It’s been a long two weeks, folks. Thank you to everyone who’s caught up over the hiatus, and to all of you who’ve been following along daily and patiently waiting.

So. The cops are busted, the bar is trashed. M’gann’s the wrong shade of Martian and J’onn isn’t color blind. Maggie tried to beat the system, got sent on a Supergirl killing mission. Lillian’s a straight up bitch, but they finally have proof she’s head of Cadmus. Alex kicked Maggie’s ass to save it (while checking it out). Kara and Cat have been getting closer and closer, working those journalistic angles and leaning on each other in new and interesting ways. They were about to fly home from the DEO when we checked on them last, right before Lillian kicked her next nefarious plan into gear. And that’s what you missed on Glee Supergirl Virtual Season.

COME ALONG THIS WEEK WHEN:

National City’s aliens are going on strike, while Cat and Kara take a trip to Metropolis. Maggie finds out her fate at the hands of the DEO and NCPD, while Alex deals with her feelings. When her loyalties are questioned, Lucy has to decide whether she steps up. M’gann believes her story ends here, now J’onn knows the truth. Is she right?
Act I
Just when you think you’ve seen all the wonders a @pinkrabbitpro can conjure, suddenly there’s flying, romantic stylez. You can sigh happily in the comments or hit the Tumblr ask.
Act I

Chapter Summary

There’s growing unrest amongst the alien population of National City in the wake of the raid at M’gann’s bar. Cat and Kara stumble into another sleepover, while Alex and Lucy punch out their problems.

Chapter Notes

Getting fancy from @xy0009!
Hit the comments or ask box about the pretty.

Our editors have carried us this far, so give it up for them please. catherinegrant (ao3 | tumblr), @spaceshipsarecool (ao3 | tumblr), @Revolos55 (ao3 | tumblr).

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

TEASER

The DEO was in flames.

Heart pumping, Alex stumbled over bodies and debris, struggling to breathe through thick smoke and heat. Gunshots boomed, glass shattered, and everywhere she turned, agents shrieked as fire consumed them.

Alex searched the flames for Kara, Winn, Vasquez, and J’onn, terrified with each dead agent she encountered she would find one of them beyond saving. She spied Lucy ahead, stepping casually
through the door to the holding cells, like she didn’t have a care in the world.

No. The word caught in the smoke and ash in Alex’s throat. Cadmus had come for them, and there was nothing Alex could do but watch her world burn.

She slammed through the holding cell door, drawing up in horror when she found Maggie’s cell engulfed, Maggie screaming her name from inside.

"Alex!"

Alex gasped and jolted awake. J’onn’s hands were on her shoulders, shaking her none too gently from her dreams.

"You’re okay. Everyone is okay, Alex."

Trembling and disoriented, she sat up quickly, glancing around the conference room she’d drifted off in. "Maggie…"

"Is fine." J’onn sat next to her on the couch, wrapping an arm around her shoulders and drawing her close. Did he know it was just the way her father had comforted her when she had bad dreams as a child? The way he’d had to comfort Kara those first few months, each night she woke up crying for her parents, for her family, for Krypton?

Leaning into his steadying bulk, Alex buried her head in her hands. "Sorry."

"Nothing to be sorry for. I’ve been having a few nightmares myself lately."

Alex carded a hand through her hair and turned to him. "Thought you were going home."

"Went for a walk to clear my head. Didn’t work. Felt your distress when I returned."

Alex must have scared the hell out of him. "Lucky me. That one sucked."

J’onn smiled thinly.

"What about you?" Alex asked. "You okay? We didn’t get the chance to talk about M’gann."

"What’s there to talk about? She lied. That’s what they do." He got to his feet and Alex winced, wishing she’d kept her mouth shut.

"I was so… stupid. I should have vetted her."

"What happened isn’t your fault, Alex. I’m not blaming you."

"I’m blaming me." She stood on unsteady legs. "J’onn, I’m sorry…"

He dipped his head to meet her eyes. "I’m glad you didn’t dig into this, Alex. Doing so could have gotten you killed. White Martians have already taken too much from me as it is."

"Is it possible… I mean, M’gann saved my life. She’s helped aliens assimilate to Earth. Maybe she’s different?"

"They’re all the same. You can’t trust their kind. Never forget that."

"You should talk to her," Alex urged.
"They murdered my people. To know she dishonored their memory by wearing our skin, pretending to be one of my kind? It’s unforgivable."

"J’onn…"

"What would you do locked in a room with Lillian Luthor?"

Alex clenched her jaw, unable to meet his gaze.

"Now imagine the rage you feel amplified by the deaths of every person you ever loved. Every person you ever knew."

Alex couldn’t fathom the scope of his loss any more than she’d ever truly been able to wrap her head around Kara’s. "We should hand her case off. I can contact another branch—"

"I’ve already left a message for Major Lane."

Her dream still vivid and fresh, Alex balked. "With all due respect, sir, Lucy could be compromised. You going to read her mind? Be sure we can trust her?"

"Alex." His tone was firm and commanding. "We’re both tired. We can talk about this in the morning."

Reluctantly, she let the topic go, but she wasn’t done with it, not by a long shot. "Fine, but I’m not going back to sleep. I’ll work on—"

"The hell you’re not. Lay down," J’onn said, pointing meaningfully at the couch. With a sigh, Alex complied.

"I’m just going to get up when you…” She lapsed into silence as he drew closer. "What are you doing?"

"Close your eyes."

"Why?"

"That’s an order, Agent Danvers." J’onn sounded exasperated with her, but there was the faintest trace of affection in his tone.

She crossed her arms over her chest belligerently. "I don’t know what you think this is going to…” His fingers were warm on her temple, and her eyelids fluttered as a sudden, heavy compulsion to sleep weighed her whole body down. She felt like she was sinking through the couch, through the very floor. A rush of pleasant memories cascaded through her mind, full of sunny days, Kara’s laugh, sand beneath her feet, and Maggie’s dimpled smile.

"You’ve been holding out on me," she slurred, tumbling back into sleep.

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Drawing her knees to her chest, Maggie wrapped her arms around her legs and closed her eyes. Sitting and waiting for someone to kill her was honestly starting to get on her nerves. Maybe she’d given Cadmus too much credit, or maybe she hadn’t given the DEO enough. Either way, she was safe for now. Safe and… bored.

Maggie?
Her eyelids fluttered open. Maggie stared at the cell door, expecting to see someone standing there, but she was alone.

*Come on, Sawyer. I know you’re here somewhere.*

"M’gann?"

*Think at me rather than talk at me.*

"Where…" Maggie dropped her feet to the floor before gripping the edge of her bunk. *Where are you?*

*This is the only time you’ve ever talked to me telepathically without screaming. Progress.* M’Gann sounded both tired and droll, and Maggie’s stomach knotted with concern.

Maggie got to her feet and slowly began to pace. She’d prowled the cell so much her calf muscles ached. *Where are you?* Maggie insisted.

*Here. Same as you.*

*At the DEO? Why?*

*You weren’t the only one keeping secrets, Maggie.*

*M’gann—*

*For what it’s worth, that agent on your mind? Danvers? Don’t let her fool you into thinking she doesn’t care.*

Maggie’s heart stuttered. *Don’t change the subject.*

*She thinks you’re hot,* M’gann teased, but it was more for form. M’gann’s emotions ghosted through her, leaving regret to sit cold and leaden in Maggie’s stomach.

*What did you do? Is this about the network?*

Silence settled between them, but she still sensed M’gann, wrestling with her secrets. Maggie knew the feeling all too well.

