Offstage

by Aerstes
Chapter 1

Chapter Summary

Kara is having a bit of a rough start as a freshman at National City University. Desperately wanting to make new friends, but too shy to figure out how, she decides to join the theater program. However, she quickly figures out that that decision may just be more trouble than it's worth. Especially because of a flirtatious, confusing, all around pain in the ass named Lena Luthor...

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Kara just needed to get out there and meet some people.

That would fix all of her problems.

Well. Some of them. Meeting new people probably wouldn’t fix the fact that she was just trying to survive college. That is, without anyone finding out that she was, oh, an alien from another planet, Superman’s cousin, and, oh yeah, had a bunch of really cool super powers. That she could never use.

Because it was dangerous.

Which, to be fair, they were. Maybe they wouldn’t be, though, if Kara could actually practice using them for once. After all, Kal El seems pretty handy with his powers! And what was the point of being orphaned at thirteen and dumped onto some foreign planet that just happened to have a sun that gave her super cool powers if she couldn’t use them?

The point was, according to Jeremiah and Eliza Danvers, to become a functioning, educated member of society.

I feel like I could do that and laser eye some stuff every now and then. But whatever.

So, here she was, a freshman at National City University, fulfilling the “educated” part.

And just in case she got any ideas, good news! Her sister Alex was also at NCU, conveniently enough, to watch her like a hawk!

“What?” Alex had said. “National City University has a great medical program. Not everything is about you, Kara.”

Alex certainly had the “educated” part of her societal duty down. She had finished her undergrad in two and a half years, and was on her way to becoming the best medical doctor on Earth, probably. All while being a total buzz kill to Kara’s formative years in college.

So, since Kara clearly wasn’t going to be able to stretch her super-muscles any time soon, she decided to explore some of her other interests, and make some friends. Because, as Ms. Grant, her freshman advisor, had told her, the best thing to do was get involved in as many on-campus activities as possible. But, when she had went to the activities fair on campus, aka, a bunch of
dining hall tables moved out to the east lawn with very disinterested looking upper classman handing out flyers for their clubs, nothing was really jumping out at her.

Except for the theater program. Some of Kara’s best memories from high school had been when she had gotten involved in the school productions.

“Are you an actor?” one of the students sitting at the “NCU Theater Arts Society” table had asked.

He was a little dorky looking, considering he was wearing tie and matching cardigan outside…in August…in California. But he had kind eyes, the very un-intimidating kind, and he actually looked like he cared about his appearance and how he presented himself, unlike most of his sandal-and-sock wearing male peers.

“Um...not really?” Kara replied.

“Do you sing?” he asked.

Kara had a flashback of joining her high school’s glee club, and shuddered.

“Not anymore,” Kara said, shaking her head vehemently. “I actually like the back stage stuff. I worked crew for a couple shows at my high school, and I helped build some sets.”

“Really?” the boy said, perking up instantly. “That is fantastic! No one ever wants to work crew! I’m Winn,” he said, standing and jutting his hand out of her to shake. “I work on lighting and sound for our theater program. I…uh, wanna be a stage technician professionally one day.”

Kara smiled, shaking his hand. “That’s really cool.”

“Heh, you should tell that to my family. They don’t seem to think it’s a great idea.”

“Well, you have a better chance making a career working tech than trying to be an actor.”

“That’s what I said!” he exclaimed. “Anyway, you don’t wanna hear about my family issues. Um, here, if you could write down your name and school email address, I can get in contact with you soon so we can see how we can put you to work. There are three different productions a year, a play in the fall, the student-produced one acts early in spring semester, and the musical at the end of the year. I’d like to say that the spring musical is more tech-intensive than the fall play, but…the director sort of hates musicals…so he tends to be pretty heavy handed with the fall play.”

Kara scoffed.

“How can he hate musicals? Everyone loves musicals!”

Winn tilted his head to the side as if he knew something she didn’t.

“I’ll see if you feel the same way at the end of the year.”

(She should have seen the red flag then. She had no idea what she was in for…)
Winn emailed her later in the day, as a part of a group email, letting anyone who had signed up for stage work know that they were going to have a brief meeting with the Winn, the stage manager, and “Professor Olsen” next Friday during the actor auditions.

The meeting couldn’t come fast enough for Kara. She knew that it was a good idea for have a single dorm room instead of opting to have a roommate, in case she would accidentally display her super strength, heat vision, or number of other super powers. But Kara was incredibly lonely so far at school. She had never been good at socializing on her own, she usually just hung out with whoever Alex was friends with. But Alex had mostly night classes, so outside of lunch breaks at the coffee house, she was never available when Kara was. And even when she was, Alex’s apartment was two miles from campus, and since Kara had to use public transportation instead of just flying, she wasn’t always able to just pop by and see Alex. And, truth be told, she didn’t want to be popping in to see her sister all the time, because Kara didn’t want to have to admit to Alex that she was having a hard time making friends.

She was having such a hard time being social, in fact, that Kara would sometimes make it through a whole day of classes without saying a single word to anyone. She felt amazingly isolated, and she didn’t know what to do about it. So, when Friday rolled around, she was half tempted to fly to the stage crew meeting just to get there faster.

When she found her way to Luthor Hall (she had no idea why the Luthor family would donate enough money to a university to have their name slapped all over several buildings, despite being nowhere near Metropolis), a group of students were sitting in the lounge outside the theater doors. She knew instantly that these were the actors, because none of them had any concept of personal space with one another. One guy was attempting to braid his friend’s hair, four students had formed a “massage chain”, and one girl was sprawled across three of her friends’ laps, napping. All of them held stapled packets of paper, which were likely the scripts they were going to be reading from. The only person she could see who was actually reading over the script was a girl in a form fitting black skirt, white button up blouse, long, dark hair, and ruby red lips. She stood a few paces apart from the rest of the group, mouthing the words on the page to herself.

Kara found herself staring at this girl for a moment, before the doors to the theater cracked open, and Winn stepped out. “Um, we can take the first person now, so, either somebody volunteer or I’m gonna randomly pick one of you. Oh, Kara, hi! Come on in.”

“Oh, um, okay. Am I late?”

“Huh? Oh, no. We like to have tech meetings during rehearsals to see if the actors can perform during interruptions.”

“Screw you, Winn!” one of the actors called jokingly.

Winn tilted his head to the side, and lifted a middle fingers towards the waiting group.

As Winn ushered Kara in to the theater, and she instantly felt at home. The entry doors opened to lowest level of the “house”, or, the audience section of the theater. To the right was the stage, and to the left were the audience seats, ascending upwards, with a set of wide, faded blue carpet steps on each side of the dark blue audience seats. At the very top of the audience seating there was a small, walled in booth with a wide window facing the stage. That must be the sound booth, Kara thought.

This theater was a little bit smaller than the one she was used to at her high school. For a university as large as NCU, she had expected a larger theater.
A grumpy, balding man sat at a “desk” Kara was accustomed to seeing in her high school theater. It wasn’t actually a desk, it was a sheet of plywood nailed to two wood planks positioned atop seats in the audience, so that the director had a sturdy surface to write on while still sitting in the audience seats to watch the actors. Sitting next to the scowl faced man was a girl in a leather jacket and ripped jeans, with bleached white hair and neon blue colored contacts. Her expression was similarly as full of disdain as the older man next to her. The difference was that he was hunched towards the ‘desk’ and she leaned away from it, combat boots resting atop the plywood, legs spread in a very unfeminine manner.

In the row behind them, a tall man with a strong jaw and a kind smile was sprawled leisurely in his seat, leafing through a binder in his hand.

Winn guided her up to the trio.

“Hey, so this is Kara! Kara, this is Dr. Carr,” he gestured to the grumpy man, “Leslie Willis,” he gestured to the white haired girl, “and Jimmy Olsen.”

“Winn,” the tall man warned.

“Right! Sorry! It’s, um, Professor James Olsen. James is standing in as our Stage Craft professor, you know, for now, until we can find a replacement for the last guy. He graduated two years ago, so I’m still used to calling him Jimmy. Sorry, dude.”

James smiled. “No worries, man.”

“Oh, nice to meet you,” Kara said to the three of them, but more so to James. He was pretty cute, honestly.

Dr. Carr regarded her for a moment with more condescension in his face than Kara could have ever thought possible.

“Oh huh,” he said, and that was the end of that introduction, apparently.

She wasn’t even going to try anything more towards Leslie than a smile, which was not returned.

“So, Kara,” James piped up, “I heard you have some stage craft experience?”

Kara grinned broadly.

“I mean…I know my way around power tools, if that’s what you mean,” she said, laughing breathily at her own joke.

She didn’t blame Winn, Leslie, and Dr. Carr for giving her a strange look.

What the hell was that, Kara?

James, however, continued to smile brightly.

“Well, that is good to know,” he said. “You have no idea many students come through here that don’t even know how to use a hammer. Here, I’ll show you the set designs I’ve been working on to give you an idea of what we’ll be building this semester.”

James ushered her to sit next to him, and she obliged, blushing slightly.

“Well, are we gonna sit here all day waiting for someone to grow a pair or what?” Leslie barked suddenly, causing Kara to jump.
Kara got the feeling that Leslie’s current level of annoyance was pretty typical.

“Oh, yeah,” Winn said, and sprinted back down the steps. “Hey, guys!” he called to the entry door of the theater. “The fuck? Somebody get in here!”

Well, Kara thought, college was apparently a bit more…blunt than high school.

“So, uh,” she said to James, “what show are we doing?”

The theater doors groaned open, and a tall, shaggy haired guy handed Winn his audition sheet and trotted up to the stage. Winn handed the paper to Dr. Carr, who tossed it at Leslie. Winn then plopped down in a seat behind James and Kara.

James flipped to the first page of his binder. Meanwhile, Leslie called out a page number and character for the actor to read.

“It’s called ‘The Birth of Merlin’,” James said to Kara, “ever heard of it?”

Kara shook her head.

“Yeah,” Winn whispered, poking his head between Kara and James as the student on stage began to read the part out loud. “There’s a reason for that. It’s one of those plays Shakespeare put his name on as a co-author, even though if you have any familiarity with Shakespeare at all you’d know that this isn’t his writing style at all. It’s…um…interesting.”

“Is that the nice way of saying that it sucks?” Kara whispered back, careful not to be overheard by Dr. Carr.

James chuckled.

“Pretty much, yeah. Snapper- that’s what we call Dr. Carr, he tends to pick more…unknown plays. He likes to feel like everything he does is ‘original’. Don’t get me wrong, he’s a brilliant director, really knows his stuff, but…he’s not helping the theater department out at all by producing plays that no one wants to see.”

Kara was no stranger to actors and crew members having negative comments about their director, but she still thought that James and Winn were pretty bold to be talking about ‘Snapper’ in this manner when he was literally right in front of them. Either Dr. Carr was hard of hearing, or he just didn’t care about what anyone had to say about him anymore.

The actor on stage was making a pretty atrocious attempt at a British accent, distracting the two from their chat.

Dr. Carr cleared his throat.

“Just speak in your normal voice, kid,” he said.

The actor seemed to deflate at Dr. Carr’s critique, but he pressed on.

“Oh, anyway,” Winn said, “best summary of the story I can give is that the devil disguises as a hot dude and hooks up with a girl. The girl gets pregnant with the future magician Merlin, while the British court is slowly taken over by the recently defeated Saxons because they have a hot princess and straight men are weak. Merlin is born, becomes a full grown adult in like five seconds, helps the British defeat the Saxons, again, basically slut shames his mom into exile, tells his Devil dad to fuck off, and by the end of the play, becomes King Uther’s right hand guy.”
Kara blinked a couple of times.

“Alright then. Good summary,” Kara said.

“The stage design I have in mind is pretty simple,” James cut in, “Jacobian era designs, with a flair of steampunk to make some visual differences between the British and the Saxons.”

Kara’s eyes widened. “Cool. I totally know what all those words mean.”

James laughed.

“Here, take a look,” he said, flipping through his concept drawings.

At some point while the trio were talking shop, the first actor had left the stage and the sound of heels clacking filled Kara’s senses as the dark haired girl she had noticed earlier stepped up to the stage.

Kara was aware that James was still talking to her, explaining various dimensions and mechanisms of the larger set structures, but she couldn’t bring herself to pay attention. Something about the girl’s presence was impossible to ignore. She stood on that stage like she owned it, like this wasn’t an audition but a performance that the group sitting in the audience was blessed to witness. Kara realized that the description that came to mind was a description she would typically think of for the bratty theater girl type she was used to enduring, but this was different. Those types of girls demanded attention, whereas the girl on stage captured your attention instantly and effortlessly.

Leslie, who seemed to bristle at her entrance, spat out a page number and part for the girl to read.

“Who is that?” Kara asked, completely interrupting James mid-sentence.

“Are you serious?” James asked.

“Dude, that’s Lena Luthor,” Winn chimed in.

Kara stiffened at the name, thinking of her cousin and all the hardship the Luthor name had caused him.

“Like, Luthor as in..”

“Lex Luthor’s little sister,” Winn replied. “Yeah, I know.”

“Why does she go to school so far away from Metropolis?”

“Nobody knows,” Winn said, “but her family donated a ridiculous amount of money to the school to make sure it was smooth sailing for her here. That’s why their name is on a couple of buildings. They paid to have the science and medical buildings totally redone and upgraded. We have like, the most state of the art tech now. Which is convenient for Lena, seeing as she’s a double major in computer science and biology, with a minor in theatre. Honestly, I don’t know if she even sleeps.”

“It must be nice to be able to practically buy your own university,” James said.

Kara frowned, unsure of how to respond to this new information. On one hand, she totally understood why the general opinion of the students was to dislike Lena. But on the other hand, at least at first glance, Lena didn’t seem to carry the same air of arrogance that most of her family likely had. At least, that Kara assumed that they had. And Kara couldn’t help but empathize with someone who was overshadowed by a family member…
Plus she couldn’t help but be totally enthralled with her audition. Lena was…really talented. She used the whole stage to her benefit instead of standing in stoically in place like so many other students had. She seemed actually familiar with what she was reading; really performing it instead of stumbling to pronounce half the words and sentence structures (it was, supposedly, Shakespeare, after all). Kara honestly wasn’t even able to pretend to pay attention to James and Winn until Lena had finished her monologue and stepped down from the stage. As she thanked Dr. Carr and Leslie, her eyes met Kara’s, and Lena let the unreadable expression on her face break for a moment to smile at her.

Kara swallowed hard.

“Um,” she said, quickly trying to change the subject, “aren’t there supposed to be more stage crew people here?”

James and Winn shared a knowing chuckle.

“Yes,” James said, “you probably won’t see any of the stage crew until tech week. I never have been able to get people to come to meetings.”

“Honestly, we were surprised that you showed up,” Winn said.

“Oh,” Kara said, feeling a bit foolish for being so excited to come.

Still, she was glad that she met James and Winn. She could tell that she was going to get along with both of them pretty well. She regretted not taking a Stage Craft class this semester. It would have been fun to have James as a professor. Not because she thought he was cute or anything…

The rest of the evening went by fairly quickly. Kara agreed to hang around through the remaining auditions. The three of them swapped their personal theater horror stories, almost all of them involving tech week (the week before performances when all of the light, sound, and special effect cues were tested), and Kara took the opportunity to observe Dr. Carr and Leslie, since she would be working with them more in the future. The pair’s collective disdain for their work made Kara glad that she had Winn and James as a buffer between them and her. She wondered why Leslie had even agreed to be a stage manager, since she was apparently so miserable doing it. She kept that question to herself, however.

Kara was little bummed when the last of the sub-par auditions were through. She didn’t want to go back to her lonely dorm room already.

James walked with her out of Luthor Hall.

“So, I’m in the theater pretty much all day Tuesdays and Thursdays with my students working on the set. You’re welcome to come by and lend a hand if you’re ever bored.”

Kara smiled brightly. “Sounds like a plan, professor.”

On her walk back to her dorm room, Kara sent Alex a text.

Message To: Big Sis

_I’ve found my people!_

(Alex was in the middle of a boring night lecture, so she quickly replied.)

_You theatre geek._
That is insulting! PS, did you know that Lex Luthor’s sister went to school here?

Umm..no. Are you okay with that?
Should you tell Clark?

No…she doesn’t seem to be as crazy.

Plus, no one knows Superman has a cousin. It should be fine.

Alright. Wait. Is she a theatre geek too?

…maybe?

Then she’s definitely crazy. :P

Whatever, med school nerd!! :-*

* It was amazing how much more comfortable Kara felt in her own skin once she felt like she had a place where she could belong. She got more interested in her class subjects, she started to participate in lectures, her professors even started to know her name. Her favorite class to go to, however, was James’ stage craft class. Which she went to every week, even though she wasn’t getting any class credit for it. She had tried to get credit for it, but Ms. Grant had, affectionately, informed her: “You are already maxed out at 18 credits this semester. Be an insufferable over-achieving freshman, if you must, but do it on your own time.”

Kara usually would only go to one of the two classes a week. She didn’t want to seem over eager, or like a nerd with no friends. Or that she had a little crush on James…

James always seemed to appreciate whenever she was there, however. After the first week, he had even started letting her work unsupervised while he would give technical lectures to the students. (he had a really great speaking voice. Like, a really great speaking voice). Sometimes he would even give her a handful of his students to help her with projects. Once or twice, students had mistaken her for a TA. She didn’t correct them after the first time it happened, because people tended to give her a weird look when she informed them that no, in fact, she was just a freshman with some free time.

Kara was pretty excited about what the end product of the set was going to look like. She often found herself looking at the small diorama of the set design that James had built, spinning the little gears on the walls, because she was allowed to touch it, and none of the other students could. She always imagined little mice dressed in costumes, running around the tiny set, little fake swords attached to their hips. She chuckled to herself.

“You good, Kara?” James called, snapping her out of her mouse daydreams. She spun around rapidly, her face feeling hot.
“Oh, uh, yeah. I was just…um, yeah.” She fidgeted with her glasses. “What’s up?”

“I know we don’t do much work during the actor rehearsals, but would you mind coming by tonight, anyway? Winn needs some help getting measurements for the costumes.”

“Wait, Winn designs the costumes, too?”

“You bet your ass, I do!” Winn yelled down to them.

He had been sitting on the catwalk above them, fiddling with the light plugs so the currents all matched.

“I have handmade all of the costumes since sophomore year,” he continued proudly. “I think it’s a pretty manly skill to have. I just don’t like the whole…touching people…part.”

Kara laughed. “Yeah, that’s fine. I can come by to help. What time?”

“Seven…ow!” Winn yanked his hand back from the plugs. “I forgot to switch the fuses off, didn’t I?”

“You’re gonna get yourself killed, Winn,” James said, shaking his head.

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That night, Kara brought some of her homework in to the dressing room, since her work load had gotten pretty intense pretty fast. It was a stark white room, bright, round lightbulbs framing each of the vanity mirrors that lined the wall. Since they were the only way to light the room, they were all on so that Winn could see what he was doing. And since the bulbs burned hot, the room got really warm really fast. And in case she were capable of forgetting how hot the room was, each time an actor walked in for their measurements, they made sure to complain about it. Loudly. As if Kara weren’t already aware of this.

There were fifteen cast members, and somehow, miraculously, they were all in the same place at the same time. Typically, if an actor found out that they weren’t in any of the scenes being rehearsed that night, they were somehow sucked into an alternate dimension of existence, never to be seen or heard from again until the next rehearsal. Not that she could blame them. The page requirements to writing assignments at NCU were ridiculous.

Kara was half convinced that Leslie had made individually horrifying threats to each and every cast member to get them to hang around this evening so they could be measured.

Winn had racks of old costumes lined up in a bare corner of the dressing room. Most of them made by him. Kara was pretty impressed by his work.

“How do you find time to do your school work?”

“Eh,” Winn said. Flipping through his booklet of rough costumes sketches and looking through his existing creations for inspiration. “You get to a certain point of your college career when you’ve hit max capacity of how much anxiety your body can handle, and the whole system just overloads and short circuits. Once that happens, you’d be surprised how much you can get done, you know, when you no longer have a functioning soul.”
Kara was mildly concerned by Winn’s expressionless face and monotone voice as he said that last part.

“Besides,” he continued, “all of my basic courses are out of the way, and all the classes I have left to take are about stuff I already know how to do. PS, for future reference, frosh, you can just have Dr. Carr sign all of this stuff off as course credit. No use doing anything around here for nothing.”

“I know about that, now,” Kara lamented, trying to find a recurring theme in Beowulf for a paper due next week, and just generally hating her life.

One by one the actors came into the dressing room to get measured. Kara knew that it wasn’t going to be the most fun thing in the world to do, but after the first two actors that came in were upperclassman guys who were a little too interested in the fact that Kara was a freshman as she tried to measure their inseams, she really regretted agreeing to this. By the fourth person she put herself into a numb routine to avoid freaking out on someone: nod along as the actors tried to make chit chat with her or Winn, look only at the measuring tape and nothing else, and if anyone made Kara uncomfortable, she would ‘accidentally’ prick them with a fabric needle.

After an hour and a half, Winn and Kara were both sweaty and miserable. They had two or three more actors to go, so Kara told her self that if she managed to force through it, and she would reward herself with ice cream. Lots and lots of ice cream.

While Kara was busy fantasizing about mint chocolate chip, lying face down on the floor, groaning loudly to no one in particular, because that made her feel better, that was when Lena Luthor walked in.

Lena knocked on the open door before walking in. Kara sprang up off the floor, cheeks flushing instantly. Lena was always more professional-looking than her peers. Today she had on an emerald green silk blouse that matched her eyes and tight black pants. She locked her gaze on Kara, looking somewhere between amused and concerned.

“You alright?” She asked, holding in a laugh.

Kara noticed Lena still had her signature blood red lipstick on. She swallowed hard, unsure of why Lena made her so nervous.

“Uh, yeah,” Kara replied. “It’s just…been a long day. And it’s really warm in here.”

“No kidding,” Lena said, stepping further into the small room that now seemed more suffocating than before.

“Ah!,” Winn called, popping up from between the racks of clothing, “our Artesia has arrived!”

Kara gave Winn a confused look.

“That’s her character. Our seductive Saxon of the play, right, Lena?”

Lena rolled her eyes, seemingly unimpressed by her given role.

“Yeah,” Winn said to Kara, “Dr. Carr doesn’t really bother to cast Lena as anything other than whatever ‘femme fatale’ role is in whatever production he’s doing. To be fair, she does have the look, but it’s getting kind of old.”

“I can only pretend to be attracted to so many bland college boys before I lose my mind,” she said, sighing.
Kara found herself staring at Lena again.

“Umm, Kara?” Winn said, snapping her out of a trance.

“Huh?” she replied.

“Measurements?” he said, gesturing to Lena.

“Oh, yeah, sorry,” Kara said, grabbing her tape off of the countertop next to her.

“Think I’ve put on weight, Winn?” Lena said, standing in the middle of the room, waiting on Kara.

“What?” Winn laughed uncomfortably, “No! I just…want to be exact. Well, that, and I lost last year’s measurement chart.”

Lena pursed her lips at Winn, feigning irritation.

“What?” he said, “it’s weird to just keep a folder of people’s body measurements, anyway.”

Lena shook her head and looked expectantly at Kara. Kara cleared her throat, wiping her palms on her pant legs in case they were sweaty. She noticed that Winn seemed to treat Lena differently than the rest of their peers did, that is, he didn’t totally ignore her. Of course, Kara figured that Winn probably could get along with everyone he met. He was just one of those people.

Tentatively, Kara wrapped the measuring tape around Lena’s waist, afraid to even let a finger touch her stomach. She didn’t know why she was so much more afraid to touch Lena than any of the other students. Maybe it was the fact that Lena insisted on keeping her eyes on Kara the whole time, when all the other actors had looked straight ahead. Kara could feel her cheeks burning, reminding herself to breathe normally, and wishing that Lena would just quit looking at her like that. She swore that Lena was smirking at her, as if she knew what was going on in Kara’s head. Kara was tempted to prick her with a needle just to get her to cut it out. She measured Lena’s stomach, her hips, and the length of her legs. She thought she was going to get away with not measuring Lena’s bust until Winn insisted on reminder her.

You try measuring her, then, Winn, she thought, irritated.

She held her breath, eyes flicking up at Lena occasionally to make sure she wasn’t making her uncomfortable. Lena was still giving her that damn look, watching her every move, smug. Kara couldn’t help but roll her eyes, frustrated. Lena actually chuckled when she did.

So, she is messing with me.

Finished, Kara tossed the tape aside, sitting in a nearby chair and crossing her arms. Was this why people didn’t talk to her? Because she liked to play mind games?

“Okay, awesome,” Winn said, looking over the numbers he had written down, “I actually have a dress from a few seasons ago I might be able to…sex up a bit for this play. Do you mind trying it on, Lena?”

“No problem,” she said, and immediately started stripping out of her clothes before Kara could even look away.

Kara jerked her head upwards, looking at the ceiling, feeling more and more uncomfortable by the second. She was no stranger to actors changing in front of each other like it was no big deal, but she still felt unnerved enough by Lena to make it weird. Winn strolled towards the clothing rack,
picked up the dress he had in mind, and brought it over to Lena, clearly unbothered by the fact that she was standing around in a matching set of lacy black lingerie. Kara kept telling herself not to look.

Kara looked down from the ceiling when Lena had the dress on. It was a long dress made of burgundy velvet, with modest white fabric covering her bust.

“Yeah, it’s an okay fit,” Winn said, looking Lena over, tugging at the fabric where it was too loose, “I’ll make some adjustments, and get rid of all of that,” he said, gesturing to the white fabric.

“It wouldn’t be a play worth putting on if I didn’t whip the girls out, right?” Lena remarked, tugging the neckline of the dress down jokingly. “We all good, Winn?”

“Yep, we’re good!” he said cheerfully as he scribbled in his notebook. “Thank you very much, darlin.”

Lena turned towards Kara, hands on her hips likes she was waiting for something. Kara raised her eyebrows, shrugging her shoulders to indicate that she didn’t know what it was Lena wanted.

“Help me out of this, will you?” Lena said, smiling devilishly.

Kara knew that Lena was probably able to get out of the dress herself perfectly fine. She thought about just telling her so and storming out, but instead she sighed agitatedly and got up to oblige. *What a brat*, Kara thought.

Lena pulled her dark hair to one side of her neck so that Kara could unzip her. Clearing her throat, Kara unzipped the dress, trying not to let her eyes hover on the pale, soft looking skin of Lena’s back as the zipper rolled slowly downwards. Kara felt heat creeping up the back of her neck as the dress dropped to the floor, and she clenched her hands nervously into fists as she stepped away from Lena, relaxing them again at her sides. Lena turned to face Kara, stepping out of the dress and into Kara’s personal space, entirely too close to her, her bare skin practically pressing up against Kara.

Kara knew her face was red.

“Thank you,” Lena said, tilting her head, looking Kara up and down. “I didn’t catch you name.”

Kara looked off to the right, unable to speak with a half-naked Lena Luthor so close to her.

“Kara. Kara Danvers.” she said through gritted teeth.

“Thank you, Kara Danvers,” Lena said, letting her name roll off her tongue in a way that should have been illegal. Kara swallowed hard.

Lena put her clothes back on, smiling at Kara again before leaving. Kara let the breath out that she had been holding since Lena walked in the dressing room.

Winn started laughing behind her. Kara spun around, scowling at him.

“Don’t freak out, frosh. That’s just how she says ‘hi’.”

“She’s like that with everyone?” Kara exclaimed, collapsing back into her chair.

“Uh,” Winn said, “actually, no. She’s only like that with pretty girls.”
Kara’s eyes widened.

“Oh…so, she’s…”

“Hella,” Winn replied, assuming what she was going to say.

Kara huffed a breath out of her nose, exasperated.

“Well, that doesn’t give her an excuse to make people so…uncomfortable.”

Winn shrugged.

“She’s a Luthor. They’re kind of used to getting what they want.”

Kara snapped her mouth shut, afraid to continue to conversation to be led to the conclusion that what Lena ‘wanted’ might be Kara. That obviously wasn’t true.

Once they were done with the last measurements, Kara couldn’t get out of that dressing room fast enough. She rushed through the theatre to the exit doors, pretending she didn’t notice Lena winking at her from up on the stage as she walked past.

*

When she got back to her dorm, Alex was sprawled out on one the couches of the dorm lounge. Standing next to her, looking slightly peeved, was one of the campus security guards. Not the cranky old guy Kara was used to seeing around her building, but the younger brunette woman that most people mistook for a student when she wasn’t in full uniform.

“Alex!” Kara exclaimed. “What are you doing here?”

“My class let out early, I thought I’d come bother my baby sister. Where were you, anyway?”

“Uh, helping out with some theater stuff.”

“Ugh, God you’re a nerd,” Alex said, pulling herself up off the couch. “See, I do know someone who lives here,” she snapped to the security guard. “And I’m a student, so I don’t know why you’re giving me such a hard time.”

The security guard rolled her eyes.

“No one is allowed in these dorms unless they live here or are signed in by a resident at the desk. How did you get past the floor RA?”

Alex shrugged innocently.

“Same way I got past you, sweet heart.”

Kara stepped between the two women before the other woman lost her cool on Alex.

“I’m sorry, uh…”

“Sawyer,” the woman said. “Maggie.
“Okay, Maggie. Can I call you Maggie? Yeah. Uh, sorry about my sister. I’ll make sure she signs in, okay?”

Maggie glared at Alex a moment before nodding to Kara and storming out of the lounge.

Alex had a smug smile on her face as she watched Maggie leave.

“She’s cute,” Alex said.

Kara sighed, walking up the stairs towards her dorm room.

“You are shameless, Alex.”

“What? You weren’t getting a vibe from her?” Alex said, following her, “I definitely got a vibe from her. I think she’s into me.”

“And I think that all those hours in a boring medical lab are making you delusional,” Kara replied, opening her door and tossing her things onto her bed.

“Whoa, now. Med school is super fun. I get to cut into dead bodies. It’s awesome.”

Kara grimaced at her sister, who was making herself comfortable in Kara’s oversized bean bag chair.

“You’re strange, you know that?” Kara said, pulling two pints of ice cream out of her freezer and tossing one at Alex.

“And you’re a dork,” Alex retorted. Kara stuck her tongue out at her in reply.

“So,” Alex said, “how’s college life going, frosh? I haven’t heard much from you in a couple days.”

“Yeah, I have a lot of stuff going on right now. Question, do professors give all the same due dates on purpose?”

“Yes. They’re evil people, Kara,” Alex said, digging a spoon into her ice cream, “don’t let them fool you. But who cares about boring academic stuff? Are you making friends?”

“Yeah, actually, I’m getting to know the people in the theater department pretty well. I really like the one stage craft professor.”

“You mean that young guy? What do you mean by like? You got a little crush on a professor?”

“What? No!” Kara exclaimed, fighting the grin off of her face.

Alex gave her a look of over dramatized shock.

“So that’s it? A teacher? You haven’t given a second glance to any other campus hotties?”

Stupidly, Kara let her mind drift for a second to the visual memory of a half-naked Lena Luthor smirking at her. She physically shook the thought from her head.

“Nope,” Kara replied, “no one.”

“Good,” Alex said, “guys are total creeps towards freshman girls anyway. I will beat anyone up who comes anywhere near you without your consent.” She stuffed a huge spoonful of ice cream
into her mouth. “Oh,” she said, mouth full, “what’s goin on with that Lena Luthor chick? She up to any evil plotting?”

Kara rolled her eyes, still irritated with how smug Lena was.

“No. I don’t think she’s evil. She’s just a big pain in the ass.”

“Why do you say that?”

Kara shrugged, not really comfortable telling her about the flustering time Lena had given her in the dressing room.

“Oh, you know. Just, typical theater diva stuff.”

“Hmm, well, maybe her version of evil is gonna come out in a very ‘phantom of the opera’ type manner.”

Kara cackled at the visual of Lena with a half messed up face and a big, black cape. She would have to picture that if Lena ever tried to mess with her again.

“Well, even if she was evil,” Kara said, “It’s not like I would be able to do anything about it. Those are the rules, right?”

Alex sighed, getting up from the beanbag chair to sit next to Kara on her bed.

“Kara,” she said softly, “Mom and Dad and I aren’t just trying to keep you from using your powers to be mean or controlling, and you know that. We just want you to be safe.”

“I understood that before, Alex, but I’m in college now! I’m an adult, by Earth standards. I should be able to make my own choices. And as much as I’m enjoying college and everything, I just know that I could be more than all of…this.”

“And you will be,” Alex insisted, “You will. You will do great things. But you don’t have to be like Superman to be great, Kara. And especially considering that Lex Luthor’s little sister is hanging around, you need to be careful. If she found out who you were…”

Kara slumped against the wall behind her bed, defeated. If she hadn’t won this argument in all the years leading up until now that she’d lived with the Danvers, she certainly wasn’t going to now.

“You’re right,” she sighed, not really believing it. “You’re right.”

Alex pulled her into a hug.

“I love you,” she said. “Now gimme your laptop, there’s a show I want you to see.”

Kara groaned.

“Alex, I have a lot of homework.”

“That’s what all-nighters are for, frosh. Come on, one episode.”

Kara groaned again, but obliged.
Hey guys! This is my first time working on an AU, and I'm worried that this is a little too much of an odd niche topic to put an AU in, idk. This is just more true to my own college experience, so I thought it would feel more genuine to the reader. So if this seems to harsh on the stereotypes of 'theater kids' at times, please know it's because I was one, and accept all of them as at least partly fact XD

This is going to get more into the supercorp stuff as I go on, but this story will, at times, get technical with the theater stuff just so you guys can get a feel for what's going on. If it gets to be too much, just let me know. I really would appreciate any kind of feedback on this, really. I want you guys as readers to have a good time reading this, ya know?

I will try to update every thursday. I'm always up to chat here, or on my tumblr (url schatziTess). See you soon! :)

Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

In which Kara is forced to see James in a new light, finds herself re-evaluating her opinions of Lena, and attends her first college party...
(PS, Mike = Mon el, if anyone gets confused. I think that's the human name they gave him. I didn't want to give him super powers in this. He doesn't deserve them...so he's just human in this AU)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Kara didn’t quite have to pull an all-nighter to finish her homework after Alex had left. Kara got maybe…two hours of sleep? Which wasn’t terrible, right?

She was convinced that coffee must have been introduced on Earth specifically for college students. With her mug filled to the brim with coffee cut heavily with sugary sweet flavored creamers, Kara speed-walked towards Luthor hall for her lunch break. She could have kept working in her dorm room, but honestly, you could only stare at the same four walls before going insane…

She needed to read one hundred pages about that Dracula guy before her next class at two o’clock. He must have been the one that started the odd obsession humans had with mythical blood sucking humanoids. They had myths about blood suckers on Krypton, but they certainly did make them out to be something to be sexually attracted to…

Technically, she could have finished the reading in no time if she used her powers. But that was “cheating”, according to Eliza and Jeremiah. Besides, she didn’t absorb the information as well if she didn’t read it at a human pace, and she was intrigued by the book. So, if she had any chance of getting through it, she needed to be somewhere quieter than the dining hall, which was by now filling with loud, boisterous students. Since she knew that James would probably be in the theater working through his break period working on the set, she let herself in.

She expected to see James when she strolled into the theatre, what she didn’t expect to see was him lip-locked with a short haired brunette in a business suit. Shocked, Kara accidentally let her books tumble out of her hands, just barely keeping her coffee from spilling all over the floor. The clattering noise sent James and his female companion rocketing away from each other. Kara was frozen in place, wide eyed, and, selfishly, kind of hurt.

“Uh,” Kara said, still staring at two of them.

The brunette girl wiped smeared lipstick from her face. James did the same. It made Kara momentarily flushed with anger, despite knowing she had no right to feel that way.

“Kara,” James said, adjusting his tie.

“I am so sorry, Professor Olsen,” she said. Were her eyes still bulging? They felt like they were ready to pop out of her head. “I didn’t mean to…”
“No, no, you’re fine. I’m sorry you, uh, saw…that…um. Kara, this is…”

“I don’t need to know,” Kara exclaimed, reaching down to gather her books as quickly as she could at a human speed. “It’s none of my business! I should have, um, knocked. Yeah.”

“Kara, really, it’s not…”

“Don’t worry about it! It’s my bad!”

A laugh burst out of Kara. She couldn’t really control it, it was like a knee jerk reaction the being this insanely embarrassed.

“I gotta go!” she continued to ramble on, unable to make herself just shut up. “James, or, sorry, Professor Olsen, I’ll see you, um, at some point. Or not. It’s not like I’m in your class!” She laughed again. “I just…uh. Yeah! Nice to meet you, uh, Miss…Lady Person…”

Kara bolted out of there before her mouth could spit any more stupidity out, and practically ran to the dining hall. The faster she could get lost in a crowd of loud, clamoring young adults, the better. The chaos of the lunch rush was enough to overwhelm her senses long enough for her to get over the bulk of her crushing embarrassment. After grabbing a sandwich (she may as well, she hadn’t eaten in like…twenty minutes), she settled into an empty table and dove into Dracula before she could think any further on what she had just witnessed.

She managed to squeeze in about twenty minutes of trying to figure out whether vampires were transformative beings or psychics or just stalkers with sharp teeth…until she was interrupted. Through the din of conversation and general rowdiness around her, someone cleared their throat close enough to her to pull her out of her book. She looked up, and Lena Luthor was smiling down at her, hair tied up, wearing a long red button up shirt rolled up to her elbows and black leggings.

“Need some company?” she asked.

Kara clenched her jaw, pushing away visual memories of their last encounter together that made her more uncomfortable than she cared to admit.

“No really,” Kara replied.

Lena didn’t seem surprised by her response.

“Well, I do,” Lena said, and sat across from Kara anyway.

Kara thought about coming up with some snappy line to make Lena leave her alone. Instead, she chose to ignore her, and went back to her book. The sad thing was, she might have been more willing to make a friend of Lena Luthor, despite her name, before that evening in the dressing room. But after her little…show, Kara had decided that she didn’t like Lena that much. In fact, Lena was kind of infuriating to be around. She just…really frustrated Kara…sitting there, staring at her, with that annoying little smirk on her lips…

“Is that for Professor Delisle?” Lena asked, indicating to Kara’s book. “Brit Lit Part 1? I took that class my first year. Spoiler alert, Part 2 is even more boring than Part 1.”

“Then why did you take Part 2?” Kara asked, forcing a tone of disinterest into her voice, and not looking up from her book.

Lena shrugged.
“I was into a cute Lit major who took it. And Delisle is an easy A. Or, at least, an easy B, if you
don’t get as distracted by blondes as I do.”

Mistakenly, Kara looked up from her book to glance at Lena, which she apparently was expecting
her to do, as she had a flirtatious wink waiting for her when their gazes met. Kara rolled her eyes
and went back to her reading. Yeah, she definitely didn’t like Lena Luthor.

“I could lend you my notes, if you want,” Lena pressed, “it would save you a lot of hours of misery
caused by sexist, stuffy old British authors.”

“I’m fine, thanks,” Kara replied blankly, wishing she were a meaner person so she could tell Lena
to just shove off.

She could still feel Lena’s eyes on her long after they stopped speaking, like a predator. Kara
suddenly felt very spiritually connected to Mina Harker in that moment. Miraculously, they were
interrupted before Kara could find out of Lena had sharp teeth, too.

“Hey, kids!” Winn called them in a sing-song voice, dragging an empty chair from a neighboring
table and moving his bag to hang off his back so he could sit backwards in the chair, facing the two
girls. “Lena, how’s line memorization going?”

“I’ll learn my lines when Brendan does.”

“Ugh, God,” he groaned, biting down on an apple. “Don’t hold your breath. He’s gonna be asking
Leslie for line cues on opening night, just you wait.”

He turned his attention to Kara.

“Hey, Danvers, what are you doing here? I thought you were gonna study in the theater during
James’ break hour?”

Kara’s cheeks flushed, remembering her uncomfortable discovery.

“Yeah, um, I decided to study down here instead. James is…um…busy with someone.”

Winn tilted his head, confused. A realization seemed to dawn on him suddenly.

“Oh, God, Lucy Lane is in town isn’t she? And they were doing it in the theater again, weren’t
they?”

“Again?” Kara exclaimed, horrified to even consider a visual of that happening in the only place on
campus she liked.

“Yeah, Lucy kind of makes James a little…not crazy, but…unwound, I guess? They dated back
when they both were students here. They were in this drawn out on-again-off-again situation,
which made everyone’s lives miserable, because they were both in theater, and they couldn’t ever
keep their personal drama to themselves. So then, Lucy got into this awesome law school in
Metropolis, and James decided to stay here when NCU offered him the job. I just wish she could
keep away from James, ya know? Not even because he’s my friend, but because she is like, way
too much of a badass to let her life revolve around a guy, even a guy like James, you know?”

Kara could feel herself visibly deflating as Winn went on about James’ complicated and,
apparently very sexually charged, relationship with this woman Lucy. She had absolutely no reason
to be jealous or hurt by any of this. She didn’t have any claim or any semblance of a chance with
James, anyway. He was a professor and she was just a silly freshman. They were friends, and he
was taken by someone else, who Kara was not going to let herself dislike or be jealous of Lucy, because that would very un-feminist of her.

All the while, during Winn’s explanation and Kara’s inner meltdown, she could still feel Lena’s silent eyes on her, clocking her every move, analyzing her like a specimen in a lab.

“Tragic,” Lena said.

Kara had a feeling she wasn’t referring to Winn’s story.

By two o’clock, she was no further into the book, staring at it and not processing any of it, having been distracted by Winn’s friendly conversation, and by the way Lena would reply to him, over enunciating every syllable because she seemed to like the way words rolled off of her lips.

Not that Kara noticed.

And not that Lena seemed to look over at Kara occasionally to notice her not noticing Lena.

Kara sped-read the book in thirty seconds on her walk to Brit Lit Part 1.

*Whatever. Just this one time.*

*One of Kara’s favorite things about James was his time management. He had a calendar book dedicated solely to the fall show, and every day had exact specifications of how much progress he expected to make. And so far, he had kept to the schedule almost to a T. It was something Kara admired, and also envied about him, especially as she was still grappling to adjust to the ever increasing work load expected of her classes.

That is, she was envious of his time management. Until Lucy arrived. Then he seemed to become totally derailed. Which was…fine. There was nothing wrong with him enjoying the fact that his girlfriend (?) had come to visit. Kara had no reason to be upset about this, except maybe from the position of someone emotionally invested in the success of the show. At least from the set design perspective. Judging by the rehearsal she had sat in on the previous night while she worked on while she worked on her Theoretical Physics assignment (a class she had a particularly hard time with, because Earth was so wrong about so much of their understanding of the universe), she didn’t expect much from the performance itself.

That was of course, except for Lena, who, unsurprisingly, stole the stage the moment she entered it, without fail. It didn’t really surprise Kara that Lena made easy work of her role as the ‘seductress’ of the play. It did, however, make it harder for her to focus on her homework. She could have just left and finished her work in her dorm. Kara was already anxious that James and Lucy might reappear from wherever they had ducked off to for the evening to make Kara uncomfortable once again, but…she really enjoyed watching Lena. As much as it unnerved Kara when she had been the object of Lena’s flirtation, she couldn’t help but stare when she could watch her in action from afar. The way she tossed her hair, the way she sauntered effortlessly around her prey, the way that her lips hovered over the pulse points of someone’s neck that made the back of Kara’s on neck tingle…*
Anyway, James’ absence from the theater had caused the construction of the set to fall behind. And after Snapper had, well, snapped, about the fact that his actors needed something to work with besides “boxes and goddamned tape marks!”, Winn had decided to take things into his own hands. All of the students who had signed up to work crew would have to show up for at least three hours that Saturday to help build the set, or have their credits rescinded. Leslie had taken it upon herself to make a similar threat to her actors, stating, lovingly, that:

“If you lazy halfwits don’t help Winn and James out this weekend, I will hook you like fish and drag each of you out of this production, one by one, get it? Good.”

She didn’t know if anyone actually took Leslie’s colorful threats seriously, but they certainly didn’t question her orders.

Kara knew it was bad for her to get into the habit of using her superpowers to get ahead in her school work, but, knowing how stressed out Winn was at all the responsibility on his shoulders, she made yet another exception to her rule, finishing a weekend’s worth of work in a few hours so she could be there to help him as much as he needed her.

At 8 AM sharp on Saturday morning, Kara strolled into the theater, wearing the sweatpants and T-Shirt she was most willing to get paint on, armed with a dozen donuts, and a half gallon coffee tote box from the coffee shop across campus in hand.

“Don’t say I never did anything for you,” Kara said, dropping her haul onto the stage next to where Winn was napping, his face pressed into the dusty floor, looking utterly pathetic. Winn bolted upright, admiring the goodies in front of him. He crawled to the edge of the stage platform to hug Kara, burying his head in her stomach.

“You are the most beautiful person,” he mumbled into her shirt, snatching a Styrofoam cup off of her to pour himself coffee. She chuckled, grabbing a donut for herself.

“Hey, Kara,” James said from behind her as he descended the stairs from the sound box, voice hollow.

“Hey, there, stranger!” she said jokingly.

Kara was forcing herself to try and resume the tone of friendship she had had with James before Lucy had arrived. Even though the broad smile he gave her killed her just a little more, now.

“Alright,” James said, taking a donut, “I get it. I’ve been MIA for a couple of days.”

“I mean, otherwise you’d just keep making out in the theater, right?” Kara said.

Why, Kara? Why did you say that? What is wrong with you?, she thought.

Desperate to change the topic, she looked past James’ left shoulder, she realized that what she thought was just a pile of black clothing in a chair was actually a person.

“Hey, Leslie,” she said to the lump of clothing, clearing her throat awkwardly, “You want some coffee?”

“I want to be spared from your insufferable peppiness for five fucking minutes, Danvers,” the lump replied, Leslie’s earphone-wearing head emerging from under her hood.

“How about a donut, then?” Kara asked sarcastically.
Kara was learning not to fear Leslie anymore, once she learned that Leslie was pretty much all talk. At least, she hoped she was. And if she was going to snap, it would probably be on an actor, so, at least for now, Kara had nothing to worry about.

The four of them had an hour before any of the actors or other crew members were supposed to show up. Dr. Carr, conveniently, was busy with some conference that weekend, and would not be joining them in their efforts to finish the set. Assuming that actors, and most of the stage crew except for one or two people, should not be trusted with power tools, Winn, James, Leslie, and Kara, would be assembling set pieces, while the actors would largely be painting the already assembled set parts. The group set out floor tarps, paint, and brushes to be used. James had cut stencils of the designs he wanted painted into certain parts of the set walls, so that no one had to worry about lack of artistic ability. Other than that, the helpers simply had to stick to the right solid colors going in the right places. In theory, they were making it idiot proof. As long as everyone showed up with their heads attached to their bodies, it should go just fine. At least, that was the hope.

Kara was going to be assembling and attaching some of the smaller, more intricate mechanisms to the set, careful not to put them on pieces of unpainted set, or someone would slap paint all over them. She still wasn’t sure what “steampunk” was, she just knew that a lot of gears had to be able to turn properly on the set, for seemingly no reason other than aesthetic. Kara had gotten lost in a box of gears and bottles of gold and copper paint by the time students began to lazily stroll in, complaining about the earliness of the hour. No one was too chatty this early on a Saturday, and as such, they started making leaps and bounds in painting progress in no time.

Kara was securing a long handled crank to the stage left wall. It was supposed to be able to successfully open the stage left set door when turned. She understood that it looked cool, but Kara didn’t understand why they couldn’t just stick to those amazing Earth inventions called door handles. She was muttering angrily to herself, fighting to secure one of the trickier parts of the crank to the inside of the wall, when…

“Hey!” and excited voice barked to her, startling her so badly that she forgot for a second that she had super strength, and ripped off three feet of wood paneling from the set wall.

“Whoa, Kara!” James called from the other side of the stage. “What was that?”

Kara swore to herself, examining the wall to see how bad the damage was. She didn’t break any of the wood pieces, luckily, she had just yanked them off of the structure.

“Sorry! That’s my bad! I got it. I’ll fix it.”

Kara continued to swear at herself under her breath, all the way over to the power tools so she could screw the panels back on to the larger structure. She was so frustrated with herself, she didn’t notice that she had a shadow until she plowed into him as she turned to walk back to her station.

“Jeez!” she exclaimed, springing away from a brown haired guy about her height with blue eyes and a close trimmed beard. “Can I help you?”

“Oh, uh, I just wanted to apologize for making you mess up your wall. You’re like, super strong, aren’t you?”

“What? No, no, it just…um, wasn’t secured properly,” she said, wanting to downplay her strength for obvious reasons.

“Ah. Cool, cool. I getcha. Can I help you put it back together?”
Kara fidgeted with her glasses, noticing that the guy talking to her was wearing dark wash jeans and a black T-Shirt that declared him “Beer Pong Champ 2016” with the letters “DXAM” in large print beneath that. She noticed those letters from flyers around campus, but she didn’t know what they were.

“Um. Yeah, I guess,” she said, wishing she were less polite so she could just tell him no.

“Cool!” he exclaimed excitedly. “I’m Mike,” he said, thrusting a hand out for her to shake.

“Uh, Kara,” she replied, shaking his hand apprehensively. “What, um, what is that? DXAM?”

Mike puffed his chest.

“That’s my frat, girl! Delta-Chi-Alpha-Mu! We just use the letters DXAM for short.”

“You know that makes no sense, don’t you?” The disembodied voice of Winn called from above. He really needed to learn to stop crawling up into the eaves without warning. Mike looked around above his head awhile, baffled, before he finally spotted Winn.

“What do you mean?” Mike said to him.

“I mean,” Winn replied, “the Greek letter for Delta isn’t a D it’s a, well, to put it simply, a triangle.”

“Well, Triangle-X-A-M doesn’t sound as good, does it?” Mike said.

“That’s not… just call yourselves Deltas like a normal fraternity, then!” Winn retorted.

“We can’t!” Mike replied, personally offended. “The Delta-Lamda-Kappas call themselves the Deltas. And they’re, like, our rivalry frat, bro.”

“Uh huh,” Winn replied dismissively, “Hey, Mike. Be a dear: Go tell James to cut the power to overhang five so I don’t turn into ash, please? Thank you!”

Winn waited until Mike had trotted out of earshot before speaking again.

“That boy is as pretty as he is stupid.”

Kara scrunched her face. “You think he’s attractive?” she asked.

“Sadly, yes. Why, you don’t see it?”

Kara looked Mike over again as he trotted up to the sound booth.

“Nope,” she said as she heaved the wood planks back onto the frame so she could bolt them down again.

“So, what’s your deal, then?” Winn asked, sitting directly above her so they could talk surprisingly privately despite being on different levels.

“What do you mean?” Kara asked between ear piercing revs of her power drill.

“I mean, I don’t know anything about your dating life, and you seemed pretty easily flustered by Lena…”
Kara huffed, eyes darting around her to see if anyone was in earshot.

“You’re confusing flustered with frustrated. She’s just…she irritates me, that’s all.”

“But, like, theoretically, if Lena didn’t irritate you, would you find her attractive?”

Why did Kara get the feeling that Winn had some ulterior motive to his questions?

“Are you asking if I’m attracted to women?” she snapped, bothered by the topic more so than she perhaps should have been if it didn’t have the pretext of Lena Luthor to it.

“Umm, yeah, I guess?” Winn replied, voice suddenly unsure.

“I dunno, Winn. I haven’t really thought about it that much.”

“So that’s not a no…” Winn suggested.

Kara groaned, angry that Winn wouldn’t just drop it. In her anger, she pushed her drill into a nail so forcefully that, again, she accidentally tapped into her super strength, and drove the drill clear through the wall, punching a hole into it.

“Crap!” she yelled to herself.

“I thought you were here to help, not wreck the set, Danvers!” Leslie chided from across the theater.

“I’ve got it, Willis,” Kara barked back at her, and stormed off to grab a piece of scrap wood to fix the hole.

The only pieces available were annoyingly large, and instead of keeping a cool head, she allowed herself to snap the scrap wood in half with her hands before grabbing a rotary cutter and measuring tape and taking her supplies back with her.

“Looks like someone has been making the best of the gym fee in their tuition.”

Kara froze, realizing that her little show of strength had been on display to everyone in the theater, and also realizing how dangerous that was for her to do. When she looked up to see the source of the voice, she became even more frightened.

“Good morning, Lena,” Kara said, making her voice sound as soft and passive as she could.

Walking back to the mess she had made, Kara made quick work of tracing a square around the hole she had punched into existence, so that it would be easier to fit in a new piece. Before she could begin to cut, however, Lena yanked the whirring tool out of her hand.

“Do you want to cause an accident?” Kara exclaimed.

“No,” Lena replied softly but firmly, “I want to help you. Your hands are shaking, you’re not gonna be able to cut a straight line like that.”

“O-oh,” Kara stammered, unsure of herself beneath the command of Lena’s tone, and fearful because of the display of strength she had just allowed a Luthor to see. She looked down to see that her hands were, in fact, shaking badly. Sheepish, Kara stepped back, and allowed Lena to cut the square for her.

“This isn’t so bad,” Lena said between the noises of the cutter. “You won’t even be able to tell
there’s a patch on this wall once it’s fully painted.”

Lena looked completely odd to Kara. The few times that she had been around Lena, her hair, makeup, and clothing were all perfectly coordinated to fit the look of a young heiress. Now, her dark hair was thrown into a sloppy bun on top of her head, she had hardly any makeup on, as made evident by the subtle circles under her eyes, and she was wearing a T-shirt and jeans like a normal college student. Between that and the fact that she had jumped into working with power tools as if it was second nature to her, Kara was…thrown.

“What?” Lena asked flatly as she drew lines into the scrap wood.

“What?” Kara asked back to her.

“You’re staring at me.”

Kara cleared her throat.

“No I’m not,” she lied.

Settling into silence, she let Lena finish helping her fix the wall. When it was put right, Kara went back to trying to properly install the door crank, hoping everyone would quickly forget what had just happened, including Lena.

She was still perplexed as to how to put the stupid crank together, and Kara was beginning to get frustrated. In the periphery of her vision, Lena plopped down on the stage floor next to her.

“You know you could just ask for help with that, right?” she said.

I could also just melt it with my laser vision, thank you very much, Miss Luthor.

“I’ve got it,” Kara insisted, testing the crank with a tentative push. It spun around and around uselessly. Kara smacked it hotly, sending it spinning rapidly and loudly.

Lena sighed.

“Move,” she said, waving Kara aside. Offended, Kara took a step back, putting her hands on her hips, waiting for Lena to struggle just as much as Kara had.

Lena considered the mechanism for a moment, fingers thoughtfully searching the length of the metal chain connecting the crank to the door it was meant to raise and lower as her eyes looked to the inner workings Kara was struggling with. Biting her bottom lip, she reached for the pliers on the floor to her right, made an adjustment that Kara couldn’t see, and turned the crank, successfully opening the door. She turned to Kara, who stared at her, mouth agape, and she shrugged.

“Oh stop acting like it is some miracle that I’m slightly handy with tools. It’s insulting, and frankly sexist.”

“Wh-How…” Kara stuttered, “I’m not sexist! I’m like, the opposite of sexist, Lena. First of all, because I’m a girl. And second off, because…I’m just not!”

“Well then quit being so surprised when I don’t always look and act like a walking china doll, Kara.”

Kara was speechless for a moment. Then, spying a slight smirk on Lena’s mouth, she became irritated again.
“You’re messing with me,” Kara said, crossing her arms.

“Maybe just a little bit,” Lena replied, tilting her head.

Kara sighed.

“It’s too early for this,” she said, and stormed back over to her table of gears.

“Alright, alright” Lena said, tagging annoyingly behind Kara, “I sort of came at you full steam there. Pun intended.”

Kara looked at her, confused.

“It’s a joke…you know…because of the steampunk thing?” She seemed to become disheartened by Kara’s lack of response. “Never mind, anyway, I’ll tone down the sass a little bit, okay? Just, do you mind if I pair up with you? I won’t be here long, I have lab work to get to once I’ve put in my three hours. And if I have to be here on a Saturday morning I’d rather be working with someone I can actually tolerate.”

“Yeah, so would I,” Kara said, rolling her eyes.

“I really bother you, don’t I?” Lena asked, pulling up a stool across the work table from Kara.

Kara had to restrain herself from crushing one of the metal gears in her hand. Seriously, why was she having such a hard time controlling herself right now?

“Can you blame me?” Kara asked blankly, reaching for one of the paint jars. Lena picked it up before Kara could grab it herself, and placed it in her hand.

Lena pondered her question for a moment.

“Look, I get it. Being hit on by a girl freaks you out. I’ll ease up, okay?”

“I’m not freaked out because you’re a girl!”

“Oh, really?” Lena said, her right eyebrow quirking up curiously. “So I did read you right?”

Kara sighed. Could people stop questioning her sexuality for, like, five minutes?

“Listen,” Kara spat, “If you want to be friends with me, can’t you just talk to me like a normal friend would, instead of behaving in a way you clearly know makes me uncomfortable?”

Lena tilted her head, considering Kara.

“Would you be uncomfortable if James talked to you the way I did?”

“Lena!” Kara exclaimed.

“Alright,” Lena said, throwing her hands in the air. “I get it. I’m sorry. I’ll stop.”

Kara frowned, deciding if she should believe Lena or not.

“Promise?” she asked.

“Yes. You are not the first cute girl I’ve settled to be ‘just friends’ with, after all. Now, give me something useful to do.”
Once Kara was able to work with Lena in peace, she found that she actually didn’t mind her that much. You know, now that she wasn’t a boundary pushing pain in her ass. Before Kara knew it, she and Lena had been assembling set pieces in peaceful for over two hours. They chatted amicably. Lena tried to describe the basics of computer coding to Kara, without much success, and tried to explain how it tied into a program she was attempting to design to make gene sequencing easier, with even less success.

As the two girls sat next to each other, painting small stencil work onto the trim of the walls, Kara answered whatever questions Lena posed to her about her first year of college and where she grew up (on Earth, of course). Kara was amazed at how different this version of Lena was from the one that made Kara crazy. She didn’t know which version of Lena was the real her. And she didn’t know if it was a good thing or not that Kara currently found herself mildly enjoying the company of a Luthor.

Kara was pulled out of her thoughts by the sound of her phone ringing. She didn’t normally didn’t like to talk on the phone while she was working, but since Alex never called unless it was important, she broke her rule this one time.

“Hey, Alex, what’s up?”

“Hey, little sis,” Alex said, dragging out her words in a tone that Kara had come to know as ‘Hungover Alex’.

“Look,” Hungover Alex continued, “I left my car on campus last night so I could go to the bar with some friends, and long story short, my battery is dead. Can you help me out?”

“What do you want me to do?”

“I dunno, can’t you figure out how to use your powers to jump start it or something?”

Kara’s eyes flicked around her instinctively, hoping Alex’s voice didn’t project loud enough through her phone for anyone to hear, especially a Luthor.

“Alex, I can’t do that, and you know why. Besides, I’m busy right now.”

“Let me guess,” Alex groaned, “theater stuff? You know, I thought that if we went to the same college we would be able to hang out and do stuff together. But now, it’s always the same story ‘Hey, Kara, wanna go to a party?’ ‘Hey, Kara, wanna get a cup of coffee?’ ‘Hey, Kara, I forgot what your face looks like, let’s hang out!’ And you’re always busy with your theater nerd friends!”

Kara tossed her head back, knowing that Alex was just cranky because she was hungover and stuck with a dead car, but she had still struck a nerve in her little sister. Kara knew that she hadn’t seen Alex as much as either of them wanted, but she couldn’t help that she was struggling so much getting adapted to her work load at school. And yes, the theater stuff was extra, but it made her feel important. It gave her a purpose outside of being Alex’s charge. Kara just liked having a part of her life that didn’t constantly remind her that she wasn’t allowed to live up to her potential as someone with the powers she had.

“Alex,” she said in a placating tone, “do you wanna hang out later?”

“Look, you don’t have to if you don’t want to, okay? It’s fine.”

Kara clenched the fist of her free hand.

“I want to, Alex,” she tried to say convincingly, “Really, I do.”
“Cool!” Alex replied, suddenly perking up, “cuz one of my friends from med school is throwing a party at her apartment tonight, and she makes the best jello shots you will ever have in your life. And I figured if you come with me, you know, since alcohol doesn’t affect you, you can be my DD.”

It was true. When Alex was still an undergrad, she had taken it upon herself to test out whether or not Kara was as immune to the effects of alcohol as her cousin Clark was. Two bottles of some disgustingly sweet strawberry liquor later, and Kara was still stone sober, holding Alex’s hair back as she retched up pink liquid.

“Aren’t you hungover?” Kara asked, bewildered as to how Alex was already ready for more partying.

“Yeah,” Alex replied, “And the best cure for a hangover is more alcohol. So are you in or out?”

Kara rolled her eyes, unsure of how driving Alex’s drunk self around National City counted as them having “quality time”.

“Yeah, alright, I’ll come. Oh, and you know that campus security will open your car for you, right?”

“Oh, shit, really? You think that hot girl Maggie will show up if I call?”

“Worth a shot, right?” Kara replied, chuckling.

After hanging up, Kara put her phone in her back pocket, picking up the paintbrush she had set down. She noticed that Lena was watching her curiously.

“That was my sister, Alex,” Kara said, hoping Lena had only heard Kara’s side of the conversation, if that.

“Does she go to NCU?”

Kara nodded. “Yep. Medical school.”

“I remember seeing someone in passing with the last name Danvers in the bio building, now that I think about it. You two don’t look anything alike.”

Kara swallowed hard, ready to put up the ever familiar wall she had built over the years to ward off anyone who questioned her relation to her Earth family.

“I’m adopted,” Kara said simply, trying to keep her voice as emotionless as possible.

Lena nodded, eyes focusing back on her work.

“So am I,” she said.

Kara froze.

“Oh,” she said, “I didn’t know.”

“Really?” Lena said, turning to look at her. “I thought it was obvious. You know, full head of hair, no overwhelming desire for world domination. I don’t even have a proper nemesis. Well, not yet at least.”

Lena blinked several times, hiding whatever she really wanted to say behind sarcasm and an
artificial smile.

“I don’t…know how to respond to that,” Kara said honestly.

Lena shrugged.

“Most people don’t. At least you’re honest about it.”

Lena’s face straightened into an unreadable blankness for a moment, as she seemingly became lost in some deep thought that she wanted to keep strictly private. It disappeared as quickly as it came, and Lena’s smile returned.

“So, you know all about my adoptive family, I’m sure. What about yours? Tell me about the Danvers.”

Kara fidgeted with her glasses, deciding how much she should divulge to Lex Luthor’s adopted sister. Knowing that Lena was not, in fact, a Luthor by blood made Kara feel guilty for the preconceptions she had been carrying about her up until now. Still, she couldn’t be too cautious.

“Well, after my birth parents…died, I came to live with the Danvers when I was thirteen. It’s just my parents and my sister, Alex. It took Alex and me some time to get used to having each other as a sister, but now I couldn’t imagine my life without her. She’s my best friend. She can be…a lot to handle at times, and we don’t always see eye to eye, especially since I started college, but I still wouldn’t trade her, or my adopted parents, for anything.”

Lena nodded thoughtfully as she listened to Kara.

“I’m sorry about your birth parents,” Lena said.

Kara smiled. In situations like this, she found that humans often replied by saying “it’s okay”. Kara never liked that. It felt like she was expected to dismiss the pain she still felt at the loss of her family and her home in order to avoid an uncomfortable moment in the conversation.

“Thank you,” she said instead.

The pair fell into a silence for a few moments.

“Aren’t you going to ask me anything?” Lena finally asked.

Kara frowned, unsure of what she would even ask. There is nothing she could think that she wanted to know about the family of the man who tried to kill her cousin on too many occasions to count. And Kara had no idea how Lena felt about the fact that she was a part of such a family. The one flippant comments she had made wasn’t necessarily a condemnation of them.

“Is there anything you would feel comfortable telling me?” Kara finally replied.

Lena laughed, suddenly and loudly, letting her paintbrush topple out of her hand, splattering against the blackness of the dusty stage floor.

Kara was startled, unsure of how what she asked was funny.

“I’m sorry,” Lena said, composing herself, “you just caught me off guard. You have to understand, Kara, that ever since I can remember, my personal life has been public property because of my last name. It’s odd to hear someone actually ask what I’m comfortable divulging about myself.”

Kara felt a surge of compassion for Lena, so much so that if she were anyone else, she would have
pulled her into a hug. But she restrained herself.

“I’m sorry,” Kara said.

Lena smiled widely at her.

“Thank you,” she said.

The two girls locked eyes on each other for a silent moment. Hidden inside of it was something so profound that it sucked the air out of Kara’s lungs. Before Kara could search for what it was that was hiding between them, a loud beeping sounded from Lena’s phone, pulling them both back to reality. Kara scooted away from Lena a bit, realizing that they were much closer to each other than they had been a moment ago.

“Shit,” Lena said, silencing the beeping. “I gotta get to the lab.”

Lena stood, brushing the dust off her jeans. “Um, thank you, Kara, for today.”

“Sure,” Kara replied.

After Lena had left, the theater felt dull and quiet. Kara checked her phone, and saw that she had a snapchat notification from Alex. It was a sniped photo of Maggie leaning against Alex’s car, trying to unlock it with some kind of thin tool. It had the caption “enjoying the view ;)”. Kara replied by saying “you’re the worst”, and settled back in for what would likely be a quiet afternoon of set work.

*

That night, Kara was still deciding over what she should wear to a party full of strangers when Alex knocked on her dorm room door.

“How do you keep getting in the building?” Kara asked as she welcomed Alex in.

“Listen, the more opportunity I get to possibly run into hot security officer, the better. You think if I break in here enough times she’ll handcuff me?”

“Why don’t you just ask her out like a normal person, Alex?”

“Umm,” she said plopping down on Kara’s bed, “I did, actually.”

“Really?” Kara asked, holding up two different tops. Alex pointed to the red one she was holding in her right hand.

“Well, sort of? I told her to come to the party tonight. So, if she shows, I’ll know she’s into me.”

Kara winced.

“Inviting a girl you barely know to a party full of people she barely knows is not a good way to get to know someone.”

“Look, little frosh,” Alex said, groaning, “I have been in the dating game longer than you. I know exactly what I’m doing.”
“You have no idea what you’re doing.”

“I…know more than you think. Shut up. Also,” Alex said, standing up and tugging at Kara’s ponytail, “Hair down.”

“No,” Kara whined.

“You are going to a grown up party! Which means you are going to wear your hair down, you are going to put on heels, you are going to look hot, and you are going to meet people. Got it?”

“Why are you doing this to me?” Kara asked.

“Kara, have you even had sex since you started college?”

“Um, first of all, ew. Second of all, what happened to ‘I will beat anyone up who comes anywhere near you without your consent.’”

“Yeah. I know what I said. But I expected you to take my words of caution toss them aside, like you always do. Plus, what I technically meant was that you can get as freaky as you want, as long as both parties involved are cool with it. Or, however many people you want to get involved, whichever works.”

“Alex!” Kara squealed, cheeks burning at her big sister suggesting she have an orgy.

Alex laughed, clearly amused that she was making her baby sister uncomfortable.

“Come on, Kara. Half the point of going to college is making a bunch of immature decisions so you can look back on them when you’re a boring adult and be proud of the fact that you aren’t that impulsive anymore. And you are just…playing it too safe, dude.”

“I am not playing it safe, Alex.”

“Have you had sex with anyone this semester?”

Kara crossed her arms at her sister, remaining silent.

“I thought not.” Alex continued. “Have you at least been on a date? Hell, Kara, have you even been anywhere this semester besides your dorm, your classes, and the theater?”

Kara put her hands on her hips defiantly.

“I…psh…well. The cafeteria for one. And…the library…”

Alex gave her a smug look.

“All right,” Kara sighed, “so I’m a little…shy. So what? I’m getting good grades, I’m making some friends, and I’m learning a lot. What more do you want from me?”

“Do you know how much of a crime it is to have a single dorm room and not use it to hook up?”

Kara groaned loudly.

“You know what, Alex? I miss it when talking to me about our sex lives made you uncomfortable. Can we go back to that? I’m getting whiplash from your attitude about my sex life.”

“Get used to it, kid,” Alex said, “Now switch those jeans out for a skirt, and let’s go.”
Kara was just as uncomfortable as she thought she would be at Alex’s friend’s party. Maybe even more so. As expected, she didn’t know anyone there. Kara had no idea if all of the people here were from NCU or not, it was just such a big school. Also as expected, Alex was off doing shots and dancing around the living room, which had been converted into a makeshift dance floor. What she didn’t expect was that Alex’s plan had worked, and Maggie had actually showed up to the party, head ducking through the doorway cautiously, scoping things out with wide, uncertain eyes, only to be scooped up by a handsy Alex and dragged away towards the liquor. And the second that Maggie arrived, Alex all but forgot that Kara was even there.

Which left Kara standing near the doorway, nursing her drink: an entirely too strong mixture of vodka and cherry soda. The fact that she couldn’t get drunk made the horrible flavor combinations and burning taste of alcohol even more unbearable to her.

She felt uncomfortable in her own skin, especially in the outfit Alex had put her in. She just wanted to be in her dorm room, in her pj’s, watching Netflix…Instead, she started scrolling aimlessly through the various social media apps on her phone.

When she opened facebook, she saw that she had a friend request from Lena Luthor. After a moment’s consideration, she accepted. Shortly after, she noticed that ‘LenaLezLuthor’ had added her on snapchat. Kara was more hesitant about that. She supposed she couldn’t be too surprised that Lena had found her on Snapchat, considering that her username was literally ‘KaraDanvers’. But Kara didn’t know if having someone like Lena on her snapchat was the best decision.

