

'DANTE' 3.

Pink (mm/dd/yyyy)

39

INT. UNDERGROUND OVAL OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

39

One Soldier leads Clarke into an office built to run the world out of after Armageddon. Nearly a century later, it looks strangely like an art studio. Crowded with masterpieces and easels on which the enigmatic man who now wears the crown attempts to paint his own.

We find him at one of them, deep in the act of creation.

DANTE  
(without looking up)  
Handcuffs aren't necessary.

← START SCENE 2

The Soldier removes the handcuffs, then EXITS. Clarke's eyes wander the schizophrenic room. Dante just keeps painting...

DANTE (CONT'D)  
That's the second time today I've had to take handcuffs off you.  
(finally looking at her)  
I hope there's not a third.

Clarke simply stares. Dante gestures to another easel...

DANTE (CONT'D)  
There's a blank canvas, if you'd like.

CLARKE  
Thanks, but art's a waste of time when you're fighting for your life.

DANTE  
(looking directly at her)  
Art is what makes life worth fighting for.

He resumes painting. Clarke shakes her head slightly. She can't get a read on this guy.

DANTE (CONT'D)  
What would you say if I told you I've painted the same memory over and over again for three decades?

He looks over. The emotion in his eyes surprises Clarke.

DANTE (CONT'D)  
Thirty-two years ago, for one hour, I was on the ground.  
(painting as he continues)  
(MORE)

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DANTE (CONT'D)

I was seven when the first of what you refer to as "the Grounders" appeared. Before that, we thought we were all there was. Imagine our surprise.

CLARKE

I don't have to imagine.

He meets her stare, acknowledging yet another commonality with a slight smile, before picking up the thread...

DANTE

My father -- this was his office then -- believed it meant the Earth was survivable again. And so he opened the doors... Fifty-four people died that day, my mother and sister among them.

He pauses to let that land. Clarke is undeniably moved.

DANTE (CONT'D)

That's why I couldn't let you open that door. I'd do anything to protect my people.

CLARKE

I understand.

DANTE

I know you do.

With that, he finally leaves the canvas, wiping his hands on a towel as he steps closer...

DANTE (CONT'D)

Loss, pain, regret. Time heals these things. And it will for you as well.

That stops Clarke cold. She braces herself.

DANTE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Clarke, I have bad news. Our patrols found no survivors, either at your camp, or from the Ark.

Clarke can't hide the fact that this news crushes her.

CLARKE

... How can they be sure?

DANTE

They can't. I've ordered them to keep searching and they will, but, Clarke, false hope is a dangerous thing. It's what caused my father to open the doors.

CLARKE

I need to see for myself.

He SIGHS, increasingly frustrated by her desire to leave...

DANTE

(finally)

No.

/STOP \*  
SC. 2