*You’ve been a good friend, Maggie. One of the few I’ve had these last hundred years. I want you to know I lied to protect you as much as me.*

*Tell me,* Maggie pleaded.

With a sigh, M’gann revealed a truth Maggie never expected.

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**ACT I**

They landed on the balcony outside Cat’s bedroom with barely a sound. Kara’s cape swirled around them as they settled, fluttering against Cat’s legs in a gentle caress. Arms still wrapped around Kara’s neck, Cat didn’t want to let her go, the heat trapped between them potent and seductive.

"That was…” The spray off the ocean when they’d swooped low had been an almost incomparable high, one no combination of pills and alcohol could match, but with the adrenaline wearing off, Cat’s
bed was calling with almost magnetic force. "Amazing," Cat finished, wincing at how insufficient the word was for the feeling of flying over National City safe in Kara’s arms. It was a thrill in itself to see Kara that confident, so completely in her element.

"Your hair is a little messy," Kara teased. "All that fancy conditioner can’t compete with the wind."

"I suppose the fact yours falls in perfect curls every time is another superpower?"

Kara smirked, a hint of that super smugness creeping in. Her hands slid up Cat’s sides, thumbs brushing over her ribs before she reluctantly stepped back. "I should get…"

"Going?" Cat filled in when Kara didn’t finish the thought right away. "You don’t have to. Are you hungry?" Maybe the salt air had put the idea in her head, or maybe knowing how close Lillian had come to taking this beautiful woman away from her made Cat want to keep Kara close.

"Am I… what, you’re going to cook? It’s way after two…"

"Of course I’m not going to cook." Cat grabbed Kara’s hand and led her through the French doors into her bedroom, kicking off her heels as she went. "But comfort food isn’t just a turn of phrase for you. I can conjure up something in the kitchen, though it might be cold."

"No, but thank you." Kara halted at the side of the bed, letting go of Cat’s hand. Just a few months ago Kara had almost hyperventilated at the mere brush of her hand along Cat’s elbow. Now the contact happened freely and far more often than Cat had ever dared hope.

"What else comforts a superhero?" Cat asked, not quite brave enough to look at Kara directly. "If it’s in my power…"

"Everything’s in your power," Kara replied, with what should be gentle mockery, but sounded a little too close to reverence. "There’s something, but I don’t want to intrude." Her gaze lingered on the bed before she shook her head. "I should go. You’ve hardly been sleeping as it is."

"In case it escaped your notice, we’re making something of a habit of this. I think we can stop with the excuses and admit we don’t mind each other’s company, don’t you?"

The confession was supposed to settle Kara’s nerves, but it seemed to have the opposite effect. "Thank you for flying with me," Kara blurted, like a flight attendant eager to disembark, "but I should… I should go. Goodnight, Ms. Grant."

Cat scowled. Ms. Grant? Back to that again?

"Don’t you dare fly off that balcony, Supergirl," Cat commanded, pleased when Kara froze by the door. It wasn’t hard to work out what Kara needed, not when she glanced longingly at the overstuffed pillows and barely-disturbed duvet on Cat’s bed. To make her point, Cat tossed the sheets back with a flourish. "It would seem the only decent sleep I’ve had lately was in Midvale."

Kara took a hesitant step back into the room. "When we…"

"Perhaps I was just exhausted, or…"

"Or it might be because I… that we…"

"Mmm." Cat gave her a long look, gesturing towards the bed as though the matter had been settled. "We’re drained and need a decent night’s sleep. Honestly, I’m afraid you’d fall out of the sky if I let you leave now."
Kara’s mouth curved with the softest smile. "You weren’t worried a few minutes ago."

"Stay. We both want you to," Cat added softly.

Their gazes held for a moment before Kara licked her lips and nodded. "Should I just wear–?" She started to unfasten her cape.

"Only if you want to be attacked with a giant bottle of Purell in your sleep. I’ve seen the grimy hell holes you’ve dragged that cape through."

Kara’s brow knit at the visual. "I can go home and change." Her shoulders slumped as she looked out at the night. "But it would be silly to come all the way back."

"Oh, for God’s sake." This strange, new dynamic had already given Cat more thrills than she cared to explore, but no amount of fondness could overcome her natural impatience. She marched into her closet and pulled out the first slip she thought would fit Kara. It was an unworn gift from Cat’s ex-husband, chancing his luck when they were already well on the road to divorce. "Dressing room’s over there." She gestured, before throwing the nightdress gently at Kara’s head. After a moment’s thought, she pulled out another for herself. If she gave a little too much consideration to how well it fit, that it put a little sway in her hips, then who would know?

"Thank you," Kara heaved out in relief, and then with a breeze she was out of sight. By the time Cat had changed, wiped off her makeup and climbed into bed, Kara had cleaned up in the bathroom and was waiting beside the nightstand. While Cat had experienced Kara in adorable pajamas, it was quite something else to see her in black silk, with just a hint of lace at the top of the bodice. The thin straps strained slightly over those defined shoulders, and it was a little tighter over the curve of Kara’s breasts than it ever could have been on Cat, but the slip fell to a respectable mid-thigh. Perfectly reasonable sleepwear. If it happened to make Kara look more like the beautiful woman she was, Cat felt no need to complain.

She had a weary eye roll ready, expecting another round of equivocation, but was pleasantly surprised when Kara slipped beneath the sheets at Cat’s nod. Making the decision for them both, Cat switched off the lights by tapping an app on her phone. In the almost-darkness, they settled against their respective pillows. Cat had nearly drifted off when Kara broke the silence.

"I’m worried… about Alex."

Cat had only met Alex under the most trying of circumstances, but she’d still developed a reluctant affection for her. They shared a fierce protectiveness for a certain invulnerable alien, which no doubt influenced those feelings. "Why?"

"Jeremiah is still out there. Now this business with Maggie. I’m scared it’s too much. That she’ll do something she regrets, just to get results." Kara turned on her side, facing Cat, only inches between them.

"Not to mention Maggie could have killed her beloved sister tonight." Cat let that disturbing fact settle between them, an opening for Kara to talk about it if she needed to. When nothing came, Cat continued. "Is there anything I can do?"

"This is more than enough," Kara whispered, her eyes darting across Cat’s face, lingering on her lips long enough Cat couldn’t pretend not to notice. "I haven’t even asked how you are."

"I spent most of the evening writing our article and listening to your little skirmish." Cat ran a hand through her wind-tousled hair, the movement dragging Kara’s gaze down her arm, over the bare skin
above her own nightdress. "And I got an email from Olivia. She wants me to attend another fundraiser in Metropolis."

"Olivia? As in…?"

"The president, of course."

"Of course," Kara echoed dryly. "Need a lift?"

"Your method is a little rough on the hair." Cat was quiet a moment, enjoying the heat radiating off the powerful Kryptonian body beside her. "Lillian will likely be there."

Kara didn’t immediately denounce the idea, much to Cat’s surprise, but she didn’t look happy about it either. "Cat…"

Cat sighed, deep and weary. "Despite recent revelations, until I’m in the same room as her, I’ll never be sure. Besides, I could use a good splashy public appearance, quell the rumors I’ve become a hermit, or I’m living in a tent somewhere."

"You know there’s no way I’m letting you go alone, right?"

"Lillian only wants me for my mind. She wants you dead."

Kara inched closer. "We’ll have to watch out for each other then." There was another one of those thrills as Kara arched a single eyebrow, daring Cat to say otherwise.