Eh, the hell with it, she thought, and added Lena to her Snapchat.

Almost instantly, Lena snapped her.

Okay, maybe this was a mistake, Kara thought, gulping, hoping to Rao Lena didn’t send her an inappropriate picture of herself as she opened the snap.

Lena had sent her a picture of herself, resting her head against a lab table, in a white coat, fake sleeping, with the caption “Weekends in the lab are the beeeeeeest”.

Kara chuckled, relieved that Lena was fully clothed. She snapped a picture of herself frowning, with the caption “pretty bored, myself”.

A moment later, she had a facebook message from Lena.

“What are you up to in that outfit?” she asked.

Well, Lena really must have been bored to be so adamant to talk to Kara.

“Got dragged by my sister to a party. Don’t know anyone here.”

Lena typed back.

“You do realize you’re a hot, approachable looking freshman girl, right? Meaning that you are
almost definitely going to get hit on by gross drunk guys,” Lena replied.

Kara rolled her eyes, but still self-consciously looked around her to make sure no guys were eyeing her up.

“Alex thinks I should meet people to ‘hook up’ with,” Kara typed.

“Encouraging her little sibling to have reckless, casual sex, huh? Sounds like a fun gal.”

Kara looked up and found her sister laying on the kitchen island, shirt raised to expose her stomach. Kara used her powers to try to hear what she was saying over the chaotic noise of the party.

“How have you never done a body shot before, Sawyer? It’s fun! Who’s got a salt shaker?”

Kara rolled her eyes, and typed a reply.

“Yes, she’s…she’s something.”

She heard someone in front of her clear their throat, and she looked up from her phone screen.

“Hi!” Mike, who had appeared out of nowhere, said enthusiastically. “It’s Kristen, right?”

“Um, Kara,” she said, correcting him.

“Right, cool, my bad.”

Mike’s voice was different than the first time she had ran into him in a way that Kara assumed meant that he was at least partially intoxicated. He took a sip from his cup.

“Sweet party, huh? Not quite as raging as the DXAM parties, but, the whole house is on probation for a couple weeks after a, um, hazing incident. Anyway, a little hottie I met in the caff told me about this party so I thought I’d drop by.”

Kara didn’t recall asking Mike for any of the information he was currently divulging to her.

“What brings a cute freshman like yourself here?” he asked, winking.

Kara pressed herself closer against the wall, thinking that maybe if she stayed still long enough she would blend into it, and Mike would go away. How did he know she was a freshman, anyway? Was it written on her forehead or something?

“Um” she replied, “I came with my sister.”

“Ooh, sister huh?” he asked, arching his eyebrows suggestively. “Nice. Hey, you’re stage crew, too, right?” He nodded to his own question, as if answering it for her. “Should be a good time. I do it for the course credits, but it has its perks. I usually meet some cool people, and the cast parties are usually good for some action, ya know?”

He winked again.

Did he have an off button somewhere for Kara to…punch?

“But you don’t wanna hear about the other ladies in my life, right? Tell me, Kara, do you live on campus?”

Alright, that was enough of that.
“Look, Mike, I’m not really interested in talking to you right now. I’m gonna go find my sister.”

His demeanor changed like the flip of a switch, and suddenly he was very cross with Kara.

“You know, it’s really rude to turn a guy down without even getting to know him first,” he snapped.

Kara wasn’t nervous by his sudden aggressive tone any means. She knew that if she had to, she could break Mike in half. But she was still frustrated that he had cornered her into this presumptive conversation in the first place.

“I’ll take that under consideration next time,” she said, and shoved him roughly out of her way when he brusquely attempted to block her path.

She stormed her way through the crowd of people to find Alex. When she did, Alex was playing some kind of drinking game with her friends and Maggie at the kitchen table. Whatever the game was, the people at the table were chanting “Waterfall! Waterfall” as Alex attempted to chug a very full cup of Rao knows what.

“Alex? Alex!” Kara tried to call over the chants, but she didn’t seem to hear her.

Maggie, however, did notice that Kara seemed distressed, and got out of her seat to talk to her.

“Everything okay, Kara?” she asked into her ear so she could be heard over the din of the crowd.

“Oh, uh, yeah,” Kara said, voice shaking slightly from the adrenaline her confrontation with Mike had sent coursing through her system. “I just…was wondering how long Alex planned on sticking around, I guess. It’s not important.”

Maggie arched an eyebrow, turning to look at Alex as she poured straight vodka into her cup.

“Hopefully not too long, at the rate she’s going. She, uh, likes to let loose, doesn’t she?”

Kara rolled her eyes.

“That’s one way to put it.”

Overwhelmed and realizing she was likely stuck at this party for as long as Alex wanted to stay, Kara felt tears welling in her eyes and she had no way to control it.

Maggie gave Kara a sympathetic look, grasping her shoulder reassuringly.

“You know, this really isn’t a good place for a freshman girl to be hanging out. Why don’t you just head back to campus? I’ll keep an eye on Alex.”

“Oh, uh, no, that’s okay, Maggie. I drove her here.”

“Don’t worry about that, Kara,” Maggie insisted. “I can drive her home. I can’t drink at these kinds of things, anyway, I could get fired.”

“Then why are you here?” Kara asked. “Was it just because Alex asked you to come?”

Maggie seemed caught off guard by her question.

“I don’t know,” she said, shaking her head as if she was angry with herself. “Just, don’t worry about Alex. I’ll make sure she gets home safe, okay?”
Kara bit the inside of her cheek, considering Maggie’s offer. There was a lull in the boisterous conversation around her, and Kara called to Alex again. Alex looked up at her, eyes drooping from the alcohol that was turning her good judgement to useless mush.

“Yes, baby sister?” she asked, giggleing.

“Is it okay if Maggie takes you home? I, um, forgot there’s a big paper I have to write for Monday.”

Alex smiled smugly.

“Maggie can do whatever she wants with me,” she said, wiggling her eyebrows at Maggie.

Kara turned to Maggie.

“I’ll take that as a yes. Um, here, put your number in my phone. I’ll text you her address, okay? And, thanks, Maggie. Really.”

“No problem, kid,” she said, punching her number into Kara’s phone. “Just, maybe don’t rely on your sister to keep you safe at upperclassmen parties from now on, okay?”

Kara smiled halfheartedly, wondering in Mike was lurking anywhere nearby, and imagining all of the bones of his she could break in a single movement if he tried anything with her again.

“Trust me, I can take care of myself.”

She waved goodbye to Maggie and Alex (who didn’t notice her leaving) before darting out of the apartment, heart racing, praying no one else got a chance to make her uncomfortable.

Back in Alex’s car, hands trembling, she checked her phone again before leaving to drive back to campus.

Lena had messaged her again.

“Try not to have too much fun without me, frosh.”

Kara let out a harsh laugh that filled the silent car, blinking away the wetness in her eyes. She messaged Lena back to give her something to do until she felt calm enough to drive.

“Trust me, I didn’t. There was a slight chance you were right about guys at parties,”

Lena replied quickly.

“I usually am, that’s why I wrote them off entirely a long time ago. Are you okay?”

The fact that a Luthor was currently more worried about Kara’s well-being than her own sister was enough to make her eyes well up again.

“Yeah, I think I’m just gonna head home.”

Kara didn’t check her phone again until she, and Alex’s car, were back on campus.

“Need some company?” Lena had messaged her.

On another day, Kara might have considered accepting Lena’s offer. She did, after all, want to be able to see Lena as a friend. But, tonight, she had used up all the energy for socializing that she
had. Which was admittedly pathetic, considering that she had barely talked to anyone at all.

Back in her dorm room, Kara let herself miss home for the first time in a long time. It was difficult enough for a regular eighteen year old girl to leave her home and family to go to college. And then there was Kara Zor El, who had lost everything and everyone she knew and loved when she was too young to even understand a loss of that magnitude. And then, as that pain became more and more unbearable as the years went by, she was at least able to take solace in the fact that she was loved and cared for by her found Earth family. But then, in the blink of an eye, she was expected to leave them, too. It didn’t seem like a bad idea at the time. Kara thought she would be so wrapped up in the adventures of being a full time student that she wouldn’t think to miss the Danvers. And, if she ever did miss being with the Danvers, she would have Alex there to keep her company.

Nothing was really working out how she expected.

Kara tossed and turned that night, trying to keep memories of Krypton and her family from drowning her in her sleep.

Chapter End Notes

I hurt Kara and I am so sorry :((( Blame it on Mike (Mon El) and his entire gross existence
PS I got a vibe from Winn that he's secretly tryna wing man for Lena, am I right? I let this chapter run longer than I expected, but I was ahead of myself this week anyway, so I thought I would post this much today, since I got some pretty awesome responses from you guys. I'm glad it wasn't a totally terrible idea to do a theater AU! Thanks for all your fantastic feedback!! Let's talk about this Danvers sisters/Sanvers action though. I'm super into exploring who Alex could have been before she settled into her more adult self, back when she was more reckless and probably more selfish than she is now. And having Maggie meet her then inherently changes their dynamic A LOT, so you'll be seeing more of that and a lot more variation than their canon dynamic, and I want to know how you guys feel about what I'm doing with that as this story moves along. Updates are every Thursday. Next up, Lena will once again find new ways to surprise Kara...
See you soon :)
Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

IM SO SORRY THIS IS...LIKE...3 DAYS LATE!! My computer got a virus and the repair guys kept it for FOREVER. Anyway, here's some more of Lena testing her boundaries with Kara, some strain between the Danvers' sisters, and some superfriends because they are everything...

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Alright, Kiera. What’s going on with you?”

Kara’s head snapped up from a booklet of available courses for the next semester she had been struggling to focus on.

“What do you mean, Ms. Grant?” she asked, sinking further into her chair under her advisor’s penetrating gaze.

“I mean that for the majority of this semester you have been in my office every other day asking me questions about your classes, your professors, upcoming courses, and really anything you thought might fall under my area of expertise. And now, I have to practically drag you in here to get your next semester courses locked in before the deadline. And while I am making an effort to care about your future here at NCU you’re just…silent and indecisive. I expect such behavior from community college transfers and spoiled millennials, but not from you. So. Tell me what’s going on that has put you in this slump.”

Kara frowned, adjusting her glasses absent mindedly.

“I just…I don’t know what I’m doing here,” she admitted, voice barely more than a whisper.

“Is this because you haven’t declared a major, yet?” Ms. Grant asked.

Kara took a long breath, trying to organize her thoughts into something that Ms. Grant might understand.

“Kind of, I guess? I don’t know. It seems like everyone else knows where they fit here, and they have a general idea of what they want to accomplish. And I don’t have any of that. I mean, when I was a kid, I had a clear idea of who I was, and what I was supposed to do. And then that sort of got…derailed. And, now, I just feel…pointless.”

Cat clicked her tongue disapprovingly.

“Should I even dignify that with a response?” Ms. Grant asked.

“What?” Kara replied, confused.

“Oh, come on, Kiera. I expect better from you than melodrama. None of these kids know what they’re doing or what they want. And if they do now, trust me, most of them will change their
minds drastically in a few years. Besides, you probably already have an idea of what you want, even if you don’t realize it. Not only do you have the highest score in your mathematics entry exam that I’ve ever seen, but I also heard from James Olsen that you are an asset to the theater department. That is, until you stopped showing up.”

Kara shrugged in response.

“Shrug all you want, missy. But I am just going to go ahead and add a theater intro course into your schedule, and if you hate it, you can drop it. Other than that, you need a science lab, a math course, though I doubt there’s a course they can come up with that you couldn’t just teach yourself…Also, since you seem to like history so much, I’ll just stick Ancient Civilizations in there, that’s a popular one. That will leave you with one block for you to fill to your little heart’s content. Just make sure you fill it before Friday. And after you get settled in next semester, we’ll talk again about declaring a major. Deal?”

Biting the inside of her cheek, Kara nodded meekly.

“Good. Now one other thing, how do you feel about desk work?”

“Um, why?” Kara asked, perplexed.

“Well, my office assistant graduates at the end of the semester and I need someone to fill her place. Normally I would only offer the position to upperclassmen, but you are already here more often than my current assistant, anyway, so you may as well get paid for it.”

“Oh, well, that’s really nice of you, but…”

“I expect you to put in at least eight hours a week. It’s mostly filing paperwork and keeping hot coffee available to me at all times. Understand?”

Kara wasn’t sure Ms. Grant was asking to take the position or demanding it…

“Uh, sure. That sounds great, Ms. Grant.”

Ms. Grant nodded, satisfied, and shooed Kara out of her office with a silent wave of her hand.

Alright, so maybe Kara was feeling a little down after her first college party experience failed pretty miserably. Maybe she was feeling a little homesick, and sorry for herself, and maybe, just maybe, she was avoiding her sister and her friends. Which was quite possibly making her mental wellbeing even worse. When Winn or her sister, or even James, had started checking in through text messages and increasingly worried phone calls, she had blamed her absence on school work. But that wasn’t true, and they all probably suspected that. Kara had skipped three classes in the last week, and when she had to hand in any assignments, she used her super speed to race through it and handed in whatever she came up with, whether it was good or not.

Kara just couldn’t make herself care about anything. She missed home. The one that didn’t exist anymore. And once she opened that door in her heart again, she couldn’t make herself stop feeling everything she had been pushing down since she was thirteen.

So, despite her pep talk from Ms. Grant, she couldn’t keep from going straight back to her dorm after their meeting to continue to ignore everything and everyone so she could just sleep some more. She was so tired all the time now. And she couldn’t help but think that dreaming of Krypton was better than being awake.
At least, that was what she planned on doing for the rest of her afternoon. Until her phone went off, waking her with a jolt. Kara cursed at herself for not putting it on silent as she checked to see who was calling. She didn’t recognize the number, but she answered anyway, prepared to scold whoever it was for waking her up.

“What?” she snapped.

“Yikes!” a familiar sounding voice responded. “Don’t bite my head off, frosh.”

“Lena?” Kara asked.

“The one and only.”

Kara rubbed the sleep out of her eyes, confused.

“How did you get my phone number?”

“Winn gave it to me. I told him I would make sure you weren’t dead or something. He bonds to people like a puppy, Kara, if you start ignoring him he gets all pouty and depressed.”

Kara sighed, irritated that she couldn’t just be left alone for a while.

“Well, I’m not dead. So…thanks for calling.”

“Hold on,” Lena interrupted before Kara hung up the phone. “What are you doing right now?”

“Um, homework,” Kara replied shortly.

“On a Friday? That sounds like a lie.” Kara could hear other voices in the background on Lena’s end of the call. “You live in Brown Hall, right? Don’t move.”

“No, Lena, I…”

Shuffling and more muffled voices through the phone.

“Too late! I’m already in the building. Now, you can either tell me what dorm you’re in or I will just start knocking on every door until I find you.”

“I could just not answer the door, you know,” Kara snapped.

“Nonsense. You’re too polite.”

Kara groaned.

“Fine. I’m in 215.”

“Thank you, Kara,” Lena said sweetly.

A moment later, there was a knock at the door. Luckily, Kara had been too lazy to change out of the button up shirt and slacks she had worn to her appointment with Ms. Grant, or she would have likely been caught in the same pair of sweatpants she had been wearing for the past week by Lena and her apparent companions. There were two girls with Lena that Kara had never seen before, who were now inviting themselves into her dorm room. One of them was tall, with intense brown eyes, a sharp jawline, and a snake tattoo poking out on her right leg under the hem of her tight red dress. The other girl was shorter, with dark brown hair and a smirk that seemed glued onto her face. They both looked and dressed like they had been pulled out of an episode of Gossip Girl. Between
the expensive looking outfits, designer shoes and handbags, all perfectly coordinated, it was clear that these girls came from money. Not unlike Lena, who stood behind them smugly.

“Ugh,” groaned the shorter one, “You are so lucky to have a single dorm. My suitemates make me want to scream.”

“I don’t know, these single rooms are so…depressing,” said the taller girl. “I think you were right about this one being in a freshman slump, Lena. This place reeks of isolation. Let’s get some light in here for goodness’ sake.” She threw curtains of Kara’s window open, causing Kara to blink several times as her eyes adjusted to the light.

“Um,” Kara said, tugging at her sleep-wrinkled clothes self-consciously. “Lena, are these friends of yours?”

“Oh, I wouldn’t go that far,” Lena said, words rolling confidently off of blood-red lips.

“Now, don’t be catty, dear.” the taller one retorted, flipping through the pages of a physics book she had picked up off Kara’s floor.

Lena moved to stand next to Kara as her two companions silently judged the dirty, cluttered dorm room. Kara felt like leaping through the window and flying away.

“Kara Danvers,” Lena said, “I’d like you to meet Siobhan Smythe,” she gestured to the shorter girl, “and Veronica Sinclair,” she pointed to the tall one. “We were actually due for a girl’s day out, and I thought you might want to join us.”

“Oh, ah, I don’t know, Lena…”

“Please don’t say no,” Lena replied, her smile soft and inviting. “These vultures need someone new to pick at, and you need to get out of this funk you’re in.”

“I’m not in a funk,” Kara mumbled stubbornly.

Lena arched an eyebrow at her, unwavering. Kara sighed.

“Fine,” she said, looking comparatively between her clothes and those of the company she was in, “Is this outfit okay?”

Lena, who was in a comfortable looking yet elegant green dress, smiled again.

“You look perfectly fine.”

“Yeah,” Siobhan cut in, judging eyes looking over Kara, “And, you know, if we find something better while we’re out shopping, so be it.”

She probably meant for that to sound less condescending than it did. Right?

Kara looked at herself in the mirror while the girls let themselves out of her dorm and waited in the hallway. A couple of lipstick touch ups and swipes of her eyeliner pen later, and Kara shrugged. That would have to do.

It would have been nice if Lena had given her some warning.

Of course, if Lena had given her warning that she was going to be scooped up by three heiresses for a ’girl’s day’, she wouldn’t have opened her door.
Kara followed behind the trio as they walked outside Brown Hall, where a shiny new black Mercedes coupe was parked. Veronica got behind the wheel, Siobhan sat in the front seat, and Kara sat next to Lena in the back. Kara sat as still as possible, hands in her lap, afraid to touch the spotless leather interior. Lena seemed amused by Kara’s discomfort.

“So,” Veronica said, starting up the car. “Where’s the best place to go to cure the freshman blues?”

“What did you do when you got all depressed without the amenities of the Sinclair Mansion at your disposal?” Siobhan mocked.

“Drank tequila,” Veronica replied. “A lot of it.”

She looked into the rear view mirror to look at Kara.

“Oh,” Kara said, realizing that Veronica was waiting for a response. “I don’t drink.”

“You a religious type or something?” Siobhan asked, inspecting her own manicure absently.

“Uh, no. I just…um, have this…metabolic condition that keeps alcohol from effecting me like it does most people.”

From the corner of her vision, Kara could see Lena narrowing her eyes at Kara, before she turned to her attention back to the front seat.

“I need caffeine,” Lena said.

“You need the phone number of that blonde barista from Noonan’s, more like it,” Siobhan remarked, smirking.

Lena shrugged innocently, eyes flicking back on Kara for a second.

“I have no idea what you’re talking about,” she said. Kara’s hearing picked up on Lena’s heartbeat picking up for a few paces.

Settled on their first destination, Veronica sent the car rocketing out of the parking lot so fast that Kara’s heart jumped into her throat.

Veronica and Siobhan argued the entire drive. First, about routes and shortcuts, then choice of radio stations, and just about anything else they could think of. Kara sat silently, blinking, senses overloaded by the chatter, the loud music, and Veronica’s reckless driving.

“I know they’re a bit much…” Lena said, leaning in towards her so she wouldn’t be overheard, placing one of her hands on Kara’s. “But they can be fun once you get used to them. And, really, they’re pretty much the only people on campus willing to associate with a Luthor.”

Kara didn’t miss the sting of Lena’s last statement. She also didn’t miss how Lena’s hand gripped her own, like a silent plea not to try to comfort her because of it. She let Lena continue to hold onto her hand until she chose to release it.

“So, you really wanted to bring me along today to make me feel better?” Kara said, suddenly desperate to end the silence between them.

Lena pursed her lips, as if annoyed that she was even asking.

“Look, Kara. You are incredibly too shy for your own good. I know what it’s like to feel isolated, trust me. So, I am going to try to help you come out of your shell a little bit and have some fun.
Minus the frat boys, of course.”

Kara wondered if Lena really just wanted to be nice to Kara, or if she had some angle behind it. She couldn’t help but continue to question Lena’s motives, despite the softness she continued to show towards her. It was like an instinct.

During the drive, Kara swore she heard a shrill metallic noise pierce through the music and chatter. No one else seemed to notice it, so Kara didn’t dwell on it.

That afternoon, Kara thought she finally understood that movie *Mean Girls* that Alex had made her watch so many times. Everything that the three girls said to each other was coded. A compliment to each other or to a stranger was often tainted with the mockery that hid beneath it. For example, when Veronica referred to something or someone as “cute”, what she really meant was “childish” or “immature”. If Siobhan replied to an anecdote or conversation topic by saying “that’s nice”, she meant that she could give a crap about whatever it was you were talking about. And, as she came to realize, when Lena made a specific kind of short, breathy laugh in response to someone, it was her way of letting them know that they had pissed her off.

Kara treaded carefully with the girls that day, only joining in to conversation she thought safe enough to weigh in on, and divulging as little about herself as possible. For the most part, they gossiped about the personal dramas of classmates Kara didn’t know. When they weren’t doing that, they were complaining about their professors and the work load they assigned. Since Kara was still in all entry courses, the three girls had personal experience with all of her professors, and gave her tips on what professors to avoid in the upcoming semesters.

“So, Kara,” Veronica said as she casually browsed through a clothing rack of a designer store uptown they had meandered into. Kara would never have dreamed of entering a store this expensive on her own. “What do you think of Dr. Carr? What a drag, right?”

“Oh, you’ve worked with Dr. Carr?” Kara asked.

Veronica laughed sarcastically.

“Only as much as I have to. I keep telling him that he would have decent talent in his department if he put on shows that are actually watchable. But he’s too busy being miserable and sitting on his tenure to actually care what anyone rational has to say about his ‘edgy’ program."

“So, do you think you’ll audition to be in the musical? I heard that he’s decided on *Sweeney Todd*. That’s a pretty popular show, right?”

Veronica shrugged, her facial expression revealing nothing.

“Did he? Well, that changes things.”

Lena had moved silently closer to Kara and Veronica. Kara noticed that Lena’s jaw was slightly clenched.

“Did you hear that, Lena? Carr chose a half decent musical for once in his life. Looks like you have competition again, hmm?”

Lena gave her short, breathy laugh.

“I look forward to it. I just hope you find time in your busy schedule to dedicate yourself to your
craft, right Veronica? I’ve heard Communications is one of the hardest majors there is.”

Veronica smiled through tight lips, looking more like a hyena than a girl.

“Kara, dear,” Siobhan cut in, suddenly reappearing from a dressing room. “You have a small waist, I think you could pull this dress off. What do you think?”

Kara tilted her head at the, admittedly cute, black and white striped dress Siobhan was holding out for her to look at. But she knew she couldn’t afford anything in a store like this, not with the student credit card the Danvers’ had helped her set up for “necessary purchases and emergencies”, at least.

“Oh, um, I really wasn’t planning on buying anything,” Kara said, cheeks hot with the embarrassment of being the odd person out in a group of girls who had never had to think twice about money or the lack thereof.

“Just humor me,” Siobhan insisted, already dragging her towards a dressing room.

“Trust me,” she continued, as she stuffed Kara into the dressing room, “You’d rather be in here than out there with those two right now. They’re um…a little competitive with each other.”

Siobhan tossed the dress at her, and closed the curtain. Kara bit her lip, considering the dress.

Eh, what the hell, she thought.

A few minutes later she was staring at herself in the dressing room mirror, wondering how hard it would be for her to use her superspeed to sneak this dress out of the store.

“Well?” Siobhan insisted from outside the curtain. “Get your skinny ass out here, I wanna see how it looks.”

Tentatively, Kara stepped out of the dressing room. She couldn’t help but let her eyes wander around the store until they found Lena across the room, who was staring at Kara, lips parted.

“Ugh, I hate you” Siobhan groaned, and tossed five more outfits at her, “Back in you go, you fucking model.”

Kara didn’t really understand the point of this exercise with Siobhan. But she was kind of too intimidated to say no.

A second later, while Kara was halfway through unzipping the back of the dress, the curtain opened again, and when Kara expected it to be Siobhan pestering her about something else, she jumped to see that it was Lena inviting herself in.

“Lena!” Kara exclaimed, “I’m changing!”

“Don’t be so uptight, Kara,” Lena said, a devilish smile flashing across her face. “Just let me help you.”

Kara watched Lena through the mirror in front of her as she stood behind Kara and slowly unzipped the dress she was wearing. Lena’s fingers tracing lightly down Kara’s back. The back of the dress now completely open, the straps of the dress hung loosely on Kara’s shoulders. Lena traced her hand back up Kara’s exposed back, leisurely, until she had reached the back of Kara’s neck, where Kara could feel goosebumps forming. Lena then slid the straps off of Kara’s shoulders, sending the dress fluttering to the floor.
For a moment Kara couldn’t breathe.

Using the mirror to her advantage, Lena unabashedly started at Kara’s body, which was covered only by her bra and underwear, mouth parted like it had been when Kara first stepped out of the dressing room, but eyes darker than they had been before. Kara swallowed hard.

“Lena,” she said. She had intended for her voice to sound stern and demanding, but instead came out as a helpless squeak.

“I can’t decide if you look better in the dress, or out of it,” Lena commented, eyes trailing from Kara’s breasts to her stomach, then her hips…

“Lena,” Kara said again, this time managing a tad more authority than before.

Lena’s eyes darted up to meet Kara’s, her cheeks slightly flushed.

“Am I making you uncomfortable?” she asked in earnest.

“Yes.”

“In a good way or a bad way?”

Kara blinked. She didn’t really know the answer to that question. She couldn’t deny the fact the way Lena stared at her made her thoughts swirl into nonsense and sent a rush of heat into the pit her stomach. But she didn’t know if she wanted Lena to know that…

Lena quirked an eyebrow upwards, awaiting Kara’s response.

“What are you two doing in there?” Siobhan called agitatedly from outside the dressing room.

Kara was ripped back to reality, the suffocating stillness of the moment before now gone. Lena sighed quietly, and pulled a royal blue dress, that had designs cut out of the midsection, off its hanger, handing it to Kara.

“Try that one,” she said, expression blank, and let herself out of Kara’s dressing room.

Kara shivered, a chill on her back without the heat of Lena’s body close to hers. Shaking the feeling off, she tried the dress on, and stepped out of the dressing room.

“Ugh, there’s nothing you don’t look good in. You’re the worst,” Siobhan spat. “I’m depressed, now. Let’s go.”

Minutes later, Kara was back in Veronica’s car, fidgeting with her outfit that felt ugly and cheap compared to what she had tried on. Lena, after lingering in the store for a while after the rest of the group had left, finally joined them in the car, sinking back into the seat next to Kara, silent. Kara fought to keep from looking over at Lena every few moments.

“So, where to next?” Veronica asked. “There’s a bar that just opened on Third. Can’t take the baby, though.”

Kara assumed that that meant her. She also assumed from her tone that Veronica wanted to shake Kara from the group for the rest of the night.

“Oh, um, don’t worry about me,” Kara said, “I actually have things to do tonight, anyway.”

Lena looked over at her quizzically.
“Winn said something about wanting to have a movie night tonight,” Kara continued. “And I feel kind of bad for blowing him off the past few days.”

Lena’s face softened, apparently accepting her answer.

Veronica shrugged, and sped off towards campus.

Outside of Luthor Hall, Lena grasped Kara’s wrist before she could exit the car.

“I hope you know you’re leaving me alone in the lion’s den with these two,” she whispered into Kara’s ear.

The feeling of Lena’s breath on her neck made Kara’s chest shudder despite herself.

“Then why don’t you just come hang out with me and Winn?” Kara whispered back.

Lena clucked her tongue.

“Tempting, but if I keep an eye on them, they can’t talk as much shit on me as I’m sure they want to.”

Kara rolled her eyes.

“I don’t understand any of you,” she said honestly.

“You should feel thankful for that, Kara Danvers,” Lena replied. “Say hi to Winn for me.”

After the car had left, Kara let herself into the theater, where Winn had set up a projector and screen for a Harry Potter marathon.

“She’s alive!” Winn yelled dramatically, mouth full of popcorn, when he saw Kara enter the theater.

The only other people in the theater with him for movie night was James and Lucy.

“Hey!” Kara replied, the guilt of her recent absence creeping in as Winn ran to hug her.

“Thank God,” James said, “Kara, can you please tell Winn that he is too old for Harry Potter movie marathons?”

“Um, excuse you,” Kara said, offended. “Harry Potter is for all ages. How dare you.”

“That’s what I said!” Winn exclaimed, and dragged Kara to sit with them in the audience seats.

While Winn and James continued to argue over what was considered a kid’s movie and what wasn’t, Lucy, who had been sitting in the row in front of Kara, crawled over the seats to plop down next to Kara.

“Hey,” Lucy said, “So, we were never properly introduced. I’m Lucy.”

“Kara,” Kara replied, shaking Lucy’s hand.

“Cool. I just wanted to, um, check in with you, ya know, after the awkward way that we met.”

“Oh, don’t worry about it.”

“No, no,” Lucy cut in. “It was childish. And I wanted to make sure that I wasn’t the reason that
“Of course not. Not at all. I just,” Kara tried to think of what she wanted to divulge about her mental health week, “I needed some time to myself.”

Lucy nodded, understanding.

“Okay. Good. Because they really seem to need you around here.”

“Yeah,” Kara said, “I’m starting to realize that.”

Lucy looked at her thoughtfully for a moment, then nodded, settling into her seat as if she intended to stay sitting next to Kara for the evening.

“So, um,” Kara said, trying to think of something for them to talk about. “How’s law school going?”

Lucy attempted to make a half smile, but it wasn’t very convincing.

“It’s good. I hope. I’m taking a little bit of a break from it while I’m here. But I’ll have to go back sooner rather than later.”

Kara frowned, looking between Lucy and James, who was in the row in front of them, laughing at something that Winn had said.

“You’re not staying?” Kara asked.

Lucy let out a sigh that seemed to carry the weight of worlds within it.

“I can’t,” Lucy said simply. “My career is all I can afford to prioritize right now.”

Kara nodded, somehow understanding. Maybe it was because her crush on James had at some point faded without her knowing, maybe it was because she couldn’t help but like Lucy, but for whatever reason, she couldn’t feel anything but sad sympathy for them at the thought that Lucy would soon have to leave James again.

After a while, the group settled into casual conversation while the film played. Most of it was about how much needed done in regards to the show, with tech week just two weeks away, and the show in three weeks. Apparently this movie night had been the last opportunity for James and Winn to relax before things got crazy. The set was almost entirely finished, so James could now settle into helping Winn run lights and sound. But they wouldn’t talk about that tonight. Despite the irony in fact that the stage hid menacingly behind the projector screen, they would not talk about the show tonight.

“Oh, by the way, Winn, Lena says hi,” Kara said, refusing a sip from the wine bottle the group had been passing around casually.

She was sure there was a rule in the student handbook about students and professors drinking on campus, especially together, but she didn’t mention it.

“Oh did she? What, did you run into her or something?”

“Uh, kind of? We were actually hanging out before I came here.”

Winn narrowed his eyes at Kara.
“What, like, just the two of you?”

Kara suddenly regretted mentioning it to Winn at all. Lucy and James were now watching her curiously as well.

“No. We went shopping with her and a couple of her friends, Veronica and Siobhan? I forget their last names. They both start with an S.”

The group collectively groaned.

“God, those two are the worst,” Lucy said, “I knew them when they were freshman, and even then, they were the most entitled brats I had ever met.”

“Now, now, Siobhan isn’t all that bad once you get to know her,” Winn cut in. “Veronica, however, she’s…pretty terrible.”

“She’s got some pretty kick ass ink, though,” James said.

“Oh, have you given them a good look?” Lucy said, mocking jealousy as she playfully smacked him on the shoulder.

“It’s not kickass when you try to put her in period clothing in a show where the characters definitely shouldn’t be tattooed,” Winn complained.

“Did she tell you if she was gonna audition for the spring musical?” James asked.

“Umm…she kind of hinted at it?”

The group groaned again.

“Lord help you,” Lucy said, taking a swig from the wine bottle.

“Still, though, hold up,” Winn said, “You hung out with Lena Luthor? I thought she ‘irritated’ you.”

Winn didn’t miss the chance to mock the way she had gotten flustered the day that he had asked Kara about Lena.

Kara couldn’t help but let her mind wander back to the dressing room of that boutique, and the way Lena looked at her like she wanted to devour her…

“Maybe I was wrong about her,” Kara said. “I mean, yeah, she can be a pain. But…” she shrugged, “she’s not so bad.”

Winn narrowed his eyes at her again, but said nothing.

Later than night, when she was back in her dorm, she stopped to realize just how miserable she had been not even twelve hours earlier, and how much better she already felt after Lena had forced her out of her isolation. And she knew that she had felt something in that dressing room. Excitement, maybe? Attraction? What did that say about her? Was her body simply reacting to being caught off guard in an unnerving situation, or was this something new about herself that she needed to explore further?

Kara rolled over in her bed. She would worry about it later.
The next day Kara had called Alex to check in. She thought, that after not talking to Alex since that party, that a phone call was due. “Oh, I’m allowed to talk to you, now?” she had said, agitatedly, but despite her anger at Kara, Alex came over to her dorm an hour later, anyway.

“So, you had your first college induced mental breakdown, huh?” Alex said, as she rummaged through Kara’s cabinets for snacks.

“It wasn’t a mental breakdown, Alex,” Kara snapped.

She thought that Alex would act at least a little apologetic for what had happened, but so far that wasn’t happening.

“Are you sure?” Alex pressed.

“Yes, I’m sure. I was in a situation I didn’t want to be in, that you put me in, thanks very much. And that made me feel isolated. And when I feel isolated I start to think of Krypton. And once I started thinking about it I couldn’t stop. So I was upset for a while, okay? You could try and be a little more compassionate, you know.”

“I am being compassionate!” Alex insisted. “I feel bad about what happened. I do. It’s not a bad thing to admit that your head got a little messed up. I just wish you would have talked to me about it instead of running off, in my car, and then dodging me for, like, two weeks!”

“Can you not make this about you for five seconds?” Kara shot back.

Alex crossed her arms, pursing her lips in a way that told Kara that she had ticked her off.

“Really, Kara?”

Kara sighed.

“Can we just move past it now? I just. I don’t like parties, okay? It’s not my thing. What I wanna do and what you wanna do aren’t always going to line up perfectly, Alex, alright? And that’s okay. Okay?”

Alex’s face softened, and she ripped into a stolen bag of Gushers.

“Alright,” she conceded, and took her usual seat on Kara’s bean bag chair.

As Alex stole Kara’s laptop to lurk on her social media, without Kara’s permission, Kara’s phone rang.

“You’ve been facebook messaging Lena Luthor?” Alex asked over the ring of the phone as Kara searched through her bed for it. “Why?”

“Shh, hold on,” Kara dismissed, finally finding the phone. It was Maggie calling.

“Hey, Maggie, what’s up?” Kara said into the phone.

Alex’s head jerked up, eyes bulging at Kara. “Maggie?” she mouthed dramatically. Kara held up her hand to signal for Alex to leave her be while she was on the phone.
“Hey, Kara,” Maggie said, “There was just a package delivered for you.”

“Oh,” Kara said, silently wondering why someone from campus security felt the need to tell her that, when she could have just figured that out the next time she checked her mail compartment. “Okay, well, I’ll come down and get it when I have a free minute.”

“Well, actually, could you come and get it now? It’s, um, kinda large, and the delivery guy here insists that you sign off on it.”

Kara furrowed her brow, confused.

“Um, yeah, sure. I’ll be down in a minute.”

Kara hung up her phone.

“Why the fuck is Maggie calling you?” Alex asked. “How does she have your cell phone number?”

“I had to give it to her so she would know how to get your drunk ass home.”

“Yeah, because you ditched me!” Alex retorted.

Kara rolled her eyes.

“Whatsoever, do you want to come say hi?”

Alex seemed to shrink into the bean bag chair.

“No,” she said flatly, “I’ll stay here.”

Kara didn’t bother to question Alex further as she headed downstairs to get whatever package was waiting for her.

Yeah, Maggie wasn’t kidding when she said it was large. There was about fifteen dress boxes stacked on the RA’s desk, all of them for Kara. Subtly, Kara used her X-ray vision to look inside one of the boxes, and saw what looked an awful lot like the black and white dress she had tried on yesterday at that boutique.

A man in a crisp white uniform standing next to Maggie at the desk handed her a clipboard with a delivery form to sign. The name at the top of the form was the name of the boutique that she had been to with Lena and her friends the day before. Kara’s heart skipped a beat, panic stricken at the thought that all of this had somehow been accidentally been charged to her credit card.

“Um, there’s been a mistake. I didn’t buy any of this.”

“No mistake, miss. This was all bought and paid for by a Miss…” he checked a piece of paper on top of one of the boxes, “Luthor. Instructed to be delivered to this name and address. This is your name and address, correct?”

Kara was floored, barely able to speak. Several students were gawking at her and the dramatic pile of boxes. She could feel her cheeks burning.

“Um, well…yeah. But…I can’t accept this. You have to take it back.”

“I’m afraid I can’t do that, miss. We have a strict no return policy for large orders. Sign here, please,” the man said, pointing to the form in Kara’s hand.
Numbly, she signed the form and handed it back to the man, who promptly exited the dorm building with a courteous nod of his head. He had gone before Kara could even collect herself enough to think to protest.

Maggie’s eyebrows were raised at Kara, and at the stack of boxes.

“Luthor as in…Lena Luthor?”

“I… I guess?” Kara sputtered.

“What’s in the boxes?” Maggie asked, hovering over each word like it was its own separate thought.

Kara picked one of them up, puffing her cheeks full of air.

“Um, clothes,” she said, making a show to peek into one of the boxes, even though she had already seen into it with her X-ray vision. This one contained that royal blue dress with the cut-out sides. She let the air out of her cheeks, her lips buzzing together.

“Stupidly expensive clothes,” she added.

“Well, um, do you need help carrying them to your dorm?”

“Uh, yeah. I guess. Thanks.”

Kara nearly dropped the stack of boxes she was balancing in her grip to open her door. In her stunned state, she had completely forgotten that Alex was in her room. Alex leapt out of the way when she saw Kara so that she could dump the boxes onto the bed.

“What in the hell…oh, um, hey Maggie.”

Maggie’s eyes widened, her body language tense as Kara took the boxes she was carrying off of her to add to the pile.

“Hey, Danvers,” Maggie said, slipping her now-free hands into her pockets. “Um, if everything with this is alright, Kara, I gotta run.”

“Yeah, no, you’re fine,” Kara replied. “Thanks for your help, Maggie. I’ll see you later.”

Maggie quickly let herself out of the dorm room, shutting the door behind her. Besides the ridiculousness of what had just happened, Kara couldn’t ignore the clear tension between Maggie and her sister.

“So, what’s going on there? With you two?”

Alex groaned at Kara’s question.

“Nothing’s going on. Don’t worry about it. What in the fuck is all of this?” She opened one of the boxes, pulling out a low cut, knee length burgundy dress. “Did you go on a shopping spree or something? Mom is gonna kill you.”

“I didn’t buy anything!” Kara exclaimed. “Don’t ask. Tell me what happened with Maggie.”

Alex put her hands on her hips.

“Not until you dish.”
Kara mimicked her stance.

“You dish first, woman!”

“Ugh, fine!” Alex sat back into her chair. “So. That night at the party, right? Me and Maggie were getting along fine. Everything was working how I wanted it to. We were talking, I was bringing my A-game, she seemed into it, and then BAM, she turns to ice. Out of nowhere. And she starts, like, trying to lecture me! Telling me about how I’m reckless, and how I wasn’t paying attention to you. Which, obviously, you were perfectly fine. I mean, you took it upon yourself to run the hell off in my car, so obviously you didn’t need my help with anything.”

Kara gritted her teeth, fighting the urge to start into the fight she had just promised to drop. Alex was sticking yet another jab in about that night because she was just so frustrating and selfish.

“Anyway,” Alex continued, “She sounded like she was trying to be my mother or something, and it was a total buzzkill. So I told her to shove off and crashed there that night. I just…I’m not looking for another mom, you know? I’m just looking for someone to have fun with.”

Kara crossed her arms, staring down at her sister, trying to decide what to say in response. At some point Alex had become someone Kara didn’t know how to talk to anymore. She knew, deep down, that everyone changed in some way or another as they grew older, and she knew that her big sister was no exception. She just thought that the bond they used to have when they were growing up would somehow remain a constant through those changes. But lately, it was like she was learning all over again how to be Alex’s sister. Which was exhausting, especially at moments like this, when it seemed she was the only one trying to keep them together.

“Maybe she just cares about you,” Kara said softly.

Alex considered what she said for a brief second, before rolling her eyes.

“She doesn’t know anything about me.”

Kara didn’t bother to press the matter further. She thought sadly on Maggie, who might have been good for Alex, if she would just give her a chance.

“Now, I told you my bit. Tell me what the hell is with all the boxes?”

Kara sighed.

“I think…they’re a gift.”

Alex regarded Kara curiously.

“From who?” she asked.

Did she really want to get into the conversation that would follow if she told Alex the truth?

“Lena Luthor?” Kara said, knowing Alex would be able to tell if she was lying, anyway.

Alex narrowed her eyes, looking left, then upwards, then right, and then back at Kara, as if looking at things that existed in the room that could help her process Kara had just said.

“Yes.”
“As in, the sister of your cousin’s arch nemesis?”

“Yup.”

“As in the very openly gay Lena Luthor?”

“Who told you that?”

“Um. Hello? I’m a single lesbian and she’s in the same department as me. You think I didn’t figure it out the first moment I saw her?”

Kara crossed her arms, frustrated with Alex, even though she had no reason to be other than the fact that she knew more than Kara wanted her to.

“Okay, so, she’s gay. So what?”

Alex gave Kara that look she always gave her when she was annoyed with Kara for not understanding something.

“So, there is a hot heiress, who is into girls, buying you, a girl, ridiculous amounts of expensive clothing? Just…because she can? You don’t think that’s weird?”

Obviously Kara thought that it was weird. But she wasn’t going to admit that right now.

“Can we just let it go, Alex? It could have been a mistake for all we know…”

“Is there something you’re not telling me?” Alex snapped quickly, before Kara could try and change the subject.

“Like what?”

“Like, are you hooking up with her?”

“No!” Kara squeaked.

“Are you thinking about it?”

“Alex, stop.”

Alex stood.

“What? I’m just trying to figure out what’s going on!”

“No, you’re being nosy and hostile over stuff that is, quite honestly, none of your business.”

Kara knew that she was getting angry. And she knew that the angrier she got, the more Alex would push her, because that’s just how she was. But, like when Winn had questioned Kara about her sexuality a couple of weeks ago, a nerve had suddenly been struck in Kara that made her want to lash out.

“It’s none of my business that my little sister might be gay and is keeping it a secret from me?” Alex pressed.

“I’m not gay, Alex!”

“Then what the hell is going on with you and this girl?”
“Enough!” Kara bellowed suddenly. “Alex, enough. Listen. These boxes just showed up here a couple of minutes ago. I don’t know why. Maybe Lena is just trying to be nice because she wants us to be friends. Maybe this was just an accident. I don’t know. Either way, it was something entirely out of my control. And you yelling at me about it doesn’t give either of us any answers. So just…back the hell off, okay?”

Alex took a step away from Kara, raising her hands slightly in submission, but her face was contorted with a sneer.

“Fine,” Alex spat. “You know what? Just never mind, Kara. Don’t talk to me about what’s going on in your life.” She moved to the door of the room. “It’s not like I’m your big sister or anything.”

She slammed the door behind her, leaving Kara alone. Overwhelmed with frustration, Kara let herself yell out, not caring how loud she was. Her bed inaccessible with the boxes on top of it, she flung them out of the way with a stroke of her arm, sending them clattering across the opposite wall with a booming series of cracks. She collapsed onto the bed, and screamed into her pillow until her momentary rage had all been squeezed out of her lungs like water from a damp cloth.

Chapter End Notes

Hey, so again my bad for being late. I was lamenting over it since wednesday, trust me.
PS i need you guys' opinion. I thought i knew how i was going to add J'onn into the story, but now I'm doubting myself.. If any of you guys have any good ideas, please feel free to share them, because I am pretty stuck about that. and space dad CANNOT NOT BE IN THIS STORY.
See you guys next thursday, for real this time!!! and thank you for all your love and comments, they make my day :)))
See you soon! :)
Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

In which show stress sets in...

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It was finally here. The dreaded tech week. It started the Saturday before opening night, which was on Thursday. Which gave everyone five days to pull all of the previously unrehearsed elements of the show together: light cues, sound cues, full props, full costumes…everything. Saturday, specifically, was going to be all about figuring out all the effect cues. Which meant a lot of standing around on stage for the actors, a lot of heaving set pieces on and off stage for the crew, and a whole lot of swearing from the sound booth. Kara didn’t know a whole lot about what went on in the sound booth. She just knew that every button on a very large console of buttons was programmed to do a very specific cue, and these cues had to be programmed and executed meticulously, or whatever sound or light effect that was needed would get screwed up. Or maybe the lights were totally separate from the buttons on the console? Kara didn’t know. And frankly, as she watched James and Winn, with their headsets on their ears, illuminated by a dull lamp in the booth that casted shadows on them grotesquely, while they yelled at each other and the equipment that vexed them, she had no intention of finding out.

It was eleven o’clock in the morning. Kara, the crew, and the actors, had showed up at eight. James and Winn? No one dared ask when they had gotten here. The same went for Leslie and Snapper. And in the three hours that they had been at running through each and every light and sound cue, one by one, starting and stopping the actors in place like flipping through frames of an old film, they had gotten through exactly…three scenes. Out of eighteen. Kara knew it was going to be an achingly long day, she had been through this before. But it was still absolute torture, especially since there was no end in sight, at least not at the moment.

Kara’s stomach growled painfully. She needed to eat a lot because of how the Earth’s sun affected her metabolism, even if she didn’t use her superpowers. And even though she had stashed her weight in protein bars backstage, in nooks and crannies she hoped no one else would find and loot, she still wasn’t coming across enough opportunities to sneak away to shove one or two…of five, in her face. And even then, protein bars could only go so far to keep her happy.

She had never wanted a burger so badly in her life.

And on top of everything else, there was the issue of Lena. And the ridiculously excessive gift she had sent her. It had been a week since Lena had sent her all of those clothes that she could never hope to afford herself, and Kara had yet to address the situation. The boxes were stacked up in her closet, out of sight but not out of mind, like a tell-tale heart. But…less gross. And since they had showed up, her methods of avoiding them and their sender were getting more and more pathetic.

Kara knew she was being rude by accepting (or, being forced to accept) a gift that expensive without thanking the sender. But she knew how that conversation had to go. “Hey, Lena, thanks for spending a small fortune on me, but you need to take them back because I think you might have
bought them for me because you want to have sex with me. Or am I reading that wrong?”

Was she reading it wrong? Kara couldn’t be sure. Lena was such an unpredictable person that really anything was possible.

But did Kara want to be right?

That was the real question, and most of the reason she had been avoiding the situation entirely. If she found out that Lena had, in fact, made such a big gesture because she was attracted to her, well, how the hell was Kara going to react to that? She couldn’t even start to consider how she felt about Lena without getting stuck in an endless cycle of contradictory feelings. One moment, she was flattered, the next, flustered, and the next, irritated beyond belief. All of these reactions felt equally as strong and valid as the one before it, and Kara was fighting to keep up with her own mind.

A couple of days after the day the gift showed up, she had gotten a text from Lena:

**Hey, I didn’t get a chance to thank you for coming out with me and the girls the other day. It was…fun.**

Kara hadn’t answered that text. She felt guilty about it, but she continued to ignore it nonetheless. Then the next day, Lena texted her again.

**I’m starting to wonder if there isn’t a thief on campus. My mail hasn’t always been showing up. What about you? Are you getting your packages or anything?**

Lena was obviously probing to see if Kara had, in fact, received the gift she had sent. And it made Kara feel awful, as she tried to imagine how she would feel if she were Lena. Kara had planned on responding, somehow, someway, to that text. But any time she thought of what to say, she changed her mind, and the next thing Kara knew, it was the following weekend.

And now, here they were, in the same building, for what was going to be a very long day. She had meant to try and say something to Lena the first moment she saw her. But the second Kara walked in the door, she was snatched up by Leslie.

“Listen, frosh,” she had said, dark bags under her eyes, blonde hair tangled and matted around a bulky headset that resembled James and Winn’s sets. “As painful as this is for me to admit, you are the only somewhat competent person on my crew. Okay? Get that shitty little smirk off your face before I smack you. Now listen,” she pressed a headset into one of Kara’s hands, and a clipboard in the other. “I need you to take charge of the half-wits back there. When I call a scene, I need you to
look it up on your cheat sheet, and make sure they put the set pieces I need for the scene in the exact right spots. Think you can handle that, Barbie?”

Kara admired how Leslie was confident enough in herself to ask for a favor from someone while simultaneously insulting them.

“Why can’t you just do it?” Kara asked, not because she didn’t want to help, but because she got an odd satisfaction from the way Leslie’s nostrils flared when someone sassed her unexpectedly.

“Because I got enough shit on my plate, sunshine. Are you gonna be a dick or can I actually count on you to do something besides drool over Olsen for once?”

Kara wanted to snap Leslie in half for that. But she decided against it, knowing that this was barely a four out of ten as far as the severity of insults from Leslie tended to go.

By the time Kara had familiarized herself with the props and set pieces according to what went where and when, Lena was already in costume and awaiting direction from Snapper and Leslie with the rest of the cast. Kara found herself throughout the morning stealing glances at Lena, admittedly taken aback by how good she looked in the costumes Winn had made her. Once or twice, Lena had caught her staring. To be fair though, she had a feeling that Lena had been glancing at her somewhat frequently, too.

Kara had set up camp for the day at the props table off stage left. Which ended up being lucky, because between the actors and the stage crew, no one seemed to be able to respect the rule to not touch other people’s freaking props.

It was like dealing with a hoard of toddlers. The second she told one person to stop touching one of the swords, another one had snuck behind her to try and steal a bits of the food props. If Kara could resist snacking on food props, so could everyone else.

“I would listen to her, dude,” an annoying and familiar voice said behind her.

She had been yelling at an unnamed crew guys to stop messing with the red, demon headed cane meant for the actor who played Lucifer.

“This girl is an ice queen,” Mike continued, “No messing with her.”

Kara rolled her eyes.

“Thanks for that,” she said sarcastically.

“I’ve got your back, girl.”

There was a bite in Mike’s tone that suggested that he said this more for the entertainment of the other four boys working stage crew with him than for her benefit. The other boys chuckled at him in response.

Instead of bothering to reply, Kara pulled her headset off her neck and placed it back on her ears so she could, hopefully, be left alone. At that moment, Winn was setting off a series of slurs into his own headset, and it could be heard by anyone else wearing a headset. Kara tried not to laugh, afraid of losing her air of intimidation around the crew who already had no reason to respect or listen to her.

“You okay up there, bud?” she asked into her headset.
“Ah, fuck. Yeah. I left the mic on my set again didn’t I? Stupid…fuckin…bag of shit…Um. Okay. Alright, whatever, I’ll work on fixing cue seventeen…later. Can we just move on to eighteen, please?”

“We’re not moving on to the next cue until that light sequence is perfect, Schott,” Snapper’s voice growled into the headsets as he sat, thrumming his fingers agitatedly against his ‘desk’ in the audience. “Run it again.”

Silence from the headsets for a moment. But, reaching her hearing up to the sound booth, Kara knew the sets had only gone silent so that Winn could let out another string of swears before replying.

“Yep. Sounds good, Dr. Carr. Running seventeen again. Leslie?”

“Ya,” she groaned into the set, sitting next to Dr. Carr. “Actors!” she bellowed towards the stage. “Top of the scene once more, please!”

A collective groaning came from the actors, both on stage and off.

“The less you bitch, the faster we get through this,” Leslie replied to their disgruntled mumbled. “Alright, yeah, Lena, Sadie, Anna, back offstage, please. Yeah. Actors set? And, lights up…”

“Oh shit, I got it to work! Go me!” Winn celebrated into the headsets.

However, it was all for not, when there was no one on stage to enter in tandem to it.


Nervous muttering from the actors.

“Brendan isn’t here,” Adam, the actor who played the clown of the play, called.

“Where the fuck did he go?” Leslie snapped.

“Uh, he had to take a shit, I think.”

“Oh, well then,” Snapper replied hotly, “let’s just schedule the whole damn play around Brendan’s fucking bowel movements then, shall we?”

Snapper threw a pen across the theater in agitation.

“Whatever,” he said, “I don’t have time for this. Moving on to cue eighteen, folks! Someone stand in for Brendan for now.”

No one moved.

“Leslie,” Winn whispered into the headsets, “have Kara stand in.”

“Danvers!” Leslie yelled, probably knowing that it was loud enough to pierce into Kara’s headphones painfully. “Stand it for Aurelius, please!”

“Uh, I don’t have a script or anything,” Kara replied, already halfway onto the stage.

“Doesn’t matter,” Carr replied, seeming irritated just to have to acknowledge her existence. “We just need to check the effect, so just stand two paces in front of the throne, there? Good. Now,
James,” he said into the headset, “we need the audience to get a clear visual that fate has taken an insidious turn by Aurelius succumbing to the wiles of Artesia. I want this to look spectacular. Like hell itself is opening, alright? Have you got that for me?”

James, who had been uncharacteristically quiet up until now, spoke into the headset.

“Yeah, Snap. I think I know how to do my job,” he said smartly into the sound booth mic, so that everyone could hear him, instead of just the people with headsets.

Kara knew everyone was on edge today, but she got the feeling something else was bothering James to make him act out like that.

Wait. Did Snapper say ‘succumbing to the wiles of Artesia’?

Snapper cleared his throat in response to James’ biting tone.

“Okay, Lena, go to your place from line 115,” he said.

Kara had been standing dutifully with her hands crossed in front of her, not really paying attention to her surroundings. Then, suddenly, someone came up behind her, fingers pressing lightly against Kara’s right hip. The unexpected contact made Kara jump.

“Easy there,” Lena whispered into Kara’s ear from where she stood behind her, breath hot on Kara’s neck. “It’s just me.

Kara flashed back to Lena staring at her half naked body through the mirror of the dressing room, and despite herself, felt a fluttering warmth in the pit of her stomach. Keeping her hand on Kara’s hip, Lena stood next to her, her arm resting carelessly above Kara’s skinny jeans.

“Do you just want me to stand on my mark?” Lena asked up to Carr and Leslie.

“Uh, no,” Carr replied, “I want you to stand just as you are before the kiss.”

Um, what kiss?, Kara thought.

Lena nodded dutifully, and she suddenly grasped Kara by the shoulders, turning her so they were facing each other. Silent and methodical, she moved Kara’s limbs around like Kara was a doll. She placed her left hand on Lena’s side, just above her hip, and her right hand on Lena’s left forearm, which she raised to grasp the back of Kara’s neck. Stepping very far into Kara’s personal space, Lena placed her other arm on the small of Kara’s back, and let her lips hover an inch away from Kara’s. For a moment, Kara was sure Lena was going to kiss her, but she stayed frozen in that position.

“Yeah, that’s good,” Snapper said blandly. “Go ahead, James.”

There was a series of red and purple gelled spotlights, followed by a sound effect of thunder.

“No!” Snapper barked, and stormed up the audience steps to the sound booth, muttering about his vision. “Actors, hold!” he yelled before slamming the door of the booth shut behind him.

Meanwhile, Kara and Lena were still pressed together center stage. Kara rolled her lips together, trying to look to the sides of her so she wasn’t looking Lena straight on.

“So…” Kara said, “Are we just supposed to stay like this?”

“Yep,” Lena replied, letting her own lips make a distinct popping sound on the ‘p’. 
Kara exhaled deeply, the rising and falling of her chest causing her to accidentally press against Lena’s breasts. Which she tried not to look at, especially since they were practically falling out of that dress. Winn hadn’t been kidding when he had talked about giving Lena a lot of cleavage in her costume.

A painful silence settled between them. Under the bright stage lights and while being so close to another person, Kara was getting uncomfortably warm. The same cue went off again and again as they stood torturously still, the sequence of lights and thunder altering slightly with each attempt James made to satisfy Dr. Carr. This close to Lena, Kara started to become self-conscious about strange things, like whether or not her breath smelled like protein bars, or if she was wearing enough deodorant. All the while reminding herself not to look straight at Lena. The few times she had met Lena’s eyes, the lack of distance between them and her deep green eyes had made Kara woozy.

The longer they stood together, the more Lena seemed to relax against Kara, letting her hip rest against hers. It was probably just because it was tiring to stand so rigidly for so long.

Suddenly, Lena broke their silence.

“So I assume that I overstepped my boundaries the other day?”

Kara blinked. She was so close to Lena that her lips practically grazed Kara’s cheek as she spoke. Kara realized she was breathing heavier than normal, and her brain was in a fog, making it hard for her to form words.

“Um…” Kara struggled, “What?”

“You’ve been dodging me since last Saturday,” Lena said, staring down at Kara with the slight height difference the heels she had on gave her.

The thundering effect went off again, louder than before.

“I’m…not dodging.”

Why was it so hard to speak when Lena stares at you like that? Why was it so hot on this stage?

“Is it because I saw you out of your clothes? Because that just makes us even.”

“Quiet on stage, please!” Carr snapped from the sound booth.

Kara gulped, feeling her cheeks redden. Memories of Lena’s soft, bare skin flooded back to her from when they first met.

“No,” Kara whispered. “It’s not that. It was the gift you sent.”

“Oh, so you did get those,” Lena said, voice equally quiet. “Was there something wrong? Did I get the wrong sizes?”

“Lena,” Kara sighed. She felt Lena’s grip tighten on her neck briefly, like a knee-jerk response to hearing her name. “I can’t accept those clothes.”

“But you already did?” Lena replied, confused.

“Well, yeah, because the guy who delivered them wouldn’t take them back. But, Lena, those are… really expensive. I can’t accept something like that.”
“Why not?” Lena asked, her lips accidentally touching just next to Kara’s own lips.

*Why do we have to be so close together? Why does Lena have to look at me like that with those big, devilish green eyes?*

“Because…” Kara started, before being startled by incredibly loud thunder. “Because…well, why did you buy all that for me, anyway?”

“Oh, for goodness sake, Kara,” Lena whispered. “What’s the point of you having that perfect body if you’re not going to wear anything worthy of it? I knew you weren’t going to buy any of those dresses yourself, so I just got them for you. And, picked out a few other things I thought might suit you.”

More flashing of dark colored light on the stage.

“Why do you have to say stuff like that?” Kara whispered.

Everywhere that Lena’s hands and body were touching Kara felt hot.

“Like what?” Lena asked blankly.

“Why do you have to be so…flirty all the time? It makes me feel like you just bought me all of that stuff…so that…”

“Again, quiet on stage!” Snapper yelled.

The two entwined girls were silent for a moment or two. Lena’s body stiffened away from Kara.

“So that what?” Lena whispered hotly. “So that you might have sex with me?”

Kara gulped, unable to reply. The lack of space between them was suffocating.

“Kara,” Lena said, tone softer than before. “I have more money than I know what to do with. I never even knew that credit cards ever had spending limits until I got to college and heard people complaining about them. Just because the money I have comes from a group of crazy, scheming assholes, doesn’t mean that I spend it with the intent of being a scheming asshole. I was trying to do something nice.”

Kara looked at the ground, feeling guilty for assuming so much about Lena. Alex had admittedly gotten under her skin that day, and she thought that her attitude about the whole situation had more to do with Alex than Lena.

It was…actually really sweet what Lena had done for Kara. Even more so now that Kara realized that Lena didn’t even think anything of it until Kara had said something. At the same, however, she couldn’t forget Lena’s history of unabashed flirting. Again, Kara was trying to decide which side of Lena was the real one.

“But, I mean,” Lena whispered, her fingernails lightly scratching Kara’s neck in a way that made Kara shiver. “If you want to have sex with me as a thank you, I would be okay with that.”

*And there it is.*

Kara would be lying if she said that her breath didn’t hitch just a bit in response to Lena’s offer, even if she knew it was in jest. The way Lena’s eyes widened at Kara momentarily suggested that she was well aware of that.
“Lena,” Kara breathed, trying to sound reprimanding.

She thought, for just a second, how easy it would be to close the nonexistent distance between them and press her lips into Lena’s. She shook the thought off.


Kara chuckled despite herself. It was hard not to, when those red lips smirked at her like that, and those big green eyes looked at her like that.

Again, Lena’s lips brushed against the corner of Kara’s mouth. This time it didn’t seem like an accident. It couldn’t be. Not when Kara was pretty sure that she was the one leaning in towards Lena…

Kara felt someone tap her shoulder, and she leapt away from Lena, startled.

“Hey!” Brendan said, apparently back from his bathroom break. “Thanks for stepping in for me, Kara.”

“Oh, um…sure. It’s no problem.”

Kara rushed off the stage, hoping no one could see the deep scarlet on her cheeks. When she looked back to the stage, she saw that Brendan now occupied the space Kara had been in. She couldn’t help but think, or maybe hope, that Lena had held Kara closer than she held her fellow actor now.

*

They broke for lunch shortly after. Winn had asked her via headset to come down to the prop room before running off to the cafeteria. He must have a death wish if he wanted to keep her from food any longer.

“It’ll just be a minute. Please?”

Kara groaned, and trotted down the narrow staircase off stage left that took you to the storage room built beneath the stage. Kara never came down here by herself. Between the electric whirring of the fluorescent lights overhead and the collection of mannequins and old stray set pieces, the prop room could be a little creepy. But when she saw why Winn had called her down there, all her crankiness and apprehension had vanished.

Winn and James had somehow managed to sneak delivery food into the theater without any of the actors noticing and circling it like vultures. He never failed to impress. Kara couldn’t control the inappropriate noises that escaped from her as she attempted to shove a two slices of pizza into her mouth at once.

“That’s not all,” James said, producing a bag Kara recognized from the Chinese restaurant just outside campus.

Kara eyes bulged out of her head.

“Are those potstickers?” she mumbled excitedly, her mouth full.

“Of course,” James said, handing her the bag, which she promptly tore into.
There was an emptiness in James’ smile, his eyes tired with more than just show stress. As the trio ate their lunch, Winn and Kara bitching back and forth about the trials of the day, James remained mostly quiet. Kara was so used to the warm glow James emitted when he was around, that it was impossible to ignore his dampened mood.

“Are you okay?” she asked him, absently slapping Winn’s hand away as he tried to sneak the last potsticker from her.

James attempted an unconvincing smile, and then let his shoulders slump.

“Lucy went back to Metropolis,” he said quietly.

Kara sighed heavily. She should have guessed that.

“I’m sorry,” she said simply.

He shrugged.

“It’s not like I didn’t see it coming.”

Kara got the urge to walk over and hug James. But she decided against it.

*  

This was by far the longest day of Kara’s life. She had resigned to lying under the props table just to get off of her feet, and using her clipboard to cover her face so she could rest her eyes between set changes. Somehow, miraculously, they had gotten through all three hundred or so cues. That was at seven at night. Just when she thought she might be free, Snapper demanded they try a full run through. There was a chance that he had already told everyone days ago that he was going to do a full run through after cue to cue, but Kara was still convinced he had decided on it last minute just to torture them all into madness. Thankfully, Leslie would announce the scene change into the headsets to give Kara a reminder or where they were so she knew what to put where on stage. Otherwise, she would probably sleep through the whole thing.

“Act one, scene four. Danvers. Danvers! Tell your frat boys the throne is in the wrong spot… before I… kick them in their dicks… or something.”

Oddly enough, exhaustion brought out Leslie’s calmer side. She was still full of her usual strain of insults and death threats, but by 4 pm, her heart just wasn’t in it anymore.

“Mike!” Kara yelled from under the table, not moving, or even opening her eyes. “Look at your tape marks! The throne is in the wrong spot!”

“This thing is a little heavy to tote around, Kara, it’s fine where it is,” he snapped.

Groaning, she rolled out from her nap spot and stormed over to the stage.

Wrong answer, douche bag.

Was it a good idea for her to show her strength by lifting the set throne, normally a two man job, by herself? Probably not. Did she do it anyway? Obviously.
“You are so full of yourself,” Mike said, arms crossed, clearly angry that he was showed up by a girl.

For the first time in Kara’s life, she made use of the Earth custom of raising a middle finger in the direction of someone who you were angry at, keeping it raised in Mike’s general direction as she walked back off stage. She could hear Leslie chuckle from her seat in the audience.

Kara quickly crawled back into her cave.

“Having fun down there?” the disembodied voice of Lena Luthor asked.

A few hours ago she would have been more interested in the fact that Lena was hovering next to the props table that Kara was curled up under. She was no longer in costume, no one was for the run through, and Kara knew that she had swapped her low cut dress for a tank top and sinfully tight shorts.

Kara would have been more interested in that fact an hour or two ago. Now she only barely gave the pair of legs standing next to her a glance or two.

“Yes,” she said, rotating her position under the table so that she could at least poke her head out to look up at Lena when she spoke, mostly as an empty courtesy. “How are you holding up?”

“Eh,” Lena said, sitting down on the dusty floor next to Kara. “I was having more fun when I was getting my ass grabbed by you and not that gross sophomore.”

Kara rolled her eyes, too tired to feign offense.

“I didn’t grab your ass, Lena,” she sighed.

“I know. Shame,” she said, voice equally as blank.

Kara chuckled absently through a yawn.

“Are you this flirty with all girls?” Kara asked, looking up at Lena, eyes half closed with exhaustion.

Lena tilted her head, considering the girl looking up at her.

“No really, no,” she replied.

Kara smiled, oddly satisfied with that answer, and closed her eyes until Leslie barked into the headset again.

*

Kara collapsed into her bed a little after eleven, settling on stuffing whatever snacks she could find in her fridge into her mouth in a few bites so that she could get to bed that much faster. She hadn’t felt this exhausted since she had tried to fly to Metropolis to see her cousin after getting in a fight with Alex. She got lost somewhere over Indiana, and she had flown around aimlessly for hours until she finally found her way home, barely able to keep her body afloat.

A knock on her door bolted Kara out of her twilight haze between being awake and asleep. She
used her x-ray vision to look through the door to see who dared to keep her from sleep any longer.

*Speaking of fights with sisters.*

“Alex?” Kara asked as she opened her door, rubbing the sleep form her eyes. “I’m um…I’m kind of tired right now…”

“I know. I’m sorry. I just…can I talk to you for a minute?”

“Couldn’t you have just called?”

“Would you have answered?”

Well, Alex had a point there. As much as Kara wanted to tell Alex that she was too tired for this, she looked clearly upset about something. Cursing the stars for her bad luck, she let Alex in, and flopped back onto her bed, gesturing for her sister to sit next to her.

“What’s going on?” Kara asked, trying to hide her yawns behind her hand.

Alex gestured for Kara to scoot over, and curled up under the blankets next to her sister. Kara could smell alcohol on Alex’s breath, and her heart dropped knowing that she probably drove here.

“Am I a bad person?” Alex asked.

Kara sighed, propping herself up on her elbow.

“Of course not,” she replied. “Why are you asking me that?”

“I don’t know.” Alex let her head thump against the wall. “Maggie really got under my skin, you know? Like, why does she care so much about how I treat you, or anyone for that matter? She barely knows me. So if she thinks I’m a bad person…maybe I just…am.”

“She doesn’t think you’re a bad person, Alex, come on. She was just worried about you.”

Alex brought her legs up onto the bed to rest her chin against her knees.

“But she was right. All I do is think about myself and what I want.”

Kara didn’t reply right away.

“See? You think so, too.”

“No I don’t,” Kara said.

Was that true?

“I don’t,” Kara insisted. “I mean, yeah, you can be a jerk sometimes. But I know that you care. You care a lot. Or else you wouldn’t be here right now, would you?”

Alex sighed, and pulled Kara into a tight hug before flopping over onto the side of the bed closest to the wall and settling in to sleep.

“I love you,” Alex said.

Kara smiled, eyes fluttering shut.

“I love you, too, sis,” Kara replied.
She closed her eyes, completely prepared to fit in as much sleep as she could before she had to play catch up with her assignments tomorrow. But something was tugging at her mind.

“Hey, Alex?” she asked.

“Hmm?” Alex replied, barely awake.

“How did you know you were into girls?” Kara asked, voice so quiet that she wondered if Alex had even heard her. She hoped that Alex didn’t hear her.

Alex shrugged.

“I think I always knew,” she mumbled into the mattress. “But. I wasn’t 100% sure until I made out with a couple of girls, first.”

Kara bit the inside of her lip, and said nothing.

*

“I’m not ready. I’m so not ready.”

Winn was sitting on the floor of the sound booth, furiously stitching at a costume one of the actors had accidentally ripped a massive hole in during dress rehearsal.

“Yes you are, buddy,” James, who was sitting on a chair next to him, replied. “It’s gonna be fine.”

Winn accidentally stabbed one of the fingers of his left hand with the needle, again, and shook the injured hand violently to disperse the pain. Kara was sitting on the opposite side of the cramped booth, also on the floor, holding a part of the torn dress in one hand, and a flashlight in the other to give Winn enough light to see what he was doing.

They were taking a fifteen minute break when they had gotten to intermission, so Kara had rushed the ripped dress up to Winn for him to work on without having to leave his booth.

