom, waking both Lexa and Clarke.

"What's up?" Lexa asked as she carefully manoeuvred herself of the the tangle of bodies in the bed.

Tris was crying and covered in vomit. "Mama threw upon me." She sobbed.

"Okay, let's clean you up." Lexa steered the crying child into the bathroom.

"Want help?" Clarke asked from the doorway while Lexa ran the shower.

"I need to check on Anya." She sighed.

"You take Tris, I'll check on Anya." Clarke decided.

Anya was passed out in her own vomit - it was a flashback to her wilder days, cleaning up after the house parties she and Octavia would throw in college. Clarke checked that she was still breathing
before trying to wake her.

"Wha?" Anya mumbled.

"Anya, wake up." Clarke said.

"What's going on?"

"You threw up in your sleep." Clarke told her. "Poor Tris came and woke us up, covered in your vomit."

"Is she okay?" Anya pushed herself upright, looking for Tris.

"Lexa is cleaning her up, she'll be fine, but it scared her."

"It's all over the bed." Anya realised.

"Go shower, I'll change the bed."

"Thanks Clarke." Anya sighed as she levered herself out of bed. “Lexa hit the jackpot with you - I’m not sure I’d be willing to clean up your vomit.” She joked.

“Well now you owe me one.” Clarke laughed. “I used to work as an orderly when my mother’s ward was short staffed - I’ve seen it all.” She explained as she ushered Anya out of the room.

“How is she?” Lexa asked.

“I sent her to shower, you may want to check on her.” Clarke said as she carried the bundled sheets through to the laundry. Lexa had a change of pyjamas in her hand which she took into the bathroom for her sister.

Within fifteen minutes Anya was back in bed with a strategically placed bucket. Tris decided - at Lexa’s urging - that it would be safest not to sleep with her mother for the rest of the night. She offered her bed, full though it was, or either of the twins’ rooms - Tris joined the pile of bodies in Lexa’s bed.

“You know, I’m not sure there’s room for us in here now.” Clarke laughed.

“Sure there is.” Lexa laughed as she lifted the covers at the foot of the bed. “It’s a good thing that my bed is a king.” She stretched out along the bottom of the bed. “Plenty of space.”

“Just watch out for Charlotte’s feet - she’s a kicker.” Clarke shook her head as lex a wriggled back to make space for the blonde as well.
“Mama.” Aden poked Lexa awake. “Your ‘larm is going off.”

“Turn it off, monkey - we’re all staying home today.” Lexa groaned.

“I wanna go to preschool.” Aden whined.

“Nope, we’re quarantined.” Lexa told him. “Pass me my phone?” She held out her hand waiting for him to grab her phone.

With a groan Lexa pushed herself upright and opened her phone to her contacts. She called Denae.

“Hi Lexa.”

“Morning, I’m quarantining the house - you can have the day off.”

“Are you sure?”

“The kids and Anya all have the same virus, I don’t want you to get it too.” Lexa told her.

“Can I drop anything off for you?”

“We’ll be okay.” Lexa said. “I’ll let you know how we’re doing at the end of the day, you might just get a couple of days off.”

“Okay, call me if there’s anything I can do to help.” Denae told her.

“Thanks, have a good day.” Lexa hung up and laid back down, snuggling up to Clarke once more.

“Mama, I'm hungry.” Aden said, poking her shoulder.

“I'll feed him.” Clarke offered, more awake than Lexa.

“Are you sure?”

“Of course.” Clarke smiled. “Get yourself up there and snuggle with the kids, I'll bring some breakfast back upstairs for you.” She leaned down to kiss Lexa's forehead. “You feel warm, are you coming down with it too?”

“I just feel wiped out.” Lexa sighed.

“Okay, get some rest, I'll check on Anya while I'm downstairs.”

“Thanks love.”

“Can I come too?” Tris asked.

“You want to check on your mama too?” Clarke asked as she stood, she lifted Aden to her hip and held a hand out to Tris. “Come on.”

Clarke sent Aden and Tris into the bathroom to wash up while she checked on Anya. Anya was still propped up, with the bucket. “Anya?” Clarke nudged her, but she wouldn't wake. She was breathing, but her pulse was slower than Clarke thought it should be.

“Is she awake?” Tris asked from the doorway.

“No, she's still sleeping.”
“Can I stay with her while you make breakfast?”

“Sure.” Clarke agreed. She made her way back out to the kitchen and grabbed her phone from her bag.

Clarke: Are you busy?
Abby: Just leaving the hospital, what's up?
Clarke: can you stop by Lexa's house on your way home? Her sister is sick, and I'm a little worried.
Abby: Sure, see you soon.

Clarke sent Lexa's address to her mother, glad that Lexa's house wasn't too far out of her way.

“Alright my little sous chef, what would you like for breakfast?”

“Cereal, please.”

“Coming right up.” Clarke poured Aden's favourite cereal into a bowl and added milk. “You eat that, I'm going to make banana smoothies for everyone else.”

Clarke found all the makings for the perfect banana smoothies and set about making a large batch. She made herself some toast and coffee at the same time. While she waited for the blender to finish she called her office to let the team know she wouldn't be in for a day or two, and to call her if needed.

Abby arrived just as Clarke finished her coffee. “What's up?” She asked as Clarke showed her in.

“Costia wasn't feeling well yesterday, and Charlotte started coming down with the same thing last night. Lexa got home and realised that Tris was still here, and when she called Anya she sounded awful - Lexa was worried about leaving her alone so she brought her here last night.” Clarke began.

“I don't think Anya had what the kids have, last night she was throwing up in her sleep, and this morning she won't wake up at all.” She led Abby through to Anya's bedside.

“Who's she?” Tris asked.

“This is my mother, Abby. She's a doctor.” Clarke explained.

“Is my mama okay?” She asked Abby.

“That's what I'm here to find out sweetie.” Abby promised.

Abby checked Anya over carefully. “She should be in the hospital.” She decided.


“Why?” Lexa whined.

“Because Anya's gotten worse, she needs to go to hospital.”

“I should go with her.” Lexa decided as she pushed herself up out of bed. “Maybe I should call Denae to come over after all.”

“I've already called my team and let them know I won't be in, I'll stay with the kids.” Clarke assured
her.

“You'll be okay with all four?”

“I will be.”

“Thanks love.”

“No trouble.” She left Lexa to get ready and went back downstairs.

Tris had climbed back into bed beside Anya, her little arms wrapped tightly around her mother. “She said Mama has to go to hospital.” Tris told Clarke.

“She's going to be fine little one.” Clarke promised.

“I have to go with her.” Tris insisted.

“Not today monster, you can stay here with Clarke.” Lexa told her.

“No.” Tris was seconds away from crying, Clarke knelt down to pull her into a hug.

“It's okay little one, your mama is going to be just fine. But the hospital is a boring place for kids.” Clarke explained.

“Mama, wake up, tell Aunty Lexa I can come with you.” Tris broke free of Clarke's hug and tried to wake her mother again.

Lexa lifted her and took her out of the room. “Monster, you can't come with us today, I'm sorry.” She told her. “I promise, as soon as she wakes up I will have her call you, okay?”

“And until then we can have a snuggle day on the couch.” Clarke told her, taking the six year old from Lexa's hold.

“I wanna stay with mama.” Tris sobbed.

“I know baby, but you can't today.” Clarke soothed as she carried Tris back to the kitchen. “Here, drink this for me.” She handed her a cup filled with banana smoothie.

“Charlotte and Costia are both fine. Try to get them to eat, but their fevers have broken, so they should be fine in a day or two.” Abby told Clarke as she came back downstairs.

“Thanks mum.” Clarke sighed. “And Anya?”

“You're right, it's not what the girls have, but other than that I'm not sure. I'm going to ride back to the hospital with her, and make sure they're set up properly.”

“Coffee?” Clarke offered, knowing her mother would need the caffeine.

“Thanks.” Abby nodded.

Clarke found two travel mugs and filled them with coffee to suit Abby and Lexa's tastes respectively. She found a travel cup with a straw for Lexa's smoothie as well.

“I'll wait outside for the ambulance, thanks again for the coffee.”

“Thank you for coming over.”
“Tris and Aden, let's get you both upstairs and dressed please.” Clarke ushered both children upstairs. She paused in the doorway to Anya's room. “There's coffee and a smoothie on the bench for you - you'll need both.” She told Lexa.

“You're a star.” Lexa told her.

“Mum is waiting outside for the ambulance, it should be here in a minute or two, I'm going to keep Tris upstairs until you leave - I don't want her to freak out at the sight of her mama on a stretcher.”

“Thank you. I'll let you know as soon as we know what's going on.” Lexa kissed Clarke's cheek.

“No trouble. Mum's going to ride with you and get you set up at the hospital.” Clarke continued. “If you need anything, just call me.”

“I will.”

“Do you want me to let Lincoln know what's going on?”

“Would you mind? Actually if he has the day off, he might be able to give you a hand with Tris.” Lexa suggested. “I'll call Indra.”

“Okay, keep us up to date, I'll see you later.” She gave Lexa one last kiss before heading upstairs to supervise the children.

Clarke waited until she was sure the ambulance had left before she carried first Costia and then Charlotte down to the lounge. She wrapped them in blankets then went to fetch the last of the smoothie she'd made. Aden curled up with Costia while Charlotte dozed. Tris followed Clarke, holding her hand.

Clarke: Hey Linc, Anya is sick, she and Lex are at the hospital. Not sure what's going on yet, but she's going to be fine.

Lincoln: Where are the kids?

Clarke: With me at Lex's. Tris is my own personal shadow today. Cos and Charlotte are both sick too.

Lincoln: I'm off shift at 2, I'll come give you a hand then.

Clarke: That'd be great.

Lincoln: Tell Lexi to let me know if anything changes.

Clarke: Will do. See you this afternoon. :)

Clarke spent the morning on the couch, the twins curled together on one side, Charlotte on the other and Tris on her lap.

“Is my mama okay?” She asked periodically.

“She's still sleeping, but she's going to be okay.” Clarke promised for what felt like the hundredth time that morning.

Lexa called around lunchtime, Clarke was in the kitchen preparing lunch for the children. “Hey, what's going on?”
“She's awake, but she's going to be in her a few days, they want to keep an eye on her.” Lexa sounded relieved.

“Do they know what’s wrong?” Clarke asked, looking around to make sure that the children were all out of earshot.

“She's pregnant, but at this stage they're classing it as high risk.” Lexa sighed. “I honestly don't understand most of what they're saying.”

“Ask the doctors.” Clarke said.

“I wasn't sure it was my place, Anya was nodding along like she understood everything, but she's gotta be in shock right?”

“Talk to her doctor outside.” Clarke suggested.

“Good idea.”

“How is she taking the news?”

“I'm not sure it's sunk in just yet. She's exhausted, literally - they're treating her for exhaustion. She needs help, Denae takes Tris when she can, but maybe it's time Anya hired a nanny of her own.”

“I know you want to find a solution, but this isn't a quick fix, there isn't an easy answer here.” Clarke reminded her. “Anya is a big girl, you need to let her come up with her own solution, I know it's hard, and I'm not saying you can't help, only that she needs to be the lead here.”

“You're right.” Lexa agreed.

“Is she up to talking? Tris has barely let go of me all morning, she's so worried.”

“She'd try to talk to Tris even if she were intubated.” Lexa chuckled. “Let me head back in there.”

“Sure.” Clarke chuckled. “Tris, your mama is on the phone.” She called.

Tris bounded over the back of the couch, almost losing traction of the hardwood floor as she sprinted to Clarke, hands out for the phone.

“Here's Tris.” She told Lexa. “It's Lexa, she's just getting your mama.” She handed the six year old the phone.

“Mama!” Tris squealed a moment later. “Are you okay? When will you come back?” Clarke watched her face fall when she realised Anya would be in hospital for a few days. “Can I visit you?” She sniffed, her eyes filling with tears. “I'll be quiet, I'll just snuggle with you.” She pleaded. Clarke's heart broke, she loved how close Tris and Anya were. “But I miss you.” Tris sobbed, her tears spilling over. Clarke knelt to hug the little girl, soothing her as best she could. “I love you mama.” Tris handed the phone back to Clarke. “Aunty Lexa wants to talk to you again.”

“Hey.” Clarke answered, lifting Tris as she stood once more.

“They're both crying aren't they?” Lexa said.

“Yeah.” Clarke nodded. “Is she up for a visit? It might help both of them.”

“Yeah, I agree.”
“Lincoln is coming over in a little while, I'll send him across, and I'll stay with our three.”

“Our three, I like the sound of that.” Lexa couldn't help pointing out Clarke's phrasing.

“Me too love.” Clarke smiled. “I need to get these children fed, you go back to Anya, let us know if anything changes, okay?”

“Will do. Talk to you soon love.” Lexa ended the call.

Clarke put her phone down on the table. “Your uncle Lincoln is going to come by after lunch, and he'll take you to see your mama, okay?”

“How long away is that?” Tris asked.

“It's just after one o'clock now, and he finishes work at two, so a little more than an hour.” Clarke answered.

“But mama said I can't go visit.”

“Lexa said you can.” Clarke said. “I think that your cuddles will help her feel better.”

“She says I give the bestest ones.” Tris nodded proudly.

“I'm sure you do.” Clarke grinned, glad her tears had subsided. “Would you like to help me with lunch?”

-

Anya was released from hospital three days later, under strict orders to rest for at least another week. She agreed to stay at Lexa's until she was back to her usual self.

Lexa was working late, and so Clarke was running the show at home, she had just gotten all four children in their respective beds before heading down to the kitchen. Anya was sitting at the bench nursing a mug of steaming herbal tea.

“Thanks for getting Tris to bed for me too.” Anya smiled.

“No trouble. How are you feeling tonight?”

“Terrified.” Anya answered frankly. “I've never really thought about a second kid, I mean I adore Tris, and there wasn't even a moment of hesitation for me when I decided to keep her, but I always figured she'd be it for me.”

“And now?”

“And now I want another baby so fucking badly.” She laughed. “I don't know what I'll do if I lose it.”

“Don't think like that.” Clarke said. “You're on the mend, and so far bub is hanging in there too, you're going to be just fine.”

“I'm going to be alone forever.” Anya sighed. “Tris is finally old enough that I was considering dating again, but now I'm going to have a newborn - that's a lot of fucking baggage.” She looked up at Clarke. “There's this woman, she comes into the bar fairly often, she's hot and she flirts a lot, we've had sex a couple of times - I was thinking of asking her on an actual date, but that seems unwise.”
“I say go for it. Ask her out.” Clarke shrugged. “See if your priorities match up, if they don’t, then that’s it, but if they do maybe she’d be open to dating even though you’re pregnant.”

“I highly doubt I’m going to find someone willing to u-haul quite as quickly as you and my sister have seemed to.” Anya teased.

“Can you blame us?” Clarke laughed. “We’re essentially the perfect couple.”

“I’m telling Lexa you said that.” Anya shook her head.

“Telling me what?” Lexa asked as she joined them. “Hey love.” She greeted Clarke with a kiss.

“That we’re basically the perfect couple.” Clarke grinned as she broke away from Lexa’s lips. “How was your meeting?”

“Too long.” She sighed.

“There’s leftovers in the microwave for you.”

“You’re an angel. Thank you.” Lexa went in for another kiss before heading to the microwave.

“You remember I’m in the room, right?” Anya groaned.

“Anya? When did you get here?” Clarke teased.

“Ugh, I’m going to bed.” Anya rolled her eyes. She put her mug in the sink as she left the room.

“She seems in better spirits.” Lexa commented.

“Yeah, we had a pretty good chat.” Clarke agreed. “She seems to be coming round to the idea of a second kid.”

“I knew she would.” Lexa shrugged. “I always knew I wanted kids, Costia was the same, but Anya was less decided on the issue. I think she may have thought about it once she was in a stable long-term relationship, but then she found out she was pregnant with Tris, and it was like something just clicked for her. As soon as she knew she was pregnant, she also knew that she wanted a kid.” She explained.

“That’s pretty much what she told me tonight.” Clarke said. “She hadn’t thought about a second kid, until now. She’s terrified of losing it though.”

“I get that.” Lexa nodded and Clarke hummed in agreement. “Hey Clarke?” She asked after a moment of silence.

“Yeah?”

“Would you want another kid?”

“Maybe? In a few years.” She answered. “Would you?”

“Maybe one more, I like even numbers.” She admitted.

“Dork.” Clarke laughed.

“Would you mind if we adopted?”
“Not in the slightest.” Clarke shook her head.

“I've always liked the idea of giving a kid what I got.” Lexa continued.

“Babe, you don't need to sell me on adoption, I'm already a fan.” Clarke chuckled.

“Right. It was the only thing Costia and I didn't agree on, I wanted to adopt to begin with, but she wanted to do the whole pregnancy thing.” Lexa said.

“Well, we will have to find something else to disagree on.” Clarke said. “Because I have no desire to be pregnant.”

“We don't need to look for something to disagree on though, right?”

“We can't agree on everything, that's very unhealthy.” Clarke joked.

“I guess.” Lexa laughed.

“So Charlotte talked to me the other day about our sleepover schedule.” Clarke changed the subject.

“She did?”

“She told me that not knowing which house we're sleeping at is stressing her out.”

“Does that mean no more sleepovers?”

“I was actually thinking the opposite.” Clarke shrugged. “Maybe we should just move in. Over the summer break?”

“Or this weekend?” Lexa suggested. “I can have movers at your house first thing tomorrow.”

“Slow down babe. The summer is only two weeks away.” Clarke shook her head. “We have enough of our stuff here now anyway, I wasn't planning on going home, we'll just officially move in during the first week of summer.”

“I like that plan.” Lexa agreed as she leaned in to kiss Clarke with a smile.

“Figured you would.” Clarke said.

-  

Clarke was used to being the first one up in the morning, she would get breakfast ready before waking the rest of the house to start the day. Anya was a morning person as well, but since coming home from the hospital she hadn't felt up to much, and so had been sleeping later than usual.

Clarke was slicing fruit, chatting to Raven with her phone wedged between her shoulder and her ear, when Anya shuffled into the room and set the kettle boiling. “Hey Rae, I've gotta go - talk to you later?”

“Do you have that book of mine?” Raven asked.

“Yeah, it's in my handbag.”

“Any chance I can swing by and grab it back on my way to work? You're done with it right?”

“Yeah, no worries, I'll text you the address - see you in a bit.”
She quickly texted Raven before she put her phone down and turned to Anya. “Good morning.”

“You could have continued your conversation.” Anya told her.

“It's okay.” Clarke shrugged. “How're you feeling this morning?”

“More like myself.”

“Good to hear, can I get you anything to eat?”

“I'm not an invalid.” She chuckled. “And I know Lexa's kitchen as well as you do.”

“Yeah, but you're sitting and I'm already prepping breakfasts.”

“Mama?” Tris called out.

“I'm in the kitchen.” Anya replied.

Tris had been reluctant to let Anya out of her sight since she'd left the hospital, refusing even to go to school. She trotted into the room and made a beeline for her mother at the table. “Morning mama.”

“Morning baby girl.”

“Are you feeling better?”

“A little bit better.” Anya nodded. She still hadn't discussed the fact that she was pregnant with Tris - it was a topic she wanted to avoid until she was no longer on the high-risk category. She had no idea how Tris would take the news. “So much better actually, that I think you should go back to school today.”

“I still want to stay with you.”

“I'm going to take several naps throughout the day, but I'll pick you up from school, I promise.”

“You'll be okay?”

“I'll be okay.” Anya nodded.

“Here we go Tris.” Clarke set a bowl of cereal and a side plate of sliced fruit in front of Tris.

“Thank you Clarke.”

“You're welcome munchkin.” Clarke tousled her hair.

The kettle clicked off as it boiled and Clarke went to work fixing Anya's tea and toast. She set it down along with a bowl of fruit salad and Anya grumbled about Clarke's fruit obsession.

Clarke chuckled as she made her way upstairs to wake Lexa and the children. “Charlotte, time to get up baby.”

“I feel bad.” She whined.

“Still? Okay, stay in bed and I'll come check on you in a bit.” She checked her forehead for fever, but it seemed to have abated.

Aden had come down with the same bug just as Costia had gotten over it. She stopped by his room to find him shivering from fever. “Oh monkey, still no good?” She sympathised as she scooped him
out of bed. Aden didn't respond other than to shake his head and nestle closer to Clarke. She carried him through to Lexa who had started showing symptoms through the night.

“Lex? How are you feeling babe?”

“Hrrrrmmugh.” Lexa grumbled, her face buried in her pillow.

“Okay, I'll call your office.” Clarke chuckled. “Here, special delivery.” She lifted the duvet to lay Aden down beside her.

“Monkey.” She mumbled, wrapping an arm around her son.

“Mama.”

“A true meeting of the minds.” Clarke joked as she made her way back to Costia's room.

Costia was awake and flipping idly through one of her favourite picture books. “Hi Clarke.”

“Morning little one. How are you feeling?”

“Good.” She beamed.

“Tris is going back to school today, would you like to as well? Or would you rather stay home?”

“Is Aden going?”

“No Aden is in bed with mama - he's not better yet.”

“I can't go to preschool without Aden.” She sook her head.

Alright. You can stay and help me, since everyone else is sick.” Clarke agreed. “Want some breakfast?”

“Will you make me a smoothie?”

“You bet.” Clarke held out a hand for Costia.

They had just reached the kitchen when there was a knock on the door. “I'll get it.” Anya called as she headed for the front.

“Clarke?” Anya called. “There's a barfly here asking for your handbag.”

Clarke laughed. “That's just Rae. She wants the sci-fi novel on the side table, you can let her in - she's harmless.” Clarke made her way toward the door but stopped as she watched Raven standing a little too close to Anya. The engineer had her arms around Anya's neck in a hug that was more familiar than anything Clarke would have guessed.

“You two know each other?”

“Barfly.” Raven held up her hands in surrender. “We chat.”

“Oh, she's not the woman from the bar you were talking about, right?”

Anya let out a startled bark of laughter as she recalled their conversation from a few nights previously. “No, Raven and I are friends.” Anya shook her head.

Raven caught on quick. “You think we're sleeping together?” She pulled a face at Clarke. “Yeah
“Okay, sure.” Clarke shook her head at the two of them. “Here's your book Rae.”

“Thanks princess.” Raven was still mostly focused on Anya as she took the book from Clarke. “Are you sure you're okay?”

“Yeah, I'll be fine.” Anya nodded.

“Coffee later?” Raven suggested, I'm off work at three.”

“I promised Tris I'd get her from school today.” Anya sighed.

“So bring your munchkin, I'm not terrible with kids - just ask princess here.” Raven shrugged.

“I'll let you know how I'm feeling.” Anya promised.

“Mama? Who's that?” Tris asked as she wandered in looking for her mother.

“That's Charlotte's Aunty Rae.” Clarke told the six year old. “She's also a friend of your mama's.”

“You must be Tris, I've heard a lot about you.” Raven let go of Anya to properly greet Tris. “You can call me Rae.”

“Hi.” Tris was suddenly shy, unused to being greeted in such a way.

“I was just saying to you mama that we should go out for coffee this afternoon, but I bet you'd rather milkshakes and ice cream, right?”

“Yeah!” Tris agreed instantly. “We can go, right mama?” She turned her wide puppy-dog eyes on her mother.

Anya, whose brain was thoroughly cooking in pregnancy hormones, found herself agreeing before she could stop herself. “Of course monster.” She promised. “Now go finish getting ready for school.”

Tris ran to do as she'd been told, and Raven straightened up once more. “What's got you so worked up?”

“I'm pregnant.” Anya whispered. “Tris doesn't know yet, so please stay quiet.”

“Of course.” Raven nodded. “We'll take the munchkin to the park later, and you can tell me all about it.”

“Thanks. Clarke and Lexa have probably heard enough of my rambling by now.” She chuckled.

“Never - we're here for you.” Clarke promised, startling the two women who had forgotten she was there. “But a fresh perspective might be good for you.”

“And my perspective is the freshest around.” Raven smirked.

“That was terrible, go away.” Clarke laughed.

“Please, you love me.” Raven rolled her eyes.

“I do, but you will be late for work if you don't leave now. Those rockets don't build themselves.”
Clarke made a shooing motion.

“Yeah, yeah.” Raven flapped a hand at Clarke to silence her. “See you later Anya - call me if you need anything.” She said as she headed out.

“Where on earth did you find her?” Anya laughed.

“We almost married the same guy.” Clarke shrugged. “Come on, I'll tell you the story while Tris gets ready for school.”

Chapter End Notes

Feel free to come talk to me on tumblr I'm ineedhappyendings. Or leave me a comment - let me know what you think.
Beach House - Part 1

Chapter Summary

Clarke and Lexa head to Lexa's beach house, which has some interesting neighbours.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Clarke was in her office, finally back after two weeks in and out with sick children - and a sick Lexa too. She had managed to do some of her work from home, but between four children, Lexa and Anya, she hadn't had much time to work at all.

“Clarke?” Niylah called from the doorway of her office.

“Yeah?” Clarke barely looked up from her design.

“We have that presentation for Heda Publications in five, did you want to sit in?”

“I do.” She nodded. “Did you adjust the font?”

“Ms Woods preferred the original.” She shook her head.

“She did?” Clarke was sure she'd talked Lexa into the new font. “When?”

“Last week.”

“Update the font, she changed her mind a few days ago.” Clarke ordered.

“But that will take at least an hour to reformat - the presentation is in five minutes.”

“Get it done, I'll stall the presentation.” Clarke shrugged. She stood up and quickly tied her hair back, she grabbed her blazer as she headed for their meeting room. “You have twenty minutes.” She called over her shoulder.

The heads of the publishing house were already there, along with Lexa. “Good morning, hello Ms Woods.” Clarke nodded to them. “You will have to excuse my team, a slight IT hiccup has put us a little behind schedule this morning.” She apologised. “So if I may, I'd like to begin by talking you through what it is we've changed.” She opened her tablet on the desk in front of them to her original sketches.

Niylah came in fifteen minutes later, quickly loading the files on the projector so they could inspect them properly. Clarke talked the executives through the updated designs, allowing Niylah input where necessary.

“Thank you Clarke.” Lexa nodded. She turned to the other two executives. “What do you think of the rebrand?”

“I'm still not sold on the font.” One of them shrugged. “I think the first one felt more authentic.”

“The updated font will take you out of niche publication and into mainstream, this font will help to
attract a more literary market.” Clarke assured them. “That is where you're planning on taking the brand, correct?”

“Clarke is right.” Lexa nodded. “She has successfully handled the rebranding of six other brands in the time she has been with the company. I trust her judgement, and that of her team.”

“Thank you, Ms Woods.” Clarke smiled.

The meeting was wrapping up, Lexa and her executives were talking, when they were interrupted by Clarke's phone. She checked the screen and saw ‘Denae’ flashing.

“I am so sorry, but I have to take this, it's my partner’s nanny.” Clarke excused herself.

“Of course, I think we're done anyway.” Lexa nodded.

“Hi.” Clarke answered her phone.

“Clarke, thank god, I have been trying to get through to Lexa all morning, but she's in meetings.”

“I know, I was just in one.”

“Oh, sorry.”

“It's okay, she understood when I said it was you.” Clarke said. “What's up?”

“I'm coming down with something, and I was hoping I could drop the twins off with you for the afternoon?”

(Of course.)

“See you in a few minutes.” She hung up.

Clarke turned back toward the meeting room to find Lexa standing, waiting, for her.

“Could I have a moment of your time?” Lexa asked, gesturing to Clarke's office.

“Of course.” Clarke agreed.

“I'll be right with you.” Lexa told the others as she followed Clarke onto her office.

As soon as the door closed Lexa's whole demeanour shifted. “Hey Charlotte.” She smiled, noticing the girl reading on Clarke's couch. Lexa and Denae had both assured Charlotte that she was welcome to stay with the twins until Clarke finished work for the summer break, but she preferred to stay close to Clarke.

“Hi Lexa.” Charlotte looked up with a wide smile.

“What's up?” Clarke asked, wondering why Lexa wanted to see her.

“I just needed a quick break, Titus drives me up the wall.” She shrugged. “Also, I wanted to see what Denae wanted.”

“She's sick, couldn't get through to you, so asked if she could drop the twins off here.”

“What did you say?” Lexa asked.

“What do you think? Of course they can hang out down here for the afternoon. I'm sure Charlotte
won't mind the company, right baby girl?” Charlotte shook her head.

“Thank you.” Lexa leaned forward to kiss Clarke.

“No problem. See you at home.” Clarke hugged Lexa, making the most of the minute they could steal.

Once leaving Clarke’s office, Lexa took the executives back upstairs for a further strategy meeting, leaving Clarke with her team once more. “Thanks Niyah.” She said. “I'm sorry to have rushed you, I didn't realise the change hadn't been made.”

“It's okay, I agree with you, I think it's a better font.”

“Is everyone free for lunch? I think it's time for a team gathering.” Clarke called to the floor.

“We're in!” Monty and Jasper cheered as they made their way out of their cubicles.

“Let's order in, and eat here though.” Harper suggested, hobbling out on crutches.

“What have you done this time?” Clarke rolled her eyes at the accident prone designer.

“Tibial fracture, I came off my bike riding down Mt Weather on the weekend.” She shrugged. “Could have been worse.”

“Very true, it could have been your arm.” Munroe teased as she joined them. “What are we ordering?”

Clarke's phone rang, interrupting the discussion. “Never mind, Clarke's going to run off with her girlfriend, and leave us.” Miller joked.

“It's not her.” Clarke shook her head. “It's her nanny.” She answered. “Are you here Denae?”

“Gustus just pulled up.” She said. “See you in a few.”

Clarke put her phone away and turned her attention back to her team. “So looks like you get to meet the twins.” She told them.

“Good thing that call came through after Ms Woods left - could you imagine her face if there were three kids in your office.” Niyah joked.

“Ms Woods is a parent, she understands.” Clarke shrugged.

“I always forget that.”

The elevator opened on Denae and the twins, the Nanny looked exhausted, despite the two perfectly well behaved children at her sides. “Clarke!” The children yelled as they charged the blonde.

“Hey monkeys.” She caught them both in a hug, kissing their cheeks.

“Thank you Clarke.” Denae sighed with relief, she handed Clarke a backpack with the twins’ essentials.

“It’s no problem.” Clarke waved her off. “Go get some rest.”

“Bye monkeys.”
“Bye.” The twins waved as Denae got back in the elevator.

“Alright, let's put your stuff away.” Clarke held out her hands once more for the four year olds and led them into her office.

“Charlotte!” Costia let go of Clarke to run to Charlotte.

“Hi.” Charlotte moved so Costia could join her on the couch.

“We were just about to order lunch, are you hungry?”

“We haven't had lunch yet.” Aden told her.

“Oh, would you like to help choose what we order?” She asked him.

“Yes please.” She lifted him up as he nodded.

“Coming girls?” Clarke looked back to see Charlotte and Costia following her. “Team, meet the twins, this is Aden, and Costia. Monkeys, this is the senior graphic design and branding team, we have Niylah, Monty, Jasper, Miller, Munroe, and Harper.” Clarke noticed the overwhelmed looks the twins gave her and giggled. “They'll all answer to 'hey you' if you can't remember their names.” She promised. “So what's for lunch?”

“We're thinking the deli across the way, and we've volunteered Miller for collection duty.” Harper said.

“Perfect. I'll have my usual, and get three number sevens for the kids.” Clarke said as she pulled some cash from her wallet and handed it to Miller.

Harper wrote down the orders to call through while everyone handed Miller their money. “I'm going to need help carrying it all back. Jasper, you're up.” He clapped Jasper on the shoulder, steering him toward the door.

“So why do you guys get to hang out with Clarke this afternoon?” Niylah asked.

“Denae's sick and mama's busy.” Costia shrugged.

“Do you like hanging out with Clarke?” Munroe asked.

“Yeah.” Aden nodded enthusiastically.

“And Charlotte.” Costia added.

“Well of course.” Monroe nodded. “We like it when Charlotte hangs out with us too.”

- Clarke logged out early as the twins were growing restless and she figured it was best to make her exit before they got worse. As she was leaving she got a call from Lexa. “Hey babe.”

“Denae was meant to collect Tris this afternoon - I just had a call from the day camp.”

“I'm leaving now, I'll collect her on my way home.”

“Thanks love.”
“Will you be late home?”

“Not too late, just a few things to finish up before we go away.”

“Okay, don't work yourself too hard, you've only just gotten over that virus.”

“I'm fine.” Lexa promised. “I'll see you at home in a couple of hours.”

“Alright. Love you.”

“Love you too.”

Clarke slid her phone back into her back pocket before swinging Aden up to her hip so he could nap against her shoulder. “Let's get you home.” She kissed his forehead with a smile.

“Can we have dino-nuggets for dinner?” He mumbled.

“I don't see why not.” Clarke chuckled. “Night team - see you tomorrow.” Clarke waved to her team as she steered the girls toward the elevator.

- 

Raven: Back from Texas, beers?

Clarke: I have the kids, and Lexa's working late, but the twins will go down by 7:30, come over say 8ish?

Raven: I'll bring the beers.

Clarke set her phone back on the bench and went back to peeling vegetables to go with the dino-nuggets that were already baking.

“Clarke? When's mama getting home?” Aden asked.

“Soon baby.” She promised him.

“Why is she so late?” He pouted.

“She had to make sure all her work is done before we go on holiday.” Clarke explained. “That way we can all have fun on the beach, and she won't have to spend all day inside on her computer.”

“Are you and Charlotte coming to the beach too?”

“We sure are.” Clarke nodded.

“Good.” Aden nodded. “Is Aunty Anya and Tris coming too?”

“Not for the whole trip, but for a week or two.” Clarke nodded.

“And uncle Lincoln?”

“The whole family will be coming to join us.” Clarke chuckled.

- 

Lexa made it home just in time to put the twins to bed. She had to read them two bedtime stories to make up for being so late.
“I’m sorry to leave it all to you.” She told Clarke. “Especially when they were in those moods.”