"Are you offering to be my bodyguard?" Cat smiled at the earnestness. Even without powers, Kara would put herself between anyone she chose to care about and danger.

"Better," Kara replied with a slow smile of her own. "I’m offering to be your date. That should flip the script. They won’t assume you were in hiding, or in rehab or any of those dumb rumors. They’ll assume we just got together and we were… y’know."

As if this outing wouldn’t be dangerous enough. "One condition." Cat saw her opportunity to set some terms for whatever the hell had them in bed, that had them holding hands at the strangest moments. "My date is Kara Danvers, not Supergirl." She ignored the soft, charmed smile that sprang to Kara’s lips, lovely though it was. "Now, let me get my beauty sleep. This doesn’t all just happen, you know."

"What happened to ‘sleep is for slackers’?"

Reaching out, Cat playfully tapped her finger on the tip of Kara’s nose before letting her touch glide down over soft lips to Kara’s chin. Kara’s eyes sparkled, enticing Cat closer. "Goodnight, Supergirl." Cat closed her eyes and rolled over, careful not to leave much extra distance between them.

Quiet settled between them, and Kara adjusted her pillow again with a small sigh. A minute ticked by, and another. Cat willed her muscles to relax, deliberately slowed her breathing. With Kara warm and close, Cat gave into sleep without a fight.

***

Morning sunlight filtered through the windows, lending a cheery cast to the office no one seemed to appreciate. James headed for his desk, his phone pinging with more notifications than he could keep track of. Cat and Kara’s article was making waves already, and the city was waking up to a police
force in chaos. It was going to be a hell of a day.

Thank God Eve was waiting with coffee. Sometimes it was good to be the boss.

"I have the names of the people detained," Eve greeted him, handing over the coffee and a printed list. For a moment, it looked like she might snatch it back, but whatever reservation she had faded as quickly as it had arisen.

"Where are they holding the cops?" James settled on the edge of his desk and took a sip from his cup.

"The officers are at a federal facility, but the others I couldn’t get a location."

"Others?"

"M’gann M’orzz, the owner of the bar, and Maggie Sawyer, a detective keeping a lot of innocent aliens safe from Cadmus." Eve pointed to the two blank spaces where their detention center should be, and James glanced up at her, surprised she had that information. "Mr. Olsen, you should know—"

"It’s James, seriously." He gave her a reassuring smile. Where Eve usually bubbled over with perky little updates, this morning she was delivering her information as though tapped to present the evening news.

"M’gann…" Eve hesitated. "Please don’t ask me how I know this, but people aren’t happy she’s been taken."

"I’m gonna have to ask," James insisted. "Information is only as good as its source. I hope you know me well enough by now to know I will always protect a source, and so will CatCo. You have my word. Ms. Grant would insist on it."

Eve cast a suspicious glance over her shoulder, before meeting James’s worried gaze. Her blue eyes – a few shades darker than Kara’s – slid away, revealing eyes far more gold and far more… reptilian.

James was careful to keep his features neutral as he nodded in reassurance. "Aliens should be safe here."

"Thank you." Eve sighed in relief. "You should know that unless these women are released, there’s talk in my community of a walkout. National City doesn’t want us or the people who help us? We’ll make them regret it."

"You mean a strike?" James downed half of his coffee in one long mouthful.

"The aliens at CatCo like and respect you, Mr. Olsen, but we can’t sit by while someone so important to the community and an ally are locked away without due process."

Aliens. Eve had used the plural form of the word, and James could only assume Kara wasn’t included. He wondered how many there were and suspected Cat knew. "Keep me posted, okay? I’ll reach out, see if I can put some media pressure on whoever is holding them. And send Snapper in."

"You’re not going to him?" Eve asked. She blinked and her blue eyes were back.

"I’m the boss. Staff comes to me, right?"

"Right." Eve scurried off, and James sat down at his desk, firing his laptop out of sleep mode. It was time to get to work.
Kara heard softly approaching footsteps, but she was so utterly comfortable she couldn’t bring herself to move or care. For a few seconds the peace held. Alex would yell about breakfast, and Kara would ignore her until her stomach rumbled, drawn by the scent from a box of fresh crullers. Just another morning.

Only mornings at her apartment had almost never featured a warm body wrapped around Kara’s own. Which meant she wasn’t at home, and the faint, honey scent of expensive shampoo belonged to only one person Kara knew. She was in bed with Cat, at Cat’s penthouse, and the gentle knock on the bedroom door could only be…

"Go away, Carter," Cat grumbled as knuckles rapped on wood. "Just for a minute, sweetheart." She roused herself with some difficulty, eventually placing her hands on Kara’s abs for leverage to sit up. Her hands slipped against the silk and her grip tightened, making Kara’s breath catch in her throat. She didn’t know how to move, even though superspeed alone could have her blocks down the street by now.

Carter knocked again, and Cat sighed. She reached into the drawer of her nightstand and produced a scrunchie she tossed at Kara’s face.

"You have a scrunchie?" Kara whispered in disbelief.

"Old habits." Cat fluffed the pillows and checked her nightclothes were decent. "Hair up, then we get this over with."

Kara sat up cross-legged in the bed, pulling her hair into the tidiest ponytail she could muster with fumbling fingers, just in time for Carter to knock a third, very impatient time.

"Come in," Cat called out.

Carter swung the door open, a grouchy cast to his features, until he saw Kara. "Oh, hey," he blurted. "When did you…" He glanced at his mother, but Cat had her best poker face in place. "I didn’t know you had company. Should I leave you two alone?"

Despite her most desperate wish, no chasm opened to swallow the bed and Kara with it. Her cheeks flamed while both Grants stared each other down in a silent battle of wills.

"Did you need something?" Cat asked blandly, but Kara caught a faint blush on her fair skin as well.

"Have you been staying over and sneaking out before I get up?" Carter asked Kara, ignoring his mother. "It’s okay. You don’t have to."

"I don’t… I haven’t…” Kara began, fumbling for excuses.

"We’ll talk in the dining room," Cat interrupted. "And I’m going to be in Metropolis tomorrow, darling. We’ll have to call your dad."

"But, Mom—"

"Presidential request, Carter," she said, with real regret. "You know I don’t do overnights unless it’s essential."

"You should catch a ride with Supergirl then." Carter barely glanced at Kara this time, but she noticed it all the same.
"Did you need something?" Cat asked again, giving Kara a side-eyed glance.

"Can we have waffles?" he asked. Kara grinned a little at his gumption. He was definitely his mother’s son.

"Fine." Cat flicked her wrist at him in concession. "Go. And ask for extra portions since we have… company."

"Thanks!" Carter dashed off, leaving them in a pool of awkward silence as the door shut behind him.

"Well," Cat finally groaned, leaning back against the headboard. "I suppose that sells my little lie to him, hmm?"

"Probably good timing. I mean, if I’m going to be your date in Metropolis. I’m pretty sure you make headlines everywhere you go.

"Getting cold feet?" Cat moved to push the covers back, but Kara stopped her with a gentle hand.

"No." Kara made sure she held eye contact with Cat as she said it. "Showing Lillian we’re not scared will be worth it, but even without that reason, I’d be honored to go to any event on your arm." The weight of what she said settled between them, making Kara panic just a little. "Who wouldn’t be, right?"

Cat preened at the compliment, her eyes sparkling in the morning light. "You are staying for breakfast? Unless there’s somewhere you need to be?"

Kara fought the urge to pull Cat back into her arms, to snuggle closer beneath the sheets. "Well, it is waffles…" She chuckled as Cat hit her in the face with a pillow.