“It’s not gonna be fine!” Winn squeaked. “The actors keep destroying my beautiful creations, the fog machines keep setting off the fire alarms, and I’m pretty sure Leslie is going to remove some very vital organs from my body if I forget a spotlight again.”

The two spotlights they had to work with were standalone units on either side of the sound booth. Leslie ran one, and a stage crew member was supposed to run the other. The brute Leslie had recruited, Kara thought his name was Todd…or Tim…or something like that, had tried to use it as a foot rest. After it buckled under his weight and went tumbling down a couple of stairs, no one but Leslie and Winn were allowed to touch the spotlights. Which meant that outside of helping James with the sound board and cues, he also had to remember to run out of the booth every few minutes to turn the spotlight where it needed to go.

Poor Winn.

“We still have tomorrow’s dress rehearsal to work everything out,” James said, placing a reassuring hand on Winn’s shoulder. “Okay? And even then, opening night is always a mess. It’s just one show. It’s not the end of the world.”
“I know that,” Winn said, taking long, steady breaths. “I know. But it’s just…if I can’t make a silly college production go off without a hitch, how am I supposed to ever hope to do this for a living?”

“Winn, you are fantastic at what you do,” Kara said, yanking her hand out of the way as he plunged his needle blindly into the fabric. “You’re just stressed out. We all are.”

Kara had already asked two of her professors for deadline extensions. She had gotten a B on her math test. Which she was sure was actually physically impossible until now.

She couldn’t help it. Her eyes, too strained to work properly, had kept crossing when she tried to focus on the problems on the test. It was honestly ridiculous that she was letting an extra-curricular pet project slowly derail her academics, and her life.

At the same time, despite the long hours, the little to no sleep, and the corralling of stage crew idiots that wandered away from their duties every five minutes to hit on female actors, Kara loved the rush she felt from being a part of the production. She was helping this show come together, and she was proud of it (however weird and tacky it was, thanks to Snapper’s ‘vision’).

But it was also the most stressful, exhausting, frustrating thing she had ever done and she kind of wanted to die.

The amazing thing was that by Sunday it would all be over. So, as much of a rollercoaster of emotions as this was, Kara had to try and savor every bit of it, the good and the bad.

When the break was up, she trudged back down to her post at the props table, where Lena was sitting on the floor like she had been the first day of tech week. That had become Lena’s go to spot to hangout when she wasn’t on stage, and Kara didn’t question it anymore. With the chaos of the week, there was no time to think about Lena or the clear tension between them. No time to think about what Alex had said Saturday night. And how if Kara was possibly attracted to girls, one girl specifically…there was only one way to find out.

But she couldn’t think about that right now. And she guessed that the same went for Lena. They had both settled into a casual camaraderie, a silent reliance on one another. Each of them knew that they could settle into the shared space they had created off stage, and that they could support and sympathize with one another without saying a word. Most importantly, each girl knew that the other would fend anyone off that attempted to distract her from her work. When Lena was running lines in her head, Kara would read the parts of the other characters, and shush the other actors when they chatted loudly enough to make Lena lose focus. And, as far as how Lena helped Kara…

“Guys, would you stop messing around for five seconds and help me put the set up for the beginning of act three, please?”

“Oh, relax, frosh,” Mike replied, his buddies chuckling stupidly behind them. “You take everything too seriously.”

Kara couldn’t see Lena move to stand behind her, but she knew she was there, arms crossed, giving her Signature Glare™.

The group of boys cleared their throats uncomfortably, and walked off to move the set into place. By the time Kara had turned around, Lena was all smiles again.

No one messes with a Luthor.

That was the other thing. Kara kept letting herself forget who Lena was. Well, she knew who Lena was. She was a generous, considerate, misunderstood…sexy…woman. One that Kara was starting
to really enjoy being around, even when they sat in total silence, sprawled out on the floor by the prop table. But as much as she was starting to like Lena, and as much as she knew deep down that Lena was nothing like her evil brother, he was still her brother nonetheless. And the closer she got to Lena, the more danger she inherently put herself in, even if Lena had no control over it. No matter what she thought or felt, she could never let herself get too close to Lena.

Okay. Maybe she had found some time to think about things between her and Lena. And maybe she had come to a conclusion that she was just, for now, choosing to ignore, because trying to put distance between her and Lena seemed like it would take more energy than Kara had to spare.

One of Kara’s favorite parts of putting the show together was watching the actors from offstage. It had been one thing to see the actors rehearse early on in the process. But now, two days from opening night, she could see the actors starting to finally understand the larger ideas behind the show outside their own lines. Every time they ran through it, she saw the scenes and the individual performances become richer. And every time she saw Lena perform, she was more captivated by her and her raw talent.

Lena was…becoming harder and harder to ignore…

*

It was finally opening night. And Kara was sure she wasn’t going to survive this. Every muscle in her body ached. Which she had previously thought impossible. But after five days of tech work, dress rehearsals, malfunctioning cordless mic sets, blown lights, fire alarms, and every other glitch imaginable, Kara was convinced that the burning ache inside her arms, legs, and back was simply her body slowly shutting down from stress and lack of sleep and proper nutrition. She was starting to hear the crackle of her headset in her dreams, which were already mostly Shakespeare themed. Many of them had Lena as the star as well. They were all PG, however. Well…except for that one dream…with the Romeo and Juliet style balcony, Lena’s burgundy costume dress fluttering to the floor…

She had woken up regrettably early during that one.

Kara was peering at the people slowly filling up the audience seats from the wings of the stage. The golden rule was that if you could see the audience, the audience could see you. But since she was wearing all black; black hair tie, black tank top beneath a black button up shirt, black skinny jeans, even all black chucks, she thought she could get away with taking a little peek. Behind her were the anxious murmurs from the actors, their shaky voices reassuring one another and rushing through tricky sequences of lines. Despite showing up two hours early, there were still a stray actor or two in the upstairs dressing room who were running behind on finishing their hair and makeup. In the rush, Kara had even jumped upstairs for a little while to help Siobhan, the self-declared “hair and makeup expert”, with curling hair.

Thank God that Siobhan had volunteered to help in this capacity, because a surprising amount of the girls had no idea how to do their own makeup or curl their own hair, and putting makeup on the boys was like pulling teeth. Kara knew that she couldn’t feel pain like Earth humans did, but she was sure that there was no need for boys to honestly squeal in pain when they were at the mercy of Siobhan with her eyeliner pen. Though, considering the sick satisfaction Siobhan seemed to get out of reminding the boys about the unfair gender norms applied to women and makeup, there was just a small chance that she was doing some intentional harm.
“Lights up in five minutes, actors take their places offstage,” James called into the headset.

Kara nodded, and then remembered that he couldn’t see her.

“Lights up in five, got it,” she whispered, and repeated the warning to the cast.

A panicked flutter of whispers followed the warning.

Kara double checked that all the props were in place for the fifteenth time, and also saw that everyone was in their proper place back stage, save for one person. Kara didn’t see Lena on either side of the stage from where she was standing. She risked sneaking behind the faux hallway created by the set walls to cross to stage right, and still didn’t see Lena.

Kara snuck back to stage left and checked the downstairs dressing room: nothing. Upstairs dressing room: still nothing. Finally, she rushed down towards the prop room. On the way down the stairs, she hear a high pitched metallic shrill that set her teeth on edge. Even when she pulled the headset off of her ears, the noise remained. It reminded her of the metallic sound she heard a few weeks ago when she went out with Lena, Siobhan, and Veronica. Shaking it off, she continued to the bottom of the stairs, and nearly collided into Lena.

“Lena! Sorry, um. Lights up in…like…less than a minute.”

“Oh, God, okay. Um, yeah. I’ll be right up.”

Her voice was shaky with something more than just nerves. Under the glow of the red exit light above the stairwell, Kara could see Lena’s eyes glistening.

“Are you okay?” Kara asked.

Lena’s trembling hands held her cell phone between them.

“Uh. Yeah. Yeah, I’m fine.”

Kara grasped Lena’s hands in her own, steadying them. Lena looked down, not meeting Kara’s gaze.

“I just got a call from my brother, wishing me a good opening night.”

Kara blinked rapidly.

“Your brother…like Lex Luthor? That brother?”

“Yeah.”

“The…the one that’s on the run from the FBI?”

Lena let out a single, hollow laugh.

“Yeah, that Lex Luthor.”

Kara blew a breath out of puffed cheeks.

“Well. Um. That’s…good…that he took time out of his…um, busy schedule to call you on your big night.”

“Don’t do that,” Lena snapped, looking up at Kara suddenly.
“Do what?”

“Pretend like this is even remotely okay.”

Kara sighed, squeezing Lena’s hands again.

“I’m sorry,” she said quietly, and, instinctively, pulled Lena into a hug.

Lena instantly buried her head in Kara’s neck, letting a short sob shake its way out of her chest. After that, she stilled, her breathing soft and even.

“The most terrible thing about all of it,” Lena said, voice slow and even, breath hot on Kara’s neck. “Is that I still love my brother. And I know that he loves me, in his own way.”

Kara pulled Lena tighter.

“That’s not terrible, Lena. To love someone…”

“Even if they hurt you?” Lena asked in a whisper.

Kara didn’t know how to respond.

“Actors set? Kara? Kara?” she heard through the headset around her neck.

“Shit,” Kara said under her breath, pulling away from Lena, and putting the set back on her head.

“Hold for like, thirty seconds. There was a…uh…wardrobe malfunction.”

“Did anything get ripped?” Winn squealed into the headset.

“No, no, calm down, it’s fine.” She looked up to Lena. “We gotta go. Like, now.”

Lena nodded, and Kara realized that some of her eye makeup had run down her cheek.

“Oh, shit, hold on,” she said, and raised a hand to Lena’s face to fix the blemish.

“I don’t think I’ve ever heard you swear before,” she said, eyes locked on Kara’s.

Kara smiled, wiping stray mascara away from Lena’s face with her thumb.

“Yeah, well, I hang around theater kids too much, I guess.”

A second of silence passed between them.

“I’m glad you do,” Lena said, eyes unwavering. “Otherwise we would never have met.”

Kara’s hand froze where it was, cupping Lena’s face. She swallowed hard, momentarily mesmerized by the way Lena’s eyes shone, and by the way her red lips quivered slightly. Kara felt her thumb trace down Lena’s cheek on its own accord, hovering over her mouth. She couldn’t stop from wondering how soft those lips might be…

“Kara? Can we roll or what?” Leslie hissed into the headset.

Kara pulled her hand away. How did she keep forgetting that there was a show to open?

“Right! Right!”

Kara didn’t have to tell Lena twice to race back upstairs and get to her place before she missed an
In her solitude, Kara let herself relax against the wall, taking a moment to compose herself.

“Go ahead, guys,” she breathed.

Chapter End Notes

I dunno, I feel like i thought this was a great chapter when I was writing it, and now as I'm uploading it I'm like "eh that's a whole lot of technical crap going on...” IDK. I swear I actually have larger plots being built slowly in the background besides Kara being super stubborn about the fact that she is BISEXUAL AS HELL. DAMMIT KARA.

I think I have finally figured out how J'onn is gonna fit into this, and it really couldn't have happened any sooner than I'm now planning on, so that's a thing to look forward to at least? (this fic is gonna be so goddamn long i s2g why do i do this to myself).

Coming up next Thursday, Maggie reappears, and Lena is in need of a hero...

See you soon ;)

Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

It's showtime! But first, Lena is in need of a hero...(and her hero is rewarded... ;D )

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The audience cheered. The actors bowed. No one suffered any injuries. Nothing too disastrous happened. Adam tripped on his own feet once or twice. A sound cue was missed. Brendan skipped a whole page of dialogue. A moving set wall got tangled into a curtain until Kara practically scaled up the wall like a lizard to free it. But. They all made it through.

Kara clapped just as loud and hard as any of the audience members. All of the actors had filtered out into the lobby to say hello to family members and friends. Meanwhile, Kara had made sure the rest of the crew stuck around to clean and sweep the stage, all but barring the doors to do so. While they cleaned, Alex, who had made sure to be there for opening night, because “the mistakes are the best part”, was meandering around the theater, joined by a familiar face.

“Nice job moving those sets around, little Danvers,” Maggie said.

“No problem,” Kara replied.

“Hey, Maggie! I’m so glad you could make it! Um, I didn’t know you were coming with Alex tonight.”

“Oh, uh,” Maggie said, unconsciously taking a small step away from where she was standing next to Alex. “We sort of just ran into each other before the show.”

Alex was smiling like a smug asshole behind Maggie.

“That show was a little weird,” Alex said, closing the distance that Maggie had created.

Kara almost thought that she could see Maggie blush when Alex brushed her arm against hers.

“Yeah, well,” Kara replied, “I didn’t pick the show.”

“I liked it. It was unique” Maggie said reassuringly, “So, Kara, do you want to go get dinner with me and Alex or something?”

Alex gave Kara a quick look. A look that said ‘Please say no, I want Maggie to myself right now.’ Kara was starving, as usual, but she didn’t want to third wheel her sister and her sister’s…date?

“Um, thanks for the offer,” she replied, “but I’m really tired. But you guys go ahead, don’t worry about me.”

“Sounds good!” Alex butted in abruptly. “Maggie, how do you feel about sushi? I know a great sushi place…”

Alex was already whisking Maggie out of the theater, turning back to give Kara a wink and a silent “you are the best”.
Happy that her sister had a second chance with a girl she was clearly smitten with, Kara finished up her work and thanked Rao that she had stocked her freezer with her weight in hot pockets earlier that week. Once she was back in her dorm room, stomach full of enough hot pockets to make her never want to eat one again, she thought again about Lena. She thought about the way she looked under the red glow of the exit light, the way her hands shook, the soft vulnerability in her voice when she whispered into Kara’s neck about her brother. Kara felt a wave of guilt for not making sure she checked in with Lena before she left for the night. Pulling out her phone, she swallowed the nerves she felt building in her stomach, and called her friend.

“Heyy Miss Sunshine,” Lena answered, voice lazy and low.

Kara could hear booming music and chatter in the background.

“Oh. Um. I’m sorry. I called you at a bad time.”

“No! No no no no. No. No. You didn’t.”

Kara furrowed her brow.

“Lena. Are you drunk?”

Lena breathed heavily into her phone.

“Slightly? Yes. Some of the cast wanted to go out for drinks. I didn’t want to go at first. But Siobhan kind of dragged me. And. Ya know? I need to blow off some steam. I have, like…shit. Going on. Ya know?”

Kara bit her lip.

“I’m sorry about what happened before the show,” Kara said quietly.

“Are you sorry that my brother is a maniac outlaw or are you sorry that you had a chance to kiss me today and didn’t take it?”

Well Lena didn’t slur her words at all when she said that last bit. Kara could hear Siobhan suddenly pipe up in the background. “Is that Kara?” she squealed. Kara was glad that she was alone so that no one could see her face turn bright red.

“I…I just called to make sure that you were okay. And, apparently you are. So. Um. I’ll just see you tomorrow, okay?”

“Hold on, hold on, hold on, don’t” she hiccupped, “don’t hang up.”

Kara sighed.

“Can I just ask you one thing?” Lena asked.

By the way the every syllable popped into Kara’s ear over the phone, she guessed that Lena was pressing the phone unnecessarily close to her mouth.

“What?”

“Do you freak out when I flirt with you because you don’t want me to or because you’re into me and don’t know how to deal with it?”

Kara never wore her glasses when she was alone in her dorm room. But she forgot they weren’t on
her head until she had raised her hand to fidget with them instinctively.

“Can we…just…how about you ask me again tomorrow?” Kara struggled to reply.

“I’m not gonna have the balls to ask you again tomorrow.”

Kara put the phone down for a second to bury her head in her hands, then picked the phone back up.

“Well. Ya know. Lena…maybe there’s a reason for that.”

Lena sighed.

“Alright. Nevermind. I’m sorry. I’m just…I’m kind of fucked up in the head right now. Forget I said anything.”

“Lena…” Kara breathed.

“I’m sorry. I’m sorry. I’m really sorry.”

She could hear Lena’s voice crack with emotion.

*Good job, Kara, you made her cry.*

“Lena, it’s okay. You’re fine. Could you put Siobhan on the phone for a second, please?”

She heard a few thudding sounds.

“Hey, Kara!” Siobhan squealed excitedly. “Oh God, why is Lena crying?”

“Siobhan, listen. Lena is having a little bit of a rough night, and I don’t think that the alcohol is helping her. So I need you to take her home. Okay?”

Siobhan groaned.

“But I just started to have a good time!”

Kara rubbed her temple with her free hand, sick to death of alcohol and what it did to people.

“I’m sorry about that, Siobhan, but I’m a little bit more worried about Lena than I am about how much fun you’re having.”

“Look, Kara, it’ll be fine. She’s fine. Nothing some shots can’t fix, right?”

*For the love of Rao,* Kara thought.

“Siobhan, where are you guys right now?”

“The Station.”

Kara may be underage, and not much of a drinker, but she had been on campus long enough to know that The Station was the go-to bar for NCU students. How could it not be, when it was in walking distance from campus and the drinks were supposedly dirt cheap?

“Alright. Don’t move, I’ll be right there.”

The Station was a converted train station five blocks from campus. And even though Kara knew it
would be suspicious for her to show up in thirty seconds flat, she couldn’t stop worrying about the fact that Lena was upset and alone in a crowded bar, her only companion someone who could give a shit about her feelings or well-being. So, yeah, she stretched her flying muscles in order to get there.

She called Lena’s phone again, and there was no answer.

*Of course not.*

A tall, gangly, bored looking man sat on a stool at the entrance of The Station. He had shaggy brown hair, gauges on his ears, ripped jeans, and patchy facial hair. Kara readjusted her glasses, trying not to let her nerves get the best of her.

“ID?” he asked blankly.

“Um, yeah, about that…”

“No ID, no entrance, kid.”

“Sir, I appreciate your convictions against underage drinking. Really, it’s admirable. But I don’t drink. I just have a friend that had a few too many, and I need to take her home, okay?”

“Then call your friend and tell her to come outside.”

Kara clenched her fists in frustration.

“I tried that. She’s not answering. I really am not trying to sneak in right now. I just want to go in, find my friend, and come back out. Okay?”

“I can’t help you, sweetie.”

“You can literally watch me the whole time if you’re worried I’m lying to you.”

“I can’t let you in, kid. Those are the rules.”

Kara huffed out a breath. She really wished that people would stop being so difficult. She unclenched her fists, shook the tension out of her hands in preparation for what she was going to do next, and took a deep breath.

“I’m really sorry,” she said, and pushed past him in one rush of speed and strength. Before he could regain his balance and grab her, she had lost herself in the crowd of drunken college students. It took her a moment to get her bearings. How was it so busy on a Thursday night? The thumping base of the music, the overpowering smell of stale cigarettes, and the claustrophobia of the overcrowded dance floor made Kara dizzy for a moment. She pushed and wiggled her way through the crowd until she was at the bar, and took a moment to scan the room. This was one of those places that hadn’t been exposed to proper lighting in years. If it did, you would be able to see just how much dirt and grime had accumulated in every nook and cranny of the place.

A few seats down from her, sitting at the seat closest to the far wall, beneath a sign that said “Sorry, Hipsters, no PBR”, was Lena, hunched over a near empty cocktail glass. Siobhan, unsurprisingly, was nowhere in sight. Kara wriggled through a group of guys to get to Lena, getting beer spilled on her in the process.

*Lovely.*
“Lena,” Kara called, close enough to gently lay her hand on her shoulder.

Lena flinched under her touch, likely assuming her to be a stranger.

“It’s just me! Hi! Sorry, I shouldn’t have startled you like that.”

“Kara?” Lena asked, blinking at her slowly and lazily. She tried to lean in towards her, and ended up gripping Kara’s forearm fiercely to keep from falling off her stool. She was wearing a tight black dress that made Kara forget for a moment why she was there.

“How did you get here so fast?” Lena asked, voice slurred, “How did you get past the bouncer?”

“Don’t worry about it. I came to make sure you got home safe.”

Lena looked up at Kara, eyes glassy with tears like they were before the show. A small smile grew on her lips.

“Alright,” she said, and allowed Kara to pull her up out of her stool, grasp her hand tightly, and lead her out of the bar.

They nearly collided into the bouncer on the way out.

“See?” Kara said to him, “Look. I’ve got her, now I’m getting out of your hair.”

The man frowned at her, perplexed.

“You’re…like, mad strong.”

“Yeah, I know,” Kara said, and pulled Lena with her out the door.

The quiet of the street compared to the blasting music inside the bar made Kara’s ears feel numb. She felt Lena press into her side.

“Thanks for coming to get me,” she said quietly.

Kara nodded.

“Are you able to walk?”

Lena parted her mouth open, considering Kara’s question.

“In these heels? Hopefully.”

Without really thinking about it, Kara stepped out of her sneakers and gestured for Lena to put them on. Lena complied, now carrying her black heels in her right hand, her left hand around Kara’s waist to steady herself.

“Such a gentlewoman,” she murmured into Kara’s ear.

Kara rolled her eyes, and they began their walk back to campus, Lena in borrowed sneakers, Kara in her fluffy purple socks slowly being ruined by the grime of the sidewalk.

Intermittently though the silent walk back, Lena would point her phone out at Kara, then at both of them, then at Kara again.

“Lena, are you trying to take a picture?”
“Uh, no?”

“Are you sure?”

“…No?”

“Why are you taking pictures?”

“Because you’re so pretty.”

Kara bit her lip, and said nothing.

Lena lived on the opposite side of the street from the larger part of campus, in the student apartments. Each of the five smaller apartment buildings was named after a Greek god or goddess, for some indiscernible reason. Lena lived in the Athena building.

After fumbling with her clutch for a few moments, Lena found her entry card, pushed it into the reader, and let them both in. The walk home in the brisk night air seemed to have sobered Lena up a bit, but Kara still held on to Lena to help her up the stairs to the third floor of the building. There were four apartments on each floor, and Lena’s apartment was on the upper right corner. Lena pushed the door open too emphatically, sending it flying against the inner wall of the apartment with a loud ‘crack’.

“Shh, Lena, you’re gonna wake up your roommate,” Kara whispered.

“I don’t have a roommate,” Lena whispered back playfully, tossing her purse and key card onto the kitchen table carelessly.

Kara didn’t expect the campus apartments to be anything that extravagant, but Kara was definitely jealous of it, compared to her own little hole in the wall. Lena’s place had a nice sized living room with a leather couch set and a big tv, a full kitchen, a large bathroom from what she could see, and what looked like two bedrooms. Kara had just enough room for a mini fridge and freezer, a sink, a bed, the smallest desk known to man, and Alex’s favorite beanbag chair. What she wouldn’t give to have her own bathroom again…

“I thought all the campus apartments had two or more students?” Kara asked.

Lena shrugged, back turned to Kara as she strolled down the hallway towards her bedroom.

“Perk of my crummy family bankrolling a whole new building on campus: I get my own apartment.”

Kara hadn’t moved from where she was standing in the living room. Lena disappeared for a moment behind the bedroom door closer to the bathroom, then, after a couple minutes, during which Kara was trying to figure out whether she should just let herself out, Lena suddenly emerged again, in sweatpants and a T-shirt.

“Oh good, you didn’t leave,” she said, “I just had to get that dress off.”

“Uh, yeah. Well, I think I’ll just…”

“Kara,” Lena said, flopping onto her couch and sitting on it backwards so she was hanging off the back of it to face Kara, “I really appreciate you coming to get me tonight. And for…you know, just…being…you.”
Kara smiled meekly, unsure of how to answer.

“You can stay here tonight if you want,” Lena said, a small, sweet smile appearing on her face.

Even though she was still worried about Lena’s state of mind, after the night that she had, Kara honestly didn’t think that anything good would come of her staying at Lena’s apartment. Even if she spent the night innocently sleeping on the couch, crashing at Lena’s place just seemed too intimate, and the thought of it made Kara’s heart race uncomfortably.

“I think I should just go back to my dorm. I’m really tired.”

Lena visibly pouted for a moment, then changed her facial expression to something more neutral.

“Right. Of course. I’ve put you out enough already.”

“Lena, you haven’t put me out at all. You’re my friend. Friends are there for each other. Okay?”

Lena stared at Kara for a long moment, eyes wide and full of some deep, overwhelming emotion that Kara was afraid to try to interpret.

“Right. Friends,” Lena said.

Kara felt small under Lena’s penetrating gaze. She fidgeted with her glasses.

“Are you gonna be okay?”

“Hmm?” Whatever message had been hiding in Lena’s big green eyes had faded. “Oh, yeah. I’m good.”

“Okay,” Kara said walking over to the kitchen where she saw a case of bottled water. She grabbed a bottle and carried it over to Lena. “Drink this, and try to get some sleep. Do you have any early classes?”

Lena shrugged, took the bottle of water off of Kara, and flopped over to lay on her couch.

“Nothing I can’t handle.”

Kara frowned.


“Goodnight, Kara,” Lena mumbled, already half asleep.

Kara thought about trying to find a blanket to throw over her.

_Nah, too cliché._

Sighing, Kara let herself out of Lena’s apartment, and began her walk back to her lonely dorm room, her purple socks now completely ruined.

*
Kara fell asleep in her Friday morning math class. And again in Freshman Seminar. And yet again in Brit Lit. And though she knew it was rude and unprofessional to do so, she was kind of grateful for it, because by the time 4:30 rolled around and she had to be back at the theater to set up for the second performance, she wasn’t nearly as tired as she had been that morning.

She didn’t think much on what had happened with Lena the night before. She wasn’t awake long enough to think about much of anything, anyway. Still, it was in the deep recesses of her mind, like an itch that doesn’t go away that you are always at least somewhat aware of. Neither girl had attempted to reach out to the other in anyway throughout the day. Kara assumed that Lena would be too embarrassed to want to acknowledge that anything had happened, so Kara didn’t let herself try and text or call her to make sure that she was okay, even if she wanted to. She had a feeling that if Lena wanted to talk, she would.

Kara scribbled her signature into the crew sign-in sheet, and started unloading all of the props out of the prop box. This was something that Leslie usually already had done by the time Kara got there, but she was either off doing something else or was running late.

Kara had a vague idea that there had to be someone in the theater besides herself at the moment, but she couldn’t see or hear anyone, and she wasn’t curious enough to use her super powers to find out. She enjoyed the opportunity to work in silence, to settle into her routine without anyone around to bug her just yet.

“Hey, Kara,” a voice suddenly called from above, making her jump in surprise.

“Winn!” she hissed up at him, “You have got to stop doing that to people!”

Winn wasn’t working on anything. He was just sitting casually on the catwalk. Kara had noticed that he liked to do that from time to time. It relaxed him, in a weird way.

“Sorry!” he said. “I guess no one looks up as often as I think they do.”

“Not in National City they don’t. Maybe in Metropolis, though.”

Kara noticed the bitterness in her own tone after her words had already tumbled out.

“Was that a Superman joke? Nice. Oh, speaking of heroes, how was your night?”

Kara raised an eyebrow up at Winn, confused.

“I don’t know what you mean.”

“Oh don’t play coy with me, Danvers,” Winn replied, making his way down from the catwalk to help set up the stage, “I’ve seen Lena’s snapchat.”

Kara should have just dropped it there, already assuming that she knew what Winn meant. She figured that Lena had posted there little adventure on snapchat, since she had seen her snapping pictures. And while Kara knew that looking to see what she had posted would do nothing but make her anxious and uneasy, she couldn’t ignore her curiosity. Kara pulled out her phone, and looked up Lena’s snap story. Lena had posted two pictures and a video. The first picture was a blurry selfie of Lena next to Kara, Lena scrunching her face up comically, with the caption “Rescued by an angel!” The next, a slightly less blurry picture of just Kara, with the caption “I say angel bc no mere human is this hot”. The third was a video of a conversation Kara remembered well: “Why are you taking pictures?” “Because you’re so pretty.” The video was captioned with three large heart eye emojis.
Kara shook her head. She wasn’t really surprised that Lena had posted any of this in the state that she was in last night, but her cheeks still grew hot at the open query of how many people might have seen what she had posted, and what they thought about Kara because of it. It felt stupid to Kara that she cared about this, because it was always Alex, and not her, that had been the one to worry about what people thought about her. She inwardly scolded herself, reminding herself that Lena was her friend, and that it didn’t matter what anyone thought about that. The only other person besides herself whose opinion mattered, really, was Lena’s. And, well, considering that this just reminded Kara, once again, that Lena was unabashedly attracted to Kara…maybe that was why she suddenly felt so uncomfortable in her own skin.

Kara threw her phone into her back pocket, and when she met Winn’s eye again, he raised his eyebrows at her suggestively. She rolled her eyes, and went back to her work.

“Go help James or something,” she snapped at him.

“Ugh, how dare you suggest I do my job,” he joked, and trotted up towards the sound booth, where James was half asleep over his sound board.

Some minutes later, Leslie arrived, slinking in silently with her pre-show prep list in hand. She leaned against the now full prop table, a black beanie on her head, hands stuffed in the pockets of her ripped skinny jeans, looking Kara up and down a moment with a curious expression.

“You can kind of hold you own around here, can’t you?”

“Uh…” What was her angle here? “I guess?”

Leslie nodded absently.

“Yeah…” she said, voice trailing off.

Kara took a step back, putting her hands on her hips, staring at Leslie with a smirk until Leslie got annoyed.

“Oh, learn how to take a compliment, Danvers. Fuck.”

Leslie stormed off. Kara kept the smirk on her face awhile longer.

Soon after the rest of the stage crew showed up and the actors started to filter in. Once Leslie and Kara made sure the crew all had work to keep them busy, Kara stole away to the upstairs dressing room to once again help Siobhan with hair and makeup. Hopefully tonight they would be done faster than the night before, but Kara wasn’t very hopeful.

Kara was trying her hand at applying stage makeup. It was a lot like regular makeup, just ten times more obnoxious so that the stage lights didn’t wash out anyone’s face. Kara was good enough at doing her own makeup, but it was another thing entirely to try and put makeup on someone else’s face. Mascara in hand, she lowered a shaky hand towards Adam’s terrified looking eyes when Lena rolled into the dressing room, tossing her bag lazily onto the section of the vanity mirrored tabletops she had claimed as her own. Kara was facing the vanity mirrors on the opposite wall, so she could see Lena even though she was facing away from her. Kara let her eyes glance at Lena every now and then before focusing back at her victim as she made sloppy strokes at the eyelashes of Adam’s pain stricken face. Every few seconds, he would blink spasmodically, smearing mascara all over his eyelids that Kara would then have to gingerly clean off.

Boys were such babies about makeup.
Lena looked tired. She unpacked her back and looked through her costumes hanging on the rack next to her with an empty, strained expression. She recognized it from Alex’s many hangovers. When Lena started to peel off her t-shirt and leggings to change into the slip she wore beneath her costumes, Kara forced herself to focus fully on blending the thick, cakey foundation on Adams face with his skin tone. She had accidentally chosen a color too dark for his complexion, but it was too late to admit her wrongdoing now.

Upon averting her gaze from Lena, she noticed Siobhan in the corner of her eye, watching her with a knowing smile.

“So!” Siobhan piped up, voice louder than it needed to be in the somewhat crowded dressing room, looking at Lena through the mirror in front of her. “What happened with you two last night? One second Lena was at the bar with me, and the next, whoosh! Whisked away by Miss Danvers. Or, what is it you call her, Lena? Your angel?”

Siobhan was playing a nasty game with her so-called friend. She knew that the casual chatter around them had suddenly hushed so everyone could eavesdrop on what Siobhan was saying. And it didn’t take a genius to figure out what she was suggesting about the nature of Kara and Lena’s relationship, especially considering that just about everyone knew that Lena was gay.

“Siobhan,” Lena said, her voice an icy warning.

Maybe Lena was upset that Siobhan was making her private business public to the rest of the cast around them. More likely, she was aware of the fact that Kara might be uncomfortable with whatever came out of Siobhan’s mouth next, and was eager to shut her up and spare Kara’s embarrassment. Either way, Kara decided that she was irritated enough with Siobhan to take the burden of handling her off of Lena’s shoulders.

“Actually,” Kara jumped in, eyes not leaving her work, “I’m willing to take that title over whatever title you get for abandoning your friend when she needed someone to take her home.”

Siobhan’s mouth snapped shut, and she went back to angrily stabbing her eyeliner pen into Brendan’s watering eyes. The sound of a quick exhaled breath was Lena attempting to stifle a laugh.

“Oh, yeah, I almost forgot,” Lena said as she wrapped a thick lock of her hair around her hair curler, “I have your shoes, Kara.”

“Oh, good,” Kara replied, voice monotone, “Now I won’t have to walk around in my socks anymore.”

Lena laughed loudly in reply.

“Don’t laugh,” Kara said, chuckling herself, “Those were my favorite socks.”

“Well if I replace them for you will you get all weird on me again?” Lena asked playfully.

“Nope. I’ll send you the link to the website I bought them on.”

Lena laughed again. Whatever uncertainty had been between them in regards to the night before was long gone.

In fact, as Kara shooed Adam away and summoned a freshman named Stephanie to sit in front of her so Kara could curl her hair, her brain started flooding with all of those thoughts and feelings she had been pushing down for the past few months. She didn’t even realize how much she had
actually been forcing herself to ignore, until it started hitting her all at once as she struggled to keep from burning poor Stephanie’s hair. When she first saw Lena at auditions, she thinks she knew then that she was attracted to her. When Lena teased Kara when she tried to get her measurements for Winn, she knew that she wanted Lena. When Lena had popped into her dressing room unannounced at that boutique, Kara may have even needed her. When they were around each other, talking about their families, or about anything that came to mind, Kara knew that maybe she cared about her. And at this moment, Kara knew that Lena was suddenly someone she didn’t think she could keep away from anymore.

But in the noisy, crowded dressing room, as actors scurried to get ready for the second performance, Kara knew that now wasn’t exactly the best time to realize that she needed to do something about this. So, for now, she forced herself to just…

*Calm the hell down, Kara.*

That night’s performance went a lot better than the night before. The glitches from the previous night were all ironed out. They were replaced with different, equally terrifying complications, of course. An actor forgot his sword off stage, and was forced to take his hat off his head and pretend to think it was a useful weapon, resulting in an unplanned and satisfying laugh from the audience. The crank door was stuck open all through the first half of the show until Kara could fix it during intermission, leading to more than one occasion of an actor being spotted by the audience while they were back stage. But Friday night audiences were known for being the most lively and responsive, so regardless, the energy they gave amped up the actors to be at their best throughout the show.

Lena, as usual, was show stopping. You could give that woman one line and she would still be the most memorable part of a show. Kara couldn’t keep herself focused when Lena was on stage, she kept finding eyes and ears drawn to her like she was magnetic. When Lena was backstage between the scenes she was needed in, Kara always found herself near Lena, just wanting to be around her. She was gorgeous, and powerful, and it made Kara giddy with pride to be friends with her. Except that now, friends didn’t feel right anymore. In the darkness backstage, Kara felt bolder. It felt like up until now she had been choking on her own nerves, unable to make a move on Lena. But offstage, where it was so dark you could barely see the person right in front of you, it seemed so much easier for Kara to just reach out to Lena, to pull her close…to…

Well, in theory it was easier. She had even reached a hand out towards Lena when they stood quietly in the dark as Lena waited for her next cue to enter, but retracted it quickly each time. She had gotten so close, but she just couldn’t make herself do it. And before she knew it, all the actors were filing out for curtain call, and Kara had missed whatever opportunity she had, and the backstage lights had come back on, along with her confidence.

“You were fantastic,” Kara said pathetically as Lena passed by her on her way back to the dressing room.

“Thank you, Kara,” Lena replied sweetly.

*The next day Kara was feeling pretty sorry for herself. How hard was it to make a move on a girl you had a crush on? She knew Lena was into her, right? So why was it so hard for her to just do
something about it? Kara wished that Lena would just make this easier on her. She wished that for once Lena would go back to being a flirt, just for a minute, so that all Kara would have to do is not protest. But Kara and Lena were friends now. And Lena, because she was so good, was suddenly completely respectful to Kara, because she thought that was what she wanted. And Kara was such a coward she couldn’t even tell Lena that that wasn’t what she wanted anymore.

It was so much easier when she had a crush on a guy she knew she couldn’t have. She knew that she could have Lena, if she wanted to, and somehow that made it that much more terrifying.

Kara felt so uncomfortable it was killing her. She couldn’t think straight. Her palms were sweaty. Every little noise made her jump. And he had super hearing, so there were always little noises. She couldn’t believe people referred to this feeling as “butterflies”. Kara felt like she was going to throw up. And she knew she wasn’t being subtle about her distress, seeing as how everyone backstage as they prepped for the Saturday show was looking at her like she was a crazy person.

Crushes sucked.

For the safety of herself, the people around her, and, most importantly, the show, she diverted all of her tasks to other people, before she broke something with her super strength, or accidentally set off her laser eyes. She imagined that Siobhan was a little more than peeved to be doing hair and makeup herself.

Whatever, Kara thought. She deserves it.

At this point, Kara almost hoped she didn’t run into Lena again for the rest of the night. She was such a nervous mess that she didn’t think she could handle seeing her in that dress.

“Kara” a voice whispered behind her suddenly.

Kara, being so jumpy already, was so startled by this that she actually fell out of the chair she was sitting in.

Of course…

“Oh! Hey, Lena!” Kara said, cheeks hot with embarrassment as she pulled herself back up to her feet.

“Oh my god, Are you okay?” Lena asked, gripping Kara’s forearm firmly to help her up.

“Yeah,” she replied, laughing awkwardly, “I’m, uh, I’m fine. Just a little…on edge today.”

“Is everything okay?” Lena asked, face filled with genuine concern.

Look at how cute she is. Look at those freaking puppy dog eyes. No, everything is not okay. Just do it, Kara…just…do it already!

“Everything is fine,” Kara said, frozen in place.

Lena didn’t seem convinced, but she didn’t push the subject any further.

“Okay, well, I just wanted to say hi.”

“Right. Hi! Um, break a leg!”

Lena gave her a confused look.
“Yeah. Thanks,” she said, “I’ll just, leave you to your thoughts then.”

When Lena had left her alone again, Kara thumped her head against the wall next to her repeatedly.

*You’re an idiot, Kara Danvers.*

Saturday was the best show by far, as far as lack of mistakes went. The audience wasn’t quite as lively as Friday, but overall, it was a great night for the actors. After Kara’s little mishap, she and Lena hardly interacted at all. Mostly because Kara found herself actually hiding from Lena in spots she knew she didn’t wander to between scenes.

Kara felt bad for ignoring Lena. She felt even worse because that wasn’t at all what she had intended to do. But she was such a nervous mess that she didn’t know what else to do but stay away from Lena until she could pull herself together. If that was even possible.

*

Kara had to get her shit together. Today was the last show. Then would come Thanksgiving break. And then they would be back on campus for a week, doing probably nothing but studying, since the week after that was finals. And then came winter break. A whole two months off of school. If Kara didn’t kiss Lena today, she probably would have to wait a long time until she got another chance.

She kept repeating in her head what Alex had said. That she didn’t know she was into girls until she made out with a girl.

*You gotta do it, Kara. You gotta find out. Think of it as an experiment.*

*You just…you gotta.*

But…well, she couldn’t just jump Lena the second she walked in the door of the theater. That just seemed like it would be unpleasant. And bruising.

And she couldn’t do it while Lena was getting ready in the dressing room, not with all those other people in there…(Kara thought about dragging Lena into the dressing room bathroom. But. That seemed too violent, and not at all subtle.) Besides, Lena seemed to be a bit quiet while she did her hair and makeup, maybe still a little groggy from last night’s show. With so few hours between curtain call the night before and call time this morning, everyone was much quieter than usual.

There was a moment that was totally possible. Lena was standing, alone, off stage left, scrolling lazily through her phone. Everyone else was still in the dressing rooms…

*You gotta…*

Kara walked to across the stage, towards Lena, internally screaming with panic, when…

“Danvers!”

Kara stopped in her tracks, mid stage, and turned, ready to kill whoever had just interrupted her quest. Leslie was standing in front of the stage. A man, roughly in his forties, with thick arm
muscles, standing with legs parted like a military man awaiting orders, was standing next to her.

“Um. Yes?” Kara replied, putting her hands on her hips.

She didn’t want to seem rude to this person with Leslie but, like, Kara had things to do…

“I wanted you to meet J’onn J’onzz,” Leslie said. “He’s gonna be our dance instructor for the musical next semester.”

“Oh!” Kara said hopping down from the stage to shake his hand, “Uh, hi. I’m Kara Danvers. Nice to meet you.”

J’onn separated his crossed arms to shake her hand firmly. The stern stiffness of his body juxtaposed against his warm smile was jarring.

“I’m also going to be the vocal coach,” he said in a deep voice. “Your director evidently had a few favors to call in from me.”

“Are you a professor on campus?” Kara asked.

“No, actually, I’m a choreographer at The Grand Theater downtown. Have you heard of it?”

“Uh, yes. That was where I saw my first musical! It was awesome.”

J’onn smiled, his rigid stance relaxing slightly.

“Well,” he said, “they’ve brought in a guest choreographer from London for their upcoming production, so I have some free time on my hands. Dr. Carr and I went to Berkley together, and I’m always willing to lend a hand to an old friend. Besides, I think it will be good for me to work with students again.”

Kara scrunched up her face inadvertently, trying to picture J’onn and someone like Dr. Carr as friends. She was glad to meet J’onn, a professional choreographer, for gosh sakes, but she didn’t really know why Leslie was so insistent on them meeting.

“Well, great! It was nice to meet you, J’onn.”

“You as well, Kara. I look forward to working with you.”

Kara blinked.

“Right. Yep, uh. Enjoy the show, if you’re, you know, here to see the show. I, uh, gotta go.”

Well, she guessed it was normal for Leslie to assume that Kara would be involved in next semester’s musical? But again, it seemed like there was something about the exchange that Kara was missing.

Kara shook her head. No matter, she had a girl to kiss.

Who was…not there anymore?

Fantastic.

What was she supposed to do now? Track Lena down? That seemed creepy.

Kara resolved to just hang out where she normally did, by the props table. Actors and crew
members came by to say hi, chat, complain about how much ending the show on a matinee sucked. But there was still no Lena.

It was ten minutes until curtain. The audience was pathetically small and devoid of energy. Everyone knew that this was going to be the worst show yet. Between that and the fact that Lena wasn’t in place yet, Kara had decided that fate hated her. Where was that girl?

Kara had a hunch, and ducked away from the cluster of students around her and headed towards the stairwell to the prop room. She only had to round the corner to see Lena standing at the top of the stairs.

“Um. Hi,” Kara said quietly, hoping not to startle Lena, though Kara herself was shaking like a leaf, already psyching herself out of trying to kiss Lena.

Lena pocketed her cell phone she had been fiddling with.

“Oh, hey,” she replied, not meeting Kara’s gaze.

“Leslie just gave the ten minute warning,” Kara said. It’s all she could think to say.

“Yeah, I know,” Lena said, expressionless.

Kara frowned. This wasn’t how she pictured this playing out in her head.

“Is, um, is everything okay?” she asked.

Lena attempted a half smile.

“Yep.”

Kara narrowed her eyes at Lena, stepping down from the landing to be at the same level as Lena on the stairs.

“You’re lying.”

“Well,” she sighed, “You were being weird yesterday. And I thought that I probably did something to make you uncomfortable, again, so I’m just giving you your space, that’s all.”

Lena looked up at Kara with big, sad green eyes.

Oh my god.

“Don’t,” Kara said breathlessly.

Before Kara knew what she was doing, she had grabbed Lena by the waist and pulled her towards her, lips landing roughly on hers. Lena seemed frozen for a second, before seemingly realizing what was happening. Then, in a single movement, Lena crashed into Kara’s kiss, mouth hungry, one hand reaching up to Kara’s scalp to grasp at a fistful of her hair, the other hand placed firmly at the small of Kara’s back. Even if Kara had started the kiss, it certainly didn’t feel that way now as Lena took total control. The closest thing she could compare it to was when she first visited an Earth beach and was knocked over by a large wave when she had turned her back from the ocean. But this wasn’t nearly as terrifying. This was…

Lena’s tongue rolled over Kara’s lower lip, silently asking permission to be let in. Kara parted her lips, a shiver shooting down her spine.
“Curtain in five. Break legs, everyone!” James announced into her headset.

Oh, shit.

“Oh shit,” Kara said out loud, breaking away from Lena.

Lena’s pupils were dilated, her lipstick smeared. Kara knew that it was because of her, and that made her even more turned on that she was before. Did they really need to get the show started right this second?

Yes, Kara, yes they do. Get it together.

“Umm,” she said, wiping her thumb over the corner of Lena’s mouth in a poor attempt to fix her lipstick. “My bad.”

“I’ve got it,” Lena said, pulling a packet of makeup wipes out from the depths of her cleavage.

Kara gave her a perplexed look.

“What?” she asked innocently. “Brendan is a sloppy stage kisser.”

She dabbed one of the wipes around her mouth, looking up at Kara for inspection. Kara gave her a thumbs up. Before turning to go, Lena grasped Kara’s hips firmly, backing her against the left wall of the stairwell, bringing her mouth to Kara’s right ear.

“We will continue this later,” she whispered hotly, then raced to her spot to start the show.

Kara gulped, a dull, demanding ache forming between her legs.

Yeah. She was definitely attracted to girls.

Watching the DOA Sunday performance from stage right, Kara casually wiped her mouth on her sleeve, not sure how much of Lena’s lipstick had gotten transferred to her. She couldn’t be bothered to care. She giggled despite herself when she saw, illuminated by the bright stage lights, that Lena had missed a spot on the left corner of her mouth.

After the scene between Brendan and Lena, the one that gave Kara yearning flashbacks to when they had been interlocked during cue to cue, Lena exited the stage quietly and gracefully, so subtle in her movements that it would have taken a trained eye to see her take hold of Kara’s hand and drag her back to the lower stairwell, where she pressed Kara back into the wall, as promised, and captured Kara’s mouth in her own desperately. Kara had to remind herself not to let her knees buckle and send her crumpling to the floor as a rush of heat pooled in her gut, her center aching, feeling as close as she could to being drunk as Lena took control of her once more.

She had an inclination that Lena perhaps had as much pent up sexual frustration towards Kara as she did towards Lena, but still…

Holy shit.

Kara had her fair share of make out sessions before, all of them being careful, gentle, calculated, for good reason. Now, totally at Lena’s mercy as tongues explored mouths, Lena’s left hand creeping beneath Kara’s shirt, a storm of desperate urgency overtaking the both of them, Kara had to keep reminding herself that she could easily break something of Lena’s if she didn’t keep her
composure.

Lena had grasped one of Kara’s breasts beneath her bra, Kara gasping louder than she had anticipated in response. She remembered then that she still had her headset around her neck.

“Hold on,” she whispered, moving to take the headset off.

“What are you doing?” Lena whispered, her thumb rolling back over Kara’s nipple. “You have to tell me when I need to be back on in two scenes.”

“They could hear me!” Kara squealed, pressing harder against the wall behind her as she was overcome with lust.

“Just be very careful not to turn on your mic, then,” Lena replied.

Kara shivered. She wanted to badly so be able to put her hands on Lena. But in that cage of a dress…

“How am I supposed to…” Kara whispered, perplexed.

Lena pinned Kara’s hands to her sides, biting playfully at her neck.

“You’re not. Now stay still.”

Kara did as she was told, the heat between her legs begging for some kind of release. Lena’s fingers traced their way to Kara’s jeans, undoing the button and zipper quickly.

Oh, shit, this is actually happening, Kara thought amongst a cloud on nonsensical thoughts screaming for more.

“Is this okay?” Lena asked.

Kara nodded emphatically in response.

Tugging at her jeans until she had enough room to work with, Lena slipped her hand between Kara’s legs.

Oh, Rao, Kara thought, hips bucking for more contact.

“I said stay still, Kara,” Lena whispered intensely into Kara’s ear, biting her earlobe as she slipped a finger inside her.

Kara covered her mouth with her hand to keep from yelling out. Lena helped her by offering to press her mouth into hers, kissing her fiercely as she began a steady rhythm inside Kara, her thumb moving in circles over Kara’s clit.

Kara moaned into Lena’s mouth, using all the strength of mind she had to comply with Lena’s order to stay still, keeping her hands at her sides. Lena quickened her pace, inspired by the noises Kara was struggling not to make.

Kara threw her head back against the wall, barely in control of her own body as she shuddered beneath Lena’s touch, feeling herself coming closer and closer to climax.

“Lena,” she whispered desperately.

Tugging at Kara’s bottom lip with her teeth, Lena pushed a second finger into Kara, her rhythm
quickening still. Kara yelped. Moments later, she could think of nothing else but the urgent insistence not to cry out as she climaxed beneath Lena. Coming down from her euphoria, she suddenly realized she could hear a voice in the headset.

“Where the fuck is Lena?!?”

Kara’s eyes widened in horror, realizing that Lena was so preoccupied with bringing Kara to orgasm that she had missed her cue.

“Oh fuck,” Lena said, and sprinted up the stairs.

Chapter End Notes

WOOPS MY HAND SLIPPED AND SMUT HAPPENED. But, like, this mini haitus is legit, and you guys have earned this sin LOL.

Literally as I was editing I realized that THAT scene happened on page 69 of the word doc I'm writing this on and I am SUCH A CHILD I had to laugh about that for awhile before posting this chap.

I'm sure Lena makes just as good a bottom as she does a top, we'll find out I guess (that respect of boundaries and consent tho ugh Lena is so goals).

Also LOOK I figured out what to do with J’onn. (I'm aware that all the other characters are kind of being ignored this chapter, James especially, I noticed. I got carried away with my two idiots, I guess, but they'll be plenty more superfriends scenes in the future, I promise)

PS, you guys leave the best comments ever, and I love ALL OF YOU. You can always find me on tumblr, too (schatzietess), it would be nice to see some friendly faces, and not just porn bots and the occasional creeper.

Coming up next Thursday, Thanksgiving with the Danvers isn't quite picture perfect, Leslie pulls a fast one on her only reliable stage hand, and trouble in Metropolis weighs heavily on Kara's mind...

See you soon :D
Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

Kara can't think of much to be thankful for at Thanksgiving...

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“So, Kara, how’s school going?”

Kara was absently pushing her stuffing around with her fork, not paying much attention to the conversation at the dinner table. At the mention of her name, she snapped her head up.

“Sorry, what?”

Eliza shook her head, eyes amused.

“I said, how is school going?”

“Oh, um. Good.”

“Well that’s good to hear,” Jeremiah said, “We haven’t really heard much from you since you started the semester.”

Kara shrugged.

“I’ve been busy.”

“Yeah, haven’t you guys heard?” Alex piped in, refilling her glass of wine. “Kara is a full blown theater geek now.”

“Yes,” Eliza said towards Kara, “it would have been nice if you would have told us about the show you were in, Jeremiah and I would have loved to see it.”

“I wasn’t in it. I was just stage crew.”

Kara felt herself shriveling under her family’s gazes.

“Well, still! We would have liked to know,” Jeremiah piped in.

“Sorry,” Kara mumbled, stuffing a huge chunk of turkey into her mouth so that maybe they wouldn’t ask her any more questions.

“Are you seeing anyone, Kara?” Eliza asked a moment later.

Kara nearly choked on her turkey.

“Yeah, Kara,” Alex pressed, “Are you?”

Kara flashed back to the sensory memory of Lena pressed against her, mouth on her neck, fingers
curled into her…

She shuddered, shaking the memory off.

“Nope,” she said simply.

After the show on Sunday, Kara had every intention to drag Lena back to her dorm room and return the favor of being screwed senseless. Perhaps hoping that this might be the case, Lena had lingered in the lobby of the theater after most of the cast had left to get ready for the cast party that evening at Siobhan’s parent’s vacation house on the bay (because of course they had a vacation house on the bay). She was in a pair of shorts and a tank top, and Kara couldn’t help but think how much easier it would be to get to her in that outfit than it had been in that dress…

She moved quickly across the lobby. Lena was looking at her phone, not noticing Kara until she had come up behind her, perhaps not-so-subtly grabbing Lena’s ass, causing her to yelp in surprise.

“Wanna get out of here?” Kara asked, standing behind Lena, head tilted into the crook of Lena’s neck, barely recognizing her own voice as it dripped with lust.

Lena turned towards Kara, eyes raking over her with remembrance of their previous encounter.

“Do you really have to ask?” she replied.

Biting her lip with a smirk, Kara grabbed Lena’s hand, turning to lead Lena to her dorm building. It was just then that she collided into Alex.

Wait, Alex?

“Um. Alex. Hi!”

Alex narrowed her eyes at Kara, looking at her, then at Lena, then at the girls’ clasped hands, then back at Kara, looking like she was piecing together some puzzle in her head.

“Hey,” she said, eyes still narrowed suspiciously at the two of them.

Kara, instinctively, released Lena’s hand and stuffed her own hands in her pockets.

“Um, Lena, this is my sister, Alex,” Kara said, eyes not leaving Alex’s face, trying to read every little movement on her face.

“Yeah,” Lena said, perfectly confident with herself, “we’ve seen one another around the labs. Nice to see you again, Alex.”

“Uh huh,” Alex replied blankly, crossing her arms.

Kara widened her eyes at Alex, silently indicating in a way only Alex could understand that Kara thought she was being rude.

Alex cleared her throat.

“Kara, I came to pick you up, we’re going to Mom and Dad’s.”

Kara put her hands on her hips.
“Right now?” she whined, eyes darting for a second to Lena. “Thanksgiving isn’t until Thursday.”

“Well, change of plans. Mom has to go on some trip to do some…science stuff…I don’t know, I didn’t really pay attention to what she said. Point being. She’s leaving Wednesday, so we’re having T-day early.”

“But…”

“Come on, Kara, aren’t you dying to eat real food for once, not this campus cafeteria nonsense? Let’s go pack you stuff, I wanna stop at the liquor store before they close.”

Kara’s first instinct was to continue to protest, but she knew that there was no way she was going to get her way. Looking to Lena, she did all she could in a single facial expression to convey an apology to Lena. Lena responded by winking at her, a small smile on her lips. Kara was confident that it meant that she wasn’t upset with her.

That didn’t make Kara any less angry with her sister from keeping her from another heart pounding encounter with Lena.

“Are you sure you’re not seeing anyone?” Alex now said from across the dinner table, something ominous in her tone, like she knew more about what was going on with Kara than she had told her sister (which was nothing). Could she have figured out that there was something going on between Lena and Kara? Not entirely anxious to find out, Kara switched tactics.

“Positive. What about you, Alex? Get sushi with any campus security guards lately?”

Alex coughed into her wine glass, sending red droplets sputtering onto the white tablecloth. She had come out to Eliza and Jeremiah almost two years ago now. Eliza had immediately accepted it, Jeremiah took some time to warm to the idea, but he eventually came around. They had even started to bug Alex to start bringing whatever girls she was dating over to meet them, instead of keeping her dating life so private all the time. Kara knew this, so naturally she wasn’t surprised when their parents took the bait, instantly starting in with the questions.

“What’s this, Alex? You seeing someone? Is she pretty? How old is she? Why didn’t you invite her over? Has Kara met her? Why does Kara always get to meet your girlfriends before we do?”

Alex sucked down her glass of wine, shooting daggers at Kara.

“I’m not seeing anyone, guys. I went on one date with a girl who works on campus. And I don’t know where it’s headed. So no, I wasn’t that quick to have her come meet my family over Thanksgiving dinner, thank you very much.”

Eliza shrugged.

“Well, figure out if you’re dating this girl or not before Christmas, so I know if I should get her a gift.”

“Mom,” Alex groaned, burying her head in her hands.

Kara laughed, gleeful that the spotlight had been diverted away from her. At least, for that moment. But her cheer was short lived.

“Did you see what happened in Metropolis?” Jeremiah asked to no one specific, apparently done
with the topic of his daughters’ dating lives.

Alex looked straight at Kara when she spoke.

“No, Dad, what happened in Metropolis?”

“Well, it’s that son of a bitch Lex Luthor again. There were funds from LexCorp being funneled into trying to create some army of genetically altered, well, superhumans, to try and kill Superman. No one realized it til there were almost a dozen of them causing mayhem all over the city.”

“Honestly, how is that company not been shut down yet?” Eliza said, exasperated.

“Because that whole damn family is just as crooked as he is,” Jeremiah snapped, growing louder and angrier with each syllable. “That’s why. And as long as they’re around, they’re gonna keep that company going so they can bankroll that maniac.”

“So you think all the Luthors are evil, huh, Dad?” Alex asked, still staring Kara down.

“Of course they are! If they weren’t, they would have turned Lex over to the police by now! You know damn well they know where he is.”

Kara felt herself deflating in her dining room chair, wishing she could crumple onto the carpet beneath her and disappear.

“I think you’re right, Dad,” Alex said, voice like ice. “I bet they do know exactly where he is. Have you even talked to your cousin lately, Kara? I hope he’s alright after having an army of superhumans sent after him.”

Kara’s jaw clenched painfully.

“Well, you know Kal-El. Doesn’t want to acknowledge my existence except to remind me, his silly, helpless little cousin not to do anything stupid like use her powers. Ever.”

“Now, Kara,” Eliza chided.

“I’m not hungry anymore,” Kara spat, and stormed off to her room before anyone could protest her departure.

*Kara found herself re-reading her “Stories of Oz” collection. It was one of the few books she hadn’t brought with her to campus. It had remained on the shelf above her bed, exactly where it had been since she was thirteen and needed an escape. She always loved the idea of a young girl getting lost in a strange and foreign world. It reminded her of herself, though Oz was a lot more similar to Krypton than to earth. The only time the books made her remember her grief was when Dorothy got to go back home in the end.

Once, when Kara had gone out shopping with Alex and Eliza, she had spotted a pair of red slippers that reminded her of Dorothy’s, and she loved them so much that Eliza bought them for her. She still had them, on the shelf next to the Oz books, too small now for her. She had never, ever worn them. She thought that as long as she never tried to tap them together, she never had to admit to
herself that they weren’t magical, and couldn’t take her back to her home and to her family like Dorothy’s slippers had.

She felt herself slipping again, into that dark place that was harder and harder to pull herself out of each time she found herself in it. She laid on her bed until the sun went down, thinking about Dorothy, and Kal-El, and Lena…

*That whole damn family is just as crooked as he is,* Jeremiah’s voice echoed in her head over and over again, mocking her.

If they knew about Lena, and what had happened between them, what would they think of her?

There was knock on the door. Kara looked through the door with her X-ray vision, and saw Alex on the other side.

“What?” she said, not moving.

Alex opened the door.

“Go away, Alex.”

“No,” Alex replied, sitting on the desk chair next to Kara’s bed. She picked up the *Oz* book, smiling at it.

“Some things never leave us, do they?” Alex said, placing a hand on the cover.

“What do you want?” Kara asked, not meeting Alex’s eyes.

“To apologize?”

Kara let the air in her lungs out slowly through her nose, staring up at her ceiling, her silence permitting Alex to continue.

“So, I don’t know if anything is going on between you and Lena. You two seemed…I don’t know, a little more than friendly with each other when I came to get you yesterday. And then I thought about how upset you got with me when I was asking you all those questions about her after she bought you all that stuff…And I stopped to think about how I would feel if I were you. I wondered how I would feel if the first time I had showed interest in a girl, you had come at me with both barrels like I kind of did to you. And I realized I would have been pretty pissed at you. So, I’m sorry. For not treating you how I would have wanted to be treated. God knows you were great when I came out to you.”

Kara bit her lip. Did she have to think about this now? Did she have to do the whole “what am I?” journey? Was she going to have to come out to people like Alex had? Kara hadn’t thought about any of that yet.

“Anyway,” Alex continued, “I wanted to make sure you know that whatever is going on with you, you can talk to me about it. I mean, I should hope you could talk to me about it. What kind of lesbian sister would I be if I was an asshole about my sister’s sexual orientation?”

“Alex…” Kara tried to cut in.

“I know. I might just be assuming too much here. Just, if you are” Alex continued, “You know, attracted to girls…please, for the love of God, find someone other than Lena Luthor.”
And she was doing so well, there, Kara thought.

“I mean, Kara, I get that she’s hot, I’m not blind. But she could actually be a real danger to you. And to Clark. There’s just no way it could work out, you know? Even if she’s a good person, that’s neither here nor there. The closer you get to her, the closer you get to exposing who you really are to those vile people in her family. And if Lex were to find out about you…”

“Lena and I are friends, Alex. That’s all.”

“That doesn’t make me feel any better about it.”

“Alex, for god’s sake…” Kara breathed.

“Kara. I can’t stand to lose you, okay?”

Alex had leaned in closer to Kara, taking her hands in her own. Her eyes were misty, her breath bitter with wine.

“I can’t lose my little sister. So please, please, just…keep away from her, okay?”

Kara bit her lip. She wished that Alex was able to see the good in people, like what she saw in Lena. She wished Alex understood that this wasn’t at all as simple a choice as she made it seem. And, worst of all, she wished that Alex wasn’t making Kara question her feelings for Lena, and if they were worth it.

“I will,” Kara said, not knowing if she was lying or not.

*

Later that night, after Eliza and Jeremiah had gone to bed, and Alex was passed out on her old bed in the girls’ shared room, Kara did something she never thought that she would do.

She texted Kal-El.

_Heard there was some trouble in Metropolis._

_Everything okay?_

Kal, who was probably awake anyway, quickly texted back.

_Just a dozen or so genetically modified super humans. Nothing I can’t handle lol._
You know you could always ask for my help.

Same powers and everything.

Out of the question. I won’t let you get hurt.

Kara rolled her eyes. It was amazing how he could sound heroic and condescending at the same time.

Jeremiah said it had something to do with

Lex Luthor?

Who else could muster such drama?

Well, what about the rest of the Luthors?

Do you know anything about them?

Not much, really. They seem pretty proud

of their Golden Boy. I don’t want to imagine

Thanksgiving at their house.

Kara bit her lip, wondering if Lena was planning on going back to Metropolis for Thanksgiving. Kal-El texted her again.

Why? Does this have anything to do with

Lena?

Kara blinked several times.

Who?
Lena Luthor? Alex told me Lex’s little sister goes to NCU. Do you know her?

Kara cleared her throat, pushing away memories of riding out an orgasm with Lena’s hand between her legs.

Um, yeah, we’ve met once or twice. She seems pretty normal, honestly.

Clark took a minute or so to reply.

Yeah. I used to think that about Lex, too.

Lex and I were best friends, once.

Kara bit her lip.

I’m sorry.

It’s okay. Just remember who the Luthors are.

Yeah. Oh. And Happy Thanksgiving.

Happy Thanksgiving, Kara. :) Miss you, kiddo.

Kara scoffed, tossing her phone onto her bed. She was older than Kal-El, after all. He liked to forget that little fact. She considered throwing her pillow at the slumbering Alex on the other side of the room for tattling to her cousin about Lena going to school with them. That was worse than if she had tattled to Eliza and Jeremiah, somehow. At least she knew that Eliza and Jeremiah would have her safety and well-being in mind. Kal probably just liked scolding Kara because he gets a kick out of the way his pec muscles flex when he crosses his arms at people.
Kara laid back in her bed, feeling uneasy. She had a lot to think about. She could listen to reason from everyone else around her, and do whatever they wanted her to do, but what did that say about her? Kara needed to start figuring the world out for herself. And a part of that was learning to trust her gut. And her gut told her that Lena was a good person.

But like Alex said, that was neither here nor there. Even if Lena was a literal saint, getting close to her meant that it would only take one misstep, for either of them, for things to get really bad, really fast.

Kara rolled over, groaning into her pillow. She could try and rationalize the situation all night long, but all she really wanted to figure out was if having sex with Lena made her a bad person…and also if it made her an even worse person for wanting to keep having sex with Lena…

*

Kara wasn’t able to get out of obligatory “family time” the following day. She felt as uncomfortable and out of place as she did when she first came to live with the Danvers, only now it was for completely different reasons. She was quiet most of the day, trying not to seem like she had an attitude, but unable to fake her usual cheery demeanor. It didn’t help that Lena had begun texting her shortly after breakfast, reminding her of the crap situation she was in.

*How’s your early Thanksgiving?*

*I mean. Food is always a good thing. How was the cast party Sunday night?*

*If Winn hadn’t guilt tripped me into going*  
*I would have blown it off. Loud pop music,*  
*toxic mixed drinks, public displays of*  
*affection at every turn…no thanks.*

*LOL.*

*Kara, really? LOL?!, she thought.*

Then again, what exactly do you say to someone you had spontaneously hooked up with during a show? Were there any Earth customs that applied to this situation?
I think Mike was bummed that you weren’t there.

Kara cackled out loud, earning her a strange look from her family.

Don’t even start.

What? It’s true. He’s gone from his “girls don’t want good guys” phase all the way into “she’s my white whale” phase since dress rehearsals. It’s rather remarkable.

Well. In that case. I’m just gonna stay home for another…few years.

So, were they just going to talk like everything was normal? Lena texted her back.

Or…we could just hook up backstage until he eventually sees us and gets the picture?

;)

Kara gulped, hoping Alex didn’t notice the flush on her cheeks. So much for that idea. She reluctantly texted back.

Staaaahp.

Kara put her phone away after that, knowing that the longer she texted Lena, the more likely it
would be for Eliza or Jeremiah to start asking who she was talking to.

It was a pretty typical day-after-Thanksgiving at the Danvers house, even for two days before actual Thanksgiving. Alex insisted that mimosas didn’t count as alcohol. Eliza joined her in her “brunch” festivities until she was giddy enough to want to go shopping. Once at the nearest strip mall, Alex and Eliza attempted to get Kara to stray away from her “conservative” fashion sense, to no avail. An hour or so into their shopping trip the girls realized that Jeremiah had disappeared at some point, only to be found watching sports in a nearby bar. Alex decided to join her dad, spouting off statistics of international soccer statistics that no one had ever heard of, except for some random drunk man who responded to her with grunts of “yeah!” from across the bar. Somehow Alex and Jeremiah would find a way to seamlessly switch between the topic of hockey player stats to theoretical physics. Kara would attempt to correct them, because most of what they knew about physics on Earth was very wrong, only to get “well that doesn’t count here” as a reply. Kara and Eliza would eventually leave the duo to find the nearest Cinnabon, because Kara would absolutely die if she was within a square mile of a Cinnabon without eating at least six of them. Eliza and Kara at some point would just decide to head home without Jeremiah and Alex and watch old films until they wandered home.

After a while, Kara almost forgot she had ever left for college.

Almost.

After bickering over what they should order for dinner, and finally settling on Italian from the restaurant two blocks down, because Kara would literally laser eye someone if they didn’t feed her soon, Kara started getting antsy. She wanted to be back in her dorm. Not because she liked her dorm. Her dorm was awful, and had a weird smell that Kara couldn’t find the source of no matter how hard she tried.

But she had privacy. She had a place where she could exist without worrying about what her family thought about her, about what she was doing, about who she was doing, and about whether or not she was following Clark Kent’s Patented 10 Step Plan to Being a Normal Earth Human. She didn’t realize how stifling it could feel to be with the Danvers until she had been without them. No, she wasn’t using her powers, or off fighting crime, or anything like that. But if she wanted to use her powers in the privacy of her independent life on campus, she might just be able to get away with it.

As Alex snuck to the basement to check out Jeremiah’s beer stash, Kara took her opportunity to snag her sister’s attention.

“Alex!” she hissed as she trotted down the stairs.

On instinct, Alex hid the opened beer behind her back.

“Calm down, it’s just me. Listen. Can you drive me back to campus tonight?”

“You’re not gonna stay the night?” Alex asked.

“No. You aren’t, either.”

“Well, no, obviously, but Mom and Dad are gonna be bummed if you duck out now.”

“Oh, they’ll be fine.”

“What about Dad? He’ll be all alone on Thanksgiving.”
Kara put her hands on her hips, mimicking Alex’s signature stance.

“What do you mean? We just had Thanksgiving.”

“Yeah, but actual Thanksgiving day? Mom’s gonna be…wherever she’s gonna be. He’ll be so depressed in the house by himself! You’re being selfish.”

“Oh I’m selfish? And where are you gonna be, hmm?”

Alex took a swig of her beer.

“At home? I live on my own. You don’t hang out at your parents house all week when you have your own apartment. It’s weird. But you, you still live here, technically. So yeah. You’re on Dad duty.”

Kara could just picture it. Five more days of Jeremiah yelling about how evil the Luthors are.

No thank you.

“Alex, you gotta take me back to campus. I’m begging you. Jeremiah…will be fine. There’s college football on, he won’t even notice I’m gone.”

“What are you gonna do all week by yourself?”

Kara hadn’t thought about that.

“I don’t know. It doesn’t matter. I just gotta get out of here.”

Alex sighed.

“Alright. Fine. I get it. But you better make up a good excuse.”

*

Kara collapsed onto her own bed in her dorm room late that night, quickly shaking off the guilt trips both her parents had attempted to give her while she was already halfway out the door. She was going to be stuck with them for two whole months once the semester was over in a couple of weeks. They would survive until then. Kara realized after a moment of enjoying being back in her room (though, seriously, what was that smell?) that Lena had texted her hours ago and she had forgotten to respond.

**So tell me, early or not, what is Thanksgiving like in a normal family?**

Kara bit her lip, trying not to imagine Thanksgiving with the Luthors as a room of bald headed stuffy villain types in some massive dining room decorated with the mounted heads of exotic animals.
Oh, I’m sure it’s not all that different from your family. Are you back in Metropolis?

**HAH. Haven’t you heard?**

Was Kara supposed to act like she had heard about Lex’s latest scheme? Or no? What would make Lena feel better? Lena texted her again before Kara could decide how to respond.