“Don’t worry about it.” Clarke assured her. “They were actually really well behaved up until I told them it was bedtime - Aden didn’t want to go to sleep without seeing you.”

“I don’t like it when they sleep before I get to see them either.” Lexa sighed. “But Titus was just being impossible.” Charlotte giggled at Lexa’s dramatics.

“Go get your pjs on baby girl.” Clarke told her daughter.

“But I thought Aunty Rae was coming over?”

“I hope that’s okay?” Clarke said when she saw Lexa’s surprised expression.

“Of course - this is your home too now, of course you can invite friends over.” Lexa assured her with a wide grin. She still felt like a teenager with a crush at the thought that Clarke and Charlotte had officially moved in.

“Good - she’ll be here soon, and she's bringing beers.” Clarke kissed Lexa’s cheek. “And you still have a bedtime miss.” She told Charlotte. “Go get ready for bed and you will still be able to see Rae for a little while when she arrives.”

“Okay.” Charlotte set her book down and headed upstairs to her room.

“I meant to tell you earlier about Rae.” Clarke began.

“Clarke, really, it's fine.” Lexa promised.

“Good, because there's something going on between her and Anya and I want details.”

“There is? How do you know?”

“Rae came over to get a book from me while Anya was staying here - after she got out of the hospital - and I saw a definite moment between them. They've both sworn that there's nothing romantic or sexual between them, so naturally I assume there is.”

“Anya doesn't do relationships.” Lexa warned.

“Neither does Raven, not since Finn.” Clarke agreed. “But she'd be so good in one.”

“Anya too.” Lexa nodded. “Although I don’t think she’d be willing to start anything right now - I think the baby is her focus.”

“I know, but I think she wants a relationship, she's just afraid of how much baggage she has.” Clarke sighed. “She mentioned it when she was staying here.”

“She did?”

“Yeah, we talked a lot while you were sick. I think it was just a case of she needed someone to talk to and I was there.”

“Anya doesn’t usually process out loud.” Lexa shrugged. “It was like pulling teeth trying to get her to talk at all in the hospital. I think she was actually glad when we brought Tris in because we stopped trying to make her talk to us.”

“Is Aunty Rae here yet?” Charlotte asked as she ran back downstairs to join them on the lounge.
“Not yet love.” Clarke smiled. “You can snuggle with me until she arrives.” She pulled the girl into her lap.

“Okay.” Charlotte agreed wrapping her arms around Clarke's neck.

“Want some hot cocoa to help you sleep?” Lexa offered.

“No thanks, I'm already sleepy.” Charlotte admitted with a yawn.

“I'll bet, you read almost that whole book today.” Clarke nodded to the book on the table.

“Yeah, I've only got one chapter left.” She nodded, laying her head on Clarke's shoulder.

“If Rae doesn't get here soon you may already be asleep.” Lexa said.

“But I miss her.” Charlotte whined.

“She misses you too baby.” Clarke assured her.

Raven arrived a few minutes later. “Aw squish, you waited up for me.” She grinned as she made a beeline for the girl. She passed the six pack she'd brought to Lexa before lifting Charlotte in a hug. “I got you a present.”

“I missed you.” Charlotte said as she hugged Raven tight.

“Next time I'm taking you with me - I don't care what your mum says.” Raven joked. “Now Clarke, can you rummage through my bag there should be some sweet NASA swag for my girl here.” Clarke pulled a mug, a shirt and a cap from Raven’s bag. “And I'll have tickets for all of you for the viewing platform when my baby takes the skies.”

“You got the green light?” Clarke asked.

“Yeah I did.” Raven cheered. “Next May.”

“That's amazing.” Clarke hugged Raven, and Charlotte since she was still in her arms. “You're amazing.”

“Damn straight I am.” Raven laughed.

“Alright time for bed my love.” Clarke told Charlotte. “Am I tucking you in, or do you want Rae or Lexa to do it?”

“You.” Charlotte decided.

“Let's go then.” Clarke said. “Say goodnight.”

“Night Aunty Rae.” Charlotte hugged Raven.

“Night squish. We’ll hang out on the weekend okay?”

“We're leaving for the beach house on Saturday morning.” Clarke shook her head.

“Well then, how about tomorrow? I have the rest of the week off anyway.” Raven suggested.

“Okay.” She nodded. “Night Lexa.”

“Goodnight little one.” Lexa kissed the top of Charlotte's head as she hugged her.
Clarke led Charlotte upstairs to her bedroom. “Into bed baby girl.” She peeled back the covers.

“G’night mum.” Charlotte hugged Clarke before laying down.

“Goodnight, I love you.” She cupped Charlotte's face. “Sleep well.” She began stroking her hair, helping her to drift off.

Once Charlotte was fast asleep Clarke leaned down to kiss her forehead again. “Sleep well my love.” She flicked out her bedside lamp, and made sure the night light was glowing, before closing her door and making her way downstairs.

“So then, she calls this ceramicist friend of hers and convinces him to make a copy of the platter.” Raven was laughing as she told Lexa the story. “And the best part is, Abby noticed immediately because it's obviously way better made than the original.”

“Really? The platter? What if Charlotte heard you?” Clarke smacked Raven’s arm to shut her up.

“What about Charlotte?” Lexa looked confused.

“She broke the platter. The first time she visited mum’s house.” Clarke explained. “She was so afraid that I'd send her back that I took the fall. Mum actually loves the new one - and it's worth like four times as much because it's a Michael Richards original piece.”

“Ugh, you always ruin my stories with the truth!” Raven huffed.

“Michael Richards, he's your friend with the ceramics studio?”

“The one Ontari is doing the summer course with, yeah.” Clarke nodded. “She’ll learn a whole lot this summer.”

“Who's Ontari?” Raven asked.

“My foster sister.” Lexa answered.

“Cool.” Raven nodded.

There was a lull as all three women sipped their beers. “So Rae - tell me, what's going on with you and Anya?” Clarke smirked.

“We're friends.” She shrugged.

“A couple of weeks after the two of you started seeing each other, I went to talk to her at the bunker - I just wanted to make sure that Lexa's people were on board - I couldn't have my two favourite girls hurt.”

“I can't imagine Anya took that well.” Lexa said.

“Actually she did. She wanted to know the same thing on our side - we can all see how well the two of you fit together, and I've never seen Charlotte take to anyone but Clarke as quickly as she has to you Lexa.” Raven said. “Not even me. She barely spoke to me for the first few months.”

“That's true.” Clarke nodded. “But her first few months were tough.” She explained. “Charlotte was borderline non-verbal when she came to me, she would sleep under the bed rather than in it, and she barely ate.”
“Is that why you still sit with her until she falls asleep each night?” Lexa asked.

“Yeah. For the first six months the only way I could keep her in her bed through the night was by staying with her all night, so I did. I would barely sleep, making sure that she wasn't having nightmares.”

“You're sweet.” Lexa leaned into Clarke's side. “If only every kid in the system could be so lucky.”

“Now, stop changing the subject - we were talking about you and Anya.”

Raven rolled her eyes. “There's nothing to talk about. Like I said we started talking because I wanted to make sure we were all on the same page about you two.”

“Uh-huh. And then?” Clarke raised an eyebrow.

“Ugh, fine - we fucked. Is that what you wanted to know?” Raven huffed. “She was really good about everything too.”

“Everything?” Lexa looked confused again.

“You haven't told her?”

“It's hardly the first thing I tell anyone, it's your story to tell.” Clarke shook her head.

“I'm trans.” Raven shrugged. “The estrogen helped so I've never gone ahead with any surgery. It's enough for me to look in the mirror and see myself as female.”

“Wow, I never would have guessed.” Lexa admitted.


“So you like her?”

“We're friends.” She nodded. “But we're not dating.” She cut Clarke off before she could start.

“But.”

“No. This works for us, leave it be.” Raven warned.

“Okay fine.” Clarke pouted. “Tell me about your greenlighted project then.”

- 

The weekend finally came and Clarke and Lexa packed the kids and all their essentials into Lexa's car for the drive down to her beach house. Charlotte had complained that reading while in the car made her sick, so Clarke had given her her old iPod with a selection of audio books loaded onto it. Costia slept for most of the drive and Aden kept busy with a tablet and Netflix.

The drive took most of the day, but it wasn't strenuous. With the kids entertained they were able to take the drive with a bit of leisure, stopping often to accommodate small bladders. But the weather was good, and the roads weren't too hectic - mainly because Lexa insisted on using the backroads. (“It's more interesting than highways Clarke.”)

They arrived at the house an hour or two before sunset. It was all wood paneling and huge windows overlooking the beach. Clarke had half expected it to have its own private beach, but there were houses on either side, within easy view, without being too close for comfort.
“Lexa!” A woman in a floral dress waved from the nearest house, making her way down the steps from her porch. “It’s so good to see you again. How are the kids?” She asked as she reached them.

“It’s good to see you too Laura.” Lexa hugged the woman. “This is my partner Clarke, and her daughter Charlotte. Clarke, Charlotte, this is our neighbour Laura.”

“Nice to meet you.” Clarke shook hands with Laura.

“You as well.” Laura smiled. “And how old are you Charlotte?”

“I’m nine.”

“Well, my daughter Ellie just turned nine as well - you're welcome to come over and play anytime, okay?”

“Thank you.” Charlotte nodded.

“Join us for dinner tomorrow?” Lexa suggested.

“Sounds great. I’ll leave you to settle in. See you tomorrow.” Laura waved as she headed black to her house.

The twins were still asleep in their seats, so Lexa quickly unlocked the front door before making her way back to carry Costia inside while Clarke took Aden. Lexa's housekeeper, Caris, had been sent ahead to air the house out and tidy it. Her family lived nearby so once the house was prepped she was mostly on holiday herself - only stopping in once a week to help out. Denae had been given a couple of weeks off as well, to spend with her husband. She would be joining them when Tris and Anya made the drive down.

They set the twins on the couch and continued back to the car to unpack. “The house is gorgeous Lexa.” Clarke commented, as they carried the suitcases inside.

“Costia and I bought it the year after we married. Trigeda was picking up momentum so we decided to splurge and buy a beach house. Her family used to come here every summer, so it was an easy decision.” Lexa smiled.

“She had excellent taste.”

Lexa smiled, she loved that Clarke didn't shy away from talking about Costia, although the brunette was ready to move on and build a life with Clarke, she wanted to hold on to Costia's memory for the twins. She glanced at the house on their other side, it was hard to tell whether is was occupied yet or not, but she knew she’d have to tell Clarke sooner rather than later exactly who owned the house next door.

“Are you friendly with those neighbours too?” Clarke asked, seeing where Lexa's gaze was settled.

“More than friendly.” Lexa nodded. “Costia's parents own that house.”

“The twins’ grandparents?”

“Yeah. If they're not here already they should be in a day or two.” Lexa nodded.

“Are they going to be okay with the fact you're dating again?”

“They know about you.” Lexa said. “We talk a lot, and Denae takes the twins to visit them every couple of weeks. They've been away recently, so it's been a few weeks since they've seen them.”
“They know about me?”

“Well even if I didn't tell them, the twins never shut up about you and Charlotte, I think they would have worked it out.” Lexa teased. “They're excited to meet you.”

“They are?”

“Of course.” Lexa nodded. “They never wanted me to stay alone forever.”

They finished moving the last of their stuff into the house just as the twins began to stir. “Beach!” Costia cheered immediately, tugging at Aden to wake up. “Can we go to the beach now?” She begged Lexa.

“Oh, monkeys, let's get you changed.” Lexa laughed as they headed upstairs.

The beach house was more open plan than Lexa’s house with almost the whole of the ground floor one big open space. Upstairs the bedrooms wrapped around the outer edge of the upper floor, with a walkway that overlooked the lower floor. One side of the upper floor had been cleared into a big play area for the children. There was a larger bedroom with several bunks for the children to share, allowing for the whole holiday to be an extended slumber party for them.

Lexa passed the twins their swimwear and left them to change while she went to do the same.

“Can I go in the water?” Charlotte asked Clarke.

“Go get changed, and I'll go in with you, okay?” Clarke suggested.

“Okay.” Charlotte grabbed her bag and headed upstairs to change.

They went for a walk along the beach first, there were some rock pools that Lexa wanted to explore before they got in the water.

“There’s a crab!” Costia shrieked, pointing into a crevice in the rock.

“So there is. Leave him be monkey.” Lexa said.

“Want to go in the water baby girl?”

“Oh, you.” Charlotte nodded. She took Clarke’s outstretched hand and followed her to the waves that crept up the shore. “You'll stay with me?”

“Always.” Clarke squeezed her hand a little tighter. “Ready?”

“One, two, three!” Charlotte counted before they started running headlong into the water, laughing as the cold water rushed in to meet them. They stopped when the water reached Charlotte’s hips. The twins charged after them, giggling madly at the chance to finally get in the water.

“Wait my little monsters!” Lexa called, running to catch up with them. Aden - ever the better behaved twin - stopped only ankle deep and waited for Lexa to catch up. Costia didn’t so much as slow down, running full speed toward Clarke and Charlotte.

Costia didn’t see the wave that was coming and she was slowed down by the resistance of the water just enough that she didn’t quite reach the blonde before it hit. “Are you steady?” Clarke asked Charlotte.

“Yeah.”
“Okay, keep both feet on the ground.” Clarke said. She kept hold of one of Charlotte’s hands as she stepped forward just as the wave slapped Costia in the face, knocking her backwards.

“Costia!” Lexa screamed as the four year old disappeared under the water.

Clarke caught one of her arms and hauled her up out of the water. She let go of Charlotte briefly to get a proper hold on the preschooler as she brought her to sit on her hip. Costia coughed several times before bursting into tears from the shock of it all. “You’re okay monkey - I’ve got you.” Clarke said as she reached for Charlotte once more. “Let’s get you back to your mama, hey?”

“Don’t scare me like that!” Lexa chided as she took the still crying girl from Clarke.

“I'm - sorry - mama.” Costia cried, her shoulders heaving under the force of her sobs.

“That’s why I told you to wait for me.” Lexa explained. “The ocean can be very dangerous.”

“I know.” She nodded before burying her face in Lexa’s neck.

“I’m glad you’re okay, but I need you to promise you won’t do that again.”

“I promise.” She mumbled.

Aden tugged at Clarke’s hand, tears streaking his little cheeks. “Did that scare you little one?” Clarke asked as she picked him up too.

“I thought Cos was going to drown.” He nodded.

“Running into the water like that, without an adult, was very dangerous - she could have drowned.” Clarke agreed. “I was scared too.” She kissed his cheek.

“Come on, I think we’ve had enough excitement in the water for now.” Lexa suggested, leading the way back up to the house.

Costia was clingy for the rest of the night, still shaken from her ordeal. Lexa was almost as bad - she didn’t want Costia out of her sight for more than a few seconds. When it came time for bed all three children ended up in the master bedroom with them.

“I’m sorry.” Lexa apologized as they were in the bathroom getting ready for bed.

“It’s fine, we all had a scare this afternoon.” She assured Lexa.

“I almost lost her once before, and today brought all that back for me.”

“I didn’t know.” Clarke wrapped her arms around Lexa’s waist from behind and rested her chin on the brunette’s shoulder.

“They were both delivered early, because Costia senior was running out of time. Aden was mostly fine, they kept him in the NICU on oxygen for a few days, but Costia was ventilated, she had a diaphragmatic hernia, she barely lived through the surgery.” Lexa leaned back into the comfort Clarke offered.

“She’s strong, she’s healthy and she’s not going anywhere.” Clarke promised. “And after today, she will certainly be more careful before running into the ocean.”

“I love you.” Lexa sighed, letting her tension go.
“I love you too.” She turned Lexa in her arms to meet her in a kiss. “Come on, you’re exhausted.”

The children woke early the following morning, excited all over again to be at the beach. Clarke rose with them and herded them downstairs for breakfast, letting Lexa sleep a little longer - since she hadn’t stirred at all when the children did.

Clarke was startled the find that the kitchen wasn't empty. An older woman with greying hair was rummaging through the pantry.

“Hello?” Clarke called.

The woman turned around with a smile, there was something about her that reminded Clarke of Aden. “You must be Clarke.”

“Nonna!” The twins charged the woman to hug her.

“Yes.” Clarke nodded, she realised this was Costia's mother - the twins’ grandmother.

“Great to finally meet you, I'm Elaine.”

“You too Elaine.” Clarke smiled. “This is my daughter Charlotte.”

“Hi sweetie, I've heard a lot about you.” Elaine smiled, the skin at the corners of her eyes crinkling with a lifetime of memory.

“Hi.” Charlotte scooted closer to Clarke, unsure what to make of the seemingly kind, but totally unknown, woman in their space.

“Is Lexa asleep?”

“Yeah, we had a scare yesterday when someone didn't listen, and the stress of it wiped her out a little.” Clarke explained.

“I nearly drowned.” Costia admitted. “I got hit by a big wave, but Clarke rescued me.”

“Well, it's lucky she was there, isn't it?” Elaine hugged Costia a little closer. “Nonno is outside, he can't wait to see you.” She nudged the twins toward the back door. “Sorry to barge in on you like this, but we arrived too late last night to get to the store - I figured I'd just raid Lexa's kitchen and cook you all breakfast at the same time.”

“Of course.” Clarke waved her to continue. “Coffee?”

“Yes please, Nyko will have one too.” Elaine nodded to the back door to indicate her husband.

“On a scale of one to surgeon, how strong do you like it?” She asked as she started putting the grounds into the machine.

“The stronger the better.” Elaine said.

Clarke helped with breakfast while Charlotte sat at the bench. She had been worried when Lexa told her she’d be meeting Costia's parents - despite Lexa's assurances, she was certain that they would measure her against the daughter they'd lost and find her wanting.

Just before the food was declared ready Clarke made her way back upstairs to wake Lexa.
“Morning.” Lexa mumbled, her curls splayed around her. “Where are the kids?”

“With Elaine and Nyko downstairs.”

“They're here?”

“Apparently they haven't had time to go to the store, so figured they'd use our kitchen instead.”

“That happens a lot when Elaine is around.” Lexa chuckled. “She just wants to be near the twins.”

“I understand.” Clarke nodded. “Maybe she and Nyko could take the twins for the night sometime soon?”

“What about Charlotte?”

“If she doesn't want to join them then we just wait until she's asleep to have our fun.”

“Oh - yes!” Lexa giggled as she caught on to Clarke's meaning. “The twins have never had a sleepover without me before, but they're probably ready.”

“And if anything goes wrong we're right next door - nothing to worry about.”

“True.”

“Now, get up, before they eat all the breakfast without us.”

They made their way downstairs where Elaine was setting the last dish on the dining table. “Good morning Lexa.” She smiled, hugging her daughter in law.

“Hi Elaine.” Lexa's eyes flicked to the back door as it opened and the twins ran back inside. “Morning monkeys.” She hugged them close. “Nyko.” She hugged Costia's father as well. “Morning Charlotte.” She caught the nine year old as she passed on her way to the table.

“Morning Lexa.” Charlotte leaned into Lexa's hold.

“You must be Clarke.” Nyko held out a hand.

“Yes, it's nice to meet you.” She shook his massive hand. Nyko was a bear of a man, but he smiled easily, and it was hard to find anyone intimidating with the twins clinging to his legs and giggling. “Go sit up monkeys.” Clarke swatted a hand at the twins. “Or mama and I will eat all the waffles!”

“No, my waffles!” Costia cried as she ran for the table.

“I see you've learned the way to control them.” Nyko laughed.

“That pair and waffles.” Clarke laughed.

“So how are you Lexa?” Elaine asked.

“Good, really good.” Lexa smiled widely and leaned into Clarke's side a little - leaving no doubt as to why she was feeling so good.

“Good. I'm glad.” She nodded. Clarke was busy serving the children as Elaine continued. “She's better in the kitchen than Cosi ever was.”

“She is.” Lexa agreed.
“What's that?” Clarke asked, only half listening.

“Costia senior, couldn’t cook at all.” Lexa laughed. “Toast was about her limit, and even then she burned it at least half of the time."

“Well, I'm not quite as skilled as Lexa in the kitchen, but I've got a handle on the basics, right kids?”“Clarke can make dino-nuggets, mama doesn't know how.” Aden said seriously making all the adults laugh.

“I know how munchkin.” Lexa defended.

“Then why don't you ever make them?” Costia crossed her arms.


“I've told you Clarke, sprinkles on bread is not food.” Lexa huffed. “It's yum!” Costia argued.

“Yeah.” Clarke nudged Lexa's side. “Don't mock my Australian heritage, fairy bread is a delicacy.”

“Your dad was Australian, and you've been there like twice.” Lexa rolled her eyes.

“I was born there.”

“Fine, you can keep fairy bread - just don't make me eat Vegemite.” She shuddered.

“More for me.” Clarke poked her tongue out, which only resulted in the twins blowing raspberries at their mother.

“It's nice to see you so happy again Lexa dear.” Elaine smiled. “So Clarke tell us some more about yourself.”

“What would you like to know?”

After breakfast they all went for a walk along the beach, finally ending up back at the beach house and collapsing on the deck. There was a swing that hung from the beams in the ceiling where Clarke ended up under a pile of children while Lexa - who couldn't also fit on the swing - ended up on one of the outdoor lounges. Nyko and Elaine headed into town to get some groceries.

Costia's parents returned to the beach house after lunch, bringing with them most of what they would need for the BBQ that evening. Laura and her two children arrived shortly after. They sent the children inside to the play area while Clarke and Nyko manned the grill and Lexa, Laura and Elaine headed inside to take care of everything else.

Clarke liked Nyko, he was an easygoing man, happy to chat, or pass the time in silence. He questioned Clarke casually about her life without her feeling interrogated.

“Mum?” Charlotte interrupted their conversation, she pressed herself into Clarke's side, shaking just enough to worry her. The meat was almost ready so Clarke left Nyko in charge and pulled Charlotte into her lap on the lounge.
“What happened?”

“They're drinking.” She said, on the verge of tears, and Clarke realised that she'd never discussed Charlotte's problems with alcohol with Lexa.

“Is Lexa drinking, or just Laura and Elaine?”

“Just the new lady, but I can smell it.” She buried her face in Clarke’s neck, blocking out the scent that still filled her memory.

“Nyko, can you ask Lexa to come out here?” Clarke asked.

“Of course.” He nodded and headed for the back door.

“Everything okay?” Lexa asked as she settled herself on the couch beside Clarke.

“We don't drink much, so I've never had cause to mention that Charlotte is uncomfortable around people who are drinking.” Clarke explained.

“But Raven?” Lexa began - she always brought beer.

“Brings beer? Yes, but never more than one six pack. Wine is okay as well, as long as no one is visibly drunk. Spirits however, and if people she doesn't know well are drinking around her, it makes her extremely uncomfortable.”

“I'm sorry sweetheart, I had no idea.” Lexa took Charlotte's hand. “I'll make sure Laura stops, right now.” She leaned forward to kiss Charlotte's forehead before going back inside.

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“Everything okay?” Elaine asked.

“It will be.” Lexa nodded. “Laura, I'm sorry, but I have to ask you to stop drinking the bourbon and to put it away.”

“Okay, why?”

“It's upsetting Charlotte.” She said simply. “Charlotte has severe anxiety, Clarke has done an amazing job at teaching her how to manage it - but we also need to manage her environment. I had no idea until just now that spirits were a trigger for her.”

“It that really the reason, or is Clarke just a recovering alcoholic?” Laura raised a suggestive eyebrow.

“No, of course not. Charlotte is out there on the verge on a panic attack because she could smell your bourbon from upstairs.” Lexa took the glass and bottle since Laura didn't seem inclined to.

“You know, at some point she's going to have to get over it.” Laura crossed her arms.

“I know, and we’ll keep working on it with her - but kids like Charlotte need us to make allowances. Clarke works so hard to help her - and she's asked this one thing of us.” Lexa continued.

“So you're saying that our cookouts have to be dry all summer?”

“She has less of a problem with wine or beer, but only if no one is intoxicated.” Lexa shrugged. “I'll have to talk to Clarke some more to make sure that it'll be okay though.”
“What made her like this?” Laura asked. “Because I didn't think you'd let anyone who'd fucked up their kid so badly around your twins.”

“Clarke adopted her, she is so in tune with what Charlotte's needs, and so committed to helping her in all areas - all foster kids should be so lucky.” Lexa smiled - Clarke really did amaze her, especially in moments like this.

“She's a foster kid? Can she be trusted?”

“Foster kids aren't evil. Plenty of them have been through hell, but with the love of someone as kind and patient as Clarke, or Indra, we have a real chance.”

“Lexa was a foster child, as was her sister Anya.” Elaine said. “They were lucky to be taken in by Indra, just as I have no doubt Charlotte is lucky to have Clarke.”

“I'm not sure I'm comfortable letting her around Ellie, what if she gets triggered and hurts her?”

“Charlotte is a gentle soul - I've only heard of her pushing one child and he had been bullying her relentlessly at school - and it was only ever to get away.” Lexa shook her head. “If she gets triggered she is far more likely to either hide - or seek out Clarke.”

“Even so, I want them supervised at all times.” Laura crossed her arms.

Clarke kept Charlotte on her lap, holding her close as she calmed down. “I'm sorry that I didn't think of that sooner.” Clarke apologised. She always felt like she had let Charlotte down when she missed something that would trigger her.

“It's okay.” Charlotte sniffed, still trying to hold back her tears. “I'm sorry I still get so scared.”

“Hey, baby girl, you know we don't apologise for your anxiety.” She kissed her temple. “It's my job to keep you safe.”

“Thank you.”

“Always my angel.” Clarke smiled. “Thank you for coming and telling me.”

“I could get to you without having to pass the kitchen.” Charlotte shrugged.

“Even still, I'm proud of you.” She said. It had taken her most of their first eighteen months together to convince Charlotte to go to Clarke when her anxiety flared. Whether that be nightmares, or some trigger or another, Clarke never got mad, she only ever wanted to help calm her and to eliminate the trigger from her environment.

Nyko caught Clarke's eye with a concerned look, clearly wondering what could have caused such a reaction since Charlotte had seemed such a happy child thus far. Clarke smiled at Nyko as she released Charlotte. “Come on, let's help Nyko with the meat.” She suggested.

“Everything okay?”

“Yep, just a quick anxiety attack.” She hugged Charlotte around the shoulders. “But we're all good now, right baby girl?”

“Right.” Charlotte nodded.
“Glad to hear it.” Nyko smiled. “I think everything looks ready, how about you let everyone inside know and we get this dinner on the table.”

“Sure.” Clarke kept hold of Charlotte as she headed for the door.

“Even so, I want them supervised.” Laura had her back to the door, so didn't see Clarke and Charlotte enter. “Who knows what that girl will do if left unsupervised - she's probably defective from a drugged up mother. I don't want that around Ellie.”

“Is she talking about me mum?” Charlotte asked, tears welling in her eyes.

Laura spun on her heel to glare at Clarke. “You know you really should tell people exactly who they’re letting their kids play with.”

“You know what - I think Charlotte and I will go out for dinner.” Clarke steered them through the house and grabbed Lexa's car keys from the bowl by the door. “Goodnight.” She let the screen door swing shut as she led Charlotte out to the car. “What would you like for dinner my love? Anything you want.”

Chapter End Notes

I love hearing what you think. I'm sick in bed today, so maybe cheer me up with some reviews? Or come chat to me on tumblr I'm ineedhappyendings over there. I've written the next chapter, it just needs some edits and should be up soon.
Beach House - Part 2

Chapter Summary

More time at the beach house, Ranya, Tris and Denae join the fun and Clarke has a birthday.

Chapter Notes

Okay, so there was a lot of anti-Laura feelings at the end of the last chapter, and a bit of blame on poor Lexa - don't worry, Laura gets told off, and Lexa isn't in trouble.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Lexa felt the door close like a punch to the gut. She turned on Laura, her eyes blazing with anger. “How dare you speak like that in my house.” She snapped.

“The kid broke down because I was drinking bourbon, she's hardly all there.” Laura waved Lexa's anger off.

“Get out.” Lexa ordered.

“What?” Laura put a hand on her hip.

“You heard me, get out. You're not welcome here anymore.”

Laura looked for a moment like she would push the point further, but Nyko chose that moment to come inside, his huge arms crossed over his chest. “I believe you were told to leave.”

“Fine. I'll see you after you and miss sensitive break up.” Laura rolled her eyes. “Ellie, Jess, time to go!” She called up the stairs.

Costia and Aden followed Laura's children down the stairs. “Mama, where's Clarke and Charlotte?” Aden asked.

Lexa glared at Laura as she lifted her son. “Laura said some very mean things about Charlotte, so she and Clarke left.”

“Are they coming back?” Costia's lip trembled.

“Of course they are, monkey.” Lexa promised - hoping it was true.

Laura huffed as she practically dragged her children outside and across the sand to her house.

“I miss Clarke and Charlotte.” Costia sniffed, picking up on the obvious tension in the room.

“It's okay sweetheart, she'll come back.” Elaine promised, lifting her into a hug.
“We should eat.” Nyko reminded them.

“I'm suddenly not hungry.” Lexa shook her head.

“She loves you, she won't leave you over something a neighbour said.” Elaine reminded Lexa.

“Clarke is fiercely protective of those she loves, and for Charlotte that applies tenfold, if Charlotte decides that she doesn't want to come back, they won't.”

“Charlotte loves you almost as much as Clarke does.” Nyko added. “They'll be back.”

“I hope you're right.”

Lexa was sitting up waiting when Clarke and Charlotte returned, the twins asleep on the couch beside her. “I kicked her out, told her to stay away.” She said as soon as they crossed the threshold. “I am so sorry that she spoke to you like that - I've never seen that side of her.” She opened her arms to Charlotte.

“Sorry I just blew out of here, but it was that or a felony assault.” Clarke said, still fizzling with anger at the way Laura had spoken.

“Not at all.” Lexa assured her, hugging Charlotte close. “I'm so sorry sweetheart. I never want for you to feel like that in our home.”

“I know.” Charlotte nodded as she clung to Lexa.

“Want to bunk in with us tonight?” Clarke asked her daughter.

“Yes please.”

“Okay, go get ready for bed, Lex and I will be up soon.” She kissed the top of her head before nudging her toward the stairs.

“I really am sorry.” Lexa said as she pulled Clarke closer. “I should have stopped her before she said those things, I just couldn't believe she actually thinks like that.”

“I know. I'm sorry your friend turned out to be a bitch.” Clarke leaned into her girlfriend.

“I was so scared when you walked out the door - I thought she'd ruined the best thing that's happened to me in years.” Lexa admitted. “The twins wanted to wait up for you too.”

“You can't get rid of us that easily.” Clarke laughed. “I wasn't walking out on you - I just needed to get Charlotte out of there. We went to the Italian place that Caris’ parents own, they spoiled us.”

“Good.” Lexa smiled. “But next time, take us with you?”

“You had a houseful of guests.” Clarke shook her head. “I promise I'll always come back though.”

“Thank you.”

“Come on, let's get them to bed.” Clarke gently woke the twins. “Hey monkeys.” She kissed their cheeks.

“Clarke.” Costia was the first to stir, throwing her arms around the blonde.
“You came back.” Aden mumbled as he reached out to hug her as well.

“Always. I love you two too much to stay away.”

“Can we sleep in with you and mama tonight?” Aden asked, his eyes wide.

“Of course. Charlotte is already upstairs getting ready, go join her.” Clarke nodded.

“Is Charlotte okay?” Costia asked. “Mama said Laura was really mean.”

“She was very mean.” Clarke nodded. “But Charlotte will be okay, because we love her.”

“Good.” Aden nodded. “Nonno got all scary and told her to leave when she didn't listen to mama.”

“I bet he did.” Clarke chuckled. “Go get into bed, your mama and I will be there soon.” She nudged the twins toward the stairs.

“They love you.” Lexa smiled.

“The feeling is entirely mutual.” Clarke said. “I adore them, they're so sweet.”

“I love you too.” Lexa pulled Clarke back into a hug. “I really didn’t like you not being here.”

“I know.” Clarke rested her forehead on Lexa's shoulder. “I think that might be the closest we've come to a fight.” She chuckled.

“Well I vote we don't do that again.” Lexa huffed.

“Seconded.” Clarke nodded. “Come on, I'm wiped, let's go to bed.”

The next morning Clarke sent Lexa and the twins ahead to the beach, wanting to make sure Charlotte had time to properly process the events of the previous night. She sent a message to Charlotte's therapist, Dr. Nina, asking if she had time for a short phone session.

“Dr Nina has some time if you'd like to talk to her?” Clarke suggested.

“Okay.” Charlotte nodded. Charlotte had fought against seeing yet another therapist when Clarke had first taken her in. But Dr Nina had resolutely worked her way into the girl's trust, she had even done a few joint sessions for both Clarke and Charlotte to help create new techniques to manage her anxiety.

Clarke placed the call, and waited until she'd gotten through to the therapist before handing the phone to Charlotte and letting her explain the night's events. Charlotte took the phone upstairs into one of the unused bedrooms and closed the door. She'd tell Clarke most of what was said later, but she needed her space at first.

Clarke picked up her book and settled down on the couch to wait out her session. Charlotte rejoined her about fifteen minutes later, nestling into Clarke's side. “Good chat?” She asked as she took her phone back.

“Yeah. Dr Nina was really happy that I went straight to you when my anxiety flared.”

“I'm so proud of you for that. I know how much you want to hide when things scare you, but if you don't tell me, then I might not know.”
“And if you don't know you can't help me fix the problem.” Charlotte finished.

“Exactly baby girl.” She kissed her head. “And I want us to be able to fix things.”

“And she said that I handled myself well.”

“You did.” Clarke hugged her. “Sometimes people are going to say things because they don't know any better. And sometimes we have to tell them that they're wrong, but sometimes we just have to walk away.”

“She also said you should buy me a puppy.” Charlotte nudged Clarke playfully.

“Oh really? I thought it was a kitten?”