***

"Thanks for coming, Major," J’onn said, addressing her with his usual formality. Lucy stepped into the training room, skirting the edge of the mat where he was pummeling a reinforced block of concrete. Their meetings usually took place in conference rooms or roaming the halls of the DEO, so it was a marked change to see J’onn in a tank top and his work pants free of the tactical belt.

"Nice to be invited. Things get a little lonely out in the desert. Susan Vasquez has taken on a lot of responsibility lately. We should talk about her rank soon."

"We will," J’onn assured her. "Right after she’s done showing Schott how to get the Reticulan form of Crazy Glue off his locker."

Lucy schooled her features. She was aware of Susan’s antics when it came to hazing the hapless Winn. Aware and complicit. "Surprised anyone has time for that, what with last night’s events."

"It helps that the FBI handled processing for most of the police officers." He picked up a towel. "Our containment level only increased by two. Detective Sawyer is locked up for her own protection first and foremost, but we’re already getting calls from NCPD demanding her return."

"And the other?"

"That’s why you’re here. I can’t trust myself to be impartial." J’onn sighed and finally relaxed his fighting stance, letting his shoulders slump. "You know we had an altercation with a White Martian last year?"
"I read the testimony on file, what they did to your people. You found another at the bar?"

"Running it," he said. "I was told she was one of my kind, but fire exposes our true form. M’gann M’orzz is a White Martian, and she’s in our custody."

"And you haven’t…"

"I haven’t gone near her cell since she was brought in. I don’t trust myself."

Lucy began to walk around the mats again. "I read about what happened, like I said, but has M’gann done anything while on Earth we can hold her for? Proving complicity in off-planet crimes is notoriously complex, sir. I’ll make the case for you, if you like, but it won’t be easy."

"That’s what I feared." J’onn sat on the nearest bench, drinking most of a bottle of water in one long gulp. "I know we have exceptions, workarounds, but there’s already rumbling on the streets. James warned us a strike is brewing. I don’t want to make her a martyr, Major Lane. Just don’t ask me to dishonor the memory of my wife and children by setting a murderer free."

"You were right to hand this off. From now on, Director, all decisions regarding her case should run through me. I’ll base myself here for the time being. See if we can’t resolve this quickly."

J’onn stood, offering a freshly-dried hand to shake. Lucy pressed her palm firmly against his. "Do what you can. What’s right."

"Of course. Anything else, sir?"

He scrutinized her, and Lucy waited patiently, ignoring the strange sense she was being judged.

"I don’t trust the NCPD in regard to Detective Sawyer."

"Do I need to flash my JAG credentials around NCPD?"

"I would appreciate that. So would Alex."

Lucy wondered what Sawyer had to do with Alex, but she didn’t ask. "What’s the desired outcome with the detective?"

"Let’s get coffee and we’ll talk."

They stepped out into the hallway. As Lucy turned, someone brushed by her and bumped her shoulder.

"Sorry, Major," Alex drawled, not sounding sorry at all. "You should look where you’re going." She gave J’onn a meaningful look before rounding the corner and disappearing.

"What the hell is her problem?"

"Where do I start?" J’onn sighed.

***

Laughter captured Cat’s attention in the living room, warming her almost as much as the sunlight streaming through the window at her back. Kara and Carter were at the kitchen table, giggling over a shared joke. As Cat watched, Kara glanced up at her, eyes dancing as she met Cat’s gaze with a shy smile before focusing on Carter again.
"Cat?" James calling her name snapped her attention back to the phone.

"Huh?" She winced at her sudden lack of vocabulary.

"You okay?"

"Fine. Fine. Just… distracted." She didn’t miss Kara’s knowing smile. *Brat.* "You were saying?"

"National media wants to talk to you and Kara about your story. The Feds are also sniffing around trying to learn where you got your information. Snapper, meanwhile, is in nirvana. All the potential follow-up angles to your story? He was humming this morning, Cat. *Humming.*"

Cat grinned. Nothing Snapper loved more than a good, old-fashioned corruption case.

"And you should know," James continued, his tone sliding into vague concern, "there are rumors flying thick and fast about protests, maybe even a strike."

"At CatCo?"

"Everywhere. The alien population is upset an alien named M’gann was taken into custody. They aren’t too happy about Maggie’s arrest, either."

"M’gann M’orzz?" Cat demanded, her good mood vanishing.

"You’ve heard of her?"

"She helps aliens new to the planet assimilate. Finds them jobs, Homes. Needed supplies. You’re damn right there will be protests over whatever the DEO is doing with her. I have half a mind to join them." Cat glanced at Kara again, who had gone strangely still.

The familiar creak of leather cushions carried to Cat through the phone as James processed the news, and an unexpected pang of longing hit her for her office. She brushed it aside for the moment, still a queen in exile.

"They definitely don’t like their champions being locked away," James said. "Can’t blame them. I’ve got an inside source on it, so we’ll see what develops. Also, we should talk about your habit of accidentally hiring aliens."

"Who says it’s accidental?" Cat fired back proudly. "CatCo is part of M’gann’s network."

"I see." Clearly he thought Cat should have shared that before now. She was just so used to having aliens around her, one in particular, Cat never gave it a second thought. "So, you knew Eve was an alien?"

Cat smirked. Did they really think she’d downgrade after having superpowered assistance for two years? "She’s your inside source? Don’t tell me, she’s gone full Norma Rae and is leading the potential strike? Never trust a Yale grad."

James snorted. "Oh, she’ll be leading the CatCo walkout, yeah. We’d better hope the DEO don’t take their time on this one. You’re more likely to speak to them than me these days, so…"

He had no idea. Kara was watching Cat again, a resigned expression on her features as Carter scooped up his books and stuffed them into his backpack.

"Time for me to be the face of the elitist media and make demands? Order them to hand over M’gann and the detective the Danvers have all but adopted?"
"Want company? Are two of the elitist media better than one?"

"No," she murmured as Carter left, giving her a big smile and wave which she returned before the door closed behind him. "I can take care of it."

"And behave yourself tomorrow night," James cautioned.

"I’m sure my chaperone will see to it."

"Got a date? Anyone I know?" James sounded both amused and intrigued.

Well shit, she’d walked right into that one. Kara drifted closer, tucking her hands in her robe’s pockets. While Cat was angry about M’gann, she doubted Kara was to blame. Still, she was going to get a piece of her mind. "Kara, actually."

"So less of a date and more of a security detail," James said with a laugh.

"Hmm." Cat neither confirmed nor denied. "Be ready to run an op-ed and some critical blogs. Make sure we’re on it for social media if anything starts trending. And cancel any time off for the mobile units."

"Already done. Have fun tomorrow, Cat. You deserve some downtime."

"We’ll see."

***

Alex attacked the heavy bag with a hard combination, her left hook sending it swinging awkwardly away and throwing off her rhythm. She closed as the bag swung back at her, stopping it with a series of jabs before spinning it off deliberately with a right. She hesitated when Lucy caught the bag with wrapped hands, holding it in place.

"You got a problem, Agent?"

Ignoring the lingering pain in her freshly-bruised right hand, Alex unleashed another flurry of blows, their power nearly knocking the heavy bag out of Lucy’s hold. "No problem… Director."

Lucy’s blunt gaze assessed her, and Alex returned the favor. Lucy had changed into a pair of black shorts and a thin, long-sleeved t-shirt, her hair tied back in a loose ponytail. She didn’t look like a Cadmus agent, but Alex had been burned too often lately. Who knew what Daddy Dearest might be holding over Lucy’s head? She couldn’t trust anyone outside the small circle of people who’d checked out, and Lucy wasn’t one of them.