**The Luthors are, apparently, too busy helping the charming outlaw of the family create an army of X-Men to host a proper Thanksgiving dinner. Wish they would have sent me the memo. I always had a thing for Rogue**…

Kara didn’t have to have a history of burying her own feelings to know that Lena was covering a pretty large wound through sarcasm. If she had been next to her, Kara would have dragged Lena into a hug.

**Lena…**

**Don’t.**

**Don’t what?**

**Don’t say whatever it is you’re going to say to try and make me feel better.**

**Why not?**
Because I don’t want you to.

But…

Don’t.

Kara took a moment to turn her head towards her pillow so she could groan into it. How was she supposed to stay away from Lena Luthor when she was this sweet, innocent person who was clearly hurting and needed someone to be there for her? Kara wasn’t a monster, after all. She was Lena’s friend before anything else. Even before Alex’s stern scolding.

When Kara had fallen into her little slump, Lena had showed up at her dorm to quite literally drag her out of it. The closer they got, the more Kara knew that Lena would unquestioningly be there for her, always. And Kara wanted to be as good a friend to Lena as she was to her. She wanted it even more than she wanted Lena. So, despite the fact that Kara kept reminding herself, over and over in her head, that she absolutely should not continue a physical relationship with Lena, she still knew exactly what to say to take Lena’s mind off of her family.

So. Not allowed to make you feel better.
Not allowed to touch you when you’re touching me. You are a big fan of ground rules, huh?

This was a total normal thing for friends to do, right? Joke about that one time they hooked up like it was no big deal?

Oh. Are we acknowledging that that happened? I figured you were going for your trademark Ignore and Avoid tactic.

I don’t…do that.
Sure you don’t.

Well…not all of us can be so forward all of the time!

Well maybe if you were, you would have more fun.

Kara bit her lip. Yeah, she probably would. But it would also most certainly get her into more trouble.

So you’re on campus?

Why exactly was Kara asking that?

Yep. Why?

No reason. Just curious.

Kara took a deep breath. You stay right where you are, Kara Danvers, she thought, forcing away the dirty thoughts creeping into her head. She forced herself to try and go to sleep before she did something stupid. Her mind threatened to wander every now and then. It wandered towards Lena, towards wondering what she was doing, and towards the thought of how short a walk it was to the campus apartments. Kara shook all of those thoughts off. She was not going to go over there. Nothing good would come of it. She would be able to be around Lena again without wanting to jump her…eventually. She just had to keep her distance until her hormones calmed the hell down. They had to calm down at some point, right?

Kara rolled over in bed, frustrated. Maybe it wasn’t such a good idea for her to come back to campus so early…

* 

The next morning, Kara was wide awake unusually early. Despite her crankiness about this, mostly
due to the fact that she woke up in the middle of a pretty steamy dream, perhaps it was best that she
did wake up this early. Soon after she begrudgingly greeted the day at the obscene hour of seven
thirty in the morning, she got a phone call from James, asking if she was still on campus. When she
informed him of her unusually early Thanksgiving and that yes, she was back on campus, James
asked her to meet him in the coffee house so he could talk to her about something.

Kara had no idea what he could want to talk to her about, and the fact that he didn’t tell her what he
wanted to talk about just made her nervous. She had all but forgotten her crush on James since she
had sort of gotten swept up in Lena, but she suddenly found herself as nervous at the idea of him as
when they had first met. Not because she still really felt anything for him, no, it was more like an
instinctive, knee-jerk reaction to him, a response that her brain had not yet un-learned.

Or maybe she was just nervous because she had completely forgotten how to hang around her
theater friends outside of the actual theater itself.

James greeted Kara with a warm smile and a wave from across the coffee house when she walked
in. The place was pretty much dead. Considering that it was the day before Thanksgiving, she was
surprised it was even open. However, as she saw a trickle of people coming in and out carrying
duffel bags and overstuffed backpacks, she guessed they only made sure to stay open long enough
that morning to help usher out the last of the holiday travelers. Kara plopped down across from
James at one of the tall, circular tables, already biting eagerly into a chocolate chip muffin.

“What’s up?” she asked, trying not to spray muffin crumbs as she talked with her mouth full.

James laughed.

“Are you just always hungry?” he asked.

“Um, excuse you, it is breakfast time. Breakfast means at least three chocolate chip muffins. That’s
just how it is, James, I don’t make the rules.”

He laughed again.

“Well I won’t keep you from your breakfast for long. I just had something I wanted to give you.”

Kara narrowed her eyes at James.

“What’s that?” she asked.

“Oh, I just had some books and notes and stuff I thought you could use, you know, to read up on
before next semester so you feel better prepared.”

Kara cocked her head to one side, confused.

“Prepared for what?”

“You know, prepared to be the stage manager for Sweeney Todd next semester.”

Time seemed to stop for a moment, Kara’s blood running ice cold with dread. Stage manager?

“I’m sorry, the what now?”

James seemed to instinctively lean away from Kara.

“Oh, shit,” he said.
“What the heck are you talking about?” Kara pressed.

“Umm,” James laughed uncomfortably, “you know what? Never mind, it can wait until later.”

“James Olsen, you tell me what you are talking about right this second!”

Kara checked her grip on the coffee table, willing herself to remember not to break it.

“Well,” James started uneasily, “it’s just that, Leslie is stepping down as stage manager next semester. And she told us that you agreed to take her place.”

Kara saw red. Of course she did, that scheming little…

“I agreed to no such thing! I don’t know anything about stage management! Why is she even stepping down?”

“Something about getting an internship at CatCo? Plus, she’s been stage managing since her sophomore year, and this is her last semester here, she was due to pass the torch anyway.”

“Well, tell her to pass her stupid torch to someone else!”

James took a sip of his coffee, not nearly as intimidated by Kara’s rage as she thought he ought to be.

“I don’t know, Kara, you’re kind of the best person for the job.”

“I’m a freshman, James!”

“I know that,” he insisted, raising his hands in submission. “All the more reason to take it as a compliment that everyone was on board with the idea. Even Snapper.”

“Oh, oh okay,” Kara said hotly, fiddling with her glasses. “Because most compliments come with a contract attached, declaring that you must give up your entire soul, every waking moment of your life for the foreseeable future, and most of your vital organs, to a college theater production. Okay, James. Sure.”

James sighed.

“How about we talk about this more when everyone is back from Thanksgiving break?”

“Fine, but until then, you better tell Leslie that she is just a raging…bad person.”

James hid a laugh behind his right hand.

“It’s not funny!” Kara snapped.

James was still laughing.

“I know it’s not, I know. I’m sorry. But, look, I’m gonna give you this stuff to look over, anyway.”

He emptied out the contents of his brown messenger bag. The fancy leather one that he always carried around. Kara always thought they looked silly, except when James carried them around. He just made them seem classy and professional. She thumbed through the contents of the bag, trying to contain her agitation, since it was Leslie she was mad at, and not James. There was a textbook on stage management, reference tabs added generously to many of the pages, notes scribbled in the margins in James’ handwriting. There was also a couple of binders, each labeled with the name of a
show that James probably worked on back when he was still a student. Each binder contained the
script of the show, heavily annotated with notes and symbols Kara didn’t understand. Also
contained was a stapled packet of additional content, sheet music if it was a musical, rehearsal
summaries, schedules, and audition forms. Kara realized with horror that she was going to be
expected to know how to put all of this together herself if she was going to accept the role of stage
manager next semester.

“I know it’s a lot to take in,” James said, reading her petrified expression. “And I’m not gonna
pretend that it’s any easier than it looks. That wouldn’t be fair to you. But, I think you can handle
it.”

“James…” Kara sighed, overwhelmed just at the idea of it all.

“Don’t answer yet. We’ll talk again next week. Just, promise you’ll think about it, okay?”

Why does he have to have that charming smile that could convince anyone to do whatever he
asked? What a jerk.

“Fine,” Kara grumbled, reaching into the paper bag next to her to start in on her second chocolate
chip muffin.

*

Wednesday crept by at a painfully slow pace. She attempted to read James’ stage management
book, got overwhelmed by Chapter 1: The Responsibilities of a Stage Manager: A Summary, and
quickly put away the book, promising to think about the totally unfair choice she had to make…
later. She got through half of the fifteen page math final study guide in about an hour (it was
amazing how easy math was when she actually had the proper time to do it). And she finally found
the source of the smell and eliminated it (don’t ask).

Lena didn’t text her at all. Kara thought Lena might text her, but she didn’t. And it didn’t really
seem like Kara should be the one to text her first…she didn’t even know what she would say…

By Wednesday evening, her dorm room was cleaner than it was when she had moved in.

On Thursday, actual Thanksgiving day, she burned through most of her Netflix queue while
looking over all of the readings from History and Brit Lit that she had only pretended to read the
first time around. She at turkey leftovers to feel festive.

Lena still didn’t text her. Was Lena bummed to be spending Thanksgiving alone? Wait…was she
alone? Who else might be over there? Was that why Lena wasn’t texting Kara? Or was something
wrong? Should Kara ask her if she was okay? Would that just make things worse? Or should she
just go over there…

No. If she went over to Lena’s apartment…things might happen…

On Friday she went online and bought all of the textbooks she would need for the next semester in
honor of “Black Friday”. She also color coded all of the notes she had ever taken in all of her
classes with highlighter, in order of the importance of the information.

Seriously? She really thought Lena would have texted her by now.
On Saturday afternoon, she took a walk around campus. Three times. She thought that a nice, long walk would clear her head, you know? Get her mind off of things. Off of what Lena might be doing that was keeping her so busy that she wasn’t texting Kara at all. Off of why Kara was so concerned about the fact that they weren’t talking, considering that she was supposed to be keeping her distance from Lena. Why was it again that she needed to keep her distance from Lena, again? Oh yeah, the whole Evil Brother thing. But...so what? No really, so what?

“Even if she’s a good person, that’s neither here nor there.”

Thank you very much, Alex, but that seems to be both here and there. It matters that Lena is a good person. It matters because that made it okay that Kara was friends with her...and that she was kind of ridiculously attracted to her...

“Lex and I were best friends, once.”

Well, you know what, Kal-El? Maybe you’re just a bad judge of character. Kara certainly wasn’t a bad judge of character. She was always pretty good at spotting a bad egg. And, yeah, even if Lena kind of pissed Kara off when they first met...Kara never thought that she was a bad person. Not really.

“That whole damn family is just as crooked as [Lex] is.”

No. Kara knew how much it tore Lena up to hear from her brother. Kara saw it for herself. She wasn’t like them. If she was, she wouldn’t have spent Thanksgiving by herself. She wouldn’t be going to school so far away from Metropolis. She wouldn’t flinch every time she heard her own last name.

Without realizing it, Kara, lost in her trail of thoughts, found herself walking by the campus apartment buildings. A lump formed in her throat. What a bad friend she was! Lounging around her own dorm all week, ignoring Lena, under the pretext of “well she didn’t text me first” and “well Alex says not to hang around her”. All the while her friend spent what should be a family holiday by herself, reminded of the fact that she didn’t get to have a normal, happy family.

You suck, Kara Danvers. You go up there right now and apologize for being such a crappy friend.

So that’s what she did. She marched right up to Athena Hall.

And then remembered that she needed a key card to get in.

Well, that wouldn’t do.

Just as Kara lowered her glasses from her eyes to laser the card reader so she could get in, someone opened the door. Not as exciting as superhuman breaking and entering, but it worked.

Kara raced up the stairs and knocked on Lena’s door. She heard shuffling, and Lena opened the door just enough to poke her head out to see who was there. She had no makeup on, and her hair was thrown into a loose ponytail.

When Lena saw who was on the other side of the door, she opened it all the way, and Kara gulped. Lena was wearing long, blue tanktop that barely covered her underwear, and nothing else.

“Oh, Kara, hi.”

Lena looked down at herself, noticing that Kara was staring.
“I’m, um, doing laundry,” Lena supplied, as if that made things any better.

Kara fidgeted with her glasses, barely able to breathe. She came over here for a reason. What was that reason again? To tell Lena how gorgeous she was? No, that wasn’t it…

A painful moment of silence passed between them. Lena, standing in her doorway, half naked; Kara, eyes wide, staring.

“I’m a bad friend,” Kara suddenly blurted out.

Lena raised an eyebrow at her curiously.

“I’m not sure I follow,” she replied.

The speech Kara had planned on giving suddenly disappeared from her head. With nothing to say, Kara couldn’t help but pull Lena into her, kissing her hungrily.

Lena shut the door behind them.

Chapter End Notes

I dunno. I dont hate this chap. I dont love it either? There's kind of a lot going on, and nothing really ended up coming out the way i wanted it to. Whatever. Point is that Leslie is a little shit and Kara literally was able to stay away from Lena for exactly six days before her resolve totally crumbled. Good job, Kara

(Ps did she really think that Lena didnt text her for any other reason than bc lena has no CLUE what Kara is thinking?? Like, EVER?? Poor girl is gonna get whiplash from your indecisive shit, Kara. You're the WORST)

Anyway, coming up next Thursday...uh...Kara tries to top? I guess? And maybe i'll pick up one of those 1500 plot strings laying all around me, screaming to be recognized? Who knows.
As always, love you guys and your rad kudos and comments. Y'all are the beeest
See you soon :)

can i for the love of god remember that ao3 doesnt follow normal text format before i spend a butt ton of time attempting to perfect putting text messages to page? COOL.


Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

If Kara's life is an odyssey, than there's a good chance that Lena's apartment is her Island of the Lotus Eaters...

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Kara pushed Lena against the now closed door, hard, with a loud ‘thump’. Lena gasped. Kara, realizing she may have already forgotten to keep her strength in check, backed off.

“Oh, god, are you okay?” she asked.

“Absolutely,” Lena breathed, pulling Kara back into her.

Oh. Good. Didn’t hurt her. See, Kara? You can do this.

Lena moved her mouth to the right side of Kara’s neck, biting and sucking at her pulse points. Kara’s eyes rolled back into her head. Completely subdued by the movements of Lena’s mouth, she almost didn’t notice Lena grabbing Kara by the waist and swapping their positions, so Kara was now the one pressed against the door. She didn’t pick up on the power shift, until Lena was tugging at the waist of Kara’s leggings.

Wait a minute.

“Hey,” Kara scolded, pulling Lena’s wandering hand away, “We’re not concerned with me right now.”

“Oh, no?” Lena asked in a whisper, capturing Kara’s mouth with her own, trying once again to gain the upper hand.

Alright, just use a little bit of strength, but for the love of Rao, be careful.

Kara grasped Lena’s thighs firmly, lifting her up off the ground. Lena was clearly surprised for a moment, then quickly complied by wrapping her legs around Kara’s waist.

“Nope,” Kara replied innocently.

As quickly as she could, Kara had moved the two of them towards Lena’s bedroom. She dropped Lena onto the bed, straddling her so that she was in Lena’s lap. Their hips connected, yet there was not nearly enough contact to make either of them happy. Kara brought her lips to Lena’s in a languid, sloppy kiss, hips grinding tortuously against her, still reminding herself not to get to forceful about anything, before she caused an injury.

She may have had one or two incidences of accidental injury during sex.

Kara remembered that the last time that she and Lena were together, there had been far too much clothing involved. This was not going to be the case this time. She wanted, no, needed, to find out
what every inch of Lena felt like.

Lena, of course, wasn’t wearing much, but what she was wearing needed to come off. In a quick movement, Kara grasped the bottom of Lena’s tank top and pulled it up over her head, revealing pale, uncovered breasts.

Kara swallowed hard. Up until now she had been running purely on lustful instinct. And now, she was straddling an almost completely naked Lena. And just the sight of her was…a little overwhelming. Because Lena was pretty much perfect, and Kara had no idea what she was doing. After all, Kara was only eighteen. She really didn’t have that much experience. And what experience she did have had thus far been a string of bumpy, awkward, disappointing encounters.

Well. Backstage with Lena not included.

“Kara?” Lena asked softly, leaning back on the bed slightly, propping herself up on her elbows. “You okay?”

Kara let out a deep breath.

“Yeah. You’re just…” Kara struggled to form words, awestruck by the woman beneath her. “You’re really gorgeous.”

She tentatively placed her hands on Lena’s waist, tracing her fingers lightly over her skin.

“Oh my god your skin is so soft. I just…oh my god.”

Kara continued to slowly explore Lena’s bare upper body with her hands. Lena remained completely still, pupils dilated, chest rising and falling with steady breaths, her face patient and serene.

“Have you ever been on a roller coaster?” Kara blurted out suddenly.

Lena’s nose scrunched for a moment in confusion.

“Yes. Why?”

Kara settled into Lena’s lap, a dull throb forming between her legs. She traced her fingers up and down Lena’s arms as she tried to figure out what it was she was trying to say.

“So. The first time I went to an amusement park I was 14. And Alex convinced me to go on this roller coaster with her. And I had no idea what it was gonna be like. I was obviously nervous. And the line was so long that the more we waited the more nervous I got, ya know? And I guess that’s half the point, right? The build up? And it’s kind of similar when you’re, well, with someone. It’s a lot of build up. And I mean…well. I’ve only been with guys? And they aren’t really worth the ‘rollercoaster’ comparison. It was like…a lot build up, but then the actual attraction wasn’t that…exciting? Kind of when you go on the obligatory water ride. The one at the park we always went to was called the Log Jammer…”

Lena had been looking, patiently, up at Kara the entire time she was absolutely rambling. Then, she suddenly burst into laughter.

“What?” Kara asked.

“Nothing,” Lena said, grasping Kara’s biceps firmly. “It’s just…you realize you just compared straight sex to something called a “Log Jammer”, right?”
Kara deflated, burying her head into the crook of Lena’s neck, and allowing herself to laugh at her own awkwardness.

“I need to just stop talking about amusement parks,” Kara lamented into Lena’s neck.

Kara’s hands, all the while, had been roaming about Lena’s upper body, amazed at how intoxicating the softness of Lena’s skin was. She freed herself from the shelter of Lena’s dark, cascading hair. It smelled like vanilla and lavender, and Kara was mildly obsessed with it. She looked into Lena’s big, green eyes, and found herself becoming overwhelmed with just how freaking gorgeous she was.

“What I’m trying to say is,” Kara continued, because apparently she was physically incapable of just shutting up for five whole seconds. “I didn’t think I was going to be nervous. But I kind of am. But like, I don’t want to be? I…I don’t know.”

Lena smiled up at her. Her smile was sweet and full and without judgement.

“If it makes you feel any better, you had a pretty solid start there,” Lena said, sitting up to capture Kara’s lips with her own.

Kara started to get lost again in Lena once again.

“Really?” she replied, moving her mouth to Lena’s neck.

“Yeah,” Lena replied, her voice changing into a low moan as Kara found a particularly sensitive spot. Kara nipped at it lightly with her teeth, grinning. “I mean, it’s kind of ridiculously hot how strong you are.”

Kara traced a line with her tongue to Lena’s collarbone, hands moving to Lena’s breasts. She was still sort of freaking out over the fact that this was all new territory for her, and she had no idea what she was doing. But she could hear Lena’s breath hitch, her heartbeat quicken, and it emboldened her. She pressed Lena into the bed, peppering kisses down the pale, soft skin of Lena’s toned stomach. Kara’s own stomach was in knots, a mixture of lust and nerves. She wasn’t sure how this was going to go, but she really wanted to find out…

“Are you sure you’re okay? I can…”

“Shh,” Kara interrupted, moving a hand to graze the fabric of Lena’s underwear. She grinned when Lena bucked her hips slightly. “I think I’ve got it.”

*  

It was about 6 p.m., and Kara was lying in Lena’s bed. In her lingerie. The low evening sun was streaming in through the window. Lena was in her bathroom showering. Everything about this was foreign to Kara.

When you’re eighteen, you don’t really have much experience in such casual “after sex” encounters. Sex was something fit into rare moments of privacy in typically non-private spaces. In your room in the half hour of time when your parents weren’t home, in a car before getting dropped off after a date, in the pool house of Alex’s friend Christina during a barbeque…
Sex until then had always been something to rush through and quickly get dressed again before anyone noticed that you were not where you were supposed to be. The only thing that remained the same since her high school sexual encounters was the fact that she had to constantly, and regrettably, hold herself back just a bit, aware of the fact that super strength was not always a good thing in the bedroom...Still, the fact that Kara was simply laying half naked in Lena’s bed, scrolling lazily through her phone, trying to remember how long it had been since they ordered delivery, felt like an impossibly decadent luxury.

Was this what adult hookups were like? Because if so...Kara could get used to this.

The water of the shower shut off. Kara felt a sudden impulse to lay in some kind of sexy pose for Lena to see her in when she walked back in her room.

*Nah. Too much.*

Was she overstaying her welcome by staying long enough for them to order food together? Did that make this a weird sort of reverse date?

No. No. They weren’t dating. If they were, they would have talked about it by now. And if they were to talk about it? Well, Kara didn’t even know how that conversation would go. Considering everything weighing on her mind right now...it probably wasn’t going to be a very fun conversation to have...best to avoid it entirely for now.

Lena strolled into the bedroom, holding her towel loosely around her. Kara rolled onto her back so that she could stare unabashedly at Lena.

“Don’t give me that look,” Lena said to her, smirking. “I need sustenance before you start giving me looks like that again.”

Kara shrugged innocently.

“I’m not giving you a look,” she replied.

Kara felt giddy. This was the first time since she started college that she felt so calm and peaceful. She thought that all that she wanted in life was to put time itself on hold, and stay in this moment until she was ready to leave it. All of the stress and drama and complication in her life existed outside this room, and she wanted to stay away from them as long as possible.

Of course, just thinking about the fact that she didn’t have to think about them, made her think about them. Funny how that works.

“So Leslie decided she wants someone else to stage manage next semester.”

Lena discarded the towel onto an office chair next to her, found her underwear that had been tossed to the floor earlier, pulled a large T-shirt over her body, and plopped down on the bed next to Kara. Kara had watched every movement with intense focus. She didn’t think that Lena would actually object if Kara put her hands on her again, hunger or not.

“Oh yeah?” Lena asked. “Who’s taking her place?”

Kara sighed.

“Me, apparently.”

Lena’s eyes widened. She turned to sit facing Kara, leaning against her pillow.
“Are you fucking serious? Why would you sign up to do that?”

“I didn’t!” Kara exclaimed. “Leslie literally told everyone I would do it before even asking me if I wanted to!”

Lena scrunched her nose.

“God she’s an asshole. Just tell her no.”

“I know. I should…but…”

“But what?”

“But…”

Lena moved to sit cross legged, looking intently at Kara.

“Oh my god, you want to do it, don’t you?”

Kara shrugged.

“I don’t know. I was pissed off at first. But. I mean. It might be fun?”

“It might drive you insane, Kara. It’s your freshman year! That’s too much to ask of you. When are you going to learn to say no to people?”

Kara found her hand moving up and down Lena’s bare thigh, as if it had a mind of its own.

“It might be fun. Plus, I do better under pressure. If I have too much time with my thoughts I get all…I dunno. I’m just happier when I keep busy.”

Lena looked down at Kara’s roaming hands, her right eyebrow quirked upwards.

“Clearly,” she replied.

Kara actually pouted up at Lena.

“Oh, my god, Kara,” Lena said, “Can you stop being so fucking cute long enough for me to be able to tell you that you are going to drive yourself into the ground with all the shit you’re trying to take on?”

Kara smirked, grasping at Lena’s T-shirt and pulling herself onto her lap.

“No, I will not. You’re one to talk, anyway, miss double major.”

Lena clasped her hands together behind Kara’s back.

“Well I happen to be a genius. And, I never take more than four classes a semester. The more time I waste here, the longer I can put off going back to Metropolis.”

Kara thought that maybe she should clue Lena in about the fact that she was pretty damn smart, herself, but got distracted by the way Lena’s eyes flickered with remorse when she mentioned Metropolis. That wave of guilt Kara had felt when she first showed up at Lena’s front door was suddenly back. She scooted off of Lena’s lap, grasping her hands in her own.

“I’m sorry I wasn’t here for you this week. I was nearby, and you were going through a lot. And I
could have tried to be here for you, but I wasn’t. I’m sorry.”

“Is that what you were so flustered about when you came over here? Kara, it’s not your job to worry about me all the time. I can take care of myself just fine.”

“But I want to worry about you! We’re…” she swallowed hard. “We’re friends.”

Lena tilted her head at Kara, face unreadable.

“Well, you know,” Kara continued, “friends who do…stuff…together.”

That was the right thing to say, wasn’t it? They weren’t dating, after all. So…that’s what they were. Friends. Right?

The doorbell rang.

“Food!” Kara exclaimed excitedly, leaping off the bed and rushing for the door.

“Kara!” Lena called after her, “You’re not wearing any clothes!”

*

Lena decided they should watch “Cleopatra” while they ate. “I’m in an Elizabeth Taylor mood” she explained casually. If Lena noticed the incredible volume of Chinese that Kara had ordered and quickly devoured, she didn’t let on. She asked Kara if she wanted anything to drink as she poured herself a mug full of boxed red wine. (“It’s just easier to buy in bulk”, Lena had said. “I honestly can’t tell the difference between this and the expensive stuff, anyway.”) For the first time in her life Kara thought that she actually was super in the mood for a glass of wine.

That was a mistake. The burgundy liquid in her cup was so bitter that she forced herself not to cringe every time she took a sip. How did Alex drink so much of this stuff?

Speaking of Alex, she apparently had another date with Maggie tonight. She had texted Kara earlier in the day, sending her several pictures of different outfits and asking her which she should wear. Kara had been a bit too preoccupied to answer. She didn’t really feel bad about not answering Alex, though. Kara knew that no matter how many outfits Alex tried on, she would probably end up wearing jeans, a black T-shirt, and her leather jacket, anyway.

Kara forgot just how long “Cleopatra” was. It was getting late. She knew that she should soon either make the choice to go home or maybe get back into the “doing stuff together” part of their friendship.

Hmm. Lonely dorm room? Or hot brunette currently sitting with her legs tucked adorably into her oversized T-shirt?

Kara ultimately decided on the latter.

None of this made any sense to Kara. Before today she never knew that sex could be so fun. That you could laugh through the awkward moments instead of just feeling…well, awkward about them. She never knew that it could feel so normal to just lay around another girl’s apartment, half naked, all day. Even when just a few days ago she had made a promise to her sister and her cousin
to stay away from the girl whose apartment she was currently having her own sexual awakening in. She never knew she could actually stop worrying about what everyone else wanted long enough to find herself experimenting with different patterns of movement of her tongue over Lena’s clit, learning which noises that escaped her meant that she was on the right track.

It didn’t make sense. But Kara didn’t care.

“Cleopatra” was still on after Lena insisted that it wasn’t a big deal for Kara to use her shower. When she stepped out of the bathroom, she discovered that Lena had fallen asleep on the couch. Kara knew that if ever there were a time for her to go back to her own dorm, it was now. Instead, she took the liberty of borrowing a shirt and pair of shorts from Lena’s dresser, grabbed the blanket off of Lena’s bed, dragged it into the living room, placed it on top of her, and curled up next to her. Lying there, Kara suddenly felt very tired. Not necessarily from fatigue or exhaustion (though it would make sense after the eventful day they had), but more from the feeling of effortless ease that overtook her. It felt so comfortable, so safe, even, to lay next to a sleeping Lena, that the luxury of it almost instantly pulled Kara into a deep sleep.

*

Kara woke up the next morning in Lena’s bed. She had a vague memory of being woken up in the middle of the night to Lena insisting that they move because she was getting a cramp from sleeping on the couch, but Kara had been half convinced that that was a dream until now. She thought for a moment that perhaps all of it might have been a dream. She was so used to vivid dreams. They were usually about Krypton and her family, and they usually felt so real that Kara would sob upon waking.

But this wasn’t a dream. If it was, she wouldn’t have so much space to stretch out on Lena’s king size bed, compared to her pathetically small twin bed. And she wouldn’t be loosely covered in sheets that were soft and silky, instead of scratchy and in need of a good washing.

(Of course, these sheets probably needed washed, now, too.)

Most of all, if it had been a dream, she wouldn’t roll over to see Lena sleeping soundly next to her.

Kara sighed. Doubt threatened to start seeping into her thoughts. She wouldn’t let it. Not yet. She would likely spend far too much time doubting herself after this, questioning whether or not she had made a mistake this weekend. So for now, she was going to let herself soak in the after sex glow for as long as she damn well pleased, thank you very much.

Perhaps sensing that Kara had been staring at her, Lena slowly roused, eyes opening lazily. A small smile formed on her face, looking over at Kara, making Kara’s stomach flutter. Lena’s chest rose and fell steadily as the two girls looked at one another for a long moment. Kara wasn’t used to someone looking at her so intently for so long. Normally she would shrink away from such a look, but she didn’t. There was a casual ease to the way they looked at one another that it made Kara almost forget that she had always been taught, since she landed on Earth, to shy away from attention. To hide. To be unnoticed.

She liked being noticed. Like this.

“What were your parents like?” Lena suddenly asked, her voice barely above a whisper.
Kara’s breath got caught in her throat.

“What?” she asked.

“You birth parents. What were they like?”

Kara took a deep breath, rolling onto her back to stare at the ceiling. Kara was so used to lying. Often times, it seemed, lying was easier than telling the truth. The lies didn’t hurt as much to think about. But couldn’t it, perhaps, be easier, just this once, to tell the truth?

“My dad was a scientist. And my mom was a…judge.”

Both of these things were true. But true in a superficial way. You don’t know your parents by their occupations. You know them by their smiles. Their habits. Their favorite songs and bedtime stories. The lessons they try to teach you…

“They were both very passionate people. About their work, about their family.”

Kara let her voice trail off, and settled into silence. It still felt like lying, to talk about them as if they were from Earth and had died in some random accident. Even if she didn’t have to say those two lies, by no denying them, they still lingered, invisible and suffocating.

Lena laid a gentle hand on Kara’s stomach.

“I didn’t mean to upset you by asking. I just…I was too young when I was adopted to remember any family other than the Luthors. I always wondered what it would be like to remember both families.”

Kara intertwined her fingers with Lena’s. She thought that it was an oddly intimate thing to do. Which was stupid to think, seeing as they had spent the better part of the previous day giving each other orgasms.

“It’s…confusing,” Kara replied honestly, still staring at the ceiling. “Sometimes I wonder if my family would agree with what kind of person my adopted family wants me to be. And that’s not really fair. To the Danvers, at least. They’ve been so good to me, and it’s not their fault that they aren’t the same people as my birth family.”

“But you think your birth parents would have wanted you to be a different person than you are?”

“Oh, I know they would have. At least, they would have wanted me to be on a very different path.”

“What path is that?”

Kara sighed again. She pondered Lena’s question silently for a moment. She wondered, if her parents had known that she wouldn’t make it to Earth in time, and that Kal-El would already have been a grown man by the time her pod landed, what would they have wanted her to do with her life? There was no way to know that.

Again, it felt wrong for her to try and attempt an answer, irritated with the lies. What would it feel like, for just one person besides her cousin and the Danvers, to know who she really was?

Kara turned onto her side again, facing Lena. Surely her parents path for her wouldn’t be for her to lie next to the sibling of her cousin’s greatest enemy, thinking about just how good it would feel to tell her everything. But…so what?
Kara’s mouth parted open, staring into the green eyes across from her, feeling safe enough, for the first time, to stop lying...

What words would have come out of them, Kara didn’t know. For just before she had decided what she was going to say, a piercing, metallic screech erupted painfully into her ears. Kara lurched out of her lying position, putting her head between her legs and clapping her hands over her ears, the shriek of the sound making her head throb.

“Kara, are you okay?” Lena asked, voice full of worry.

Kara had heard this noise before. She knew this noise. And every time she heard it, she had been around Lena. In the back of Veronica’s car, before opening night of the show, and now. Kara looked around the room, trying to pinpoint the source of the metallic shrill.

There, on Lena’s nightstand. Lena’s phone.

But that didn’t make any sense! Super hearing or not, she had never heard a cell phone make a noise like that before.

“Yeah, I’m, uh, I’m fine,” Kara said, wincing. “I just have a really bad migraine all of the sudden.”

“Hold on, I’ll get you some aspirin.”

Lena got up and left the room. With little time to spare, Kara leapt to Lena’s side of the bed to grab her phone, struggling to think straight as the screeching continued. The sound grew louder as she brought the phone closer to her, indicating to her that she had guessed correctly.

Lena had the same phone as Kara, so unless there was something inside of it that was different from her own…

Kara used her X-ray vision to look into Lena’s phone, holding up her own phone next to it for comparison. There, lodged between the case and the exterior of the phone, was a small silver object. It had a small, square tip, and a thin, rectangular body.

What was that? Why did it send out an ear piercing sound that, apparently, only Kara could hear?

Fingers shaking, afraid of being caught, Kara pried the case off of Lena’s phone, and picked out the small, nondescript piece of metal. It continued to whine painfully. Kara replaced the case to Lena’s phone, put the phone back on the nightstand, and grabbed her own cell phone. Holding the small, screaming object in her palm, she snapped a few quick pictures of it, and, feeling like her head was going to explode, crushed it in her hand.

The noise, thankfully, stopped.

Lena stepped back into the bedroom, two aspirin in one hand, and a glass of water in the other.

Kara lowered her hand containing the dust of the offending metal, moving it as discreetly as she could over the side of the bed, and letting the dust fall inconspicuously to the floor. She attempted a smile, heart racing.

“Thanks,” she said, voice hoarse, as she took the water and chalky white pills from Lena.

Kara felt like the floor had fallen away beneath her. She didn’t know what that thing was. But her gut told her that it was bad, and that she was somehow unsafe because of it. The doubt she had pushed away came rushing at her all at once, reminding her of everything she was risking by
allowing herself to be so selfish and careless. She was in Lena’s bed, wearing her clothes, going directly against her family’s warning mere days after she had made a promise to stay away from Lena. What was she doing?

Kara’s head was telling her to take off. To barely make a hasty excuse for why she had to leave as she was already halfway out the door. But how could she do that to Lena, when her gut was telling her that Lena cared too much about her to be a danger? She could see her face in the periphery of her vision, face full of genuine concern. Whatever that thing was, and if it was something bad, like Kara thought it might be, she had to believe it had nothing to do with Lena.

And hell. She could just be overreacting, right? It could be nothing. But…considering that for a moment there, she was seriously considering telling Lena about who she really was, Kara had to know for sure.

She turned towards Lena, painting a smile onto her face.

“I, um. I think I’m gonna get going. I should start studying for finals and stuff.”

Lena shifted away from Kara slightly.

“Yeah, sure. I didn’t expect that I’d be able to keep you this long, anyway.”

“What do you mean?” Kara replied, her nose scrunching unknowingly.

“I mean that when you showed up at my door yesterday, I figured you were just here for a quick fix, that’s all.”

“I…” Kara balked, wondering what Lena thought of her that would make her think she would just want a ‘quick fix’ from her. “I was here to apologize!”

“Well I know that now,” Lena said, smirking, “I must say I am a fan of the way you apologize.”

Kara blushed, hiding her own smile behind her hand. No longer swept up in the heat and urgency of the day before, she was suddenly more aware of the gravity of the fact that she and Lena had a lot of sex yesterday. Like.

A lot.

Kara hid her burning red face behind her hands.

“Yeah. Yep. That was a thing that happened,” she said, voice muffled.

“So shy all of a sudden?” Lena joked, eyebrows raised, a smug grin on her face.

_Ugh. She’s so cute, _Kara thought, already leaning closer into Lena’s body. _No, Kara, focus! You have investigating to do!_

How intoxicating could one person be that Kara had to keep reminding herself to be alarmed by the mysterious, screaming object that had been hidden in Lena’s phone?

Kara got up, gathering her discarded clothes from the day before off of the floor. Lena watched her intently as she changed. Kara thought for a moment that maybe she should have changed in Lena’s bathroom, but, really, what was the point of that? It was nothing Lena hadn’t seen before…

“So, um,” Kara said, suddenly unsure of herself. “I guess I’ll see you later?”
“If you say so,” Lena said, a smile on her face, but her eyes searched Kara’s own face, as if looking for something.

What was the ‘goodbye’ protocol here? A hug? A high five? A firm handshake? A full on goodbye kiss seemed like too much. That would have really only have been appropriate if they were dating…which they weren’t. But also they had done a lot of kissing the day before?

Kara settled for a quick kiss on the cheek, and left Lena’s apartment.

The second she closed the door behind her, the world felt real again.

“Real” felt unbelievably dull.

Walking back towards her dorm, Kara crossed the street from the apartment buildings to the main campus, when she saw a campus security car creeping slowly along, Maggie behind the wheel. Kara froze. She didn’t exactly want to be caught leaving Lena’s apartment the morning after a very…eventful night, by the girl who was dating her sister. You know, the sister who was very anti-Luthor. But it was too late. Maggie waved at Kara, pulling her car up to the curb of the walkway towards campus, and put the car in park.

“Hey, little Danvers,” Maggie said, leaning out of the window of the car. “What are you up to?”

“Oh, not much. Just taking a walk,” Kara replied.

She was still wearing the outfit she was walking in yesterday. Why shouldn’t Maggie believe her? Plus, technically, she was currently walking. So, really, it wasn’t even a lie.

“How, um, how was your date with Alex last night?” Kara said, switching topics.

“Oh, uh” Maggie scratched the back of her neck, suddenly avoiding eye contact with Kara. “It was good.”

Whatever had gone on the night before, Maggie seemed not to be too keen on revealing the details to her date’s little sister. Kara smirked.

“Good, huh?” she teased.

Maggie rolled her eyes at Kara.

“Well, I’m sure Alex told you all about it.”

“Actually,” Kara said, voice trailing off.

Kara had been a little bit busy between Lena’s legs, and vice versa, the night before when she became mildly aware that Alex had been sending her text updates of her date. During lulls in the action, Kara would quickly check her phone just to make sure that Alex didn’t need rescued from a terrible time or anything like that, but since most of the texts started with something like “GUESS WHAT?!” or “Kara oh my GOD” and “IM SO GAY”, Kara guessed that it had gone well.

“I didn’t hear much from Alex last night,” Kara answered simply to Maggie. “I was…away from my phone.”
Maggie looked at her curiously.

“I see. Well, I’ll let you two catch up about it before I give my side of things, then. Don’t want to butt in on the whole ‘sisters talking about their dates’ bonding thing.”

“Right. Okay. But, it’s just your date we’d be talking about. I wasn’t on a date with anyone last night. Or at all. Ever.”

Maggie narrowed her eyes at Kara.

“Okay, then,” she said cautiously. “Well, I’ll see you later, Kara.”

“Yep, sounds good!” Kara was already speed walking away from the campus car.

*Could you be chill for like, five seconds, Kara?*

Winn was back on campus later that afternoon, and he agreed to meet up with Kara at the coffee house. Something about his checkered button down shirt, bright purple tie, crisp Khaki pants, and unapologetic Doc Martens, made Kara think that he belonged in a coffee house, behind a computer, eternally writing the same script or novel. Or maybe grading papers.

“So! I heard Leslie Shanghai-d you.”

“I have not been Shanghai-d!”

Kara didn’t know what that meant, but she was sure that Winn was wrong nonetheless.

“Are you gonna take the gig?”

Kara sighed.

“I don’t know. I’m thinking about it. Though I’m half tempted to say no just because you all seem to expect me to say yes.”

Winn shrugged, sipping from his latte.

“What can I say, directors and SM’s can spot a sucker from a mile away.”

Kara pouted.

“I’m not a sucker.”

“I hate to break it to you, sweetie, but you are.”

“Well, why don’t you do it?”

“Are you kidding?” Winn replied. “I have enough on my plate. I’m graduating this spring. You
don’t even want to know what my Capstone project entails…”

“Ugh,” Kara groaned, “don’t remind me that you’re leaving me soon.”

“Oh, don’t be dramatic,” Winn replied, reaching out to squeeze one of Kara’s hands. “I’m too broke to try and move away from National City.”

Kara still pouted, painfully aware that all of her close friends on campus were older than her, and more likely to leave her before she was done at NCU. She pushed off the thought for the moment, however, as she had more to worry about right now.

“Hey,” she said, “you’re pretty tech saavy, right?”

Winn made a clacking noise with his mouth.

“I mean, within reason. Why do you ask?”

Kara pulled up the picture of the metal object she had snapped on her phone, and handed her phone to Winn.

“What does that look like to you?” she asked.

Winn considered the picture, biting the inside of his cheek.

“A teeny piece of metal, why?”

Kara let an impatient breath out of her nostrils.

“No, there’s more to it than that. I think it’s some kind of tech.”

Winn arched his eyebrows at her in curiosity.

“What kind of tech?”

“I don’t know! But it…it made a noise.”

“A noise?”

“Yeah. Like, a screeching noise.”

Winn zoomed in on the picture, trying to look for something that better identify it.

“I don’t know, it’s hard to tell. You don’t happen to have it so that I could look at it?”

Kara would have kept from reducing it to dust if it hadn’t been driving her crazy.

“Um…no. I don’t have it.”

Winn scratched at the stubble on his chin, thinking.

“Well, where did you find it?”

“In someone’s phone. Well, not like, inside the phone itself. I didn’t disassemble someone’s phone or anything like that. But, like, it was tucked under the phone case. Hiding, you know?”

Winn stared at Kara for a moment, then at the phone, then back at Kara.
“Who’s phone was it in?”

Kara sipped her coffee, feigning disinterest.

“No one’s.”

Winn pursed his lips.

“Well, if this was spy movie, I would say that someone planted a bug in that phone.”

Kara had to think a minute about what “bug” was supposed to mean in this context.


Wait. A *listening device*?!

“But this isn’t a spy movie, obviously,” Winn continued, “so I dunno, Kara. You should try asking Lena about it. She’s better with the non-theater related tech than I am.”

Kara took another sip of her coffee.

“I can’t ask her.”

“Why not?”

“Uh…because it was in *her* phone.”

Winn shook his head, confused.

“What were you doing snooping around Lena’s phone?”

“Nothing! Don’t worry about it! Do you really think it was a bug?”

“Well,” he let out an exasperated sigh. “I don’t know. Normally, I’d say no. But…I mean… considering all the crap going on with the Luthors right now…it’s not totally out of the realm of possibility, ya know?”

Kara bit her lip, trying to stifle her growing anxiety as the thought of all of the possibilities of who could be trying to listen in on Lena and why.

“Look,” Winn said. “I’ll do a little bit of research, okay? See if there are any bugs that look like that thing. It would have been helpful if you had actually kept the thing. You didn’t say anything to Lena about it, did you?”

Kara shook her head.

“Okay, you should probably keep it that way for now. No need to let her in on the fact that you like to just casually snoop through her shit. Anyhow, it could have just been something that came loose from her phone, you know? And it could have been causing, I don’t know, interference or something. No need to get you or her worked up about it yet.”

Kara’s lips buzzed together as she let out a large breath, her head sinking into her crossed arms on the table.

Winn crossed his own arms against his chest.
“So why were you digging around Lena’s phone?” he asked smugly.

Kara rolled her eyes.

“Like I said, I heard it make a noise. It was on Lena’s nightstand this morning and…”

“Wait, whoa whoa whoa!” Winn exclaimed.

Kara’s eyes widened, realizing her misstep.

Winn face broke out into a shit eating grin that he only barely contain behind a fist that he rested his chin on, staring her down.

“How were you in Lena’s bedroom this morning?”

Kara’s lips parted, but she couldn’t think of a lie fast enough to push out of them.

“Did you spend the night?” he squealed, clearly too excited to have this info to care that his voice was cracking in a very non-masculine manner.

“I-I…” Kara struggled. “I came by to see if she was okay after all of the LexCorp nonsense! We… we had a movie night!”

“Uh huh,” Winn said in a tone that suggested that he didn’t believe Kara for a minute. “What movie did you watch?”

“Cleopatra.”

“Hah!” Winn yelled out, shoving his pointer finger in Kara’s face victoriously, “That is Lena’s go-to sex movie! You two did it!”

“Winn!” Kara screeched, slapping his hand away, “People can hear you!”

Realizing he had risen out of his chair considerably, Winn settled back into his seat.

“How in the hell would you know if Lena had a…” she lowered her voice to a whisper, grimacing, “a sex movie?”

“Lena and I tell each other more than you think. She once told me that she always randomly get the urge to watch ‘Cleopatra’ after having sex. Well, I misspoke. She said she likes to watch it after ‘particularly mind blowing’ sex. So like, nicely done, frosh.”

“Oh my god, shut up,” Kara groaned.

She buried her head in her hands, hiding, despite her crushing embarrassment, the grin creeping onto her face.

Mind blowing, huh?

“Oh, goddammit,” Winn said, suddenly switching from elation to lamentation.

“What?” Kara asked through her hands.

“Nothing, I just, I owe Siobhan $20.”

“Why?”
“Well,” he said, shrugging, “we kind of had a bet going about when you two would finally jump each other.”

Kara smacked Winn on the arm, harder than she probably should have.

“Jesus, sorry! At least you’re not out $20! It could have been worse, I guess. I would have owed her $30 if you two hooked up before the show was over.”

Kara bit her lip, avoiding eye contact with Winn.

“Oh goddamn you!” he hollered. “When?”

Kara hid her lips behind her coffee cup.

“Uh,” she mumbled into the plastic lid. “You remember when Lena missed her cue during the Sunday matinee?”

Winn’s eyes widened, his jaw dropping.

“You didn’t,” he said.

Kara clenched her jaw, remaining silent.

“You little minx. I am so proud of you. And also jealous as fuck. Do you know how long I’ve been in theater, and never once got even a little frisky with anyone back stage? You just…you’re an asshole.”

“Alright, that’s enough!” Kara insisted. “We have bigger things to worry about!”

“Yeah, yeah, I’ll start researching. You know, when I’m not busy getting murdered by finals. You just keep a close eye on your girlfriend for now, okay? See if you notice anything suspicious.”

Kara felt an uncomfortable flutter in her stomach.

“We’re not…she’s not my girlfriend.”

Winn scowled at her.

“How did I know you were going to say that?”

Chapter End Notes

LISTEN. It was important to me that Kara's first attempt at WLW sex have a bit of a stumbling, rambling start. It felt more relatable to me. NOT EVERYONE IS INSTANTLY GOOD AT SEX DAMMIT. She like, super young rn, after all. (Which makes it even funnier to me that Lena is so CLEARLY SMITTEN with this SMOL BEAN of a girl. Like look at her. A hot AF upperclassmen totally wrapped around that freshman girl's finger. Poor Lena. She didn't stand a chance...)

I know that I probably could have spent more time "behind the closed door", as they say, but like, smut is exhausting for me to write. But I hope you guys enjoy what's here, bc clearly, since I've only gotten to like the midway point of this story, you know
I gave them some fluffy cuteness before I go and fuck everything up. Sorry. Gotta do it. Shit's happening.

Ps you can pry the headcanon that millionaire Lena Luthor drinks boxed wine from my COLD, DEAD FINGERS.

ANYHOW your feedback and kudos are amazing, as usual, and I love you guys! Coming up next (tentatively, who even knows anymore)...Kara makes a final decision about Stage Managing, finals nearly kill everyone, Winn has some news for Kara, and Lena goes back to Metropolis for winter break...(yikes). See you soon! :)}
A loud bang sounded, pulling Kara out of her slumber with a violent jolt. She didn’t mean to fall asleep on top of her Brit Lit book, she had only meant to close her eyes for a second…

She looked for the source of the noise. A familiar blonde stood over her from across the study table of the library Kara was sitting at. She smiled smugly down at Kara, a bright blue lollipop hanging out of her mouth, staining her lips the same neon blue color as her contacts, several books tight in her grip just above the table, suggesting that she had slammed them against the wooden surface to intentionally startle Kara.

“What’s up, frosh?” Leslie asked, her loud voice filling the silent library.

Kara gritted her teeth, unresponsive.

“You pissed at me?” Leslie pressed, plopping down into a chair across the table.

“It would just make you happy if I told you I was, wouldn’t it?”

Leslie grinned widely, blue stained tongue pushing the lollipop from one side of her mouth to the other.

“I mean, yeah.”

Kara groaned, propping her book up so she could block Leslie from view.

“Oh come on, this is no fun if you don’t play along.”

“Would you just go away, Leslie?”

She swung her feet up onto the table, black combat boots sitting atop one of Kara’s binders. Kara glared at her, willing herself to remember that using her laser eyes was probably a bit too harsh a response.

“Ugh, look,” Leslie said, “I’m sorry, alright? Well, I’m not sorry for pushing the gig on you. But I’m sorry I didn’t give you more of a heads up, I guess.”

“You could have asked me first!”

“What fun would that have been? I figured you might be a little mad at me at first. But you’ll get over it. Know how I know?”

Kara blinked at her, expression blank.
“Because,” Leslie continued without the response she was digging for, “Your life revolves around that damn theater. Admit it. You’ve still got that little twinkle in your eye, the most naïve little twinkle, that says that you think that some crappy college theater program is actually worth your time and energy. I used to have it too, okay? Well, I’ve never twinkled at anything. But you get my meaning. Point is, I stopped giving a shit about this place a long while ago. Clocked out, ya know? My head is already in post-grad mode. So, no, I didn’t feel like going through that shit show yet again. You know they never asked me to be the SM, either. They’ve just assumed I wanted the gig since sophomore year. Sophomore fuckin’ year, Danvers. I’ve gotta tap out, ya know?”

Kara continued to blink at her.

“Do you expect me to feel bad for you?” Kara finally replied.

Leslie yanked the lollipop out of her mouth, her blue-stained lips making a loud smacking sound.

“I don’t give a fuck if you do or don’t, honestly. But I do feel mildly bad for dicking you over. So, if you need help with anything, just let me know, okay?”

Kara narrowed her eyes at Leslie.

“Do you actually mean that?”

Leslie shrugged.

“No idea. I guess we’ll find out. Happy studying, nerd.”

*

The day before finals began, Kara had a sit down meeting with James, Snapper, and the choreographer and voice instructor, J’onn. Snapper regarded her from across the table they sat at with leery disdain, his eyes glaring just over the brim of his glasses. Kara thought that maybe, somehow, that being expected to do such a big favor for Dr. Carr would make him just a little bit nicer towards her. She was mistaken.

“Well, Kara,” J’onn cut into the awkward silence that had fallen over them after initial re-introductions. “I was informed by James that you sort of agreed last minute to step into the role of stage manager for this production, after the assumed stage manager stepped down from her duties. So I would like to personally thank you for agreeing to step into such a role of responsibility. I’m sure the production as a whole will be a great success with you at the helm.”

Kara smiled, perking up at the compliment, and looking towards Snapper as if to rub in the fact that a professional had more compliments and faith to offer her than he did.

“Thank you, J’onn. I appreciate it.”

“Oh huh,” Snapper grunted. “Anyway, here’s everyone’s copies of the scripts, the music, and some of James’ rough sketches for the set design concept. Now, as far as my vision for this production goes…”
Kara tuned Snapper out. She had heard him go on enough speeches about “visions” and “artistic integrity” to know that there was nothing he was about to say that was of interest to her. James would likely fill her in on whatever important bits she needed to know later. It still didn’t feel real to her that she had actually agreed to take on this much responsibility next semester. But it would be fine…right?

At least, if nothing else, it would give more opportunity to be around Lena next semester…

*

Kara really thought that finals were going to be a big deal, after everyone had lamented about it so much. But, after all, Kara was pretty damn smart. She couldn’t get around the inevitable work she had to put in through the semester: the readings, the papers, the projects. But the finals were just tests. And Kara was pretty good with tests, when she had the proper time and energy to prepare for them.

And she had both. Because everyone was busy having a much harder time getting through finals than her, apparently. Alex could think of nothing but all of the anatomy terms she had to memorize (though Kara had the sneaking suspicion that Maggie had found a way to creep into her thoughts, or maybe even her apartment, once or twice). Winn would respond to Kara’s texts maybe once a day or so with a vague “Cool” or “lemme get back to you in a minute”. James was eager to administer and grade the finals for his classes as quickly as possible. Kara had heard rumor that he was in a hurry to go and visit Lucy in Metropolis, but he hadn’t mentioned anything about it, so Kara tried not to jump to conclusions.

And then there was Lena. Kara and Lena hadn’t really talked all that much since that weekend. The weekend that felt less and less real the farther Kara got from it. Once the final week of classes resumed the following Monday, Lena got just as lost in her studying as everyone else. Kara didn’t really mind the sudden distance. At least, she didn’t mind it any more than she minded all of the sudden shifts in how she spent her time. The few weeks following the end of a production were always so jarring. You go from spending every waking minute either in the theater, or stressing about the next time you needed to be in the theater. You see the same people every day for extended periods of time. And then suddenly you’re free. And you realize that you have legitimately forgotten how you lived your life before you had gotten sucked into the production.

But maybe she minded being away from Lena a little bit more than she minded the end of the fall play. Maybe Kara was even able to admit to herself that she missed Lena. Every day that passed during finals week that Kara forced herself to look over the same notes that she had memorized a long time ago, checking her phone every five minutes just to see if maybe Lena had texted her yet. Kara didn’t really text her first…but that was mostly because she didn’t want to distract her from studying. And because she didn’t want to bug Lena. Or seem too eager. But then Kara started to worry that maybe Lena thought that Kara was blowing her off? So she sent her a generic “Hey” text. And then internally berated herself for a good long while because apparently having sex with a girl instantly had turned her into a fifteen year old boy because that is the only explanation for sending a “Hey” text.

She wouldn’t blame Lena for never talking to her again after that. But she did, eventually.
Hey, sorry I’m really swamped right now. And

I may have literally locked my phone in a
drawer so that I didn’t get distracted by cute
blondes tempting me away from my work.

Plural, huh?

Yuh huh. Snuck in another gal in the whole
five minutes you kept your hands off me long
enough to get a shower.

Kara chuckled. Okay. So they were good, right?

Too bad I can’t take you and your stamina with
me to Metropolis over break.

Oh, Kara thought.

Kara felt herself deflating. She told herself not to. Lena probably had to go back to see her family
over break. No. Even that wasn’t right for Kara to think. Lena had every right to want to see her
family. She couldn’t expect Lena to feel the way she wanted her to feel just because it would make
Kara’s own life more convenient. It wasn’t fair.

Yeah. Too bad.

Yeah. Wouldn’t want to put you through the
torture of Christmas at the Luthors.

Kara bit her lip, feeling guilty for letting herself be just another person to silently let Lena think
there was something inherently wrong with her because of her last name.
I’m sure it’s not that bad, Lena. Come on.
They’re still your family, right? I’m sure
you’ll be glad to see them.

Hmm. Maybe you’re right.

Lena presumably got lost in her studying once again after that. Kara tried for the rest of the night not to think about what it was going to be like to spend two months without Lena.

*Kara took her last final on Thursday. She was going to stick around campus until Friday, however, since that’s when Alex would finish her last exam and would take her back home to their parents house.

Kara really needed to get her own car…

Campus was pretty much a ghost town by Thursday evening. Most students had taken the last of their finals and gone home. Kara knew that Lena’s last final was this morning. When she hadn’t seen or heard from her, Kara figured, regretfully, that she was probably already on a plane back to Metropolis. But, that thought didn’t stop her heart from jumping into her throat when there was a knock on her door.

Kara sighed when she looked through the door with her X-ray vision. It was just Winn.

“Hey, Winn” she said as she opened the door, trying to feign excitement at seeing her friend, even though it was significantly less exciting than if the person who was at the door was the person she was currently involved in a sexual relationship with.

Winn didn’t look that happy to be there. His facial expression was strained, eyes tired, his fingers thumbed against his legs nervously.

“Hey, Kara,” he murmured, “got a minute?”

“Sure,” she said, opening her door wide to allow him to enter. “Is everything okay?”

“Uh, yeah. You know, finals and stuff.” He plopped down onto the bean bag chair. “Also, we may have been right about the whole ‘Lena is being bugged’ thing.”

Kara’s eyes widened, moving to sit across from Winn on her bed.

“Really? You’re sure?”

“Well, I mean, I’m not sure. I don’t have the actual thing on me to look at so I can’t tell you for sure. But. All the research I’ve done based on the picture you took of it leads me to think that… yeah. It was a bug. A pretty high class one, too. Like…CIA level tech.”
“So…what? You think the CIA is spying on Lena?”

Winn shrugged.

“Not necessarily. There’s a number of different organizations…or people, who could have gotten their hands on something like that. Someone like…I don’t know…a highly intelligent villainous convict on the run from the feds and very intent on keeping his location hidden.”

Kara let out a long breath.

“Lex?”

Winn bit the inside of his cheek.

“I mean, it would make sense. Lena might know where he is, since they were pretty close back before he, ya know, went nuts. And he might be keeping tabs on her to make sure she doesn’t tell anyone what she knows. Or? It actually could be the feds, listening in to see if she says anything to anyone about where he is. I don’t know. But either way, I’m worried about her.”

“Yeah…” Kara said, thoughts racing. “So…this bug. What else do you know about it? Does it just listen in to phone conversations? Or can it listen to anything near it?”

“I don’t know. Maybe both? It wouldn’t shock me. But regardless, where there was one, there will probably be more. If someone is listening in, they probably have been for a while, and they will probably be quick to replace the one you got rid of. Speaking of which, you said that you found it because you were able to hear it? How…how is that possible?”

“Umm…maybe it was malfunctioning?” Kara said quickly, cheeks growing hot.

“Right, yeah,” Winn said casually. Kara breathed a sigh of relief. “So…what are we gonna do? Should we tell her?”

“I don’t know,” Kara said, reaching for a pack of fruit snacks from the box under her bed. Stress made her hungry.

“I don’t know if now would be the best time to tell her,” she continued, “We don’t have any real evidence besides a picture on my phone. And anyhow, she’s going home to Metropolis. Her family might suspect something is wrong if she knows.”

“Yeah, don’t want any of them telling good old Lex that something is up with his sister.”

Kara felt her stomach drop, sick with the idea of what would happen to Lena if her brother turned on her.

“Hmph.” Winn crossed his legs, perching on top of the bean bag chair, reminding Kara of a bird. “Too bad we can’t keep an eye on her while she’s in Metropolis.”

Kara suddenly had an idea.

“Uh huh,” she said, already concocting a plan. “Too bad.”

There was yet another knock at Kara’s door. In their paranoid state, both Kara and Winn jumped at the sound. She used her X-ray vision to look through the door once again, and her stomach clenched with nerves.
“It’s Lena,” she whispered to Winn.

“How do you know that?” Winn replied, perplexed.

_Oh yeah, it’s weird that you can see through walls._

“Umm,” Kara struggled, already walking towards the door, “I recognized her knock?”

“Gaaaay,” Winn whispered as Kara swung the door open, shaking a hand empathically at him behind her back so he would knock it off.

“Lena!” Kara exclaimed, immensely excited to see her, despite herself and her company.

Lena looked between Kara and Winn behind her, eyebrows furrowed.

“I’ve caught you at a bad time?”


“Hi Lena,” he said, attempting to hide the look of guilt on his face by digging into Kara’s snack stash.

“Here, come in,” Kara said to Lena.

“I, um,” Lena said, stepping into the dorm room. “I just wanted to pop by and say goodbye before I headed to the airport.”

Winn looked up at the girls, a shit grin appearing on his face. Kara, who was standing a step behind Lena at the moment, shot daggers at him with her eyes.

“Winn,” she said to him, trying to hide the threat in her voice behind sugary sweetness, “weren’t you just heading out?”

“Was I?” he asked. “But I just got here.”

He was messing with Kara and she knew it. Normally she might be more willing to tolerate his subtle way at poking fun at Kara and her somewhat secret fling with Lena. But considering that she felt sick just thinking about being across the country from Lena for two whole months, she was not going to let Winn take away her opportunity to give Lena at least a half decent goodbye.

She strode over to Winn, grabbed his shirt collar, and pulled him to his feet just a little abruptly.

“Yes, you were!”

“Ow!” he said, as he was shoved towards the door. “Wait, I-“

“Bye, Winn!” Kara said sweetly, and brusquely shut the door, with him on the other side.

Lena lifted an eyebrow upwards slowly, eyes sparkling with amusement towards Kara.

“So,” Kara said, spinning around to face Lena, that irritating fluttering in her stomach she often got around her returning with an acute ferocity. “When does your flight leave?”

Kara knew that there were serious things happening. She knew that Lena was likely being watched, and that she might be in trouble. And Kara especially knew that Lena being watched put herself in even more risk of being exposed for who she really was more so than before. And she knew that
she already had a temporary plan forming to keep the both of them safe for now. But at the moment, all she could make herself care about was the way Lena’s lips quirked into a devilish smile, eyes raking over Kara.

“Tomorrow morning,” Lena said slowly.

A rush of yearning went shooting into Kara’s gut.

“Thank God,” she said, and closed the distance between the two of them in a single step, kissing Lena desperately.

* 

So, Kara didn’t have a plan, so much as a set of superpowers enabling her to tiptoe the line between “concerned friend” and “creepy stalker” much more easily than the average human. Kara could have just made sure to check in on Lena via text while she was in Metropolis over break and hope that if something was wrong, that Lena would tell her. But Lena wasn’t always great about talking about what was going on in her life. And if something bad did happen, she might not have the chance to send Kara or anyone else an “SOS”. And since it was just a quick ten minute flight to Metropolis (more or less, depending on how in super-shape Kara was), Kara couldn’t see a better option than to just pop into the neighborhood every now and again, just to check on Lena, and makes sure she was alright.

Kara gave herself strict ground rules, simply to feel more confident in the fact that she wasn’t, in fact, being a creep. First of all, she would check on her no more than once every other day, except if she had a strong suspicion that something was up. Second, she would only come by Lena’s home for a minute or less, just to survey things. Third, she would absolutely, under no circumstances, go inside the house or try to listen in on any conversations, regardless of who they were between. Lena had enough problems with being listened in to. Kara respected her too much to invade her privacy like that.

She would just zip over, check to make sure Lena was okay, and zip back home. And, if she thought something might be wrong, she would not, repeat, would not jump in to try and help unless it was absolutely necessary. Should be easy enough, right? If anything, the real trick would be A) keeping from straining herself to the breaking point (she forgot just how tiring long distance flights were) and B) keeping anyone in her own family from knowing what was up. After all, it was one thing to literally fly by someone’s house without them noticing. It was another thing entirely to go missing for twenty or more minutes from your parent’s house, when they were all breathing down your neck because “we don’t get to see you anymore!” Even Alex was around far more often than she should be.

“Shouldn’t you be out celebrating the survival of your first semester at med school or something?” Kara had asked as Alex had popped by the Danvers’ house, yet again, to see if Kara wanted to hang out.

“I’ve done enough celebrating for now,” Alex said, shrugging, as she stole another big handful of Kara’s popcorn, flipping the channels even though Kara had been watching that.

“Well, then go hang out with Maggie or something!” Kara said, exasperated, growing more and more irritated at the delay when she had wanted to go and check on Lena like, an hour ago.
Alex sighed.

“I can’t. She’s not around.”

Kara’s face fell.

“Oh,” she said softly, “Did you guys stop seeing each other?”

“What? No! She’s out of town for the holidays! God.”

“Well, I didn’t know! That’s what you usually say when you call it quits with a girl. Which…by the way, you are fast approaching your usual self-proclaimed expiration date for relationships.”

Alex brought her knees up to her chin, falling deep into her own thoughts.

“Yeah. I know. But…I don’t know, Kara. I’m like…not sick of her yet. And, weirdly enough, she doesn’t seem to be sick of me. At least I don’t think.”

Kara’s mouth fell open, gaping at her sister.

“Oh my god,” she said.

Alex side eyed her.

“What?”

“You are falling for this girl!” Kara exclaimed, slapping her sister’s leg lightly with a pillow.

“Hey!” Alex replied hotly, grabbing the pillow next to her to hit Kara back.

Popcorn went sputtering to the floor and into the cracks of the couch cushions.

“I’m not falling for anyone,” Alex insisted. “Don’t be stupid. I just…I like her, that’s all. And figure that I’ll just see how things go with her, ya know?”

Kara grinned smugly at her sister.

“Hey Eliza!” she called loudly.

“Yes, dear?” Eliza replied from her office.

“You can buy that Christmas gift for Alex’s girlfriend, now. They’re in love!”

“Oh my god, Kara!” Alex squealed, shoving her pillow into Kara’s face to muffle her voice before she could say anything else.

“Well that’s awfully short notice, Alex,” Eliza chided casually, “You’re gonna have to help me pick something out”.

Kara knocked the pillow away from her face.

“I can’t breathe, jerk!” she yelled at Alex.

Alex put her hand over Kara’s mouth.

“She’s not in town for Christmas, Mom, don’t worry about it. And we’re not in love.”
Kara licked the palm of Alex’s hand.

“Eww, gross!” Alex exclaimed, wiping her hand on Kara’s shirt. “What about you, nerd, still single?”

“Yep,” Kara replied nonchalantly, tossing a piece of popcorn at her sister.

*

The Luthor household was, unsurprisingly, a massive, daunting looking mansion, like something Dracula would want to live in (hey, she did learn something from Brit Lit). Kara usually didn’t snoop around the windows outside enough to see much of the inside, but what she did usually capture glimpses of were shiny suits of armor, elaborate portraits of bald patriarchs, and stuffed animal heads.

See? She was totally right about the stuffed heads thing.

The only room she tried to pay any close attention to was Lena’s. It was on the third floor, second window in from the left of the north wall of the mansion. And even then, she made sure not to try and make out any specific details of the décor of the room. She had only found it by listening for Lena’s heartbeat and finding her there. She was usually in her room when Kara swept by to check on her, since she normally came by later in the evening. Kara didn’t even stay long enough to find out what Lena was up to. That was crossing the line. No, she only stopped by to make sure Lena wasn’t in any imminent danger, and then promptly flew back home. Sure, it was exhausting, and felt more and more ridiculous with every passing day, but Kara didn’t care. It made her feel better.

And that was the preposterous carryings on of Kara Danvers for several weeks. Hang out with her family during the day, try not to worry about Lena, or even think about Lena, because it just make her want to worry about her more. Send a couple of casual, superficial texts to her every now and then, asking how her day was going, using all the willpower she had not to tell Lena God I miss you. Go two days, sometimes just one day, before letting her thoughts and worries and yearning bubble over until she found herself passing casually by Lena’s home in Metropolis, hidden in the blackness of the night sky, only letting herself look at Lena for a second just so that she knew she was safe. Go home, rest her aching muscles from the exertion flying, and repeat.

It was pathetic. Kara was starting to wonder if there even was someone listening in on Lena, planting bugs in her phone and the like. She wondered if she was just so damned hung up on her that she had convinced herself and Winn of the whole thing so that she had a valid excuse to fixate on Lena like this. Was she just finally hitting her crazy hormonal teen phase? Did hormones make people behave like complete idiots?

Kara was ready to tell herself to give up on the whole thing. To stop, for the love of Rao, flying over to Metropolis every other night just to get a glimpse at the girl she couldn’t keep off her mind. To accept the fact that she was a hopeless mess, and to just force herself to carry on like a normal person until she could see Lena again at the beginning of the next semester.

That was, until, Lena went missing. Not technically missing by any legal or criminal standards, but missing from Kara’s ability to know where she was. One day she was at her childhood home with the Luthors, like normal, and then two days later, there was no sign of her there. Or the next day. Or the next. And Kara was starting to panic. Because, complete hopeless girl that she was, she had
planned out how to keep an eye on Lena, but, had never thought to make a plan about what to do if something actually happened to her.

She tried, of course, to get a hold of Lena. She called, texted, messaged, all with no response.

What was she supposed to do? Call the cops? Call Kal-El? Knock on the Luthor’s front door like “Oh hey, how ya doing, not to show up unannounced or anything, but where the hell is your daughter?”

Then, finally, thankfully, Lena texted her back.

Hey. Yeah, so, sorry, I kind of misplaced my phone, had to get a new one and get all of my shit transferred over. It was a pain.

Oh! No problem. I hate when that happens.

Phew. Okay. So, she was fine. But…then…why wasn’t she home?

Still having fun with catching up with your family?

Yep.

Liar, Kara thought.

Once again growing paranoid, Kara had to decide whether she thought Lena was just lying to Kara about where she was, or whether some kind of unknown bad guy had taken her hostage and was using her phone to convince people that nothing had happened to her. When stuff like this happened in movies, the main character usually asked the person a question no one else knew the answer to. So…what could she ask? Keeping in mind that she didn’t want to release and possible saucy information to a possible kidnapper. Kara thought carefully about what she was going to ask, still half aware of the fact that she was more likely than not being a complete idiot.

You remember what I said when I came by your apartment after thanksgiving?
The bubbles indicating that Lena was typing a reply appeared and disappeared several times over the course of a few minutes. Kara swallowed hard. Finally, Lena texted her back.

*You mean other than saying my name over and over again, a series of uncharacteristic expletives, and a good many moans that I have committed to permanent memory? You said you think that you’re a bad friend. Which you’re not. You’re bad at keeping your hands to yourself, but that’s about it.*

Kara let out a sigh of relief.

*See? You’re being stupid,* Kara thought. *But…then…why is she lying about where she is?*

*Why do you ask?*

*No reason.*

*Lena knocked on a familiar door, holding a large suitcase in front of her, foot tapping thoughtlessly against the concrete slab porch. A moment later, the door was opened.*

“Well,” Winn said, sighing, “at least you made it all the way through Christmas this year!”

Lena laughed despite herself. This was the third year in a row that she had ended up calling Winn from Metropolis, miserable, asking if she could come crash at his place for a while. The most ridiculous part of it all was that there was no reason to, now. Back when she was an underclassmen living in the regular dorms, attempting to fully drown herself in that college lifestyle, all the students were kicked out of housing over winter break, and she had nowhere else to go. The campus apartments, however, were a totally different story. She could just go back to her place whenever she wanted. Or, hell, she could have just stayed in a hotel for a while, either in National City or Metropolis. It’s not like she couldn’t afford it. She could have whatever she wanted, as long as there was a price tag on it.*
So what was she doing on Winn’s porch?