“Both, she says I need both.” Charlotte nodded seriously before dissolving into giggles.

“I'll talk to Lexa, and we'll think about it, okay?” Charlotte had been pushing for a pet for a while, but between their various commitments she wasn't sure they had the time to devote to a pet. She was glad to see Charlotte was back to her usual self though, and not still dwelling on the night before.

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It was a little strange for Lexa not to have Laura around, she'd always been there in previous years, but after the way she behaved she couldn't say she actually missed her. Their first two weeks passed in a mostly happy blur. Clarke had brought her art supplies and spent an hour or two each day painting the view from the back deck, overlooking the beach. While Clarke painted Charlotte would sit on the porch swing behind her and read (they had to make trips to the local library - or bookstore - every couple of days to keep up with her). Lexa and the twins would wander along the beach, occasionally Charlotte would join them.

They spent their afternoons either on the beach, splashing each other in the waves and building epic sand castles - which turned out to be a special talent of Clarke's - or if the weather turned bad they would either head inside to construct blanket forts and watch movies or go into town to the arcade or the cinema.

They saw Laura at a distance a few times, but she made no effort to engage with them, and neither Clarke nor Lexa could say they were particularly sorry for the loss.

Anya, Tris, Denae, and Raven drove down from Polis together. They arrived late one Friday night. Clarke sat up to wait for them - Lexa was exhausted and had gone to bed not long after the twins did. Charlotte had begged to sit up and wait for Raven, but when Raven had texted to say they'd be arriving just after eleven Clarke had taken her upstairs to put her to her bed.

Raven had driven, taking it in shifts with Denae, leaving Anya in the backseat with Tris. Raven had been strict in her enforcement of the doctor's orders - Anya was to rest as much as possible. Clarke helped Denae to carry the bags in from the car, Raven carried a sleeping Tris and Anya carried Tris’ favourite pillow and her stuffed panda - it was the heaviest load they'd let her carry.

“How was the drive?” Clarke asked Anya.

“I sat in the back - apparently driving is too strenuous.” She grumped.

“They're just looking out for you.” Clarke chuckled.

“I'm not an invalid.”
“What did the doctors say at your last check?”

“What things are looking good, but I'm still in the risk category, and I should take it easy. They were in favour of the beach trip actually, or at least the relaxing and not having any fun part.”

“That porch swing is comfy, and a couple of light walks along the beach each day will do you good.” Clarke agreed.

“Not you too.” Anya sighed. “Chasing the kids all over the beach - and into the waves is the best part of these trips.”

“Let Raven do that - she really is great with kids.”

“She's Tris' new best friend apparently.” Anya rolled her eyes. “She's been a huge help these last few weeks.”

“She's one of the best people to have in your corner.”

“Who's one of the best people?” Raven asked as she rejoined them.

“You are.” Clarke said as she hugged her best friend. “Anya was telling me you've been looking after her.”

“It's mainly so I can hang with my girl Tris - she's a little hellion, and she's promised to be assistant pyrotechnician for the fireworks display.” Raven beamed.

“My six year old daughter is not going anywhere near the explosives.” Anya huffed.

“Anya please, I have more degrees than everyone else here combined - lab safety is number one.” She countered. “I would never put Tris in danger.”

“How about you two take this argument upstairs?” Clarke yawned. “Anya, I believe you have a usual room, you can show Raven the spare room - or you can show her yours - up to you.” She retreated upstairs before either of them could retaliate.

Charlotte had a bad night. Clarke had spent most of it awake, soothing her through nightmares, finally falling asleep in Charlotte's bed in the small hours. Charlotte woke first, and for a while she was happy just to cuddle into Clarke's side, but she started to get hungry, and Clarke was no closer to waking. She quickly got dressed and headed downstairs to the kitchen.

“Is your mum still asleep?” Lexa asked as she poured a bowl of Charlotte's favourite cereal.

“Yeah, I think she stayed awake longer than I did.” Charlotte nodded.

“We'll let her sleep then.” Lexa agreed. “I was just about to take Tris and the twins down to the beach, want to come with?”

“Okay.” Charlotte nodded.

“Squish!” Raven greeted as she came in through the back door. She hugged Charlotte close. “I hear you didn't have a good night?”

“I had nightmares.” Charlotte leaned into Raven. “Mum stayed up all night to help me sleep.”
“She's the best.” Raven smiled. “Will you come down to the beach with us?”

“Yeah.” She nodded.

“Great. Finish your breakfast, I’m going to have another coffee then we'll go.” Raven ruffled her hair.

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Clarke woke to a silent house. She knew that meant that either the children were out - or they were up to no good. With Raven and Denae now helping out with the kids, she was pretty sure that they had gone out, rather than the children being up to no good. She had woken still in Charlotte's bed, it was one of the few times in the last months that she had woken without Lexa beside her, she missed the brunette's presence.

She pushed herself out of bed and headed for the bathroom. She made her way downstairs, showered, dressed and feeling a little more alive after so little sleep. The kitchen was empty as she made herself some coffee and cereal. She took her breakfast out to the back deck, figuring that everyone was most likely down on the beach.

“Morning.” Anya greeted from her seat on the swing.

“Hey, how are you?”

“Bored.” She huffed. “I want to be down there.” She pointed to where the others were burying Raven under a mound of sand, which Denae was carefully sculpting into a mermaid body.

“I'll go for a walk with you after I finish, if you'd like?” She suggested as she set her coffee down and sat on the end of the swing.

“Yeah, okay.” Anya agreed.

“So, how far along are you now?” Clarke asked.

Anya rubbed her belly, it had just started to round out. “Seventeen weeks.” She couldn't help but smile. “He's a boy.”

“That's exciting.”

“Yeah.” Anya agreed. “He's an active little thing.”

“From what I've seen of you and Tris, that's hardly surprising.”

“Tris was calm until she could crawl, I barely felt her move while I was pregnant. I mean, she'd roll over, or stretch her legs occasionally, but I think this guy is running through morning calisthenics.” She laughed. “Which is a nightmare on my poor bladder.”

“That right there is a strong argument for outsourcing all baby production.” Clarke teased.

“Lexa has shared the same sentiment.” Anya said. “Have the two of you talked about kids? Is three your limit?”

“We've talked a little. Lex likes even numbers, and I would like another kid. But we'd foster to adopt - Lexa wants to give another kid what she got.”

“She wanted to adopt to begin with, but Costia wanted babies of her own - and Lexa couldn't deny
her anything.” Anya sighed.

“I know.” Clarke smiled. “We’ve talked about it.”

“That’s good.” Anya nodded.

“I’m just going to put my bowl away, then we can go for a walk.” Clarke said as she stood.

They walked down onto the beach and along the water’s edge, waves lapping at their feet. “So, how are things with you and Raven?” Clarke asked.

“How do you know anything is going on?”

“I know Raven.” Clarke shrugged.

“Shes been hanging out with Tris and I a lot. She has been really sweet to us both.”

“She told me you slept together.”

“It’s not her baby - if that’s what you think.”

“No, I know.” She laughed. “The hormones render her basically infertile.”

“She really does tell you everything.” Anya chuckled.

“She does. I can also tell that she likes you.” Clarke bumped shoulders with Anya.

“I don’t do relationships.”

“I know - and Raven hasn’t since she got burned a couple of years ago - has she told you about that?”

“Yeah - I’m seriously not a fan of this Finn guy - he hurt so many people.”

“But it brought us together as well. I got my daughter and best friend out of it - so assuming I never have to see him again - I’m okay with this.” Clarke shrugged. “I’m just saying, if you wanted something more lasting - Raven isn’t a bad choice. She’s good on paper too, well educated, great job, with all the benefits - she’s an actual rocket scientist with NASA - she loves kids, and she has a heart of gold.”

“I know. But what we have now, it works for us.” Anya said.

“I get it. Just go with the flow.” Clarke agreed. “Just make sure the two of you talk. I don’t want to see Raven hurt.”

“So now it’s your turn to give me the shovel talk.”

“Raven doesn’t need me to do that for her. If you hurt her, just remember that her favourite pastime is making things go boom.” Clarke laughed. “Don’t worry though, if anything happened to you, Lexa and I would obviously take good care of your kids.”

“Funny.” Anya rolled her eyes.

“Mama!” Tris had broken away from the group as soon as she realised that Anya had made it onto the beach.
“Hey monster.” She wrapped an arm around her daughter. “Having fun?”

“Yeah, we’re burying Raven.” Tris giggled.

“I can see that.” Anya laughed. “Do you want to go keep helping?”

“I wanna stay with you.” She shook her head emphatically.

“Ok monster.”

“So Tris are you excited to have a baby brother?” Clarke asked.

“Yeah, but he's not very nice.” She shrugged.

“Why's that?”

“He makes mama sick and tired all the time, so she can't play with me - and that's her favourite thing to do.”

“I guess that's fair. I don't think he means to make your mama sick though - it's a lot of work for mama's body to grow a baby.”

“So he's not bad at sharing?”

“He's not really anything yet.” Clarke explained. “But your mama is pretty amazing because she's growing a person in her belly.”

“Yeah. My friend Caleb’s mommy grew a baby in her tummy too. And now he has a little brother who steals all his cars. - but I don't like cars, so that won't happen with my brother.”

Clarke laughed, she loved the single track causal logic of young children. “I guess you're right.”

“Mama, can we go mini-golfing? Raven said there's a place not very far.”

“Sure thing.” Anya agreed. “Should we all go, or just the three of us?”

“Everyone.” She decided.

“Let's go and see what Lexa thinks.” Anya steered their path to join the others.

“Aunty Lexa, can we all go mini golfing?” Tris asked, running ahead.

“Sure little monster.” Lexa nodded. “How about tomorrow?”

“Yeah!” The children cheered.

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It was getting late one afternoon a few days after the others arrived, Clarke had taken Charlotte and Aden to the library, Tris and Costia were napping in the hammock with Anya, leaving Raven and Lexa alone.

“Are you aware that Clarke's birthday is coming up?” Raven asked.

“She hasn't said anything.” Lexa shook her head.

“She's not a big fan of her birthday. Her dad passed away about a week after her birthday - so they
can make her a little sad.”

“When is it?”

“Thursday.”

“Okay. I'll think of something special for her.” Lexa nodded.

- 

Lexa took Charlotte and the twins to the mall early the next morning to help her pick out a gift. Lexa had already decided what she would get for Clarke, but she knew Charlotte would want to choose a gift for her as well.

“What are you going to do for mum’s birthday?” Charlotte asked as they wandered the mall.

“Well, I was thinking that it might be nice if she and I spent a nice relaxing day together, while you three go with everyone else to the wildlife park, and then I thought we might have dinner just the five of us and take her for a walk along the beach before we give her our presents.” Lexa told them.

“I think she'd like that.” Charlotte nodded. “We should get her a bath bomb, to help her relax.”

“Great plan.” Lexa agreed steering them into the Lush store as they passed by.

The day of Clarke's birthday arrived and Lexa had everything perfectly planned. She held off on all mention of her birthday, but arranged a lunch date for just the two of them, and sent everyone else out for the day.

They walked along the beach and had lunch at Caris’ parents’ Italian restaurant in town, followed by a walk back along the beach. “Thank you for lunch.” Clarke sighed happily as they climbed the steps to the deck of the beach house.

“It was my pleasure.”

“I love the kids, but it's nice to have time just for us too.”

“You know - we have the whole place to ourselves for at least another few hours.” Lexa suggested.

“Even better.” Clarke agreed as she tugged Lexa upstairs to their bedroom. They lost two hours to exploring each other's bodies - despite them being well mapped terrain at this point. Sated and content Lexa went to fill the bathtub, lighting her favourite scented candles and dropping Clarke's favourite bath bomb onto the water.

“This is why I love you.” Clarke hummed happily as she followed Lexa's call into the bathroom.

“Love you too.” Lexa smiled as she slid into the tub and held a hand up for Clarke to join her.

Clarke was certain that the tub had magical heat retaining properties, because the water did not seem to cool as they laid there just relaxing into one another.

They finally made their way back downstairs when they heard the others arrive home. Lexa had given Denae the evening off, and Anya decided that she and Raven were taking Tris to see a movie (all part of Lexa's plan), leaving just their family of five at home.

Lexa cooked while Clarke listened to the children's stories from the day, they were so excited, bouncing around her as they all spoke at once. Lexa kept up with the pretense that it was just another
ordinary day until they'd finished dessert. She suggested they go for a walk along the beach since it was a nice night.

Lexa led the way along the beach past Elaine and Nyko’s house. The moon was full, offering them enough light for their walk. They continued along the beach to the pier that marked the end of the commercial part of town. The end of the pier was lit with strings of fairy lights, giving the whole area a warm glow. Clarke loved the view out to sea from the top of the pier so they walked out to the very end.

Clarke leaned into Lexa, taking in the view, watching the waves crash against the rocks below. “Thank you for today, it's been perfect.” Clarke sighed happily.

“Anything for you my love.” Lexa kissed her just behind her ear. “I know you don't really celebrate your birthday, but I wanted to give you a great day all the same.”

“Thank you - and thank you for not making a big deal of my birthday.”

“It was my pleasure.” Lexa smiled. “I did get you a gift, but it’s very small.” She said as she reached into her pocket. She dropped to one knee as she opened the small box. “Clarke Elizabeth Griffin, I love you more than I ever expected to love anyone again. You have the kindest soul of anyone I’ve met. I know we’ve talked about this, but I still have to ask. Will you marry me?”

“Yes.” Clarke couldn’t help the tears that filled her eyes. “I can’t wait to marry you.” She tugged Lexa to her feet to kiss her. “I love you.” She said, their foreheads and noses still pressed together.

Lexa slid the ring onto Clarke's finger before turning to the children. “What do you think?”

“Are you married now?” Costia asked.

“Not yet monkey.” Lexa chuckled. “Next we have to decide when we want to have the wedding, and where.”

“Right here, on this beach, as soon as possible.” Clarke answered.

“Ok, sounds perfect to me.” Lexa agreed.

“I have to give you my present.” Charlotte said. She held a hand out to Lexa, who produced a second small box.

“What is it baby girl?” Clarke was surprised that Charlotte had picked jewellery for her, but that was what the box suggested.

“You have to open it. Lexa helped me pay for it, but I picked it.”

Clarke popped open the box. Inside was a platinum chain with a small disc pendant that had Charlotte's name and year of birth engraved on it. “I love it.” Clarke hugged her daughter. “Thank you so much baby.”

“We have something for you too.” Costia said. “Mama.” She held out her hand.

Lexa passed smaller boxes to each of the twins. “There is one more thing that I want to ask you.” She began. “You are an amazing mother, I know Charlotte agrees.”

“The best.” Charlotte nodded.

“Clarke, in addition to marrying me - would you adopt my twins?” Costia and Aden flipped open
their boxes to reveal pendants that matched Charlotte's, but with their own names and birth year.

“Really?” Clarke's eyes welled with tears again as she pulled the twins into a hug. “I would love that.” She kissed their cheeks. “I love you both so much.” She threaded the pendants onto the chain and fastened it around her neck.

“Charlotte, if it's okay with you, I'd like to adopt you as well.” Lexa said. “I was hoping we could include the signing of the adoption papers in our ceremony.” She glanced to Clarke who nodded, crying without restraint.

“You want me forever?” Charlotte asked.

“Of course sweetheart.” Lexa pulled her into a hug. “I love you.”

They ended up in a group hug, both Lexa and Clarke on their knees with the children on either side. Clarke was the one to finally stand, Aden leaned heavily against her legs.

“Mama, do we have to walk anymore?” He asked with a yawn.

“We can go home now monkey.” Lexa nodded. “Want a piggyback?” Clarke lifted Aden onto Lexa's back before taking the girls’ hands for the walk home.

Everyone was waiting for them on the deck when they arrived back at the beach house. Tris was half asleep in Raven’s lap, even Caris, Elaine and Nyko had joined the group sitting out on the deck - waiting for their return.

“So?” Raven demanded.

Clarke rolled her eyes and held up her left hand to show off the ring. “I said yes.” She laughed.

“Oh my god!” Anya shouted. “What?”

“Patience isn't my strong suit.” Lexa shrugged. “We knew what we wanted, so why wait?”

“Have you discussed when and where?”

“Before the end of the summer, and right here on the beach.” Clarke said.

“Oh sure, because it's not like months of planning goes into a wedding.” Raven joked.

“We haven't discussed exactly what we want yet, but we can make it happen.” Lexa shrugged.

“Now, we need to get the kids to bed.”

Clarke made her way back downstairs once the children were asleep. She poured herself a glass of wine and headed out to the back deck.


“Thank you.”

“Lexa spoke to us, about you adopting the twins.” Elaine began, taking Clarke's hand in her own. “We've watched you with them over the time here, and it's obvious that you love them.”

“I do, I fell for them just as quickly as I fell for Lexa.” Clarke nodded.
“We know.” Nyko nodded.

“We just wanted you to know, you have our blessing.” Elaine finished.

“Thank you.” Clarke said. “I don't want to replace your daughter - and it's important to Lexa that the twins know as much about Costia as they want - but I promise to love them like my own.”

“We have no doubt you will.” Elaine nodded. “Cosi was so worried that Lexa would close herself off and never let anyone love her again. She didn't want that - she would love you though.” Elaine paused, sucking in a deep breath. “Lexa changed after we lost Cosi - she lost some of her spark - but with you and Charlotte in her life, we've got that old Lexa back. It's good to see.”

“Thank you.” Clarke pulled Elaine into a hug. Clarke's phone rang loudly and she pulled away. “Sorry, it's my mother.” She told the twins’ grandparents.

“You have plenty to tell her.” Elaine said, waving Clarke's apology aside.

Clarke nodded in agreement as she stepped away from the group to take the call. “Hi mum.”

“Happy birthday sweetheart.” Abby said.

“Thanks.”

“How has your day been?”

“Perfect.” She sighed happily. “Lex and I spent the day together, just the two of us, and then we had dinner just us and the children. After dinner we went for a walk along the beach and she proposed.”

“She did?”

“Yeah.”

“Isn't that a bit fast?”

“Probably?” Clarke laughed. “I said yes.”

“As long as you're happy.” Abby told her.

“I've never been happier. She asked me to adopt the twins, and she told Charlotte that she wants to adopt her too.”

“Then I'm over the moon for you.” Clarke could hear the smile in Abby's voice.

“We haven't set a date for the wedding yet, but we want to do it here, before the summer finishes.” Clarke said. “You'll be able to make it, right?”

“I have a week off coming up, I was going to ask if your offer to stay at the beach house still stood?”

“Of course. Text me the dates you're coming?”

“Sure.” Abby agreed. “I should let you get back to celebrating. Talk to you soon.”

“Thanks mum. I love you.”

“I love you too.”

“Your mother?” Raven asked, leaning into Clarke's side. They both had their forearms propped on
the railing of the deck, watching the moonlight on the waves.

“Yeah.” Clarke looked at her screen as a message came through. “And that's the week we'll be doing the wedding.” She decided. “Mum’s coming to join us.”

“Anya and I are here for the rest of the summer.” Raven agreed. “When does O get here?”

“Another two weeks. She and Lincoln don't have as long off as we do.” She opened her calendar. “And Indra will drive down with Ontari then, so that looks like our perfect window.”

“Okay.” Raven nodded.

“I have to call uncle Marcus, see if he can make it.”

“I'll leave you to it.”

“Before you go.” Clarke pulled Raven back. “I'm going to ask Charlotte to be my maid of honour, but will you help her out? And the speech is all yours.”

“Of course.” Raven hugged her friend.

“Thank you.”

“I'm happy for you.” Raven hugged her friend. “You deserve to be this happy all the time.”

“So do you.”

“I'm getting there.” Raven admitted quietly. “Call Marcus.”

“I should talk to Lexa first.” She made her way across the deck to where Lexa was talking with Anya, sitting on the swing. She took a seat at Lexa's side, snuggling up to her while she spoke to her sister.

“Hi love.” Lexa kissed Clarke's temple.

“Hi.” Clarke smiled. “Can we talk dates?”

“For the wedding?”

“Yeah. I just spoke to my mother, and she's coming down that week.” Clarke pointed it out on her calendar. “Everyone should be here that week.”

“Is there anyone else you want to invite?”

“Just Marcus. I don't need a big wedding.”

“But do you want one?” Lexa pulled back just slightly to look at her fiancee.

“If we had a big wedding I would spend the whole time worrying about how Charlotte was coping with the crowd.” Clarke shook her head. “I would much rather have a small wedding - just our family.”

“Perfect.” Lexa agreed. “Call Marcus and make sure he can make it, and then we can get into the planning tomorrow.”

“Will do.” Clarke kissed Lexa's cheek. “I love you.”
“You'd better - you just agreed to marry me.” She joked. “I love you too.”

Clarke made her way inside to call Marcus.

“Princess, awfully late to be calling, isn't it?”

“Bellamy.” Clarke felt some of her good mood dissipate. “Awfully late for you to still have your boss’ phone.”

“Bellamy, who’s calling?” She heard Marcus in the background.

“Nothing that can't wait, sir.” Bellamy responded.

“Bellamy, give Marcus the phone.”

“It's been a very long day for the senator, I'll place you on the callback list for tomorrow.”

“When you're done with that call Bellamy, I need my phone - it's Clarke's birthday.” She heard her uncle continue.

“Oh - she's actually who is on the line.” The smugness dropped out of Bellamy’s voice and she heard the phone being passed from one hold to another.

“Clarke? You know I'm meant to call you on your birthday.” Marcus joked.

“Well I had something I needed to ask you.” She told him.

“On my favourite niece's birthday? What can I do for you?”

“Can you clear a couple of days during the week of the 28th?”

“Bellamy, pass my diary.” She heard him say. “Okay, the 28th you said?”

“Anytime that week.” Clarke confirmed.

“I have a meeting I don't want to take on the Thursday, and I could move everything on the Friday to earlier in the week. Would that work for you?”

“Perfect. I'm going to send you the address of Lexa's beach house.” She said. “We’re getting married.”

“Congratulations.”

“Thanks.” She smiled widely. “So you'll join us?”

“Nothing could stop me.” He promised. “So tell me how your day has been?”

Clarke refilled her wine glass and flopped onto the couch to relay the story of her day, her smile only growing. It really had been her best birthday ever.

-

Clarke was just finishing her phone call when everyone made their way inside. Nyko and Elaine ducked inside to bid Clarke goodnight before heading back to their house.

“Night babe, glad your birthday was a good one.” Raven smiled, her hand in Anya’s as they headed for the stairs.
“Night.”

Lexa sat down beside Clarke and leaned into her side. “How’d your chat with the Senator go?”

“Good. He can make it that week for the Thursday and Friday.”

“Okay.” Lexa nodded. “Ready for bed? Or do you want to keep talking wedding plans?”

“Have you told your mother? Or Lincoln? Because I haven't told O yet.” Clarke said.

“We should call them.” Lexa agreed as she reached for her phone.

Chapter End Notes

I love hearing what you think, so please let me know either I. The comments or over on tumblr at ineedhappyendings. Next chapter is mostly done so I shouldn't make you wait too long for it :)}
Wedding Preparations

Chapter Summary

Clexa plan and prepare for their wedding or; dresses and puppies and suits. Oh my!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Clarke and Lexa were the first ones up the following morning, and with barely three weeks to work with, they were in full wedding mode. Clarke had revealed a wedding Pinterest board, that she had previously kept set to secret, and they had picked their favourite ideas along with searching a few new ones.

Lexa and Anya were handling the local vendors, since they knew the area better, and Clarke was handling the aesthetics of the whole thing with her artist’s eye. They had agreed that the children would be their bridal party, with Anya and Raven as their witnesses. Clarke found a store in the next town that had the perfect outfits for the children, a little linen suit for Aden and matching dresses for Costia and Charlotte.

“Those are three very cute kids.” The shop assistant told her as the children all stood in front of Clarke in their outfits.

“They are, aren't they.” She smiled as she adjusted Aden’s tie. “You look amazing, all three of you. Are you happy with these?” She pointed to the mirror.

Aden walked closer to the mirror looking at himself in his suit. “I look cool.” He decided. His suit was a grey linen, breathable for the warm weather, it was paired with a white shirt and green tie that matched the girl's dresses.

“Here, try these.” Clarke handed him a pair of ray-ban style sunnies.

“Yeah.” He gave himself a thumbs up in the mirror.

“Perfect, go put your clothes back on.” Clarke smiled as she nudged him toward the change room.

“Costia, Charlotte?” She waved the girls over.

“It's like a princess dress.” Costia beamed, twirling so her skirt flared.

Clarke had picked matching dresses for the girls, they had pale green bodices and blue sashes with a-line skirts with green tulle overlays. “Charlotte?”

“It's pretty.” She smiled.

“Happy?” She asked them both.

“Yeah.” Costia nodded.

“Yep.” Charlotte agreed.
“Great, go get your clothes back on, and we'll go for ice cream.” Clarke shooed them back to the change room. She collected their outfits and handed them off to the sales assistant.

“So what's the occasion?” She asked casually.

“I'm getting married, they're going to be the bridal party.” Clarke said.

“Congratulations. When's the big day?”

“Three weeks from yesterday.” Clarke laughed. “We only got engaged yesterday, and didn't want to wait.”

“Well, good luck.”

“Thanks.” Clarke smiled as the children rejoined her at the counter. “Now, you have to keep your outfits a secret from mama, okay?” She told them.

“Why?” Aden pouted. “I want her to see my suit.”

“She will, and she'll love it, but it's going to be a surprise for her at the wedding, okay?”

“Yeah!” Costia cheered, she loved surprises.

The beach house was empty when they returned. Clarke sent the children upstairs to play before stashing their clothes in one of the spare rooms.

Clarke: Hey babe, we're back from our shopping trip. Where are you?

Clarke's phone rang almost instantly, Lexa's picture flashing up on her screen. “Hi babe, what's going on?”

“Um, well, Anya and I went for a walk along the beach.” Lexa began, her words more measured than usual.

“Is she alright? What happened?”

“Anya’s fine, the baby's fine - I'm fine too.”

“But?”

“We were down by the rock pools and I saw something caught in a sack. I thought it was a fish or something, so I tried to free it.”

“What was in the bag?” Clarke winced.

“A litter of puppies.”

“What?”

“Someone had dumped them there to drown. Only two of them were still alive. We're at the vet with them now.”

“Okay, what's the plan?” Clarke asked. They'd discussed the idea of getting the kids a pet, but they'd agreed to wait until the kids were all settled at their new school before throwing a puppy in the mix.
“They're really cute.” Lexa whined.

“So we’re keeping them?”

“No, we can't keep them both.” Lexa sighed. “Anya already called dibs on one.”

Clarke couldn't help but laugh at her fiancée’s childlike antics. “Okay.” She agreed. “What kind of dog is it?”

“The vet isn't sure, they're still a little too young to tell. He said that really they shouldn't even be weaned yet.”

“Poor babies.” Clarke sighed. “Want me to make a trip to the pet store? I can see Denae and Tris coming back up the beach now.”

“That'd be great actually. I'll send you pictures of the two of them.”

“Am I shopping for both puppies?”

“Yes please.”

“Does Tris know? Should I tell the kids?”

“I want to surprise them when we get back.” Lexa decided.

“Ok, send me pictures, and I'll let you know how I go at the store.”

“I love you.”

“Love you too.” Clarke smiled as she ended the call. She made her way downstairs to meet Denae and Tris as they made their way back inside. “How was the beach?”

“We found a crab!” Tris told her.

“Awesome.” Clarke hi-fived the six year old. “Charlotte and the twins are upstairs, why don't you go play too.”

“Okay.” Tris ran upstairs to join the fun.

“I have to go out, are you right with the kids for an hour or so?”

“Yeah, of course.” The nanny nodded. “Is everything okay?”

“Yeah, all fine. Oh god, you're not allergic to dogs are you?”

“You're getting them a dog?” Denae grinned, keeping her voice down to not alert the children.

“Lexa found a litter of puppies dumped in the rock pools. Only two survived. Anya is keeping one, we're keeping the other.” Clarke explained. “Just don't tell the kids - they have no idea.”

“Oh my god, I love it!”

“Good, I was afraid you'd think we were just adding to your workload.”

“But puppies.” Denae laughed.

“Alright. I'll be back soon.” Clarke chuckled. “Kids, I'm going to the grocery store, I'll be back soon
- Denae is here with you.” She called upstairs as she headed for the door, hoping that none of them decided to accompany her.

“Okay mum!” Charlotte called back.

-  

“Okay, you're all good to go, I'll grab you each a tin of puppy formula and if you have any issues please let me know - I'm here to help.” The vet smiled.

“Thanks.” Lexa scooped one puppy while Anya took the other. They followed the vet back into the reception where Lexa settled the bill before heading back to the car.

Lexa grabbed her phone to call Clarke again. “Hi love.”

“Hi, how'd the vet go?”

“We're about to head home how far off are you?”

“Only a few minutes from home.” She said. “How long will you be? Want me to wait outside for you? We can all go in together?”

“Perfect. We'll see you soon.”

Clarke pulled up beside Anya's car and began unloading the puppy supplies, ferrying the bags to the porch. Denae made her way out to help. “The kids are totally absorbed in their game.” She shrugged. “We can get things set up.”

Denae and Clarke went about setting up the crate Clarke had bought and outfitting it with everything the puppies would need. Lexa held the two puppies while Anya mixed up two bottles of the formula the vet had given them. Their plan was to feed the puppies and have them sleeping when the children came downstairs - so as not to overstimulate them right away.

“Okay, I'm going to get the kids.” Clarke nodded as Lexa set the two puppies in their crate and covered it with a blanket. She made her way upstairs to the play area where all four children were busy building with their legos. “Hey gang.”

“Hi mum.” Charlotte glanced up from the rocket she'd been building.

“Can I talk to you a minute, all of you?” She knelt down between Charlotte and Aden.

“Are we in trouble?” Costia asked.

“No monkey.” Clarke shook her head. “I actually came up here to tell you that we've got a very special surprise downstairs for you, but I need you to promise me that you'll be very quiet. Can you do that?”

“Why do we have to be quiet?” Tris asked.

“You'll see.” Clarke grinned. “Ready?” She took hold of Aden's hand and led the children down the stairs.

“Hey.” Lexa smiled. “Okay, you have to stay very quiet, because they're sleeping, but look what Anya and I found on the beach this morning.” Lexa carefully lifted one corner of the blanket that covered the crate.
“Are we keeping them?” Charlotte turned to Clarke with wide eyes.

“We sure are.” Clarke nodded. “Well, we are keeping one and Anya and Tris are keeping the other.” She corrected.

Lexa dropped the blanket. “They're very young babies right now, the vet thinks they're only a week or two old, so for now they might not seem like much fun. But there will be plenty of time to play with them once they're a little older.” She explained. “Right now, just like human babies, they're going to sleep a lot - don't hassle them while they're sleeping. Do you understand?”

“Yes mama.” The twins nodded.

“Good. Now, the more you help out with them over the coming weeks the better they will bond with you.” Anya explained. “But, you all need to share the responsibility, and you need to be very gentle with them.”

“Which one is our one?” Tris asked.

“We haven't decided yet.” Anya shrugged. “We’re going to all look after both puppies for now, and hopefully the decision will be clearer by the time we go back home.”

The choice between the puppies was an easy one they discovered. One of the puppies was instantly drawn to Anya, his tiny head resting on her belly, protecting the unborn baby. The other puppy didn't seem to notice, she had formed an attachment of her own to Charlotte.

“I'm naming him Ryder.” Anya decided, scratching his ears gently.

“Good choice.” Charlotte nodded. “I think her name should be Fish, because she keeps trying to swim in her water bowl.” She giggled.

“I like it.” Anya nodded.

“Mum, can Fish sleep in my bed?” Charlotte asked.

Clarke watched the puppy splashing in her water dish and laughed. “If she dries out by bedtime, sure.”

“So did you find clothes for the kids?” Anya asked.

“Yeah, wait until you see Aden in his suit.”

“Oh god, tiny suits.” Anya chuckled. “I can't wait until my guy is old enough for tiny suits.”

“You should have seen him, he was checking himself out in the mirror - I think he'll ask to wear it to school, he loved it - especially when I found him sunnies to go with it.”

“Oh my god, please send him to school in a suit.” Anya laughed. “So cute.”

“Speaking of your guy, seems he's got an admirer.” Clarke nodded to Ryder.

“Yep, he's not budging.” She shrugged. “I was actually hoping that he'd run around with Tris, since I can't. It might make this whole experience a little better for her.”

“He's still very young. Give him a couple of weeks and he'll run Tris ragged.”
“What did I miss?” Raven asked as she made her way out to join them.

“We got puppies.” Charlotte grinned.

“Seriously Clarke, I leave you unsupervised for one morning and suddenly there are puppies?” Raven joked.

“Hey, Anya has one too.” Clarke shrugged.

“Well okay then.” Raven inserted herself onto the swing, with Anya’s head in her lap. Ryder let out a tiny growl in protest. “Enough of that little guy.” Raven told the puppy.

Clarke was thoroughly enjoying watching Anya and Raven grow closer, their casual affection for one another was increasing daily, and she was certain that Raven had yet to sleep in a room other than Anya’s. She took out her phone and snapped a couple of quick photos of the two of them all wrapped up in the tiny puppy.

Lexa, Tris and the twins returned soon after. Charlotte and Fish were curled up asleep in the hammock and Ryder was still napping on Anya’s chest. “Where’s the puppy?” Costia wanted to know.

“They’re sleeping, they’re still babies so for now they’re going to sleep a lot.” Clarke told her.

“Did Aunty Anya pick which puppy she wants to keep?” Aden asked.

“I think Ryder picked her.” Clarke chuckled.

“How did your shopping trip with the kids go?” Lexa asked.

“Really easy, I bought all three outfits.” Clarke smiled. “And I have sashes for each of us, to tie the whole look together. I wasn’t sure what you were planning outfit wise, so yours can be altered to be a belt or a tie, or whatever.”

“A sash will work.” Lexa nodded. “Anya and I went to a tailor today.”