"Let’s spar." Lucy’s tone brooked no argument. She snagged a pair of bag gloves, pulled them on over her wraps, and stepped into the middle of the room. When Alex hesitated, Lucy’s mouth twisted into a thin smile. "Come on, Agent Danvers. I’ll go easy on you. Especially since it looks like someone else didn’t." She indicated Alex’s shiner with her glove.

"Fine." Alex joined her, and they circled, trading lazy jabs to get a sense of each other’s reach and speed.

"So why the little body check earlier?" Lucy asked conversationally.

"You need to look where you’re going." Alex grinned behind her guard, goading the other woman. "Keep out of my way."
Lucy’s right hand shot straight at Alex’s jaw, but Alex blocked it easily and parried with a dazzling hook-uppercut combo that just missed Lucy’s midsection as she danced back. Alex pressed her advantage, following and throwing several jabs at Lucy’s head to keep her off-balance. Breaking away and circling, Lucy held Alex at bay with several quick strikes.

"Didn’t realize I was in your way." Lucy swung an obvious right hook. Alex knew to expect the left coming toward her ribs, and she made Lucy pay, connecting a sharp jab with Lucy’s jaw that was harder than it needed to be.

"Anyone associated with Cadmus, past or present, is in my way right now."

"You think I’m Cadmus?" This time, Lucy waded in, stepping inside Alex’s reach and unloading a series of body blows. One or two slipped through as Alex disengaged.

"You were going to hand me and J’onn over." Alex jutted out her jaw, daring Lucy to swing, but she didn’t take the bait.

"Still upset I knew you were lying?" Lucy’s smirk was cocky, and Alex closed the distance in a flash, feinting with a right and striking under Lucy’s guard with her left. Lucy stepped back, breathing hard. "I rescued you, as I recall."

"Because Kara shamed you into it." Alex dropped her guard and stepped into Lucy’s space, sparring forgotten as she searched her eyes. "Did you know? What kind of experiments they were running? What they would have done to me? To J’onn?" Lucy paled, but Alex persisted, looking for signs of deception. Cadmus had been lurking in the shadows too long, infiltrating too close. The spread stopped now.

"Of course not. When I followed those orders, I had every reason to believe they were a valid arm of our organization."

"Lillian," Alex snarled the name between clenched teeth, "is Cadmus."

"And you think that means my father is involved. And me too, apparently."

"We just arrested more than sixty cops. Their reach is extensive." Alex dared Lucy to contradict her. "They’ve already infiltrated the DEO twice, at least."

"Alex." Lucy’s soft tone disarmed her. "I know you’re struggling with who to trust right now. I get that. But I’d like to think I’ve proven myself, keeping Kara’s secret, standing with you and J’onn against my father’s agenda…"

"You have," Alex said reluctantly, her temper cooling at the hurt in Lucy’s eyes. "I just…"

"I get that you don’t know who to trust, but I need you to believe me. Believe in me."

Cadmus was making her paranoid, and Alex had a growing suspicion she was playing right into their hands. Lucy’s only connection was her father and stepmother, and Alex knew Lucy was on good terms with neither. Cadmus had already taken too much from her, and she couldn’t add her growing friendship with Lucy to the list. That’s exactly what Sam and Lillian would want, Lucy forced out and betrayed with no one to turn to but them.

Alex took a deep breath, letting her suspicions go as she exhaled. "I’m sorry."

Lucy braced her gloves on Alex’s shoulders and pushed her back lightly, starting to circle again. "And just so you know, J’onn cleared me. I let him read my mind again so he could know for sure."
"Why didn’t you tell me?"

"Like I said, I need you to believe me. Not just what you’re told." Lucy jabbed at Alex, and Alex slowly re-engaged, bobbing under her blow and swinging an experimental hook toward Lucy’s body. "By the way, the NCPD is demanding we hand over Sawyer. We’re taking her in tonight."

"No." Alex was adamant. "I’m not letting them near her."

"Relax, Alex. She’ll be in good hands." Lucy quirked an eyebrow over the top of her gloves as Alex’s punch slid harmlessly past her guard. "Maybe not yours, but still, good hands."

"What’s that supposed to mean?"

"I’m her lawyer."

"What?" Alex straightened in surprise, and Lucy finally got in a clean hit, her glove landing squarely on Alex’s jaw.

Chapter End Notes

We have been so, so, SO encouraged and heartened by your comments. Some of you on every chapter, sometimes joy, sometimes amusing threats, but every word of them is appreciated. It’s a long story and you won’t get time every day, but whenever you are moved, PLEASE comment on the art and on the writing. It means the world, and it makes this feel like a real community effort. Thank you.
Act II

Chapter Summary

Tonight on Supergirl Virtual Season, Kara and M’gann get to talking.
M’gann gets a stunning turn from @pinkrabbitpro, so please bask in this for a loooong moment. You can sigh happily in the comments or hit the Tumblr ask.
Act II

Chapter Summary

Cat and Kara prepare for the gala in Metropolis, and Alex is impressed when Lucy steps up for Maggie in a big way. James is monitoring the growing strike and protest activity as it spreads across National City, but he still finds time to have everyone's back.

Chapter Notes

Getting fancy from @xy0009!
Hit the comments or ask box about the pretty.

Our editors have carried us this far, so give it up for them please. catherinegrant (ao3 | tumblr), @spaceshipsarecool (ao3 | tumblr), @Revolos55 (ao3 | tumblr).

"Why?"

M'gann lifted her head. She was both surprised and not to see Kara standing there in her supersuit, hands on her hips, waiting for an explanation.

"What difference does it make?" M'gann asked sullenly.

"I've been learning how much power there is in the truth. How important it is to get both sides of a story. You've been running a vital network. Helping people. Cat read me the riot act this morning for this." Kara pressed her palm on the glass. "She insisted I check on you. Even after I told her you lied, she still believes in you."
M’gann was touched by Cat’s faith and friendship, still solid after all these years, but she said nothing.

"You risked everything to save my sister. That isn’t behavior I expect from a White Martian."

"Nor should it be." Unfurling from the bunk, M’gann padded closer, her feet bare on the cold floor. "You let Maggie go?"

"She’s safer here for now," Kara countered.

"She protected us all. Kept Cadmus off our backs even though it damn near broke hers to do it. Maggie doesn’t deserve to be caged."

After a moment of silent regard, Kara asked, "Do you?"

M’gann shrugged, but she was surprised by the question. "If it gives J’onn some peace? I accept my fate."

"Not sure I’m comfortable with you even saying his name," Kara admitted.

"It was never my intention to hurt him. Why do you think I tried to keep him at bay?"

"Because he could expose you?"

"Because my kind has inflicted enough agony on his. Look, I don’t regret my choices last night. Saving Alex was the right thing to do, but I am sorry learning the truth caused him more pain. I thought all the Greens were gone. I chose to live as one to keep them alive somehow, despite what my people did. When I found out one was left…" M’gann shook her head. "It doesn’t matter."

"Doesn’t matter? Your people committed genocide. Murdered millions. Women, children… This isn’t abstract. I’m talking about J’onn’s family. His daughters."

"And the noble house of El failed Krypton and Daxam. Might have even helped their ends along, with their arrogance. That mean you’re responsible for all that death? All that destruction?"

Kara rocked away from the glass, anger flashing in her blue eyes.