She just didn’t want to be alone.

“I don’t mean to intrude…” Lena said uneasily, wondering how much it put Winn and his mother out to take Lena in…yet again…

“Oh, shut up. Come on in,” Winn said, grabbing her suitcase and ushering her into the house.

Winn had been right. She did make it through Christmas with her family, and that was something. Last year she had stormed out on Christmas Eve, sick of acting like everything was normal while talking in code with her mother in case anyone was listening in on them, and while Lex hid away from the cops in the catacombs of the basement. It wasn’t even the hiding and the lying that had thrown her over the edge that year, really. It was the rabid, sallow face of her once beloved brother as he stared down his beloved chessboard in the dark, damp, earthen room beneath the house, a single yellow light hanging over him, making him look sickly, and no longer human. It was the way he looked at her, at anyone, really, with the same wide, manic eyes, suggesting that he couldn’t even see you. He could only see past you, through you, always fixated on his enemies and hatreds projected into almost hallucinogenic manifestations through his mind’s eye. The Lex she knew up until then was dead, and the Lex that existed now was someone she couldn’t stand to be around without becoming physically ill.

This year, comparatively, wasn’t half bad. But God, she was bored. And being on the receiving end of a constant stream of passive aggressive insults from her mother just didn’t seem like the best way to pass the time. So, she left Lillian, alone, in her big house, every nook and cranny of it preserved perfectly as the Museum of Lex that it was; a shrine, a temple, even, to the Golden Boy.

Winn’s mother was in the kitchen, like most people’s mothers always seemed to be, sipping at a cup of coffee at the table. Lena crossed through the cozy, plush furnished living room to say hello.

“Hi, Mrs. Schott,” Lena called.

Winn’s mother looked up from the book she was reading, a bright smile appearing instantly on her soft featured face. The book was heavily worn at the binding, suggesting that Mrs. Schott probably read it often.

“There she is!” Mrs. Schott said in a sing-song voice. “I was wondering if you would be coming around. A girl needs someone besides a teenage boy around to keep her company, you know.”

“Mother,” Winn groaned, “I am literally going to be twenty two in a few months.”

“Well then act like it, dear,” his mother joked, patting him firmly on the back, a silent reminder she often gave him to stand up straight.

Winn slid into a chair at the table, and Lena sat down next to him.

“So, how was your Christmas?” Lena asked.

“Oh, it was lovely,” Mrs. Schott piped up. “We went to visit my sister on the other side of town. Her oldest boy just went off to college. She’s having a bit of a hard time adjusting. It’s a lot, you know, to let go of any of your babies.”

Winn groaned again.

“Anyhow,” Mrs. Schott continued, “you should have seen the pies I made! Lord! I was a baking
“I should think so,” Winn said, “now that you have that kickass new oven.”

“Oh, don’t swear, Winn. But you’re right, I do love that new oven. So strange, how it just appeared at our front door a week before Christmas.”

“Right? Wonder who could have done that,” Winn said.

Both Winn and his mother gave Lena a knowing smile. Lena shrugged, feigning innocence.

Lena and Winn stayed up awhile after Mrs. Schott had gone to sleep, watching television in the living room. Lena remembered always feeling that there was something off about not only the décor of the living room, but of the house in general. After a while, she finally realized why. There were no pictures of Winn or the family anywhere to be seen. The only picture frame in the house sat on the top of the entertainment center in the middle of the living room, permanently turned down so that the picture inside it could not be seen. Lena knew, however, what the picture was of. It was a posed department store photo of a much younger Winn, his mother, and his father, who, since his arrest years ago, had been all but erased from the home. They did not speak of him, there were no things left of his around the house. It was as if he had never existed, except, in that picture.

“So,” Winn said, cutting through the comfortable silence that had settled between them as they watched some tacky zombie film. Winn had an odd obsession with zombie culture, and Lena was always amazed that he seemed to never run out of new media to consume regarding the subject.

“You gonna tell Kara you’re back in town?”

Lena’s head snapped up to look Winn dead on, thinking that maybe if she glared at him long enough that he would drop the subject of Kara.

“The Luthor Glare doesn’t work on me, woman,” he persisted.

Lena rolled her eyes.

“I don’t see why I should tell her.”

Winn guffawed at her.

“Are you serious? You don’t see why you should tell Kara you’re in National City?”

“What? Just so I would have to admit to her that sunshiney optimism wasn’t enough to make being back home with my mother at all tolerable?”

“Oh, come on,” Winn replied. “She was just trying to make you feel better.”

“I know. She told me to have a good trip home and she asks me how I’m doing and how my family is because that’s what normal people do. And I just…all it does is remind me that we just…do not know each other very well. Like, at all.”

“Well, no. I mean, physically, you two seem to be getting to know each other pretty well.”
“Lena smacked Winn on the arm.

“What? I still get to crack jokes about the fact that you two had a marathon worth of sex.”

“I’m never telling you anything, ever again,” Lena said, shaking her head. “But like, that’s what I’m saying. I feel like I’m close to her, like, really close. And then at the same time it feels like I’m standing on one side of a door. And Kara is on the other side. And she only has the door open a crack, and I can only just peer in and get the smallest glimpse of what’s going on with her. And when I do, she shuts the door and disappears for a few days, or more, with no more than a goddamn “Hey”. It just seems like she’s hiding so much from me.”

“So, what, you’re the only person allowed to be guarded?”

“I have never been guarded, though!” Lena exclaimed. “Not with her! Which is, fucking pathetic.”

“What, that you’re totally smitten over a dough eyed freshman? I mean, it’s a little pathetic. But it’s also adorable.”

Lena groaned into a decorative pillow that was sitting next to her.

“She still refers to us as friends, Winn. Goddamn friends.”

“Yeah…that would sting a little bit. But, I’m sure you just don’t know the whole story, you know? I don’t think she’s the ‘casual sex’ type. I’m willing to bet she’s just as into you as you’re into her. I just…I would stick it out a while longer, maybe things will change. Especially if you guys are gonna start spending a lot more time together during the musical, you know?”

Lena plopped her head into Winn’s lap, covering her face with her hand.

“Do you really think she’s into me?”

“Oh, come on, Kara literally threw me out of her dorm just to give you a proper goodbye fucking.”

Lena’s stomach flipped at the memory of her last encounter with Kara.

“Don’t remind me, it’ll just make me all…bothered.”

“You know what would fix that?” Winn asked, pulling Lena’s hand away from her face. “Telling her you’re back in National City!”

“I’m not ready to see her again yet! I still have to think about a lot of things. She just…God, why does she have to be so cute?”

“I don’t know, sweetheart. Maybe she’s not human.”

Lena laughed, and sat back up, trying to focus on Winn’s terrible zombie movie so that she could stop thinking about Kara. Even though it had become increasingly impossible not to think about her…

Chapter End Notes

I felt bad bc this chapter is a short lot of choppy nonsense as a result of being in the
lull in the story telling and my being busy AF this week. So I threw in some Lena POV for ya. Hopefully that makes up for it. Probably not the last time we'll shift to her perspective. Anyway, we will HOPEFULLY actually get back into theater stuff happening in this story by next week. Auditions and such shall be happening, which will introduce at least one new (familiar) character.

(PS did i really throw a lollipop kink bit into this story? What goes on with me anymore IDK)

Reminder that updates are Thursdays (usually after 5), and also that I love all of you for reading this and chatting with me about it.

See you soon! :)}
Chapter 9

Chapter Summary

Poor lil Lena...

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Kara thumbed her fingers agitatedly against her notebook. A single, barely legible audition sheet sat on the plywood theater desk on her left, between her and Dr. Carr, who sat next to her, leaving an empty seat between them. That audition form was about to be one of many. To the right of her notebook was a list of roles available, paired with a summary of what the general physical appearance and vocal range of the character should be. One seat over to her right sat James, and Winn sat directly behind them. J’onn was sitting down at the piano in front of the stage, prepared to accompany the actor currently on stage, Adam, in this case, as he sang his audition piece. Afterwards, J’onn would test his vocal range, pushing him as high and as low as he could manage to sing.

Kara noticed that she had been blowing her breath out of her lips like a horse every time she felt intimidated or overwhelmed by all of the daunting work ahead of her. Each time she did this, Winn would lean forward and give her shoulders a reassuring squeeze.

Kara wasn’t agitated because of the stage manager job, however. She was agitated because it had been two months since she had seen Lena, and Lena had never told Kara when she had gotten back to campus. Kara didn’t even know that Lena was back, until she was handing out audition sheets to the flock of students outside, each of them singing bits of their own audition pieces, the sound like dozens of birds trying to out-squawk one another. Kara was walking her way around the group, handing out forms, giving a generic speech about what to fill out where, watching her step as she weaved around a maze of bodies and bags and textbooks, when she actually ran into Lena. Lena, expression cool and collected, gave a simple head nod and smile in recognition to Kara, and took a form from her.

And that was it.

To be fair, they had texted each regularly since break started, but still, after how...close, they had gotten at the end of the semester, Kara thought that Lena would have at least been a little anxious to see her.

Was Lena mad at her? What did Kara do wrong? Why was Lena suddenly so secretive about where she was? First she lied about being home, and then she just never told Kara that she had come back to campus, even though they were now into the third day of classes. Was Kara just supposed to have assumed and gone to see her? Was any of this even Kara’s business?

Why was this suddenly so difficult?

Kara shook herself out of it. She had to focus. It was her job to jot down notes on the auditions as they went on. She had to write down a small bio for each actor, write down what they performed, how well they performed it, how their stage presence was, what their range was (J’onn would tell
her. She didn’t pretend to be good enough at this to know just by sound what note was being played), and what their availability was like. All while trying to pay attention as the actors performed. That wasn’t hard or anything.

Well, technically, it would be easy, if she wrote at a more accelerated speed. But, with Winn right behind her, she worried that he would be suspicious of he saw Kara’s hand moving like an actual blur as she jotted down paragraphs of notes within seconds.

At least, until she was three auditions in, way behind on her notetaking, and allowed herself to speed her handwriting up just a little bit. Winn was looking at his phone, anyway.

For once, Kara didn’t have to ask Winn to go wrestle the next person into coming in to sing. Lena walked in, unceremoniously dropped her audition form on the desk, locking eyes with Kara only for the briefest second, and walked to the stage.

Kara narrowed her eyes at Lena as she handed her sheet music to J’onn.

*Is she doing that thing where I have to come to her?*

Lena had chosen to sing the first few bars of “Stay With Me” from Into the Woods. It wasn’t a piece really meant to showcase her voice, but Kara knew why she chose it. Lena chose the piece more as an acting showcase to attempt to convince Dr. Carr that she should take the role of Mrs. Lovett. She had told Kara a while ago that that was the role she had her eye on, and Kara didn’t know if it was biased of her or not to think that she was perfect for it. Despite that fact that Lena clearly had a strong voice (because of course she did, because she was, apparently, good at everything), it was almost overshadowed by the frantic, unnerving character she slipped into as she took over the stage. Kara was so transfixed by her performance that she had been neglecting to take any notes for some time. Finally, after Dr. Carr cleared his throat loudly for the third time, Kara snapped back to reality and held up a hand to J’onn and Lena, signaling that they had heard enough. Lena smiled, back to her usual self, hopped down from the stage, and leaned casually next to the piano.

Kara looked down at her notes, and realized that she had mindlessly scribbled “*annoyingly talented. And pretty*”. She quickly erased that bit.

Winn leaned forward, settling his head onto Kara’s shoulder.

“What cha think?” he asked.

“That was…like…amazing,” Kara whispered.

“I know, right? She was so worried about it. I ended up dragging my old keyboard out of storage a couple weeks ago so I could help her with it.”

Kara’s eyes widened, moving her shoulder so that Winn could no long rest on it, and turning slowly to him.

“I’m sorry, you said two weeks ago?” she asked slowly, jaw clenched.

Winn’s eyes bulged, realizing his error.

“Oh…um…well, I mean…uh…”

“How long has Lena been back in town?” she asked, mindful not act too affected by this news.
Meanwhile, J’onn pricked at the keys, starting at a middle C, working down as low as Lena could manage to imitate, then back up to see how high she could sing. She was clearly an alto, but slid into several soprano notes with practiced ease.

Winn shrugged, leaning back in his seat, far enough from Kara to keep her from questioning him further.

Snapper cleared his throat again.

“Thank you, Lena, that will be all.”

Lena nodded curtly, and turned too walked back out the exit of the theater. Before she disappeared, she looked Kara straight on, gave her a knowing wink, and then she was gone.

Kara scoffed. That girl was so… Why was she choosing now of all times to mess with Kara? Especially now when she was in the middle of auditions. She had a lot to do! She couldn’t just… leave and go find Lena… drag her into the stairwell, maybe scold her for ignoring her when she got back from Metropolis. Or maybe shoving her against a wall…

Don’t you dare, Kara, she scolded herself in vain. Stand your ground.

She was not going to leave her post. She wasn’t. She…

“Can we hold for a minute?” Kara suddenly asked. “I have to use the restroom.”

Snapper rolled his eyes.

“Yeah. Sure. We’re not on a tight schedule or anything.”

Kara was too busy rushing out of the theater to care if Snapper was mad at her or not.

Lena’s bright red overcoat flapped in the breeze as she turned the corner of the sidewalk to head back to her apartment building. Kara popped open the front doors to Luthor Hall.

“Lena!” she hissed.

Lena’s head turned, she smirked at Kara, putting her hands on her hips.

“Is something wrong?” she asked.

Kara, who walked quickly to close the distance between Lena and herself, already began stumbling over her words.

“I…you…hi.”

Lena tilted her head to the right, considering Kara.

“Hey there,” she replied casually.

Kara exhaled heavily.

“I… I didn’t know when you got back.”

Lena shrugged.

“Not too long ago.”
Kara loosened her clenching jaw as she tried not to get frustrated with Lena.

“Well…I guess I thought you would have told me when you got back so we could…catch up.”

Lena’s eyebrow quirked upwards, the way it did seemingly of its own accord sometimes. Kara hated to admit that it never failed to turn her on.

What was Kara upset about, again?

Lena smirked, as if she knew exactly the effect she had on Kara.

“Catch up, huh?” Lena said carefully.

Kara tried to glare at Lena, but a small smile was creeping onto her face despite her best attempts to maintain her vexation. She found herself being pulled in to Lena by a force inside her like gravity. Lena stayed very still, allowing Kara to act of her own accord. Kara grasped the sides of Lena’s jacket, biting at her bottom lip, dragging Lena towards her.

At that moment, a couple of students rounded the corner of the sidewalk, probably walking down form the dorm buildings above Luthor Hall. Kara jumped, releasing her grip on Lena’s coat instantly.

Lena’s face fell, stepping back from Kara as the two students walked past.

“Well, since we’re such good friends,” Lena said, voice like ice, “I’m sure we’ll find time eventually to catch up. But you’ve got auditions to run. I’ll, uh, I’ll see you later.”

Lena walked briskly away from Kara before she could protest, or apologize, or anything…

Yeah. Maybe Lena was mad at her. And maybe she had good reason to be.

She walked back into the theater, sulking slightly. As she plopped into her seat, Kara looked up a moment to see J’onn giving her a curious look. Then, after a moment, he resumed playing a few chords on the piano, familiarizing himself with the key of the piece of the next audition song.

The next moment of peace between auditions, Kara turned to glare at Winn.

“You could have let me know that Lena left her parent’s house early,” she said in a harsh whisper, “We’re supposed to be keeping an eye on her to make sure she’s safe.”

Winn shrugged again.

“She was safe! I was keeping an eye on her, don’t worry. You just don’t want to admit that you’re cranky that your girl toy didn’t come running over to bed you the second she was back in National City.”

“I’m not!” Kara exclaimed, then reminded herself to speak in a whisper. “That’s not why I’m mad, Winn. I’m just…worried about her. Same as you.”

“Well don’t worry, Kara,” he whispered back to her, “I’ve got a plan to flush out our little mystery spy. I just need some time to work on it.”

*
“So,” Snapper said, voice flat. “What do we think?”

Kara rested her forehead in the palm of her hand, wishing she had taken Winn up on his offer of a cup of coffee an hour ago before he left for the night. One downside to being a stage manager, you never got to leave the theater in a timely manner. Tonight especially, as it was now Snapper and Kara’s job to fill the roles of the show. Just the two of them. Which, to Kara, seemed a punishment worse than death.

“I, uh…” she said, flipping numbly through the stack of audition sheets before her. “I don’t know.”

“Already wowing me with your passion for your work, Danvers.”

Kara groaned.

“Alright. Just…give me a minute.”

Kara was halfway through the process of sorting the forms. She had made a pile for strong auditions to possibly fill the guy roles (some of which were not guys because there are just never enough guys in theater), a pile for girl roles, and a pile of those who she already suspected would get shuffled into the ensemble. There was no “no” pile. Not at this theater. There weren’t enough people involved to turn anyone away. Even if they were tone deaf and had two left feet, they were a body to fill the stage. And as far as dancing went, J’onn was going to meet up with the whole of the students who had auditioned today to teach them en mass a quick, easy dance routine, just to gauge how well they would all be able to pick up on choreography for the show. Basically, as long as you didn’t fall on your face, you were considered “good enough”, and a bad dance audition would only affect someone’s casting if it was really, truly abysmal. Kara prayed to the gods that J’onn didn’t feel too insulted by such a careless approach to what he made a living doing with professionals.

Kara handed Snapper the pile of promising auditions for the guy roles. The girl roles pile she handed to James behind her to look over in the meantime.

Snapper looked over the papers in front of him, pinching the base of his chin between his thumb and pointer finger, as if here was facial hair there that he meant to tug at. He sighed heavily, pulling up two specific forms to compare.

“Where’s that Mike guy?”

Kara grimaced. Mike had apparently decided to graduate from stage hand to actor. If there was a “no” pile, he would be in it. Regretfully, she pulled up his form, and handed it to Snapper. He went back to his pondering, glasses so low on his nose that she was surprised they didn’t fall off.

A form appeared below Kara’s own nose suddenly.

“That’s our Sweeney Todd.”

Kara’s eyes widened, adjusting her glasses to read the blurry print beneath her (they weren’t prescription glasses, obviously, but the glass still altered her perfect vision enough to make her slightly far sighted when she had them on).

“Jack Spheer?” she asked. “Yeah, okay. He was really good.”

And just like that, the ball got rolling. Within a few minutes, many of the roles were filled. Mike
ended up being placed in the role of Adolfo Pirelli, the conning salesperson, which Kara could live with. A very petite girl named Abbi was cast as Tobias. Siobhan was given Lucy Barker, Sweeney’s wife (Kara had a strong feeling it wasn’t the role she wanted, but she would live). The only notable gaps were Mrs. Lovett and Johanna. And only two names in the girl’s pile remained.

“I think Veronica could be our Mrs. Lovett.”

Kara couldn’t stop the barking laugh that escaped her.

“Are you kidding? The notes she hit? She could hit Johanna’s notes like it was nothing,” Kara protested.

Snapper glared up at her.

“Lena could make it work.”

“Lena,” Kara insisted, oddly defensive all of the sudden, “is a much better fit for Mrs. Lovett and you know it.”

“I know that that’s the role she expects to get. Maybe the little princess should be told no for once.”

“You have no reason to have an attitude towards her right now, Dr. Carr,” Kara persisted. “She’s talented. She’s professional. She isn’t a fair weather actor like most of the people we saw today, and she blew that audition out of the water. So stop being such a…”

Dr. Carr tossed his glasses onto the table with a loud ‘whack’. Kara bit her tongue.

“I’m just saying, she mumbled.

“For what it’s worth,” James cut in, pulling Snapper’s attention away from the target of his anger. “I agree with Kara.”

“So do I,” J’onn, who had been quietly observing them from his piano bench, said.

Snapper took several long, heavy breaths, calming himself.

“Alright, fine,” he snarled. “Have it your way.”

*

Kara didn’t sleep well at all that night. She wondered what she was supposed to do about Lena. At some point, something had changed between them. Brief as it was, Kara had quickly become comfortable in the casual lightness of the physical relationship that had been added on top of their friendship. But now, it no longer felt like that was what Lena wanted. As foolish as it sounded, thus far Kara hadn’t really put any thought into what she wanted. She had thought that she would like things to stay the way they were. There was nothing wrong with their relationship as it stood now. They talked to each other a lot, they had each other’s backs, and every now and then they had really good sex. Like…really good. So…what was suddenly wrong?

Kara knew, in the back of her head, what was wrong. She wasn’t an idiot after all. The way that Lena had spat out the word “friends”, the way she seemed hurt when Kara pulled away from her at
the first sign of getting caught, told Kara that Lena wanted them to be more than what they were. Kara never would have thought, when she met Lena, the seductive smartass that she was, that she would be the one possibly wanting a real relationship with Kara, and Kara would be the one being frustratingly casual about the whole thing.

So, what was she to do other than figure out just what the hell she wanted? Why was it so bad for her to just want things to stay the same? Or was it that she wanted the same things Lena did, but was just too afraid to go for it?

Kara thought that ensuring that Lena would get the role that she wanted would somehow make for some kind of apology. She certainly was too much of a coward to just call or text Lena and actually apologize like a normal person.

Kara’s room felt suffocating. It felt like the bed itself was the source of all of her doubts and worries, like it whispered into her ear like something otherworldly and evil. She thought that if she could just get out of that room, she might feel better. She thought that it probably had something to do with the fact that she had been letting herself fly so much lately that her body ached for the freedom of it again.

So, though Kara knew it was a bad idea, she popped open her window, and bolted out into the night sky, circling around National City until her eyes drooped with sleep. Simply enjoying the rush of flight, the feeling of weightlessness, but the power she could feel coursing through her, made her want to push past her fatigue, to keep going. Until, that is, she woke up once or twice about to crash into a sky scraper or a tree, and finally decided that it was best that she call it a night. Kara returned groggily to her room, promising to think of some kind of a solution about Lena…tomorrow…

* 

The next afternoon was her first day working for Ms. Grant in the advising office. She almost forgot about it, until it popped up on her reminders in her calendar. She had her journalism class that morning, the elective she had decided to put in the free space Ms. Grant gave her to fill. It was simply the intro class, just looking over the syllabus and going over the basics of what they were expected to do, but Kara was already excited for it. She knew, regretfully, that she would not be able to put near as much time in as some of the more ambitious students in the class to help put the school newspaper together because of her responsibility to the musical, but even if she could contribute one or two pieces in the course of the semester, she would be happy.

Ms. Grant barely acknowledged Kara’s existence when she walked into the office. When she first walked in, without looking up, Ms. Grant pointed to the unoccupied front desk of the advising office, apparently meaning that that was to be Kara’s post. From where Kara set up shop at the front desk, she could see just enough into Ms. Grant’s private office to be able to see the advisor herself, who kept her eyes mostly locked on her computer screen, even when she, somehow knowing that Kara was looking in on her, pointed to her coffee cup, signaling that she needed a refill.

Kara only spent a few hours there that day, as Ms. Grant went home around four, anyway. For the most part she directed students to the advisor they had an appointment with (Ms. Grant was the senior most advisor out of a staff of four), or she set up appointments in the scheduling system in the computer, or, she handed along paperwork handed in by students to give to their respective
advisors (mostly class add ons and deletions at this point of the semester). It was all rather monotonous. That was, until, Winn popped his head in to see her.

“Hey, gorgeous,” he said, the momentum he had created from swinging into the partly open office entry door causing his bag to swing off of his shoulder and go tumbling to the ground, spilling folders everywhere. “Shit,” he exclaimed, lurching to grab the fallen contents of the bag.

“Nice one,” Kara said, laughing. “Come to drop out of a class? Is your professor mean? Or, demanding? Or have a strange smell? I’ve heard that one today already.”

“I mean, if they were referring to Dr. Aarons, then they’re absolutely right, he does smell really weird. It’s like…tapioca…mixed with, like, lighter fluid? I don’t know, anyway, no, sweet girl, I just came to say hi to just my best friend in the whole world.”

Kara narrowed her eyes at Winn.

“You wanna see the cast list don’t you?”

“It’s not fair that I don’t get to know before everyone else! I have costumes to plan!”

“You are a blabber mouth and you know it, Winn Schott,” Kara scolded. “You will find out Friday after four like everyone else.”

Winn groaned loudly, collapsing into one of the chairs of the waiting area. Ms. Grant’s eyes darted up for a second, glared at Kara and her companion, and then looked slowly back at her screen.

“Can you at least tell me if banging the stage manager paid off for our gal?”

Kara gave Winn a look of mild irritation. She was getting used to the fact that apparently he was just going to tease her about Lena forever.

“Not now, Winn,” she chided half-heartedly. “Things are kind of…weird between me and Lena.”

Winn sighed.

“And why, pray tell, is that?” he asked, voice monotone and dripping with sarcasm.

“Well, you know her better than I do,” she said, leaning over the top of the desk so she could speak more confidentially to Winn. “Is she…mad at me or anything like that?”

Winn rested his chin in his hand, elbow leaning in to the arm of the chair he sat in.

“You know, Kara, I may gently guide one or both of you one way or another, depending on the circumstances, and however stubborn either of you choose to be. And I do so because I love both of you idiots. But, at the end of the day, it’s not my place to betray either of your confidences. So, I can’t help you. I’m sorry.”

Now it was Kara who groaned.

“Do you mind if I ask you something, though?” Winn inquired.

“Shoot,” Kara replied, checking in on Ms. Grant, who, though she still looked at her computer screen, clacking away lazily, suggested silently that she was mildly aware of the fact that the undergrads outside her door were disturbing her peace.

“If Lena Luthor were any other girl, with any other name, would you be calling her your girlfriend
already?”

Kara sighed, pinching at the crinkle between her eyes.

“Look…” Winn said before she could answer, moving to crouch in front of Kara where she sat behind the desk, balancing himself by placing a hand on her knee. “I’m gonna tell you something about myself. Something that I don’t like to tell anyone, ever. “My…” he sighed, pressing his forehead momentarily into the hand on Kara’s knee, as if summoning some inner strength. “My dad is in prison. For...some really dark stuff that I don’t want to get into right now, because I can’t afford a therapist. But I remember a time in my life when his name was splashed all over papers, reporters and cameras were always waiting for me or my mom everywhere we went, and every detail of our lives was compressed into tacky headlines on the evening news.”

Kara sat very still, afraid to even move as her friend divulged things about his past Kara could never have even guessed at.

“The point is, I know what it’s like to be known by name in the worst way possible. I know what it’s like for people to distance themselves from me because of it. In my case, thankfully, people eventually forgot about it, for the most part. But people aren’t just going to forget about the Luthor infamy any time soon. And I would hate to think that you’re one someone who would keep that sweet girl only at arm’s length for something out of her control. I want to think that you’re a better person than that. Are you?”

Kara opened her mouth, entirely unsure of how to answer.

“Kiera!” Ms. Grant suddenly snapped from her office, eyes never leaving her computer. “I do not pay you to bring around boy toys!”

“She hardly pays me at all,” Kara grumbled under her breath.

“No worries, Ms. Grant!” Winn piped up, already headed out the door. “I’m not Kara’s toy. That would be too straight for both of us.”

Kara’s eyes nearly bulged out of her head, head snapping up, cheeks flushing.

“Bye, kitten,” he whispered, any seriousness from the previous moment almost completely gone. “Oh! PS, I’m having a Mario kart tournament on Saturday. Want in?”

Kara wished she was able to enjoy video games. But after the first time Kara had been introduced to them by Alex, Mario Kart specifically, her competitive side, mixed with a hint of careless strength, led her to crush nearly twelve game remotes in under a year. After that, video games were banned from the Danvers household, simply because they couldn’t afford to feed Kara’s destructive habit anymore.

“Umm, maybe next time,” Kara said.

“Alright. Think about what I said, okay?”

Winn left before she could respond. For the next hour until Ms. Grant bade her to leave her post, and for a long time afterwards, she thought only of Winn’s dark reveal, and of the question he left hanging in the air.

*
First read-through was Monday. All the actors had to do was sit in a circle of chairs on stage and read their lines from the scripts they had picked up when they came by Carr’s office to find out what role they had (or had not) gotten (she heard that Veronica had thrown a mild fit when she didn’t get the role of Mrs. Lovett). Considering that the non-musical dialogue was in short supply in this show, it was probably going to be the easiest night of the whole process for everyone, Kara included. She still, of course, had to take attendance by means of quick glances around the room, trying her best to pair faces to the names on her sheet. For the main characters it wasn’t so hard. But as the ensemble actors tended to group together in little flocks anyway, Kara had to ask once or twice for people to remind her who they were. Kara and Lena barely texted since auditions, and hadn’t seen each other at all. Anything they had said to one another felt forced and awkward, and it was always Kara who texted first. At first, Kara thought that Lena was going to ignore her altogether. Then, as Kara was staring down at her binder, color coding highlighters and pens for notetaking, Mike plopped down in the empty seat next to her.

“Hey Kara,” he said, spreading his legs wide enough apart in his chair to bump his knee against her. “How was your break?”

_Deep breaths, Kara._

“It was fine.”

“Cool, cool. I was gonna send you a little, ya know, Happy New Year’s text or whatever. But I don’t have your number.”

Mike let his head hang dramatically to one side, staring Kara down in a way she could only assume he thought was persuasive or charismatic. Technically, everyone in the cast received an email with her cell number in it so they could get a hold of her if they needed to, but she wasn’t going to remind him of that just now.

“That a shame,” she said flatly, flipping through script pages without really looking at them, trying to look busy.

“I know,” he continued, feigning a sad look, “I was like, all alone on New Years, too. No ladies to kiss at midnight.”

“What a tragedy,” Kara replied.

“Yeah…So, anyway, uh, Kara,”

A familiar pair of legs stepped in front of them, a voice clearing her throat.

“You’re in my spot, Mike,” Lena snapped.

“Uh, actually, I think that…”

“Move,” she warned, and Mike quickly switched seats to one a few spots further away from the two girls.

Kara let out a sigh of relief as Lena sat down next to her. Lena, who was wearing a navy blue pencil skirt and white blouse, sat down wordlessly, staring ahead of her, a small smile hinting on her lips.

Kara bit her own bottom lip, pushing down the urges fighting for attention within her.
“Still got my back, huh?” Kara said quietly, flipping casually through the stage management bible James had given her at the end of the previous semester. Kara didn’t go anywhere without it, now.

“Always,” Lena replied, biting the inside of her cheek, looking down at some sheet music in her binder.

“I thought you were mad at me,” Kara said, licking her lips as she dog-eared a page in the book on stage direction shorthand she knew she would be looking at a lot over the next few months.

“I’m not,” Lena said, now digging through her purse to produce a pen.

“Well you’re certainly something at me.”

Kara knew the more appropriate thing to do would be to apologize, for anything and everything possible. But she wanted to know exactly what was going on in Lena’s head, first. She wished she could know Lena as well as Winn did, and be able to understand her better.

Lena bit at the clicker of her pen, staring intently down at her script, unresponsive.

Kara sighed, fighting the urge to bury her head in her hands. She clenched and relaxed her fists several times, struggling through the fog in her head that settled in the second Lena had sat down next to her, so close to her, but feeling like she was leagues away.

“I miss you,” Kara whispered, squeezing her eyes shut, willing away the surge of yearning in her chest.

Lena’s breath hitched next to her, barely audible to anyone but Kara.

Before anything more could be said or done, Snapper cleared his throat, gave introductions, and the read through began.

*

“Let’s take five, huh?” Snapper muttered from his seat next to Kara an hour into read through, “I need a cigarette.”

Kara nodded.

“Alright, guys, great job so far!” she said in a projected, professional voice, sounding so sickly sweet it made her annoyed with herself. “Let’s take a short break and be back here at, oh, ten after? Sound good?”

The troupe gave a general grumble of a response, shuffling away from their seats on the stage to head to the restrooms or mingle amongst themselves. As Kara placed her binder beneath her chair, a soft hand grasped hers firmly, tugging her out of her seat. Kara complied eagerly, stepping quickly as Lena dragged her down to the hallway beneath the stage.

“I missed you, too,” Lena breathed, and gripped at Kara’s waist, pulling the two of them together roughly.

Kara moaned uncontrollably at the sudden contact between the two of them, the way their hips rocked into one another, the way Lena’s tongue licked along Kara’s bottom lip. It felt like an
eternity since they had last been together like this, but the muscle memory of it flooded back to Kara in an instant. Kara tugged at the fabric of skirt Lena had on, trying to figure out if it had any give for her to work with, or if she would have to simply take it off altogether. Then she stopped, checked herself, and pulled away from the bruising kisses being pressed into her open mouth.

“Are you sure you don’t have anything you want to talk about?” Kara asked, breathing heavily.

“Right now?” Lena exclaimed.

“Stupid question, sorry,” Kara replied, pulling up Lena’s skirt and finding that it was, in fact, stretchy enough to simply hike up to Lena’s hips with relative ease.

Before Lena could try and turn the table on her, Kara had dragged Lena’s underwear down until the fell uselessly around her ankles, and pushed a finger inside of her, smiling smugly to herself when she felt just how wet Lena was.

“Fuck,” Lena gasped loudly, the sound of it echoing slightly up the stairwell.

“Shh,” Kara whispered, giggling louder than she probably should have, and capturing Lena’s mouth in hers so that they would both shut the hell up.

Lena got close. So damn close that Kara could feel her beginning to clench around her, her breaths intermittent between a high pitched desperation that spurned Kara on, who thought she would never get over what it was like to experience Lena coming apart beneath her. And then…

“Danvers? DANVERS!” Snapper’s voice echoed from above them in the theater.

“Seriously?” Kara hissed, only barely slowing her rhythm.

“Here,” Lena said, panting, “you go up that way, I’ll go around the side exit and come back in the main doors.

“But…” Kara whined, still determined to finish what she started.

“Later,” Lena insisted, already pulling away from Kara and tugging her clothing back into place, about to race out the door.

“Wait, Lena!” Kara whispered, giggling, “your lipstick.”

Lena rubbed at the impossibly smeared hue of red all over her face.

“Goddammit, I have got to stop wearing lipstick around you. You’re just as bad.”

Lena pulled a pack of wet wipes from in her bra, and handed one to Kara.

“Did you know this was gonna happen?” Kara asked incredulously.

Lena shrugged, opening the side door.

“No. But one should always be prepared for such things.”

Kara rolled her eyes, laughing still as she wiped at her mouth with the damp cloth, and bounded up the stairs.

Minutes later, Kara and Lena were sitting next to each other, eyes locked on their own respective scripts, as if nothing had ever happened.
“Well, now that we finally have everyone back, let’s get this run through wrapped up before the semester runs out,” Snapper grumbled.

“Uh, Kara?” Adam asked from his seat on the other side of Lena.

“Yes?” Kara replied.

“Are we, um,” he said quietly, leaning in slightly over Lena so as not to be overheard by everyone. “Are we all supposed to be doing an accent like Jack is?”

Kara sighed despite herself.

“No, Adam. That’s just…that’s just how he talks.”

“Oh! Cool,” he said, leaning back into his chair.

“Don’t,” Kara whispered harshly to Lena, who was struggling to hold back a laugh.

“I didn’t say anything,” Lena said, voice cracking as she failed to contain herself.

*

“So…Jack, huh?”

Kara rolled over on her side to face Lena, who was lying next to her. Moonlight streamed in from the window of Lena’s bedroom, its blue light hovering adoringly over Lena’s breasts and stomach, uncovered by the sheet on top of her.

“What?” Kara asked, taking a lock of Lena’s hair between her fingers, considering its soft darkness.

“Jack Spheer.”

Kara tilted her head inquisitively.

“What about him?” she asked.

Lena shrugged absentmindedly.

“ Nothing, really. We just used to date, that’s all.”

Kara’s eyes widened.

“Huh,” she said simply, keeping her thoughts to herself.

“What?” Lena pressed, turning in towards Kara. “You’re not the only one who can experiment. I thought I might try dating a guy to see if I could make it work. It made my mother happy for a while, at least. And Jack is a great guy, really. And he was a really good boyfriend. I just…I wasn’t attracted to him. I tried to be. I think I even loved him a little, in my own way. Because he was bright, and caring, and the opposite of the skeezy male caricature I allowed myself to think all guys fit into to make my distaste for them go down easier. But the fact that he was a good guy couldn’t make me change my nature. Admittedly, he was a little peeved at me for not telling him this until
six or so months had passed, but he still took it pretty well.”

Kara scrunched up her nose, trying to imagine Lena dating a guy like Jack. They looked attractive enough together, just judging by the read through they seemed to work off of each other well. But Kara still couldn’t wrap her head around it.

“You really didn’t know that we dated?” Lena asked after Kara was quiet a moment.

“You forget that I am literally a freshman and don’t know any of the common knowledge drama around campus.”

“Hmm…does that make me a cougar?”

Kara rolled her eyes, turning inward yet again so she was laying on her stomach, head resting on Lena’s arm. She sighed heavily, feeling guilty for being so damn content right now.

“What was Lena supposed to talk about? How she convinced herself, somehow, someway, in the time she spent away from Kara, when she felt finally sober after months spent in a Kara Danvers induced stupor, that it was better for her to try and stay away from Kara for a while? Lena wanted to reestablish some distance, either so that she could get back to being the person she was before she met Kara, or so that Kara would maybe realize that there was no way they were just friends, or that they could ever be just friends.

That was the plan, at least. And it was easy enough at first. Until she saw Kara again at auditions and she almost forgot the words to her audition piece completely. She did her best to get through her audition as fast as possible, and get the hell out of there, before any resolve she had left crumbled into nothing. And then, of course, Kara came rushing after her, and Lena, stupidly, thought for just a moment, that her plan had worked, that Kara was done calling them friends, and that their time together didn’t have to feel secretive and disposable anymore.

And then Kara froze as soon as they were no longer alone, and Lena wanted to smack herself in the face for being so stupid.

And now here Kara was, lying next to her, make Lena want to give her the whole world if she wanted it, just so that those big, blue eyes would always look at her like that.

“We don’t need to talk right now,” Lena replied quietly.

“But it’s bothering you that we’re not saying whatever it is that needs said.”

Kara propped herself up, face leaning against her right hand, left had planting into the mattress on the other side of Lena, blonde hair cascading down one side of Lena’s chest.

Did it need to be said? That Kara probably didn’t want Lena the same way Lena wanted her? That Lena was now, and not for the first time in her life, made a private, kept thing by a lover? Saying any of that out loud would almost certainly ruin whatever happiness she could still squeeze out of their time together.

Just now, one of the most perfect girls she had ever seen was staring down at her, soft skin pressed against hers, looking at Lena like she was the only thing that mattered. How could she ruin this moment by worrying about the moments that would come tomorrow when Kara eventually left this
Lena shrugged, accepting, however bitterly, that she was entirely helpless against whatever power this girl held over her.

“It can wait,” Lena said, and lifted her head up off of her pillow so that her lips could meet Kara’s.

Maybe if they stayed like this forever, they would never have to worry about those things that held them apart. They would never have to worry about anything that existed outside the feeling of lips and bodies connecting to one another. Because when they were intertwined like this, all of those things seemed to cease to exist.

Chapter End Notes

I DUNNO, FAM. I’m mad at Kara, but she’s also just a lil bab with a lot on her mind just trying to navigate the world. BUT POOR BABY LENA. UGH.

PS it was my original thought to put Jack in as sort of an opposing, "i’m mad that my ex a lesbian now" dickish character, but I really liked him after that ep and I'm not even sorry for that. So he's in here now and he’s gonna be a half cool dude. Who knows, he might be able to be useful in this whole situation.

Things are about to get a little messy and complicated, i think. Just trust that i have a plan, and that I may just be able to sort of execute it in a legible fashion. WE’LL SEE.

I need some Alex and Maggie next chap dont I? Yes i do. I really do.

Updates are thursdays! Love you guys and see you soon :-*
Chapter 10

Chapter Summary

THE PLOT THICKENS (cuz there's totally a plot to this now...besides Lena and Kara banging...)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Late that night, Kara awoke in Lena’s bed with a jolt. That same sound she had been agonized by the day that she found the bug in Lena’s phone was now back again, pulling her out of a sound sleep in a panic. She had almost let herself forget that there was so much going on outside of Lena and this room. And that some of it was just mildly terrifying.

Trying not to disturb the girl sleeping next to her, Kara inched out of the bed, and followed the nightmarish screech, desperate to find the source. She knew better now than to act on instinct. She was determined to find it, and to bring it to Winn, so that he might be able to learn more about who was listening in on Lena and why.

The sound grew louder and more painful as she entered the living room of the apartment. As small as it was, the darn thing could be anywhere! Kara stopped in the middle of the room, willing herself to think critically despite the mind numbing metallic shrill that was drowning her.

The last bug was in Lena’s phone. Whoever it was probably realized that that one had been discovered or lost from it’s hiding place, and wouldn’t try to put it there again. It probably wasn’t in some stagnant place in the living room. Between classes and theater and lab work, Lena was hardly ever home, and it wouldn’t do this spy any good to listen to static. It would have to be connected to something that Lena kept on her most of the time, that wasn’t her phone.

Kara located Lena’s purse that was tossed haphazardly onto the couch while the girls had been wrestling each other’s clothes off on the way to the bedroom. The noise grew louder, signaling to Kara that she was on the right track. Blinking past tears forming from the sheer pain induced by the sound of the device, Kara rummaged through Lena’s purse almost desperately, trying to remain as quiet as she could. Kara finally settled on the keys to Lena’s candy red BMW, a showy little thing that Lena hardly ever made use of, but still wouldn’t go without, because she hated public transportation. She grasped at the remote starter, and, carefully as she could, pried the two connecting pieces of plastic it was composed of apart, to look inside. Sure enough, there was a bug inside of it, just like the other one. Kara swore under her breath, used her heat vision to melt the broken plastic pieces of the keys back together, and replaced the keys carefully into the purse, hoping that they didn’t jingle too much. Though really, she wouldn’t know if they jingled or not. All she could hear was that infernal screeching.

Then, putting the purse back where she found it, she made the possibly bad decision to open Lena’s living room window and fly out of it, determined to get that thing away from her as fast as she could before it turned her brain to mush.

Kara flew as fast as she could over to the dorm building Winn lived in. When she got there, miraculously, the sounds stopped. She thought about just putting it in her dorm room or something
until a more reasonable hour, but that thing was so dreadful when it screeched like that that Kara
didn’t want it anywhere near her. She used a bit of her strength to pop open a locked window on
his floor, the third floor, and rushed to the door of his suite, pounding on it impatiently.

Winn’s suitemate, a boy named Darren, opened the door hesitantly, rubbing the sleep from his
eyes.

“Dude, what the hell?” he asked Kara lazily.

Kara pushed past him and to Winn’s room. Once inside, she shook him awake.

Winn nearly leapt out of his skin.

“What the shit?” he squealed. “Kara, what are you doing here? It’s the middle of the night!”

“Oh hush, look,” she said, and grabbed his hand so she could place the bug firmly in it.

“Wha…” he started, squinting his eyes to look at the tiny piece of metal in his hand. “Is that…”

“Another bug!” Kara finished for him. “Yeah. I just found it.”

Despite the severity of the situation, Winn smiled wide, eyes still half shut with sleep.

“You spent the night at Lena’s didn’t you?” he asked smugly.

Kara rolled her eyes.

“Yeah,” she spat.

“I knew she’d cave,” Winn said, then focused back on the issue at hand. “How did you find it?”

Kara shrugged casually.

“Happy accident. Don’t worry about it. I gotta go, okay? Just…tell me if you figure anything out.”


Winn was already half asleep again. Kara placed the bug carefully on Winn’s nightstand, and left
the room. Darren had disappeared somewhere, so she simply let herself out, flew back over to
Lena’s apartment, crawled back through the window, and stepped gingerly into Lena’s room.

Lena still slept peacefully, lips upturned just a little, her chest rising and falling with steady, even
breaths. Kara took a moment, standing in the doorway of the bedroom, to stare unabashedly at
Lena. She thought about how much had changed since she met Lena. On how different she was
when she first came to college. On how differently Lena behaved before she got to know Kara, and
before Lena let her see anything of herself other than that irksome, playful exterior she wore like a
suit of armor. Life had been coming at Kara so quickly that she hadn’t really taken any time to stop
and look around at where she was. Hell, she had just used her superpowers for the sake of
protecting a girl she was in an intimate relationship with. When had that happened? And how far
was she willing to go to keep this girl? How long did she want to keep her?

Kara crawled back into Lena’s bed, tugging at the pillow she had been using so that it overlapped
Lena’s own pillow at the corner, and wrapped an arm around Lena’s waist. If Lena roused, it was
only to roll onto her side, facing a way from Kara, push herself further back into Kara’s embrace,
and resume her slumber. Kara sighed, holding securely on to the brunette next to her, trusting,
however naively, that somehow Winn would find a solution to their struggles, and that somewhere
further down her own path, she and Lena would find some way to stay like this for a long time.

* 

Kara had a 9 AM class the next morning. Lena didn’t have class until 11. Kara tapped the alarm on her phone to sleep as quickly as she could so that it’s loud, jarring tones wouldn’t wake Lena up. But, considering that she didn’t like the idea of leaving Lena’s apartment without some kind of goodbye, Kara thought that a moot point. But, at least, it seemed that pulling Lena onto her back and straddling atop her was a much better way for her to wake up than a screeching phone alarm.

Lena blinked slowly awake, processing the fact she was waking up to Kara hovering over her.

“Didn’t peg you for a morning sex person,” Lena said lazily, “guess I was wrong.”

Kara giggled for a moment, letting her head drop into the crook of Lena’s neck.

“No, you goof, I have to get to class.”

“Oh, well then never mind,” Lena replied, feigning offense.

“Just shush,” Kara said, and leaned in to kiss Lena.

Lena attempted to squirm away from Kara.

“I have morning breath,” Lena insisted, turning her head to the side.

“Oh, stop, like I care,” Kara said, gripping Lena’s chin to pull her face back towards her, giving her a purposefully sloppy kiss.

Kara then pulled herself off of the bed, and turned before leaving the bedroom.

“I’ll see you at rehearsal, okay?”

“I dunno,” Lena said, smirking as she sat up, “I’m not really feeling rehearsal tonight. I might just email the stage manager and tell her I’m sick or something so I don’t have to go.”

“Oh, ha, ha,” Kara replied, stuck her tongue out at Lena, and hurried towards the living room to find her shoes.

* 

Kara was walking back to her dorm so that she could brush her teeth and change into clean clothes, when she heard a sudden ‘woop woop!’ sound behind her. She spun around, seeing the lights of a campus security car flashing blue and red. Confused, Kara turned around and kept walking.

“KARA DANVERS” a voice boomed from the security car’s speaker system, causing Kara to freeze in place. “YOU ARE UNDER ARREST FOR BEING A BORING, THEATER NERD FROSH.”

Kara’s muscles, all of which had tensed instantly from the shock of having her name called out so loudly by a campus police car, instantly relaxed, her shoulder slumping in annoyance at the voice she suddenly recognized so well.
The car pulled next to her on the sidewalk. Maggie was in the driver’s seat, and Alex was half
dangling out the passenger side window, smiling broadly.

Kara made a point to roll her eyes dramatically at her sister.

“Hey, little sis!” Alex called gaily.

“I told her not to use the speaker, by the way,” Maggie said regretfully from the driver’s seat.

“It is a girlfriend perk, Maggie, we’ve been over this,” Alex teased.

Maggie rolled her eyes, but clearly was in no way upset with Alex. Kara wondered when the two
had started referring to each other as ‘girlfriends’.

“Where are you headed?” Alex asked.

“Um, class.”

“You want a lift?”

“Alex I can’t just…” Maggie tried to cut it.

“It’s cool,” Kara interjected, “I need to head up to my dorm room first, anyway.”

Alex cocked her head to the side.

“Where are you coming from?”

*Shit.*

“I was…just taking a walk,” Kara said quickly.

Alex narrowed her eyes for a second.

“Whatever, don’t tell me where you were. Heaven forbid you tell me anything. Anyhow, it’s a
good thing I caught you. What are you doing Saturday night? And don’t even pull the theater dork
card, I know you don’t have rehearsal Saturday.”

“Um, I’m not doing anything, why?” Kara replied, happy that the confusion of Kara’s previous
whereabouts had already been forgotten.

“Good. Mom wants to meet Maggie over dinner, and you’re gonna be there.”

“Oh,” Kara replied, surprised, “Um. Yeah, sure, I guess I can do that.”

“I wasn’t asking.” Alex said.

“What Alex means to say” Maggie cut in, “is ‘thank you, Kara, for offering your emotional
support while I face the stress inducing obstacle of introducing my girlfriend to our mother.’”

Alex smacked her lips together loudly.

“Yeah, what she said,” Alex said, holding back a smile.

*
The first month’s rehearsal schedule went as follows: Mondays and Wednesdays were acting rehearsals, Tuesdays and Thursdays were vocal rehearsals, with Tuesday being the company vocal rehearsal and Thursdays being reserved for individual vocal work, and Friday was saved for choreography. Today was Tuesday. The company sat in folding chairs arranged in three rows on the stage, the actors sectioned off into their respective ranges: sopranos, altos, tenors, baritones, and one lonely bass.

Kara could feel somewhat relaxed at the vocal rehearsals, more so than she probably would in acting rehearsals, at least, because she didn’t have to jot down every direction Snapper gave out in the shorthand she had learned from James. She still had to take notes about the progress of the vocal rehearsals, but, what exactly was she supposed to write down? Was she supposed to keep a list of who messed up what notes? That seemed petty. Instead, Kara settled on making a time log, clocking start time, duration of time spent on each song they chose to work on that night, and breaks. And, of course, she had to take attendance.

So, yes, Kara felt somewhat relaxed because she had to do less work than acting rehearsals. But as the first warbled, dissonant notes echoed from the mouths of the company, Kara did everything in her power to hold back a grimace. She felt that just sitting idly by while the sheet music was murdered by off-key actors was somehow more stressful than Snapper’s stage directions.

J’onn cleared his throat.

“That’s alright,” he said to the company, voice warm and calm, “I didn’t expect a miracle. Let’s just break this down by section, shall we?”

Lena and Kara didn’t have much time to talk. When they did, it was a passing greeting during a quick break, just before Winn pulled Kara away to give her a list of things that needed to be ordered for the lights: a few new gel colors, some fuses, replacement bulbs, things like that. At the end of rehearsal, when Kara attempted to steal a moment with her after most of the ensemble had left for the night, Lena insisted that she had important lab work to catch up on, and left without another word.

-  
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“Danvers! Where did I put Jack at the top of this scene?” Snapper asked.

“Uh…” Kara looked down at her notes, trying to read what she had scribbled down at the top of the page.

*Sweeney enter SL, XDSR->table, sits*

“Um, he enters stage left, crosses down to stage right and sits at the table.”

Snapper narrowed his eyes at the stage, looking at it as if he were picturing holograms of the actors moving about the stage. The actual actors, Jack and Lena, were standing, on opposite sides of the stage, Lena tapping her foot absently, Jack looking over the script.

“Okay, so he’s opposite of Lena here?” Snapper asks.
“Yes?” Kara asked uncertainly.

“I don’t want that,” Snapper decided. “I want Lena to mirror Jacks’ movements as he moves about the room.”

“Okay…so…whose directions am I switching? Jack’s or Lena’s?”

Snapper groaned.

“What did I just say, Danvers?” he asked condescendingly.

Kara sighed, and looked up at Lena, who, taking advantage of Snapper turning his back momentarily, stuck her tongue out at him.

Kara stifled a laugh.

“Lena,” Kara said, “just…scratch those directions I just gave you, and mimic Jack, two or three paces behind.”

“Cool,” Lena said, and crossed over to the other side of the stage.

“Oh! I’ve always wanted a shadow!” Jack joked.

“Well alright then, Peter Pan,” Lena replied.

The two shared a quick laugh, one that felt familiar, and felt like a window that peered into the casual lightness they must have had with one another when they were together. Kara wished it was like that with her and Lena all the time. Her mind flickered to the bug she had delivered to Winn a few days ago, and all of the dangerous unanswered questions swirling around it, she thought regretfully on the fact that Lena knew nothing about any of it, otherwise she might not be able to laugh so easily, and Kara felt sick.

When they took a five minute break, Lena hopped off the stage to and came to sit next to Kara, where she had practically build a fortress of snacks and books in a section of audience seats in the front row. Hungry, cranky, self-conscious under Snapper’s constantly critical gaze, nervous about Lena, and trying desperately to squeeze in a moment of homework in her down time, Kara accidentally bristled when Lena tried to wrap an arm around her shoulder. Lena recoiled instantly, and got up to leave Kara alone.

“Wait, Lena,” Kara pleaded, and pulled a pack of Twizzlers from the left side of her fortress, holding it out towards Lena. “Stay, please.”

Lena sighed, took the pack of Twizzlers from her, and sat silently in the seat next to Kara, the tension within her palpable.

* * 

Rehearsal over, script pages darkened with written, erased, and rewritten notes in every available white space, Kara rested her head in her hand, opening up a Google Doc to type up a summary of the night’s rehearsal notes. This would become her regular routine, typing up rehearsal notes when they were fresh on her mind, then sending a copy to Snapper, J’onn, James, and Winn, knowing, full well, that they probably wouldn’t even look at it. But Kara had to keep up with it. It was a part of her job, apparently.

Kara thought that she was alone in the theater, typing away at her ‘desk’, which was really just a
folding table set up just in front of the stage. She was trying to get her summary made up as fast as she could so she could head back to her dorm and do her reading for history class. Suddenly, Kara sensed that she wasn’t alone at all.

“You look like some secretary out of the fifties, typing away like that,” Lena said, sitting leisurely in the audience seat behind Kara.

“If I don’t do it now, it won’t get done,” Kara said, voice distractedly monotone as she tried her hardest not to let her train of thought get derailed by the girl behind her.

The sound of Lena’s heart beat grew closer, until Lena’s breath was on Kara’s neck.

“Then it doesn’t get done,” Lena whispered, sending a trilling chill through Kara.

“Just…give me one second…” Kara insisted, willing her eyes to stay on the screen even though Lena was pulling Kara’s chin to the right, pulling her into an attempted kiss.

“Why should I?” Lena asked, “I only get to act like you’re mine when no one’s looking.”

Kara stopped dead, turning instantly to face Lena.

“What?” she asked.

Lena’s face was suddenly more serious than Kara had ever seen it before.

“You heard me.”

“Lena…” Kara breathed, trying to pull Lena into her by the fabric of her shirt, but Lena resisted.

“That right there,” she said, “That’s how I know I’m right.”

“Is this about earlier?” Kara asked. “I’m sorry. I wasn’t paying attention. I didn’t mean to…”

“That’s not all there is to this and you know it.”

Ah. So Lena finally decided that she wanted to say what she needed to say. Kara wanted to be able to have this talk. She knew they needed to have this talk. But she also knew that nothing good would likely come of it. And as hard as she tried to force herself to go through with it anyway, no words came from Kara’s lips in the end. She only sighed, frozen, afraid to say anything. Lena nodded, Kara’s silence somehow a deciding factor for her, and turned on her heel, walking away from Kara and leaving her alone in the quiet theater.

Kara wanted to smack herself. Why couldn’t she just…be better at this?

*  

“Okay, so I’ve found out some more things about this bug.”

Kara groaned, letting her head hit her desk outside of Cat’s office. She knew that this problem about Lena wasn’t going to go away. She knew that she and Winn, between her concealed brawns and his brains, had to be the ones to protect her. But after last night…she really didn’t want to think about Lena. She didn’t want to think about how much she was failing at this, failing at being able
to be the person Lena probably wanted her to be. Hell, just to be the person she wanted herself to be.

“Like what?” Kara mumbled, pushing her thoughts down, where they festered along with all the other stuff she was avoiding.

“Well,” Winn said, seemingly oblivious to his friend’s distress, “it seems to have some basic memory system on it, but since it’s so damn small it can’t hold much. And, since whoever is planting these probably can’t afford to come busting in to Lena’s place every time they need to transfer over the files, there has to be a remote transmitter to pick up these files so that it can memory dump itself routinely. Now, the transmitter would probably have to be close by to pick up the files, likely within a hundred feet or so. So, theoretically, all our spy would have to do is peruse on by wherever Lena is at with one of these things once every, oh, twelve hours or so, maybe, get the audio transferred, and go on their merry way.”

Kara thought back on all of the times that she had heard that squealing noise, and realized that those must have been times when whoever this person was had been near enough to collect the audio files. Kara tried to think back, wondering if there were any people that could be connected to each of those instances. She sighed, realizing that there was no way to narrow it down without more information.

“Okay, so,” Kara thought out loud, “We know, or at least we’re guessing, that this system works off of localized transmission unique to the bug and its receiver. So…if we have the bug…can’t we find a way use it to find the receiver?”

“Very good, young padawan!” Winn exclaimed.

Kara scrunched up her face at Winn.

“Yeah, alright, bad time for Star Wars references. Anyway! You’re right. I’m close to being able to jailbreak this thing. Once I do, I can try to use it to track down the receiver, you know like a “find my iphone” kind of thing. But like…way cooler. And way more complicated. But in theory, you know, we track down the receiver…”

“We track down whoever is listening in. That’s fantastic, Winn! How do you even know what you’re doing?”

“Oh, come on! I’m a smart guy! And, well, I have a few friends in the computer science department with way too much time on their hands. Don’t worry, all they know is that they’re helping me build a radio transmission tracker. I may even have it ready by this weekend.”

Kara dragged Winn into a hug.

“Thank you so much,” she sighed into his shirt.

“Don’t thank me yet. Besides, what other choice do we have? Nobody messes without girl.”

Despite the fact that she could feel Lena slipping through her fingers, she smiled nonetheless, feeling more strongly than ever that Lena was, in fact, her girl, as Winn had said.

And she would do absolutely anything to solve this puzzle. Because once she did, maybe she wouldn’t have to keep her at arm’s length anymore.
“Son of a…”

Lena stumbled over her feet yet again as she struggled with the set of five seemingly simple steps J’onn was attempting to teach the cast. He had definitely put too much faith in the ‘talents’ of the cast he had to work with.

“Don’t worry, Lena, you’ll get it,” J’onn said to her reassuringly from here he stood at the far right of the stage, watching the ensemble as they repeated the same series of steps over and over, moving to guide individuals as needed.

Oh, leave me the fuck alone, Lena thought. She could have sworn that J’onn’s eyebrows pricked upwards in surprise, as if he had heard her thoughts.

But that was impossible.

“You know I’m always around if you need help catching up, Lena,” Veronica’s voice sounded sweetly behind her.

Veronica had been putting on a show of pointing out Lena’s every flaw since she got cast in the role Veronica had wanted. But, because Veronica was anything but stupid, she did it in a way that made her sound caring and helpful.

Alright, asshole. As if picking me apart long enough will magically give you my role.

It’s not like Lena even cared that much about this stupid show, anyway. She had plenty of better things to do. Like perfecting her gene sequencing program, curing cancer, reversing climate change, preferably all before she turned 25. What did she care if she couldn’t master a few stupid dance…

“Dammit!” she cursed to herself, and took a moment to compose herself before she made even more of scene.

Because it wasn’t just J’onn and Veronica keeping a close eye on her. She felt another pair of eyes on her as well. A certain doe-eyed blonde was up in the sound booth with James, learning how to work the sound board or something like that. But Lena could just tell that Kara was watching her.

Or maybe she just wanted to think that Kara was watching her.

Because maybe she had sort of called Kara out the other day after rehearsal, in hopes that it would scare Kara into finally admitting that they were not just friends. And when Kara froze, saying absolutely nothing in response, maybe Lena had gotten frustrated and stormed off on her.

Lena wasn’t sorry. Not even a little bit.

Well. Maybe a little bit. But she didn’t want to feel sorry. She knew that she had every right to wonder why in the hell Kara acted so secretive about…whatever they were. Was it so damn bad for Lena to want to be able to call the girl that really felt like her girlfriend, her girlfriend?

What was she doing wrong?
No. Stop that, Lena. Not everything is always your fault. That’s just your mother talking.

Lena stomped on her own foot by accident as she attempted the moves once more, and stood still for a moment, doing everything in her power to avoid swearing again. She still felt J’onn’s eyes on her, and still felt in a strange way like he was able to tell what was on her mind.

It would be nice if he could read minds, actually. Maybe then he could tell her what the fuck Kara was thinking.

Suddenly the overhead speakers crackled.

“Ooh, James, what does this button do?” Kara’s voice boomed from the speakers.

“Uh, that would be the mic, Kara.”

“So everyone in the theater can hear us right now?”

“Yes,” James said.

A few of the actors nodded their heads in agreement to her question, trying not to giggle too much at the antics of their very young stage manager. Compared to the reign of terror of Leslie, Kara was a breath of fresh air. A little inexperienced, to be sure, but everyone could tell that she was giving it her all.

“Oh!” Kara said, still leaving the mic on. “Cool! Hi guys!”

The little giggle that escaped her before she shut off the mic made Lena have to practically hold back a whimper. Why did Kara have to be so…Kara all the time? It made Lena feel like she had kicked a puppy by trying to confront her about anything.

* * *

“So you didn’t say…anything?”

“I froze, James! I just…froze!”

Kara had finally broken down and told someone about her and Lena besides Winn. She hadn’t planned on it, but James could instantly tell that something was up with her, and he wouldn’t let her alone until she opened up to her about it. He was like that, anymore, since she had become stage manager. He was constantly checking in on her, asking her if she needed help with anything, making sure she wasn’t taking too much crap from Snapper, talking her down whenever she became overwhelmed. It tugged at her heartstrings in a way that made her remember almost fondly when she had been so enamored with him, as if that was some very distant memory, and not something that had happened only a few months ago.

His reaction to the news that Kara and Lena were…involved, was one of shock at first, followed by his face softening slowly, and a quiet remark that “that explains a whole lot, actually.”

“Well, is she right?” James asked.

“No!” Kara exclaimed, careful to stay far away from the mic button. She watched TV, she knew that there was a risk of turning on the mic at the worst possible moment.

“No, you’re not keeping your…involvement, a secret?”

“Well, I mean, yeah, technically. But like, I don’t want to.”
“Then why are you?” James asked simply, sitting down on the stool behind him and crossing his arms in front of him.

Kara groaned, fidgeting with her glasses. *That* wasn’t so easy to tell.

“There’s…a lot of different reasons.”

“Like what?” James asked.

“Like…a lot, James! Quit grilling me!”

“I’m not! I’m just trying to understand.” James held up a surrendering hand. “Look. If you don’t feel comfortable talking to me about whatever it is that you think is forming a barrier between you and Lena, that’s fine. But you have to at least talk to her about it, right? It’s not fair to expect her be okay with putting up with whatever boundaries you set between the two of you without even giving an explanation as to why.”

Kara sighed. Why did James have to be so…smart all the time? But at the same time, what he said wasn’t anything that Kara didn’t already know. She knew more than anyone. And she would tell Lena everything…if she felt like she could.

But…she just…couldn’t. Yet.

“There’s some things that I can’t tell her, James. Or anyone, really. Not right now, at least.”

“I get it. You’re guarded. But you’ve got to give her something, Kara.”

“But what if I freeze up again?”

James got out of his chair, and moved to place a firm, reassuring hand on Kara’s shoulder.

“Then you try again. And again. Until you don’t freeze. But, if it’s any consolation, I don’t think you will. You’re tough. Right?”

Kara nodded her head, suddenly determined.

“Right.”

*

J’onn told everyone to take a short break, to Lena’s relief. Instantly, Kara came popping out of the sound booth and went rocketing down the stairs, as if driven by some sudden inspiration.

“Lena!” she called, her voice from the force of her energetic hopping down the stairs.

Lena walked towards the audience seats on the opposite side of where Kara was, pretending as if she hadn’t heard Kara.

Maybe Lena was a little stubborn.

“Lena,” Kara said again, voice hinting at agitation.

Lena raised an eyebrow at Kara, but still said nothing, and pulled a textbook out of her bag, opening it to a random page and pretending to read it as she plopped into a random seat near her belongings.
She could hear Kara let out a long breath, and then Kara turned and bounded back up the stairs towards the booth. Lena thought, regretfully, that Kara had given up.

The overhead speakers crackled again.

“Could Lena Luthor please report to the sound booth?” Kara’s voice, imitating a voice like what you’d hear in a department store when an employee was being summoned, or in a school when a student was being called to the office. “Lena, Luthor. To the sound booth.”

Lena rolled her eyes.

Oh my God.

Lena, begrudgingly walked up to the sound booth, as she went to open the door, James beat her to it, exiting the booth with a wink at Lena as they passed. Lena closed the door behind her.

“Feel like a quickie?” Lena asked bitterly.

Again. Lena was slightly stubborn.

Kara looked upset for a moment, then composed herself.

“No, Lena, that’s not what I want right now. I mean, if you weren’t mad at me, I would totally be up for that, but you’re mad at me. And…you should be. And…I’m…I’m sorry.”

Well. Lena wasn’t going to lie and say that didn’t catch her off guard. But she was still going to hold her ground. Lena crossed her arms, standing indignantly.

“Sorry that we had a tiff or sorry that you’re embarrassed to be seen with me?”

“I’m not!” Kara exclaimed, stopping herself short. “I’m not embarrassed to be seen with you. I would never…I’m…I’m sorry I let you think that’s how I felt.”

“Then how do you feel, Kara?”

Lena was secretly proud of herself for not already succumbing to Kara’s big, sad, puppy dog eyes, and forgetting about the whole thing just so that they could be kissing.

Kara sighed.

“I never saw this coming, Lena. You and me. I never would have even dreamed of it. And now…I never knew being with someone could feel like this. It’s…intoxicating, and almost suffocating, but in a good way, somehow, I don’t know.”

“So…I’m suffocating you?” Lena asked.

Stay strong, Lena. You are a Luthor. Luthor’s are not undone by pouting, ever.

“That’s not what I meant…” Kara said, clearly struggling. “I just…I can’t tell you everything, I can’t explain everything, even if I want to.”

Lena was barely able to contain the groan rising in her chest.

“You see, Kara? That’s just it. That’s the problem. You don’t give me anything. I didn’t notice it at first. I knew that you were quiet, shy, even, when we first met. But once you started sassing me back when I gave you a hard time, I thought I was starting to get to know the real you. And I kept
believing that the closer I got to you, that I was getting to know you better. And then suddenly, I wake up one day, in my bedroom, you’re lying next to me, and it dawns on me, Kara. I don’t know a single damn thing about you. I know you’re adopted, I know you have a mildly intimidating sister, I know that you can literally eat your weight in Chinese food like it’s nothing, and I know that you sometimes yell out words in bed that aren’t anything resembling English. But other than that? You are a complete mystery. It’s like I can actually touch the wall you’ve put up, that’s how tangible it is. Hell, Kara, even when we’re having sex it feels like you’re holding back.”

*

*Well of course, I am, I could literally break something of yours if I didn’t, Kara thought.*

*

“Lena, I don’t know all that much about you, either,” Kara said defensively.

“Oh, please, you could do a goddamn google search and you could find out anything you wanted to know.”

“That’s not the same…”

“Okay, fine! Ask me anything, and I’ll tell you. I’m not afraid to hold anything back from you, Kara. Can you say the same?”

Kara bit her lip, and was quiet for a moment.

“I wish I could. I want to…but…”

Lena sighed, disappointed more in herself than anything for thinking that she could get Kara to change her nature, whatever that was, just with a few words.

“I can’t just casually be with you, Kara. I can’t.”

“Lena,” Kara tried to interject.

“And I know the easy thing to would be to just keep letting you call the shots. But you calling the shots means that I feel stupidly happy for very short bursts of time, and then massively confused and unsure of myself the rest of the time. And I don’t want to do that, anymore, Kara, I just don’t.”

Kara’s jaw clenched for a second.

“I understand,” she barely whispered.

Lena’s breath caught in her throat painfully, making her eyes water. Lena wasn’t surprised at all that Kara was giving up in response to Lena’s outburst.

But that didn’t make it hurt any less.

Lena, silently, let herself out of the sound booth.

*

Kara let herself collapse onto the floor of the sound booth, aware of the fact that if she felt anything other than numb at that exact moment, that she might have let herself cry.
Kara was staring blankly at her glass of water. The glass itself was one of those expensive looking chalice-like glasses. Its fanciness annoyed Kara. The whole restaurant annoyed Kara. The wait staff wore white button down shirts and black bowties. The sound of a piano tinkled away in the distance. She was expected to use a fabric napkin, as if that wasn’t the stupidest and least effective thing ever invented.

One thing was very clear to Kara in a place like this. The portions were going to be too small. They were always too small in fancy restaurants.

She just wanted a barbeque bacon cheeseburger. And a mountain of fries. And a chocolate milkshake.

But she wasn’t going to get any of those things. Because Alex was trying too hard to make Eliza like Maggie upon their first meeting. And in her trying too hard she decided that, as far as restaurants were concerned, the fancier and more expensive, the better.

As a result, really no one at the table they sat at felt comfortable.

Alex fidgeted uneasily in the dress she was wearing. She didn’t do well with dresses. Maggie seemed to be more comfortable than her girlfriend was in the “dressing up” department, but she clearly squirmed under Eliza’s casual, but persistent, gaze.

Kara was pissy and annoyed because her stomach was growling. And, maybe, you know, because she got dumped. If that’s what you could even call it.

“So…Maggie,” Eliza began, cutting through the painfully awkward silence after their drinks were delivered: a cosmopolitan for Eliza, Merlot for Maggie, iced tea for Kara, and water for Alex.