“Any hints?”

“Nope.” Lexa teased.

“Okay.” Clarke laughed “Raven and I are going to go dress shopping tomorrow.”

“My lawyer is coming down on Monday, we’ll sort all the adoption paperwork then.”

“I was thinking we should make little adoption certificates - like our wedding certificate - for the kids.”

“I like it.” Lexa agreed.

“I’ll make something up.” Clarke decided. “Is there any other paperwork we need to do with your lawyer?”

“We could probably sort out the licence at the same time.” Lexa nodded.

“You don't want me to sign a prenup?” Clarke asked.
“Absolutely not.” Lexa shook her head as she pulled Clarke into her lap, her arms going around the blonde's neck. “I trust you.”

“Okay.” Clarke nodded, resting her forehead against Lexa's.

“We should talk finances though.” Lexa said. “Does Charlotte have a college fund?”

“Yeah.” Clarke nodded. “It probably won't cover everything, but it's a start.”

“I have a college funds, and trust funds set up for each of the twins, and Tris, I'd like to set Charlotte up as well.” Lexa continued.

“Thank you.”

“No need to thank me.” Lexa smiled. “I love that little girl, I want her to have the world.”

“You're the best.” Clarke closed the distance between their lips, letting them fall into each other. Neither tried to escalate the situation, more than content to just make out.

“Eww, gross.” Anya joked as she wandered into the house, seeing the two of them on the lounge - Clarke straddling Lexa. “What if the children saw?”

“Then they'd know their mamas love each other.” Lexa retorted, flipping Anya the bird before going back to kissing Clarke.

“You're impossible.” Anya laughed as she grabbed a jug of juice from the fridge and headed back outside with a stack of plastic tumblers.

Clarke couldn't hold in her giggles and broke away to rest her forehead on Lexa's shoulder. “There are too many people in this house.”

“And we've got six more still to come.” Lexa agreed.

“Mama? Is it time for Fish’s bottle?” Costia interrupted them, most likely at Anya's direction.

“Not quite baby girl.” Clarke answered.

“Okay, Aunty Anya said Fish wants to stay with you.” She held the puppy out for Clarke to take.

“Thanks monkey.” Lexa chuckled.

“Also, Denae says it's going to storm this afternoon.”

“I have the perfect plan.” Clarke decided. “You go back and keep playing, mama and I will set everything up in here.”

“Okay.” Costia agreed and ran back outside.

“Did Anya seriously just send a puppy to cock-block us?” Lexa sighed.

“Can it really be cock-blocking if there's no cock?” Clarke teased. “Plus, look at her little face.” She held Fish up for Lexa to see.

“Yeah, she's pretty cute.” Lexa grumbled.

“Now come on, you need to help me set this up.”
“But someone needs to give Fish snuggles.” Lexa pouted, taking the puppy.

“You're ridiculous.” Clarke laughed.

“Yeah, well you already agreed to marry me. No take-backsies.” She stuck out her tongue and Clarke just laughed. “You love me.”

“I do. You loser.” She kissed Lexa’s nose before getting up and heading to the cupboard under the stairs.

- 

By the time the storm arrived Clarke had transformed the living area into what she called a fairy cinema. She had found an old projector in the cupboard which she hooked up to her laptop. She had pulled the curtains and tacked two white sheets up on one wall as their screen. The only lights were strings of fairy lights, and she’d pushed the couch back as covered the floor with blankets, cushions and beanbags.

“Can we do this at home too?” Costia asked.

“Sure monkey.” Clarke nodded, pulling the girl into her lap and hugging her.

“How about in the basement?” Lexa suggested. “It's just wasted space down there.”

“We can make it a sleepover room.” Clarke decided. “We’ll add it to our list of projects.”

“What other projects?” Costia asked.

“I was thinking we could redecorate your rooms, since you and Aden are about to start school.” Clarke told her.

“Really?” Aden asked as he climbed into Clarke's lap as well.

“Yep, anything you want.” Clarke agreed.

“Can I have a bed with a slide?” He asked.

“You bet.” Clarke pulled him in to kiss his cheek. “And we can paint murals all over your walls, we’ll do Charlotte's room too.” Charlotte was cuddled into Lexa’s side, she nodded.

“You better have picked a good movie Griff.” Raven said.

“Star Wars.” She nodded as she reached back to hit play.

“I haven't seen Star Wars.” Aden said.


“Who’s having hot chocolate?” Denae asked as she brought a tray down to them.

Lexa dragged her beanbag closer to Clarke's, draping one arm around the blonde. Charlotte climbed into Lexa's lap with Fish in her arms. “This, right here, this is my favourite.” Lexa hummed happily, turning to kiss Clarke's cheek.

“Mine too.” She agreed.
“Pfft, this is not even the best bit.” Raven huffed, tossing a handful of popcorn at them, her eyes glued to the screen.

“You're picking that up Reyes.” Clarke warned.

- 

“Hurry up Griff!” Raven called from the bottom of the stairs.

“I'm coming.” Clarke shouted back. “You have to let me go, or I'll have nothing to wear for our wedding.” She complained, detangling herself from Lexa's hold.

“I'm not opposed to you wearing nothing to our wedding.” Lexa shrugged.

“I'm pretty sure our mothers will object.” Clarke laughed.

“Do we have to invite them?”

“We already have.” Clarke rolled her eyes. “The sooner you let me go, the sooner I'll be back.”

“Fine, but I'm doing so under protest.” Lexa huffed.

“Love you.” Clarke kissed her fiancée’s cheek before leaving their bedroom and heading downstairs.

“Clarke, can we come too?” Costia asked, she and Tris both smiling sweetly.

“You want to help me pick my dress?”

“Yeah.” Tris nodded.

“Did you tell your mamas?” She asked the girls.

“Mama's still asleep, but Rae said we can leave her a note.”

“Okay, Cos, go tell your mama you're coming with me okay?”

“Okay.” Costia took off running up the stairs. “Mama says we have to take her too.” Costia called from the landing a moment later, Lexa pouting behind her.

“Lexa.” Clarke rolled her eyes. “Come on monkey.” She held a hand out for her.

“I've texted Anya.” Raven said.

“You're taking Tris too?” Lexa asked, it was unusual for Tris to want to go anywhere without Anya.

“She wants to come.” Raven shrugged. “Anya won't mind.”

“Come on,” Clarke steered the group toward the door. “Lex, I'm taking your car.” She called as she grabbed Lexa's keys.

Charlotte was sitting on the porch with Fish, feeding her a bottle. “Hey squish.” Raven grinned.

“How's Fishy?”

“She's good.” Charlotte nodded.

“We’re going dress shopping, want to come?” Clarke offered.
“No thanks, I want to stay with Fish.” She shook her head.

“Okay baby girl.” She stopped to kiss her forehead. “Lexa is here if you need anything, Denae and Anya too.”

“I'll be fine.”

“Okay, love you.”

“Love you too.” She waved as they headed for the car.

Caris had recommended a couple of stores a few towns over for them to start at. Tris and Costia chattered the whole way about dresses, Raven had found them a bridal magazine at a store in town just so she could listen to their very serious discussions about the various dresses.

“How many people are coming to the wedding?” Tris asked.

“Well, not including the bridal party, thirteen.” Clarke said.

“But all these pictures have lots of people.” Costia said.

“Some people do invite lots of people to their wedding, all their friends and lots of family, and some people just go to the courthouse with themselves and their witnesses.” Clarke explained. “Every wedding is different, because every couple is different. Lexa and I just want all the most important people in our lives there with us.”

“Oh, so we'll know everyone?” Tris asked.

“You haven't met my mother, or my uncle Marcus yet, but you'll know everyone else.”

“I've met them.” Costia said.

“Yes monkey, you've met them.” She chuckled.

“Are you going to get a really big princess dress?” Costia asked.

“I don't think that'll be very practical on the beach, do you?”

“What's practical?” Costia asked.

“Exactly munchkin.” Raven laughed. “Practical doesn't matter for a wedding.”

“It means that a big princess dress will probably get a little bit ruined if I wear in on the beach.” Clarke said. “Plus, all those layers would get very hot in the sun.”

“Oh yeah.” Costia agreed.

-

The first store had three giant puffy dresses that were about ten years past fashionable and a sales assistant who practically laughed them out of the store when Clarke said that the wedding was less than three weeks away.

The second store was more promising, or at the very least it had dresses she was willing to try on. Clarke was quickly pushed into the fitting room while Raven and the shop assistant collected every dress in her size.
“So what's the occasion?”

“I'm getting married in two and a half weeks.” Clarke grimaced, having been put off by the previous store.

“Okay, I like a challenge.” The assistant laughed. “Let's find you a wedding dress. So, first thing’s first. Talk to me about colours, white? Off white? Not white at all?”

“Probably something in the realm of white.” She shrugged.

“How formal are we going?” She asked.

“I actually have no idea what Lexa’s wearing. But I want something that looks like a wedding dress.”

“Okay, full length? Or would something shorter be okay too?”

“I'm flexible.”

“Okay, let's get you into the first one, and go from there.” She grabbed a dress and handed it to Clarke. “Now, we're going to get pretty well acquainted through this, so I'm Jess.”

“I'm Clarke.”

“Alright, well, you go ahead and slip that on, don't worry about trying to do it up, I'll do that. Just let me know when you're ready.” Jess told her.

The first dress would have looked great, if she was about a foot taller, or if she were Lexa, but as it was, she was less than pleased with the shape. - and her face told Jess as much almost instantly. The second through fourth dresses went much the same way. “Sorry, I feel like I'm being difficult.” Clarke sighed.

“Not at all. We want you to love your wedding dress, I mean you're going to be looking at those pictures forever, right?”

“Exactly.” Raven agreed.

“Alright, well, you go ahead and slip that on, don't worry about trying to do it up, I'll do that. Just let me know when you're ready.” Jess told her.

The first dress would have looked great, if she was about a foot taller, or if she were Lexa, but as it was, she was less than pleased with the shape. - and her face told Jess as much almost instantly. The second through fourth dresses went much the same way. “Sorry, I feel like I'm being difficult.” Clarke sighed.

“Not at all. We want you to love your wedding dress, I mean you're going to be looking at those pictures forever, right?”

“Exactly.” Raven agreed.

“Okay.” Clarke nodded. “Next dress.” She'd abandoned modesty by that point, she couldn't be seen by the shop floor, but she had stopped closing the fitting room door at all. She took the next dress and stepped into it, waiting for Jess to make her adjustments and to fasten it.

“Rae, how about this dress?” Costia called from the other side of the store.

“I don't hate that one.” Raven shrugged before going to find Costia and Tris.

Jess ran Clarke through some alteration options to change the dress up a bit, gathering and blocking to show the various looks. “Thoughts?”

“The more I look at full length dresses the more I think that maybe I do want something shorter.” Clarke mused.

“Okay, these kids are little geniuses, look what they found.” Raven announced as she returned with two dresses and the children trailing behind her.

“Try mine first!” Tris begged.
“Okay.” Clarke chuckled as she slid out of the dress they’d been looking at and took the dress Tris was pointing to.

The dress Tris had chosen was a little shorter than the traditional fifties tea-length dresses, it had a solid white a-line skirt and a lace bodice. “Do you like it?” Tris asked worriedly as Clarke inspected it still on its hanger.

“I do.” She nodded before sliding it off the hanger and pulling it on. She looked at it in the mirror and had to admit, it was almost perfect, if only it fit a little better across her shoulders. She had the distinct feeling that if she moved too much, or lifted her arms, then the seams would give way - and the chances of her getting through her wedding without lifting at least one of the twins were slim at best.

“The fit isn’t quite right there, is it?” Jess commented, running one hand along the shoulders.

“It’s a little tight.” Clarke nodded. “But otherwise, we’re on the right track.

“Try mine, try mine!” Costia said.

“Okay.” Clarke agreed. “Tris, I really like this dress, but it’s a little bit small. You made an excellent choice though - thank you.”

Clarke handed the dress back to Jess before taking the second dress from Raven. It had a more fitted shape to it, finishing just below her knees. The neckline was low - in a way she knew Lexa would love - and the whole thing was constructed of an ivory lace, that had an almost peach quality to it.

“How are you feeling?” Raven asked.

“I’m good.” Clarke shrugged. “I’m not an ‘all about the dress’ kind of girl, as long as we find a dress that is comfortable and looks good, I’ll be happy.”

“Yeah, well you could show up in a potato sack and Lexa would still stare at you with those big ol’ heart eyes of hers.” Raven rolled her eyes.

“She could do the same and I wouldn’t care either.” She said. “As long as she shows up, and says ‘I do’ nothing else matters.”

“Says this girl?” Clarke opened a photo on her phone and held it up for Raven to see. It was a shot of Raven and Anya that neither knew was being taken, their heads were together and small smiles played on their faces as they talked quietly to each other. “Tell me that you’re not just as adorable.”
“You’re impossible.” Raven huffed.

“Okay, try these.” Jess said, adding three more dresses to the rack of ones they’d already rejected. The first two were not quite right in ways that none of them could quite articulate and were quickly added to the growing ‘no’ pile. The final dress was possibly the worst of the lot, so bad that Clarke dissolved into helpless giggles.

“There’s the potato sack - if you want to test Lexa’s resolve.” Raven howled.

“Clarke, I don’t like that one.” Costia scrunched her face, which only made Clarke laugh harder.

“Oh, not that one then.” Jess giggled. “I have a dress out the back - it’s not entirely finished, it’s just something I’ve been playing with when the store’s quiet.”

“Anything has got to be better than this.” Clarke gestured to the dress that was shapeless in all the wrong places.

“Okay, just know that this one isn’t technically for sale.” She called back over her shoulder. “I mean, if you like it I can totally sell it to you - but my boss would kill me.”

“I won’t tell if you don’t.” Clarke winked. She slid out of the monstrosity, handing it back to Raven quickly to put it back onto the hanger.

“Alright, try this.” Jess helped Clarke into the final dress.

“I love this.” Clarke decided. The bodice wasn’t completely attached to the skirt and it was yet to be properly hemmed, but the shape and the fit were perfect. The v of the neckline incorporated the shape of the lace to give a scalloped edge, the straps were large enough that a bra wouldn’t be an issue - something she knew she had to keep in mind - but the lines were clean. There was a belt she could easily replace with her sash and the skirt had a relaxed flare.

“You do?” Jess gasped.

“I do.” Clarke nodded. “Can you finish it in time?”

“Of course.” She nodded frantically. “Let me just take some notes.” She ran back to the counter to grab her phone.

They spent the next half hour confirming the exact length and style of the hem, and ensuring that the finished product would fit perfectly. “Okay, so final detail.” Clarke said as she redressed in her own clothes.

“What did I forget?” Jess looked terrified for a moment.

“Price. How much do you want for the dress?”

“I hadn’t really thought that far, um, I don’t know?”

“Oh, don’t panic, it’s hard at first to tell someone what your work is worth.” Clarke knew the feeling all too well. “How much did the materials cost?”

“Um, about two hundred.”

“Oh, and how long have you spent on it?”

“About twelve hours?”
“And how many more will it take to finish?”

“Three or four?”

“And have you had training?”

“I just graduated from Parsons.”

“Okay, so you're a designer,” Clarke took out her phone. “Starting wage for a designer is sixteen dollars, but that's ridiculous, let's go with the median, that's thirty dollars an hour. So let's call it eighteen hours of work, plus materials, and what does your boss generally take in commission on the dresses sold in the store?”

“About thirty percent on the designer collections.”

“Okay, that takes us to nine hundred and sixty.”

“I couldn't charge you that.” Jess shook her head.

“Of course you can.” Clarke assured her. “If you want to make it anywhere as a designer, know your worth, because most people will undervalue you unfortunately.” She smiled. “You've been helpful, and you know what you're doing, and I'm going to make sure your boss knows about it, does the store have an Instagram account?”

“Uh, yeah - it's here, on our card.” She pulled a card from her pocket.

“Perfect.” Clarke snapped a picture of the rack of rejected dresses.

@clarkegriffin_artist: I think I've tried on every dress in the store, but the lovely Jess never wavered. I can't wait to show off the perfect dress on my big day! Thanks @hauteuniquedesigns for making it easy!

She hit post on the picture knowing that it would crosspost to her other platforms. “Okay, that should get you a little bit of good press at the very least.” She slid her phone back into her pocket.

“Thank you.” Jess said.

“Tell your boss that she should stock more of your designs. You're good.” Clarke told her. “Here's my card, my cell is on the back, call me if you need to do another fitting or once the dress is done. How much of a deposit would you need today?”

“Store policy is twenty five percent.”

“No trouble.” Clarke offered her card.

Octavia and Lincoln arrived two days after Clarke made the deposit on her dress - and Octavia was not impressed that Clarke had bought a dress without her. “We've planned our weddings a hundred times since we were kids!” She pouted.

“I have a fitting tomorrow morning, want to come?”

“Obviously.” She nodded.

“We leave at nine.”
“So early.”

“You literally wake up at five am every damn day.”

“But I'm on vacation.”

“And I'm getting married in two weeks.”

“Oh my god - when are we having your bachelorette party?”

“That's up to my maid of honour.” Clarke shrugged.

“You made Raven your maid of honour?”

“No, you know I couldn't choose between the two of you like that.” Clarke promised her oldest friend. “Charlotte is my maid of honour. We decided to just have the kids stand up with us.”

“Okay, I can live with that.” Octavia laughed. “Hey, Charlotte.” She called, beckoning the nine year old closer.

“What's up?”

“What are we doing for your mum's bachelorette party?”

“Aunty Rae has been helping me with it, but we're having a spa-day.” She beamed, clearly very proud of her idea.

“Great plan baby girl.” Clarke hugged her daughter. “Make sure you include all the girls - Lexa too.”

“What am I being included in?” Lexa asked, only hearing half of Clarke's request.

“My bachelorette party, let's just have a joint one, a girls’ day at a spa.”

“You can't invite your fiancée to your own hen’s party.” Octavia protested.

“Watch me.” Clarke shrugged.

“I like the sound of it.” Lexa nodded. “Count me in, but we have to bring Aden - that boy loves a good mani-pedi.”

“O, does Lincoln like spas? We could all go, I don't mind.”

“You think this skin just happens Griffin?” Lincoln joked as he came downstairs. “Count me in.”

“Brilliant. So that's what, fifteen of us for the spa day?” Clarke counted.

“Who's not coming? Elaine, Nyko and?”

“Caris since she'll be with her parents?”

“So Denae is coming?”

“She deserves a spa day.” Clarke nodded.

“I'll make the booking.” Anya volunteered. “There's the spa we went to a couple of years ago.”

“Yeah, it was great.” Lexa agreed.
“Okay, I have a dress fitting to get to. So I will see you later.” Clarke pulled Lexa in for a kiss.

“Can I come?” Charlotte asked.

“Of course you can.” Clarke held out a hand for her daughter.

“Us too!” Costia declared, taking Aden's hand.

“Alright. I have one seat left in the car, Tris?”

“I'm going to stay with mama.” She shook her head.


Indra and Ontari arrived six days before the wedding, and only a few hours ahead of Abby. Nyko and Elaine joined them for a cookout that same evening. Abby and Nyko found common ground almost immediately in their medical training and were soon chatting like old friends. Indra was laughing with Elaine in a manner that Clarke had not experienced from her soon to be mother in law.

“Clarke?” Ontari had been quiet most of the night, as she so often was. She sat down beside Clarke on the lounge.

“Hey, how was your ceramic course?” Clarke asked. “I hope you've got pictures to show me?”

“It was great. I wanted to say thank you for getting me a place.”

“No sweat. Honestly, I was happy to help.”

“I have some pictures.” She continued, taking out her phone.

“These are great.” Clarke told her. “Look at how much your technique improved.” She flicked back and forth through the pictures. “Are you thinking about going to art school?”

“I don't really know?” She shrugged.

“Polis University has a great art program.”

“Is that where you studied?”

“No, I went to NYU, but a couple of my old professors have moved to Polis now.”

“I'd need to get a scholarship, and I don't know if my grades are good enough to get one.” She shrugged.

“You've got time to really apply yourself,” Clarke assured her. “Mike runs classes throughout the year too - I'm sure he'd be happy to keep teaching you.”

“I don't know if Indra would keep paying for them - they're expensive.”

“There's no harm in asking.” Clarke suggested. “Or you could ask Mike if maybe you could work to reduce the cost of the classes - he could almost certainly use some help cleaning up.”

“I'll talk to Indra.” She nodded. “Was art school hard?”

“It was. I did a double degree course and then my masters, because I'm apparently a glutton for
punishment.” Clarke laughed. “The more you can practice in a broad range of skills now, the easier you will find things. A good eye takes time to develop, daily drawing practice will help though.”

“Do I have to be able to draw?”

“Yes. You don't have to be MC Escher, but basic life drawing, sketching.” Clarke nodded. “I've been spending an hour or two each morning painting or sketching while we've been here. Would you like to join me? I can give you some pointers, and practice is the only way to improve.”

“I'd like that.” Ontari smiled. “Thanks Clarke.”

“No trouble.” Clarke assured her. “So did Anya tell you about tomorrow?”

“No?”

“Lexa and I are having a joint bachelorette party, which Anya and Charlotte were in charge of.”

“That's an odd combination?” Ontari giggled.

“Yeah, anyway, we’re all going to a day spa.” She sighed. “We've got bookings for the steam rooms, hot pools, the whole lot.”

“I've never been to a spa.” Ontari said.

“I guessed as much. Don't worry, they're actually pretty great.” Clarke bumped her shoulder against Ontari’s playfully. “I thought I'd hate it the first time I went, but it was so relaxing.”

“Sounds like fun.” Ontari shrugged. “My counsellor says I should try new things - I don't think she meant a spa day, but whatever.” She let out a yawn.

“Go get some sleep.” Clarke told her. “You've got a big day of relaxing tomorrow.”

“Goodnight.” Ontari headed inside to the room she was sharing with Indra.

“She likes you.” Indra commented, taking Ontari’s vacated seat, Elaine and Nyko waving their farewells as they left for the evening. “Thank you for taking the time with her.”

“She's a good kid. She showed me her work from her ceramic class.”

“She's talented.” Indra nodded.

“She was asking me about art school.”

“I've been encouraging her to think about college for a while now.” Indra said. “When I decided I wanted to adopt Ontari, Lexa offered to pay her college tuition, but Ontari said no to the adoption.”

“I'd still give her the money.” Lexa shrugged as she came to join them. “She's still family.”

“You're a good girl Lexa.” Indra nodded.

“I'll talk to her about it.” Lexa said.

“Mike runs classes year round, she'd benefit from his teaching - but I think she's worried about the cost to you.” Clarke told Indra. “I suggested she talk to Mike about working for him - cleaning the studio, light admin work - to subsidise the cost.”
“I’ll pay.” Lexa said. “If you want her to work, to learn responsibility and commitment, then that’s up to you, but I'll cover the rest.”

“You’re sweet.” Clarke smiled, leaning into Lexa’s side.

“Yeah yeah, you’re both adorable, and great people and whatever.” Raven teased as she too joined them. “Now, is there an adult portion of your joint bachelorette party?”

“If there is, would you meet the requirements to attend?” Lexa quirked an eyebrow.

“Nicely put Lexa.” Abby laughed.

“Mama G! You’re meant to be on my side!” Raven whined.

“You’re not helping your cause.” Anya told her.

“Ugh. I’m bunking in with the kids tonight. They get me.” Raven huffed as she stormed off.

“She realises that she just proved us all right, right?” Lexa asked the group.

“So, we’re set to arrive at the spa at ten, and we’re booked for the whole day, we will need to leave here just after nine to make it on time.” Anya said. “Charlotte decided we should all go for breakfast beforehand, so we’re booked for the Waterfront at seven thirty.”

“If we have to get up that early, we should call it a night.” Clarke suggested.

“Good plan.” Lexa agreed as she stood, holding out a hand to lead Clarke to bed.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry it’s been forever, my real life gets in the way. I also got really sick and was hospitalised for a while. I’m recovered now, but it wiped me out for longer than I would have liked.
The Wedding

Chapter Summary

The title says it all really, Clexa get married and their summer vacation comes to an end.

Chapter Notes

I’m sorry! I’ve been working on this update for a while, I was planning to get it posted before I left on holiday, but that didn’t happen. So here is a chapter that I’m posting from my hotel room in Vegas, where I’m still recovering after The Dinah, and hoping that I’ll be human again in time for ClexaCon!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Caris agreed to watch the puppies for the day while everyone went to the spa. Indra and Ontari shared a ride with Raven, Anya and Tris, Denae and Abby rode with Clarke, Lexa and the children, leaving Lincoln and Octavia to follow in Lincoln’s Jeep.

Charlotte and Anya had decided on a basic package for everyone and a couples package for Clarke and Lexa. The children switched out among the adults throughout the day, mostly staying in the hot pools or the mani-pedi rooms.

“This is nice.” Clarke sighed happily as she and Lexa lay in an enormous mud bath. “Why don’t we do this sort of thing more often?”

“Because we have three children?” Lexa chuckled.

“Ah, right.” Clarke nodded. “Guess we’ll have to stick with our late night bubble baths.”

“I can live with that.” Lexa smiled.

“So is everything sorted for Thursday?”

“Caris’ parents are going to cater, we have chairs and tables Lincoln and Octavia are in charge of the music, and I pick up my outfit on Tuesday.”

“So you’re still not telling me what you’re going to wear?” Clarke pleaded. “Not even if it’s a dress or pants?”

“Nope.” Lexa smirked. “It’s a surprise.”

“You suck.” Clarke pouted.

“Not going to work.” Lexa shook her head.

Clarke was prevented from further interrogation of Lexa by the return of the attendant. “The massage therapists are ready for you, if you’d like to make your way to the tables?” She instructed. “Just get
yourselves situated comfortably, lying on your stomachs.”

The tables, set side by side, looked more like gurneys than massage tables, they were made of a hard plastic and had a gutter running around their edges. Clarke and Lexa made their way over to the tables and laid on their stomachs as instructed. The masseuses entered a moment later and got to work.

They were massaged in harmony, by the masseuses and jets of hot water, in a combination that almost liquified them both. It was possibly the most relaxed either of them had ever been and the hour long treatment passed before they knew it.

“My skin feels amazing.” Lexa marvelled as they dressed afterward.

“Mine too. That was amazing.” Clarke agreed.

They made their way through to the salon for their mani-pedis.

“Mama!” Aden called, waving with the hand not being tended to by the manicurist.

“Hey monkey.” Lexa greeted him.

“Clarke, can you help me pick a colour for my nails?” He asked. “I want them to match my tie.”

“Of course.” She agreed, taking the colour chart from him.

“You don’t mind his nails being coloured?” The manicurist asked.

“Not at all.” Lexa shrugged. “If he wants them painted that’s up to him.”

“I think this one, what do you think?” Clarke pointed to the colour that best matched his tie for the wedding.

“Yep.” He nodded. “That colour please.” He told the manicurist.

Despite Raven’s protests, neither Clarke nor Lexa caved to her demands for a night of debauchery prior to the wedding and the intervening days passed quickly. The morning of the ceremony Abby and Indra were in charge of setting up everything for the ceremony.

Clarke and Lexa spent the morning separated from one another. Clarke got the children ready while Lexa took a walk along the beach on her own. She was lost deep in her own thoughts, mainly thinking about Costia senior.

“Lexa!” Lexa turned from her seat on the rocks to see Laura approaching. “How are you?”

“I’m not interested in talking to you.” Lexa started to get up.

“Don’t be silly. We’ve been friends for too long for one fight to end everything.” Laura huffed as she sat beside Lexa. “I’m sorry that I upset you that night. I know that not all foster kids are as messed up as Clarke’s kid, I mean you and Anya are both pretty normal.”

Lexa let out a bark of humourless laughter. “Anya and I were every bit as ‘messed up’ as Charlotte.” She shook her head. “My biological father was a drug addict, have you ever seen someone suffering through suicide Tuesday? Because I have. The night I saw my parents for the last time I watched my father beat my mother to death. I was seven years old and couldn’t do a thing to help her because
he’d already broken both my arms.

“A neighbor called the police, but they arrived too late to save my mother. I was taken straight to hospital, I spent a few nights there, all alone with nothing but a stuffed bear one of the nurses gave me. When I was discharged they dropped me off with Indra while they found a more permanent arrangement for me. I was lucky with Indra - Anya became my protector, and my best friend. But I had nightmares for years, I can still see that night as clearly as anything in front of me.”

“I had no idea.” Laura said quietly.

“Of course not. It’s hardly a memory I share often.” Lexa shrugged. “Charlotte and I, we’re the lucky foster kids. We landed with someone who loves us, and who was willing to make the time to help us. But a loving home doesn’t instantly wipe out the trauma we suffered, it helps, but those scars last a lifetime.” Lexa sighed. “I’ve learned how to deal - but Charlotte is still working through her trauma - she’s learning how to cope and you kicked her while she was down.”

“I’m sorry.” Laura hung her head.

“It’s not me you need to apologise to. Like I said, I can handle it - Charlotte on the other hand-” Lexa trailed off. “She’s the one who deserves an apology.”

“I’ll stop by later.” Laura promised.

“Not today.” Lexa shook her head. “We’re busy today.”

“I saw the chairs and tables on the sand, are you having a party?”

“Clarke and I are getting married.” Lexa smiled. “Our whole family is here.”

“What about Costia?”

“Laura, Costia has been gone for more than four years now - she’s not coming back. I’ve accepted it, and you need to as well.” Lexa sighed. Laura and Costia had been friends as children - their families summering on the same beach.

“Sounds like you’re trying to convince yourself as much as me.” Laura shrugged as she stood. “It’s not too late to walk away.” She called as she left.

Lexa stared at the waves as they crashed over the rocks below her. Laura’s voice bounced off the walls of her mind, making her wonder for the first time if maybe she had moved too fast. Was she disrespecting Costia’s memory by remarrying? Would the twins resent her for replacing their biological mother?

“Lex?” Lincoln jostled her from her thoughts as he lowered himself to sit beside his sister. “You okay?”

“We saw Laura leave.” Anya added as she sat on Lexa’s other side.

“She implied I’m disrespecting Costia’s memory by remarrying.” Lexa said. “I’m not, am I?”

“Of course you’re not. She told you herself to find someone, to love again.” Lincoln pointed out, wrapping an arm around her shoulders.

“You don’t think Clarke and I moved too fast?”

“I think you’ve moved fast, but it was the right pace for the two of you.” Anya assured her. “She told
me she loved you after only a few weeks, and I could see that she meant it.”

“Clarke is genuinely one of the best people I’ve ever met, she loves you, and the twins, so much. She lights up whenever you’re around. And you do the same with her.” Lincoln said. “She’s a great mother, to the twins as much as Charlotte, she’s good for you.”

“Not to mention, she’s hot as hell.” Anya joked.

“Thanks.” Lexa laughed.

“Any time.” Anya bumped her shoulder against Lexa’s. “Now, let’s get you married.”

Lincoln stood and helped each of his sisters to their feet. “Clarke has the kids in the house, but Elaine and Nyko volunteered their house for you to get ready at - Anya already took your things over.” He said as they walked back up the beach toward the houses.

Lexa was the first one to enter the ceremony. She greeted the celebrant and ensured that all the paperwork was ready to go. Their family was seated and waiting, all smiling as widely as she herself was as they waited for Clarke and the children.

Abby was the last one to take her seat, she walked down the small aisle to hug Lexa before taking her spot at the end of the front row. Music began as the backdoor of the beach house opened.

Costia came first, carrying the box containing the rings. Her hair had been swept back from her face and left to hang down her back. She made sure to smile at each of the assembled guests as she made her way down the aisle to her mother.

“Do you like my dress?” She asked Lexa.

“I love it monkey.” Lexa nodded as she took the box. She held Costia’s hand as Charlotte took her turn.

The nine year old carried Fish, who was wearing a blue bow to match the color theme. She made her way quickly down the sand to stop beside Lexa.

The door opened again and Clarke made her way out, Aden on her hip. He had his head rested on her shoulder, and Lexa could tell right away that he wasn’t feeling well.

Clarke fixed her gaze on Lexa as she made her way down from the deck and down the aisle. Lexa had outdone all of Clarke’s expectations with her custom tailored white halter necked jumpsuit, her blue sash perfectly accenting her waist. Clarke carried Aden until they had almost reached the front before putting him down so he could properly show off his suit as he covered the last few paces on his own.

“You feeling okay?” Lexa asked, crouching down to cup his cheek.

“Just tired.” He nodded.

“Go sit up.” Lexa pointed him toward the remaining seats between Abby and Indra. Costia and Charlotte each paused to hug Clarke before taking their seats as well.

Clarke made her final steps toward Lexa. “Hey you.” She smiled.

“You look gorgeous.” Lexa told her.
“You look pretty good yourself.” Clarke reached out to take both of Lexa’s hands. “Ready?”

“Absolutely.” Lexa nodded, turning to the celebrant.

“Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today to witness the joining of these two women in matrimony.” The celebrant began.

Neither Clarke nor Lexa took in much of the beginning of the ceremony, they were lost in each other’s eyes, smiling goofily at each other. It wasn’t until they were directed to exchange their vows that they zoned back in.

“Lexa.” The celebrant prompted.

“Clarke Elizabeth Griffin, you are phenomenal. I've never encountered anyone who shares the depth of your compassion and kindness. I was broken when we met, crudely mended, my cracks still showing. You have filled in every single one of those cracks, you've made it so no one would know I was broken.” She smiled, looking Clarke directly in the eyes. “I can't wait to wake up beside you every day for the rest of our lives, to share a life with you, and to raise our children together. I promise to love you more with each day, I promise to respect you and to trust you unconditionally, I promise to be right there at your side even when you deviate from the plan, from this day forward, from now until forever.”

“Clarke.”

“Alexandria Renee Woods, you are a force of nature, you possess the strength of a tide and the gentle persistence of a stream. You are so intelligent, so passionate, and so incredibly humble. You have a huge heart and you are an amazing mother. I promise to stand at you back when you need support, to stand in front of you when you need protection and by your side at all times. I chose you, every day, in this life and the next. I chose our family over the world. I love you.”