"I tried to save as many Greens as I could. The only Martians that died by my hand were my kind, not J’onn’s. I’m a traitor to my people, and they would kill us both if they knew where to find us. There’s a reason he takes human form too, remember."

"You--"

"I created the network to help exiled aliens find a life here, a home. Am I making up for the sins of my people? Hell, I’m trying to. Will it ever be enough? Not for me. But for the Roltikkons, the Valderians, the Daxamites… all the refugees that need kindness and help on this new world, they find it with me. What have you done for them, Supergirl?"

"I’ve saved them," Kara argued heatedly. "I’ve gotten them help when they needed it."

"Like the werewolf? What help did you give him?"

Kara flinched. "That’s different, he was already--"

"You were back amongst the humans the minute you put him in a cage like this one. You hid for so long because you needed to, but I suspect you’d try to be one of them even without that threat. It’s a
privilege you don’t want to give up.”

"I…” Kara’s hands balled into fists and she paced a few steps away before she looked back at M’gann.

"It’s all borrowed time." M’gann returned to her bunk and sat down. "And for me, for us, this is a borrowed planet. I didn’t come here to fight, to start more trouble. I just wanted to survive and pay my penance. If I have to do that here?” She gestured to the cell around her. "So be it. I’m not the one who will suffer, though."

"The aliens in the network," Kara murmured. "What happens to them now?"

M’gann shrugged again, not wanting to think about it. "Some will do fine. They look like you. Pass as human. The others… they’ll wind up in laboratories, fight clubs, or as experiments for Cadmus. Someone needs to step up and help them. That gonna be you?"

"I’ll see what I can do," Kara promised. With a heavy sigh, she turned on her heel and headed for the door, pausing when her fingers curled around the handle. "For what it’s worth… thank you. For Alex."

"I did it for Maggie," M’gann confessed with a fleeting smile. "But you’re welcome."

***

Lost in worried thoughts about Maggie and her guilt over Lucy, Alex was relieved when Kara stepped out on the landing pad beside her. A distraction was just what she needed to keep her mind from spinning in circles. "What are you doing here?"

"Cat wanted me to talk to M’gann." Kara leaned against the rail, their shoulders brushing. "I don’t know what to think about her."

"Cat or M’gann?" Alex replied with just a gentle amount of sisterly mocking, earning a light bump of Kara’s hip against her own. "I’m trying not to think about M’gann at all, honestly. My head’s full enough as it is. Washington is capitulating to NCPD’s demands. They’ve ordered us to hand Maggie over."

"Oh. What are you going to do?"

Alex tried to shrug, to look unaffected, but it just made her shoulders tight and tense. "Don’t really have a choice. We’re stalling them until this evening. Lucy plans to represent her."

"And you’re okay with that?"

"I am," Alex told her. "We… talked. Cadmus has me paranoid, doubting people I trust. Lucy set me straight, handled it better than I would have if the shoe were on the other foot."

"I’m just glad she’s on our side. Despite her parents, she’s a friend." Kara lapsed into silence, and Alex glanced askance at her, wondering what she was reluctant to talk about.

"Spit it out."

"How do you always know?" Kara huffed.

Alex poked her between the eyebrows. "Crinkle."

"Damned crinkle," Kara grumbled. "Cat and I are going to Metropolis tomorrow. There’s a
fundraising thing for the president."

"Okay," Alex said slowly. "Why do you think that will make me mad?"

"Because Lillian is going to be there." Kara grimaced, already bracing for Alex’s ire.

Alex scrubbed her face with her hands, biting back her first, caustic reply. "Lillian is going to be feeling the heat with Maggie in custody and your article wiping out the cops in her pocket. While that thought pleases me, getting in her face is a bad idea. Don’t you think I would have hauled her ass into the DEO by now if I could? We need more proof. Hard, physical proof. Anything less and she walks."

"Cat needs this. She needs to confront her. And what if seeing her jogs Cat’s memories? What if she remembers something helpful about Jeremiah?"

Alex pursed her lips. Playing the dad card was a low, but effective, blow. "She tried to kill you. I don’t want you anywhere near that woman. Let me send a team with you--"

"I’ll be fine. Clark will be there too. We’re just going to… rattle her cage a little. See what shakes loose."

"That sounds like Cat talking."

"Maybe it is." Kara leaned into her a little. "Shouldn’t we keep the pressure on? Show Lillian she doesn’t scare us?"

"She scares me," Alex admitted. "What if she decides to kill Maggie or Cat? Tie up loose ends? Lillian is powerful and dangerous. If you or Cat make her feel cornered--"

"We’ll be on our best behavior. And if something goes down with Maggie… I’ll break the sound barrier to get back and help."

"Thanks." Alex tried to ignore her anxiety about the impending transfer. It was why she’d stepped out on the landing pad in the first place.

"Sister time when I get back? Brunch?"

That sounded so wonderful Alex was tempted to do it now. "Deal. Be careful in Metropolis."

"Be careful here." Kara pulled her into her arms for a quick hug. "I love you."

"I love you, too."

***

Maggie said nothing as she was bundled into the SUV by a small team of hulking DEO agents, but her heart was hammering so hard she could feel it in her ears. She hadn’t seen Alex since they’d shared a meal in Maggie’s cell the night before, and Maggie had selfishly hoped for one last glimpse of her before this moment came. She could hardly blame Alex for keeping her distance now, though.

A woman in a military uniform climbed in the front passenger seat, turning to peer back at Maggie with mild interest. "Detective Sawyer? Major Lucy Lane." She extended her hand.

Maggie didn’t take it, eyeing her with distrust. "The military is getting involved? Great."

Lucy smiled, taking no offense. "I’m a director with the DEO. I also happen to be an attorney. I’ll be
"Representing you today."

"Representing? But—"

The rear passenger door jerked open to Maggie’s right, the muggy night air rushing inside. Maggie blinked as Alex stepped up and slid onto the leather seat beside her before slamming the door. She didn’t acknowledge Maggie right away, reaching up to engage the two-way in her ear. "You in position?" she asked and nodded when she got a response before tapping the driver on the shoulder. "Move out."

The SUV lurched away from the curb, part of a caravan of three, and Maggie reluctantly tore her gaze away from Alex. They rode quietly for a few minutes, navigating the traffic further into downtown National City. Maggie leaned her head against the cool window. She would have rolled it down if she could have, breathed in the air as a free woman for a few minutes more.

"You, um… you okay?"

Maggie closed her eyes and nodded.

"Nothing is going to happen to you," Alex vowed. "If you’re worried…"

"I made my bed, Danvers. I’m ready to lie in it. Or die in it, depending on what Cadmus does with me."

Alex was silent for a tense moment. "Nothing is going to happen to you," she repeated, her tone bordering on fierce. "I won’t let it."

Lucy watched them both in the rearview mirror, saying nothing.

Her view of the city blurred with tears, and Maggie clenched her teeth, fighting mightily to keep them from falling. "Someone comes for me, Alex, don’t stand in their way, okay?"

"Hey." Alex gripped Maggie’s forearm, the heat of her hand burning through Maggie’s long-sleeve t-shirt. "It’s not going to come to that, you hear me?"

Lucy turned away to give them a moment of privacy.

"Did you get anything new on your dad?" Maggie asked, wanting to keep the tenderness of Alex’s expression a moment longer. "Did it help, at all?"

"Nothing yet," Alex admitted, "but knowing he’s still fighting them? That… helps."