“Do not let me drink,” Alex had insisted to Kara, whispering in her ear when they first walked into the restaurant. “I am nervous as hell. And if I have one drink, I will have five more. And not only is booze probably expensive as hell in this place, but if I get drunk I am going to say something stupid and ruin the whole night. So, no matter what. Do not. Let me drink.”

“How long have you been a, uh, security guard?” Eliza continued.

Kara knew that Eliza was just trying to make conversation, but even Kara thought that her tone was a little condescending, even if by accident.

Alex sucked down her glass of water in a way that made Kara think that she probably wished it was something stronger.

“Oh, just a little over a year.”

“And what were you doing before that?”

“Um,” Maggie faltered slightly. “Just…trying to figure my life out, I suppose. Had a few odd jobs here and there, moved a few times.”

“And so this is what you’ve settled on? Security?”

“Mom,” Alex hissed.
“What? I’m just curious.”

“It’s okay,” Maggie insisted, reaching for Alex’s hand that gripped the edge of the table intensely. “To answer your question, Mrs. Danvers, I think that I’m on the right track where I am. I like my job. I’ve been thinking about working in law enforcement.”

“Interesting,” Eliza commented non-committal, sipping from her drink.

Silence fell over them again. Alex’s eyes were wide, wild even, as she tried to contain whatever tumult was within her.

No, Kara mused grumpily to herself, she didn’t get dumped. She was given a pretty straightforward and reasonable explanation of why things between her and Lena weren’t working anymore. And all Kara really would have had to do to fix it was to just be honest with Lena for all of five seconds. But she couldn’t. Or wouldn’t. Whatever.

And why couldn’t she? She’s Superman’s cousin, the Luthor family, Lena being surveilled, blah blah blah. These all felt more and more and more like excuses, like convenient little walls for Kara to hide behind.

When the waiter came back around, Kara ordered the biggest steak available, with extra fries.

“Oh, and what whiskeys do you have?” Alex asked the waiter. “And don’t bother telling me anything above bottom shelf.”

Kara kicked her under the table. Alex sighed.

“Never mind,” she grumbled.

“So, umm, Mrs. Danvers,” Maggie began.

“Oh, please, call me Eliza.”

“Okay, Eliza. Alex tells me you’re a brilliant scientist. I’d love to hear about some of your work.”

Eliza smiled, and instantly launched into a speech about some highly technical project she was working on, of which no one at the table could follow along with. Kara could, if she were paying attention, but she was too busy moping.

She was going to get Lena back. She would. She just…needed a plan. No, she didn’t need a plan. She needed to stop being so…herself, all the time.

“But anyhow, enough about me,” Eliza conceded, “I want to know everything about you, Maggie. Alex never lets me meet anyone that she’s dating. How did you two meet?”

“Oh, well,” Maggie chuckled quietly. “Alex sort of gave me a hard time at work for a little while, and things sort of took off from there. For the record, she still is giving me a hard time.”

“I do not give you a hard time!” Alex gasped, feigning insult. “At least no more than the Greek life on any given weekend.”

“Oh, really?” Maggie replied. “Well let’s just list off all of the stunts you’ve pulled since we met, shall we? You broke into a dorm building, locked yourself out of your car three times in one day, each time insisting that ‘the hot chick’ be the one to come help you out…”

Alex blushed crimson, eyes flashing momentarily at her mother to gauge her response at hearing
that her daughter referred to Maggie as a ‘hot chick’.

“You,” Maggie continued, “parked your car in the Dean’s parking spot. Twice. You somehow got yourself into the cafeteria at three in the morning to use the pizza oven…”

Kara gasped.

“You made pizza without me?”

“You didn’t answer my calls!” Alex replied.

“And, most recently, you set a small fire in one of the science labs”

“In my defense,” Alex said, “it was a completely contained.”

“Axel, why did you set fire to your school?” Eliza asked, sighing.

“I didn’t ‘set fire’ to anything. I made a small, completely safe chemical reaction that resulted in a small combustion. And I did so A) for the sake of science, which you should appreciate, Mom, and B) because Maggie was busy with work, and I missed her.”

Kara smiled despite herself, fully aware of how impulsive Alex could be when she was smitten with someone. It was endearing, if not a little worrisome. But with Maggie, well, it was almost like Maggie was built to handle whatever Alex could throw at her.

“So the security thing keeps you very busy, Maggie?” Eliza asked.

“Oh, well, I suppose it can, at times,” Maggie replied quietly.

“Are you kidding? It’s gotten ridiculous,” Alex said, reaching for the last piece of bread at the table. Kara practically growled at her, and Alex conceded the bread basket to her instead. “It seems like Maggie is always disappearing for work related stuff. Even in the middle of the night, sometimes.”

Alex’s eyes suddenly widened, realizing what she had said.

“Not that I’m with her in the middle of the night or anything. That’s just…what she tells me, you know?”

Eliza took a long sip of her drink in reply.

Kara wished there was more bread. And that Lena would text her. Even though Kara knew she had no reason to.

“Anyhow,” Eliza then said, “Where are you originally from, Maggie?”

“Um, Colorado,” Maggie replied.

“I thought you said you were from Nebraska?” Alex asked her quietly, but the whole table heard it.

“Oh, yeah, you’re right. I, um, I just meant that I lived in Colorado for a while, and that always felt more like home.”

Kara narrowed her eyes at Maggie. Was she really that nervous around Eliza that she was unable to answer her questions correctly? Eliza wasn’t *that* intimidating, after all.
Another silence fell on the table, this one more uneasy than the last. In the lull of conversation, Kara noticed that she had a missed call from Winn, followed by a text that read “911! KARA ANSWER YOUR PHONE!!”

Kara’s stomach lurched. There were a million possible bad things that popped into Kara’s mind.

“Um, could you guys excuse me a second? I, ah, have a stage manager problem and I have to make a quick call. It’s important.”

“Nerd,” Alex joked.

Kara attempted a half-hearted laugh, already headed for the front doors of the restaurant.

“Winn, what’s wrong?” Kara said into her phone.

“Hey, Kara! So, uh…some stuff is happening, it’s just a little thing. A…a small, little development. Not a big deal.”

“Winn,” Kara warned, “Tell me.”

“Oh,” Winn breathed, composing himself. “So, that thing I was working on? The…the tracer for the bug receiver? Yeah, well, me and the guys I had been working with just finished it up this morning. And, you know, I felt like testing it out, obviously. So I submitted it to different kind of radio frequencies and other types of transmission, ah, you know, Bluetooth files sharing, HAM waves, stuff like that. And nothing was tripping the device up, so I figured that I must have calibrated it correctly. Heck, I thought it might not work at all. So, I’m driving around town a little bit, just to see if it might pick anything up, not really expecting much, and then…”

“What?”

“Well, it pinged a location. The tracker, it gave me a location to the receiver.”

“Are…are you serious?” Kara breathed. “Wha…so…what are you gonna do?”

“That’s why I called you! I don’t know what to do! I know we did all this planning and got all hyped up about finding out who was spying on Lena, but like Kara I never really thought about what would happen if the plan actually worked! I mean, what should I do? Should I call the cops? Should I go…go find the person myself? What if it’s some scary bad guy? I’m not a fighter, Kara!”

“Calm down, Winn,” Kara soothed. “It’s gonna be okay. It might be nothing, you don’t even know if the tracker is working properly, right? Let’s just…let’s not panic. Where are you?”

“I’m just rounding the corner of 4th and Jefferson,” Winn replied.

Kara blinked.

“Wait, you’re like…three blocks away from me. There’s a restaurant coming up on your left, meet me outside of it.”

“Oh,” Winn replied nervously, and hung up.

A couple of minutes later, Winn was walking rapidly and uneasily towards Kara, a handheld device flashing in his hand.

“Good lord, that looks like something out of Ghostbusters,” Kara commented.
“I was going for efficiency, not style, Kara. You try coming up with something better in the span of a week.”

Kara snatched the thing out of Winn’s hand to inspect.

“Hey! Be careful with my baby!” Winn complained.

Kara rolled her eyes, inspecting the wires and electrical tape that roughly attached the original bug that Kara had found in Lena’s purse to the crude device, which looked like Frankenstein creation of varied bits and pieces of what looked like a car GPS, an old cell phone, and some pieces Kara couldn’t even pretend to know the origin of. Kara was never that good with Earth technology, it was so vastly different from the technology she was used to on Krypton. So, while she understood the function and concept of the device Winn and his friends had built, she had no way of really telling if their execution was flawed or not. It certainly wasn’t an elegant thing.

“How confident are you in this tracker?” she asked.

“Kara, it passed every test I could think to run on it. I can’t know for sure, since I didn’t have a way to exactly duplicate the bug’s receiver, but, Kara, I really think it’s working.”

Kara let out a heavy breath, trying not to let the mounting tension in her body take hold of her and cause her to accidentally crush Winn’s device.

“Alright. So…where does it tell you the receiver is?”

“You’re not gonna believe me if I tell you,” Winn said, pulling the device back out of Kara’s hand.

“Come on, Winn.”

Winn ran a nervous hand through his hair.

“You’re having dinner in this restaurant?” Winn asked.

“Um, yeah, Alex is introducing Maggie to our mom.”

“Well, Kara, if this thing is right, the receiver is in that restaurant somewhere.”

Kara’s head jerked back of it’s own accord in response to her disbelief. How in the world…

“It’s wrong, then. Why would it be in there?”

“I-I don’t know, Kara. But that’s what it’s telling me. I checked it three times. And each time, it still pings in inside of there.

Kara took a breath, trying to make her brain work more efficiently toward a solution.

“That thing, the bug, is it live? Can it…is it still able to send files?” she asked.

“Well, no, I have it switched off, in case it picked up on anything that’s been said by me or you since you got your hands on it.”

“Could you switch it back on?”

“Well…yeah but Kara…”

“Do it.”
“How will that…”

“You’re just gonna have to trust me on this, Winn. Do it. Turn it on.”

Winn looked unsure, but he agreed. Winn fiddled with a couple of the wires, tapped at a few buttons on the device, and in an instant, Kara had to fight from letting herself collapse, the screeching noise returning with a vengeance. Below the screams of the bug, she could hear a lower hum, coming from within the restaurant, a different noise entirely, but Kara had no doubt what was making it.

“Kara, are you okay?” Winn asked, clutching her elbow to hold her up. “What’s wrong?”

“It’s here,” Kara gasped, forcing herself to withstand the pain, “It’s working.”

“How do you…” Winn began, but Kara squeezed his shoulder, maybe a little too hard, a silent urge for him to be quiet.

“Get in your car,” Kara insisted, easing her grip on his shoulder only slightly. “Wait there for exactly one minute. Then shut that thing off, and get out of here. Do you understand?”

“Kara, what are you going to do? How are you going to find the receiver?”

“I can’t explain that right now. Please just do as I say. Alright?”

Winn’s eyes flickered with worry, maybe even fear. But, somehow sensing Kara’s absolute certainty, he obliged, and walked hurriedly back to his car.

Knees weak and head throbbing, Kara forced herself back into the restaurant. She walked as determinedly as she could, already half inclined to know exactly where she was going, and where the source of the receiver’s humming came from. She just wished that she was wrong.

Kara’s heart dropped when she located the source.

She wasn’t wrong.

She stopped at her own table, blinking hard as she fought her own head to make a clear picture with her X-ray vision.

“Kara, are you okay?” the voice to her left called.

She looked towards the speaker, towards Maggie, looked down at the purse at Maggie’s feet, and looking through it, saw a small, black device, which let out a hum only Kara could hear.

It had been a minute since she told Winn to get in his car. The noise stopped.

Kara still felt sick, but for an entirely new reason.

Chapter End Notes

I haaaaate this chapter. Well, that's not true. It's okay. I think I just hate my own plot building? I know there are holes in it. TRUST ME I KNOW. And i hate that my babies are fighting. Even though I understand both sides.
I had the day off today and my eyes are crossing from staring at my screen too long so i'm just posting this now as is.

I promised Sanvers, and this isn't all of it, trust me. But I got to page 14 of this chap and i was like ALRIGHT THAT'S ENOUGH so there will be EVEN MORE sanvers next week. But there's also going to be more of me shoving this shit ass plot twist down your throats. So...sorry about that. But like, come on, would i make maggie a bad guy? Fuck no. I love maggie. She's not a bad guy. Just...you'll see. it's gonna be fine. ITS FINE.

I think I'm gonna go take a nap now. Next thursday, Maggie explains herself to Kara, they butt heads, Maggie has to at least come a little clean with Alex about her secret goings-on, and umm...Lena is probably off somewhere listening to an emo-ass breakup playlist.
I LOVE YOU GUYS, seriously. I dont know why any of you put up with me...
See you soon!! :-*
Chapter 11

Chapter Summary

It's been a pretty rough day for the Danvers sisters...and rough, well, everything for Lena...

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Kara, honey?” Eliza asked worriedly.

Kara tried to away the rage forming behind her eyes like a blinding pressure.

“Um,” she struggled. “Yeah. I need to. Well, no. I don’t feel well.”

“Is it your stomach? I had them bring more bread.”

“No. No. It’s not…I’m just gonna go to the girls room for a minute. Maggie!” She realized she was yelling, and forced her tone to soften. “I mean, Maggie, could you come with me?”

“Why do you need Maggie to go with you?” Alex asked incredulously.

“I just do! Alex!”

Kara could feel her fingernails beginning to break the skin of her palms as she clenched her fists.

Maggie, whose eyes were wide with shock at Kara’s sudden outburst, rested a placating hand on top of Alex’s before getting up.

“It’s alright, I’ll go with her,” Maggie said, and followed Kara, who stumbled stupidly through the restaurant towards the bathroom. When they were both inside, Kara checked to make sure no one else was inside, and locked the door behind them.

Maggie looked utterly perplexed.

“What’s goin on, little Danvers?” she asked.

“Don’t! Little Danvers me!” Kara burst out, forcing herself to lean against the sink counter behind her and gripping onto it to stable herself so she didn’t rush at Maggie.

Kara had had a hard time controlling her temper before. But never like this. She was genuinely afraid of what might happen if she let go of her self control for even a second.

“Alright then, wow,” Maggie said, moving to stand against the opposite wall, sensing Kara’s physical tension. “You gonna tell me what’s wrong or…”

Kara could feel the countertop begin to crack and warp beneath her tightening grip. She made sure to let her body block the view of sink so Maggie couldn’t see the accidental damage.

“Just stop, Maggie,” Kara said through a forced sigh. “Stop talking. I know you’ve been lying. I
know you’re spying on Lena.”

Maggie’s eyes flickered for just a second, so quickly that Kara almost missed it. Then she resumed a look of confusion, mixed with a hint of amusement.

“I’m sorry, what?”

“Come on, Maggie. Let’s not do this. I don’t have the patience, okay? You’ve been spying on Lena, listening in to her life, placing bugs in her phone, her keys, and god knows where else. Now just…tell me why.”

“Kara, I really don’t know what you’re talking about.”

Kara rolled her eyes.

“Maggie! You have a listening device on you right now! You…”

Kara looked Maggie over, and realized that she wasn’t carrying her purse.

“Oh. Okay, so…you’re not one of those girls who brings her purse into the bathroom. That makes things…difficult…I thought you would have…never mind. The point is! I know it’s in there!”

Maggie’s eyes faltered again. Her heartbeat quickened. She crossed her arms.

“How did you know?”

“So I’m not wrong? About any of it?”

Maggie sighed.

“No.”

“Hah!”

Maggie pursed her lips in annoyance.

“Okay,” Kara said, not actually sure what to do now that she got Maggie to admit anything. “So…why? What reason could you possibly have?”

“I’m a rival super villain trying to get to Lex Luthor through his little sister.”

Maggie’s face and voice were both so neutral that Kara almost missed the sarcasm to Maggie’s faux explanation.

“…You’re kidding.”

“Of course I am, Kara, Jesus Christ.”

“Well! What am I supposed to think of a campus security guard using high tech gear to listen in on a student?”

“You really think I’m just some security guard? Come on, Kara, I thought I was at least badass enough to seem obviously over-qualified for that position.”

“I don’t know! We don’t really know each other that well.”

Maggie frowned.
“Yeah, I guess you’re right.”

“So what are you, then? You have to be working for someone, right? Who is it? Lex Luthor?”

“God, no!” Maggie said indignantly.

“Superman?”

Maggie scoffed.

“Please.”

“Well, then, what? FBI? CIA?”

Maggie shrugged.

“Something along those lines,” she said simply.

“That’s not very reassuring, Maggie.”

“Look, it’s government, okay? That’s all you need to know.”

“Is Maggie even your real name?”

“Of course it is, you watch too much TV.”

“Oh, I’m sorry, is this not the setup of a tacky spy film, Maggie? Huh? You’re invading Lena’s privacy. And for what? To find out what she knows about Lex?”

“Uh, yeah,” Maggie said.

“Maggie!”

“What, Kara? Are you really surprised that the government is listening in to a family member of the most dangerous man in the country? How naïve can you be?”

Well…okay. Maybe Kara was too worried about the whole evil genius Lex Luthor having a vendetta against her cousin thing to consider the rational solution that Lena was being investigated by cops or whoever to track down her brother. But…

“You lied, Maggie! To everyone! It’s one thing to find out that some random cop, government person, whoever, was spying on Lena. But it’s you! You let yourself into our lives, Maggie! You’re dating my sister for cripes sake. She…oh my God, does she know?”

Maggie’s face fell, no longer able to keep her composure when her girlfriend was brought into the confrontation.

“No. She doesn’t know.”

Kara pinched the crinkle between her eyes with her thumb and pointer finger, struggling to grapple with any of what was happening.

“Why would you do this, Maggie? Why would you date my sister, make her care about you, all while lying to her, and leading this double life like this? Is that part of your job, too?”

Maggie closed the distance she had put between herself and Kara, pulling Kara’s hand away from
where it hid her face.

“No, Kara. This wasn’t…this wasn’t supposed to happen. Alex and I, I mean. I got distracted by her, I guess. One moment there was this cute girl pushing my buttons seemingly because she got off on it, and I was playing along because her recklessness worried me and I felt like I had to keep an eye on her. And then the next moment we were going on dates and having tacky movie nights together and staying up all night to talk about stupid shit. And I didn’t see it coming, Kara. I should have just kept away from her. But now I just…can’t. I don’t want to.” She took a breath. “I care about her, Kara. A lot. And I don’t know what to do. I don’t know what to tell her, how to tell her. If I even could bring myself to tell her the truth, I’d be terrified that I would lose her.”

Kara took a long breath, annoyed that she felt for Maggie, related to her struggle, even though she was still a sneaky, lying…bad person.

“You don’t deserve her,” Kara spat.

“Yeah, probably not.”

Kara bit the inside of her cheek, processing everything. Suddenly she remembered the damn reason this whole situation had sent her into a panic in the first place.

“How much do you know?” Kara asked urgently.

Maggie seemed to put her defenses back up, her moment of vulnerability over as fast as it arrived.

“Nothing useful. Lena isn’t really as close to her family as I thought. Even when she went back to Metropolis…”

“That’s why you were away over Christmas…” Kara mused, cursing herself for not figuring it out sooner.

“Yeah.”

“Why do you have to sneak around like this? Spying on her without telling her…it has to be illegal, violating her rights, right?”

Maggie shrugged.

“It falls into a certain shade of gray.”

“Didn’t you ever think that if you just…questioned Lena, that she would tell you what you wanted to know?”

“You think we haven’t tried that? The Luthors have the best attorneys money can buy. The second the FBI or anyone else would come anywhere near that family or their affiliates, they’d get drowned in red tape. This kind of surveillance is the only chance we have.”

“And if Lena found out what you were doing?”

“Then the whole thing would get scrubbed. Any trace that I was there would get wiped away like nothing ever happened.”

“And you? Where would that leave you? Would you just disappear from Alex’s life without a word?”

Maggie didn’t respond.
“You have to tell her,” Kara said.

“I can’t.”

“You have to.”

“I can’t, Kara! I shouldn’t even be talking to you about this!”

“I don’t give a shit what you should or shouldn’t be doing, Maggie! I will not allow you to lie to my sister anymore! If you don’t tell her, then I will…”

Kara moved to leave the bathroom. Maggie grasped her arm firmly, pulling Kara away from the door. The rage in Kara flashed again. She had an inclination to throw Maggie across the room like a rag doll, but, thankfully, she didn’t.

“I can’t let you do that,” Maggie hissed.

Kara looked down at the grip Maggie had on her, fully aware that she could just break her hand in order to gain her freedom.

“You can’t stop me,” Kara said defiantly.

“If you try to tell her who I really am, then she’ll find out what’s been going on with you and Lena.”

Kara could probably get away with lightly throwing her across the room, right?

She shook off Maggie’s grip on her, re-creating some distance between them so that she could better control her temper.

“That’s none of your business,” Kara said, her own voice cold and foreign to her.

“Yeah, no shit. Do you know how many hours of audio files I had to cringe my way through while you two were going at it?”

“Oh, poor you, I’m so sympathetic of the girl who’s been listening in on my sex life without my permission.”

Maggie took a step back from Kara.

“Alright, fair. But the point is, I know that Lena is a sore point between you and Alex. And I know she would go flying off the handle if she found out you two were dating.”

“We’re not dating,” Kara replied quickly, “And whatever we had…it’s over.”

“I doubt that.”

Kara groaned.

“So, what, Maggie? You’re gonna blackmail me so that you can keep hooking up with my sister under false pretenses? You’re not really convincing me to be on your side on this.”

Maggie sighed.

“Believe it or not, Kara, I’m one of the good guys here. All I want is to get Lex Luthor behind bars. And I’m not just spying on Lena to get whatever information out of her that I can. If I wanted to get
information out of her I could just drag her into a dark holding cell in a classified location and get her to tell me what I need to know. No lawyers, no red tape. And don’t think I haven’t thought about it. But I’m also here to watch over her. To keep her safe. She’s the family member of a dangerous man, Kara. One who gets more and more brazen each day. It’s only a matter of time before he does something that puts her into the line of fire, even if it’s indirectly. And if that happens, I’ll be here to look out for her, even if it’s in the shadows.”

“I can look out for her just fine,” Kara grumbled under her breath.

“What, you think your doe eyes and can-do attitude are enough to keep her safe? It’s in everyone’s best interest that I keep on with my mission.”

“And Alex? What’s in her best interest? I won’t lie to her, Maggie. I just won’t.”

“I know. Okay? And I’m sorry. I’m sorry I’ve made this whole thing one huge mess. Just…let me be the one to tell Alex. You’re right, she needs to know. But, just, let it come from me. Please?”

Kara tapped her foot agitatedly against the bathroom tile, staring Maggie down, deciding what to do next.

A knock at the bathroom door made them both jump.

“Um, guys?” Alex called from the other side of the door. “Are you in there? Why is the door locked?”

Kara grasped the door lock in her hand, staring Maggie down intently.

“This weekend. You tell her this weekend, or I do,” she said.

Maggie nodded.

“And Maggie?”

“Yeah?”

“You won’t get a damn thing from Lena. Not if I can help it.”

Kara opened the door. Alex was wearing an inquisitive, if not slightly peeved, expression.

“What the hell are you guys doing?”

“Sorry, babe,” Maggie replied before Kara could get a word in, slinking past Kara and out of the bathroom. “Your sister was just…upset over some boy trouble. That’s all.”

“Ugh, was it that Mike guy you were telling me about?” Alex said with a groan. “I will beat the shit out of him myself if he won’t leave you alone.”

“Nothing I can’t handle, Alex,” Kara said, suddenly feeling completely numb.

*

Alex sat on Maggie’s couch, taking large gulps of the beer in her hand. She didn’t know how the
hell she made it through that dinner without a drink, but now that that was over she definitely earned this one. She insisted that they spend the rest of the night at Maggie’s. Maggie had spent the whole night out of her comfort zone trying to make Alex’s mom like her. The least that Alex could go was go back to Maggie’s place, so that she could be comfortable, relaxed, and hopefully screaming Alex’s name sometime in the near future if the evening went according to plan. Because really, Maggie had gone above and beyond tonight, even taking time to tolerate Kara’s bizarre little episode…whatever the hell that was.

Just now, Maggie was pissing around with something or other in her bedroom, entirely too far away from Alex to be properly seduced. Alex was determined to change that.

“Babe,” Alex called, drawing out the word as the sauntered over to Maggie’s bedroom.

Maggie was sitting on her bed, texting or something like that, as she bit the corner of her bottom lip, deep in thought. Alex stood in the doorway of the bedroom for a moment, thinking about how cute Maggie looked when she was…well, when she did literally anything. All the time. She was always cute.

“Babe,” Alex called again, this time as more of a whisper, as she moved to perch on top of Maggie’s bed, carefully gripping her beer so as not to spill it. Because, seduction mode or not, she was still going to finish her celebration beer.

Maggie put her phone down, and looked up at Alex with a smile that seemed more painted on than natural.

“Sorry, just had to send a quick email,” Maggie said.

“What was in the email? Daily update: Campus not on fire. DXAMs are still the honest to God worst human beings, not only on campus, but on the whole planet.”

Maggie chuckled.

Ah, there was that smile.

“Pretty much, yeah,” she said.

“So,” Alex said, crawling over to where Maggie sat, cross-legged, so that she could straddle her lap, “have I mentioned that you get a gold star for surviving my mom and sister at the same time today?”

“Oh yeah?” Maggie said, eyes unabashedly roaming the view of the girl in her lap, “what do I get when I meet your dad, then?”

“Um, some kind of fucking medal,” Alex said, taking a sip of her beer, before she set it down on the nightstand to her left. “And also, something a lot similar to this.”

Alex tugged her own shirt off, tossing it carelessly to the floor, and pressing her lips into Maggie’s as she guided her into a laying position on the bed. Maggie eagerly melted into Alex’s touch at first, and then suddenly went rigid.

“Alex,” she said, her voice a soft warning.

Alex pulled her mouth away from where it had been trailing kisses down her neck.

“Yes?” she asked, nipping slightly at Maggie’s collarbone.
“We shouldn’t do this…right now,” Maggie struggled to say.

“Why not?” Alex asked, tugging Maggie’s shirt up, scooting down slightly so she could move the progression of her mouth from Maggie’s neck to her stomach.

“Alex,” Maggie whined helplessly, “Seriously. I…there’s something I have to tell you first.”

“Can’t it wait?” Alex asked as her tongue traced just above Maggie’s jeans.

Maggie groaned helplessly.

“I mean, it could, but I wouldn’t feel right about it if we did this now before I say what I have to say.”

Alex sighed. She knew that she could get her girlfriend to stop protesting if she really wanted to. But if it was important to Maggie, she wasn’t going to ignore it just because she wanted to make her moan. Begrudgingly, Alex released her hold on Maggie, pulling herself off of the girl beneath her and sitting on the bed.

“Okay, what is it?” Alex asked.

Cheeks flushed, Maggie sat up, facing Alex.

“So, um,” Maggie began, already faltering, “Uh…”

“You sure you don’t wanna wait until after I relieve some of that tension there, Mags?”

“Shh, stop. I’m being serious.”

Alex pouted at Maggie for a second, relishing in the fact that it made Maggie seem to struggle even more.

“Babe, listen. I don’t…I…haven’t been totally honest with you.”

Well *that* got Alex’s attention.

“About what?” Alex asked cautiously, trying to block out the memories of every other relationship she had tried, and the similarly structured conversations that led up to the eventual break up.

“About…my job?”

Alex cocked her head to one side like a curious puppy.

“So the campus actually is on fire?”

“No,” Maggie said, fighting away a chuckle. “That’s not it. I just,” she sighed, “I’m not just a security officer. That’s sort of just…what I let people think I am.”

“I don’t really understand what you mean, Mags.”

“I mean that my job working on campus is sort of a cover for what I really do.”

“What do you mean ‘a cover’? You make it sound like you’re a spy or something.”

Alex chuckled at her own remark, and then saw that Maggie’s face was still totally serious.

“Oh my God, you’re not like actually a spy, right Maggie? Because I was totally kidding.”
Maggie’s was like stone. She said nothing, she didn’t even move.

Alex felt her stomach flip like she was about to be sick. She thought about the tension between Maggie and Kara earlier, how they had locked themselves away to have some kind of serious conversation. She thought about all the times Jeremiah and Eliza drilled her on how to take care of Kara. How to keep her from using her powers, how to lie her way out of it if Kara ever slipped up, how to notice if someone was paying too close attention to Kara. How to lose someone if they ever tailed Kara. Who to call if something ever happened to Kara or if anyone found out who she really was. All the drills, all the lectures, all the fear, came flooding back to Alex, and she felt like she was fourteen again.

“Maggie please say something before I freak out,” Alex said cautiously, willing herself to remember how to breathe.

“I don’t work for NCU, Alex, I work for the government.”

Alex honestly thought she was going to throw up. Her ears roared with deafening static, her eyes watered.

“I was given the assignment to keep tabs on a certain student. To listen in to what they said and did, to gather information.”

Alex’s chest burned from a lack of oxygen. Her eyes stung with tears.

“Maggie please don’t…”

“Lena Luthor,” Maggie interrupted. “I’m working to track Lena Luthor.”

Alex nearly choked on her own spit as she allowed air to rush into her lungs.

*Oh, thank God.*

“Alex? Alex, are you okay?” Maggie asked, rubbing her back as Alex caught her breath.

“Yeah. Yeah, I’m good,” she said, slightly shrugging Maggie off.

Maggie pulled her hand away from Alex instantly, clasping her hands together in her lap and sitting on the bed with her feet tucked under her legs. She looked so fragile just then, staring down at her lap, afraid to look Alex in the eye, shrinking away from her like she was waiting for some kind of horrible blow back from her confession. Alex could guess at how Maggie felt just then. There had been so many times in Alex’s life when she had fucked up beyond belief. And she had been willing to own up to her fuck ups a handful of times. Alex knew from those experiences that there was no worse feeling than waiting for the person you hurt to decide if they were going to forgive you or not. And knowing that she had the power to just instantly forgive Maggie so that she would stop looking so damn wounded was enough to make Alex want to forget everything Maggie had just said. But…for God’s sake, this wasn’t just some normal, everyday lie Maggie had been telling Alex. She was a goddamn…what? A spy? What the fuck movie had Alex been dragged into? Thankfully, by some miracle, this didn’t have anything to do with Kara. But that didn’t make this even remotely…normal.

“So…” Alex began tentatively. “You don’t work for the campus?”

Maggie shrugged.

“I technically do, actually,” she said, still looking at her lap, “I mean, NCU doesn’t know anything
about my real job, they just were given a strong recommendation by some made up reference to hire me on. So, I’m kind of on two payrolls right now. Which is doing wonders at getting rid of my credit card debt, let me tell ya.”

“Mags,” Alex insisted.

“Right, yeah, sorry. No jokes right now.”

“So you’re, like, some kind of spy?”

“That’s a generous term. This gig isn’t really all that exciting. It’s mostly just listening to a shit ton of audio files and falling asleep on stakeouts.”

“So…you just…listen in on Lena Luthor?”

“Yeah.”

“All the time?”

“I mean, I always have a listening device planted on her, but I usually fast forward through a lot of the audio files.”

“Why are you spying on her?”

“Orders.”

“Why do you have those orders, Maggie?”

“Lex Luthor, why else?”

Alex sighed. It made sense. Hell, Alex could have guessed on her own that the cops, or the FBI, or whatever Maggie was, was keeping an eye on anyone attached to that crazy ass. Still, Alex would never had guessed that her goddamn girlfriend was the eye to be kept on her.

“Babe?” Maggie asked cautiously. “What are you thinking?”

Alex strummed her fingers against her knees.

“I’m thinking…that you lied to me. A lot.”

She heard Maggie sigh.

“Yeah.”

“Why didn’t you tell me before?”

“Because I couldn’t.”

“And why are you telling me now?”

“Well. I could say that it’s because I care about you. And because I couldn’t stand to lie to you anymore. All of that is true. But it would still be a lie. Really, I’m only telling you because I was found out and I had to be the one to tell you first before someone else did. Otherwise I wouldn’t have told you at all.”

Alex’s eyes widened.
“Well that makes me feel just great, Maggie.”

“It’s the truth. You deserve at least that.”

Alex took a long, slow breath.

“Who found you out?”

“Your sister.”

*Of course. Why not?*

“How?”

“Honestly, I don’t know. She’s been spending a lot of time with Lena, lately. She must have figured it out somehow.”

“Hah! Of course!” Alex felt stinging wetness in her eyes once again. A hysterical laugh burst out of her of it’s own accord. “Of course she is! Of course Kara is going off and becoming besties with the one person I told her to stay away from! And of course she, because of doing so, managed to get herself tied up into some goddamn spy novel type bullshit! And of course, of course, Maggie, you’re the one on the other side of all of this. For fuck’s sake.”

She felt tears spill over onto her cheeks, and she left them there, thinking it was some kind of rebellion simply to let herself cry.

“Alex…” Maggie said cautiously, daring to inch closer to her on the bed. “I know you’re upset right now. But…it’s not Kara’s fault that I lied about who I was.”

“No, I know,” Alex said intensely, “I know that. But it managed to fucking work out this way, anyway. Do you…do you know what one of my favorite things about you was? You had absolutely nothing to do with my family or my sister. You were completely mine. You were this little oasis that I could fall into when I was so goddamn sick of playing the role of protector to my little sister, who resents my doing so, anyway! You didn’t constantly remind me to keep an eye on her. Well, besides that one time, but I was genuinely being an asshole.”

“Alex, no you…”

Alex shushed Maggie with a gesture of her hand.

“You didn’t all but sew my hip to hers when we were kids to make sure I didn’t let her wander off! You didn’t all but ignore the fact that I finished my undergrad a year and a half early, just to start shoving NCU med school pamphlets under my door when you found out Kara wanted to go to school there! You didn’t care if I didn’t have Kara’s day to day itinerary memorized! Our relationship wasn’t about Kara! You were just mine! And now! Oh, well look at that, Maggie, the one thing I had that didn’t have anything to do with Kara, now suddenly is tangled up in her shit just like everything and everyone else in my life!”

“Alex, I don’t think that’s fair to your sister…”

“I don’t give a shit!”

“Alex,” Maggie insisted, more forcefully than before. “This is not Kara’s fault. Don’t be mad at her when you should be mad at me. Hell, she demanded that I come clean with you because she was furious at me for lying to you in the first place. I’m sorry that I lied. I’m sorry that everything
is now more complicated because of me. Be mad at me about that, not her.”

Alex got up from the bed, standing as she buried her face in her hands.


Her head snapped up suddenly, looking Maggie straight on.

“I’m not mad.”

Maggie was surprised by this, to say the least. There was a glimmer of hope, maybe even excitement, in her eye.

“You’re not?” she asked doubtfully.

“No,” Alex breathed, beginning to pace back and forth. “No. I mean, okay, so you’re some kind of government agent tasked to spy on Lex Luthor’s little sister. That’s…not the worst thing in the world. Hell, it would be irresponsible for the feds not to keep an eye on her, in case she might have ties to him still, you know? You guys want to catch that crazy shit bag. And, yeah, it bugs me that you lied. But I know now. And…and…it’s good that you’re one of the good guys! The sooner you find some answers from Lena the sooner I can stop worrying about…never mind. No. No. This could be worse. This isn’t that bad.”

“You’re serious right now?” Maggie asked.

Alex stopped pacing and turned to face Maggie, putting her hands on her hips.

“Yeah. I think.”

“So…we’re…are we good?”

“Umm…” Alex said, voice breathy and high pitched, looking around the room as if the answer was written somewhere on the walls. “I don’t know. This kind of makes me want to press the brakes a little on our relationship. But honestly I was panicking at how fast we were moving, anyway. I mean, I was really not ready for you to meet my mom yet. And, well, as far as everything else goes, maybe this is a good thing!”

“How’s that?”

“Well, you know, maybe we can help one another now. If I know and Kara knows that you’re trying to get some info on Lex out of Lena, well shit, I mean, maybe we can speed up the process a little. If we can talk to Kara, and see if she’ll get Lena to tell her what she knows!”

“Alex, I don’t think we should use Kara like that…”

“We wouldn’t be using anyone, Mags! I’m sure she’d be more than willing to help if she knew how much good she would be doing.”

“Alex…” Maggie said, face full of worry.

Alex moved to sit on the bed again.

“Can I just ask you one thing?” she asked Maggie.

“Umm, I guess?”
“Kara is more than just friends with Lena, isn’t she?”

Maggie bit her lip.

“I can’t answer that.”

Alex narrowed her eyes at Maggie.

“I fucking knew it. And that’s…that’s all you found out about Kara, right? Just that she has the hots for Lena. Nothing else?”

“Umm, no, that’s about it.”

“Well! That settles that. Kara is just gonna have to help you out if she wants to prove that her little fuck buddy Lena isn’t on Lex’s side.”

Maggie blinked twice, head tilting slightly to the left, looking at Alex as if she was something fragile and dangerous.

“Are you…okay?” she asked cautiously.

“Yeah,” Alex insisted a little too eagerly. “I’m fine.”

She said that, but as her head roared with deafening static, she had no idea if it was true.

*

There was a pounding on Kara’s door. Kara ignored it at first, feeling herself slipping into one of those moods that threatened to keep her mentally chained to her bed for a long while. Then she heard the voice connected to it.

“Kara?” Winn’s voice called through the door. ‘Kara, let me in.”

Groaning, Kara got out of bed and opened the door, barely giving Winn a nod as she headed straight back to the safety of her twin mattress.

“Kara!” Winn insisted impatiently. “What…what happened tonight? I called you, like, five times!”

Oh. So that’s what that noise was.

“Oh. So that’s what that noise was.”

“Oh. I had steak. They overcooked it, but I was too hungry to care.”

Kara wriggled under her comforter.

Winn tapped his foot, staring her down from where he stood next to her bed.

“Kara. Come on. You just sent me away earlier with almost no explanation. You have to tell me what happened in that restaurant.”

“You know,” Kara said, rolling over so that she was laying on her side, facing Winn. “I don’t remember what it feels like to not have all these secrets to keep all the time. I don’t remember what it feels like to be completely honest with anyone. I don’t even know if I know how to be honest
anymore.”

Winn furrowed his brow, looking down at Kara, confused.

“O…kay?” he replied.

Kara bolted upright suddenly, looking at Winn with an intense expression.

“I need one person right now. Just one person in my life that I can tell absolutely everything to. I need to get rid of some of these secrets, Winn. I need to feel honest for a minute.”

“Right,” Winn replied, clearly placating her at this point.

“I have a serious question for you, Winn.”

He nodded expectantly.

“Do you wanna be that person? Can I trust you?”

“If I say yes will you tell me what the fuck happened tonight?”

“Yeah.”

“Then yeah. Sure.”

Kara nodded solemnly. Then she got up, opened her door, and began walking down the hallway without a word. Winn, muttering to himself, hurried to follow Kara. Kara opened up the fire escape window in the stairwell, and looked out.

“Are you afraid of heights?” she asked nonchalantly.

“Umm, I don’t really know. Why?”

“Try not to squirm,” Kara said, and before Winn could even ask what she meant, Kara had scooped him up with one arm, shot out the window, and she was flying circles overhead of the campus, Winn tossed carelessly over her shoulder.

Winn, suddenly aware that they were airborne, let out a shriek, and Kara, worried that he would panic his way out of her grasp, dropped down on top of Luthor Hall, allowing him to grip her arm as he steadied himself.

“Kara…what the hell?” he squealed, voice cracking. “Did we just…did we just fly?”

“I flew. You rode along,” she said passively, sitting down cross-legged as if she would begin meditating soon. “I haven’t carried anyone with me in a long time. That was kind of cool.”

“You…you…okay. Umm. Okay! You can fly! That’s…unexpected.”

Kara, oddly calm, as if she was exposed to some kind of sedative, looked at Winn, watching his every move with fascination. It had been so long since she had willingly showed her powers to someone. He stood at least five feet away from her, eyes darting around, unable to land on any one thing. His heartbeat, unsurprisingly, had sped up a good bit. His breathing was quick and panicked. All of his body language suggested that he was in distress, yet he tried as hard as he could to speak calmly.

“How, um, how is it that you were able to do that, exactly?”
Kara sighed.

“You know the whole Superman, story, right?”

“Well, yeah. Everyone does.”

She shrugged. Normally she would be indignant at letting anyone compare her own personal story to that of her arrogant, too young to even remember Krypton, cousin. But right now she was too tired and indifferent to even care.

“Well, he’s my cousin.”

“What do you mean his cousin? But he’s…you honestly are telling me…that you’re an alien…from another planet…”

“Yep.”

Winn let out a laugh.

“But that’s ridiculous! You’re so…normal! You’ve never done anything…I don’t know…alien-like!”

Kara shrugged.

“I’ve been trained to hide my powers since I was thirteen. I don’t ever use them unless I want to or by accident when I’m upset.”

Winn moved to sit down across from Kara.

“I need a drink,” he said, eyes wide as he tried to process everything.

Without a word, Kara zipped off, and returned a moment later with a half drunk bottle of vodka. She placed it in Winn’s hand unceremoniously, and moved to sit again.

“Wait, is this…”

“From the stash you keep up in the cat walk? Yeah. You aren’t very good at hiding things.”

“I can hide things just fine! It’s not my fault you have…alien superpowers, apparently,” he said, and took a large gulp from the bottle.

Winn scrunched up his face, coughed, and moved to hand the bottle to Kara. She declined his offer with a shake of her head.

“I would just be wasting it,” she said, “it doesn’t do anything to me.”

“Right. Yeah. I think I read somewhere that Superman can’t get drunk, either. High metabolism or something, right?”

Kara nodded. For once in her life it was paying off that everyone knew everything about her show-off of a cousin.

“So, are you ready?” she asked.

“Oh god, for what? Please don’t make me fly again.”
“No. I mean, are you ready to hear all my secrets?”

Winn took another sip from the bottle.

“Like…all of them?” he asked, voice a croak from the burning of the alcohol in his throat.

Kara nodded again.

“I think it will make me feel better if it all comes out.”

Winn took a long breath, looked at the bottle as if he were measuring whether or not enough was in there to get him through the night, and crossed his legs to sit more comfortably on the lonely roof of Luthor Hall.

“Alright,” he said, “Shoot.”

*

Lena didn’t remember most of the weekend.

It was funny. When she was nineteen, and she went to her first college party, back when she and Veronica genuinely liked each other and didn’t just pretend to, she had been dragged by Veronica into the kitchen of the host’s apartment after Veronica confessed that she was too nervous to go and get a drink herself. And despite all the mixers and bottom shelf liquors splayed out on the countertop next to the fridge, both girls had passed all of that up for the box of wine in the fridge. Not because it was in any way a good choice of drink at a college party, but because both girls had never in their privileged experiences had seen wine handled in so casual and crude a manner. And in their shared need to rebel against their own preconceptions, they both got perfectly trashed off of it, amazed that a box of wine seemed to be literally bottomless.

Now, Lena could almost kill a box of it in a weekend by herself, thinking the whole time that there should be a bigger sized box available for purchase.

So, no, she didn’t really remember the past weekend. And she was glad for it. What was there to remember? On Friday she broke up with a girl she wasn’t even dating because she was dramatic like that. On Saturday she lamented over the fact that she broke up with her not-girlfriend, because after all, if she could just learn to not be so emotional all the time she would have probably been getting laid and having a grand time with a girl who, dating or not, was really sweet and caring and good to her, in her way.

And then on Sunday the news broke. Apparently some kind of monument to Superman had been erected in front of a children’s hospital in Metropolis as a way to thank him for stopping all those super-soldiers Lex had thrown at the city.

So, naturally, Lex had to drop a bomb on the damn unveiling ceremony. Because, you know, nothing screams “I’m not a bad guy, I’m just a misunderstood hero” like setting off a bomb in front of a goddamn children’s hospital.

And now, as she sat on a set platform on the stage, holding her throbbing head in her hands, all she really wanted was to go out to the liquor store and buy another box or two of wine to get her through the week.
Veronica, who recently decided that she could only drink expensive ass French wines from before the year 2013, was nearby, as she always seemed to be anymore, watching Lena with that look of disdain and condescension. Come to think of it, it seemed like everyone in the theater was giving her a similar look.

Not that it mattered. She was used to these looks. Lex never could keep quiet long enough to let people even think about forgetting just how despicable it was for Lena to share his last name. And how she was just as despicable for keeping the name, for benefitting from it, for using it to get everything she could ever want, spoiled little brat that she was.

Business as usual for Lena, really.

Not everyone looked at her like that, though. Winn never did. For God’s sake sometimes he felt like her personal mentor in mastering the art of bearing the burden of a relative’s infamy. Jack didn’t look at her like that. It was why she once convinced herself to try and love him.

Kara certainly didn’t look at her like that. Not now, at least. No. Now, she was looking at Lena like she was some fragile, damaged thing. And somehow, that was more frustrating than any other looks being thrown at her.

“Well, that was a train wreck,” Dr. Carr grumbled from his seat in the audience. “Shall we try running that scene again? But this time, if everyone could at least pretend to give a shit about this production, that would be fantastic.”

“M-maybe we should take a break,” Kara stammered from her “desk” in front of the stage. “Yes? Lena? Do you need to take five?”

Lena hauled herself onto her feet, forcing herself to ignore the sickening lurch in her stomach that came from moving too fast in her hungover state.

“I’m good,” she spat, and walked to her place off stage for the beginning of the scene. Jack was standing nearby, leaning against the stairwell that led to the upstairs dressing room.

“You don’t have to do that, you know,” he said to her quietly.

“What?” Lena asked, voice biting.

“Cover up how you’re feeling by being so prickly to everyone,” he replied.

“Ooh, what the fuck do you know?” Lena said, turning away from him.

“Yeah, alright,” he replied, pushing off from the railing of the stairwell and moving to stand behind her. “Trying to tell you what to do is not a good move. That’s my bad. Can I give you a hug instead?”

Lena sighed, and resigned to let Jack pull her into a hug.

“I’m sorry, dear,” he said softly, and released her.

“Remember that plan we had to build our own lab on some deserted island where no one could bother us?” she asked.

Jack laughed.
“Yeah, why? Need me to pack a bag?”

“Possibly.”

“Alright. We gonna bring your, ah, friend with us, then?”

His eyes gestured towards the blonde flipping absently through her master script as she fiddled with her glasses. Lena rolled her eyes at Jack.

“I have no idea what you mean,” Lena said, looking away from Jack’s probing gaze.

They got through about half a page of dialogue before Snapper called a halt again, mumbling to himself about “ungrateful kids” and “went to Berkley for God’s sake” and “tenure isn’t worth this shit”. He then stormed out of the theater, shouting “Handle this mess, Danvers!” in his wake.

“Uh, hey Lena?” Kara asked meekly from her desk, eyes locked on her script.

“Yeah?” Lena said, trying her best to sound uninterested.

“Um, it’s nothing, just, you had your face turned away from the audience when you were delivering your lines. We couldn’t hear anything you were saying.”

“Well, then, I will just make sure to turn towards the audience when we actually have one.”

Kara sighed loudly.

“Or you could just fix it now,” she said.

Lena arched an eyebrow at Kara.

“Whatsoever you want, Kara,” Lena said mockingly. “That’s all that matters, right?”

“I’m just trying to help you, Lena,” Kara snapped back at Lena.

“Well I didn’t ask for your help, Kara!”

“Oh my God! Fine! Never mind!”

Kara balled her hands into fists, and then released them, placing her palms flat against the table and taking a deep breath, letting her head fall back and looking up at the ceiling as she tried to compose herself. And because Lena was her own worst enemy, the only thing she could think about was how it reminded her of what Kara looked like when she had an orgasm.

For God’s sake, Lena.

Snapper returned a moment later, chose a scene to run that wasn’t even in the rehearsal schedule for that night, got angry when half the actors needed for the scene weren’t there because they weren’t in any of the scheduled scenes for that night, and told everyone that he done trying, and that they should all go home. This outburst barely phased Lena. She wasn’t complaining about getting to go home earlier than she thought, anyway.

As soon as Snapper left, Kara shut herself up in the sound booth so that she didn’t have to interact with Lena, or anyone else or that matter. Lena knew that she was venting out some anger in Kara’s direction that was misplaced because Kara was, admittedly, an easy target. But she also couldn’t help but take the easy way out, to keep lashing out at her, because it was just so easy to be mad at Kara for not being who Lena needed her to be. Maybe in a week or two, when outrage over the
Luthor scandal of the month had died down, Lena would be in a better place to try and make some kind of peace with Kara.

Then Lena pushed open the front doors of Luthor Hall, and realized in a heart stopping moment of panic, that the outrage against her family might not die down any time soon.

Just outside of the building, a cluster of students had gathered, all of them cheering on a student who had, apparently, scaled his way up to the top of the building, crow bar in hand, and he attempted to rip the large, metal letters that spelled out “LUTHOR”, off of the front of the science hall.

As far as she could tell, no one had seen her come outside. As slowly and quietly as she could, she backed up towards the doors of the building, away from the angry pack of students. There was a second door on the other side of the building that led to the back lawn. If she could slip out that way, she could get back to her apartment where it was safe. As she walked slowly backwards, she suddenly bumped into something. She whipped around, and was looking at a large, pissed off looking dude.

“What a coincidence!” He yelled, loud enough to grab the attention of the rioting students and grabbing Lena roughly by arm before she could bolt away from him. “The little Luthor heiress is here to watch the show!”

“What’s the matter, Lena?” another student jeered. “Big bro not here to protect you?”

“This university should have never accepted your family’s dirty money in the first place!” cried another disembodied voice somewhere in the crowd.

“You and your whole family should be locked up!”

Lena knew how to defend herself. She had been trained on how to fight by some of the best coaches that money could buy. But, at this moment, despite all her training, she felt completely frozen by fear. She couldn’t move, couldn’t speak, couldn’t even think, as the boy that had grabbed her pushed her forward, closer towards the angry pack of students. She shut her eyes, not knowing what would happen to her next, and utterly unable to make herself fight past her panic and do something.

Everything went quiet. The voices of the crowd suddenly ceased. A strong wind hit her face.

Lena opened her eyes, and she was at least twenty feet off the ground, flying off to God knows where, held in the strong grip of a familiar pair of arms.

Chapter End Notes

MY POOR SWEET SUMMER CHILDREN.
PS Pry my 'Lena loves boxed wine' headcanon from my COLD DEAD FINGERS
WHY DONT YA :D
This makes two angsty af chapters in a row and i'm just as mad at myself as i'm sure you guys are XD
I CANT HELP IT, WE'RE AT A VERY TENSE PART OF THE STORY.
aLSO if you're kind of cringing at how Alex handled all of that, you're right to. Her coping mechanisms are kind of kicking in HARD right now. But we'll get more into that next week.

Minor 'Tess's Life' update, I'm getting kind of bogged down by work right now, and my schedule is only gonna get crazier as the summer goes on. And considering that I felt rushed this whole week fitting everything i wanted to into this chap (it sounds rushed too, good lord the quality is just not where it should be and i know it), i think from here on out my updates are gonna be a good bit smaller than usual. I really want to do justice to this story and my babies (and you guys cuz you have been the most fantastic and supportive ppl ever and i love you). But they will still be every thursday as usual, so don't worry about that.

ANYHOW up next week, Kara goes from literally no one knowing who she really is to OH MY GOD WHO DOESNT KNOW AT THIS POINT. Alex tries to fix things, and in doing so makes everything worse, and Kara and Lena FINALLY MAYBE START COMMUNICATING PROPERLY WITH ONE ANOTHER. see you soon :-*
Chapter 12

Chapter Summary

Secrets are revealed...things are said...everyone just needs some ice cream and a lil forehead kiss rn...

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Kara didn’t really think about what she was doing.

Would you have?

If the girl you cared about was being dragged into an angry mob like a human sacrifice, would you have taken even a second to think before rushing in to save her?

Of course not.

Kara heard the commotion first. After Lena had left the theater, Kara snuck out of the safety of her sound booth to gather her things and rush home to write her rehearsal report and catch up on the homework she was a week behind on. When Kara was alone like she was just then in the theater, she tended to loosen up on her control of her abilities. It was exhausting to keep such a tight grip on her powers all day. It was like holding your breath, or being in a long staring contest. Or more accurately, it was like when she used to hold the flashlight up for Jeremiah every Thanksgiving as she shimmied into the crawl space of the attic where they kept the Christmas decorations. At first it was no big deal to hold the light up high, over her head, while he rummaged. Then after a few minutes her arm muscles started to ache, worse and worse, until all she wanted to do was let go.

But she couldn’t.

Releasing her grip on her abilities for a moment, she heard a series of ‘thwumps’ and ‘clangs’ coming from the east wall, on the other side of Luthor Hall. A voice cheered viciously at the source of the noise, one heartbeat became two, became ten, became twenty. The entry door of Luthor Hall, which was beginning to squeak at the hinges just slightly, opened halfway, before a woman’s voice gasped quietly.

What a coincidence, a gruff male voice said, cutting through the din of voices Kara tried to sort through as they bounced off her ears. The voices, the clangs, the heartbeats, the jeers, all blended together like a buzzing swarm, and she tried with all her might to focus on the one that made a warning go off in her heart. The little Luthor heiress is here to watch the show!

Lena, she thought.

Lex had done something horrendous, yet again. And suddenly, being around Lena felt like those summer afternoons at the Danvers’ when the heat became insufferable, the air itself becoming thick, suffocating, pressing, until the sky finally caved to the pressure and black clouds appeared as if from nowhere overhead, erupting onto the Earth below with crackling ferocity.

To be near Lena after what had happened was to feel a similar tension. Not just from her, but from
everyone around her. No one relaxed when she was in the room. Muscles and jaws clenched perceptibly, instinctually. And Lena seemed to be shrinking under the pressure of it all, collapsing into herself, waiting for the storm to be over.

But it wasn’t over. It was worse than ever before. Something about this time, about this one instance in which her brother had lashed out at his nemesis, and by extension, the world around him, the students on campus had had enough of the Luthor name, and of the girl attached to it through no fault of her own.

Electricity cracked through the crowd outside the building, realizing that they had found a prize, an outlet for their anger and frustration. The heartbeat of the dark haired girl began to race. The students threw shouts and jeers at her. She said nothing in response. It was like she was giving up.

Kara didn’t think. She rushed down the stairs of the audience, out the emergency exit on the side of the stage, and flew into the storm. She knocked roughly into the boy that had a firm grip on Lena’s arm, sending him tripping forward. His grip loosened. Kara wrapped an arm around Lena’s waist, pulled her up, placed one arm on Lena’s back and scooped Lena’s legs up with the other arm, and shot off before anyone could see what had happened.

Kara had acted without thinking. Now, she had to think. She had to first figure out where she was going. All she had thought was to get **away**. It didn’t seem smart to take Lena back to her apartment. She had to decide where to drop Lena down, and she had to do it quick, considering that it seemed, by the suddenly choking grip Lena had around Kara’s neck, that Lena had realized that she was flying, and did not like it one bit. Rather than continue to circle around uselessly while Lena squeezed the life out of Kara, she decided to drop down on the nearest spot, which was the edge of the baseball field on the far north side of campus. She landed gently, allowed Lena to pry herself off of Kara and stumble a few paces away from her.

Now Kara had to think of the next thing: how to keep Lena from seeing her face, if she hadn’t already.

Kara whipped around, facing away from Lena while she composed herself. Behind Kara’s back, Lena placed her hands on her knees, crouching over the sand mound, gasping desperately. Kara fought the urge to rush over to Lena, to help her to her feet, to rub her back soothingly, to tell her everything was okay. But she couldn’t. Not now. If anything, the best thing for her to do right now was to fly off, to leave Lena there, call Winn and tell him to go her and make sure she made it home safely.

Kara stood there for nine…ten…eleven seconds.

She needed to **go**. She couldn’t stay here. Lena would find out…

*Just go, Kara.*

Twelve…thirteen...fourteen…

Kara distributed her weight from one foot to the other, back and forth, body restless, the voice in her head screaming **go go go**. She clenched her fists, her thigh muscles tensed as she prepared to push herself off the ground and up into the air.

“Kara,” Lena’s voice called behind her, freezing Kara’s body and mind instantly.

Kara’s moved her head slightly, just enough to see in the periphery of her vision that Lena was now standing, facing her, but she did not move her head so much that Lena could see her face.
“I don’t know who that is. I have to go,” she said, forcing her voice to sound lower than normal, as if that could save her now.

Kara realized that she was hovering above the ground. The tension of the moment had caused her feet to rise off the turf without her knowledge. She rose further, prepared to simply leave and hope for the best. That would work, right?

“Kara, stop,” Lena insisted firmly.

Despite herself, Kara felt herself sinking back towards the ground.

“Miss Luthor, I’m not…”

Why did Kara have to keep lying? Why even try anymore? Why didn’t she just give in already?

“Kara I have seen you naked. A lot. I know what you look like. I know what you feel like. Hell, my sheets still smell like the perfume you’re wearing.”

Kara’s lungs suddenly felt too big for her chest. Still, she remained silent, terrified to stay but unable to leave.

“Kara, for God’s sake you are in the same outfit I saw you in ten minutes ago in the theater.”

Kara looked down at her blue sweater and tan pants.

 Damn it.

It felt there were cotton balls trapped in Kara’s throat. The other night when she had told Winn who she really was, Kara was too distressed and exhausted to care about what the fallout might be. And Winn was so, well, Winn, that even if he was freaking out about it, he would never let Kara feel nervous or ashamed about who she really was. That was why Kara trusted him in the first place. And now. Well, it wasn’t that Kara didn’t trust Lena. But there had always been such an element of unpredictability to Lena and to their relationship. Kara had no idea what would happen when she turned around. But she couldn’t just stand there stupidly, hiding her face from Lena. And she couldn’t just fly off, now, either.

Kara felt like she could feel every vein inside her body filling with fire. Her eyes watered. She realized that she was biting her lip so hard that if she were human she would have drawn blood.

Kara turned. Lena was standing on the sand mound. Upon seeing Kara’s face revealed to her, Lena’s chest heaved with a heavy exhale. Her mouth parted slightly. She ran hand through her hair. Her chest heaved again.

“What the fuck,” Lena finally breathed.

“I didn’t,” Kara began, kicking absently at the grass in front of her. “I didn’t really think this through.”

“Clearly,” Lena replied.

Kara squirmed uncomfortably under Lena’s unbroken stare. Would it be terrible of her to just fly off now so she could avoid this whole confrontation part?

“Oh, but seriously, Kara, what the fuck?”

“Well…you were in trouble. And I panicked. And…yeah.”
Lena arched a dubious eyebrow at Kara.

“So, what, you’re expecting me to believe that you had so much adrenaline pumping through you that your fight or flight instinct quite literally kicked into flight?”

“I…well, no.”

Suddenly Kara’s glasses were giving her a headache. She pulled them off and held them in her clenched fist.

“You weren’t ever supposed to know,” Kara whispered.

“What? That you can goddamn fly? Well, I can’t unlearn that now, Kara.”

“I know.”

Kara got the odd notion that maybe this was all a dream. Maybe it didn’t matter what she said or did, because she would just wake up and everything would be fine. She knew that wasn’t true. But knowing that this was all real didn’t make the dream-like feeling go away.

“So…I mean…how…what…” Lena began. Flustered, she plopped down onto the sand mound, crossing her legs in front of her.

The shift made Kara uncomfortable. She didn’t like that she was towering over Lena now as she stood several feet away from her. But Kara also couldn’t make herself sit to put them on even ground again. She was too nervous to move.

“So…” Lena tried again, “you fly. How…I mean, how does that work? How do you fly?”

“I mean, it’s a power I have. I get my powers from…”

“Yeah, no, I get it that there’s some superhero comic stuff going on. I’ll get back to that. But I mean how is your body physically capable of flight without wings or any kind of body structure conducive to flight you’d typically see in flight-capable species?”

Kara blinked, startled by the question.

“I…I don’t know how I do it. I never really thought about it like that. I just…do it.”

Lena let out a quiet ‘hrmph’, her eyes scanning the sand in front of her as if she had cue cards hidden in them to read from.

“Then is that it?” she asked. “Or is there other stuff you can do? Other powers, I mean. Wait, don’t answer that. It’s the strength too, isn’t it?”

“Um, yeah.”

“How strong are you?”

“Stronger than any human could ever hope to be.”

“So you’re not human?”

Kara sighed, not answering. Lena bit the inside of her cheek.

“I’m sorry. I just…holy shit, Kara. I mean, how is this even possible? Well, of course it’s possible.
Superman has been zipping around for years, so of course it stands to reason that there might be other people like him out there somewhere. But you…I mean…you’re normal. You never acted like someone who’s hiding…goddamn…super powers.”

Kara shrugged, still silent. She had been able to answer Lena’s questions at first, but it suddenly felt like she had hit a wall. Kara wanted to speak, she wanted to be able to make even yes or no answers. But she couldn’t. Why was this so hard? She had told Winn almost everything just the other day. She thought that if she ever did tell someone about who she was, that it would get easier to tell anyone thereafter. But if anything, it felt harder than ever before.

Lena stood, moving to close some of the distance between them. Despite herself, Kara flinched, her vulnerability getting the best of her.

“Alright, I’ll stop,” Lena said, voice low and soft. “I can see that I’m making you uncomfortable. I’m sorry. But…Kara…I can’t just pretend this never happened. What am I supposed to do now? How am I supposed to act around you?”

Kara’s eyes stung as she forced them to stay open, to keep from blinking, so that tears wouldn’t come trickling out onto her cheeks. She took a ragged breath, fighting to gain control over her emotions, and clearly losing.

“Hey, hey…” Lena soothed, wiping away a tear on Kara’s cheek with her thumb. “It’s okay. Alright? You’re okay.”

“You shouldn’t be calming me down right now,” Kara said, chest shuddering as she spoke. “You’re the…you’re the one I just had to save from an angry mob.”

“Yeah, well, then, I guess we’re both having a bad day, huh?”

Kara choked out a laugh.

“God, no wonder you feel a million miles away all the time,” Lena whispered, pulling her hand away from where it had been placed against Kara’s cheek, leaving Kara’s face feeling cold and over-exposed to the crisp night air. “You have super powers, and you got yourself tangled in the web of a girl whose family has a personal vendetta against someone for being just like you.”

“He and I are more alike than you think,” Kara said, voice flat. “He’s my cousin.”

“Jesus,” Lena said, stepping away from Kara and turning to face away from her. “Kara why did you even come near me? Didn’t you realize how dangerous I could be to you?”

“Lena, come on,” Kara said, taking a step towards the girl who now had her back to her. “You’re not some scary thing whose web I’m caught in. I got involved with you because I wanted to.”

Kara felt a tightening in her throat and her stomach. She was suddenly becoming overwhelmed by the need to tell Lena something that was real and true that needed to be said.

“I wanted…you, Lena. And that scared the hell out of me. Not because of your stupid brother or my stupid cousin or any of that other crap. I told myself that that was why I was scared, but it’s not true. I feel something towards you I’ve never felt before. Lena, I…”

“Stop,” Lena interrupted, turning to face Kara, her eyes glistening. “Look, I don’t want to hear that. Not right now. You and I…there’s a lot of bullshit standing between us. A lot more than I thought there was just a couple of hours ago. So I can’t just pretend none of that exists just because you’re giving me that look that makes me feel like my heart is going to burst if I don’t fucking kiss you.”
Kara swallowed hard, chest swelling painfully. Lena hid her eyes behind the palm of her right hand, composing herself.

“There’s problems we have to figure out,” she continued. “Stuff we have to talk through. Most importantly, we need to start being fucking honest with each other.”

Kara sighed.

“You’re right,” she replied softly. “Can we just…can we do that later? I’m kind of…”

“Drained? Yeah. I know what you mean.” Lena looked around, as if she just finally realized where she was. “Fly me home, will you?”

The smallest hint of a smile formed on her lips. Lena’s request seemed like enough to let Kara know that she hadn’t totally scared her off.

“Are you gonna choke hold me again?” Kara asked.

“I was more than a little startled, Kara. I’ll just…close my eyes this time or something.”

Kara took a step towards Lena.

“Not a big fan of heights, huh?”

“No, not really.”

“It’s okay. Winn nearly broke my eardrum with the shriek he made when I first carried him around like that.”

Lena put her hands on her hips indignantly.

“Wait, Winn knows? Goddamn, that little shit knows everything.”

Kara froze, suddenly, stupidly, remembering a very important detail to her troubles with Lena.

“Yeah,” Kara said blankly, opening her arms and gesturing for Lena to let herself be picked up. “Hopefully he’s the only one.”

On the quick flight back to Lena’s apartment building, Kara couldn’t help but feel that they each held on to the other with an unspoken desperation, a sudden genuineness to their touch that was entirely unfamiliar. She dropped Lena off softly at the back of the building, so Kara wouldn’t be seen dropping down in the middle of the walkway. Each girl looked at the other as if there was something more that needed to be said before they parted ways, but in the end, Lena turned silently to walk into her building, and Kara took off to track Maggie down, hoping to Rao that Maggie hadn’t heard Kara reveal that she was Superman’s equally abled cousin.

Besides, Maggie had a deadline to meet.

Luckily, she didn’t have to look long. On a hunch, she zipped over to Alex’s apartment, and taking a quick look inside from her vantage point hovering outside her apartment building, she could definitely see that both Maggie and Alex were inside the apartment. The only downside to this discovery was that Kara accidentally saw her sister straddling Maggie, half naked.

“Oh, gross,” Kara said to herself, gagging, but despite her mortification, she resolved to come into the building to talk to them, anyway.
She just made sure to go the front door and knock. She also made sure to turn partly away from the
door just in case either of them didn’t cover up completely before Alex, after a minute of swearing
and muttering to herself, came to open the door.

“Kara!” Alex said breathlessly, her jeans still unzipped and her shirt on inside out. “What are you
doing here?”

Kara pursed her lips, eyes darting down to her sister’s midsection and back up as a silent
suggestion. Alex realized what she was trying to convey, and quickly zipped up her jeans, cheeks
redden slightly, though her typical self-satisfied smirk remained.

“I have to talk to Maggie,” Kara replied, that anger that had been simmering in her stomach since
the weekend and her discovery of who Maggie was now bubbling over inside of her.

Maggie looked startled to see Kara, but not nearly as startled as Kara would hope her to be, as they
both had to know that Kara was here to confront her about her double life. (And, of course, to also
make sure the details of her own double life hadn’t been revealed. But that was beside the point.)

“What’s up, Kara?” Maggie asked, sitting on Alex’s couch, more comfortable than Kara thought
she had the right to be. However, there was a hint of worry in her eyes. Maybe more towards Kara
than towards her own self.

“You’ve been here all night then?” Kara asked.

“Yeah,” Maggie said carefully, her tone like she was talking Kara down from the edge of a cliff.

“Haven’t been anywhere near campus in the last, oh, half hour or so?” Kara pressed on, spurned, if
anything, by Maggie’s demeanor.

“Kara, she’s been here,” Alex said, standing like a human shield in front of Maggie.

“Good!” Kara said, moving to where Maggie’s bag sat on Alex’s kitchen counter.

Moving quickly, Kara popped open Maggie’s bag, pulled out the receiver unit, threw it to the
ground, and crushed it into a thousand pieces with one stomp of her foot.

“Kara!” Alex shrieked, “What the hell?”

Maggie, on the other hand, remained still, face expressionless.

Cheeks red from the adrenaline that had burst through her for a brief second, Kara looked Maggie
dead on, ignoring her sister entirely for the moment.

“Did you tell her?” Kara asked.

“Kara, you don’t just go around breaking people’s stuff because you’re mad that someone is
keeping tabs on your girlfriend!”

Kara froze, and turned to look at the speaker, Alex.

“W…what?” Kara asked stunned.

“To answer your question,” Maggie interjected, moving quickly now to be Alex’s shield from
Kara. “Yeah. I told her. About the spying thing, though, not about the you and Lena thing.”

“I figured that one on my own,” Alex spat, popping over Maggie’s left shoulder to pipe in to the
conversation. “Once again, you never tell me anything.”

“You literally forbid me from being around Lena, Alex!” Kara retorted. “Why would I tell you we’re…well, we’re not dating. Everyone needs to quit assuming we are.”

“Well it’s easier for me to say ‘dating’ than to say that you’re having casual sex with a freaking Luthor.”

“Well you’re dating a goddamn government spy, Alex! You don’t think that’s a little concerning?”

Alex moved away from her position behind Maggie, shrugging Maggie off when she silently tried to cajole her into calming down.

“Look, I was shocked when she told me. And Maggie and I…we have to work on things in our relationship now. But that’s between her and me.”

“It’s not just between you and Maggie, Alex! There are other people involved in this because of Maggie. Lena is, I am…”

“Well, un-involve yourself, Kara. Lena is connected to a dangerous criminal. And Maggie is just doing her job.”

Kara scoffed, in complete disbelief that her sister had so readily accepted who Maggie really was. Kara’s mind and body went cold, staring the two of them down like they were on the opposite side of forming battle lines.

“Alex, did you ever think about what could go wrong if someone from the government was listening in on someone I’m spending a lot of time with?”

Kara’s eyes widened, silently urging Alex to fill in the blanks.

Alex looked at Kara, then down at the broken receiver, then back at Kara.

“Maggie, we need a minute,” Alex said softly to her girlfriend.

Maggie, who was clearly uncomfortable at being in the middle of a fight between her girlfriend and her girlfriend’s sister, wasted no time excusing herself out to the hallway of the apartment building.

“What did you do?” Alex hissed.

“Alex, it was out of my control, I…”

“Oh my God, Kara, please tell me that Lena fucking Luthor doesn’t know who you really are.”

“It…there were…it was an emergency situation.”

“Kara!” Alex yelled out, “What the fuck is wrong with you?”

Alex began pacing back and forth, hands grasping at the roots of her hair in distress.

“Oh my God, this is so bad…” she whispered, more to herself than to Kara.