“Please repeat after me. I Alexandria Renee Woods.”

“I Alexandria Renee Woods.”

“Take you, Clarke Elizabeth Griffin.”

“Take you Clarke Elizabeth Griffin.”

“To be my wife.”

“To be my wife.”

“In good times and bad, from this day forward.”

“In good times and bad, from this day forward.” Lexa pushed the wedding band into Clarke's finger.

“I Clarke Elizabeth Griffin.”

“I Clarke Elizabeth Griffin, take you Alexandria Renee Woods to be my wife, in good times and bad, from this day forward.” Clarke didn't need to hear it all again, she pushed Lexa's ring into place with a smile.

“Ladies and gentlemen, by the power vested in me, I now pronounce the couple before me married. Congratulations, you may kiss your bride.”

Clarke's arms went around Lexa's neck as she pulled her wife into their first married kiss. “I love you
“I love you more.” Their foreheads rested together and the world melted away for that moment. “Ready for the next bit?” Lexa whispered.

“So ready.” Clarke agreed, taking one last breath before stepping back.

“We have one final portion to today’s ceremony. Lexa.”

“Charlotte, would you come here please.” Lexa held out her hand for the nine year old and helped her up onto a wooden box so she could look her directly in the eye. “From the first time I met you, I knew you were special. We share a similar story, we both got off to a rough start in life, until we were taken in by someone who knows that love is the most important part of any family. The more time I spend with you, the more I learn about you, the more I love you. You are clever, funny, and so kind, and I love you. I promise, today in front of our family to love you every day of my life without conditions or limits, I promise to support and protect you no matter what. I promise to be your mama, forever.” She pulled Charlotte into a hug, kissing her cheek. “I love you so much.” She whispered.

“I love you too mama.” Charlotte responded.

Lexa lifted Charlotte down from the box and stepped back, Charlotte in front of her, hugging her as they yielded the floor to Clarke and the twins. “Costia, Aden.” Clarke lifted each of them onto a slightly larger box. “I fell in love with the two of you as soon as I met you. You lost one mother before you could properly know her, I know what it is to lose a parent who loves you, and I never want to erase her, only to step in and finish what she could not. I stand here today in front of our family to promise you my love, my time and my devotion. I promise to support and guide you, to stand up for you and to teach you what I’ve learned. I promise to be your mum as long as I have breath in my lungs.”

The twins launched themselves at Clarke, almost knocking her backward into the sand. “We love you Clarke.” They chorused as she kissed their cheeks.

The children followed their mothers to the small table that held the paperwork where Clarke and Lexa signed first their marriage certificate and then the adoption certificates (the actual papers had been lodged by Lexa’s lawyer a week earlier).

Their family erupted into cheers as the celebrant called the ceremony to its close, rushing forward to hug the happy couple, and the children.

“Your dad would’ve been so happy for you today.” Abby dabbed her tears away before pulling Clarke into a hug. “You both looked beautiful up there.”

“Thanks mum.” Clarke said.

“And you, Lexa, welcome to the family officially.” Abby hugged Lexa as well.

They made their way up onto the deck for dinner under strings of fairy lights. Aden barely made it past the first course before Lexa carried him upstairs to bed. “Poor thing, he was so excited for today - he’s been dying to show off that suit.” Clarke told Lexa once she rejoined the table.

“He did look great - he’s already asked me if he can wear it to school.” Lexa chuckled.

“Please let him, he’s too cute!” Anya pleaded from across the table.

“Maybe we should take him shopping for a new school wardrobe?” Clarke suggested. “He’s grown so much.” She murmured against Lexa’s lips.
a bit over the summer anyway.”

“Good idea - we can go once we get back home.” Lexa agreed. “Costia and Charlotte could do with a few new things as well.”

“I can make do.” Charlotte insisted.

“I know, but we’ll go shopping anyway.” Lexa shrugged.

- Anya and Raven took Charlotte, Tris and Costia to bed shortly after dessert was over. Anya was every bit as exhausted as the children after the day’s events, so was more than happy to tackle bedtime.

Abby and Indra were the last ones to bid the happy couple goodnight, the two having become fast friends during the days leading up to the wedding. “Well, Mrs Griffin-Woods, shall we go to bed?” Lexa suggested.

“Sounds like a wonderful plan, Mrs Griffin-Woods.” Clarke agreed, leaning in to kiss her wife.

They made their way upstairs to the master bedroom, closing and locking the door behind them. “You’re my wife.” Lexa smiled, still unable to believe that simple fact.

“And you’re mine.” Clarke nodded. She wrapped her arms around Lexa’s neck as she leaned in to kiss her.

They undressed each other slowly, following their favourite routes to ecstasy over and over again. They fell asleep, sweaty, sated and tangled together shortly before dawn.

- Clarke woke around eleven, she could hear the sounds of everyone else downstairs going about their days. “Lex?” Anya knocked on the door.

Clarke grabbed her robe and crossed the room, Lexa was still fast asleep. She pulled the door open. “Hey Anya.” She yawned.

“He needs mama snuggles.” Anya nodded to Aden, who was standing by her side pouting.

“Of course, little monkey.” Clarke lifted him to her hip, hugging him close. “Mama’s still asleep, but we can snuggle.” She kissed his cheek. “Thanks Anya.” Clarke nodded to her sister in law.

Clarke laid down with Aden, keeping him close. She stroked his hair until he fell asleep, snoring softly into her. Lexa grumbled in her sleep and moved closer to the two of them, she was somewhat of a koala when she slept - always hugging something.

Clarke woke again about an hour later to Aden fiddling with her hair. “Feeling better baby boy?”

“Yeah.” He nodded.

“Aden?” Lexa cracked one eye and lifted her head.

“Are you sick mama? You slept until lunchtime.” Aden reached out to touch Lexa’s cheek.

“No monkey, Clarke and I stayed up really late, so I was extra tired.” She kissed his hand with a
smile. “Are you feeling better?”

“Uh-huh.” He nodded. “But now I’m hungry.”

“Then we’d better get you some lunch, hadn’t we?” Clarke decided as she scooped him off the bed.

Abby and Charlotte had gone to the bookstore, but everyone else was relaxing out on the deck, enjoying the last few days of the summer break. “They’re alive!” Raven cheered as Clarke and Lexa made their way onto the deck.

“Yeah yeah.” Clarke waved off their teasing. There were a couple of plates piled with sandwiches on the table that they’d been picking at; Clarke grabbed one for Aden and passed it to him.

“Thanks Clarke.” He said as he sat on one of the benches, munching happily.

Lexa’s phone rang a couple of hours later, she smiled apologetically when Clarke saw the name of her assistant flash across the screen. “I’m amazed she hasn’t called before now.” Lexa chuckled “I’ll be right back.” She pushed herself away from the table.

“Hi.” Lexa answered as she closed the door behind herself.

“Hello Ms Woods, I’m sorry to interrupt your vacation time.”

“I’m surprised it’s taken you this long. What’s up?”

“I just wanted to let you know that a messenger just dropped off an envelope from your lawyer’s office. Normally I’d open it, but it says private and confidential across the front.” She sounded anxious. “I wasn’t sure if it was important, or if it could wait until Monday?”

“Go ahead and open it up - are they adoption forms?”

“Um, okay, give me a minute.” Lexa could hear the sound of an envelope being torn open. “Yes, and they’re notarised. The twins have officially been adopted by Ms Griffin. And a Charlotte Griffin-Woods has been adopted by you. Oh, the twins are Griffin-Woods now too.” She read.

“Wonderful, you can just leave those on my desk and I’ll transfer them to my safe at home on Monday.” Lexa told her.

“Yes Ms Woods. Enjoy the rest of your break.” She said.

“I will, see you on Monday.” Lexa ended the call and slid her phone back into her pocket before making her way back out to the deck to rejoin everyone.

“Everything okay?” Clarke asked, reaching out to take Lexa’s hand, pulling the brunette back down beside her.

“Yep, she received the papers from my lawyer - the adoptions are officially complete.” She leaned in to kiss her wife, the other mother to her children.

“That was quick, I thought we weren’t expecting them until next week.”

“Just lucky, I guess.” Lexa shrugged.

Clarke hugged Aden, who has happily snuggled on her lap, a little closer. “Just lucky indeed.” She
agreed.

“How does everyone feel about going out for dinner? Celebrate our last night here?” Lexa asked the table.

-

After dinner, which was a raucous affair, Clarke and Lexa took Charlotte and the twins for ice cream while everyone else headed straight home for the evening. The five of them took their cones and spread a picnic blanket on the sand.

“How do we have to go home tomorrow?” Costia pouted.

“We do Monkey, I have to go back to work, and you three have to get ready to go to school.” Lexa nodded. “But once we get home tomorrow afternoon, we have all afternoon and all of Sunday to ourselves.”

“No lunch?” Charlotte asked.

“Not this week.” Clarke shook her head. “We’ve all just spent weeks together, I think it’s okay for us to skip it, just once.”

“Oh, okay.” She nodded.

“When do we start school?” Aden asked.

“Two more weeks.” Lexa told him.

“Oh.” He looked saddened by the prospect of two weeks without anything much to do after an extended bout of family time.

“But, I’m not going back to work until your second day of school.” Clarke told him. “And we’re going to get started on redecorating your rooms.”

“You don’t have to go back to work?” Charlotte brightened.

“That’s right. Denae has another two weeks of vacation time, so the four of us get to hang out until the start of school.” Clarke promised them.

“Can I still get a slide bed?” Aden asked.

Clarke looked to Lexa for confirmation before nodding. “Absolutely.” She assured him. “And Costia? What would you like?”

“Um, a castle playhouse!” She giggled.

“That sounds fun!” Clarke agreed. “Charlotte?”

“Can I have murals again?”

“You bet. Those will take me a little longer, but we can at least get the paint and start the rough sketches.”

-

The drive home was as uneventful as the drive down to the beach house. Lexa still insisted on taking the backroads - which actually proved a little faster given that they managed to beat Anya and Raven
back to Polis by over an hour. Fish whined at being locked in her travel carrier, but fell asleep after an hour of driving.

“So, was it a good summer vacation?” Clarke asked the children when they stopped for lunch.

“The best.” Charlotte nodded.

“Yeah!” The twins cheered.

“I’m with them.” Lexa chuckled as she leaned in to kiss her wife. “Best summer ever.”

Lexa went inside to order their lunch while Clarke watched as the children played with Fish, who was becoming more active by the day. Clarke had also noticed that her paws were growing, indicating that she would soon be a much larger dog than they had anticipated.

After lunch Clarke sent the children to play once more. There was a playground beside the diner where they’d stopped, and all three children chased each other and giggled until they were exhausted. Fish was already asleep in Clarke’s lap. They loaded the children back into the car, happy to let them nap for the remainder of the trip home.

“I think we’re going to have to tell my team about us getting married.” Clarke said as they reached the outskirts of Polis.

“You’re right.” Lexa nodded. “But I think your life will be easier if we leave it at just telling your team.” She suggested. “I think you’d end up fielding calls from people trying to fast track their own interests, hoping that by going to you, you will take them straight to me, rather than letting things take the usual channels.”

“True.” Clarke agreed. “I don’t want to get stuck listening to the whole company’s problems, I’d rather be able to do my job and get home a little early and spend time with the munchkins.”

“Me too.” Lexa agreed. “I didn’t not want you to think that by not going public I’m trying to hide you - I’m not ashamed of our relationship-“ she trailed off.

“Lexa, I have no doubt of that. I know you love me and our family. I understand entirely your reasons for keeping our relationship between us.” Clarke reassured her. “I agree with you.” She reached across to squeeze Lexa’s thigh. “I love you.”

“I love you too.” Lexa smiled.

Clarke unpacked the car while Lexa ferried the still sleeping children inside to the couch. Fish scampered around the house, her paws sliding over the hardwood floors, as she inspected her new domain. “Fish!” Clarke called, leading her to the back door, and down into the yard. The puppy whined in delight as she bounced through the yard. Clarke tossed one of her toys out for Fish to fetch, the puppy rushing to bring it back.

“What should we do for dinner?” Lexa asked.

“Something quick and easy.” Clarke shrugged.

“Then I’m going to need to make a run to the store - because there’s no food.” Lexa said.

“Will you do a full grocery run, or just enough to cover us for a few days?” Clarke asked. “I can take
“I’ll do it now.” Lexa decided. “You’ll be okay?”

“I’ll be fine.” Clarke nodded. “I’m going to wear Fishy out and put her down to nap with the kids, then I’ll start sorting laundry.”

“Thanks love.” Lexa leaned in to kiss her wife. “I’ll be home shortly.”

“No worries.” Clarke smiled back, she loved all the little domestic things she and Lexa shared. New love was exciting and fun, but this - this was their life, they got to do all of this everyday, and she was over the moon. “Love you.”

“I love you too.” Lexa smiled, and Clarke knew she was thinking something similar.

“Mum?” Charlotte called from inside.

“In the yard, baby girl.” Clarke called back.

“Did I fall asleep?” She asked, rubbing her eyes as she made her way out to them.

“You did, just after we left our lunch stop.” Clarke nodded.

“Oh.”

“You can go and nap a little longer if you want? I’m about to start on the laundry and Lexa is going to go grocery shopping.” Clarke said as she brought her daughter in for a hug.

“Can I go with Lexa?”

“Sure.” Lexa nodded.

“Go put your shoes back on then.” Clarke told her, kissing her head before letting her go.

“So it’s just you and the twins.” Lexa smiled. “We’ll be quick.”

“Take your time - we’ll be fine here.” Clarke assured her. “We should each try to schedule some one-on-one time with each of the kids.”

“You’re right.” Lexa nodded.

“We can work something out later.” Clarke decided as Charlotte reappeared with her shoes on.

“Have fun, my loves.” She called as she waved them toward the front door.

Aden was the first of the twins to wake. He wandered through to the kitchen where Clarke was sorting the laundry into hampers. “Hey monkey.” She smiled as he climbed into her lap.

“Where’s mama?” He asked as she snuggled into her hold.

“She’s gone to the grocery store with Charlotte. She should be home soon.”

“Okay.” He nodded, his eyes still heavy with sleep.

“You still tired little one?” She chuckled, rubbing his back soothingly.

“Cos pushed me off the couch.” He pouted.
“Aw, I’m sorry monkey, I bet she didn’t mean to do it.”

“I know, but it hurt.” He grumbled.

“Okay, well close your eyes.” She kissed his head. “I won’t let you fall again.”

“Okay.” He mumbled, already half asleep once more.

Clarke gave up on the laundry and carried Aden through to the lounge room. She sat down on the giant nest chair in the corner, where she could bask in the afternoon sun. She helped Fish up to join them too. She must have dozed off herself, because she woke up a short time later to find Costía climbing up to join them.

“I want snuggles too.” She told Clarke.

“Of course.” Clarke nodded seriously.

She waited until Costía was settled before lifting her phone to take a selfie of the three of them.

Clarke: (img.008219) Things are going well here. xx <3

Lexa: We might have gotten sidetracked…

Lexa: (img.007714)

Clarke laughed when she opened the picture of Lexa and Charlotte in the huge bookstore at their local mall.

Clarke: As long as you’re having a good time. <3

Clarke set her phone down with a smile, she would need to add bookshelves to Charlotte’s room - as many as she could fit, she suspected.

Chapter End Notes

Let me know what you think. And let me know if you’re going to be at ClexaCon! Come hassle me on tumblr: ineedhappy endings.
First days

Chapter Summary

Clexa settle back in to daily life and the children begin at their new school.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Lexa organised a new credit card for Clarke, attached to her account, so the blonde didn’t empty her own bank account redecorating the children’s rooms. Lexa had showed her the balance on her everyday account, and assured her that there was no way Clarke could do much damage to their overall financial position. The way that Lexa lived, for the most part, it was easy for Clarke to forget just how rich she was. How rich they both were now. Lexa owned a company with several thousand employees in five states and six countries, and she ran it well.

Clarke agreed with Lexa’s philosophy of living well below their means. They were more than comfortable, the children had everything they needed, there was no need for more just for the sake of it. Lexa donated millions each year to the hospital, and to various charities - especially those helping foster children, and she gladly funded anything her family needed without question.

Clarke spent Sunday afternoon with each of their three children in turn, she let them flick through various furniture catalogues and Pinterest boards to design their bedrooms. Costia changed her mind with each new piece she saw, but Clarke was able to put a rough sketch together that the four year old loved. Charlotte stuck with her request for her murals back, wanting almost the same room she’d had at Clarke’s house before they moved in with Lexa. Aden picked out a tall bed with a slide attached to the end, and a workspace underneath.

On Monday morning, once Lexa had returned to work, Clarke took the children to pick up their choices. She bought new beds for each of them, Costia and Aden had been sleeping in toddler beds still, and Charlotte was in the bed that had been in the spare room that had become hers. The sales associate who had approached her as they entered was kept busy as they selected three new beds, and various other items to suit each room’s new look.

But lunchtime the children all complained that they missed Lexa, and Clarke had to agree. They left the homewares store and headed to Lexa’s favourite lunch spot to collect a to go order for her. Clarke called Lexa’s assistant and made sure she’d be free when they arrived.

“Okay, now, we need to be very quiet so mama doesn’t hear us coming.” She reminded the children as they rode the elevator up to Lexa’s top floor office.
“Okay.” Costia nodded, barely suppressing a giggle.

They were waved through by Lexa’s assistant and Clarke paused with her hand on the door to make sure that the children were ready. She pushed the door open and peeked around before letting the children run to their other mother.

“Hey, well this is a nice surprise.” Lexa beamed as she hugged the children.

“We missed you.” Aden explained.

“We did.” Clarke agreed.

“I missed you too.” Lexa assured them.

“We brought you lunch!” Costia said.

“We thought we could have a picnic in your office.” Charlotte added.

“That sounds perfect.” Lexa smiled. “Thank you.” She looked to her wife.

“Anytime.” Clarke leaned in to kiss her. “So how’s your day been?”

“Not bad.” She shrugged. “Just going over everything that’s happened while I’ve been off.”

“Will you have to stay late?”

“No, not at this stage. Although I’ve been having trouble getting through to my team in London.”

“Let me know if you’ll be late for dinner.” Clarke told her as she began handing out the various
Raven got off work early, and Octavia’s last client of the day cancelled, so they were both able to help Clarke rearrange the furniture in the kids’ rooms. Anya arrived a short time later with Tris and Ryder, muttering an excuse about Tris needing to play with her cousins, before hugging Raven close. Clarke decided not to point out the obvious lie.

Anya sat on the back deck and watched while the children played with the puppies on the grass. Clarke brought her a drink while in the kitchen getting water for her friends upstairs. “Can I ask you a favour?” Anya said.

“Always.” Clarke nodded.

“Can you watch Tris for me on Wednesday? I have an appointment with my OB. I’d ask Raven to watch her, since she has the day off, but she asked if she could come with me to the appointment.” A slight flush crept up Anya’s cheeks.

“Of course.” Clarke agreed. “So things with the two of you are going well?”

“She’s been a good friend.” Anya shrugged.

“I’m glad.” Clarke nodded, knowing she couldn’t reasonably expect more from Anya on the topic. “You can drop Tris around whenever, you know she’s always welcome here.”

“Thanks. Lexa’s lucky to have found someone like you.”

“I’m lucky to have found someone like her.” Clarke shook her head. “Your whole family have been so welcoming, to me and Charlotte. It means the world to me that you’ve all embraced her so fully.”

“I bounced through I don’t even remember how many foster homes, I know exactly how much it means to a kid like Charlotte to be a part of a family. And she’s such a sweet kid, she’s easy to love.”
“She is.” Clarke agreed. “Lexa’s been talking about doing more to help the foster kids in the area, she’s looking into some of the programs around.”

“She’s a rare breed.” Anya nodded. “Costia Senior was, not actively against Lexa’s altruism, but I think she was a little perplexed by it. She couldn’t understand how Lexa was so willing to part with the money she worked so hard for.”

“I think it’s one of her best qualities.” Clarke shrugged.

“I know.” Anya chuckled. “And that’s one of your best qualities. Your priorities align, you support her endeavours.” She shook her head. “Have you talked any more about another kid?”

“Not yet.” Clarke shook her head. “But between the kids starting Harbourside, and all the other changes we’ve thrown at them recently, I think it’s better that we wait a little while before we add to the chaos. At least a year or two.”

“That’s sensible.” Anya agreed. “I think adding another kid at this stage might send your three over the edge.”

“I’d rather not find their breaking points just yet.” Clarke chuckled.

“Oh, I see how it is, we’re doing all the work while you two sit and chat.” Raven accused as she and Octavia arrived in search of Clarke and her promised beverages.

“Sorry, I brought a drink out for Anya, and we got distracted.” Clarke shrugged. “Your drinks are on the bench.”

“Rae!” Charlotte ran to hug her favourite aunt.

“Hey Squish.” Raven hugged her close. “How you doing?”

“Good, I’ve almost taught Fish to sit!” She beamed.
“That’s great.” Raven told her. “Can you show me?”

“Yeah, come on!” She dragged Raven out into the yard.

“Looks like we’re taking a break.” Octavia laughed. “I might go chase some hellions.” She followed Raven and Charlotte down the steps before launching herself into a chasing game with Tris and the twins, all of whom squealed in delight.

“I think I might set up an indoor camp out for the kids tonight as I won’t have any usable bedrooms at this rate.” Clarke shook her head with a chuckle. “Do you want me to make up a bed for Tris too?”

“Could you?” Anya nodded. “It’s only been a day since we got home, and she’s going stir crazy with me out of action.”

“Of course. Will you stay too? Or do you and Raven want some alone time?”

“You know, that would be great.” Anya agreed. “Let me just run that idea by Tris - and Raven.” She levered herself up from her seat and slowly took the stairs down into the yard. Raven went to her almost immediately, and Clarke had to fight down a laugh - she hoped they got their acts together soon, because it was fairly obvious that they were very much into each other - and good together.

“Clarke, come play!” Aden called, his hand firmly planted on his hips as he stared up at her.

“Okay monkey.” She laughed, throwing herself into the game Octavia had started.

Lexa arrived home shortly after everyone had left. She was greeted at the door by both Fish and Ryder, both whining excitedly at her return. “Hey puppies.” She reached down to scratch behind their ears.
“Hi love.” Clarke leaned in the doorway between the lounge room and the kitchen.

“Hey yourself.” She stood and approached her wife. She quirked a brow at the chaos of the normally ordered lounge room, and the two puppies at her feet.

“Tris needed to burn off some energy, so she’s having a sleepover - Ryder too.” Clarke shrugged. “And since we’re still in the middle of setting up the kids’ rooms, I told them they could camp in here.”

“Okay.” She nodded. “How’s Anya?”

“Tired, it’s why I offered to take Tris for the night - and again on Wednesday.”

“Is she staying too?”

“No, I suggested she might like some alone time with Rae.” Clarke smirked. “I really like them together, and not just because it ties everything up so neatly. My sisters with your brother and sister - one happy family.”

“I hadn’t thought of it quite like that.” Lexa chuckled. “But I agree, it’s nice to see them both happy.”

“They make a good pair.” Clarke nodded.

“Are you starting on dinner?” Lexa asked. “Want some help?”

“If you’d like, go get changed while I decide what we’re having.” Clarke gave a quick kiss before nudging Lexa toward the stairs.

Lexa returned a few minutes later to find Costia sitting on the bench, while Clarke rummaged in the fridge. “Hi monkey.” She made her way over to hug her daughter.

“Hi mama.” The little girl smiled.
“Why aren’t you upstairs playing?” Costia rarely chose to be away from the other children if they were together.

“I don’t feel like it.” She shrugged.

“Okay monkey.” Lexa nodded, kissing the top of her head.

“How about chicken and veggies?” Clarke asked Costia.

“How about you handle the vegetables and I’ll do the chicken?” Clarke suggested.

“Sure.” Clarke agreed as she started taking the various ingredients from the fridge and laying them out on the bench.

“What should I do?” Lexa asked.

“How about you handle the vegetables and I’ll do the chicken?” Clarke suggested.

“Suits me.” Lexa agreed.

“Can I help?” Costia asked.

“Sure.” Clarke nodded.

Costia’s room was the first to be completed. It took most of a day for Clarke to paper the walls with a bold teal dotted with white polka dots. Costia had picked the colour herself, and Lexa had quietly suggested that Clarke should return it and swap for a less intense selection. Clarke had laughed and promised that she had everything under control.
Costia’s new bed was painted bright purple, they’d gone through a number of possible options, including several with princess canopies, before Costia set her heart on one with a house shaped frame over the top and it stood out perfectly against the teal walls. Clarke had chosen half a dozen white floating shelves and cloud decals and staggered them down the wall on one side of the bed. There were also approximately two dozen mismatched frames in various pastel shades that Clarke had filled with animal pictures.

Costia loved it, the colours, the framed pictures, all of it. She dragged Lexa up to see it as soon as she walked in the door Wednesday evening. “Come one Mama!” Costia huffed as she dragged Lexa up the stairs.

“Oh wow.” Lexa laughed as she looked at the transformed room.

“Do you like it?” Costia beamed.

“I love it.” Lexa assured her. “You and Clarke did an excellent job.”

“Tris and Charlotte and Aden helped too.” Costia told her.

“Well, then you all did an excellent job.” Lexa lifted her daughter for a hug. “Are you happy with you new room?”

“Yeah.” She nodded. “It’s fun colours.”

“The funnest.” Lexa kissed her cheek.

“So whose room is next?”

“Charlotte’s furniture is all done, but I’m going to repaint her walls after Aden’s room.” Clarke answered as she came up behind Lexa.

“Am I allowed to see?”
“Sure.” Clarke nodded. “Costia, can you go wash up for dinner please?”

“Uh-huh.” She nodded as Lexa set her down once more.

“Is Tris here for dinner?”

“Yeah, Anya’s not back from her appointment yet.” Clarke said quietly as she pulled Lexa into their bedroom, away from the children in Aden’s room. “They’re keeping her overnight, there were some abnormalities in the test results today. Mum says there’s no reason to worry yet.”

“Your mother is with her?”

“Raven called her when it was clear that things weren’t right.” Clarke nodded. “Rae hates hospitals, they make her very edgy, mum is always happy to take the time to calm her.”

“I appreciate her taking the time for Anya too.”

“Of course - she’s family.” Clarke nodded.

“How’s Tris?”

“Distracted enough that she’s not asking questions yet. Depending on how things go tomorrow Lincoln will take her to visit Anya.”

“He’s off shift tomorrow?”

“Yeah, recovery from nights.” Clarke nodded.

“And Anya’s okay?”
“So far there’s no reason to worry.” Clarke assured her. “They’re just being cautious because her pregnancy is considered high risk.”

“Okay.” Lexa nodded slowly.

“Come see Aden and Charlotte’s rooms, and then let’s have some dinner.”

Lexa nodded and allowed Clarke to lead her out of their bedroom and across the hall to Aden’s room where the four children were gathered. Aden’s bed was set up in the middle of the room, a bunk with a desk underneath, the slide was still in its box.

“Hi mama!” Aden waved happily from his bed.

“Hey monkey.” Lexa lifted him down and into a hug. “I love your new bed.”

“It’s going to have a slide!” He grinned.

“Wow.” She kissed his cheek.

“Aunty Lex, when is my mama getting back?” Tris asked.

“She has to stay overnight in the hospital, so you’re going to have a sleepover here.” Lexa explained.

“Can I visit her?” Tris pleaded.

“Maybe after dinner, I’ll talk to Rae, see what she thinks.” Clarke nodded.

“Okay.” Tris agreed.

“Charlotte, do you want to show Lexa your room so far?” Clarke suggested.
“Yeah.” Charlotte led them back out into the hall and into her room next door to Aden’s.

Charlotte had picked out a set of bunk beds that sat perpendicular to one another. The beds were in one corner of the room, a small reading nook sat in the corner closest to the wide window and three bookshelves had been added below the window. A hammock chair had been installed in the corner to complete the nook. “This is great.” Lexa told Charlotte.

“Mum found a bed for Fish too, but she wants to talk to the vet about how big fish will get before she buys it.” Charlotte pointed to the space under the top bunk.

“What?” Lexa seemed confused.

“Have you seen how big Fishy’s paws have gotten? I’m pretty sure we’re going to have a very large dog on our hands.” Clarke shrugged.

“Ryder and I are going to sleep in here tonight too.” Tris said.

“Yes, otherwise they miss each other.” Charlotte nodded.

“Sure.” Lexa agreed.

“Okay, everyone get washed up for dinner and head downstairs please.” Clarke instructed.

Clarke left Lexa to get changed and headed downstairs to call Raven. “Hey, is Tris alright?” Raven answered.

“Yeah, she’s fine - she wants to stop by and visit Anya tonight. What do you think?”

“Any is going nuts in here.” Raven sighed.

“I am not!” Clarke heard Anya huff in the background.
“It’s not too much trouble for you to bring the monster?” Raven continued.

“Of course not. We’re just about to eat, then I’ll bring her down.”

“Thank you.” Raven said.

“Text me her room number and I’ll let you know when we leave here.” Clarke said.

“No worries. See you in a bit.”

“See you.” Clarke ended the call and started dishing up the pie and vegetables she’d made for dinner.

“Did you talk to Rae?” Tris was the first one back downstairs.

“I did, and after dinner I’ll take you to visit your mama.” Clarke nodded.

“Why does she have to stay in hospital?”

“Because the doctor wants to make sure that both your mama and your baby brother are healthy. Sometimes is really hard for a mommy’s body to make a baby, and no one wants anything bad to happen.” Clarke explained.

“Okay.” Tris nodded. “Can I not have peas?”

“You need to eat some peas, but I won’t put many on your plate.” Clarke assured her.

“Thanks for taking care of dinner.” Lexa said as she came downstairs.

“No problem.” Clarke smiled as she leaned in for a kiss.
“I should get away from the office earlier tomorrow, I’ll cook for us then if you want?”

“Sounds great.” Clarke agreed. “I spoke to Rae and I’ll take Tris to visit Anya for a bit after dinner.”

“I can take her.” Lexa offered.

“You’ve barely had time to spend with our three the last few days - they miss you.”

“I miss them too.” Lexa sighed. “You’re sure you don’t mind?”

“Not at all.” Clarke smiled. “Let’s go eat.” She nudged Lexa toward the dining table as Charlotte and the twins came down the stairs.

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Clarke could hear Anya complaining all the way down the corridor as they approached her room. Tris couldn’t help but giggle at her mother’s whinging. “She hates having to sit still all the time.”

“It doesn’t sound like much fun.” Clarke sympathised. “Knock knock.” She called as they reached the door.

“Monster!” Anya cheered. “Come give me cuddles.”

“Hi mama, hi Rae.” Tris beamed as she scrambled up onto Anya’s gurney. “Are you feeling okay?” She asked.

“Yeah, I’m just fine.” Anya promised.

“Will you come home tomorrow?”
“I hope so.” Anya nodded.

“If they keep you tomorrow as well, Lincoln has already promised to bring Tris back down to see you.”

“The doctor thinks she’s pushing too hard - he wants her supervised, but I have to go back to work tomorrow.” Raven explained.

“You can come stay with Lex and I - you know that.” Clarke assured Anya. “Tris can hang out with her cousins, and you can binge netflix.”

“I can’t impose on you two - you’re newlyweds.”

“Newlyweds with three kids - you’d hardly be cramping our style.” Clarke laughed.

“Charlotte just got new bunk beds.” Tris added.

“Thank you Clarke.” Anya smiled. “Shouldn’t you at least ask Lexa though?”

“How do you think that conversation would go? Do you honestly think she’d say no?”

“I don’t know - this one on bed rest is a nightmare.” Raven sniggered.

“I don’t have to get out of this bed to take you down Reyes.” Anya warned.

“Big talk Woods.” Raven rolled her eyes, it was clearly not the first threat Anya had made toward her. “She’s in a bad mood because the doctor has suggested that she may be on bed rest for the remainder.”

“That’s way too long to be in bed rest.” Anya whined. “That’s like four months!”
“It’s better than the alternative.” Raven reminded her.

“I know.” Anya snapped. “Ugh. Monster, what did you do today?” She asked to change the subject.

“Have you eaten Rae?” Clarke asked while Anya was distracted by Tris.

“Not yet.”

“Go get something to eat, I’ll keep an eye on things here.”

“Thanks.”

“Anytime.”

Raven smiled at her best friend as she headed out in search of food. Clarke sat back and listened as Tris told Anya about her day.

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Anya was released from the hospital the following day, on the condition that she go and stay with Clarke and Lexa. As Clarke had predicted, Lexa was more than happy to have Anya and Tris move in temporarily. They set Anya up in the downstairs guest room, and Tris in with Charlotte - at the girls’ request. The children were more than happy to be together, they loved whenever Tris visited, and Charlotte in particular was glad that Raven visited more frequently than she had before, even staying over most nights.

They left Anya at home while Clarke and Lexa (who’d taken a half day from the office) took all four children shopping for the new school year. It was a fun day out for the six of them, all four children getting new clothes as well as backpacks and all the other supplies they’d need.

They met with Indra and Ontari, who’d been doing the same thing, for lunch. “Did you get everything you need?” Lexa asked her mother.
“Almost.” Indra nodded. “I’m going to take Ontari to Best Buy next - she needs a new computer.”

“We’ll come with you.” Lexa offered. “Charlotte and Tris will both need tablets for school anyway.”

“Thank you.” Indra nodded, understanding that Lexa was offering to pay for her foster sister’s computer.

“Clarke, can we go to Build-a-Bear?” Aden asked, the sweetest smile on his face.

“Sure.” Clarke agreed. “After lunch.”

“Yes!” He cheered.

“I’ll take the twins while you all go get the tech stuff.” Clarke suggested.

“Sure.” Lexa agreed.