"He’d slip me intel. A weapons shipment here. A chemical shipment there. Wasn’t much, but we tried to ruin Cadmus’s day when and where we could." Maggie managed a meager smile. "I don’t have a right to know, but… would you tell me his name?"

"Jeremiah."

Alex had given her a gift, trusting her with something so personal. "Suits him a hell of a lot better than ‘Jay.’"

They were already approaching headquarters, and any detente they might have achieved would end as soon as Alex signed the paperwork to hand her over. Maggie looked away again, bracing herself for what was coming next.

"Alex." Lucy’s voice was sharp with alarm.
"What’s wrong?" Alex leaned around her to see the road ahead.

"Protesters."

The SUVs pulled up at the curb, and Maggie’s whole body began to tremble. She wasn’t even going to make it into the building. She could almost hear the crack of the rifle shot waiting for her when she emerged.

Muffled chanting surrounded them as the other agents hopped out of their vehicles and moved into position. Beside her, Alex shifted restlessly.

"Are you seeing this?" Lucy asked, studying the signs people were waving around them.

Alex snorted.

"Nothing I like more as a lawyer than leverage." Lucy grinned. "I think we just got plenty."

"What’s going on?" Maggie asked, confused.

"See for yourself." Alex swung the door open and climbed out as Lucy did the same.

Maggie didn’t see the point in doing anything other than following, but the expected bullet never came. Instead, she faced a sea of alien and human faces, all chanting the same thing. "N-C-P-D! Set the innocent free!"

"Gotta love the power of the press," Lucy shouted over the din. "Cat and Kara delivered with their story!"

Maggie’s gaze flickered over the signs, seeing her own name. M’gann’s. The protesters weren’t there cheering her arrest. They were demanding her release.

"What the hell?" Maggie blurted.

A flash went off in their faces, and Alex stepped in front of Maggie to shield her as they entered the precinct. "Drop the camera, Olsen," she demanded, but James ignored her. She grabbed his lens, forcefully pulling it down.

James bristled, and Lucy maneuvered between them.

"Easy, you two."

"You okay, Detective?" James asked casually, trying unsuccessfully to get around Alex.

"Just dandy," Maggie muttered, barely loud enough to be heard over the din. Alex’s heart twisted at how diminutive she looked, flanked on all sides by burly agents.

"I’m taking photos as much for her protection as yours, Alex," James said. "The people out there? That’s the tip of the iceberg. There’s a city-wide strike brewing over Maggie and M’gann’s incarceration. Things are going to boil over if you guys don’t start being more transparent."

"He’s right. The more witnesses, the more documentation, the better." Lucy put her hand on Alex’s arm. "It keeps Maggie safer too."

Alex hesitated. As far as she was concerned, they were standing in enemy territory.
"You have my word, Alex. I can see she’s important to you," Lucy said in a softer tone. "I won’t leave this precinct until I walk out beside her."

"And I’m staying," James added before offering a shrug. "Cat insisted. She wants to make sure Maggie gets a fair shake. So do I."

"Alex."

Clenching her jaw, Alex faced Maggie as she came closer, those fathomless dark eyes searching her own.

A tremulous smile was on Maggie’s lips, meant to reassure, but it only broke Alex’s heart instead. "It’s okay."

"We’re not done. You hear me, Sawyer?"

"Whatever happens..." Maggie’s voice quivered but didn’t break. "Thanks. For everything."

"We’re not done," Alex insisted, willing Maggie to have faith.

Warm, soft lips ghosted over Alex’s cheek and lingered for a dizzying moment. "See you around, Danvers," Maggie breathed in her ear before Alex had to let her go.

***

The balcony doors leading to Cat’s bedroom were open when Kara landed, and anticipation fluttered in her stomach. They’d only been apart a day, but Kara already craved her company.

"About time," Cat said as Kara stepped inside. As soon as she pulled the balcony doors closed behind her, Cat scooped up a box from the bed and disappeared off into her dressing area. Gown options for their gala tomorrow, no doubt. Unsure what to do with herself, Kara kept out of the sightline.

"I checked on M’gann like you asked, and I handled a few things for work since the story is still blowing up. Snapper was nice to me for once. It was actually kinda… freaky." She grimaced at the unpleasant memory. Glancing around Cat’s bedroom, Kara marveled a little at the size and grandeur she’d been too tired to notice last night, feeling oddly scruffy in her supersuit.

Cat’s voice drifted from the other room. "And has the DEO come to their senses and freed her yet, or are the aliens of National City going to take matters into their own hands?"

"It’s not that simple, Cat."

"Hmm," Cat purred doubtfully. "What about Detective Sawyer?"

Reaching up, Kara adjusted the two-way in her ear. She’d been listening for any kind of panicked call from Alex that things had gone sideways with Maggie’s transfer, but so far, her sister had been quiet. "She was transferred to NCPD tonight. Lucy is representing her."

"Well, that’s something I suppose." Cat returned to the bedroom, still speaking, but her reply was lost to Kara, who couldn’t hear anything but the thundering of her heart and her own lack of breathing. She understood now what it meant to feel stunned. Any lingering doubts or excuses about wanting Cat evaporated at the sight of her in couture coupled with the confident sway of her hips as she moved.

"It's just a little something I had sent over from Saks," Cat said, dismissing the praise with a toss of her curls, but she had that secret smile, the genuine one so few people got to see. Kara's inability to form full sentences at the sight of the rose-pink gown had pleased her, even if she was pretending not to care. "Given the short notice, off the rack with a little customization had to do. The chain detail is a nice touch, don't you think?"

Kara nodded stupidly as Cat studied her reflection in the full length mirror. "I should... wear a potato sack. No one is going to know I'm alive if I stand next to you while you're wearing that." The halterneck had golden chainmail detailing, and the front of the dress was a sheer column of elegance. The back, however, was almost as dramatic as Cat herself. The fabric was cut away entirely, framing her bare back and skimming low enough Kara already felt the urge to tell a room full of people to avert their eyes. The only interruption across faintly golden skin was the delicate chainmail in one strip across Cat's shoulder blades.

"I had them send something for you, too," Cat replied, like it was the most obvious thing in the world. "You have to look the part, and nobody at this gathering will have heard of Forever 21, unless they own stock in it."

"You didn't have to do that."

Cat fished around in some boxes, selecting a diamond necklace that seemed to catch every atom of light in the room. "I'm not sure this dress supports a necklace, but let's see. A little help?"

Cat could put any piece of jewelry on singlehandedly in much the same way she was flexible enough to undo just about any zipper. The fact she was asking, inviting Kara into that intimate space where it would be so easy to lean in another inch or two and place a kiss right on...

The necklace. Right. Fumbling slightly, Kara closed the clasp.

Cat examined the drop of the chain once it was in place. Far daintier than the statement jewelry she wore to the office, the diamonds sat in formation over ruched material of the bodice, stopping right on the curve of...

"What?" Kara realized Cat was talking to her. She had to stop zoning out into desperate little fantasies, or they'd never have another meaningful conversation again.

"I said," Cat repeated with a fond smile, turning to face Kara. "I was right. This doesn't go. Can you unearth the remote? I don't want to miss the news."

"Sure," Kara said, flipping the huge flat screen on the wall to CatCoNews. "You want me to put competitor coverage on your tablet too?"

"Kara." Cat moved close again, putting a hand on Kara's wrist. "I only asked about the television as a favor. You're not my assistant anymore. No need to cater to my every whim."

"Not even when I want to?" Kara asked, holding Cat's gaze.