“Alex, it’s not…”

“This is why I told you to stay away from her! God damn it, Kara! Are you trying to get yourself killed?”


“Alex, stop. I trust her, okay?”

“Well then you’re a fucking idiot!” Alex spat, moving towards her liquor cabinet to pour herself a very large serving of room temperature Jack Daniels into an empty coffee mug that had the words ‘Earth’s Greatest Sister’ written out in faded, chipped paint in the fourteen year old version of Kara’s handwriting.

“Lena is not her brother. She’s nothing like what you think or expect her to be. She’s…she’s smart. She’s a fucking genius, even, but in such a quiet way that you wouldn’t even know it unless she wanted you to know. And she’s funny, in this biting, unexpected way. And she…she’s kind and she’s caring and she has this huge heart and I just…I need you to believe me when I tell you that you’re wrong about her. I didn’t plan on ever telling her who I am. It was an accident. But now that she knows…I’m not scared, Alex. I know I can trust her because I know she cares about me too much to ever reveal my secret to anyone. But Maggie…it doesn’t matter who she is or how you feel about her. She has a job to do. She has orders. And tonight, because of her little spying game, she was darn close to finding out who I am. And can you say for sure that she has the freedom to keep that secret away from whoever it is she works for?”

Alex bit her lip, that look of panic Kara was so familiar with written all over her face. That panic that fell over Alex any time her baby sister was in danger, even if it was danger only Alex perceived. Her eyes flickered towards the hallway. She took a large gulp of her drink, and winced, eyes shining with tears.

“I can’t know that you’re safe with her, Kara. I can’t just trust you on your word. Or on hers. But if you can get Lena to tell you, or Maggie, where Lex is, then…”

“What?” Kara said, taking a step back from Alex.

“Kara, think about it. You let out this huge secret to someone who is directly connected to someone who could and would hurt you if they found that secret out. I can’t just trust that it will work out fine. And you can’t be naïve enough to think that, either. But you can’t take it back. The damage is already fucking done. So, the only way that I’m going to feel okay with this is if Lena proves that she can be trusted. And the only way she can prove that is to help Maggie put Lex in jail.”

Kara stood, mouth agape, staring in disbelief at her sister.

“She doesn’t owe you anything, Alex. She doesn’t owe anyone anything. You can’t ask her to put herself in that kind of a situation. You can’t ask me to ask her to do something like that. That’s not fair.”

“Why not?” Alex insisted. “Don’t you see that it would fix everything? We could get him locked up, you and Clark would be safe, and I would be more willing to tolerate your little tryst with Lena if I knew she was at least on our side. Come on, Kara.”

Kara shook her head, blinking back tears that came with renewed vigor to her eyes.

“I have to go,” Kara said, voice breaking.

“Kara,” Alex called after her. “I’m just trying to do what’s best for you. I love you, and I want to keep you safe.”

Kara gripped the door handle as tightly as she dared.

“When are you going to realize that that’s not what I need from you? When are you…gonna realize
that you’re the reason we’ve been driven so far apart from one another?”

Alex didn’t reply. Kara opened the door and let herself out. Maggie was standing at the end of the hallway, next to the elevator, fingers tapping nervously against her sides. She jumped when she saw Kara heading out of the apartment and towards her.

Kara tapped at the ‘down’ button on the elevator, not looking Maggie in the eye as she opened her mouth to speak.

“Lena was targeted by a group of angry students tonight,” Kara said quietly. “She could have been seriously hurt. And you weren’t there. So next time you try and tell me you’re looking out for Lena’s safety, don’t be surprised when I tell you to go fuck yourself.”

Kara stepped into the elevator and kept her eyes locked on the ground as the doors shut in Maggie’s shocked face.

Chapter End Notes

KARA SAID A SWEAR!!
This story is so angsty anymore that i felt like i had to add that as a tag. i need to make the next chap a little more fun, goddamn.
(PS can someone teach me how to tag stories properly bc i clearly dont know what i’m doing)
I can't imagine there being more than like...4 or 5 chapters left to write to wrap up this story...this was kind of pretty close to the peak of the plot line...
I want you guys to know, in case i don't say it enough, that seeing your comments and whatnot is literally the highlight of my day sometimes. I'll like, hoard unopened Ao3 emails just so i can tell myself "if you get through work today you can go home and read those unread comments it'll be GREAT". So yeah, you guys are awesome.
Updates are Thursdays, see you soon. :D (can't even put in a "coming up" bc idk what i'm gonna do with them next...)
Chapter 13

Chapter Summary

Kara and Lena are being cliche idiots, and various other complications are thrown into the mix...(because there wasn't enough already, I guess)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Kara wasn’t asleep when her phone went off. Not even close to it. When she saw the name of the person calling lit up on her screen, her chest tightened instantly, panicked that something else had gone wrong.

“Lena, hi,” Kara whispered into the phone, as if speaking too loud would scare Lena into hanging up.

“Hi.”

“What, um. Is everything okay?”

Lena breathed quietly into the phone for a few seconds.

“I don’t…” she finally said. “I don’t know where we stand with one another right now. And that’s fine, that’s not why I’m calling. It’s just…” Another deep breath into the receiver. “I’m scared, Kara.”

Kara’s fought to swallow past the sudden dryness in her throat.

“What do you need?”

“I need someone to just…be here with me.”

“I…I thought I asked Winn to…”

“I told him to go home. Kara. I know this isn’t really fair of me to ask. In fact I have no right to even think to ask it…but you’re the only person that can make me feel safe right now.”

*  

Kara didn’t say anything in reply. Lena thought that maybe Kara hadn’t heard her. Or maybe she had hung up. But she checked her screen to see that the call was still active. But Kara was just… silent. Lena bit the inside of her cheek, realizing that she had probably overstepped her boundaries. Kara had been so panicked when Lena had discovered her secret. Of course she wasn’t ready to see her yet, to come running the second that Lena called just because Lena couldn’t make the terror that had settled into her brain like storm clouds go away. How stupid of Lena for even calling her in the first place…

A knock at her door made her jump out of her seat on the couch. Shaking, Lena moved slowly to her door to look through the spy hole. When she saw who it was, she instantly opened the door.
“Hi,” Kara said as she stood in Lena’s doorway, fidgeting with those glasses that Lena now realized she probably didn’t even need.

Kara was wearing pink sweatpants and a sheer white tank top. Her eyes were marked with exhaustion and worry, her hair was frizzy and disheveled, likely because she had been in bed already when Lena called. She had fuzzy blue slippers on.

How could something so powerful be contained in something so soft and innocent?

Couldn’t Lena just forget the bullshit swirling around them long enough to drag Kara into her bedroom, throw the comforter over both of them, and sleep curled up next to her for the next few days?

“Hi,” Lena replied, swallowing the yearning she felt like it was a large pill. “I feel kind of stupid for…”

“Don’t,” Kara said, stepping into Lena’s apartment and shutting the door behind her. “I should have offered to stick around to make sure no one else came after you. I shouldn’t have taken off like that earlier…”

“Don’t apologize for that.”

The two girls stood in silence for a moment. Lena wondered absently how much wine was left in her fridge.

“So, um,” Kara piped up, “you don’t have to worry about anything happening to you tonight, okay? I’ll, ah…I’ll keep you safe.”

Lena couldn’t try to pretend that her chest swelled and her knees threatened to buckle beneath her at the way Kara’s oath of protection rolled off her tongue so sweetly.

“Thank you, Kara. I don’t mean to put you out like this, and I know you probably don’t want to have to show your powers to anyone. I think I might fly home for a few days, until all of this has died down.”

Kara grimaced.

“Is that what you really want?” she asked.

No. I want to punch every single asshole on this campus in their stupid self-righteous faces.

“I mean. It seems like the most logical course of action.”

“I dunno. If it were me, I wouldn’t want to give those jerks the satisfaction of thinking that they won somehow.”

Lena crossed her arms in front of her.

“I could hire a security detail.”

Kara scoffed.

“You mean have a bunch of lunks following you around all day?”

Lena shrugged.
“It’s either that or drop out.”

“Don’t say that,” Kara insisted fervently, stepping in closer to Lena. “Don’t let a couple of ignorant assholes ruin your plans for the future. You have just as much of a right to be here and to feel safe here as anyone else. I don’t think you need the security detail. This school isn’t run by complete idiots, so I doubt anyone will let what happened tonight happen again. If you need to take a personal day or two, do it.”

“Kara, I hear you. But just sitting around here alone…waiting for something else to happen to me just because of stupid fucking Lex. Doesn’t sound very helpful to my state of mind, ya know?”

Kara reached out and grasped Lena’s hand suddenly, fiercely.

“I’m here for you. Okay? And I will always protect you. I promise.”

Lena felt so damn far away from Kara. She felt like Kara continuing to care for her, despite everything, was reckless and foolish of her. She felt like she was a fire that Kara was walking right into, and she nearly choked on the screams held back in her throat telling Kara to stay away from her. But more than anything, selfishly, she was so damn glad that Kara was here. She felt so suddenly content, so safe, so cared for, that she couldn’t bring herself to do what she thought was probably the right thing and push Kara away.

“Thank you,” Lena replied, squeezing Kara’s hand.

“So, um, I’m just gonna crash on the couch, okay? Don’t worry, though, I’ll know if anything goes wrong.”

“Oh, Kara it’s such an uncomfortable couch to sleep on. You can just stay in my room.”

“Nope,” Kara interrupted, laughing nervously. “I, um, I don’t think I can trust myself. And I’m trying really hard not to just let us slip into impulsive old habits right now, you know?”

“Yeah, I know,” Lena said, knowing full well that Kara was right, and that she probably couldn’t trust herself to not instantly want to be close to Kara again before they had figured things out. “Would you at least sleep in my room and I’ll sleep on the couch?”

“Psh, come on. What kind of protector would I be if I made my charge sleep on the couch? Now go get some rest. Okay?”

Lena sighed. She knew better than to argue with Kara right now. She wanted to find something else to say. Something that could convey her gratitude, her regret, her admiration, and her frustration all in one eloquent sentence. But the proper words didn’t exist. So, feeling disappointed in herself more than anything else, Lena silently let herself into her bedroom, shut the door, and settled in once more to attempt to sleep.

Lena could almost feel Kara’s presence in the next room. The wall between them felt too thin and too intrusive all at once. Kara felt too close and yet too far away. As Lena felt her eyelids growing heavy, knowing that Kara was right there on her couch made her stomach twist into knots thinking of how much she wanted to just step through her door and go to Kara, yet it also allowed her to drift off into a peaceful sleep, feeling safer than she had ever felt in her life.

*  

Stop it, Kara, she scolded herself silently. Stop thinking about how easy it would be to just crawl into bed next to her. This isn’t what you’re here for. And it’s not what either of us are ready for yet.
“Alright, guys, listen up, because we have got a lot of ground to cover.”

Kara’s fellow Intro to Journalism students were huddled around a lunch table stuffed into the corner of the small computer lab. Only the upper classmen journalism majors were allowed access to the computers. They were the only Macs in a sea of crappy old Dell desktops, and were guarded by the journalism and film students, who shared this particular lab, more closely than Fort Rozz.

Their instructor, professor Vasquez, was leaning against her desk in the upper left corner of the lab, fingers tightly gripping the metal.

“So,” she continued, “we all know about what happened the other night at Luthor Hall, right?”

Kara’s face fell into a scowl, scanning the room to determine if anyone in the room happened to sympathize with the jerks who put Lena in danger. “Good. So we’ve already published a few preliminary articles online, basic story coverage and what now, but we need to really get our stories together for print next week. I want all of you working to get witness interviews, photos, videos, anything you can get your hands on. But not just about the incident. Believe it or not, there is a bigger story brewing than the Luthor heiress being roughed up a little.”

If ever Kara could laser eye someone and not feel remorse over it, it would be today. Unaware of the death glare being shot at her from Kara, Vasquez moved from in front of her desk to behind it, waking her computer and up pulling an image to display on the projector.

When Kara saw the image, she very nearly threw up.

It was nighttime when the incident with Lena and the crowd happened, meaning that it was dark enough to conceal anything or anyone who was at a distance. And the object in the top left corner of the photo was moving too fast, barely more than a blur in the photo. But it was still, undoubtedly, was a picture of someone, with long curls, pulling Lena away from the crowd, and flying off with her.

“What’s the story?” one of the senior students at a computer in the corner asked. “Superman does Lex’s little sister a favor despite family drama?”

“Does that look like Superman to you?” Vasquez snapped, zooming in to the picture from the touch screen of her computer. “No. That is a girl. Or…just…someone with really good hair. But it’s not Superman.”

“So who is it?” the girl next to her, a blonde, easily distracted communications major, asked.

“That’s the question, isn’t it, Tina?” Vasquez replied, trying to mask her irritation. “Look, regardless, we’ve got the scoop on this. So I want everyone working to figure out just who this is. I want this puzzle solved no later than Thursday so the story can be run.”
Kara, who had been slowly deflating as a room full of journalists stared at the picture of her while trying to figure out who it was, finally decided to speak up.

“Is it so important that we figure out who is in the picture?” Kara struggled. “I mean…It’s just a…good Samaritan, helping out an innocent victim. So what if they’re…flying? Can’t we just…leave whoever that is alone and focus on the fact that a bunch of students on this campus turned on one of their own classmates because of an unfair bias against her that she has no control over?”

Vasquez narrowed her eyes at Kara.

“It’s…Karen, right?”

“Um, Kara.”

“Right. Okay. Well, listen, Kara, we can’t just leave it alone. Okay? No one else has this image. Do you know what a story like this would do for a small university paper, huh? We could be namedropped on Buzzfeed. Buzzfeed, Kara.”

Kara scrunched her nose up at her response.

“But I just…I don’t think it’s right for us to…”

“Well, listen, kitten, journalism isn’t about right and wrong, okay? It’s about telling the story. So get to work.”

Kara swallowed hard, hoping to Rao that the students around her were as incompetent as they looked.

*

“Danvers? Danvers!”

Kara’s head snapped up from where it had been resting against her master script. A slight puddle of drool had formed over the page of set design notes, causing the ink on the page to smear and bleed together.

Great.

James was sitting next to her, his face a mixture of concern and amusement. She remembered that they had been discussing building plans before she had nodded off.

“Yes, Dr. Carr?” Kara replied, trying her best to sound dutiful.

She could hear his footsteps thundering down the audience steps as he moved towards her.

“Dare I even ask why you neglected to send out a rehearsal report yesterday?” he grumbled as he plopped down at his makeshift behind them, his glasses lowered to the tip of his nose as he glared down at her.

“Well, you know, we were both there for the rehearsal, so we know what happened. And I was just filling James in on the rehearsal notes, anyway, so really, I don’t think I need to…”
Snapper cleared his throat loudly, and Kara fell silent.

“One of the few things I expect from you, as my stage manager, is send out a rehearsal report after each rehearsal. Just send a quick email with the recap to the necessary parties. Is that really so hard for you to handle, kid?”

Kara bit her tongue.

“No, Dr. Carr. It’s not. I’m sorry.”

“Good. Anyhow, there’s one other thing I need to talk to you about. James, you should hear this, too.”

Snapper’s voice was suddenly quieter, but still loud enough to be heard over the few aisles of seats between Dr. Carr and Kara and James. In front of the trio, the sopranos sang their opening part in “No Place Like London” in disharmonious tones that fit the tone of the musical, but was wrong nonetheless. Their dissonant shrills pierced Kara’s ears painfully, and she fought to focus on her vexing director.

“I think we need to recast Mrs. Lovett.”

Kara blinked.

“You mean take Lena off the role?” James asked, seemingly as dumbfounded as Kara was.

“Ya,” Snapper said, as if it were obvious.

Kara pictured Lena as she was the last time she popped in to her dorm room to grab a text book and check in on her charge.

This was the working situation while Lena took a few days for herself. At night, Kara stayed in Lena’s dorm and kept her safe. During the day, Lena hung out in Kara’s dorm room, which was likely much less safe than her apartment, but Lena insisted that she felt safer being alone here than in her own place.

Lena was reading one of Kara’s ‘theoretical physics’ books thoughtfully as Kara stepped through the doorway.

“What are all these scribbles?” she had asked, gesturing to Kara’s notes she had left in the margins in Kryptonian.

“Oh. They’re…they’re um…”

Lena had tilted her head at Kara, eyes full of innocent curiosity.

“Where I’m from…we call everything by different names than you do here. So I’ve been trying to translate, I guess. To find the similarities and differences between our knowledge of the universe and yours. Some of that is more, well, corrections to your science, than translations.”

Lena’s eyes widened, her mouth parted slightly.

“It…it’s reckless of me to even be writing in my native language. I should just…”

Kara reached to grab the book from Lena’s hands. Lena tugged it away from her before she could.

“This isn’t reckless, Kara, it’s…inspiring. These symbols they’re…they’re beautiful. Could you…”
teach me what all of this means, sometime? At least, could you tell me what corrections you’ve made?”

Kara couldn’t help but smile.

“Sure.”

“Why would you want to do that?” Kara now asked Snapper, minding her grip on the pen in her hand.

“Well, first of all, because this is the second rehearsal she’s missed this week. Which is fine for a minor character, but not for a lead.”

“She was attacked on campus a few days ago…”

“Yeah, well, that’s the other thing. Look, guys. It just…it doesn’t look good for me or the department to have the name ‘Luthor’ plastered onto one of our productions. It’s bad enough that their name is on the damn building already.”

So that’s why he never gives her the casting she deserves, Kara thought.

“Come on, Carr,” James replied before Kara think of a retort. “She works hard. She’s a good kid. She’s just having a rough week. She shouldn’t be punished for things out of her control.”

Kara wanted to hug James.

“Look. I just don’t think she’s doing the department any good,” Carr persisted stubbornly.

“Maybe it’s you who’s not doing the department any good,” Kara mumbled to herself.

But when Dr. Carr’s head snapped towards her, she realized that perhaps he had heard her.

“You know what, Danvers? I don’t need you feedback, anyhow. I don’t expect anything close to a useful opinion from a simple little beginner stage manager…”

“Oh, I’m sorry!” Kara said, her seething anger now bubbling over out of her control, “I didn’t realize that managing your train wreck of a show was so simple! I of course have nothing but time to get all of the menial crap that you expect from me done the second you ask for it! It’s no problem at all for someone as silly and inexperienced as me! It’s not like I have a life of my own, or, I don’t know, class work to do. But this is just college, right, Snapper? I’m not here to get an education or anything! No! I’m here to keep your barely functioning theater program afloat since your last stage manager ditched you, which she probably did because you’re insufferable to work for! And you have the audacity to act like Lena, the most talented and hard working person in your company, by the way, is the problem with your theater program, and not the miserable, dried up old jerk running it? Really?”

The entire theater went silent. The chatter of the ensemble that sat in their usual chairs on stage for vocal rehearsal went silent. J’onn sat rigid and motionless at the piano. James’ eyes widened. Snapper’s face contorted into a snarl. Winn, who was up in the sound booth, jumped up and down in excitement in response to her outburst, his revelry muted.

“Let’s take five, company,” Snapper growled, and stormed out of the theater.
Kara, now realizing what she had done, buried her head in James’ chest. He wrapped a consoling arm around her, patting her back. She felt comforted not only by his strong grip, but by the fact that he was one person in her life that wasn’t at all involved in the crap storm that was her life.

When Snapper hadn’t come back fifteen minutes later, everyone just assumed that they might as well go home. Kara didn’t even care. Her own life was too much of a mess for her to care. She still hadn’t talked to Maggie or Alex since their blow up. The journalism kids were trying their best to unknowingly expose her secret identity. Lena was hanging out in Kara’s dorm during the day, and asking Kara to keep watch of her at night. All while the silent conflict over the fact that Kara and Lena were related to bitter rivals, like some sort of tragic play, loomed over them. And above everything else, that deep heat in her stomach whenever Lena was around her, that static tension when they got too close to one another, that impossible need, all of that was still there between Lena and Kara. And it was slowly driving Kara insane.

While she was brooding silently and alone in the theater, putting off going back to her dorm, where Lena probably still was, she heard someone clear their throat above her, pulling her out of her thoughts. J’onn was standing there, looking down at her sympathetically.

“Mind if I sit?” he asked.

“Um. Sure,” she said, turning to face more towards him as he sat down thoughtfully.

“So,” he said. “There’s something I feel I need to confess.”

Kara had no idea where J’onn was headed with this, but considering how her week was going, she could guess she wasn’t going to like whatever came next.

“Okay,” she said tentatively.

“I’m not quite sure how to begin. I want to take the course of action that is the least startling to you. You seem like such a jumpy little thing sometimes. But I’m not sure which course that is.”

Kara looked at J’onn with a blank expression.

“I…I don’t really know how to help you out with that,” she said.

J’onn wrung his hands together in his lap.

“Right. Right. Of course you don’t. So…well, here goes. Kara, I know you’re not from Earth.”

Kara definitely jumped at this statement, but other than that, she sat relatively still, not much bothered after the initial shock. A couple of days ago, Kara would have started in on her “psh” and “pfft” routine at J’onn, stumbling around as she tried her best to deny it. Now? She couldn’t bring herself to lie.

“How?” she asked.

“Well, that was the other thing. I, ah. I’m not from this planet, either.”

Kara laughed out loud. She didn’t mean to, it just slipped out. It was just so silly to think about.

“What? That’s not…you’re not…”

J’onn frowned, not very amused by her disbelief.

“I’ll prove it, alright? Just…don’t freak out.”
Kara nodded silently, dumbfounded.

J‘onn looked around the theater, making sure they were truly alone. In a flash, J’onn’s body had morphed, actually *morphed*, into what she could only assume was his true form, which was that of a tall, regal looking, green *being*, at least a foot taller than his human form. Kara covered her mouth to keep a squeal from escaping. As fast as he had changed, he changed back.

“Okay,” Kara breathed, eyes still bulging. “So…not form Earth. Where…”

“Mars,” he supplied.

“No shit,” Kara replied dreamily, not even bristling at the fact that she let a curse word slip out. She shook her head, pulling herself out of her musings at all the possibilities from life on Mars. “Okay, so I didn’t know that about you, obviously. So how did you know about me?”

J‘onn tapped on his left temple with his pointer finger.

“My people are telepaths. Funnily enough, I found out about you because I *couldn’t* read your mind. You were the only person I ever met on Earth in which that was true. That was my biggest clue. Well…that, and the fact that since the beginning of the week, Winn’s thoughts have been practically a skipping record of *‘Kara’s an alien. Kara’s an alien. Oh my god, I can’t believe Kara’s an alien.’* So. That helped too.”

Kara couldn’t help but laugh again. She couldn’t help feeling nothing but safe and reassured in the sudden knowledge that *holy crap* she wasn’t the only one. Then she laughed again, hard, for a totally different reason.

“What’s so amusing?” J’onn asked, smiling.

“It’s nothing. It’s just, I just remembered that I had the hardest time figuring out what people meant when they made the ‘skipping record’ metaphor when I first came to Earth. It made no sense to me. Why make that reference if no one uses records anymore?”

Now it was J’onn who laughed.

“I have been on Earth much longer than you have, then.”

There was a brief, comfortable silence between them, filled with a sudden understanding of one another.

“I might get found out,” Kara said suddenly, realizing that she finally had someone besides Kal to go to for alien related problems.

“The whole rescuing of Lena thing?” J’onn asked, quiet and calm, looking forward towards the stage.

“How did you…” Kara sighed. “Winn again?”

J’onn shrugged.

“Common sense, too.”

Kara leaned back in her seat resignedly.

“I don’t know what to do. The school paper has a freaking picture of me. It’s not clear…but still…”
“You want to know what I think?” J’onn asked, now turning so their gazes met.

“Yes, please.”

J’onn clasped his hands together in his lap.

“People aren’t that good at seeing what’s right in front of them. Not on this planet, anyway. You’re pretty good at being nondescript, flying under radar, as it were, if you can excuse the pun.”

Kara chuckled.

“I cannot excuse that, no.”

J’onn laughed back.

“Anyhow, I don’t think you have anything to worry about. And if you are still worried about it… keep in mind that Earth technology is still surprisingly fragile and easily manipulated. I’m sure you could find a way out of possible exposure, if you really needed to.”

Kara nodded, already feeling some of the pressure lifting off her shoulders and mind as a result of J’onn’s confident tone.

“Can I ask you something?” she said.

“Ask as much as you need to. It’s the least that I owe you, after accidentally being clued in to your secret.”

Kara bit the inside of her cheek.

“Why did you get into musical theater? Of all the things you could do on this planet, why this?”

J’onn shrugged, looking up at the ceiling as if his life’s history was unfolded in pictographs upon it.

“It was overwhelming, when I first arrived here, to hear all those voices, all those secrets, and hopes, and fears, swirling around me. Music drowned it out. Not only by being louder than the thoughts. But by teaching music and dance, I could channel all those thoughts, let my mind relax amongst a company whose thoughts all channeled on a common task. And at shows themselves, it’s amazing how the humming thoughts of multitudes all fade out into near silence when a show begins, when they get lost in the music and the story. I feel more connected to people in those moments than I would if I listened in on their minds their whole lives.”

Kara felt a surge of emotion suddenly, as she blinked back tears at the glimpse J’onn had given her of the depth of his heart.

“There will always be a spot for you in my theater company, if you would want it,” J’onn continued. “You’re talented. And it would be good to be around someone who understands what it’s like to be from another world.”

Kara nodded in silent appreciation for his offer.

“Thank you, J’onn. Just promise that your theater isn’t as dysfunctional as this one.”

J’onn scoffed.

“No. This place is a train wreck, truly. I regret ever meet that man you all call Snapper.”
Kara rolled her eyes.

“Same.”

They sat quietly awhile longer, secure in each other’s company. All the while, a plan was forming in Kara’s mind, a way to erase her struggles with the school paper, and to maybe help bridge the divide between her and Lena, so that maybe, sometime soon, it would feel right to hold her again.

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Lena was half asleep on Kara’s bed. She had tried for a while to focus on turning her latest experiment in the lab into a somewhat coherent report. But what was the point, if she didn’t know if she even wanted to keep coming to class anymore? She was smart enough without these people, their judgement and apathy, and their meaningless, expensive degrees.

A knock on the door shocked Lena awake. She had felt almost totally secure in Kara’s small, messy dorm room, until this second. Kara obviously wouldn’t knock on her own door. Who could be here? And were they here for Kara, or did someone figure out where Lena had been holed up for the past couple days while she licked her proverbial wounds?

Lena stayed still, not moving. Maybe whoever it was would just…think no one was here, and go away.

“Kara?” a female voice called from the other side of the door.

Lena thought she could recognize the voice, but couldn’t quite place it. Still, she remained sitting silently on Kara’s bed.

“Kara, are you seriously just gonna ignore me? I know you’re here, I can hear the music you’re playing.”

Well someone was certainly pushy. Lena still didn’t want to indicate that anyone was inside the dorm room, but, mostly out of curiosity, she tiptoed to the door and peered through the spy hole.

Kara’s sister Alex was on the other side of the door.

Lena pondered whether she should open the door now or not. She got the feeling Alex didn’t like her very much, and didn’t really know if she was ready to try and explain to this girl why she was hanging out in her little sister’s room by herself.

“Fine,” Alex grumbled, pulling something out of her pocket and fiddling with the door handle. “We’ll just do this the hard way, Kara.”

*What is she…Lena asked herself as she watched Alex through the spy hole. Is she seriously trying to pick the lock right now?*

Lena’s question was almost certainly answered when the door suddenly popped open, slamming Lena in the face.

“Ow! Son of a bitch!” she hollered out.

Kara’s sister’s face popped into view as she took a step into the room to see who was yelling and
“Lena?” Alex asked. “What the hell are you doing here?”

Chapter End Notes

I could have maybe just finished that scene instead of leaving a random unnecessary cliffhanger if i had had any time to write this week. I'm literally trying to rush to post this before my boss calls me to come back into work *growls*. Honestly I hate that i don't have the proper time to dedicate to this story right now. I'd say that one day when it's done I'll come back and edit it to look more like how it looks in my mind. But I know i wont, and like, thats not doing you guys any good right now so eh. Anyway, I at least had fun making Kara yell at Snapper. (I now realize the fact that it seems almost silly that I made him a director when i was gonna end up making a journalism mini storyline in here anyway...can't plan everything out perfectly i guess. At least we got to see Vasquez right?)

I dunno what else to chat about in here. I'm tired. OH! There was like an extra amount of comments last week and they were all great and made my weekend a lot better (while i was helping my sister move into a house bc im just a nice sister i guess) so THANKS GANG LOVE YOU.

See you next Thursday, when Alex maybe MAYBE, FINALLY, STOPS BEING A DICK. WHAT A PLOT TWIST RIGHT???? :D <333

PS HAPPY PRIDE MONTH!!! :D
Chapter 14

Chapter Summary

Alex gets Lena drunk. Because of course she does...

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Wait, why am I even asking you what you're doing here?” Alex asked, nearly shoving past Lena as she stepped into Kara’s dorm room. “Of course you’re here. You’re nailing my little sister. Why wouldn’t you be here?”

Come on, Alex, she thought to herself. You came here to make nice. Just because Lena is here instead of Kara, doesn’t mean you get to be a jerk.

“Where is Kara?” she asked before Lena could answer her first question.

Lena cleared her throat, closing the door behind the two of them. She seemed to almost bounce on the tips of her toes as she moved around Alex. Alex liked to think it was because she made Lena nervous, and she puffed up her chest smugly.

Damn right I make you nervous.

Retreating from the door, Lena pressed herself against the desk on the far wall of the very small, very cramped, very dirty dorm room. It looked oddly natural for Lena to half stand, half sit against the small desk, crossing her arms, considering Alex. Alex wanted to be annoyed by Lena’s quick shift from nervous to assertive, but she couldn’t help but be distracted by how goddamn messy her sister’s room was. Like, what the fuck.

“She’s at rehearsal still,” Lena said. “And as far as ‘nailing your little sister’ goes, as you so gracefullly put it, that’s not what’s going on. Not anymore, at least.”

Alex blinked. She didn’t really expect Lena to be so blunt and honest right off the bat, her shoulders squaring off like she was ready for whatever challenge Alex could throw at her. Alex was used to sniveling, shitty teenage boys, sniffing around her sister because she was blonde and cute and, most importantly to them, naïve. When Alex would stare down Kara’s former boyfriends, their eyes would dart around, avoiding her gaze. Their shoulders would be slumped, an arm usually casually wrapped around Kara’s shoulders or lower waist like they were gripping something they owned. That’s what pissed Alex off, that they were too cowardly to look her in the eye and acknowledge that they wanted to own Kara and her body, but would grab at her as if they already did.

Lena, on the other hand, looked Alex right in the eye. And if Alex recalled correctly, the last time she had seen Lena and Kara together before Thanksgiving, it was Kara who was being the handsy one with Lena.

Which. Ew.

“Okay,” Alex pressed on despite being tripped up for a brief moment, “Well at least you’re honest
about it. Kara wouldn’t tell me anything about what was going on with you two.”

Lena shrugged casually.

“I can’t say that I blame her. You’re clearly overprotective, and I’m someone who could be very
dangerous to someone like her.”

*Someone like her. As if you know anything about my little sister. I’ve kept her safe for years. I sat
with her on the kitchen floor when she was thirteen and taught her how to make paper stars until
her hands became controlled enough to keep from breaking everything she touched. I beat the snot
out of anyone who gave her a hard time at school because she was ‘weird’. I stayed up with her on
nights when she missed home so much she cried herself into hysterical fits. And you just slid into her
life half a second ago.*

“She should have stayed away from you like I told her to,” Alex said in a moment of sudden anger.

Lena’s fingers thrummed against where her hands gripped her forearms. Her face was like stone,
emotionless, not letting Alex see even a glimpse of what was going on in her head.

“You’re right,” Lena replied. “She probably should have. But she didn’t. Kara made the choice to
start whatever it was we had. And she made the choice to pull me out of a bad situation that
subsequently made me realize who she really is. But none of that was in my control. So if you’re
picturing me as some sort of villain scheming to use your sister to my own gain, you’re wrong.”

“I don’t…I don’t think you’re…”

Lena pursed her lips, raising an indignant eyebrow at Alex.

“Alright, yeah, I kind of pictured you that way. But…” Alex moved to sit on Kara’s bed. “You
have to understand where I’m coming from, though. I mean, you’re…”

“A Luthor. Yeah. I know. Can’t go more than five seconds without being reminded of that.” Alex
saw Lena’s fingernails dig into her arms slightly before relaxing again. “And trust me, there’s a
part of me that wishes I didn’t know the truth about Kara. She would be safer that way. But I do.
And now that I do, you have to know I’m going to do everything I can to keep that secret safe.”

Alex bit the inside of her cheek, trying to decide how to proceed with Lena. It had been easy to
judge her when she was more like an idea than a person standing in front of her. The Lena that
Alex had made up in her head was a cold bitch who wore business suits like they were a second
skin and lavished in her family’s blood money. The real Lena, as she was now, had messy hair, no
makeup to hide her tired eyes, was wearing sweatpants and a well worn NCU t-shirt, and was
picking at her nails nervously, since she was likely, as Alex now realized, hiding out in Kara’s
dorm room after having a bad week.

Alex sighed. Why couldn’t Lena just be the bad guy? That would make Alex’s life so much easier
right now.

“Do you want a drink?” Alex asked, as she hopped off the bed and laid flat on the floor so she
could shimmy under Kara’s bed.

“Um, sure? But I know Kara doesn’t keep any booze around here.”

“Perks of being a borderline alcoholic,” Alex said, as she snatched the whiskey bottle she had
stashed behind a pile of crap under Kara’s bed. “I am always prepared for when drinks are
needed.”
Alex got up off the floor, brushing the dust and stray crumbs off her shirt (seriously, Kara, clean you damn room), and waggling the bottle in her hand like it was a prize, the brown liquid inside sloshing mutedly. Lena pulled the chair out from Kara’s desk and sat down.

Alex twisted the cap off of the bottle, took a swig from it, feeling the familiar heat radiating from her throat down to her stomach, and handed the bottle to Lena. She took a tentative sip from the bottle, winced in disgust, and then tilted it back again, taking a larger sip than before.

“Taste too refined for the cheap stuff, princess?” Alex asked dryly.

Lena blinked rapidly as the alcohol made it’s way through her body.

“Trust me. The expensive stuff is just as horrid.”

Lena took another drink from the bottle, and handed it back to Alex.

“You know I came over here to apologize to Kara. For blowing up about, well, you.”

Lena crossed her arms in front of her again.

“Which part bugs you more?” she asked. “The part where I had sex with your sister or the part where I know she’s Superman’s cousin?”

Alex took a large, searing gulp from the bottle.

“Could you at least try to make this easier on me?” she asked.

“Absolutely not.”

Alex sighed, took another sip, and passed the bottle to Lena.

“Look, you seem like a nice person. I just…getting involved with Kara of all people…nothing about this can be casual for either of you. I can’t even tell you to just not bother with her, to stay away, because she’s already got you too wrapped up in her life. She just had to go and reveal her powers to you…”

“Like I said, Alex…”

“I know! She made that choice. I get it. But…up until now I have been able to get her out of any mess she’s gotten her into. But I can’t get her out of this. She doesn’t want out of it. She doesn’t want me to save her anymore. And…I don’t know how to handle that. I don’t know how to just let her handle her own shit.”

Why was Alex even telling her any of this?

She passed the bottle to Lena.

“So what I’m gathering from this whole speech is that Kara kind of has a habit of getting herself in trouble?”

“Ugh! God! Don’t even get me started!”

Alex flopped against Kara’s bed dramatically.

A phone rang next to Alex’s face, which was now planted in Kara’s pillow. It had an incoming call from someone named ‘Siobhan’.
“This yours?” Alex asked, holding up the ringing phone.

“Yes.”

Alex tossed the phone at Lena, who thankfully caught it.

“Not the best time, Sho, can I call you back?” Lena paused. “Wait, she did what?” A longer pause. “Oh my god, you’re kidding. Holy shit. Okay, well, I’m gonna see her in a little bit, anyway. I’ll make sure she’s alright.” Another pause. “Shut the fuck up, I told you we’re not… Siobhan I’m sitting next to her sister, can you not.” Pause. “Yes I’m serious…yeah so hang the fuck up I gotta go…Okay bye.”

Alex scowled at Lena. Lena cleared her throat uncomfortably.

“Apparently your sister just flipped the fuck out on the director in front of everyone.”

“See? What was I saying! Always in trouble!”

Lena smirked.

“Actually, it’s pretty cool that she finally told that jerk off. Maybe she’s better at handling her own problems than you thought.”

Alex sat up and made a grabbing gesture towards the bottle in Lena’s hand, and Lena passed it back to Alex.

“Well if she’s so good at solving problems, maybe she can help me figure out what to do about Maggie.” She took a drink. “I mean, what am I supposed to do? Tell her to sabotage herself and possibly lose her job, or worse, I don’t even know, just to spare my sister’s girlfriend’s feelings? Even though she…you, could very easily solve this whole problem just by telling Maggie where your brother is?”

Lena hiccupped.

“Alex, Kara and I are not girlfr-wait, what the fuck are you talking about?”

Alex eyes widened.

“Umm…”

“Alex. What the fuck. Are you talking about?”

Alex bit the left side of her tongue.

“So…Kara didn’t tell you that Maggie is a fed and has been spying on you to find out where Lex is?”

Lena sat up straighter than before, blinking lazily several times. She reached out for the whiskey bottle, and Alex leaned to place it in her hand.

“No. She didn’t tell me that.”

Alex’s throat was suddenly very dry.

“Well…shit,” she croaked.
Lena took a long drink from the bottle, and made a gagging sound as she fought to keep it down. She got up, motioned for Alex to scoot over, and plopped down on the bed next to her, sprawling out as best as she could with the room Alex allowed her.

“How much did I just fuck things up for you and Kara by telling you that? Like, on a scale of one to ten?”

Lena shrugged, face planted into the pillow.

“I mean, this isn’t the first time I’ve had to deal with shit like this,” she mumbled into the pillow. Realizing her voice was muffled, she turned onto her side. “And like, I’m pissed Kara didn’t tell me that she knew it was going on. But let me guess, she was trying to protect me, right?”

“Yes.”

Lena groaned loudly.

“And Maggie is your girlfriend, right?”

Alex nodded.

“So,” Lena said, turning her face so that she could now be heard more clearly. “You’re stuck between a rock and a hard place. Because on one hand, you want Lex behind bars. Because outside of being, well, himself, he’s potentially a big threat to Kara due to, well, her special circumstances. And also you want Maggie to be the one to get the intel on him, because she’s your girlfriend and you don’t know what would happen to her or your relationship if you stood in the way of her mission.” Lena hiccupped again. “But on the other hand. If you allow, or even help Maggie to get what she wants out of me, then Kara might never forgive you for taking Maggie’s side over hers and betraying her trust. And also you don’t even know if you want to take Maggie’s side, because you’re probably still pissed that she lied to you for this long in the first place. Did I…did I about nail that down?”

Alex was speechless for a moment, before finally managing to say: “So I guess you are pretty smart, huh?”

“Yes, I am,” Lena said in a very matter-of-fact tone.

Alex realized suddenly that she didn’t feel as uncomfortable being around Lena as she was when she first came to Kara’s dorm. At some point between the drinks and the confessions, contempt had turned more towards camaraderie. Maybe Lena wasn’t all that bad. Maybe she was just as stuck in a shit situation as Alex herself was, or more accurately, as Kara was. And she couldn’t help but connect with someone who shared the same blunt, no bullshit way of communicating as Alex did.

“So what comes next?” Alex asked.

“Well, you need to fix your strained relationship with your sister, first of all.”

“No shit, Lena. But I have to figure out a solution to this mess in order to do that.”

Lena shrugged, sitting up on the bed and crossing her legs in front of her. Lena now said at the head of the bed, Alex at the foot of it.

“I don’t know where he is, Alex. And even if I did, or even if I could find out…”
Alex sighed, looking down at the bottle and contemplating if she should take more from it. She screwed the cap back on it instead. Seeing that Alex was finished, Lena snatched the bottle off of her, cradling it in her lap.

“You couldn’t do it. You couldn’t betray family like that. Right?”

“Could you?” Lena asked.

Alex bit the inside of her cheek.

“No,” she admitted.

Lena attempted a half smile.

“I think one day I might be able to change my mind. One day he’ll go far enough that whatever affection I have towards him will go cold.”

“I don’t know,” Alex said. “Family is one of the strongest bonds there is.”

“It’s easier to say that when you have family like Kara. She’s so...good.”

Alex laughed bitterly.

“Yeah. She’s too good, if anything.”

The effects of the alcohol seemed to be catching up with Lena. She swayed slightly in her sitting position, eyes glassy and slightly red.

“I love her,” Lena admitted in a rushed whisper.

Alex froze, completely unsure of how to respond. Lena’s eyes widened, as if she just realized that she had said that out loud.

“I shouldn’t have said that,” Lena said, letting her head fall dramatically into her own lap, the bottle, now next to her head, sloshing from the sudden movement.

Alex shook her head.

Goddammit.

“No, no, it’s fine,” Alex said, placing an awkward hand on Lena’s knee in an attempt to console her. “If anything, I probably needed to hear that from you. I needed to know that...you wouldn’t let anything happen to her.”

“I wouldn’t,” Lena said into her lap. “Ever.”

“Okay,” Alex said, breathing deeply.

What a fucking mess.

At that moment, the door opened. Lena bolted upright, Alex spun around, and a very confused looking Kara stood in the doorway.

* 

“Oh, um, Lena?” Kara asked. “Blink twice if Alex is holding you against your will.”
Alex rolled her eyes.

“It’s fine, Kara,” Alex said, getting up off the bed.

Lena’s lack of response wasn’t at all reassuring. Her cheeks were beet red, as if she were embarrassed about something.

“I came here looking for you,” Alex continued, “and I found Lena first. So, we had a little talk.”

Kara narrowed her eyes at Alex, then at Lena.

“What kind of talk?”

Alex’s eyes darted to Lena for a second, then back to Kara.

“Let’s talk in the hall, huh? I think Lena is a little tired.”

Alex walked out of the dorm first. Kara caught Lena’s gaze long enough to mouth ‘are you okay?’ to her. Lena nodded in response, cheeks still a burning crimson.

Kara shut the door behind her as she followed Alex into the hall.

“What did you do to her?” Kara hissed.

“What! Nothing! Okay, well, I did get her a little drunk, but only because it helped to break the tension.”

Kara pinched at the crinkle between her eyes.

“Are you sure you didn’t get her drunk so she’d tell you where her brother is?”

“That’s not what happened. Kara, look. I just…I came over here to apologize for the other day. I…I get it now, okay? It’s not fair what I expected from you, and from Lena too, really. I guess I’m just upset at all the lying that’s been going on, and instead of trying to mend any of the strains between me and you or me and Maggie in a healthy way, I just tried to find a quick fix to everything. But it’s not a quick fix. I mean, technically it is, but it certainly wouldn’t help things between you and I. Or you and Lena.”

“Oh, please, you would jump at the opportunity to find a way to drive Lena and I apart for good.”

Alex frowned, disheartened at how much Kara had grown to distrust her sister.

“See, no. That’s just it,” Alex persisted. “You would have been right an hour or so ago. But that was when I thought you two were just…messing around for the hell of it. And I thought that any attachment you felt towards her was probably just a temporary thing. Like the infatuations you had with those garbage guys back in high school. But…this isn’t at all like that, is it?”

Kara put her hands on her hips.

“No.”

“You’re like…seriously into this girl, aren’t you?”

Kara took a shuddering breath, letting herself feel just how much she missed Lena, even when they were right next to each other. She let herself drown in the yearning, feeling like Alex might finally not scold her for her feelings for Lena. She felt her eyes sting with sudden tears.
“Oh, sweetie,” Alex sighed, pulling her sister into a hug.

“I don’t know what to do, Alex,” Kara whimpered. “I had her. For all of a second, I had her. And I took it for granted. So I lost her. And now things are all screwed up. And I don’t know if or how I can get her back, not while everything is screwed up like this. And I just want her back so bad, Alex…”

“Shh,” Alex consoled, stroking Kara’s hair. “Look, I don’t think things are as bad as you’ve made them out to be in your head. Okay? Yeah, things sort of blew up for a moment there. Sort of comes with the territory when you get yourself involved in a romance like something out of Shakespeare or some shit. But guess what?” Alex grasped Kara’s shoulders firmly, taking a step away so that Kara would look her in the eye. “I’m on your side. Okay? I always was. I just had to remind myself of that. And if…being on your side means sticking up for your girl in there, and keeping her out of trouble, then that’s what I’ll do. Okay?”

Kara sniffled like a child calming down from a fit, eyes still shining.

“What about Maggie?” she asked softly.

Alex smiled reassuringly at Kara, tapping on her chin with her pointer finger.

“Let me worry about Maggie for now, okay?”

Kara smiled back, wiping at the tears on her cheeks with her sleeve.

“Now, fly me home, would you? I probably shouldn’t drive home.”

Kara scrunched up her nose.

“I thought you didn’t like me flying around?”

“Well, you never listen to me, anyway, so I may as well benefit from your disobedience every now and then, right?”

Kara slapped Alex’s arm lightly.

“Oh, and Kara?”

“Yeah?”

“I’m sorry I’ve been an ass. I love you.”

Kara pulled Alex into another hug.

“I love you, too.”

*

Lena was half asleep in Kara’s bed when the door opened again. She was vaguely aware of the sour taste of the whiskey on her own breath. She hated whiskey. She could drink wine all night and barely be bothered by it, but just a little bit of hard liquor and Lena was on her ass. After Kara had followed Alex outside, Lena had taken another swig or two from the bottle, trying to shake off the
embarrassment she felt from admitting that she loved Kara. To Kara’s terrifying sister of all people. And shortly after that the room had started to spin.

Lena had flopped back over onto Kara’s pillow, closing her eyes because the dizziness was much more pleasant when her eyes were closed. She knew it was about time she got back to her own place, as she had been doing since the incident. Because as much as she loved being in Kara’s messy little room, as much as it felt more like home than any place other she had ever been in, she knew it was pushing too far to stay here with Kara. She knew that the lack of space between them would become suffocating, and she wanted so badly to do things right this time around.

But, then again, Kara’s bed was so damn comfortable…

She heard Kara sigh when she came into the room and shut the door. Lena wriggled further beneath the comforter, thinking that maybe if she was cute enough, Kara would have no choice but to give up and crawl into bed next to her. She knew that was the wrong thing to think, but she was going for it anyway.

“Are you okay?” Kara asked softly, sitting at the edge of the bed and placing a tentative hand on Lena’s knee.

“Mhmm,” Lena said, nodding her head vehemently and giggling at the way it made her head spin even more. Then her stomach threatened to turn, and it wasn’t funny anymore.

“Sorry Alex got you drunk. She’s um, she’s good at that.”

“Oh, I got myself drunk,” Lena insisted, eyes still closed, thinking about how nice it would be to be lulled to sleep by the sound of Kara’s voice.

Then she remembered Siobhan’s phone call. Lena lurched herself into a sitting position, and instantly had to reach out and grasp Kara’s arm so she had an anchor as her world tilted sickeningly.

“I sh-I should be asking you if you’re okay. What happened with Snapper?”

Kara shook her head, looking forward, facing away from Lena, not meeting her gaze.

“Kara,” Lena whispered, scooching closer to her so that she could rest her head on Kara’s shoulder. Lena’s rational self knew that she was pushing to be too close to Kara too soon. But then again, her rational self was somewhere deep in the back of her mind, splashing around in a pool of bottom shelf booze. “What happened?”

Kara shook her head more fervently than before, and Lena could see that Kara likely remained silent so that she could keep Lena from hearing her voice crack with emotion. As it was, tears were brimming up in her eyes. Lena moved to sit behind Kara, pulling her in to sit pressed against her, and wrapping her arms around Kara’s waist, head still pressed into the crook of Kara’s neck.

“It’s fine,” Kara said, voice shaking. “He was just being a jerk. It was just…it’s been kind of a crazy day. I don’t want to talk about it right now, okay?”

Lena nodded her head, breathing in the painfully familiar smell of Kara’s shampoo. It was one of those generic brands that came in a ridiculously large bottle, but goddamn if it didn’t smell like a flower shop in heaven. Lena squeezed Kara tighter, overwhelmed by the physical contact, unable to keep herself from wanting more.

Kara pulled away suddenly, leaving Lena’s body cold where Kara had been pressed.
“We should, um, we should get you back to you apartment, yeah?” Kara said.

“Kara,” Lena said, “I am too tipsy to want to walk, or fly, home. And you have had too bad of a day to pretend that you’re not miserable sleeping on my couch. So. Why don’t we just stay here for the night?”

“Lena,” Kara sighed.

Lena’s stomach fluttered. It had been so long since she had heard that signature Kara sigh, her way of playfully pushing off what she thought was Lena making a pass at her. For a second, it was like everything was new again.

“I’m not gonna do anything,” Lena said, already settling back into Kara’s bed. “Trust me. I’m in no shape to try and seduce you. I just…I’m tired as hell. And I want to be here to keep you company. So just get in your pj’s and get in here already.”

Kara rolled her eyes, but she couldn’t keep a smile from sneaking onto her face.

“Okay, then shut your eyes.”

“Why?”

“Because I have to change.”

“Kara, oh my God, I have seen you naked. Just. So many times.”

“Well. Yeah. But it’s different now. So just…just do it.”

Lena groaned.

But I really just wanna see you naked, she thought, disgruntled, and shut her eyes.

Her need to sleep must have been more demanding than she thought, because Lena didn’t realize she had dozed off until she was stirred awake by the rustling of Kara getting into the bed next to Lena.

“Scooch,” Kara said, and Lena obliged by pressing herself as far against the wall as she could. This bed was ridiculously small.

Kara’s hair tumbled onto the pillow in front of Lena’s face. The scent of Kara’s shampoo hit her again, and Lena let her eyes flutter shut, breathing deeply.

Kara bristled slightly.

“Lena?”

“Hmm?”

“Your hand is on my butt.”

Huh. Look at that.


Lena shut her eyes again.
“Lena,” Kara said in a scolding tone.

“What?” Lena groaned.

“You’re still doing it.”

“What? I’ve never grabbed an alien’s ass before.”

Lena could practically feel Kara rolling her eyes.

“Yes you have. Plenty of times.”

“Well, yeah, but I didn’t know I was, so I couldn’t fully appreciate it at the time.”

“You’re the worst,” Kara said, tone not at all indicating that she was actually upset.

“Yeah, probably,” Lena said, and removed her hand from Kara’s ass. “Wait, is it bad to call you an alien?”

Kara shrugged.

“Technically you’re an alien to me.”

Lena thought on that for a second.

“Huh. Weird,” she said, after deciding that sleep was more important than mulling over the political correctness of the term ‘alien’.

Before Lena settled into sleep, she wrapped an arm around Kara, pulling her close. She couldn’t help herself. You don’t just fall asleep next to Kara Danvers and not try to cuddle her just a little bit. Lena expected Kara to either scold her again or pull away, but she did neither. She simply relaxed into Lena’s touch, her breath slowing as she drifted off. Lena couldn’t help but smile wide as she let herself start to drift off as well.

Lena knew they still had problems. She knew they had things to talk about. But all of that could wait until tomorrow…

Chapter End Notes

You can all stop hating me now, I’ve finally stopped making Alex act like an asshole ;D . I’ll admit that action-wise not a lot happened in this chap, but I thought that this scene itself needed to be fleshed out, I know a lot of you (for obvious reasons) were looking forward to the Alex/Lena confrontation. And also, each girl gushing their feelings about the other to Alex was necessary. :)))

Next week, more sanvers drama! I might even pop into Maggie's POV for a few pages. Should be fun.

Come chat with me on tumblr (url schatzietess), i'm always looking for ppl to bounce ideas off of :D

See you next Thursday! :D <3
Chapter 15

Chapter Summary

Fluff, fluff, parallels, and more fluff...

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Maggie thrummed her fingers against her kitchen island restlessly. It was three in the morning, and she couldn’t even think about sleep. Alex hadn’t texted or called her all day. And Maggie knew that she couldn’t blame her for that, but she still just wished she could talk to her.

But what would she even say to her? Talking wouldn’t fix anything. They’d just go around and around talking in circles and still running into the same walls each time. And besides, Alex wasn’t good at the whole ‘communication’ thing, anyway. Alex Danvers handled tension between their relationship in one of three ways. The first way was to shut down until Maggie got sick of the silence and agreed to drop whatever it was that was bothering her. The second method usually involve some big distraction to make Maggie forget what she had even been upset about before. Distractions usually came in the form of breaking into places Maggie had to get her out of, or, more commonly, getting Maggie so hot and bothered that she was willing to do or say anything just so that Alex would finally make her come.

And then there was the third option, the one that Maggie didn’t realize existed until things with Kara and Lena Luthor sort of blew up in their faces. It involved Alex becoming obsessed with finding a solution to the problem that had the least consequence towards her own sense of morality, and plowing along with that plan regardless of what anyone else said or did.

So. If Alex wasn’t answering Maggie, then logically, she was either ignoring her, off doing something stupid and would be calling Maggie to bail her out of whatever trouble she was in at any moment, or was currently forcing a confession out of Lena Luthor by whatever means necessary.

Maggie sighed. She wasn’t really a fan of any of those options.

She then jumped at the sound of a ringing phone. She reached for her cell phone, and saw that the screen was dark. Then she realized where the ringing was coming from, and her stomach clenched.

Maggie reached for the burner phone she kept in her purse, the one that only rang if one specific person was trying to get a hold of her. And if he was calling…

She swallowed hard, and answered the phone.

“Yes, sir, Director?”

“Sawyer,” the familiar, gravelly voice of her superior replied. “Status report.”

“Yes, sir,” she replied, like an instinct, and then faltered, realizing that she had nothing to report that would very seriously incriminate her and the people around her. “So, ah, surveillance has been temporarily interrupted.”
“For what reason?”

“Well, um, there’s some technical difficulties going on, sir. I’m working on it.”

There was a pause.

“I’ve heard rumor that your asset had close contact with a possible alien. Have anything on that?”

“Well…I…no.”

A longer pause.

“Just ‘no’?”

“Well…I wasn’t there when the incident occurred, sir.”

“Where were you, then?”

*Inside of Alex?*, Maggie thought.

“Otherwise occupied, sir.”

The Director sighed.

“I’m running out of patience, Sawyer.”

“I know, sir.”

“I was taking a heck of a risk when I pulled you out of the police academy to put you in my ranks.”

Maggie flashed back to a manila folder with an unfamiliar insignia stamped on it as it was slapped in front of the desk she sat at back at the academy. The only thing contained inside was a blank piece of paper, it’s header the same insignia as on the folder, with a line for her to sign her name on. Standing over her and the mysterious folder was a quiet, stoic, white haired man in a nondescript black suit. She recognized him. He had been around the academy once or twice, both times while she was training, and he watched her carefully. Despite his intimidating stare and harsh jaw, there was something about him that was oddly paternal, if ever she could pretend to know what a proper father figure looked like.

“I know that, too, sir,” she replied.

“The fact that I perhaps have a soft spot for you isn’t going to protect you forever, Sawyer.”

Maggie bit her lip.

“Yes, sir.”

Another sigh.

“I need results from you, Sawyer. To prove that you can do this job. If you even can do this.

“Sir, I…”

“The window of time in which you can still get out of all of this and go back to being a civilian is still there, you know, Maggie. But it’s closing quickly. You need to decide if this is really what you want. And if it’s not, if your heart isn’t in it anymore, you have to tell me while I can still help
you.”

Maggie took a shuddering breath.

“Yes, sir, Director.”

The line went dead.

Maggie let her head plop into the crook of her arm on the countertop.

What do I want? If my heart isn’t in my work anymore, then where is it?

Maggie’s apartment buzzer went off, and her heart jumped.

“Mags?” Alex’s voice crackled through the comm next to her door. “Are you awake? I know I should have called first, but I have to talk to you in person. Are you there? Could you let me up?”

How could Maggie even ask where her heart was? She already knew the answer.

She rushed to the door and buzzed Alex up. A moment later, Alex was standing in her doorway.

“I know it’s late,” Alex said sheepishly.

“I was already up.”

Alex walked through the doorway. Maggie shut the door behind her.

“I, um, I talked to Lena.”

Maggie’s eyes widened.

“Alex, you didn’t beat a confession out of her or something, did you?”

“No! Why does everyone think that? No. I just…I talked to her.”

“Okay.”

“Although, if I did, you should thank me not lecture me. Because I would be doing your job for you.”

“Well, someone ought to. It’s not like I’m any good at it.”

Alex sighed, moving down to sit at the kitchen island.

“I didn’t say that,” Alex said.

“No, but you should have. I suck at my job.” Maggie sat down across from Alex. “I had a very simple task here, Alex. Observe and report on a target, intervening only when necessary. Stay in the shadows, nondescript, unattached. And what did I do? I got distracted by a cute girl. I lost track of my mission, half assed all of my work, got found out by two goddamn college kids, realized that the girl I got involved with is tied in with the target, let the target get attacked by, of course, yet again, stupid college kids. And now my superiors are expecting answers and I don’t have any. You know why? Because I fucking suck at this.”

Alex reached across the island, grasping one of Maggie’s hands to hold inside her own, squeezing it reassuringly.
“Then why are you doing it? What...what made you want to be in this line of work?”

Maggie bit the inside of her cheek, shrugging.

“I never really wanted it. But I didn’t know that I might not want it, so I never thought to say no. A few years ago, I wanted to be a cop. I didn’t know exactly why I did, I just did. And I was good at it. At least I was good at training for it. The skills all came naturally to me, you know? Like I always knew how to do this stuff, I just had to remember. And then all of a sudden I was being whisked away into a special division because I fit some kind of unspecified qualifications. And I thought that that made sense, and that it was just what was meant to happen, because everything else up to that point since I’d started at the academy was clicking so well, it almost felt like fate, you know? But then they sent me out here for my first mission. And it seemed easy enough, right? But it’s not. None of this comes naturally to me like it did at the academy. None of this feels right. I feel...I feel like I made a mistake getting into any of this.”

Alex had been listening quietly to Maggie as she rambled her inner turmoil out loud.

“But it can’t be a mistake, can it? Because along the way of this whole thing, I met you. And that...that doesn’t feel like a mistake, Alex.”

Alex exhaled heavily, placing her elbows against the table and resting her chin against her knuckles.

“What are you gonna do?” she asked.

Maggie thrummed her fingers against the countertop, thinking. Big brown eyes stared expectantly at her, mouth turned slightly downwards in that signature Alex Danvers pout.

“What do you want me to do?” Maggie asked.

Alex frowned.

“Ever since I’ve met you you’ve been telling me what I should have already known about right and wrong,” she said. “And now that we’re here, when I need your clear-headedness more than ever, now you’re asking my advice?”

“Maybe I’m not the clear-headed one anymore. When you think about it, I never really was. I’m just a girl who forgot herself and her duties because she fell in love.”

Alex gasped slightly, and Maggie realized what she had said.

Fuck it.

Maggie moved to crouch in front of Alex, who was sitting at a barstool. She rested her chin on Alex’s knee.

“I love you, Alex Danvers. And I need you to tell me what to do to fix this. Because I can’t lose you.”

Alex’s eyes glistened with sudden emotion.

“Well you can get the hell off the floor, first of all,” she said, her voice cracking.

Maggie stood, Alex grasping her hands tightly in her own.

“I can’t tell you to keep after Lena anymore.”
Maggie nodded.

“She’s not a bad person.”

“I never said she was,” Maggie replied.

“Look, you, you know more about the two of them and their relationship than I do. So you know how they feel about each other.”

That was a loaded statement. First off because it put into perspective just how wrong it was that Maggie knew everything she did know, considering how close she was now to Alex, by extension, Kara. And because Alex was putting that into perspective, she was acknowledging, finally, and no longer ignoring, what the reality of the situation was. And second because good god those two girls were complicated. She knew Lena was absolutely nuts for Kara. And she knew that Kara was fairly wrapped up in Lena. But she also knew that there was a distance, a tension between them, than Maggie couldn’t put her finger on, which kept them apart.

Instead of trying to verbalize any of this, Maggie simply nodded again.

“Well, I didn’t realize just how serious this was until tonight. Kara had a damn meltdown over Lena, and Lena, well…Jesus, Mags, she loves her. Fucking admitted it out loud. To me, of all people. And I wasn’t prepared for that! And I sat up tonight in my apartment, thinking about what I’m supposed to do now that I realize that I was wrong. And I was wrong. Which, trust me, is hard for me to admit. So…you have to stop this, Maggie.”

Maggie sighed.

“I know. I think I’ve always known that.”

“Can you?” Alex said.

“Can I what?”

“Stop?”

Maggie squeezed the soft, caring hands grasping her own. She thought about who Alex was when they met. The way she threw herself so recklessly into any passing impulse, because living on a whim was so much easier than to stop and think about who she was, where she was going, and what was hurting her. And Alex wasn’t magically cured of all of those problems she had then. How could she be? But she was getting better. She was putting an effort towards changing herself, no matter how minimal it was, how small the steps. She was getting there. And that gave Maggie so much hope. Because how could she feel stuck in any one problem or situation, when she was watching someone like Alex change in front of her very eyes? She didn’t want to think that any of it was because of her. That ruined it, somehow. All she needed to know was that people could change. And that meant that she could change. She never thought that was possible, not after her parents threw her out of the house when she was far too young to learn that ignorance could sever even the strongest of bonds. And Maggie thought now that change could simply mean going back, trying to undo what was done, and hoping she didn’t lose the things most important to her in the process.

“There’s still loose ends to be tied up. That night, the incident with Lena…there was something, someone there. Someone…possibly not human. It hasn’t been confirmed yet, all we have to go on are rumors, but…”

Alex looked up at her, eyes were suddenly wide with a nameless fear.
“You have to get them to drop it,” she said hurriedly.

“What?”

“Your bosses, or whatever they are. Convince them it’s just a rumor, that it’s just college kids who were high or something. Maggie, please.”

“Why? What’s wrong?”

Alex’s hands shook, her foot tapped against the tile floor at a rapid pace.

“I can trust you, right?”

“Of course, Alex.”

“It’s…it’s Kara.”

“Wait, what?”

“Maggie, someone came in and literally swept Lena off her feet? Who else could it be?”

“I…” Maggie stumbled, mind racing. “Shit.”

“Yeah.”

“So she’s…”

“Yep.”

“Like from another…”

“Uh huh.”

“Are you also…?”

“Nope. Just her.”

Maggie took a breath.

“Okay. What all can she do?”

“A whole bunch of crazy shit. But she doesn’t use her powers that often. Not unless she has to.”

Well, she certainly hides it well. Though that would explain how the little shit found me out. Super power advantage? No fair.

“So now that you know, you have to be as dedicated to protecting her as I am. You have to put her safety above everything else. No one can know. Okay?”

Maggie nodded solemnly, Alex’s uniquely strained relationship with her sister suddenly making a lot more sense to her.

“I’ll take care of it.”

Alex let out the breath she had been holding.

“Thank you. And then?” Alex said, eyes hopeful. “After that? You could get out of all of this?”
Maggie frowned, looking over at her purse, where her burner phone was concealed.

_It’s right next to my broken receiver, thank you very much, Kara._

“It wouldn’t be easy. I would have to disappear for a while. They don’t just let someone with higher security clearances pop back up in the civilian world without being reassured that nothing bad will come of it.”

Alex scrunched up her nose.

“Do you really have that high of security clearances, though?”

Maggie narrowed her eyes at Alex, knowing already that her mood was shifting.

“Yes. I totally do.”

“Really? They gave the world’s worst rookie spy the highest clearances?”

“Oh, my god, shut up.”

Alex raised her hands in submission.

“I’m just saying, I think you’re all talk.”

“Okay, well let me know if you still feel that way when I tell my superiors I want out, and have to drop off the face of the earth for at least six months.”

Alex’s face fell, no longer in a kidding mood.

“Six months?” she repeated.

Maggie bit her lip, eyes looking downwards instead of at Alex.

“Potentially so, yeah,” she said.

“And then what? Where will you…pop back up? Will it at least be in National City?”

“Hopefully. I don’t know for sure, Alex.”

Alex faltered, eyes searching Maggie’s. Then the smallest smile crept back onto her lips.

“But you’ll make it back to me anyway, right? Because what was that you said? You _love_ me?”

“Wow,” Maggie said, pulling away from Alex, feigning offense. “Girl tells you she loves you and you turn it into a joke? No wonder you have a crap record at dating.”

“Oh! Okay!” Alex said, laughing, “What about you, Miss ‘Cheated on My Ex Because I’m Afraid of Commitment’?”

“Why do I tell you anything? Honestly, why?”

Without warning, Alex pulled Maggie against her, pressing her head into her stomach and hugging her tightly.

“I love you, too,” she said into the fabric of Maggie’s shirt.

Maggie kissed the top of Alex’s head, rubbing her back soothingly.
“I’m sorry I fucked things up so badly,” she said.

Alex pulled away, grasping a lock of Maggie’s hair as she stared up at her.

“It’s not as bad as you think. And anyhow, I forgive you. But…I’m not the only one whose forgiveness you need to ask for.”

Maggie nodded silently, knowing what it was she had to do.

“You gonna stick around with me through whatever comes next?” Maggie asked.

Alex raked her fingers through Maggie’s hair, smiling slightly.

“Ride or die, right?” she said.

*

Kara woke up exactly thirty three minutes ago. Her alarm for her 8 am math class went off, and she had shut it off as fast as she could so that she wouldn’t wake the girl sleeping next to her. The momentary disturbance had caused Lena to stir, her grip around Kara’s waist tightening for a second, pulling her closer. How on Earth was Kara supposed to get out of bed now?

Kara settled back into bed, pressed against Lena, as she watched the clock tick away minutes she should have been spending in class, trying to ignore the dull ache between her legs. She couldn’t help it. She couldn’t make herself forget the fact that she was still painfully attracted to Lena. She couldn’t keep from remembering what it felt like to come apart at her touch.

But she had to. Kara felt Lena’s chest rise and fall in even breaths against her, felt Lena’s soft grip around her stomach, and she told herself that she could be happy with just this for the moment. This was as close as she had been to Lena since Lena had called things off between them. And god she had missed this. She missed it so much it felt like she was suffocating. It didn’t help that they were stuffed together in the world’s smallest bed.

Lena shifted. Kara held her breath, afraid to wake her. If she woke her, the moment would be over. The closeness would end.

“Don’t you have class?” Lena murmured softly, mouth hovering near enough to the back of Kara’s neck that she could feel Lena’s breath against her skin.

_Dang it._

“It was cancelled.”

“Liar.”

Lena tugged her close yet again. Not that Kara was complaining, but she was unsure of how to proceed.

“You, um, you feeling alright?” Kara asked, locking her eyes on an unidentified stain on the far wall. She thought that if she focused on trying to identify the stain she would be able to restrain herself from turning towards Lena and getting lost in her.
She felt Lena shrug.

“I’m waking up next to you, how bad could I be?”

Kara’s mouth went dry, the yearning in her suddenly unbearable.

“Lena…” Kara breathed.

There was nothing judgmental in her tone. Nothing distancing or scolding. She just…wanted to say Lena’s name.

“Can I ask you something?” Lena inquired.

Kara turned to face Lena, the sudden, silent eye contact her way of giving her permission for Lena to continue.

“Were you ever gonna tell me about Maggie?”

Kara’s face fell, regret and shame turning her stomach.

“I…” she tried to begin, but words failed her. She felt a tear roll down her cheek and onto the pillow.

“Kara, hey,” Lena soothed, her hand moving to wipe the tear from Kara’s face. “It’s okay. I’m not mad.”

Kara scoffed, the sound of it bubbling pathetically past the misery in her chest.

“I’m not,” Lena insisted. “Though, hold on, can I brush my teeth or something before we get into this? You’re like, way too close to me, and morning breath is a thing.”

Kara turned, pulling a pack of mints out from her night stand drawer, popping a mint in her own mouth, then handing the container to Lena.

“Thanks,” Lena said, tossing two or three mints into her mouth and swirling them around with her tongue.

Despite the tension in Kara’s whole body at the knowledge that Lena had found out she had been lying to her, again, Kara felt hypnotized by the way Lena’s tongue danced around in her mouth.

“Anyway,” Lena continued, “Look. I think I get why you didn’t tell me. You thought you could handle it on your own, and save me the stress of knowing that I had a spy on my tail, on top of everything on my plate right now, right?”

Kara nodded silently. Lena sighed.

“Kara,” Lena said, hand cupping Kara’s cheek. “Can you. Fucking. Stop doing that?”

She blinked, stunned. Lena took a deep breath, hands wrapping around Kara’s lower back in a manner that was almost too close and intimate for her to handle.

“You,” Lena said, “you have to stop trying to take on everyone else’s burdens. You have to…stop volunteering to get stomped on for the sake of everyone else.”

“But…”
“I know. I know you thought you could fix it. But if you would have just told me what was going on when you found out, then I would have told you that this is nothing new for me. Fuck, there’s practically a Luthor handbook on what to do when the feds mess with us. You think I don’t expect shit like this to happen? If anything, I’m disappointed that I didn’t realize it sooner. But…I admittedly got distracted.”

Lena’s grip around Kara’s lower back tightened for a second, like her muscles were responding reflexively to what she was saying.

“By what?” Kara asked.

She knew she was playing coy. And she was completely okay with that. Because somehow (that somehow probably being Alex), Lena had found out the one secret Kara had left between them, and, contrary to what she had feared, Lena wasn’t mad. So she was going to play coy. Because the girl she cared about knew her secrets, her lies, her dark corners, and was still lying in her bed, holding her, telling her it was okay.