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The first day of school came around quickly. Clarke got up early and made breakfast before waking all four children. Anya came and joined them at the table, smiling as Tris chattered excitedly about seeing all of her friends again, and her new teacher.

“You okay baby girl?” Clarke asked Charlotte who was quieter than she’d been over the summer.

“Nervous.” She nodded.

“I know, but it’s going to be okay.” Clarke assured her, offering her a hug. “I have the whole day off, I can stay as long as you need.”

“Thank you.”
“Anytime.” Clarke promised.

They all rode together in Lexa’s car, Anya waving goodbye as they pulled out of the driveway, Clarke planned to walk the few blocks home once Lexa left for the office. They dropped Tris at her classroom first, before taking Charlotte to hers. Mr Carter, Charlotte’s teacher was a short man with a wide smile. “You must be Charlotte.” He greeted them.

“Hi.” Charlotte gave a small wave.

“And who have you brought with you this morning?” He asked.

“My mums and my brother and sister.”

“Well it’s wonderful to have your family join us here at Harbourside.” He assured them all. “Ellie?” He called to a girl already seated at a nearby desk.

“Yes sir?” The girl came forward.

“This is Charlotte, she’s joining our class - do you think you could help her out?”

“Yeah.” Ellie nodded. “It’s nice to meet you Charlotte.”

“Off you go my love.” Clarke encouraged as Ellie led Charlotte away.

“Ellie is a great student, but a little shy - I’m hoping she and Charlotte will get along.” Mr Carter explained. “Now I understand that Charlotte has some anxiety issues?”

“She does, it’s been a few months since her last attack, and she’s taken a low dose of her anti-anxiety meds this morning - she doesn’t take them all the time, but I wanted her to have a positive first day.” Clarke explained.
“A wise plan.” He nodded. “And if she does have an episode?”

“An attack.” Clarke corrected. “If she has an attack, call me, in the meantime get her to breathe - but I’m hoping it doesn’t come to anything like that.”

“Of course.” Mr Carter nodded. “I should let you go - I’m sure your younger children need to get to class too.”

“Yes. Thank you Mr Carter, please call if Charlotte needs.” Clarke nodded. She and Lexa both waved to Charlotte before leading the twins down the hall to their classroom.

Their classroom was a riot of colour and excited children. A young woman greeted them with a smile. “Hi I’m Miss Jacobs, who do we have here?”

“Nice to meet you, I’m Lexa, my wife Clarke and our youngest two - Aden and Costia.” Lexa shook the teacher’s outstretched hand.

“Welcome.” She smiled. “Aden, Costia, at the back of the classroom you’ll find a row of pegs, can you go and hang your bags up please?”

“Yep.” Costia nodded before tugging on Aden’s hand, pulling him along.

“There’s an information session for our new parents in the gym, it’s a good opportunity to meet some of the other parents too.” Miss Jacobs told them. “I know it can be hard, to leave on their first day - but it’s better for them if you rip the bandage off quick.”

“Of course.” Clarke agreed. “We’ll just say goodbye.” She squeezed Lexa’s hand, knowing that this moment was harder on her wife.

“Have a great first day, okay my monkeys?” Lexa crouched down to hug the twins as they returned.

“Bye babies, I’ll be back with Denae to pick you up, okay?” Clarke added.
“Bye mama, Bye Clarke.” Costia hugged each of them.

“Bye.” Aden hugged them each as well before following Costia into the crowd of children.

“You okay?” Clarke asked as she pulled Lexa out into the hall.

“They were babies in my arms, it seems like yesterday.”

“I know.” Clarke pulled her wife in for a hug. “They’re meant to grow up.”

“I know.” Lexa sighed. “Let’s go do this parent thing.” She waved in the direction of the gym.

“Welcome to Harbourside.” Luna was waiting at the door of the gym to greet the parents as they arrived. “Clarke and Lexa right?”

“Good memory.” Clarke nodded, shaking Luna’s hand.

“Please come in, we’ll be getting underway in a few minutes, but grab a refreshment while you wait.” She told them.

“Thank you.” Lexa led Clarke further into the gym.

“Are your kids in kindergarten too?” A nearby mother asked.

“Yeah, we just dropped our twins off.” Lexa answered.

“You have twins? That must be a handful.” She laughed.

“We have three kids, they’re all pretty great.” Clarke shrugged.
“My husband wants a second - I don’t know.” She joked. “I’m Chelsey.”

“Nice to meet you, I’m Clarke, and this is my wife Lexa.”

“Nice to meet you too.” Chelsey smiled.

“Could everyone please take their seats?” Luna asked as she stepped up to the podium at the front of the room. “Welcome to your first school year with us here at Harbourside.”

After the welcome had ended Clarke walked Lexa back to her car before heading home on foot. Denae had the first half of the day off, and Anya had gone back to bed, so Clarke got to work finishing the last touches on Charlotte’s murals. She was interrupted around noon by a courier who was dropping off the last item she’d ordered for Aden’s room - a climbing gym.

Clarke: Aden’s climbing stuff arrived, any chance you’re free today?

Lincoln: My shift ends in 20, I’ll come over after.

Clarke: You’re a star - Aden is going to be so excited. :)

Lincoln: See you soon.

“So what’s in the box?” Denae asked.

“Aden wanted a climbing gym that he saw, and so I ordered him one online, it’s got a rock wall, a rope ladder, monkey bars and gymnastic rings. Linc is going to help me instal it, and O is going to come over and teach him how to use it all.” Clarke told her. “He’s going to love it.”

“And then the kids’ rooms are finished?”
“Yeah, for a while at least. Charlotte probably won’t need hers redecorated until she goes to high school, the twins might need theirs redone in a few years.” She laughed.

“They look great.”

“Thanks, the kids had so much fun choosing everything - Lexa almost died when she saw Costia’s wallpaper choice.”

“I’ll bet. That girl is something else.” Denae laughed.

“She knows what she likes though.” Clarke conceded. “Has Lexa talked to you about extracurriculars for the kids?”

“Not really, what are you thinking?”

“Costia wants to take dance lessons, and that’s great for her gross motor development, so we’re looking into options for her. Aden we’re leaning toward gymnastics - he’s a little monkey - and again it’s great for gross motor. Charlotte is tougher to choose for, but I’m thinking maybe music lessons of some kind - she’s not a particularly athletic kid, and I don’t want to push her too far.”

“The twins won’t like the idea of taking separate activities.” Denae chuckled.

“I know, but a little separation will be good for them too.”

“I know - but it'll be a tough sell.”

- 

Denae and Clarke drove down to the school together to collect the children. The twins’ class was let out a little early, to help them adjust to school. “Clarke! Denae!” The twins ran up to them as soon as the teacher released them.

“How was it?” Clarke asked as she hugged them both.
“It was fun!” Aden beamed.

“I made three new friends, and Aden made two!” Costia added. “And Jess has two mamas like us!”

“Lucky Jess.” Clarke agreed. “Should we go get Charlotte and Tris?”

“You have to talk to Jess’s mama so she can come and play.” Costia tugged on Clarke’s hand, pulling her toward another girl who was doing the same thing to her own mother.

“Hi, you’re Costia’s mother?” She laughed as the two girls met in the middle.

“Clarke, it’s nice to meet you.” Clarke nodded with a laugh. “Apparently we’re meant to be arranging a playdate?”

“So I’ve heard. I’m Sarah, by the way.”

“Nice to meet you.” Clarke smiled. “We’d love for you all to come over on the weekend - how’s Saturday afternoon?”

“Suits us.” Sarah nodded. “Although, fair warning - there are five of us. Myself and my wife, Carol, then Ellie our eldest is ten, then Jess and Micah just turned one.”

“There’s five of us too.” Clarke shrugged. “And my wife’s sister is staying with us at the moment with her daughter Tris - she’s six.”

“We can use our house instead, if it’s easier?”

“Not at all, we’ve got a big yard, the kids and the dogs have plenty of room to play.” Clarke assured her. “Your daughter Ellie - is she in Mr Carter’s class?”

“She is, why do you ask?”
“My eldest, Charlotte has just switched here - Ellie was assigned to show her around.” Clarke explained.

“Ellie struggles making friends - she doesn’t open up easy.” Sarah said.

“Charlotte is the same.” Clarke agreed. They started walking toward Mr Carter’s classroom.

“I’ll go collect Tris.” Denae said as she and Aden caught up with them.

“Is this your wife?” Sarah asked.

“No, this is Denae, our nanny.” Clarke said. “Denae this is Sarah, her daughter Jess and Costia have made friends.”

“Nice to meet you.” Denae smiled. “I’ll meet you back once I’ve got Tris.”

“Thanks.” Clarke nodded as she scooped Aden up to sit on her hip, she could see he was tired from his first day. “Denae will ordinarily do the pick-up, but I wanted to be available for Charlotte’s first day, so I took the day from work.”

“What do you do?”

“I’m the head of Graphics and Branding for Trigeda Corp.”

“Wow, and your wife?”

“She’s the CEO of Trigeda.” Clarke shrugged. “I worked for her before we met by chance at a fundraiser for Arkadia Women and Children’s hospital.”

“Lexa Woods is your wife?”
“She is.” Clarke nodded.

“Carol.” Sarah waved to a tiny woman with short dark hair with a toddler braced on her hip. “This is Clarke, she has twins in Jess’ class and a daughter in Ellie’s.”

“Nice to meet you, I’m Sarah’s wife.”

“Nice to meet you too.”

“Clarke is married to Lexa Woods.” Sarah told her.

“Do you know Lexa?” Clarke asked.

“We’ve met briefly, she expressed an interest in helping out with my agency, but I’m not having any luck getting past her assistant.” Carol explained. “I run the Polis Foster Children’s Fund, we help to match foster kids with long term placements.”

“Small world.” Clarke laughed. “I went through that agency when I adopted Charlotte.”

“You did?”

“Yeah, I’ve had her a little over two years now, best two years of my life.”

“Which social worker helped you through?”

“Karen Mills.” Clarke said. “She was fantastic.”

“I’m glad to hear it.” Carol smiled. “We’ve had Ellie since she was four, I started the Fund to help kids like her find permanent homes - every study into foster care shows that the constant shuffling and the uncertainty is the last thing these kids need, and yet that’s what we do to them all too often.” She shook her head. “We’re working to change that though.”
“That’s amazing.” Clarke agreed. “Do you have your card? I’ll pass it on for you.”

“Thank you so much.” Carol fished a card from her wallet and passed it to Clarke as the children were released from their classroom.

“Mum.” Charlotte ran to hug Clarke.

“Hey my love. How was your first day?” Clarke let go of Costia to hug Charlotte.

“It was good.” She nodded, leaning into Clarke.

“Did you make any friends?”

“Ellie is really nice.” She nodded.

“Is this Ellie?” She asked, nodding to the girl who’d followed her over.

“Yeah.”

“It’s very nice to meet you Ellie.” Clarke told the girl.

“Charlotte’s little brother and sister are in Jess’ class, and we’ve organised to get together over the weekend.” Sarah told her daughter.

“Clarke, is my mama better today?” Tris asked as she and Denae arrived.

“She is a little better.” Clarke assured her. “We should get going, is your cell on your card?” She asked Carol.
“It is.” She nodded.

“Great, I’ll be in touch to arrange Saturday. And I’ll make sure Lexa calls you.” Clarke said. “It was great meeting you.” She waved as she and Denae steered the kids back toward the car.

“See you soon Clarke.” Carol waved.

- 

“So tell me all about your first day.” Clarke turned to face the kids in the back as Denae pulled out of the parking space.

“My teacher is really nice, and we’re going to do a whole unit on space!” Charlotte began.

“My friend Josh got a new puppy too.” Tris yelled.

“I made friends with Jess and Emi and Kat.” Costa added.

“Miss Jacobs says I’m the best at writing my name.” Aden said proudly.

“Well, it sounds like everyone had a good day.” Clarke laughed.

Clarke set out snacks for the children while Denae took them upstairs to put their bags away. Fish and Ryder whined at the bottom of the stairs, having not quite mastered the obstacle yet. Charlotte and Tris were the first downstairs and they each picked up a puppy on their way to Clarke in the kitchen.

“Puppies down, and wash your hands please.” Clarke told them. “You can play with them outside once you’ve eaten.”

“Yes Mum.” Charlotte agreed.
“Now, I know it’s only the first day, but do any of you have homework or notes?”

“We have to make a picture.” Aden nodded. “With everyone in our family.”

“Just the family that live in our house.” Costia added.

“I have to fill in a ‘all about me’ sheet.” Tris said.

“Me too.” Charlotte agreed.

“Okay, let’s get those done and then you can play.” Clarke told them.

Anya had been napping, but wandered out to the kitchen when she heard the children at the table. Clarke had pulled out coloured pencils for the twins, and was helping Tris and Charlotte with their sheets while the twins drew their pictures.

“Hey monster, what’s this?” Anya kissed the top of Tris’ head.

“We have to fill in this sheet so our new teacher can learn all about us.” She shrugged.

“How was your first day of second grade?”

“It was fun, Josh got a puppy too, but his isn’t as cool as Ryder.” She beamed.

“Only Fish is as cool as Ryder.” Charlotte agreed.

“How’s your worksheet going?” Anya asked, running her eyes over her answers.

“I don’t know what to put for the questions about brothers and sisters?”
“Why don’t you put that your mama is going to have a baby soon, and then you’ll have a little brother?” Anya suggested.

“Yeah.” Tris nodded as she started filling in her answer.

“And did you like Harbourside Charlotte?”

“Everyone is much nicer than at my old school.” She nodded. “Mr Carter chose Ellie to show me around, she’s really nice.”

“And her little sister is in the twins’ class.” Clarke added. “Their family is coming over on Saturday for a play date.”

“Do you want the monster and I to go home while they’re here?”

“Of course not, Tris can play with the other kids and you can join us, or nap or whatever.” Clarke waved off Anya’s offer.

“Thanks Clarke.” Anya smiled.

“Ellie and Jess have two mamas too.” Charlotte explained. “And Ellie was adopted just like me.”

“Carol, one of their mothers, runs a foster agency - the one I used actually.” Clarke ran a hand through Charlotte’s hair.

“Were Ellie and I in the same group home?” Charlotte asked.

“I don’t know baby, Sarah and Carol adopted her when she was four, so I think your were probably still with your birth mother then.” Clarke told her honestly.

“Oh.” Charlotte nodded. “She thinks we knew each other before.”
“I’ll talk to Sarah and Carol, we can look into it, maybe you did know each other.” Clarke promised her.

The front door opened announcing Lexa’s arrival home. “Mama!” The twins chorused as they ran to greet her.

“How was your first day? I want to hear all about it.” Lexa appeared in the kitchen a moment later with a twin on each hip.

Homework was well and truly interrupted by Lexa’s arrival as all four children told her all about their days. “And so what are we all working on now?” Lexa asked finally, pointing to the papers on the table.

“We have to draw pictures of our family.” Aden explained.

“And Tris and I have these worksheets to fill in.” Charlotte added.

“Okay, well, let’s get your homework finished and then I have an after dinner treat for all of you.” Lexa told them.

“I’m going to head off. I’ll see you in the morning.” Denae decided.

“Sure, see you tomorrow.” Lexa and Clarke both waved as the nanny grabbed her bag and headed out.

“So we have a playdate on saturday.” Clarke told Lexa. “And I happened to meet the head of the Polis Foster Children’s Fund - she has daughters in both our kids’ classes.”

“I spoke to her a while back, Karen, or Carmel? Or something.”

“Carol.” Clarke nodded. “She said she can’t get past your assistant, she gave me her card.” Clarke fished the card from her pocket and passed it over.
“Thanks. I’ll call her tomorrow.” Lexa pulled Clarke into a hug. “What do we want to do for dinner?”

“How about we go out? A special first day of school celebration dinner - and I’m sure Anya would like to get out of the house for a little while.” Clarke directed the last part at Anya, knowing her sister in law would be on board.

“How about we go out? A special first day of school celebration dinner - and I’m sure Anya would like to get out of the house for a little while.” Clarke directed the last part at Anya, knowing her sister in law would be on board.

“Can we invite nana and Rae?” Charlotte asked.

“And nana Indra and uncle Lincoln?” Tris added.

“Family dinner it is.” Lexa agreed as she pulled back from Clarke’s arms. “Anya, you call ma and Rae, Clarke you call your mother and O and I’ll call Sammy’s to get us a table.”

“Aye Commander!” Anya mock saluted her sister and making all the children giggle.

Dinner was a noisy affair, the children all excited to tell the adults of their family all about their days. Shortly after getting them home all four children were tucked into their beds and fast asleep.

“I think I’m almost as tired as they are.” Lexa chuckled as she and Clarke slid under the covers.

“Me too.” Clarke agreed, laying her head on Lexa’s shoulder. “I think I have to tell my team tomorrow.”

“Want me to come down when you do?”

“That’s probably a good idea.” Clarke agreed. She reached for her phone and opened up the calendar, clicking through her options she brought up her team’s schedules for the following day. “Everyone is free at nine, can you come down then?”

“Yeah, I can make that work.” Lexa nodded.
“Ok good.” Clarke added the meeting to everyone’s calendars before setting her phone back on the bedside table. “G'night.” She yawned.

“Night love.” Lexa smiled as she pulled Clarke closer.

Chapter End Notes

Let me know what you think, come chat to me on tumblr: ineedhappyendings
Play dates and birthday parties

Chapter Summary

Charlotte and the twins have their new friends over and the twins celebrate their fifth birthdays.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Clarke was the first to wake the following morning. She left Lexa to sleep a little longer and made her way into the ensuite to start getting ready for the day. She woke Lexa once she was done in the bathroom, before heading downstairs to get breakfast started.

Lexa woke the children and sent them downstairs for breakfast just as Anya joined Clarke in the kitchen. “Morning.” She nodded as she headed for her stash of herbal teas.

“Morning, how are you feeling?” Clarke asked.

“Same as the last few days.” Anya shrugged. “I love this kid but I hate this pregnancy.”

“You’re halfway there.” Clarke tried to reassure her.

“Ugh.” Anya huffed. “Nine months is too long.”

“Mama!” Tris bounded down the stairs at the sight of her mother in the kitchen.

“Hey monster.” Anya always perked up when Tris was around.

“Hi baby.” Tris rubbed Anya’s belly.

“Morning all.” Denae smiled as she let herself inside.
“Hi.” Clarke greeted. “Breakfasts and lunches are ready to go, Lexa’s getting everyone moving upstairs and bags are packed.”

“You make my job so easy.” Denae teased.

“I do what I can.” Clarke laughed.

“Morning everyone.” Lexa called as she joined them.

“Morning.”

“I’m going upstairs to kiss our babies goodbye, and then I need to head in if I want to be home by four.” Clarke told Lexa.

“Sure.” Lexa nodded.

Clarke stopped in each child's room for a few minutes. She helped Aden pick out his outfit, and Costia to tie her hair back and reminded Charlotte to get ready before reading any more of her book. “Have a great day at school.” She told all three as she kissed their foreheads. “I love you.”

She stopped off in the kitchen to let Lexa and Denae know that she was off for the day. “I'll see you for our meeting at nine.” She kissed Lexa’s cheek.

“See you then.”

“Bye!” Clarke waved as she grabbed her bag and headed for the door.

“Clarke!” Her team chorused as she exited the elevator.
“Hey everyone.” She greeted. “Let me put my bag down and then let’s catch up.” She headed into her office and set her bag on her desk. “Conference room.” She pointed.

“How was your summer?” Niylah asked.

“Great, really great.” She couldn’t help her grin. “Now catch me up, what’s everyone working on and where are things at?”

“Did you know we have a meeting scheduled with Ms Woods at nine?” Harper asked. “Do you know what it’s about?”

“I do, but we’ll save that topic for once she joins us.” Clarke nodded seriously.

“You’d tell us if it was something to worry about right? Because my husband and I are about to buy a house.” Harper pressed.

“That’s great news, have you found the place?” Clarke asked. “And no, it’s nothing for you to worry about.”

“We have, it’s a bit of a fixer-upper, but once we’re done with it, it will be perfect - I’ll show you pictures later.” She nodded.

“Can’t wait.” Clarke nodded. “Monty, let’s start with you.”

“I’m working on the website redesign for Heda Publications - we finalised the graphics before you went away obviously, just coordinating with the web department and working around the final few kinks.”

“Great, Jasper?” Clarke continued around the table hearing what each of her team was up to and making notes on which projects she would need to weigh in on further later in the day as well as upcoming deadlines to keep track of.
Lexa joined them just as Clarke was finishing up her questions. “Good morning Ms Woods, thank you for joining us.” She nodded and Lexa took her seat at the opposite end of the conference table. “Well, Ms Woods asked to be here for this announcement.”

“You’re not leaving us, are you?”

“No, nothing like that.” Clarke shook her head. “I believe the time has come to tell all of you something. Over the summer break, I got married.”

“Congratulations! Do you have pictures?” Niylah asked.

“I do.” Lexa nodded. She’d already connected her phone to the projector and within seconds she had pictures on the screen to the left of the table.

“Ms Woods is the LDH?” Jasper gasped. “Plot twist!”

“Dare I ask what that is?” Lexa asked dryly as Jasper sunk down in his seat.

“Well a while back Clarke started going out with an unnamed suitor who we’ve all been referring to as the LDH, or Lunch Date Hottie.” Miller admitted.

“I’ve been called worse.” Lexa shrugged.

“We wanted to tell you this, because we think you deserve to know, however, we ask that it go no further.” Clarke began.

“There are certain department executives who I fear would use Clarke as a shortcut to me, rather than taking the appropriate channels - and I think we can all agree that Clarke’s attention is better focused here than drowning in irrelevant messages from other departments.” Lexa explained.

“I wanted to tell all of yo-” Clarke continued.

“Oh my god, you got Charlotte a puppy?” Monty interrupted, his eyes fixed on the wedding photos
still playing on the screen.

“That’s Fish, Lexa and her sister rescued her and her brother Ryder from a Rockpool where someone had attempted to drown them.” Clarke nodded. “The twins love Fishy as well, and she plays with all of the kids, but I think she’s decided that Charlotte is her person.”

“Look at the tiny suit.” Niylah gushed.

“Aden wasn’t well on the day, but he was so excited for the wedding - and his suit - that he pushed through like a little trooper.” Lexa nodded. “He spent most of the next day snuggling with Clarke.”

“Congratulations, it looks like it was a wonderful day.” Niylah told them both.

“It really was.” Clarke smiled, her eyes fixed on Lexa.

“And thank you for telling us.”

“I didn’t like keeping this from you, but Lexa and I both agreed that it was best to keep things professional.” Clarke told her team.

“It’s okay Clarke, we get it.” Niylah assured her.

- 

Clarke’s team adjusted quickly to the new normal of Lexa dropping by whenever she had a spare minute during the day and Lexa started to relax around them, joking with Monty and Jasper and chatting with Niylah and Harper. Clarke was grateful that they took keeping their secret so seriously.

Her first week back at work passed quickly and with little of interest, and suddenly it was Saturday and they were getting ready for Sarah and Carol and their family to arrive. Lexa and Charlotte spent the morning baking cupcakes and cookies while Clarke, Tris and the twins played with Aden’s climbing gym.
Carol and Sarah arrived at two, Clarke let them in and led them all through to the back deck. “Lexa made us some snacks.” She chuckled as she gestured to the enormous grazing platter Lexa had prepared. “The kids are in the tree house if you girls want to join them, and Lexa will be back any minute - she went with her sister to Tris’ soccer practice.” Both Ellie and Jess waited for their mothers’ nods of approval before running into the yard to join the other children. Micah was fast asleep in his stroller which Sarah parked in the shade by the house.

“So how long has your sister in law been living with you?” Sarah asked.

“Almost three weeks?” Clarke shrugged. “She’s in the middle of a tough pregnancy, and so we offered to let her stay here so we can help out with Tris and Ryder. She’s not quite on bed rest - but she’s been threatened with it if she doesn’t take it easy.”

“Lexa and her sister must be close then.”

“Anya was Lexa’s protector when they were young, this is Lexa’s way of paying her back. But they are close, we’d ordinarily see Anya three or four times a week.” Clarke shrugged. “I love how close Lexa’s family are - we were all together at the beach over the summer - along with her first wife’s parents.”

“Okay, you have the patience of a saint. Your sister in law lives with you so you can look after her kid, and your wife’s ex’s parents went on your summer vacation?” Carol joked.

“Lexa’s first wife, Costia senior, passed away just after the twins were born - her parents maintain a close relationship with the family.”

“I’m so sorry, I had no idea.” Carol apologised.

“It’s fine, I know how it sounds.” Clarke waved off the awkwardness Carol was feeling. “Just wait until you find out I met one of my best friends by finding out I was the other woman her fiancé was sleeping with.”

“Really?”

“Yeah, we both broke up with him, became best friends and I adopted his daughter.”
“You dated Charlotte’s father?”

“That’s why I went down the path of adopting her initially. Then he gave me an ultimatum when I told him my plan - him or her. I chose Charlotte, and I have zero regrets.” Clarke explained. “My mother was so worried that I was making such a huge life decision based on a boyfriend she hated, but as soon as I met Charlotte for the first time I knew without a doubt that I was making the right choice.”

“So is Charlotte the reason Lexa wants to help other foster kids?”

“Not the whole reason.” Lexa answered as she and Anya made their way outside to join the others. “Hi I’m Lexa, you must be Sarah?” She shook Sarah’s hand. “And Carol, it’s good to see you again.”

“Hey love.” Clarke smiled. “Anya this is Sarah and Carol, their daughters Ellie and Jess are in the treehouse with our kids - and their youngest, Micah is asleep over there. Carol, Sarah, this is Lexa’s sister Anya.”

“Nice to meet you.” Anya smiled at the two of them. “My daughter Tris will join us soon, she’s just changing out of her soccer gear.”

“Nice to meet you too.” Carol nodded.

“Anyway, to answer your question, I want to help foster kids because Anya and I both know how hard it can be for kids in the system.” Lexa told Carol as she took her seat beside Clarke.

“You were foster children?”

“We were both adopted by an amazing single mother and raised alongside her biological son.” Anya nodded. “I spent longer in the system than Lex though.”

“I was lucky to land with Indra as my first and only placement.” Lexa agreed. “Anya bounced through multiple homes before going to Indra.”
“And although she stopped after adopting Lexa, Indra has recently gone back to fostering. She currently has a fourteen year old foster daughter, Ontari.” Anya added.

“She has offered to adopt her, but Ontari said no.” Lexa reached for a grape. “Not that Indra is deterred, she plans the keep Ontari until she goes to college - she’s a part of our family.”

“And what did Indra’s son think of her adopting the two of you?”

“We’re all really close - I think Linc liked having sisters to take some of Ma’s focus, she can be quite intense.” Anya laughed.

“But it worked for all of us, we turned out pretty well I’d say.” Lexa shrugged.

“So Anya, what is it that you do?” Sarah asked.

“Well, right now I’m on light duties because this guy is determined to make things difficult.” She rubbed her belly with a chuckle. “But I own a club downtown called the Bunker.”

“I went there once - there’s a lot of cops in that place.”

“Military too.” Anya nodded. “And a zero tolerance creep policy.”

“I always enjoyed myself there.” Clarke nodded.

“Normally I’m very hands on, but right now I have to trust that my staff know what they’re doing, and settle for balancing the books.” Anya sighed.

“How long have you got to go?”

“Four months.”
“Mama?” Tris wandered out from the house.

“Hey monster.” Anya opened her arms for her daughter. “The other kids are in the tree house, do you want to go play?”

“Can I sit with you for a little bit?” She asked as she climbed onto the bench beside Anya.

“Of course.” Anya agreed, letting Tris snuggle into her side.

“How was practice?” Clarke asked her.

“It was hard.” Tris told her. “But that’s good.”

“So, Carol, tell me more about your organisation.” Lexa requested.

“Of course, we’re a non-profit organisation focused on finding long term and beneficial placements for foster children.” Carol began. She gave Lexa a run through of all their stats and a few success stories. Lexa nodded along asking questions as they came to her.

Sarah was forced away from the conversation by Micah waking, she lifted him from her stroller and brought him back to the table. She handed him a cracker to chew on, letting him watch the adults around the table.

“Ma!” He squealed, reaching for Carol.

“Hey baby boy.” Carol laughed as she took Micah into her lap. “So as I was saying, by carefully screening all prospective parents we are better able to match them with the children who would benefit the most.”

“Like Clarke with Charlotte.” Lexa nodded. “And so what is the next step? What is your current goal?”
“Well, we’re aiming to add an additional case worker and a further two in the coming year, as well as adding our own pre-service training program.” Carol told her. “We’ve seen an increase in applications, especially from rainbow families, and our case workers are at capacity.”

“And what is the budget for this increase?”

“To remain competitive and attract the best social workers to the organisation we offer a salary on the higher side of average, and then there is an increase in overheads, and we will require an office fit out to accommodate the new staff and the training rooms, we’re confident that the whole lot can be achieved for four hundred thousand.”

“And what could you do with a million?” Lexa asked.

“With a million we could open an additional home and staff it for up to ten children for a year or two - setup costs would go to a little over half a million, and then staffing and resources for the children would eat up the rest over a two year period, although I would need to run a more detailed cost breakdown for exact figures.”

“Show me a proposal for the group home, take your time to get it right, and the funding will be there.” Lexa decided. “And I’ll write you a cheque today for your staffing increase.”

“You will?” Carol clearly hadn’t expected Lexa’s level of generosity.

“You do good work - I’ve done my research.” Lexa assured her. “And Clarke speaks highly of her experience while fostering Charlotte, which tells me you have good staff.”

“Everyone loves Karen.” Sarah agreed.

“Thank you Lexa, your support is far more generous than I expected.” Carol managed finally.

“You’re welcome.” Lexa assured her.

The table fell silent once more as Micah called the attention back to him, clapping his hands against the table. “Weren’t you getting enough attention?” Clarke asked him with mock seriousness.
“Ah!” He grinned at her.

“Really?” Clarke reached out to grab at his fist.

“Would you like a cuddle?” Carol offered, lifting him over the table.

“I’d love one.” Clarke beamed, taking Micah and holding him close. “Hey buddy.”

“Bwa-ah!” He shouted as he grabbed a fistful of Clarke’s hair.

“So what are your first impressions of Harbourside?” Sarah asked Lexa.

“The twins are still so caught up in the excitement of going to school each day.” Lexa smiled. “And Charlotte seems happier than she was at her last school.”

“So much happier.” Clarke agreed. “I’m so glad she’s getting a fresh start.”

“That’s good.” Carol agreed. “We’ve always been happy with it.”

“The school has a great community.” Sarah added.

“Mum, can we have something to drink?” Charlotte asked, leading the group of children back onto the deck, their faces all flushed from playing.


“Yeah.” Costia nodded.
“I’m tired, can I sit with you and mama?” Aden pouted.

“Sure monkey.” Clarke nodded.

“Can we play with Micah?” Ellie asked her mothers.

“Sure, grab his playmat from the stroller.” Sarah agreed as Clarke set the toddler down. Micah took hold of Ellie’s finger and followed her to his stroller on wobbly legs. Aden took advantage of Clarke’s empty lap and moved in for a snuggle.

“You are tired.” Clarke chuckled as she hugged him close.

Carol and Sarah left shortly before dinner time, promising to have Clarke and Lexa over to their house soon. The children were all exhausted and so Lexa relented and allowed Clarke to order pizzas for dinner. They ate in the lounge room while watching movies, all snuggled together on the couch, with Anya and Tris on the loveseat.

“So the twins’ birthday is coming up.” Lexa mentioned as they were cleaning up after putting the children to bed.

“Their first proper birthday party.” Clarke beamed. “Do you have any ideas?”

“Just something simple, cake and games in the backyard?”

“I have some suggestions.” Clarke reached for her tablet which had been charging on the bench.

“Pinterest?” Lexa teased.

“Hey, Pinterest is amazing.” Clarke defended. “What do you think of an obstacle course? Ninja warrior style.”
“I think Aden would love that.”

“We can set up a few of these outdoor games as well.” Clarke showed Lexa the various ideas she’d saved on her “birthday parties” board. “Or I have plenty of messy fun options, if you think they’d prefer that?”

“I think the outdoor games sound great.” Lexa assured her. “Do we have to build them?”

“There’s a place across town that we can hire a few of them from, but a couple of them we can build easily.” Clarke told her. “I’ll make up some invites this week - are we inviting the whole class?”

“I don’t see why not.” Lexa agreed.

“Great.” Clarke smiled. “Charlotte has never let me throw her a birthday party, it’s always just dinner with my family.”

“Maybe now that she’s making friends she’ll let you throw her a small one - a movie night or a sleepover or something?” Lexa suggested.

“I hope so - she deserves some fun.” Clarke leaned into her wife.

“I love you.” Lexa wrapped an arm around Clarke.

“I love you too.”

“I’ve been thinking.” Lexa began slowly. “I might sign up for a pre-service foster course.”

“Okay, But I think we need to give the kids a bit more time before we actually move forward on another kid.” Clarke said.

“I agree, but I know the approval process can be a lengthy one, better I do the work now so we can
move when we’re ready.”

“You’re right.” Clarke agreed. “I should update my licence as well, it’s due to expire in March.”.

“How long do you want to wait?”

“A year or two, we’ve just thrown a lot of changes at our three, let them settle into our new family before we make any more changes.”

“You’re right.” Lexa nodded.

“Of course I am.” Clarke teased.

The twins’ birthday fell on a Sunday three weeks into the new school year. Clarke made up invitations for their whole class, and was pleased that almost all of the children were able to attend. Clarke had Lexa and Anya distract the children while she and the rest of the adults set up everything. Abby and Indra took care of the food and Clarke, Raven, Octavia and Lincoln set up the obstacle course and games.

“Okay, come see.” Clarke called up the stairs.

Aden and Costia ran down, almost tripping in their hurry. “Wow!” Aden cheered.

“Do you like it?” Clarke asked Costia.

“Uh-huh.” Costia nodded. “Thank you!” She launched herself at Clarke, hugging her tight.