“Seriously?” Lena asked, moving her left hand up to pull a lock of Kara’s hair away from her face.

Kara’s eyes fluttered shut, savoring the touch.

“Is it so bad that I want to hear you say that I distract you?” Kara asked.

Lena laughed, shaking her head indignantly.

“Oh, I’m the distracted one, huh? Who’s the one skipping their math class right now?”

Kara scoffed.

“Who’s the one that has my class schedule memorized?”

“Wow,” Lena said, sitting up, “Fine, be that way.”

“Hey,” Kara whined, sitting up as well, “I thought we were talking things out”

“Yeah, we were, until you got all sassy.”

“Heaven forbid I be the sassy one, for once.”

Lena rolled her eyes dramatically.

“Fair enough. Look. However you want to handle the Maggie situation, fine. After all, she’s the one that stupidly got herself romantically involved with your sister while on the job.”

Kara scrunched up her face.

“You act like you’re an expert on the do’s and don’ts of spying.”

“Kara. Come on. I swear it’s like a rite of passage for entry level feds to try and crack the Luthor family.”

Kara sighed.

“So it was that easy? This whole time? To have just told you what was going on?”

Lena rolled her lips together, making a ‘smacking’ sound from the motion.
“Pretty much, yeah.”
“But what would you have done, if I told you?”

Lena shrugged.

“The Lillian special, basically. That is, dropped a half dozen lawsuits on her department and her superiors, drowned them in legal fees and red tape until they left us alone for another few month, until Lex got back up to his bullshit again. Rinse and repeat.”

“And where would that have left Maggie?”
“No idea, honestly.”
“And that wouldn’t bother you? Not knowing what kind of blowback would fall on her?”

“Of course it would bother be. Especially considering that she’s dating your sister. But maybe you realized that, somewhere deep down, right? And maybe that’s part of why you kept it from me, huh? To protect them, too?”

Kara picked at her fingernails absently, avoiding Lena’s question.

“God, you’re so good,” Lena breathed.

“No, I’m not.”
“Yes, you fucking are,” Lena insisted. “Hand me a bottle of water, would you?”

Kara stretched over to reach a bottle from the case she kept on the opposite side of the nightstand, and handed it to Lena.

“Can I tell you something?” Kara asked, as Lena, who was likely a little hungover, pulled several long sips from the plastic bottle, nodded in response to her request.

“I got caught.”

Lena furrowed her brow at Kara.

“What does that mean?” she asked, settling back against the pillow.

Kara looked down at her, leaning on her elbow.

“It means that the freaking journalism kids have a picture of me rescuing you. Like, in the superhero way.”

Lena shrugged, like the news was nothing that spectacular.

“Then bury the evidence.”

Kara blinked.

“I…yeah. That’s exactly what I was thinking. But how do I…”

“Well, first, you hack into Vasquez’s computer and track down whoever sent her the pic. Then wipe her computer, and all the journalism student cloud drives for good measure. After that, well, whoever took the picture probably took it on a phone. That might be a little tricky to wipe,
depending on what backups they might have. I could do it, but it might be easier to strong arm whoever it is into silence, so to speak.”

Kara was speechless for a moment, staring down at the girl lying in her bed in a manner that suggested that she had always belonged there.

“How do you do that?” Kara asked.

“What?” Lena said, shrugging innocently. Her dark hair was splayed against the pillow, a small smirk on her face.

Kara swallowed hard.

“How do you just magically know exactly what I need to hear?”

Her smile widened.

“I’m actually handy as fuck, if you would give me the chance to show you that every once in a while.”

Kara laughed, sitting up fully again.

“Well since you mention it, I could use your help with something.”

Lena turned her face, grunting into the pillow in protest.

“Whatever you’re gonna ask, it’s too early for it,” she mumbled into the pillow.

“Oh, come on, you won’t even have to leave this room.”

Lena turned, arching an eyebrow at Kara and squirming in the bed just enough that her hips bumped against her.

“Not like that,” Kara said, though, it was certainly on her mind.

In fact it was kind of hard for Kara to think about anything else right now…

“Ugh, fine,” Lena groaned, sitting up again. “What is it?”

“Well,” Kara said, getting up off the bed to grab a blank pad of paper off of her desk. “I already know I’m gonna have to bury that story about, well, me saving you from that group of jerks the other day. But, the school paper should still have something to run about it, right?” She hopped next over to the kitchenette, grabbing a whole box of Pop Tarts and bringing them back to the bed with her, one of the pastries already stuffed in her mouth. “So,” she mumbled, “I thought, screw everyone who keeps trying to make this story about anything other than the fact that you were the victim here! I’m so sick of people treating you like you’re some kind of totem representing your whole family! You’re just…you. And no one knows you or how great you are. So…” she plopped back down on the bed, pen and paper in hand, tossing one of the silver packets at Lena, “I’m gonna interview you. Let everyone on campus get to know the real Lena. So they can all realize that they’re being just…bad people.”

Lena frowned.

“Kara, I don’t know…”

“You don’t have to answer any question you feel uncomfortable with. Okay?”
Lena seemed to mull over Kara’s request for a moment.

“On one condition,” she finally replied.

“What’s that?” Kara said, mouth full.

“For every question you ask about me, I get to ask one about you.”

Kara furrowed her brow.

“But…”

“Oh, come on, it’s only fair after everything that’s happened.”

Kara shrugged. She certainly had a point there.

“Okay deal. You wanna go first?”

“No. You go ahead.”

Kara nodded, crossing her legs in front of her and settling in to the foot of the bed. Perhaps deciding that they weren’t close enough, Lena scooched towards Kara, mirroring her sitting position, their knees bumping together. Lena pulled her hair to one shoulder. The strap of the camisole she had worn to bed was slipping off the other shoulder. Her lips pursed slightly as she locked her big, calm eyes on Kara.

Kara swallowed hard. Was it suddenly warmer in her room?

“What, um, what’s your favorite color?”

Lena laughed, leaning forward slightly as she did so, her hair tumbling forward enough to tickle Kara’s forearm.

“Seriously? This is how you’re gonna get the campus to stop hating me? Telling them my favorite color?”

“Well, no. I’m just, asking you basic questions first to ease you into the interview.”

“Ah, okay, gotcha. Well, it’s blue. Like the blue in your eyes.”

Kara held her breath as the other girl leaned in, seemingly to get a better look at her eyes, but was she close.

“Okay, my turn,” Lena said.

Kara shook her head.

“Uh uh, missy, you technically just asked a question. So it’s my turn again.”

Lena gasped dramatically, reestablishing the space between them.

“Tricky, aren’t you? Okay, fine.”

Kara cleared her throat.

“What’s your favorite movie?”
“Cleopatra.”

“I thought that was just your ‘after sex’ movie.”

“Exactly why it’s my favorite.” She winked. “Some Like it Hot is a good one, too.”

“So you just have a thing for films with classic Hollywood women lounging around with their breasts hanging out?”

“Duh.” Lena bit into her Pop Tart. “So, what’s your real name? You know, the one you had back on Krypton.”

Kara hesitated. She could have figured that Lena would want to know about her more ‘alien’ side, but she still couldn’t make herself totally comfortable with talking freely about the subject.

“Kara Zor El,” she said quickly. “Do you, um, do you have any hobbies? Besides theater, obviously.”

Lena moved even closer to Kara, now practically sitting in her lap. Kara’s breath hitched at the sudden closeness.

“Well, I do enjoy making you flustered. Does that count as a hobby?”

Kara’s stomach fluttered at the way Lena’s eyes looked Kara over like might pounce on her at any second.

“That depends. Is that what you want me to put in the paper?”

Lena shrugged, a devilish smile creeping onto her face. Kara knew what kind of a mood Lena was in now. And while she knew she needed to focus, to make this article perfect, she couldn’t stop herself from playing Lena’s game. Not when it made her feel like every nerve in her body was on fire in the best way possible.

“It would just be honest reporting, Kara. I can’t hold that against you. So, what’s your most and least favorite things about Earth?”

“That’s technically two questions, Lena.”

Lena pouted up at Kara, tracing her fingers in patterns just above Kara’s knees. Kara tried to blink away the haze settling into her head in response to Lena’s touch. What on earth had happened between yesterday and today that made Lena suddenly so…Lena again?

“Ugh, fine,” Kara said, watching Lena’s hands closely. “My most favorite thing is ice cream. Least favorite thing is how much fighting humans do here. Now, Lena stop that,” she said, smacking Lena’s hand as it moved just a little too high up on her thigh. Though she didn’t really want her to stop. “Do you have any unusual talents?”

Lena licked her bottom lip, eyes flicking down to Kara’s mouth.

“Wanna find out?” she asked.

“Lena,” Kara sighed. “I’m trying to be serious, here.”

“But aren’t you curious to know why I’m suddenly trying to get back in your pants?”

“Well, I mean, yeah. But…”
“Here, give me that,” Lena said, snatching Kara’s notebook out of her hand. “What the…what language is this?”

“Kryptonian short hand,” Kara said with a shrug.

“Huh. Neat. Well here, you suck at asking questions, so I’ll write down some for you to ask me.”

She scribbled on the page, and handed it back to Kara. Kara narrowed her eyes to try and read Lena’s abysmal hand writing. Her stomach knotted back up when she saw what it said.

“Lena,” Kara read out loud, “does it bother you that Kara is not only from another planet, but also related to your brother’s most hated alien?”

“Ooh, tricky question, Miss Danvers,” she said, pantomiming holding a microphone. “But I would have to say no. Not only would it be hypocritical for me to judge someone based on where and who they come from, but Kara is one of the kindest, most selfless people I’ve ever met. And she’s also sexy as hell, so if that’s from coming from a whole other solar system, then I am totally okay with it.”

Kara buried her head in her hands, trying to hide the massive smile on her face.

“As far as the whole ‘Lex Vs. Superman’ conflict of interest goes,” Lena continued, still pretending she was in a formal interview, “I admittedly was scared for Kara more than anything else when I realized who she was. I didn’t want to put her in danger. But I realized that I don’t think I could go back to the life I had before I met her. So if she’s willing to go for it, despite the obstacles, then so am I.”

Before Kara could even think of how to respond to that, Lena took the pad of paper back, wrote something else on it, and handed it back to Kara.

“Are you mad at Kara for keeping things from you?” Kara read, and looked up at Lena expectantly.

“You know,” Lena said, no longer holding the imaginary microphone, “I’ve spent my whole life around dishonest people. But they were always dishonest for the wrong reasons. And then I meet this girl, who spits out little white lies left and right because she feels that she has to. She doesn’t do it because it benefits her, or because she likes lying to people. She does it because it makes her feel safe, and because she wants everyone around her to be safe, too. And I couldn’t imagine holding that against her.”

Kara could feel her eyes suddenly clouding with tears.

“Lena, I…”

“Shh,” Lena replied, and held her hand out, indicating for Kara to hand her the pad of paper.

Kara obliged.

When Lena handed the pad of paper back to Kara, she stared at the words for a long time before she could make herself say them out loud.

“Have you ever been in love?” Kara read from the paper.

Lena pulled herself onto Kara’s lap, wrapping her arms around back.
“Just once,” she said, looking down at Kara, “And I really hope I don’t fuck it up.”

Unable to contain the storm in her chest any longer, Kara pressed her head against Lena’s chest so the girl couldn’t see the sob she let escape. She didn’t know why she felt the need to hide her face from Lena, she just wasn’t used to anyone seeing her vulnerable like this. It had been years since, when suddenly gripped with emotion, she let someone else see it, rather than bury it down until she felt numb again.

“You okay?” Lena asked, lips pressed against the top of Kara’s forehead, one hand still wrapped tightly around her, the other stroking Kara’s hair.

Kara sniffled, pulling away from Lena slightly and wiping her cheeks on her sleeve.

“Yeah,” she said. “Sorry, I just…”

“Why the hell are you apologizing?”

“I don’t know,” Kara said, a croak of a laugh bubbling out of her. “It’s an instinct!”

“Okay, well, you don’t have anything to be sorry for, alright? I mean, it would be nice if from now on you could tell me what’s going on up there instead of bottling everything up.”

“Yeah, I know. I will.”

“Cool,” Lena said, nodding casually as if this wasn’t one of the most profound moments of their entire relationship. She looked over at the clock at the head of the bed. “Hey, so, when’s your next class?”

“Eleven thirty, why?”

Lena dragged her fingers through Kara’s hair, pulling her in and kissing her fiercely. Kara melted in an instant, grasping at Lena desperately, barely able to keep herself together enough to keep from crying again.

She couldn’t help it.

She was actually happy.

In one movement, Lena pulled herself off of Kara’s lap and pressed her against the bed, her fingers tugging at the elastic of Kara’s shorts playfully.

“Good, because I have plans for you until then.”

Chapter End Notes

I CANNOT EVEN. SO IF I, THE CREATOR, CANNOT EVEN, IDK WHAT YOU GUYS ARE GONNA FEEL ABOUT THIS. BUT PERSONALLY I’M A SQUEEING MESS.

If i had the time today i would have thrown in the smut, but like, I didn't. So, I'll put it in the next chapter. Cool? Cool.

FYI there are like literally 2 or 3 chapters left in this story. Just to warn you. (I say 3 bc technically it should be 2 but i know i’m not gonna have as much time to write as i
think i will)

Thanks to my writing idea helper-people of the week, robie (quit yelling at me tho, like damn, LOL), littlekbrother, and theunyeti.

See you guys next Thursday! Love you all, for real, and I'm looking forward to hearing what you think about the chap! :D <33
“Oh, my god, Lena,” Kara whined, “Are you trying to kill me?”

“No on purpose,” she replied, nibbling playfully at the contour of Kara’s hip bone. “Now keep still.”

Kara whimpered again, but tried to keep her squirming to a minimum, hoping that the more she obeyed the faster Lena would finally give her some release. Instead, Lena moved her mouth, biting, kissing, licking, slowly up Kara’s right side, in the direction opposite of where she wanted Lena to go.

While Kara was completely undressed, pressed against the bed, arms above her head, Lena was still in her lingerie, mouth and hands tracing Kara, mapping her every inch. Not like Kara didn’t enjoy it, and not that she didn’t especially enjoy the view…but now she just needed to…

“Lena, please,” Kara pleaded when Lena’s left hand moved slowly down her thigh, stopping just before where Kara needed her most.

“Kara, I told you not to interrupt my concentration.”

“And I told *you* that you’re being ridiculous.”

“No I am not,” Lena insisted, now tracing lines down Kara’s stomach with her fingernails. “What kind of a scientist would I be if I didn’t try to prove my theory?”

“Lena, I do not have some sort of magic sex button on my body just because I’m an alien.”

Lena propped herself up on her elbow, body pressed flush against Kara’s

“I never used the word ‘sex button’,” she said. “I am just saying that it’s almost impossible that your anatomy is completely identical to humans, and therefore it stands to reason that you might have unique erogenous zones. And I intend to find them.”

Honestly, wasn’t Lena aching just as bad? How was she willing to be so patient?

“The ones you normally hit work just fine. Now, please, Lena, I am begging you.”

Lena moved to straddle Kara, one hand on each of Kara’s wrists.

“I could just tie you up so you had no say in the matter, you know.”

“Super strength, remember?”
“Oh, I remember,” Lena murmured, crawling back down Kara’s body so her hands gripped Kara’s hips while she placed torturous, calculated kisses on Kara’s inner thighs. “And don’t think I don’t plant on testing that out, too.”

That is it. Two can play at this game.

Kara squirmed out of Lena’s grip on her, moving towards the head of the bed. When Lena moved to recapture her, Kara moved to flip the two of them around so that Lena was now the one trapped, Kara hovering above her. She pressed her body against Lena’s, leaving bruising kisses on Lena’s collarbone and pressing her knee lightly between her legs. She felt Lena buck as much as she could despite being pinned down, their fingers intertwining.

“Oh, there she is. Say it again,” Lena said, pushing a digit inside of Kara.

“Fuck,” Kara exclaimed, gripping her headboard behind her to steady herself.

“Fuck,” Lena exclaimed, and in a momentary loss of control, she felt the headboard snap in her grip. The cracking sound it made caused Lena to flinch.

“Oh god, oh god, Lena, I’m sorry,” Kara said, jumping away from Lena, tossing the broken wood aside. “I didn’t mean to scare you. I…”

“Kara! Kara stop,” Lena said, sitting up to grasp Kara’s wrist reassuringly. “Babe, it’s fine. I trust you. I know you wouldn’t hurt me.”

“I wouldn’t. I just…I let myself get too comfortable. I’ve never…been with someone who knew about me before.”

Lena tugged at Kara’s wrist, guiding her back to the bed.

“It caught me off guard, that’s all. But I stand by what I said before, it is ridiculously hot how strong you are.”

Kara smiled shyly.

“Really?”

“Uh, yeah,” Lena said, pulling herself up onto Kara’s lap, “Here, let me prove it.”

Before she could do anything, Kara picked Lena up, gripping her ass, and dropped her onto the bed, eliciting a giggle from Lena.

“Nope,” Kara said, “You let me prove that I can be in control when I want to be.”

Lena relaxed into the mattress, no longer arguing or trying to gain control.
In no time, Lena was gripping Kara’s hair desperately, gasping out her name between utterings of “fuck” and “Oh God” and an occasional string of incoherent whimpers as Kara swirled patterns onto Lena’s clit with her tongue. She grinned wide as she felt Lena’s thighs shiver and clench around her, knowing that she was close…

So, of course, that was the exact moment that there was a knock at the door.

_Nope_, Kara thought. _Not today._

Kara, who had paused only for a moment to listen and see if the knocking would stop, now resumed what she was doing, mouth encircling Lena’s clit, eliciting a yelp from Lena.

Another knock at the door.

“Go away!” Kara barked, at the same time, slipping a finger inside of Lena.

“Oh, fuck,” Lena gasped, throwing her head back against the pillow.

“K…Kara?” A familiar voice on the other side of the door said. “Did you just drop an f bomb?”

_Intrusive little…_

“Winn! Whatever it is you want, it can wait.”

“Kara, you better not be moping around in there,” Winn replied. “Come on, I’m worried about you.”

Kara sighed heavily.

“He’s not gonna go away, is he?” Kara whispered.

“Hold on,” Lena said, pulling herself away from Kara, “I’ve got it.”

Lena wrapped a blanket around herself and sauntered over to the door.

“Lena! What are you doing?” Kara hissed.

She didn’t respond, and instead opened the door a crack.

“Can we help you?” she asked.

Kara, who rushed as fast into her shirt and shorts as she could, got to the door just in time to see Winn’s jaw practically drop to the floor.

“Hi, um,” Kara looked over at a smug, blanket-covered Lena. “Yeah. I’ll text you later, okay?”

She shut the door in Winn’s still shocked face.

“Are you guys back together?” she heard him squeak mutedly.

* 

Kara definitely ended up missing her 11:30 class. And the class after that. And her office hours
with Ms. Grant. And that evening’s rehearsal. Though, really, she was sure that if there even was a rehearsal at all that night, after the blowback of the previous day. Really, the two girl’s didn’t leave Kara’s dorm room all day, except the one time Lena ran out to grab dinner. Kara spent the whole time she was gone furiously cleaning her room (because, really, how had her room gotten so dirty???). And while Kara would have been willing to spend the entirely of the day finding new ways to make Lena scream her name, she knew that as a human, she had limits. So she left the pace of the day up to her, contentedly curling up next to her between orgasms so they could watch Netflix, talk, argue over science and Earth’s impossibly limited understanding of the universe, or anything else they could think of to pass the time.

It was honestly the best day Kara had had since coming to NCU.

Finally, at about eight that evening, she answered one of Winn’s twenty or so text messages, most of which were probing into her relationship status with Lena. He had told her that apparently almost no one had showed up to rehearsal, and that regardless of how everyone might feel about Lena, they all could agree that Snapper was totally out of line, and that Kara flipping out on him like that was “totally bad ass”.

Yeah, so, my bad for skipping out today, Winn.

Wanna get coffee and catch up?

Is your girlfriend coming with you, then?

“Lena, wanna come get coffee with me and Winn?”

Lena was flipping through Kara’s anthology of Elizabethan literature.

“Yeah, sure,” she replied.

Yep.

HA! YOU ADMIT SHE’S YOUR GIRLFRIEND!!

I’M GOING TO DIE!!! FUCKING FINALLY!!!!

Kara chuckled despite herself.

“What?” Lena asked, as she put the book down and got up to rummage through Kara’s closet, looking for something to borrow.

“Nothing…it’s just…Winn is very happy at the idea of us being a couple.”

“Well, are we?”
Lena was frozen, facing away from Kara, waiting for her reply. Kara blinked. She thought about how afraid she was of being more than casual with Lena just a few weeks ago. And then she thought of where she was now.

“Well. I mean, yeah. If you wanna be,” Kara said.

She could hear the pace of Lena’s breathing pick up slightly. Her throat clenched as she swallowed past a swell of emotion. And then she was pouncing on top of Kara, kissing her dizzily.

“If I wasn’t goddamn exhausted I would fuck you senseless right now.”

“Wore you out again, huh?” Kara chuckled sitting up.

Lena settled into Kara’s lap, fiddling with a lock of her hair.

“Honestly, I think you and your super stamina just might kill me.”

Kara shrugged, smiling shyly.

“What are girlfriends for?”

Lena’s face was suddenly very serious.

“I just realized we’ve never even been on a date.”

“Well…” Kara said, upset at the idea that she just got to call Lena her girlfriend and might already have to take it back. “We’re going to get coffee, right?”

Lena scrunched up her nose.

“Yeah. With Winn.”

“Well, we could get dinner after?”

“Kara, you just ate your weight in Chinese food.”

Kara pouted up at Lena.

“Ugh, god, fine, you animal.”

Kara nipped at Lena’s collarbone playfully in response, and got up to throw on a pair of jeans.

*

Winn sipped at his white chocolate mocha, a ridiculous grin on his face as he watched his two friends in front of him sit close together, Lena’s hand on Kara’s thigh, occasionally whispering something private into Kara’s ear. He concealed his wide smile at the two of them behind the lip of his cup. Sitting on either side of him were two unexpected guests: James on the left, and J’onn on the right. Kara and Lena sat across from the trio.

“If you guys are here to chew me out for missing rehearsal earlier, then don’t bother,” Kara said. “I’m not coming back until Snapper apologizes for what he said about Lena.”
Lena slid her hand slightly up Kara’s thigh, the effect of it calming Kara momentarily.

“You know I appreciate you sticking up for me, but I can handle that weasel on my own.”

“But you shouldn’t have to! You…”

“Shh…” Lena murmured into Kara’s ear, “save you heroic notions for when we get back to your room later.”

James cleared his throat to regain the attention of the two girls, who were already slipping back into their own little universe.

“Anyhow,” he said, “that’s not why we’re here. J’onn, actually, approached me with an idea that I think you would want to hear.”

Kara turned her attention to J’onn. Meanwhile, Lena’s hand hadn’t left it’s dangerous position on her inner thigh.

“So, I understand that Dr. Carr is more than frustrating to work with. And I…I know that…” his eyes darted to Lena for a second, seeming to lose his train of thought. “I know that he’s doing nothing but burning out good, talented kids from theater entirely. And that’s…”

Lena moved her hand up even further until it was resting between Kara’s legs, her thumb and forefinger working to pop open the buttons on her jeans. Kara’s eyes widened in surprise. As did J’onn’s, who was suddenly clearing his throat, eyes darting around the room as if looking for something, anything, to distract him.

But, it wasn’t like J’onn knew what was happening. It’s not like he could see that…

*Oh crap, I totally forgot he was a mind reader.*

Kara slapped Lena’s hand away.

“Um, J’onn, before you continue, could I talk to you privately a second?”

The face he made was like that of a puppy being scolded. He followed her a few paces away from the table.

“Quit reading Lena’s mind!” she hissed.

“I’m sorry! I didn’t mean to!” he insisted. “Trust me, I’m trying to block it out. I don’t need to…hear that…”

Kara groaned.

“Well, just, focus on Winn’s thoughts or something.”

“You mean the one who is inwardly singing ‘Lena and Kara sitting in a tree, F-U-C-K-I-N-G’ to himself?”

Kara covered her face with her hands.

“Oh my god, even his thoughts are dorky,” she said into her palms. “Just. Focus on someone random. I don’t care. Just…not Lena…”

“I’ll try,” he replied.
They reconvened at the table. Kara sat far enough from Lena that she couldn’t get handsy again. Lena visibly pouted.

“Anyway, like I was saying,” J’onn said, “I hate to see anyone, you four especially, become so disheartened about something you used to care so much for just because a toxic director. And I know that there’s not much else available as far as options are concerned within the university. But, as fate would have it, a possible solution may have presented itself.”

“What’s that?” Kara asked.

“Well, a dear friend of mine, M’gann is her name, has been trying to start up a community theater program at the civic center down on fourth for a while now, but hasn’t had the staff necessary to get anything going. So I thought, since all of you seem to work so well together, James with his teaching and set design experience, Winn with his tech knowledge, and the two of you with your knowledge both on and off stage, I really think you could all work together to make a thriving theater program.”

Kara blinked several times.

“Wait, you’re serious?”

J’onn nodded.

“I already talked to M’gann in person the other day,” James said, “she said she might be able to hire me on as coordinator. The pay wouldn’t be great, but, I’d have a schedule flexible enough to be able to visit Lucy more often. Winn could join on as an intern once he graduates, I could possibly train him take over for me if I ever decide to move to Metropolis, and you and Lena could volunteer. Same as it already is, but we would actually get to run things the way we wanted to.”

“When would all of this start?” Lena asked.

“As soon as possible,” J’onn replied. “There’s some renovating that needs done to the performance space available at the civic center. Meanwhile, you’d have to come up with an opening season of shows to produce.”

“M’gann also wants to start an after school program to get local kids involved in doing their own Junior productions,” James piped in.

“So, wait,” Kara cut in, “are we seriously considering this? Just…completely ditching Dr. Carr and the show altogether?”

“Do we really have much reason to want to stay anymore?” Winn asked. “Kara, think of how much we could accomplish if we could make this work! Isn’t that more exciting than any droll half assed production Snapper will ever put on?”

Kara bit her lip, looking over at Lena for assistance.

“I think it’s a good idea,” Lena said, “Personally, I’d love to help with the after school program.”

The group at the table, Kara included, looked at Lena inquisitively.


Kara looked around at the people surrounding her, thinking about what a great team they could make.
“Alright,” Kara said, “I’ll agree under one condition.”

“What’s that?” James asked.

“Please don’t make me stage manage until I get some more experience. Like, a lot more experience.”

James chuckled.

“Deal. So…I guess the only thing left to figure out now is how we’re gonna break the news to Snapper.”

“Yeah, good luck with that,” J’onn said, bidding the group goodnight, and heading out of the coffee shop.

“Uh…Kara?” Winn asked warily, eyes on his phone screen.

“Hell no, I’m not telling him. He’ll murder me.”

“No, Kara,” Winn said, face pale as he still stared at his phone. “It’s not that, it’s…” His eyes glanced towards James. “Um, James, could I talk to Lena and Kara alone?”

James looked confused, but obliged.

“Sure, buddy, I should head home anyway. We’ll talk more tomorrow, okay?”

The remaining trio nodded.

“Winn, what is it?” Lena asked when James was out of earshot.

Winn’s mouth moved, but nothing coherent came out. He instead handed his phone to Kara and Lena. On it was an open page of the school paper’s newest online article update. It featured a dark, blurry photo Kara knew all too well, with the caption “A Luthor and a Super?”

Kara felt her breath catch in her throat. Lena wrapped an instinctive arm around Kara’s waist.

“Oh god,” Kara whispered. “Do they say if…”

“They don’t know who it is,” Winn answered. “They just ran the picture with a bunch of speculation.”

“Vasquez said they were gonna try to gather more info before releasing the picture. I thought I had more time…”

“Well, she must have gotten sick of sitting on it,” Winn replied.

“We should have fixed it while we had the chance…” Lena sighed. “Kara, I’m sorry I…”

“Lena, stop,” Kara said, squeezing Lena’s hand. “Don’t you dare apologize for today. It’s…it’s fine. No one knows who it is. We can still fix this.”

Lena’s facial expression changed from regret to sudden determination.

“Winn,” she said, “get your gear. We have work to do.”

Winn practically jumped out of his seat with excitement.
“Oh, this is gonna be awesome! Kara, we’re like, your tech saavy sidekicks! No, not sidekicks. Your consultants. Yeah. That sounds cooler.”

Lena cleared her throat.

“Yeah, right, sorry,” Winn said, “I’ll go get my stuff.”

“What about our date?” Kara asked mournfully.

“Kara,” Lena said, turning to Kara and grasping her hands. “Keeping you safe is more important to me right now. So, school paper sabotage now, date later. Cool?”

“You’re just…” Kara said, leaning in for a quick kiss, not caring if anyone saw them. After all, why should she? “You’re perfect.”

Chapter End Notes

hey, so, i was planning on tying up all my loose ends this chap so only the epilogue would be left for next week. But...i kind of had a really messed up, upsetting week. And it was like "k so you need to vent your emotions in a constructive way. so either finish the story or go swing a sledgehammer at that old wood burning grill you've been meaning to demolish"
...long story short there's a pile of rubble in my backyard and that is why this chap is so short...
At least i got some supercorp lovin in there, right?? :D
I feel like next week the superfriends are gonna feel a whole lot more like the scooby doo gang as they sneak around tryna figure out who took the picture of kara in the first place...stay tuned! <333
Chapter 17

Chapter Summary

In which our story is quickly coming to a close...

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Ow, Winn, that was my toe!”

“My bad.”

“Seriously, ow!”

“Well, I’m sorry we can’t all have, like, night vision, Kara!”

“I don’t have night vision, you jackass, I’m just not blind.”

“You know, I miss when you didn’t swear.”

“Oh, she’s always had a foul mouth. She just uses it outside the bedroom more often now.”

“I hate both of you.”

One flash of Kara’s laser eyes later, and she had rendered the lock to the journalism room obsolete. The trio crept inside, Winn pressing himself against the walls as he moved across the room, likely with some kind of theme song playing in his head. Lena, as if challenging Winn’s caution, strode over to Vasquez’s desk as if it were her own. She moved to drop into the office chair at the desk, and the effort made the adjustable seat nearly drop to the floor. Lena held her hand over her mouth to keep from gasping aloud as she squatted over the sunken desk chair, Winn began choking on muted laughter, and Kara simply rolled her eyes at the both of them.

“Can you guys stop goofing around before I get carted off to some facility to get experimented on or something?”

Lena frowned, eyes locked on the screen in front of her as she began clacking away at it. Kara moved to stand behind her, looking on at the screen as if she could even offer any kind of help.

“So um,” she said, “what ‘gear’ did you guys bring?”

Winn produced from his backpack a tablet and a USB cord, dropping them on the desk next to Lena. Finally, he placed a bag of Twizzlers on top of tablet, which Lena scooped up eagerly. Kara raised an inquisitive eyebrow towards Winn. He shrugged.

“It helps her think, I guess.”

“But…that’s it? No, like, special high tech gear or anything?”

“You two act as if I’m committing some kind of cyber espionage over here,” Lena said, mumbling through a mouthful of candy. “I’m literally just getting into Vasquez’s email account to see who
sent her the picture.”

“But don’t you need her password for that?” Kara asked.

Lena opened the top drawer of Vasquez’s desk and rummaged through it a bit until she produced a small, yellow notepad. She opened it, flipped through it a bit, and pointing to the bit of info scribbled into it that she needed.

“Faculty has to change their school portal passwords every semester just like the students. Obviously, they lose track of them all after a while. So, most of them write them down somewhere close to their computers. And…look at that! We’re in! I was right. I love when that happens.”

Kara was only mildly annoyed by the fact that Lena’s smug attitude, which used to annoy her to no end, was now kind of a turn on.

Lena scrolled and clicked her way through a few pages of Vasquez’s emails until she landed on one that seemed to interest her.

“How do we know that whoever took the picture didn’t just text it to her?” Kara asked.

“Psh,” Winn scoffed, “Because college students totally text their professors. Come on, Kara, nobody is that nerdy.”

Kara rolled her lips together, avoiding eye contact with Winn.

“Oh, God, frosh, please tell me you don’t text your professors?”

“Well, first of all, James doesn’t count. And second, I have to keep in touch with my math professor since he started sending some of his students over to me for tutoring. And…he’s the only person I know who appreciates some of the memes I find.”

“What…like…math memes?” Winn asked.

Kara chose not to respond.

“Lena, you’re dating a fucking nerd.”

“Tell me something I don’t know,” Lena said distractedly as she read through an email.

“Not dating til we go on an actual date, Lee,” Kara said, resting her head on Lena’s shoulder and hoping that if she was cute enough Lena would forget about embarrassing little tidbit about herself.

“Working on it, babe,” Lena said, giving Kara a quick peck on the cheek, though her eyes never left the screen. “Oh! Found it! Go me!”

Lena shoved a cluster of celebratory Twizzlers into her mouth as Lena and Winn crowded around the computer screen.

“Well, it’s a school email address at least, so we should be able to figure out who it is,” Kara commented, looking at the address of the sender, which read ‘lww@ncu.edu’


“What?” Kara and Lena said almost in unison.

“It’s fucking Leslie!” he shouted before covering his mouth when he realized how loudly he was
“What?” Kara squeaked, “Why would…”

At that moment, the door burst open, and Maggie Sawyer was there staring them all down sternly.

“Kara?” she asked in disbelief. “What are you doing in here?”

“The real question is what are you doing, Sawyer?” a droll, barely interested Lena said as she focused on whatever she had sent to the printer. “I’m not hiding Lex in here, just in case you were wondering.”

“I…I don’t…” Maggie stammered, looking from Lena to Kara.

“I didn’t tell her, Alex did,” Kara replied simply. “But seriously, are you still tracking her? Come on, Maggie.”

“What? No! I am still a security guard, you know. And you three are breaking and entering and tampering with university property. What are you guys even doing here?”

Well Kara certainly couldn’t tell Maggie that she was trying to save her super power wielding self from being exposed, that was for sure.

“I’m umm…umm…” Kara struggled, “I’m submitting an article for journalism class last minute?”

Maggie pursed her lips, unimpressed by Kara’s lie.

“You’re here to bury that story about you saving Lena, aren’t you?”

The three students looked at Maggie in disbelief.


“Alex told me about you,” Maggie said simply.

“Man you guys have got to stop trusting Alex with all your secrets,” Winn said.

“Why would she do that?” Kara insisted. “Why would she tell you that when you’re not even on our side?”

“Because I am!” Maggie insisted. “I am. Well, I want to be. Look…I’m sorry about everything that’s happened. I’m sorry to you, Kara, for lying to you and your sister. I’m sorry to Lena for…”

“Hey, Jaimie Bond,” Lena said to Maggie, the tone of her interruption biting and cold, “skip the heartfelt speech. You want to prove yourself? We have a job for you.”

Kara looked over at Lena, blinking in confusion.

“Um, okay.” Maggie replied. “What is it?”

* 

After a fair bit of searching, they managed to track Leslie down at The Station. At the sight of
Kara, the same bouncer that was working the night she pulled Lena out of there gave Kara a nervous side glance before stepping aside to let her in without question. Kara, however, had no plans to go. This part of the plan was all Maggie. Maggie gave the trio behind her a quick nod, and disappeared into the bar.

“Do you think she’s gonna get the job done?” Winn asked.

“I don’t know,” Lena said, “she’s kind of a shit spy.”

* *

Maggie found the messy platinum blonde head of hear in the crowd relatively quickly. She walked past Leslie, face calm as she grabbed the girl’s arm firmly and dragged her out of her bar stool.

“Hey!” Leslie snarled, “What the hell are you…”

“It’s in your best interest to stay quiet and follow me, Miss. Willis. You and I need to have a talk.”

Perhaps out of curiosity more than anything else, Leslie followed Maggie out the back entrance of the bar and into the alley.

“Wait, you’re that… that security guard, right?”

“That’s not all I am, Miss Willis. I’m an agent for an undisclosed federal agency. And you have caught my boss’s attention.”

Leslie scoffed. Her breath reeked of alcohol.


Maggie forced her face to remain like stone. Leslie wavered for a moment.

“Alright, then, let me see your badge.”

Maggie was issued a generic federal badge for situations like this. This was probably the last time she would ever get to use it. Leslie stepped forward to examine it, stumbling over her feet. She peered at it with red eyes.

Okay,” she said, apparently satisfied. “So what did I do? Is this about my antigovernment blog? Because it’s supposed to be read as satire, duh.”

“What? No. It’s… that picture you took the other day, that you sent into the school paper to get published.”

“Huh? Oh! The superhero thing! That was sick, right? It was like, I was a little excited to see a good old fashioned mob riot, ya know? And then whoosh, this flying thing comes in and plucks Lena up off the ground!”

Maggie raised a hand, gesturing for the rambling girl to quiet herself.

“Why did you send it into the school paper?”

Leslie shrugged.

“I took some journalism courses my sophomore year. I know how desperate Vasquez is to get one of her paper’s stories some national attention so she can find a better job. And I knew no major
paper would believe that the pic wasn’t faked. Plus, I couldn’t pass up the opportunity to see the students go on a witch hunt to find the super person among them, you know?”

Maggie rolled her eyes.

“You’re a real agent of chaos, aren’t you?” she said sarcastically.

Leslie produced a lollipop from her pocket, unwrapped it, and popped it into her mouth.

“I do what I can to keep myself entertained,” she said simply. “So, what? You gonna pump me for information about the mystery person or can I get back to my evening?”

“I’m not here to get information, Ms. Willis, I’m here to stifle it. That person you snapped a picture of is…protected. And I can’t let you jeopardize that.”

“So…what? The story is already up. People have seen it. There’s nothing I can do about that.”

“You can and you will denounce the credibility of the picture. Tell Vasquez you faked it, and rescind your permission to have it published.”

“I can’t just…”

“You will.”

“Or what?”

Maggie wondered just how good Kara’s “super hearing” was. Then, on cue, a dark figure appeared on the roof of the building above. She smiled.

“I’m so glad you said that,” Maggie said.

In a moment, Leslie was suddenly off the ground, screaming bloody murder as Kara let her dangle in her loose grip. The two of them disappeared from Maggie’s sight for a moment, the screaming still audible, and then Kara dropped Leslie back onto the ground, disappearing as fast as she had arrived.

“So we good?” Maggie asked calmly.

Leslie’s eyes were bulging out of her head, face sickly pale, lollipop missing.

“Um…yeah…” she said, and promptly doubled over to throw up.

“Good, sign this, please,” Maggie said, holding out some kind of nondisclosure agreement.

Lena made it up. Whether it was binding or not didn’t matter. It just had to look real. Leslie wiped her mouth, and made a scribble on the page with the pen Maggie handed her.

“Phone, please,” Maggie then requested.

Leslie reluctantly handed over her cell phone. Maggie placed it in her back pocket.

“Hey!” Leslie began to protest.

“It will be returned to you soon enough,” she replied curtly.

Leslie rolled her eyes, but didn’t press any further on the matter.
“Can I go now or what?” she asked.

“Sure. But if that story isn’t discredited by tomorrow, I’ll be back.”

Leslie nodded, and stumbled her way out of the alley.

The trio was waiting for Maggie when she rounded the corner of the building.

“You think I convinced her?”


“Really didn’t think you had it in you to threaten somebody’s life, frosh,” Winn chimed in.

“Oh, she was fine,” Kara insisted.

“You tossed her around like you were juggling with her,” Lena said, failing at hiding her amusement.

“Yeah, and I caught her every time, right? Right. So. It’s fine.”

None of them seemed very convinced. Maggie, remembering the phone in her back pocket, handed it to Lena.

“What are you gonna do with that?”

“Nothing you need to know about, nark. Though you should at least know that it involves me being a much better spy than you are,” Lena replied, pocketing the phone.

“Oh, come on. Do you know how much shit I would be in if any of my superiors found out about any of this? Hasn’t my helping you at least earned back part of your trust?”

Kara gave Lena’s arm a quick squeeze, a silent plea in her eyes. Lena sighed.

“I’ll think about it,” she said. “Now don’t you have some deep dark hole to disappear into for a while?”

Maggie was suddenly very tense.

“Yeah. I um, I have a few calls to make. Until then, Kara, if you need me, I’ll probably be with your sister. And after that…well, I guess we’ll find out.”

Kara stepped forward, closer to Maggie.

“Thank you for this, Maggie. For everything. I’m sorry that…”

“Not your fault, Little Danvers. This, this job I mean, was never my path, anyway.”

“You can say that again,” Lena muttered.

Kara turned to glare at her, and Lena bit her lip, keeping any other quips she had to make from escaping.

“Are you gonna be okay?” Kara asked, turning back to Maggie.

Maggie shrugged.
“Yeah. I just…I’ll be counting the seconds til I can come back to National City.”

Kara made an attempt at a smile.

“So will we,” she said.

*

The next day, Kara popped into the journalism lab twenty minutes before class was supposed to start, trying to look as innocent as possible. Vasquez sat at her desk, visibly agitated.

“Good morning, Professor!” Kara beamed. “I saw that article the paper posted last night online. How intriguing! I noticed that…”

“Oh, would you hush?” Vasquez spat. “We had to pull the story. Apparently the source that sent it to me just…faked the picture to create drama on campus.”

“Oh no!” Kara said, knowing full well that the story had been pulled hours ago, and replaced with a quick apology note from the editor, something along the lines of ‘maintaining journalistic integrity’ and ‘the downfalls of modern technology and honest reporting’. “How terrible! What are we going to do now?”

“I don’t know, Danvers. I was going to just let it run for a day or two. But then Leslie Willis, that’s who sent us the picture, you may as well know, she started going off the rails online. Talking about aliens dragging her over National City by her heels, and the MIB coming to wipe her cell phone. Turned the whole story into a joke by doing so. So. I had to pull it. And now, by the time I figure out a new angle to spin on the story of the Luthor attack, it’ll be old news. Now just drop it, okay?”

“Well, actually,” Kara said, pulling a folder out of her backpack, “It just so happens that I went ahead with that interview with Lena Luthor. You know, just in case you wanted to give it a look.”

Yes, at some point the previous day, Kara had managed to keep Lena at bay long enough to get some proper interview time with her. It hadn’t been an easy task. Especially considering that Kara was now just as bad at keeping her hands to herself as Lena was.

Vasquez yanked the folder out of Kara’s grasp, looking it over with a bitter expression.

“Well, it’s not terrible,” the journalism professor admitted. “I guess this can work.”

Kara smiled widely.

“Well?” Vasquez bit, “are you just gonna stand there smiling stupidly at me because you got your way or are you gonna prep this for publication?”

“Oh, um, right,” Kara said, and took the article back.

*

That night, Kara’s stomach was in knots. The source of her anxieties was on the other side of the
theater entrance doors. When she walked into the theater, most of students were lounging around the seats of the audience. Veronica was on stage, reading Lena’s lines. Snapper was standing, his back turned to Kara. Kara glanced to her left, saw Lena, Winn, and James in the sound booth, who all nodded at her reassuringly.

Kara cleared her throat. Nothing. She did so again, louder this time, and was able to catch Snapper’s attention, who turned to peer at Kara condescendingly through his glasses.

“Oh! Well, look who finally got over her hissy fit long enough to come do her job!”

Kara clenched her fists. She heard the door to the sound booth creak open, light steps descending the stairs.

“I’m not here to work on your show,” Kara replied, urging her voice to remain composed. “I’m here.

“Oh, okay, then, you’re here to ‘tell me off’ again? Yeah, sure, I could use a laugh.”

Kara felt a swelling in her chest, like winds were swirling inside of her, trying to break out and tear everything apart that they touched. And really, if she thought about it, she wouldn’t mind tossing Snapper around a little like she had with Leslie the night before. Which, was really fun, if she was going to be honest. She unclenched her fists, stepped forward towards Snapper, not entirely sure what was going to happen next. But before she got to find out, a gentle hand slipped into hers, squeezing slightly. Kara took a breath, Lena’s presence behind her washing a calm over her mind.

“Dr. Carr,” she said, “You are a miserable person to work with. You are unprofessional, unorganized, you don’t care about anyone’s feelings but your own, and you have made me want to hate doing something that I used to love. And. And! On top of everything else, you insulted my girlfriend.”

You could hear a pin drop in the theater. Under the gaze of every pair of eyes in the room, Lena stepped closer to Kara’s side. Kara slid her arm around Lena’s waist.

“Yeah,” Kara continued. “So you know what? I’m done. Find someone else to be your stage manager.”

Snapper looked dumbfounded for a second.

“You can’t just…leave a show mid-production, Kara. It’s unprofessional. And if you’re thinking about taking a career in theater seriously, I promise you you’ll never get hired with that attitude.”

“Actually,” Kara replied coolly, “I already have a new project to work on. And if that doesn’t work out? Well, not that you would know, but I’m actually pretty damn talented at a lot of different things. So I’m sure I’ll do just fine. But thanks for your concern. Good luck to you.”

Snapper stared at Kara blankly. She smiled at him, and turned on her heel to leave. Lena, who was being tugged slightly by Kara’s hand interlaced with hers, took the opportunity to pause, look from Snapper to Veronica and back again, and raised two middle fingers at them, before following Kara out. Winn hopped down the stairs, James on his heels.

“I’m with her,” Winn said, taking his turn to exit.

James said nothing, but only handed Snapper his resignation, and joined the group in their exeunt. They said nothing to one another until they were on the other side of the exit doors. It was then that Winn squealed with excitement, jumping up and down.
“Oh my god, that was so awesome!” he exclaimed. “Kara, you are like, the most badass person I know. Don’t give me that look, Lena, you’re the most badass human I know.”

“Wait, what?” James asked.

Winn’s eyes widened, realizing his error.

“Don’t mind him,” Lena interjected. “He had some pre- quitting shots with me before we came over.”

“Oh! Now James can finally hang out with us like a normal person!” Winn said excitedly, glad that the moment of awkwardness was over. “No more student/professor restrictions. We have to celebrate. Where should we go?”

“Nuh uh,” Kara replied, “You will just have to entertain yourself for the evening. I have a hot date tonight.”

“Oh yeah?” Lena asked, sliding up next to Kara, arm wrapping casually around her waist, mouth turned in towards Kara’s neck. “Who might that be with?”

“You might know her, actually,” Kara said with a nonchalant shrug. “She’s that sassy green eyed brunette that struts around Luthor Hall like she owns the place. Which, technically she does.”

“Ooh,” Lena purred into Kara’s ear, “gotta watch out for those heiresses. They can be a handful.”

Kara’s hands slid down Lena’s sides.

“I think I can handle her,” she said.

“Only if you say please,” Lena replied, biting her lip as her eyes stared at Kara’s mouth.

The two men standing across from them cleared their throats in unison.

“Are they always like this?” James asked.

“Oh, yeah,” Winn replied. “It’s gross, right?”

“Completely,” James said with a chuckle. “Well, I’m gonna go call M’gann, tell her we’re free of Snapper’s tyranny. See you guys later.”

“And I’m gonna…go somewhere where you two aren’t all over each other. Night, kids.”

“So,” Kara said as they walked out of Luthor Hall. “Where are we going?”

“It’s a surprise. You still have that dress I bought you from that shop we went to last semester?”

Kara smirked.

“Which one? There were like ten.”

“The blue one.”

Kara flashed back to the memory of the two of them together in the dressing room, the first time Lena had ever put her hands on Kara. She was amazed at how that already felt like an eternity ago.

“I’ll go put it on. Wanna help?” Kara asked with a wink.
“Uh uh, no way, Danvers. You are officially on a Lena Luthor Date, TM. So no funny business.”

“Are you serious?”

“Dead serious, Kara. I intend to be a complete gentlewoman.”

Kara raised a dubious eyebrow at Lena.

“I’m not kidding, Kara! Now go change, I’ll meet you in front of your dorm building with the car.”

Kara rolled her eyes and walked towards the shortcut to her building, relishing in the way her stomach fluttered at the idea of their first date together.

*

Kara felt like she was going to burst. And not because Kara had really taken Lena seriously when she said “order as much sushi as you want” at dinner. But because she had just been on the best date ever and just wanted to do something to show her appreciation. But Lena was still standing by her “no funny business” policy. Lena literally had barely touched Kara all night. She didn’t let Kara feel her up even a little bit when Kara saw how gorgeous she looked in the tight red dress she had changed into. Lena didn’t use the private room she had reserved in the restaurant to her advantage. She didn’t get handsy in the booth at the jazz bar they went to afterwards. She didn’t even try to make a move when they stumbled across a pop up carnival and Kara ended up with a teddy bear almost the size of her pod from Krypton when she threw a baseball at a stack of milk bottles so hard that it went straight through the wall of the game stand.

And now. Now. Lena was walking Kara to her dorm, hands clasped in front of her, insisting that she was just trying to make sure Kara got home safe.

Kara was seriously going to die if she didn’t get Lena into her room and out of that dress.

She forgot about that momentarily, however, when she saw Alex’s car parked in front of her dorm building, Alex sitting on the hood.

“Hey,” Kara said as she walked up to the car. “You didn’t break into my building for once.”

Alex turned towards Kara, swinging her legs over the side of the car.

“Yeah. I wasn’t in the mood, I guess. And damn, girl, look at you. What are you all…” she noticed Lena coming up to stand next to Kara. “Ah. Date night?”

Kara nodded, a slight blush forming on her face as she smiled, still unable to believe her luck that she was on a date with hands down the most beautiful girl in National City.

“Well. You clean up good, kid. You taking good care of my little sister?”

“Yes, ma’am,” Lena said, not even trying to smirk or make some sarcastic comment.

 Seriously, who was this girl and what has she done with Lena?

“Good,” Alex said with a nod. She sighed slightly.
“What’s up, Alex?” Kara asked.

Alex shrugged.

“It’s nothing. It’s just…Maggie left a few hours ago.”

Kara stepped forward to grasp her sister’s hands in her own. She expected to smell alcohol on her breath, but there was none.

“Oh, sweetie,” Kara said. “I’m sorry. But it’s gonna be fine. She’ll be back before you know it.”

“I know, I know. I just miss her already.”

Kara smiled, tucking a lock of Alex’s hair behind her ear.

“Well, then, you’ll just have to keep busy by planning an awesome ‘welcome back’ date for her, won’t you?”

Alex smiled back at Kara.

“Yeah. I guess. And I could do that whole studying thing I should be doing, anyway. No redo’s in med school.” She sighed again. “Anyway, I just thought I’d let you know. My bad for interrupting you guys on your date.”

“It’s perfectly fine, Alex, I was just dropping Kara off,” Lena said.

Alex nodded.

“And I’m sorry, again, Lena, for everything. I didn’t know what to think when you started hanging around Kara. And, overprotective big sister that I am, I assumed the worst. But if I would have known then that you love her, well, I would have probably been a lot less of a dick.”

Kara blinked. Lena’s face instantly turned beet red. Alex’s mouth dropped open.

“Oh shit. You didn’t tell her…oh um. Fuck. You know what? I don’t even know what I’m talking about. It’s been a long day. I’m just gonna…go…”

Alex mouthed a silent ‘sorry’ at Lena before jumping into her car and peeling out of the parking lot.

Kara turned towards Lena, whose face was still red, and couldn’t help the renewed storm of fluttering in her stomach.

“So…” Kara began.

“Before you say anything, just know that Alex and I were just sort of babbling back and forth that night she got me drunk, and I didn’t think that…”

“Lena?”

“I just don’t want you to think that…”

“Lena,” Kara repeated softly.

Lena let out a long shuddering breath, hiding her face behind her hands. Kara pulled them away gently, staring into those big green eyes that she never got sick of getting lost in.
“You don’t have to say anything. You can tell me when you’re ready to. Okay?”

She nodded silently, pressing her face into Kara’s outstretched hand.

“Now,” Kara continued, “can you please for the love of Rao break your rule about first dates just this one time? Because I am dying right now.”

That classic, devilish grin was suddenly back on Lena’s face, the implications behind it sending shivers down Kara’s spine.

“I guess I can make an exception. But only because you in that dress is impossible to say no to.”

Kara bit her lower lip, and in a second she had Lena captured in a searing kiss.

Chapter End Notes

Epilogue next week, then that's all she wrote, folks!! (I literally wrote 90% of this chap in the last few hours. My procrastination game is getting a little out of hand)
But also i could write supercorp banter and flirting all damn day bc these two give me life UGH i can't...
(also i obvy have to bring Maggie back in the epilogue just bc Lena being snippy with Maggie is my aesthetic now???)
Love you guys. You're the most fun, supportive, and all around cool ppl ever, and if it weren't for you, i probably would have never been inspired to push this story to it's end. So <333333
Kara sat at a dusty piano in a small theater.

Well, it was technically sawdust.

A miraculous lull had fallen from the day’s work, the endless screeching of power tools cutting and nailing wood, transforming blank slabs of pine into small, temporary universes that existed, at the moment, only in the imagination of their builders. Kara took the moment to play out the melody jammed in her head, the one she had been hearing Lena tinker with over and over at the piano in her apartment the night before. Because Lena Luthor was nothing if not lavish enough to buy a full sized Steinway where a keyboard in her drafty studio apartment would have sufficed. She knew that the piano was Lena’s contradictory way of decompressing the tension in her mind. The music both soothed her and made her restless; reminding her of home, of Lionel and Lex, of cigar smoke and serenades, when monsters only existed in story books and not in human hearts.

Kara’s fingers stumbled over one another, trying over and over again to recreate the melody she had heard the night before. She hummed the tune, and it helped her slightly to correct her movements. So, with that in mind, she began to sing…

“Moon river…”

She alternated between humming and singing, the words not perfectly known to her.

“Wider than a mile…hm hmmm hm hmm hmm hmmm…”

A more than familiar presence crept up behind her. Her smell, her heartbeat, her breathing, the heat of her skin, all as familiar to Kara as her own body.

Lena exhaled slowly.

“I would like to point out the fact that it’s completely unfair of you to have a voice like that and insist of sticking to the work backstage.”

“I’d make an exception,” Kara said absently, pressing at the keys languidly, repeating the opening bar of the song over and over, “if the right role presented itself.”

“Diva,” Lena said, sitting on the empty space on the bench next to Kara.

“Son of a…” Kara heard a voice struggle from the prop loft.

Winn was up there somewhere, lost in piles of fabric, likely stabbing himself yet again with the sewing needle.

Lena set her hands two octaves below Kara’s on the keys, slowly playing out the parts Kara had tripped over, stopping at the end of the bars to let Kara attempt to repeat her. Her eyes looked between the keys and distant, unseen memories.

“It’s that time,” Lena said.

“Already?” Kara asked. “I haven’t thought of anything yet.”
“Too bad” Lena said, her fingers moving on to a new song, some new melody Kara could only sit and listen to, the sound of it bringing images of heavy rainfall pattering against Lena’s bedroom window to Kara’s mind. “Tell me one truth.”

Kara smiled, trying to think of one new truth to tell Lena for today, like they did every day.

“When I was fifteen,” she said, “a boy named Luke told all his friends that he went to third base with me, when he’d really only barely talked to me at a friend’s house. And I had no idea what that meant until Alex told me. So…I broke three of his toes with a good stomp when I ran into him in gym class. And I told Alex and my parents it was an accident, but it totally wasn’t.”

“Well that sounds like a completely justified thing to do.”


Lena sighed quietly, eyes still locked on her hands which continued to play the soft, soothing melody.

“Yesterday, I was happy that Lex got caught and locked up two weeks ago. Because it meant he was done threatening your cousin, doing terrible things to innocent people, and potentially putting the both of us in danger.”

“And today?” Kara asked, voice just above a whisper.

Lena took Kara’s right hand in her own, placing it over the keys.

“Today,” she said, moving Kara’s fingers for her so she could teach her the song she had been playing. “I just wish I could have my brother back.”

Kara squeezed Lena’s hand.

“I’m sorry, babe,” she said, resting her chin on Lena’s shoulder.

“It’s okay,” Lena replied. “If it weren’t for all this, I never would have met you.”

Kara smiled.

“You sap.”

Lena turned her face towards Kara’s, pressing their foreheads together.

“Guilty as charged.”

The clearing of a throat pulled the two girls out of the moment, Kara spinning around rapidly to see the source of the sound.

“You see, this is what I don’t miss about you being my assistant, Kiera. My office finally went back to being beautifully devoid of hormones and sexual tension once summer break began.”

“Sorry, Miss Grant, but to be fair, you are a little early.”

She put her hands on her hips.

“Oh yes, forgive me. Please, go back to making out with your girlfriend instead of convincing me you’re both professional adults that I should entrust my son with.”
Lena rolled her eyes privately to Kara, before getting up off of the piano bench and strolling over to Miss Grant, her posture and stride as demanding as hers.

When Lex was finally arrested, Lena, even if she never said it out loud, began thinking about what she could do with Luthor Corp and its resources now that he was gone. Since then, Kara had begun to see, now more than ever, that strong, fearless, impossibly driven side of Lena that was so inherently Luthor. She was confident. She was motivated. She was passionate with Kara late into the night, and up early in the morning tinkering with new experiments and software. And Kara couldn’t get enough of it.

“And how is that class scheduling software I reprogrammed for you, Miss Grant?” Lena asked.

Miss Grant pursed her lips, trying to maintain her air of indignant condescension.

“Well it has cut down my need to interact with the students by at least fifty percent. So, I guess it’s a welcome improvement, even if you only did it to get more time with Kiera.”

“The words you’re looking for are ‘thank you, Lena’. Hey, Carter.”

A skinny boy with a head of thick curled brown hair and wide, innocent eyes stepped out from behind his mother’s shadow, giving a coy smile and a small wave of his hand.

“Still insist on double majoring in history and computer science, Kiera?” Miss Grant asked.

“Yep,” Kara said with a smile. “I know they aren’t my strong points. But that’s why I love them. It’s a challenge, you know?”

Miss Grant shook her head, keeping whatever comment she had to make to herself. She gave Carter and affectionate tap on the shoulder, and left without another word. As she left, she passed by J’onn and M’gann, who were just entering the theater.

“J’onn!” Kara said excitedly, getting up from the piano, “I didn’t expect to see you tonight!”

“Well, I was grabbing dinner with M’gann, and my own company is working with my assistant for the night, so I thought I’d come by and see how things were going here.”

Kara’s stomach growled at the mention of dinner. As if on cue, Lena grabbed a bag she had stashed next to the piano and produced a box with the symbol Kara recognized from the little pizza shop across the street from Lena’s apartment.

“Is that a calzone from Rio’s?” Kara asked excitedly.

“Oh, my god, you read my mind.”

“I did no such thing, I just know you,” Lena said, “though, speaking of mind reading, I better keep my thoughts to myself.”

She winked at J’onn, who made a small smile in reply.

They had to tell Lena about J’onn. After all, they couldn’t just let her keep having compromising thoughts about Kara in earshot of him without telling her about it.

“Well, it’s good you’re here,” Kara mumbled to J’onn through a large bite of cheesy, carb filled heaven. “You can help Carter with some of his solo bits until the rest of the kids show up.”
“Oh yeah?” J’onn asked. “What is it you want to work on, young man?”

Carter blinked several times, caught off guard by the sudden attention.

“Well...I dunno...I guess I need help making my voice sound more...you know, beast like?”

Lena, as promised, was directing a junior production, and had decided to do Beauty and the Beast. And while Carter had been a little shy and soft spoken, he had the most promising voice and acting ability, so Lena, surprisingly adept director that she had suddenly become, was more than willing to take on the challenge of bringing him out of his shell. Kara, of course, was ready to help, too. J’onn smiled down at his small charge, and sat down at the piano, gesturing for Carter go up to the stage. While he and Lena worked with him, J’onn at the piano, Lena pantomiming large, beast-like gestures for Carter to copy, Kara plopped down next to M’gann in an audience seat in the first row.

“I think he’ll be great,” Kara said, “he just needs us to believe in him.”

“Lena has been great with him,” M’gann replied. “With all of the kids, in fact. I have to say, I didn’t know what to expect when I had this oddball group sent my way by J’onn to help me start this program. Especially considering where you’d all come from.”

Winn came rushing down the stairs, carrying a pair of furry beast arms with him. He helped Carter into them, a large smile growing on both their faces.

“Oh, I wouldn’t judge any of us based on our time working with Snapper.”

“Apparently not. I don’t know how we could have gotten so far here without any of you. While we’re on the topic, how is your old director these days?”

Kara shrugged.

“I have no idea, honestly. Most of the people I was close to in the theater program ditched shortly after we did. I know the show we were working on that semester was still put on. But according to the reviewer for the school paper that went to see it, it was a train wreck. After that I just stopped paying attention to any of it. All the classes I take are in buildings halfway across campus. I spend most of my down time here. Now, it’s nothing to me but a handful of stories.”

M’gann smiled.

“I’ve heard some of them. They’re...interesting, to say the least.”

The entry doors groaned open. James was ushering in some of the younger actors inside, chatting amicably with their parents as they waved their goodbyes to their kids until they would pick them up again in a couple of hours. James seemed to be all smiles since taking on this new job.

“Well, I can’t be too bitter about any of it,” Kara continued. “If it weren’t for that theater, I wouldn’t have met any of these people, or you, or these kids. I wouldn’t be the person I am, really.”

The girl who had the role of ‘Chip’ rushed up to the stage, excitedly asking Carter if she could try on his costume arms. Winn fidgeted nervously as Carter handed them over to the girl, likely picturing all of the things that could happen to his creation in the hands of a giddy young child.

“We’re gonna have to get someone to help Winn with costume repairs before he has a heart attack,” James said as he passed by Kara with a familiar wink.
“It’ll be fine,” Kara insisted unconvincingly. “You coming over later?”

“Mariokart tournament? Hell yeah. Wouldn’t miss it.”

“Yeah! I’m gonna beat your superhero ass, Kara!” Winn exclaimed from the stage.

Then, realizing that A) James, M’gann, and most everyone else in the theater didn’t know that she had super powers and B) he had swore in front of children, Winn suddenly turned a bright crimson.

“And…you know, by ass I meant, um, rear end, and by superhero I meant, well just…strong independent female…” he struggled.

Kara glared at Winn for a moment, then looked at M’gann expectantly.

“Next time, Kara,” she said.

“But you have to come! It’s Friday!” she whined.

“And I am not as young as you, Kara! I’m not a college kid anymore, sometimes I just want to go home, have a glass of wine, and be in bed by ten.”

Kara rolled her eyes.

“Fine. But you will come next time. Promise?”

“Promise.”

Content enough with M’gann’s response, Kara went back to inhaling her dinner.

* 

Later that night, the gang was crowded around Lena’s television. They had of course moved video game nights to Lena’s apartment when she moved off campus because she of course had the largest TV out of anyone. But it was also where Lena felt the safest.

“Hey, Lena,” Winn commented as he plugged his game console into her television. “Not that I don’t appreciate upholding the tried and true Mariokart night tradition, do you think we could, I dunno, go out and do something one of these weekends instead of hanging out here?”

“Hey, Lena,” Winn commented as he plugged his game console into her television. “Not that I don’t appreciate upholding the tried and true Mariokart night tradition, do you think we could, I dunno, go out and do something one of these weekends instead of hanging out here?”

“What’s wrong with hanging out here?” Kara asked defensively as she plopped onto the couch next to Lena, a large bowl of popcorn in hand.

“Well, first of all,” Alex chimed in as she stole a handful of popcorn from the bowl, “there’s always a good chance you two will disappear up into the loft to fool around while we’re here and can hear you because of the whole ‘no walls’ thing.”

“Rao’s sake, it was one time, Alex,” Kara replied.

“Yeah, and I’m still mentally scarred from it,” Alex said, making gagging sounds.

“Also, you know, there is a whole world city out there to conquer, dude!” Winn insisted, “I know you’re nervous ever since…” Winn refrained from mentioning Maggie around Alex because he
likely knew it would instantly put her in a funk for the rest of the night. “Well, since you found out about Kara. But you can’t be afraid of what’s potentially lurking behind every corner.”

“I’m not! Really, I’m not. I just…” Lena sighed. “I feel safer here. I feel like Kara is safer here. Because…”

“Because you’ve rigged this whole place with transmission scramblers and high tech security systems?” Alex filled in. “Yeah, we know. I remember having to log my fingerprint and retina scan into your door lock.”

Lena shrugged innocently.

“I should think you’d be happy that she’s so cautious, Alex. My identity has probably never been more secure in my life,” Kara said.

“Oh, I am happy. But I also wouldn’t mind going out every now and then, either.”

Kara squeezed Lena’s hand reassuringly. This was nothing that they hadn’t talked about at length. How Kara could keep herself safe, how she didn’t need anyone else worrying about her safety every minute of every day. And Lena knew she would have to get comfortable with letting Kara choose to put herself at risk by being with her. Hell, she couldn’t forget it, seeing as Kara told her so every single day, that she chose her. And Lena was getting there, she was. But for now Kara was okay with indulging her a little. She was okay with the baby steps Lena was making to release the fears and tensions in her mind. Because no one could completely change who they were overnight.

And Lena was glad for Kara’s lenience, because honestly, she had never been more inspired with her life and her work than she was when Kara was here with her, in the little world that they had built for themselves in this apartment.

There was a knock at the door.

“That’s probably James,” Winn said as he got up to answer the door. “Everyone knock off the Kara’s secret identity talk, huh?”

“Can’t we just tell him, too?” Kara asked.

“Kara, if I have to tell Mom and Dad that one more person knows you’re an alien, they’re both gonna have heart attacks. You may as well post it on facebook or something at this point.”

Kara stuck her tongue out at Alex in reply.

“Speaking of,” Alex continued, “Lena, Dad wants to know if you’re coming over for the 4th of July.”

“Oh,” Lena said, blinking, “I didn’t really think about it. Do you guys…want me to be there?”

“Well, yeah, silly, that’s why we’re inviting you.”

“Then, um, yeah. I’ll be there,” Lena replied, unable to hide the smile growing on her face.

James walked in with a bottle of wine in the crook of one arm, and Lucy Lane on the other. Her law degree conquered, she was taking a long vacation in National City. She had even started talking about looking for jobs out this way, since James was making so many worthwhile connections in the professional theater world in the city since taking on the job at the community center. But nothing had been decided yet. For now, they were simply enjoying each other’s company, and
everyone was enjoying having Lucy around again.

After the group had settled into a tight squeeze on the couch, Lena’s mind still drifted back to her own worries and fears. About Lex’s capture, about Lillian’s fresh wave of hell she had sent out on and every government agency responsible for spying on Lena and the rest of the family. Lillian was convinced that that was the only reason he was found out. Not simply because it was inevitable, or because hateful vendettas made Lex careless and impulsive. She thought about Luthor Corp, about what might become of it, and if she had the strength to stand up to her mother and make the move to get more involved with the company so she could reinvent it as a force for good.

Lena pushed her thoughts away with a long sigh, insisting to herself to be content in the moment in her studio apartment, as the window curtains billowed in the balmy night breeze, her and Kara’s friends gathered close around her on the couch. A stash of extra game controllers sat in a box behind her for when Kara would eventually get too wrapped up in the game and crush her controller in her strong grip. Though, at the moment, Kara’s grip was soft and secure around Lena’s stomach as she made a rather comfortable pillow.

Lena laid her head back into the crook of Kara’s neck, breathing deeply.

“I love you,” she said for the fifth or sixth time that day.

“I love you more,” Kara replied in her familiar refrain.

Lena smiled.

“Oh, God, you two are so gross,” Alex groaned, “But at least you’re distracted enough for me to kick your ass, Luthor.”

“Whatever you say, Danvers,” Lena replied, not very concerned with the progress of the game.

In reality, all of the people in the apartment except for Alex were waiting expectantly for a certain someone to knock at the door. Even Lucy was filled in on the surprise.

Because after no contact for three months, then getting the news that she had to first train in a police academy outside of National City and then transfer back in, so as not to raise suspicion about her disappearance from the academy the first time, Maggie was finally coming home. Lena might have had a few grumblings and snarky comments to make about her return at first. But she couldn’t resist the idea of helping surprise Alex, just so she could see her girlfriend’s sister happy.

And as coincidence would have it, just as Lena was thinking about Maggie and her return, there was a knock on the door. No one moved, each of them trying their best at a poker face. Lena cleared her throat.

“Hey, Alex, you mind seeing who’s at the door?” she asked.

“Why, so you can cheat?”

“That’s exactly why.”

Alex rolled her eyes.

“You’re lucky Kara’s around to protect you,” she said, and got up to answer the door.

The group all eagerly turned to watch Alex as she sauntered unknowingly to the door. When she
opened it, a small yelp escaped her.

“Hey there, Danvers,” Maggie said with a dimpled smile.

“Maggie!” Alex shrieked, and leapt into her arms.

The end.

Chapter End Notes

I can't...believe this story is over like...holy shit...
It's so weird bc the week after this is going to feel like the week after a show ends. I'm not gonna know what to do with myself bc I won't have this story to worry about working on...
I don't even know what to say to you guys to make you realize how much fun this has been for me. How awesome it's been to get to know some of you. How cool it was to know that this silly little story that popped into my head turned into this absolute BEHEMOTH that other people actually enjoyed and felt connected to.
There's parts of the story I didn't get to cover. Parts that I didn't do enough justice for, parts I regret even making, characters that got glossed over simply because I didn't have enough time to get to everyone and everything I pictured in my head. But I'm still pretty damn proud of this thing. And I hope you guys had fun reading it.
I have some more writing projects planned for the near future. All of which are supercorp, bc it owns my whole life, pretty much. So I hope some of you guys stick around for when I put out some new stuff. In the meantime, come bug me on tumblr (url schatzietess), because trust me, I will need ppl to talk to to fill the void of not working on this project anymore.
I could gush forever, but I won't. I love you guys so much. Thanks for going on this ridiculous fuckin journey with me. <<<333 always.
-Tess

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