“You’re very welcome.” Clarke knelt to hug both the twins.
“You really have done a great job out here.” Anya said as she moved to the table.

Clarke looked out at the backyard full of activities, with streamers, balloons and a happy birthday banner, and had to agree - it looked like the best kind of birthday party. “Thanks.”

“Clarke, our first guests are here.” Lexa called as she walked the first group through to the yard.

“Welcome.” Clarke greeted.

Lincoln and Octavia supervised the obstacle course, helping any children who struggled. Raven and Lexa had taken up positions in amongst the games to help out with rulings on any disagreements and Clarke circulated, making sure that all the children were having fun.

Sarah and Carol had brought Ellie and Micah too, and after taking one look at the sheer number of kindergarteners Ellie and Charlotte had opted to play with the puppies in Charlotte’s room, Tris following them a moment later.

“Great party.” Carol told Lexa once the other parents had left with their children. “It’ll be a tough act to follow for the rest of us.”

“You’ve thrown down a gauntlet for sure.” Anya agreed. “A power move.”

“I wasn’t trying to show anyone up, I just wanted the twins to have a memorable party.” Clarke said.

“We know that - but there are going to be some very competitive parents who think you’ve issued a challenge.” Sarah shrugged.

“Great.” Clarke sighed.

“Don’t worry about them. The twins loved every second of their party, and they love you for planning it all for them - that’s what matters.” Lexa reassured her wife.
“I’ve never thrown a kids’ birthday party before - I wanted it to be a good one.”

“Never?” Carol asked.

“Charlotte has never let me - she hasn’t really had friends to invite before now.” Clarke explained.

“But the twins, surely they’ve had birthday parties before?”

“This is their first birthday with me - Lexa and I haven’t been together all that long.” Clarke admitted.

“You haven’t? You’re so in sync - I would’ve guessed you’d been together for years.”

“It’s barely been six months.” Anya laughed. “But you’re right about them being in sync - they’re the perfect couple.”

“We both knew pretty quickly that this is what we both want.” Clarke agreed.

“Clarke, I’ve finished loading the dishwasher - I’ve left a few serving platters in the sink, but I have to get going.” Abby called from the kitchen.

“Excuse me.” Clarke made her way into the kitchen. “Thanks so much for your help today.” She hugged her mother.

“Anytime.” Abby smiled. “I’ll see you all tomorrow for lunch.”

“See you then.” Clarke agreed as she walked her mother to the front door.

“Bye my loves.” Abby waved to her grandchildren who were all collapsed on the longe with Tris, Jess and Ellie, watching a movie.
“Bye!” They waved.

“Alright, come on munchkins - time to go home.” Carol called to her children and Sarah pushed a sleeping Micah in his stroller.

“Can’t we stay for the end of the movie?” Jess pouted.

“We have Netflix at home - you can watch it there.” Carol shook her head. “We need to give Clarke and Lexa their house back, I’m sure they’re tired too.”

“Fine.” Jess huffed and she got up off the couch.

“What do you say?” Carol reminded her.

“Thank you for inviting us to the party - we had a lot of fun.” Jess told Clarke and Lexa.

“Thank you for helping us to celebrate Costia and Aden’s birthday.” Lexa told her.

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The twins were awake at the first crack of dawn the following morning - their actual birthday. Costia was the instigator, waking her brother and dragging him into their mothers’ room. They scrambled up onto the bed and wedged themselves between the sleeping women.

“Mama wake up.” Costia poked at Lexa’s face.

“Do you want snuggles monkey?” Lexa mumbles, wrapping Costia in her arms, as Clarke did the same with Aden.

“No mama!” Costia wriggled in Lexa’s hold. “It’s our birthday!”
“Extra special birthday snuggles then.” Clarke mumbled, Aden already settled snugly against her.

“No!” Costia whined. “It’s time to get up.”

“No quite yet, monkey. Snuggle for just a little while.” Lexa told her, kissing her forehead.

“Okay, but just for a very little while.” Costia agreed reluctantly.

They managed to put off actually getting up for another hour, Costia’s patience finally running out. “Come on then, I’ll make you breakfast.” Lexa agreed, kissing Costia on the tip of her nose. “Aden?”

“In a minute.” He mumbled, still snuggled happily in Clarke’s embrace.

“You want help?” Clarke offered, cracking one eyelid to look at her wife.

“All good, you snuggle with the birthday boy, I’ll feed the birthday girl.”

“Breakfast in bed?” Aden suggested.

“Sure monkey.” Lexa leaned over to kiss his head.

Lexa lifted Costia and carried her out of the bedroom where she found Charlotte just coming out of her room. “Is mum still in bed?” She asked, rubbing her eyes.

“Yep, I’m going to make breakfast and bring it up for all of us, go snuggle.” Lexa promised.

“Thanks. Tris woke me up, she’s gone down to see Anya.” Charlotte explained.
“Where are the dogs?”

“Tris took them downstairs.” Charlotte yawned as she made her way into Clarke and Lexa’s bedroom.

“Okay, come on monkey, what are we going to make for breakfast?” Lexa asked Costia.

“Birthday pancakes!” Costia cheered. “The special ones!”

“Alright.” Lexa chuckled. She set Costia on the island bench and started gathering ingredients for the pancakes.

Once the pancakes were finished Lexa carefully stacked everything onto a tray and carried it upstairs.

“Anya, there’s pancakes for the two of you on the bench.” She called as she passed her sister’s room.

Clarke was sitting up against the headboard with Aden and Charlotte leaning into her from beach side as she read the first Harry Potter book aloud. Costia quickly darted past Lexa and went to join them.

“Perfect timing, we just finished the chapter.” Clarke smiled as she set the book back in the nightstand.

“Can we read more?” Aden asked.

“After breakfast, sure.” Clarke agreed. “Maybe mama will read to all of us - she does the voices better than I can.”

“I’d love to.” Lexa agreed.
“This looks amazing.” Clarke told Lexa, as she looked at the tray of pancakes that had been cooked full of sprinkles, and topped with whipped cream, strawberries, blueberries and banana slices and maple syrup.

“Super special birthday pancakes.” Lexa grinned.

“Yes!” Aden cheered.

Lexa pulled two extra trays from beside the bed and set them up so that everyone had room for their plates before passing out the cutlery. “Thanks Lexa.” Charlotte smiled as she cut into her stack of pancakes.

“No problem.” Lexa assured her.

They finished their breakfast and Clarke took everything downstairs to clean up while Lexa picked the book back up and continued from where Clarke left off. Clarke returned a few minutes later and reclaimed her place, Aden and Charlotte snuggled back into her sides happily.

- 

“Okay, time to get up, everyone will be here for lunch in two hours.” Clarke said finally. They’d read through several chapters of the book.

“Mum’s right.” Lexa agreed. “Let’s go.” Lexa agreed. “Do you want to get them dressed, or start on lunch?” She asked Clarke.

“I’ll get the kids ready, and then come down to help you.” She smiled before giving Lexa a swift kiss. “Come on my little hooligans.” She herded the children out of the room.

Clarke joined Lexa in the kitchen a short time later. “I’ve done Charlotte and Costia’s hair, they’re just getting dressed, and Aden has finally selected an outfit. They’ll be down shortly.”
“Thanks love.” Lexa said.

“Now, what can I do?”

“Can you start on the potato bake? I’m just getting the chickens in the oven.”

“Sure.” Clarke nodded as she grabbed the peeler and got to work.

“Thanks for breakfast.” Anya said as she brought her dishes out and set them in the sink.

“Yeah, if I’d known you could cook like that maybe I would have married you before Clarke could.” Raven joked.

“No worries.” Lexa assured her. “Although, if I’d known there were three of you in there I would have made you extra.”

“See, she gets me.” Raven told Clarke.

“She gets that you’re a human garbage disposal?” Clarke teased.

“Hey.” Raven pouted. “I’m telling squish you were mean to me.”

“What?” Charlotte asked as she came down the stairs.

“Your Aunty Rae is upset because I called her a human garbage disposal - because she eats everything in sight.” Clarke told her daughter.

“Mum’s got a point.” Charlotte giggled as Raven reached for the fruit bowl.

“Et tu Squish?” Raven clutched her chest in horror.
“Don’t listen to her.” Clarke rolled her eyes as she pulled Charlotte into a hug. “She’s just feeling dramatic today.”

“Can Tris and I go play with the puppies?”

“Sure.” Clarke let her go.

“Wait for me Squish.” Raven called after the girls as she followed them into the yard.

Aden and Costia both ran down the stairs a minute later. “The birthday monkeys!” Anya cheered. “Happy birthday!” She opened her arms to hug them.

“Thanks Aunty Anya.” Aden said.

“Mama, can we watch a movie?” Costia asked.

“You don’t want to play with Tris and Charlotte?” Clarke suggested.

“No.” Costia shook her head. “Movie.”

“Okay, go pick something.” Lexa nodded.

“Can I come snuggle with you?” Anya asked.

“Yeah.” Costia agreed, leading her aunt into the lounge room.

“Potatoes are done when you’re ready with the sauce.” Clarke said. “I’ll get started on the rest of the veggies.”
“Thanks love.” Lexa said as she brought a saucepan over from the stove and poured the contents over Clarke’s carefully layered potatoes. “Can I get you to started on icing the cake though?”

“Of course.” Clarke nodded.

“Hello.” Lincoln called from the front door as he and Octavia let themselves in.

“Hey Linc.” Lexa called back.

They heard both Lincoln and Octavia stop in the lounge to wish the twins happy birthday. Octavia was the first to make it through to the kitchen. “Hey.”

“Hey, O.” Clarke smiled.

“Hi Octavia.” Lexa waved to her with the knife in her hand.

“Need any help?”

“Can you scoop the frostings into my piping bags?” Clarke nodded to the various bowls of coloured frosting.

“Sure.” Octavia nodded.

Lincoln joined them a minute later with Costia clinging to his back. “Hi Lex, Hey Clarke.” He grinned.

“Hey Linc.” Clarke said, her focus on the frosting she was smoothing over the cake.

“Where are the other two girls?”

“In the yard with Rae, being suspiciously quiet.” Clarke shrugged.
“Honey, you should check on them before Rae makes something go boom.” Octavia ordered.

“On it.” Lincoln nodded and carried Costia out into the back yard.

“Anyaaa!” Lexa called. “Our brother just responded to being called ‘honey’!”

“And I missed it?” Anya yelled back. “Do it again, I wanna see!” She demanded as she joined them in the kitchen.

“Is it really that big a deal?” Octavia asked.

“Linc usually hates pet names. His high school girlfriend started calling him muffin, and he broke up with her almost immediately.” Anya laughed.

“It was different this time though.” Lexa was quick to reassure Octavia. “He didn’t even flinch when you called him honey.”

“I do it all the time, honey, babe, he answers to pretty much anything.” Octavia shrugged.

“He loves you.” Anya said. “I guess you’ll be doubly family before long.”

“Here’s hoping.” Octavia chuckled.

“Clarke? Lexa?” Abby called as she let herself in.

“Kitchen!” Clarke called back.

“Hey Aden, happy birthday sweetheart.” They heard Abby stop in the lounge to greet Aden before continuing through. “Hello everyone.” She nodded to the assorted adults in the kitchen.
“Wow, the cake is so pretty! Thanks Clarke!” Aden marvelled from his place on Abby’s hip.

“Thanks Aden.” Clarke beckoned Abby closer so she could kiss her son. “I’m glad you like it.”

“Where’s our birthday girl?” Abby asked.

“Outside with Lincoln, checking in on a suspiciously quiet Charlotte, Tris and Raven.” Octavia told her.

“How long has he been gone?” Abby looked outside.

“I’ll go.” Anya decided. “They won’t attack me.” She winked as she made her way outside.

Anya returned a moment later, Tris and Raven at her sides as she made her way to the table where she sat heavily. “Are you sure you’re okay now?” Raven fussed.

“I think so, can you grab me a drink?”

“Of course.” Raven hurried to the fridge as Lincoln, Costia and Charlotte made their way inside too.

“Cos, look at our cake!” Aden called to his twin.

“I wanna see.” Costia pushed a chair up against the bench and scrambled up. “Is so pretty!” She clapped excitedly, bouncing on the chair.

“Woah, careful munchkin.” Octavia warned, catching the girl as she toppled backward off the chair.

“Oops.” Costia giggled as Octavia set her back on the ground.

“Charlotte and Octavia, can you set the dining table please?” Lexa asked, deciding that there were too many people in her kitchen. “Everyone else, not involved in cooking, can you please make
yourselves comfortable in the lounge room?” She grabbed a couple of cheeses from the fridge and some crackers and threw them together on a cheese board which she took through and set out on the coffee table. “Lunch won’t be too far off.” She promised them.

“Better love?” Clarke caught Lexa as she returned to the kitchen.

“There were just too many people, someone was going to get hurt.” Lexa nodded.

“Okay.” Clarke nodded before leaning in to kiss her wife. “As long as you’re all good.”

“I am now.” She assured Clarke.

“There’s too many people in there, can I hang in here with you?” Ontari asked. They could hear Indra greeting everyone in the lounge.

“Sure, can you stir?” Lexa pointed to the gravy.

“Sure.” Ontari took the spoon from Lexa.

“Clarke, Lexa, how are you?” Indra made her way over to her daughter and daughter in law.

“We’re good, we managed a lie in after the party yesterday, the twins are still a little hyped up though.” Clarke laughed. “But I guess it’s not everyday you turn five.”

“You arranged an excellent birthday party for them yesterday.” Indra told her. “Just wonderful.”

“Thanks.” Clarke smiled.

“Is everyone here?”

“We’re just missing Elaine and Nyko.” Lexa said. “But they had church this morning, so they might
“Did you tell the twins they’re coming?” Clarke asked.

“Nope, it’s a surprise.” Lexa grinned.

“The table’s set.” Charlotte said, making her way back to Clarke.

“Thanks baby girl.” Clarke set down her piping bag to hug Charlotte. “Now, Nyko and Elaine are about to arrive, so it’ll probably get very loud through there in a minute.” She warned.

“Okay, I’m going to go sit with nana.” She nodded.

“Okay.” Clarke kissed her head before releasing her.

Nyko and Elaine arrived just as Lexa was taking the chickens out of the oven. As expected there was an explosion of noise, everyone greeting each other - the whole family back together for the first time since they left the beach house.

Lunch was a noisy affair, as all family events seemed to be. Clarke kept a watchful eye on Charlotte, but she didn’t so much as flinch even when Nyko laugh boomed out over the table. It was amazing to think that barely six months ago her family had been barely half the size it was now - and being surrounded by so many people who loved her had helped Charlotte to start to come out of her shell.

Once lunch was done presents appeared almost out of nowhere and the twins tore into each one with frenzied excitement. Costia received a mountain of art supplies, as well as LEGO and a gift certificate for build a bear, which caused her to squeal with glee. Aden got LEGO, a pile of books and a junior membership to a climbing gym that a friend of Octavia’s had just opened.

“They run bouldering classes on tuesday afternoons, I’ve already spoken to your moms, and you’re enrolled to start this week.” Octavia told him.

“Really?” Aden beamed. “Cos too?”
“No, Costia has a class of her own on Tuesday afternoons.” Clarke shook her head, handing Costia one last present.

Costia tore her gift open and pulled out a black leotard with a lavender tulle skirt and wrap cardigan along with a pair of ballet slippers. “Ballerina class?”

“That’s right.” Lexa nodded.

“You know, your mommy was a wonderful dancer - she won so many trophies and medals.” Elaine told Costia.

“I have her ballet picture on my wall - Clarke found it.” Costia nodded.

“I found a box of old photos while I was cleaning out the wardrobe in Charlotte’s room. Costia love the picture of Costia senior so much that I got it a new frame for her room. Aden has one in his room too, of Lex and Costia senior on a hike.” Clarke told the twins’ grandparents. “Have they shown you their rooms?”

“Not yet.” Elaine shook her head.

“Why don’t you go show them, while we clean up, and then we can cut your cake?” Clarke suggested to the twins.

“Okay!” Costia agreed. She grabbed hold of Nyko’s hand and dragged him upstairs, Aden and Elaine close behind.

Clarke stood and began gathering dishes, Raven and Octavia quickly following suit. They stacked the dishwasher while Lexa cleared the wrapping paper and the twins’ gifts from the dining room with the help of Abby and Indra.

“Clarke, their rooms are amazing.” Elaine told her as she came back downstairs. “You put so much effort into them - thank you.” She swept Clarke into a hug.
“I loved doing it with them. We had a ball, right monkeys?” She assured her.

“You never want to be in a position like ours, but if you are, you hope that whoever steps in to take over will love them just as much as their own mother did - and Lexa found that in you, the twins are so lucky to have you.” Elaine’s voice hitched with a sob. “Thank you.”

“It’s my absolute pleasure, honestly.” Clarke smiled, hugging Elaine a little longer.

“They’re really great Clarke.” Nyko agreed.

“Thank you.” Clarke hugged Nyko as well. “Now let’s do the cake before we all start crying.” She joked, squeezing Elaine’s arm.

“Good idea.” Elaine chuckled.

Clarke sent everyone to the table while she went to get the cake from the bench. She had decorated it with a riot of colour around the sides and topped with a forest of lollipops. She had let the twins make suggestions after an evening scrolling through Pinterest with her. She set the cake down in front of the twins, taking delight in their faces. The assembled family sang them happy birthday before the candles were blown out.

“Alright, who wants a slice?” Lexa asked as she picked up a knife.

“Mama, can we sleep in with you tonight?” Aden asked as Lexa helped him into his pyjamas after his bath.

“Sure monkey, go get snuggled in.” She kissed his forehead.

“Will you read more of the story?”

“You’ll have to ask Charlotte, she was reading it with us.” Lexa told him.
“Charlotte!” Aden ran off to find his older sister.

Lexa chuckled as she made her way into her own bedroom and through to the ensuite. “Love, I think we’re going to have company in bed tonight.” She told Clarke, who was relaxing in the bathtub.

“They want to keep reading the book, don’t they?” Clarke laughed.

“Yeah.” Lexa nodded.

“Well, wait for me, I like the way you read it.” She grinned as she pushed herself up and out of the water.

“Of course.” Lexa promised. Waiting until Clarke had wrapped herself in a towel before tugging her closer. “Love you.” She leaned in to kiss her wife.

“Love you too.” Clarke was careful not to get Lexa’s pyjamas completely soaked by hugging her back, settling for sliding her hands into Lexa’s hair to keep her close.

“Mama! We’re ready for the story!” Costia called from their bed.

“Such a demanding audience we have.” Clarke chuckled. “Go, I’ll be there in a moment.”

Clarke quickly dried herself off and changed into her own pyjamas before claiming her place in the bed, all three children in between her and Lexa.

The children fell asleep after two chapters and neither Lexa nor Clarke could bring themselves to move them to their own beds. Opting instead to join hands over their sleeping bodies. “I love our family.” Clarke smiled.

“Me too love.” Lexa agreed.
“G’night.” Clarke hummed, her eyes already closing despite it being barely eight thirty.

“Sweet dreams love.” Lexa smiled, letting her own eyes close as well.

Chapter End Notes

Let me know what you think, I love hearing from you all :-)
Halloween and Sleepovers

Chapter Summary

Clexa and their family celebrate Halloween and Charlotte’s first sleepover is a more eventful night than they anticipated.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Clarke took Costia to her first dance class, Octavia took Aden to his bouldering class and Charlotte spent the afternoon with Raven and Tris. Denae was more than happy to take the afternoon off.

Clarke helped Costia to change her shoes before going and getting her name marked off with the teacher. “Name?” The teacher was an older woman, her salt and pepper hair pulled back in a loose bun, and dressed all in black.

“Costia.” Clarke nodded to the five year old at her side.

“I am Miss Lizzie, I taught your mother when she was younger.” She told Costia with a small smile.

“My wife chose your school because you were Costia’s teacher, we thought the connection would be good for little Costia.” Clarke explained, putting Miss Lizzie at ease.

“Of course.” She nodded. “It’s lovely to meet you Costia, why don’t you go join the other children, and we’ll get started in a minute.”

Costia looked to Clarke, who nodded encouragingly. “Have fun, I’ll be sitting over there with the other parents.” Clarke assured her.

Clarke took a seat to watch Costia. “Which one is yours?” The lone father of the group asked.

“Costia, with the braids.” Clarke pointed to her daughter. “And yours?”
“Ally, in the wrong coloured uniform.” He pointed to the one girl in pink, standing out against the black and lavender of the other children’s uniforms. “She flat out refused to wear the black.” He sighed.

“Costia would have worn anything to come to dance class - she was so excited when my wife and I told her she’d be coming.”

“My mother-in-law, well my ex-mother-in-law, insists that Ally has to take ballet.” He shrugged. “I don’t know, maybe it will be good for her.”

“Does she want to dance?”

“She says she does.” He sighed. “Her mother left us a few months ago, Ally has obviously taken it hard.”

“She just left?”

“Ally had been with my parents for the day, I picked her up on my way home, and when we got there all of my wife’s things were gone. She called a week later to say she wasn’t coming back.”

“That’s awful.” Clarke sympathised.

“Yeah.” He shook his head. “Sorry, I don’t mean to be such a downer.”

“Don’t worry about it. I’m Clarke by the way.” She held out a hand.

“Derek.” He smiled, shaking her outstretched hand. “So Costia is an interesting name, how did you choose it?”

“She’s named after Costia Wilde, former principal with the Polis Ballet, she was also her biological mother, my wife’s first wife.”

“I’ve always thought it a little vain to name your child after yourself.” He shrugged.
“My wife, Lexa, chose her name actually. Costia senior was terminally ill when the twins were born, she passed away a few weeks after their birth.”

“Sorry, I had no idea.” He cringed at his own awkwardness.

“Don’t worry about it.” Clarke assured him.

Miss Lizzie called the class to order and Clarke spent the rest of the hour taking photos of Costia’s first lesson. When they were released at the end of the hour, Costia ran straight into Clarke’s arms.

“Did you have fun?”

“Yeah.” She beamed.

“I’m so glad.” Clarke hugged her close. “I took lots of pictures, we can get one printed on the way home if you’d like, and put it up beside the one of your mom?”

“Okay.” Costia nodded.

“And we can make an extra copy for Nonna.”

“She’d like that.” Costia agreed.

“See you.” Clarke waved to Derek as she took Costia’s hand and led her toward the door.

“Bye, it was nice to meet you.” He waved.

“Costia, you danced very well today, I can see you definitely take after your mom.” Miss Lizzie said as they reached the door. “Can I show you something?” She beckoned them to follow her out into the hall. “These are all former students of mine. I have quite a few of your mommy up there, she was one of my very best students.”
“She was?.” Costia beamed, looking up at the photos on the wall.

“Thank you.” Clarke smiled at the teacher.

“See you next week, and make sure you practice your pointy toes.” She waved.

“I will.” Costia promised as she waved back. “I’m going to be as good as my mommy was.” She promised them. “Clarke, can we bring Nonna to see the photos?”

“We can ask if she’d like to come with us to watch next week’s class, if you’d like?” Clarke suggested.

“Yes please.” Costia nodded as they headed out to the car. “Can we call her now?”

“We can FaceTime her when we get home.” Clarke promised.

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“Go put your bag away, and get changed.” Clarke instructed as they arrived home. “Hey Aden, How was bouldering?”

“It was really cool!” Aden jumped up onto the couch, bouncing as he answered Clarke.

“No jumping on the couch.” Clarke reminded him. “Is Octavia still here?”

“She had to go. Raven and Aunty Anya are in the kitchen.” He told her.

“Want to help me with dinner?”
“I want to watch tv.” He shook his head.

“Okay.” Clarke agreed, letting him sit back down as she headed for the kitchen.

“Hi mum.” Charlotte waved from the table where she and Tris were sitting with Raven.

“Hi baby girl, Hi Tris, hey Rae.” She made her way over to them. “What are you doing?”

“Science.” Raven explained, as though it should be obvious.

“Rae is helping us with our coding homework.” Tris explained.

How great is this school? They teach coding from second grade!” Raven grinned. “They have this program that teaches them - I wish I could have done this in school.”

“I have no idea what you’re doing - so I’m glad you’re here to help.” Clarke laughed. “Are you staying for dinner?”

“Are you cooking, or is Lexa?”

“I am.” Clarke said.

“I’ll stay,” Raven decided.

“Awesome.” Charlotte cheered.

With the children all at school, they fell into an easy routine. Clarke was the first to get up each morning, she would get the children moving and then wake Lexa just before she was ready to leave for the office. Lexa would make the school run and Denae would arrive mid-morning to watch the
puppies - and Anya. Most days there would be a couple of errands for Denae to run, and she would help Anya out with anything she couldn’t do for herself.

Denae would collect the children from school and give them a snack before starting them on their homework. Clarke would get home around four most afternoons. She would take the dogs for a walk, usually accompanied by Charlotte, and then get started on dinner. Lexa would get home after her gym session with Lincoln and help Clarke with dinner before they sat down as a family for the meal. There were times when one or both of them had to work late, or go in early - but Denae was happy to be flexible with her hours, and if she couldn’t help then one of their family members could step in for a few hours when necessary.

The puppies grew larger every day, and by the time they were four months old it became undeniable that they were at least part Wolfhound. Ryder was the larger of the pair and almost as tall as the twins, with Fish only an inch or so behind. Lexa apologised for their size, but Clarke waved off her apology with a laugh - she much preferred large dogs. The dogs were playful in short bursts, they liked their walk to the local dog park each afternoon, but Ryder was content to nap beside Anya for long stretches of the day, and Fish would sit with Charlotte each evening.

With their routine in place, it seemed that the days flew past, and suddenly it was Halloween. Clarke and Anya worked together to make costumes for all four children. Charlotte wanted to be Hermione, Tris wanted to be a monster, and the twins wanted to be skeletons. Anya was heartbroken that she couldn’t go trick or treating, but was somewhat placated when Raven agreed to stay home with her and hand out candy to trick or treaters who came to Lexa’s door.

For herself, Clarke chose a Supergirl costume. Lexa let Clarke decide her costume, and almost backed out when her wife handed her a Wonder Woman costume with a smirk. “You said I could choose.”

“I guess I did.” Lexa agreed with a chuckle.

“Go put it on. The kids are ready to leave without us.” Clarke darted forward to kiss her wife before running out to corral their children.

“Mum, can you fix my robes?” Charlotte asked.

“Sure baby girl.” Clarke adjusted the robes so that the collar sat flat. “Make sure you thank Anya for her work on your costume.”
“I will.” Charlotte nodded as she ran off down the stairs.

“Monkeys, how are you doing?” Clarke stopped outside Costia’s room, to check on the twins’ progress. “Aden, you’re back-to-front.” She chuckled as she helped him to turn his top around. “You both look great.”

“Is mama coming?” Costia asked.

“She’s just putting her costume on.” Clarke nodded.

“What’s her costume?” Aden asked excitedly. “Mama never dresses up with us.”

“Well I’m Supergirl, so I got mama a Wonder Woman costume. That way we match, sort of.” Clarke told them. “Now let’s go get your buckets so we’re all ready once mama is dressed.” She ushered them downstairs.

Anya was dressed all in greed, except for her stomach, which was brown. “Mama’s an avocado!” Tris announced.

“Love it.” Clarke smiled as her sister in law filled the candy bowl. “And don’t worry, I’ll take a ton of pictures for you.”

“Thank you.” Anya smiled.

“No worries.” Clarke assured her.

“Okay, I’m ready.” Lexa said as she came down the stairs.

“Looking good Lex!” Raven called, making Lexa blush furiously.

“Thank you Raven.” Lexa said. “Ready?”
“Yes!” The twins cheered as they ran through to the kitchen.

“Tris, can we get a picture of you with your mama and Rae?”

“Oh-huh.” She nodded as she ran to stand with the two of them. Clarke took several shots of the three of them together.

“I still think your costume is cheating,” Lexa told Raven.

“What, I’m all about the authenticity.” She grinned.

“But an actual space suit? Isn’t that taking things a bit far?” Clarke agreed.

“Not at all.” Raven shook her head. “Plus, this suit is decommissioned, it was just sitting in a storage closet. I’m recycling.” Raven poked her tongue out. “Now go, before all the good candy is gone!” She laughed, shooing them toward the door.

Clarke took hold of Lexa’s hand and ushered the children to the door. “See you in a bit.” She called back to Anya and Raven as they headed out the front door.

They were about two blocks over when they saw some familiar faces. “Ellie!” Charlotte called to her friend.

“Charlie!” Ellie broke away from her family.

“Let’s get a picture of the two of you.” Clarke said, as the girls posed side by side.

“Aha, now I see why Ellie had to be Luna Lovegood.” Carol chuckled as she and Jess caught up.

“I think they look great.” Clarke smiled. “I’ll send you the pictures.”
“Thanks.” Carol nodded.

“Is Sarah at home?” Lexa asked, as they started moving along the street once more.

“Yeah, Micah has a fever, so she’s holding down the fort, while I’m out with this pair.”

“Mum, can Ellie stay over?”

“Not tonight sweetheart, you have school in the morning, but how about this weekend?” Clarke shook her head.

“Friday after school? Can we have a movie night?”

“Sure, if it’s okay with Ellie’s moms.”

“Please?” Ellie turned to Carol.

“Sure.” Carol agreed. “You’re sure you don’t mind?”

“Of course not.” Clarke assured her. “Ellie is always welcome, you all are.”

“Actually, are you free on Friday night? I’d like to go over the proposal you sent me - there are a couple of things I’d like to look at in more detail.” Lexa asked.

“If Micah is still sick, Sarah may want me home to help with Jess. Micah gets really clingy when he’s sick.”

“I understand.” Lexa said. “Let me know how you go.”

“Thanks, I will.” Carol nodded.
“Can Jess stay over too?” Costia asked.

“I don’t think that’s a good idea, maybe when you’re a little older.” Carol shook her head.

“What if you all came for dinner?” Clarke suggested. “I can pick your girls up from school and they can play for the afternoon. Then you, Sarah and Micah can come over for dinner - and the two of you can discuss whatever you need to discuss.”

“I’ll talk to Sarah.” Carol decided. “Thank you for the offer.”

- 

They returned home with their buckets full, and all four children in high spirits. “A successful outing then?” Anya chuckled as they returned.

“I got your favourite mama!” Tris fishes through her haul before handing Anya several tiny Almond Joy bars.

“Thanks monster.” Anya smiled.

“We ran into Carol and her girls - we’re having Ellie for a sleepover tomorrow night.” Clarke told Anya. “Maybe Tris would like to invite a friend over too?”

“That’s too much.” Anya shook her head.

“Nonsense. Tris, would you like to invite a friend over tomorrow night?” Clarke asked her niece.

“Yes please.” Tris nodded. “Can I invite Nic?”

“I’ll text her mom and see.” Anya agreed.
“You sure you’ll be okay with that many munchkins?” Raven asked.

“Of course.” Clarke nodded. “And if you and Anya wanted to go for dinner, Lex and I can handle them all.” She added quietly, so only Raven would hear.

“Thank you.” Raven nodded. “She’s going stir-crazy, cooped up in the house all the time.”

“I know. You should go and have a good time.” Clarke said. “Tris will be distracted by her friend - and you two should make the most of your time together before bub arrives and takes priority.”

“You’re the best.” Raven hugged Clarke around the shoulders.

“I know.” Clarke winked before turning her attention back to the children. “Okay, costumes off, it’s time to start getting ready for bed.” She herded all four children upstairs.

“So Lexa, I hear you’ve enrolled in our new pre service course?” Carol said once the children had left them to play after dinner.

“Yes, three sessions in, and I’m finding it quite interesting.” Lexa nodded.

“So are the two of you planning on increasing your family?” She asked.

“Not right away, but since I have to renew my licence anyway, Lexa decided she would get hers, and then we’re ready to go, once we’re ready for another child.” Clarke explained.

“That makes a lot of sense.” Sarah agreed.

“I hope you’ll come to us, when you are ready for another child?” Carol asked.
“Of course.” Clarke agreed.

“Well, Carol, did you want to come through to my office and we can go over your proposal?” Lexa suggested as Micah started to fuss.

“Sure.” Carol nodded, glancing quickly at her wife, to make sure sarah was okay.

“We’ll be fine.” Clarke assured them. “We have wine.”

“So, where’s Anya tonight?” Sarah asked once Lexa and Carol were gone.

“On a date.” Clarke grinned. “My best friend Raven, who my mother considers a daughter, and Anya got to know each other when Lex and I started dating, and they’re kind of perfect for each other.”

“And the baby isn’t complicating that?”

“A bit, maybe? But Rae is so smitten, she’s determined to be there through everything.” Clarke shrugged. “It means that we’ve been seeing a lost more of Rae recently, which I love, and she’s one of Charlotte’s favourite people, so Charlotte is happier too. I’ll actually miss them once Anya is allowed to return home.”

“Ellie told me that Charlotte’s aunt helps her with her science homework, she keeps asking if she can come over to get help on her homework too.” Sarah chuckled.

“I’m sure Rae wouldn’t mind, she is all about more women in STEM fields. She got Charlotte hooked on all things space.” Clarke said. “I’ll talk to her about setting up a regular study session - Denae can pick up Ellie from school and bring her back here on study days.”

“We wouldn’t want to impose.”

“It’s no trouble. Rae won’t mind, she loves kids, and she loves teaching them to love science as
much as she does. She even talked to Luna about making up Anya’s volunteer hours since she can’t.” Clarke assured her. “And when a genuine NASA rocket scientist offers to bring in space suits and talk about going to space - well let’s just say Luna jumped at the chance.”

“Ellie told me that Charlotte’s aunt makes rockets, but I figured that was just an exaggeration.” Sarah said.

“Nope. She is actually the head engineer on the shuttle being launched in May, it will be the fastest trip up to the ISS and hopefully completely reusable, just refill the gas and go again.” Clarke explained. “Or at least that’s how she explained it to me.” She laughed. “I’m glad she’s here to help out with their homework, because I couldn’t help the girls with coding if they asked - but Rae can code in her sleep.”

“Well, if she’s happy to help, I’ll gladly accept.” Sarah decided. “Ellie’s coding homework gives me a headache.”

“Mum! Can we go the the aquarium soon? And can Jess come? She hasn’t seen the penguins yet!” Costia asked as she ran down the stairs.

“Sure monkey.” Clarke nodded, trying to hide her shock at Costia calling her ‘mum’. She pulled the little girl into a hug. “Maybe next weekend?”

“Can Jess come?” She asked Sarah.

“We can all go together, if your moms don’t mind?” Sarah looked to Clarke.

“Sounds wonderful!” Clarke nodded.

“Thanks!” Costia wriggled out of Clarke’s arms and ran back up the stairs. “They said we can go next weekend!” She hollered as she went.

“You okay?” Sarah asked, having seen the strange look that had come over Clarke.

“That’s the first time she has called me mum.” Tears pricked at her eyes as she forced back a sob.
“I remember the first time Ellie called me mom, I was a wreck.” Sarah reached across the table to hold Clarke’s hand. “Carol too.”

“Everything okay in here?” Lexa asked as she made her way to the fridge.

Clarke all but bounded over to her wife. “Costia just called me mum.” She beamed.

“She asked me this morning if I thought you’d mind, she said none of her other friends call their parents by their names, so she wanted to call you mum too.” Clarke buried her face in Lexa’s neck, happy tears soaking the brunette’s collar. “I told her you’d like it if she called you mum.”

“I really do.” Clarke gushed. “Thank you.”

“Nothing to thank me for, that little monkey adores her mum.” Lexa smiled as she kissed Clarke’s cheek. “Carol and I will be about an hour - sorry to talk shop and leave the two of you.”

“No worries, off you go.” Clarke assured her, letting her go. “Sorry, I’m back.”

“Don’t be sorry, it’s amazing the first time they call you mom.” Sarah assured her. “Especially when they’re that bit older when you come into their lives. We’ve had Jess since she was two days old, and Micah since he was three months - it was still special the first time they said mama, but the older ones get to choose to give you that title.”

“You’re right.” Clarke nodded. “I don’t think I let Charlotte go for an hour after the first time she called me mum, she was seven when she came to live with me, I thought she’d call me Clarke forever.”

“I wanted to call you mum the first day I was dropped off.” Charlotte said from the doorway. “You promised I could stay with you forever - no one promised me that.”

“My angel.” Clarke opened her arms for her daughter. “I love you.” She kissed Charlotte’s temple.
“I love you too.” Charlotte said.

“Was there something you needed?” Clarke asked as she released Charlotte from her hug.

“Can we have some of our Halloween candy? We’re going to watch a movie.” Charlotte asked.

“Sure.” Clarke agreed, getting up to get her some candy. She put a selection into a bowl. “Here you go, what movie are you going to watch?”

“Christmas Inheritance.” She grinned. “Ellie hasn’t seen it.”

“Okay, enjoy.” Clarke chuckled as she handed over the bowl.

“You have such lovely kids.” Sarah said. “I’m glad you came to Harbourside.”

“Your kids are sweeties.” Clarke countered. “They’re welcome here anytime, as are you and Carol - I’ve never had mom-friends. None of my other friends have kids, so while I know that O and Rae would do anything to help me out - or Charlotte - they don’t quite understand.”

“There’s a parents’ group that Carol’s Fund runs, for adoptive parents, you should come along - we do social days for the kids, as well as parents only outings.” Sarah suggested.

“Thanks, that sounds great.” Clarke agreed.

“Hey, how was dinner?” Clarke asked as Raven and Anya let themselves back inside.

“Really nice.” Anya smiled. “This one is pretty great at romance.”

“Yeah I am.” Raven smirked.
“Does this mean you have an announcement for us?” Clarke clapped excitedly.

“Yeah, Usain Bolt looks at a picture of you and Lexa before his races, because your relationship is the only thing that moves faster than he does.” Raven rolled her eyes. “No I did not ask Anya to marry me - it’s way too soon.” She swatted at her best friend.

“Well, if you don’t do it soon, Linc and O will beat you to it.” Clarke shrugged.

“They should beat us, they’ve been dating for almost a year longer than we have.” Anya laughed.

“What’s going on?” Lexa asked as she made her way downstairs.

“Your wife asked if we got engaged - I was just reminding her that the rest of us move a little slower with these things.” Anya teased.

“We’re just better at this than most.” Lexa replies with a shrug. “So where did you go?”

“To that new restaurant down by the waterfront. And then for a drive up to the lookout to see the stars.” Anya leaned into Raven.

“But now I need to get my lovely lady to bed.” Raven said as Anya let out a yawn. “Thanks for watching the monster for us.”

“I’m meant to say that.” Anya frowned. “And thank you for letting her have a friend over too.”

“It’s no trouble. The girls are all in the basement.”

“Clarke, you can’t lock children In the basement.” Raven warned her.

“Go look, say goodnight to my monster, I’ll meet you in bed.” Anya laughed.
Clarke led Raven down into the basement. It wasn’t what Raven had expected. “I finished it a couple of weeks ago, Lex wasn’t using much of the space so I put a wall up to separate her storage and made a sleepover room.” Clarke explained. There was a huge lounge that was big enough to be a bed that could comfortably sleep six or seven adults. There was a screen and projector to make it the perfect movie night hide away.

“This is awesome.” Raven told her.

“Hi Rae.” Tris popped her head up over the back of the lounge.

“Hi monster, hey squish.” She ruffled their hair. “I came to let you know that your mama and I are home, and to say goodnight - your mama has gone to bed because she is very tired.”

“Okay, night Rae.” Tris kneeled up to hug Raven.

“This is your last movie, okay girls?” Clarke reminded them.

“Yeah, we know.” Charlotte nodded.

“Good girl.” Clarke leaned down to kiss the top of her head. “Come get me if you need anything at all, okay?”

“We will.” She agreed.

“Okay, goodnight girls.” Clarke said as she took Raven back upstairs.

“That is seriously cool.” Raven said.

“I know, the kids loved the makeshift cinema at the beach house so much that I figured I’d build them a real one. And I figure it’ll see a lot of use with three kids.”
“For now - Anya told me you’re considering another.” Raven nudged her friend.

“Not right away, in a year or so.” Clarke nodded.

“Will you make a baby the old fashioned way, or adopt again?”

“Adopt. It’s what Lexa wants, and I don’t feel a burning need to have a biological child, so I’m more than happy to go along with it.” Clarke nodded. “She’s actually getting herself certified as a foster career at the moment, so we can move as soon as we decide we’re ready.”

“And is four the limit? Or will you just keep filling this place up with kids?”


“Any more than four and one of us would have to give up working, to be a stay at home mama.” Lexa said as she returned from helping Anya.

“That’s a bridge we can cross when we come to it.” Clarke chuckled. “The girls have about fifteen minutes left on their movie and then it’s lights out.”

“Okay, the twins are fast asleep already.” Lexa nodded.

“I’m off to bed too, night.” Raven waved as she headed to Anya’s room.

“Sarah suggested we go to a parents’ group that the Fund runs.” Clarke told her wife.

“Okay.” Lexa nodded.

“I was telling her how much I enjoy having mom-friends, O and Rae are great, and I’m not looking to replace them, but some more friends with kids might not be so bad.” Clarke explained further.
“If it’s something you’d like to go to, I’d be happy to go.” Lexa agreed.

“Thank you.” Clarke leaned in to kiss her wife. “Sarah told me she’d send me the details.”

“Sure.” Lexa nodded. “Do you want to head up to bed and I’ll make sure the girls go to sleep before I come up?”

“Thanks.” Clarke agreed. “Don’t be too long, okay?”

“I’ll try not to be.” Lexa promised.

Clarke made her way upstairs, looking in on each of the twins as she went. Costia was fast asleep, but Aden was tossing and whining in his sleep. “Hey buddy.” Clarke whispered as she put a hand to his forehead, he was warmer than usual. She lowered the rail on his bed and lifted him down into her arms. He was drenched in sweat. “Aden, wake up little one.”

“Clarke? I don’t feel good.” He cried.

“I know baby, I’m going to get you some medicine, and then you can sleep in with me and mama tonight, okay?”

“Okay.” He nodded, tears falling.

“Does your tummy hurt?” She asked as she grabbed him a fresh set of pyjamas.

“Yeah.”

“Okay, let’s take a look.” She carefully laid him on their bed, she put a hand against his stomach to check, but he flinched away.

“Hurts.” He whined.
“We might have to go see nana Abby at the hospital.” She told him. “Let’s change your pjs and then we’ll go, okay?”

“Mama too?”

“One of is will need to stay here for Cos and Charlotte and Tris and Nic and Ellie.” Clarke reminded him.

“Hey, what’s up?” Lexa asked as they entered the kitchen.

“Our little monkey is sick, I think he needs to go to emergency.” Clarke said. “His stomach is tender and he has a fever, it could be his appendix.”

“Who do you want to take you?” Lexa asked him.

“Clarke.” He buried his face further into her neck.

“Call O and Linc, see if they can come stay over, then you can come join us.” Clarke suggested.

“Let’s wait until we know more.” Lexa said. “Call me once he’s been seen by a doctor.”

“You’re sure?”

“Yeah, you’re better with hospitals than me anyway.” Lexa nodded.

“Ohkay.” Clarke agreed. “I’ll call you once I know more.”

“Thanks love.” Lexa nodded.

Clarke carried Aden out to the car and settled him into his seat carefully. “I’m going to call nana Abby while we drive, okay?”
“She’ll make me feel better?”

“She will.” Clarke promised. She kissed his forehead before closing the door and getting into the driver’s seat.

She called her mother as soon as her phone registered the connection to her car. “Hi Clarke.”

“Are you working?”

“I was just about to head out for the night, is everything okay?”

“I’m bringing Aden in, we’re just leaving home, can you meet us?”

“Of course, is he alright?”

“My tummy hurts lots.” Aden told her.

“My sweet boy, I’m sorry to hear that.” Abby sympathised. “I’ll warn emergency you’re coming and have you brought up to paediatrics immediately.”

“Thanks, we’ll be about ten minutes.”

“Call me when you’re here.”

“I will, thanks.” Clarke ended the call and glanced back at Aden. “How you doing bud?”

“Sleepy.”

“I need you to try and stay awake for me, just a little bit longer.”
“Okay.” He nodded.

Clarke parked in the deputy director’s parking space, she knew the position was empty anyway. She lifted Aden from his seat and carried him inside as she called her mother. “We’re here.”

“Tell the nurse on the desk I’m expecting you.” Abby told her. “I’m on my way down now.”

“Thanks.” Clarke hung up and approached the desk. “Hi, Director Griffin is expecting me.”

“I’m sorry ma’am, you’ll need to take a seat.” The receptionist shook her head. “And you’ll need to fill this out.” She handed Clarke a clipboard with admission forms attached.

“I’ll fill the form out, but can you just buzz me through? Dr Griffin is on her way to see us.”

“Ma’am, it’s late, and Director Griffin is more than likely at home. You need to wait like everyone else.” She held firm.

“Where’s nana?” Aden asked.

“We’ll see her in a moment.” Clarke promised. “Please, Director Griffin is expecting us, I just spoke to her - this is her grandson.”

“Clarke, is everything okay?” Abby asked from behind the receptionist. “Send them through, that little guy is a VIP.” She instructed.

“Yes Director.” She nodded and buzzed Clarke through the doors.

“Hi Aden, how are you little one?”
“I don’t feel good.” He shook his head, tears leaking down his face.

“Well let’s see if we can make you all better, hey?” Abby brushes his hair from his face. “Lexa isn’t with you?”

“No, Charlotte and Tris both have friends staying over, so one of us had to stay home - and Lex says I’m better with hospitals.” Clarke explained.

“Well, let’s get him upstairs and check him over.” Abby smiled, leading them down to a bank of elevators.

The on dusty doctor for the paediatric department met them almost as soon as they stepped out of the elevator. “Good evening, I’m Dr Cartwig, is this our patient?” She introduced herself.

“I’m Clarke Griffin-Woods and this is my son, Aden.” Clarke said.

“We have a room set up for you, come on through.” She led them into a private room.

Clarke laid Aden on the bed, and kissed his forehead. “Dr Cartwig is going to check you over, okay?”

“Don’t go.” He reached out to take Clarke’s hand.

“I’m not going anywhere.” She promised him. “And nana is staying too.”

“Okay.” Aden nodded, his eyes closing.

“I know you’re tired buddy, but can you stay awake just a little bit longer?” Dr Cartwig asked.

“Yeah.” He nodded.
The doctor conducted a quick yet thorough examination. “It’s his appendix.” She concluded. “I’d like to take it out tonight, it’s keyhole surgery so he can be back home by Monday and back to normal routine in two weeks.”

“Okay, how long before you take him in? My wife will want to be here.” Clarke asked.

“I’ll need to book an OR, so probably an hour or two.”

“I’ll call her now.” Clarke agreed. “Thank you.”

“I’ll help get everything prepared.” Abby followed the doctor from the room, giving Clarke and Aden their privacy.

“So, Dr Cartwig says you need surgery.” Clarke explained. “There’s a little thing in your tummy called an appendix, and sometimes it gets really sore so the doctor takes it out.”

“Will it hurt?”

“They put you to sleep while they do the surgery, you’ll hurt a little bit when you wake up, but we can give you medicine to make it stop.” She told him. “Now, I’m going to call mama, so she can come see us before you go into the operating theatre.”

“Okay.” Aden nodded. “Can I have cuddles?”

“Always.” Clarke joined him on the bed, letting him snuggle into her. She dialled Lexa.

“Clarke, how is he?” She answered.

“He needs his appendix out, will you come down before the surgery?”

“He needs surgery?” Lexa sounded panicked.
“He’s going to be fine, it’s minimally invasive and he’ll be fully recovered in a couple of weeks.” Clarke assured her. “Get Rae to keep an eye on the girls, and head down here.”

“Can Cosi come too?” Aden asked.

“He wants Costia too.” Clarke said.

“Alright, we’ll be there soon.” Lexa agreed.

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Lexa ended the call and went to Anya’s room. “Raven?” She called as she knocked.

“Everything okay?” Raven asked as she opened the door.

“Aden has appendicitis, and he’s having surgery tonight. I’m going to take Costia and meet Clarke at the hospital, can you watch the girls downstairs? They’re all asleep, but just in case they need anything?”

“Of course.” Raven nodded. “Let us know if you need anything else.”

“Thank you.”

Anya nudged Raven out of the way and took hold of her sister. “He’s going to be fine.” She assured her. “Do you want me to come with you?”

“Clarke’s there.” Lexa shook her head. “I’ll be okay.”

“You’re taking Costia?” Anya checked.
“Aden asked for her.” She nodded.

“Okay, call if you need anything.” She nodded.

“Thanks.” Lexa squeezed Anya’s forearms.

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Anya: Keep an eye on Lex, the anniversary of Costia’s death is a couple of days away, so the hospital is likely not going to help her.

Clarke: Of course, thanks for the heads up, I’ll keep an eye on her.

Anya: She just left with Costia, she won’t be long.

Clarke: Thanks, are you and Rae watching the girls?

Anya: Yeah, although Rae more than me. She’s going to stay up in the lounge room, in case any of them come upstairs.

Clarke: Thanks. And sorry to take your human body pillow - I know you sleep better when she’s with you.

Anya: I’ll be okay for one night, she can make it up once you bring our boy home.

Clarke: I’ll make sure you get the time.

“Is Lexa on her way?” Abby asked from the doorway.

“She should only be a few minutes away. Thank god we live close by.” Clarke nodded.
“I’ll meet her in the foyer, so she doesn’t have to come through emergency.” Abby decided.

“Thanks mum.” Clarke smiled. She set her phone back on the stand by the bed and focused back on Aden. “Mama and Cos will be here soon.”

“I don’t want to get surgery.” He shook his head.

“It’s a bit scary isn’t it?” Clarke ran her fingers through his hair. “But I promise it will make you feel all better.”

“Can I take some medicine instead?” He asked.

“No, there isn’t a medicine that will fix it.”

“Will you stay with me?”

“I’m not allowed to go into the operating room with you, but I bet nana will go with you. We can ask her when she gets back with Mama.”

“Okay, if nana stays with me, I’ll have the surgery.” He decided.

“My brave boy.” Clarke hugged him a little closer. “I love you so much.”

“I love you too.” He nuzzled into her. “Can I nap now?”

“Sure baby, mama will be here in a few minutes.”

As promised Lexa bustled in a few minutes later, Aden was sleeping against Clarke, she placed Costia on the bed by her twin. “How is he?”
“Tired, and in pain, but he will be fine.”

“My baby boy.” Lexa leaned over to kiss the side of his face.

“Mama.” Aden whined.

“I’m here, so’s Cosi.” Lexa assured him.

“Mum, Aden is hoping you’ll stay with him in the OR.” Clarke told Abby.

“Sure.” Abby nodded. “I’ll let Dr Cartwig know.”

Abby arranged for them to keep the room while Aden went into surgery. The three of them curled up on a tiny couch in the corner of the room. Costia quickly fell back to sleep, it being the middle of the night, but Lexa refuses to close her eyes, and Clarke was determined to be there for her wife.

“He’s going to be fine, you know that, right?” Clarke whispered.

“But what if he’s not?” Lexa could barely get the words out.

“Don’t think like that, my love.” Clarke pulled Lexa closer. “I have total confidence in the doctors, and that our little guy is a fighter. He will be sore and snuggly for a few days, but then he will be back to his usual self.”

“I’m taking the week off to stay with him.” Lexa decided.

“He’ll like that.” Clarke smiled.
The doctors estimated they’d be back with Aden in three hours, but as the clock ticked over on the fourth hour, even Clarke began to worry - not that she let Lexa know of her fear. They finally wheeled Aden back into the room about half an hour later, still fast asleep from the anesthesia.

Clarke had Abby help to shift him to allow Lexa space to cuddle up with him before setting Costia down on his other side, knowing that having his twin close would bring him comfort.

“So, how’d he do?” Clarke asked.

“It wasn’t as straightforward as we had hoped, but all of the infected tissue was removed.” Abby assured them. “His vitals stayed strong throughout, it just took a little longer than expected to get the job done.”

“He’s going to be okay?” Lexa clarified.

“He will wake up in an hour or two, and he will be discharged by Sunday morning. He will have to stay home from school for the next two weeks, and he won’t be able to go back to his bouldering class for three or four weeks, but yes, he will make a full recovery.” Abby squeezed Lexa’s shoulder.

“Mum, will you stay with the twins for a moment, I think Lex needs some fresh air.” Clarke asked.

“No, I want to stay.” Lexa insisted.

“Five minutes.” Clarke told her. “They’re both asleep, we will be back before he wakes up.”

“Use the patio at the end of the hall.” Abby handed Clarke her swipe pass. “I promise I will stay with them the whole time.” She promised her daughter in law.

“Five minutes.” Lexa agreed reluctantly, following Clarke from the room.

Clarke found the door at the end of the hall that lead onto the small terrace that served as an outdoor space for the paediatric ward. She led Lexa our into the cool night air.
“Why are we out here?” Lexa asked, looking back toward Aden’s room.

“Because you needed a break.” Clarke told her. “I know you’re worried about Aden, but I know it’s more than that. It’s Costia, isn’t it?”

“What?”

“The anniversary of Costia’s death, being in the hospital so close to the anniversary is stressing you out more than Aden being sick normally would.” Clarke guessed.

“I can’t lose my baby.” Tears streaked down Lexa’s face.

“You haven’t lost him, he’s going to be fine - he’s strong and healthy and he will recover quickly.” Clarke hugged Lexa tightly. “When is the anniversary?”

“The fifth.” Lexa whispered.

“What if we invite Elaine and Nyko over, we can watch some of Costia’s dance tapes and have her favourite dinner, a night to remember her.”

“You wouldn’t mind?”

“Not at all - I may not have met her, but I love the babies she gave life to, and I will always be grateful to her for them.” Clarke said. “My mum and I still celebrate my dad’s birthday every year, it helps us - maybe this will help you.”

“I think I’d rather celebrate her birthday than the anniversary of her death.” Lexa sniffled.

“When is her birthday?”

“January thirty-first.” Lexa said.
“Then we’ll make it special.” Clarke assured her. “I know it’s hard, but for now you need to put Costia to one side, Aden needs your strength right now. He was scared of having surgery, he will pick up on your fear.”

“You’re right.” Lexa nodded. “Thank you.”

“Anytime. I love you.” She pulled Lexa in for a soft kiss. “Now, are you ready to get back to our boy?”

“Yes please.” Lexa nodded.

-  

Aden woke slowly, his eyelids blinking open with great effort. “Mama?”

“Hey monkey, how are you feeling?”

“Sleepy, heavy.” He mumbled.

“That’s the medicine.” Clarke told him. “You did great in your surgery.” She leaned over to kiss his forehead.

“I can go home?”


“Okay.” He agreed. “I’m sleepy.”

“Go back to sleep, my sweet boy, mama’s got you.”
“Cosi?”

“She’s asleep on your other side.” Lexa smiled as Aden reached out for his twin’s hand.

“Love you.” He mumbled as he fell back to sleep.

“We love you too.” Clarke brushed his hair back.

“We love you so much, monkey.”

“I’m going to go home, so I’m there when the girls wake up. I’ll bring Charlotte back with me once I drop Ellie home.”

“You’re sure?”

“Yeah, I think you’ve got things covered here.” Clarke smiled. “But call me if you need me, I’ll come right back.”

“Thanks love.” Lexa reached out for her wife.

“Is there anything you need before I go?”

“We’ll be fine.” Lexa nodded.

“I’ll be back as early as I can. I’ll text Sarah and let her know that drop off will be earlier than planned.” Clarke said. “Charlotte will want to check on her brother too.”

“You’re right.” Lexa agreed with a smile.

“Get some sleep.” Clarke instructed as she covered Lexa with a blanket.
“You too.” Lexa tugged Clarke in for a kiss. “I love you.”

“Love you too.” Clarke agreed with a smile, kissing Lexa again.

“I’m going to stay in the on call room down the hall.” Abby added. “Text me if you need anything at all.”

“You don’t have to do that.” Lexa argued.

“I’m not going anywhere.” Abby stood firm. “I’m here for all of you.”

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Raven looked up from her place on the lounge as Clarke let herself inside. “Everything okay?”

“He’s out of surgery, he woke up briefly but went back to sleep. He’s going to be fine.” Clarke flopped onto the couch beside Raven.

“Good, how’s Lexa?”

“She’s better now that he’s out of surgery.” She sighed. “But She was a wreck for a while there, Anya texted me to warn me - it’s almost the anniversary of Costia’s death, so Aden being in the hospital-“

“Was torture, you’re sure she’s okay now?”

“Yeah, we went outside and talked it out. Once she separated the two things in her head she was much calmer.” Clarke nodded. “Anyway, thanks for sitting up, you should go get some sleep - Anya needs her human body pillow.”

“You’re sure you’re okay?”
“Yeah, I’m good.” Clarke promised as she shifted off Raven and stood. “I’m going to go get a couple of hours sleep, I’ll take Charlotte back in the morning, it’ll give you and Anya some quiet time with Tris.”

“Thanks. Goodnight.” Raven pushed herself up off the couch and headed for Anya’s room.

“Night.” Clarke called softly. She was just about to head upstairs to bed when the basement stairs creaked and one of the girls climbed them. She waited for the door to open.

“Mum?” Charlotte rubbed her eyes. “I could hear voices.”

“I was talking to Raven, I just got back from the hospital.” Clarke hugged Charlotte. “Aden had appendicitis, he just had surgery to take it out.”

“Is he okay?” Charlotte worried.

“He’s going to be fine. Nana stayed with him the whole time he was in surgery, and mama and Cos are with him now.” Clarke promised her. “We will go see him after breakfast, once we drop Ellie home.”

“Okay.” Charlotte nodded.

“You should go back to sleep, it’s still late.”

“Will you stay ‘til I fall asleep?”

“Always, my love.” Clarke followed her daughter back down to the basement. The other three girls remained fast asleep. Charlotte laid down at the edge of the group, Clarke spooning her from behind. “Night baby girl.”
Clarke woke with Charlotte still snuggled against her, she hadn’t meant to fall asleep in the basement, but she knew she probably wouldn’t have slept otherwise. She carefully shifted out from behind Charlotte, kissing her cheek before heading upstairs to the kitchen.

“Lonely were you?” Anya joked as Clarke came out of the basement door.

“Charlotte woke up when she heard Rae and I talking. She asked if I’d stay until she fell asleep, I guess I was more tired than I thought.” She chuckled.

“Not to mention you probably needed one of your babies close after last night.” Anya shrugged.

“Yeah.” Clarke nodded. “I really did.” She grabbed her phone from the counter where she’d left it the night before.

Lexa: How’re the girls?

Clarke: Still asleep, Charlotte woke up when I came home, ended up sleeping in the basement. How’s our boy?

Lexa: He woke up for a little while, but sleeping now. Cosi has gone to the cafeteria with Abby, she was getting restless.

Clarke: Give Aden a kiss from me, and Charlotte and I will be over soon. I’ll bring you all a change of clothes.

Lexa: Thanks. See you soon. xx

Clarke made her way upstairs and packed a bag for Lexa and the twins before having a quick shower and getting dressed. The girls were just making their way upstairs as Clarke came back into the kitchen.

“Good morning, did you all sleep well?” Clarke asked them with a smile.
“Yeah.” Ellie nodded. “Can I call my moms?”

“Oh course.” Clarke grabbed her phone and called Sarah.

“Morning Clarke, how did Ellie go?”

“She was a delight.” Clarke assured her. “She is asking to talk to you, so I’ll hand over the phone.” She held her phone out to Ellie.

“How?” Ellie said as she held the phone up to her ear. “Yeah, I had a good time, yeah, I will, okay, I’ll ask.”

“My Mom wants to know what time I’ll be home?” Ellie asked Clarke.

“Can I talk to her again?” Clarke asked.

“Yeah.” Ellie nodded and handed the phone back.

“It’s me again.” Clarke said as she took the phone through to the lounge room. “Can you girls all go and get dressed please?” She asked as she left.

“Everything okay?” Sarah asked.

“It’s been a big night.” Clarke chuckled. “I said goodnight to the girls down in the sleepover den, then went to check on the twins on my way to bed. Aden was tossing and crying and drenched in sweat - appendicitis. I took him to the hospital and they took him for surgery around eleven.”

“You should have called - we would have picked Ellie up.” Sarah said.

“Raven sat up, just in case any of the girls woke up, and I came home once his surgery was done. I’m going to head back over to the hospital after breakfast, I’ll drop Ellie home on the way, if that suits?”
“No problem, or one of us can come pick her up?”

“I’m going out anyway, and it’s hardly a detour.” Clarke assured her. “We’ll see you in about an hour.”

“Sure, see you then.” Sarah said.

Clarke headed back into the kitchen and got to work on breakfast, the four girls making their way downstairs a few minutes later, dressed for the day.

“Come here monster, I’ll do your hair.” Anya ordered.

“Want a hand with breakfast?” Raven offered.

“Thanks.” Clarke nodded. “Can you make the eggs?”

“Easy.” Raven nodded as she got to work.

“So, Ellie, I’m going to drop you home after breakfast, because Charlotte and I need to go to the hospital to see Aden.”

“Is he okay?” Ellie asked.

“He will be, he came down with a bout of appendicitis last night, and had to have surgery while you were all in bed.” Clarke told her.

“Do I have to go home too?” Nic asked.

“Your mommy is coming to pick you up at eleven, you can play with Tris until then.” Anya told her.
“Okay.” She nodded.

Aden woke slowly, nuzzling into Lexa’s side. “Mama?” He mumbled.

“I’m here, monkey.” Lexa promised.

“My tummy still hurts.” He pouted.

“Let’s call the nurse in, see if we can get you some more medicine.” Lexa said, pressing the call button.

“Hi, I’m Maya, how can I help?”

“Aden is complaining about his pain.” Lexa said.

“Well that’s no good, may I take a look at your incisions?” She asked him.

“I guess.” Aden nodded.

Maya carefully lifted Aden’s top and felt the skin around his incisions. “Well everything looks just like it should, so I’ll talk to the doctor about increasing your pain meds.” She lowered his shirt and quickly left the room. “Good morning Director.” Maya said just as she moved from sight.

“Good morning.” Lexa heard Abby say as she entered. “How’s my favourite grandson?” She asked.

“Maya is going to see about increasing his pain meds, he’s in a little bit of pain.”

“I’m sorry to hear that.” Abby brushed his hair back as Costia climbed back into the bed.
“When’s mum getting here?” Costia asked Lexa.

“Soon, she texted that she was on her way a little while ago.” Lexa said.

“Charlotte too?” Aden checked.

“Of course.” Lexa assured him. “Your big sister was very worried about you.”

“Hey baby boy, how are you?” Clarke asked as soon as she and Charlotte entered a moment later. She quickly took Lexa’s place, cuddling up to Aden and kissing the top of his head.

“My tummy hurts and the doctor needs to give me more medicine.” He pouted.

“Nana will go follow up.” Abby suggested as she ducked out of the room.

“Thanks Mum.” Clarke called after her. “There’s a change of clothes, and your phone charger in the bag.” She told Lexa, nodding to the bag she’d dropped on the chair.

“Thanks love.” Lexa smiled, finding the phone charger and plugging her phone in. “Costia, come and get dressed.” She added as she pulled Costia’s clothes from the bag.

“Jess made you this.” Charlotte said, handing Aden a card that Jess had insisted they take when they dropped Ellie off.

“Can you read it?” He asked.

“It says, ‘Dear Aden, I hope you feel better soon, from Jess.’” Charlotte read, she sat the card on his side table so he could see the flowers Jess had drawn on the front.

“That was nice of Jess.” Lexa said.
“Yeah.” Costia agreed.

“Okay, Aden.” Maya paused as she entered the room. “Oh, you have more family now.” She chuckled.

“I’m Clarke, Aden’s other mother, and this is Charlotte, his big sister.” Clarke introduced herself.

“Clarke Griffin?” Maya questioned. “You work with my husband, Jasper Jordan?”

“I do, so does Lexa, although we’re in different departments.”

“What do you do then, Lexa?” Maya asked, as she checked Aden’s chart.

“I own the company.” She shrugged.

“Oh, right.” Maya nodded. “Well, I spoke to Dr Cartwig, and she agreed that we should increase Aden’s dosage, just slightly. So you shouldn’t feel any pain in a little while, okay?” She fiddled with Aden’s drip quickly.

“Thank you Maya.”

“I’m sleepy.” Aden yawned as the nurse left them once more.

“Then take a nap monkey, we’re all right here.” Clarke promised him.

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Aden was released late Saturday afternoon, on the condition that Abby go home with them - and that he not sleep in his bed, out of concern for his stitches as he climbed into or out of his bed.
Clarke carried him inside and set him on the lounge beside Anya. “Hey monkey, are you alright?” She asked, wrapping an arm around her nephew.

“The doctor cut open my tummy and took my ‘pendix.’ Aden told her seriously. “And they said nana has to stay with us, or I wasn’t allowed to come home.”

“Hi Abby.” Anya nodded to Clarke’s mother. “We’re lucky to have you home so soon then.” She told Aden, kissing his head.

“Are you happy to snuggle with Aunty Anya for a little bit?” Clarke asked.

“Yeah, can we watch a movie?”

“Sure, you want to pick?” She offered him the remote.

“Charlotte, can you go have a shower, and wash your hair please, I’ll braid it for you afterwards.” Lexa said.

“Sure.” Charlotte nodded and headed upstairs.

“And Costia, it’s bath time for you too.” Lexa pointed Costia toward the stairs.

“I’ll get dinner started, I think we could all use an early night.” Clarke said as Lexa headed for the stairs.

“Thanks love.” Lexa paused to kiss her wife before following Costia upstairs.

“Where’s Rae?” Clarke asked Anya.

“She took Tris and the dogs for a walk.” Anya said. “All three were going nuts trapped inside.” She laughed.
Aden was sleeping comfortably in their bed, Costia and Charlotte on either side of him, all three having refused to sleep anywhere else - not that either of their mothers could bring themselves to argue. “I needed this.” Lexa sighed as Clarke relaxed against her front in their bathtub.

“We both did.” Clarke agreed. “It’s probably no bad thing that we’re light on for lunch tomorrow, with your mother and Ontari out of town, and O and Lincoln both working.”

“It’ll just be us, Anya, Tris, Raven and your mother.” Lexa agreed. “I’m thinking pot roast?”

“Sounds delicious. I’ll distract the kids and give you run of the kitchen.” Clarke offered, knowing that Lexa found peace in the kitchen.

“Thank you.” Lexa dropped her head forward to kiss Clarke’s shoulder. “I like this bath bomb, what is it?” She asked, taking a deep sniff of the scented steam rising around them.

“No idea, but I agree, it smells great.” Clarke tilted her head back to capture Lexa’s lips in a lazy kiss. They knew they couldn’t take things any further, not with all three children in their bed, but the casual intimacy was a welcome respite from the stress of the hospital.

“We should get out.” Clarke sighed, the water cooling around them.

“You’re right.” Lexa held the blonde a little closer. “In a minute.”

“Okay.” Clarke chuckled, letting Lexa have her moment.

Finally they climbed out of the tub and dried themselves before changing into pyjamas and heading through to their bed. Clarke curled up behind Charlotte, and Lexa behind Costia. “Night, babies.” Clarke leaned up on her elbow so she could kiss each of their foreheads.

“We love you.” Lexa added as she copied Clarke’s action.
The two women settled against their pillows and were asleep within minutes.

Chapter End Notes

I’m so sorry that it takes me forever to update! My life is busy and I jump from project to project faster than a kid with ADD. Anyway hope you enjoyed this chapter, it’s my birthday and comments make great presents - just saying. Let me know what you think, or come chat to me on tumblr ineedhappyendings :-)

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!