Cat reached up slowly, plucking an invisible piece of lint off Kara's collar. Her fingers trailed lazily over the texture of Kara's suit, coming to rest at the top of her crest.

"Carter has finished his homework," she said matter-of-factly, her touch lingering. "I thought... maybe you'd like to stay? Visit with him for a little while?" She uncharacteristically hesitated, biting her lip. "And you should be aware, he blindsided me after he came home from school."
"He knows." It wasn’t even a question.

"He’s his mother’s son. Not easily fooled by heroes."

"Since you were being so honest with him now, does he know about… us?"

"Us?" Cat arched an eyebrow. "Is there an us?" she teased.

"I… I meant…"

"I haven’t corrected his impression that we’re in an… intimate… relationship if that’s what you’re asking."

Intimate. Just the thought of it. Kara struggled not to swoon. If she didn’t know Cat’s home had perfectly regulated A/C, she’d swear the temperature had just risen by ten degrees. "Why not?"

Cat searched her gaze, the air growing heavy and charged between them. "I don’t know," she whispered. "I suppose it’s starting to feel like less of a lie and more—"

Kara closed her eyes, the moment slipping through her fingers as she heard footfalls in the hallway. "Speaking of Carter…"

Cat stepped back reluctantly just as he swept into the room.

"Hey, Kara," he greeted her as casually as he had that morning, despite the fact she was standing there in her supersuit. There was a smirk on his boyish features, though, and the expression was so Cat it made Kara’s heart ache in a beautiful way. "Just as well you confirmed my theory, Mom. You look really pretty."

"Thank you, sweetheart. Don’t mock Kara too hard; she can’t help being an awful liar. Let me change, and we’ll play Settlers of Catan."

"Is Kara staying the night again? Can she play?"

Kara’s breath hitched. "Oh… I… um…" She wanted to. Rao, she wanted to. "I wouldn’t want to intrude on family time."

"You’re family. Right, Mom?" Carter looked at his mother expectantly, but he was clearly enjoying the awkward moment a little too much.

Cat ran a hand through his curls before meeting Kara’s eyes. "Of course," she said softly.

Kara willed herself not to blink, determined to preserve this moment and a perfect memory of it at all costs. "I’d love to."

***

Lucy Lane and the other agents stuck close as they wound through a few hallways, cops eyeing them as they passed. Maggie kept her gaze front and center on Acting Chief Young’s back, in no mood to see the scorn on her colleagues’ faces. She had met Young once, maybe twice, his closely-cropped, curly gray hair and bushy mustache hard to forget. He’d been rumored for chief before, and Maggie wondered now if he’d been taken out of the running because he wouldn’t play along with Cadmus. She sure as hell hoped so.

"It says a lot about you," Lucy murmured unexpectedly. "That Alex Danvers is in your corner."
"What’s that supposed to mean?"

Lucy shrugged, playing dumb.

Expecting an interrogation room, Maggie was startled when they stepped into a plush conference room she hadn’t even known existed, but she warily took the seat the chief indicated.

"We need to talk to our detective," Chief Young informed Lucy and the agents. "If you’d like to wait out–"

"Sorry, I didn’t properly introduce myself." Lucy gave the assembled brass a dazzling smile, and Maggie watched curiously as they relaxed, already dismissing her. Their mistake, Maggie could tell, from the predatory gleam in the Major’s eyes. "Major Lucy Lane, Judge Advocate General’s Corps, DEO Director, and counsel for Detective Sawyer." Lucy stepped deliberately around the acting chief and sat down to Maggie’s right, folding her hands in front of her.

"And before we get started, gentlemen, I’d like to set some ground rules. Given the threats issued from officials within this organization, Detective Sawyer is to be in the presence of a DEO representative at all times while in NCPD custody." She pulled some sort of cube-shaped alien device out of her pocket and turned it on before setting it down on the table. "Every moment of every interview will be recorded. Any attempt to disparage–"

"Major, this isn’t necessary. Detective Sawyer is not under arrest, and she will be adequately represented by her union rep, as is normal procedure in these matters. Right, Sawyer?"

Impressed by Lucy’s sudden, and very effective, intimidation tactics, Maggie almost missed the part where she wasn’t under arrest. Startled, she glanced around the table, first at the chief, then the other officers, and ended with Lucy, who was looking at her with quiet confidence. "I think," Maggie began slowly, "I’d feel more comfortable with Major Lane."

Young didn’t look pleased, but he didn’t press the matter. He started to sit, but Lucy held up a commanding finger and he paused.

"You interrupted me," Lucy said. "I’d like to finish."

Maggie didn’t think Lucy’s presence was going to change a damn thing, but it was going to be fun to watch her work.

"Of course," Young said slowly as he finally sat and the other men followed suit.

"On the record, the DEO considers Detective Sawyer a vital asset in the fight against Cadmus, a terrorist group that has managed to infiltrate both of our institutions. We expect to work out a suitable arrangement to leverage her considerable expertise and knowledge to the benefit of both of our organizations. Is that clear?"

"Wait… What?" Maggie sat up straighter. "I–"

"We all want to protect the citizens of National City and eradicate the threat Cadmus poses," Young confirmed. "Neither humans nor aliens are safe while they are undermining the rule of law in this city. We also believe Detective Sawyer can play a key role in that fight." Maggie gaped at him, but Lucy nodded, seemingly satisfied with the vehemence in his voice. "Anything else before we get started?"

"A couple of coffees for me and the detective would be lovely."
Young smiled faintly, warming to Lucy’s style. He nodded and someone got up from the table to comply with her request. "Seems you have some powerful champions, Detective," he said to Maggie, looking more pleased than angry.

What in the hell was happening? Maybe she was still asleep in her cell in the DEO, dreaming this surreal moment. It was the only thing that made any damn sense. Alex’s words echoed in her head. *We’re not done.*

"Shall we get started?" Lucy asked. "I think we have a lot to discuss."

Chapter End Notes

We have been so, so, SO encouraged and heartened by your comments. Some of you on every chapter, sometimes joy, sometimes amusing threats, but every word of them is appreciated. It’s a long story and you won’t get time every day, but whenever you are moved, PLEASE comment on the art and on the writing. It means the world, and it makes this feel like a real community effort. Thank you.
Act III

Chapter Summary

Previously on Supergirl Virtual Season, Lucy Lane proved her worth to the team all over again.
Another stunner from @ofpensandcupcakes! How lucky are we? Hit the comments or head to Tumblr ask.
Kara and Cat head to Metropolis for a brief reunion with Clark and a more worrying encounter with Lillian. J’onn and M’gann finally talk about what happened on Mars. Is it their first step towards peace? Maggie learns her fate with the NCPD.

“Maybe I should have stayed.”

“Stayed?” Cat crossed her legs and leaned back, tearing her gaze away from the news on the TV to look at Kara. They were somewhere over the Midwest by now, scheduled to touch down in Metropolis in less than two hours. Based off the news reports of the gathering alien protesters across the country, she wondered what kind of traffic hell awaited them.

Kara stared at the screen, a pensive look on her face. Beautiful and burdened, no sunny smiles to hide behind for a change. “Look at all of them,” she said quietly. “I never realized how many of us there were.”
It still threw Cat sometimes, to think of Kara as *alien*. Even with her powers, she could blend seamlessly into the population. No doubt that made it easier for her to miss how hard it had been for others who couldn’t hide what they were so effortlessly. That they had to hide at all said more about Cat’s species than their own.

“Maybe I should have stayed,” Kara repeated. “Protested with them. Protected them. Not all of them have powers…”

“You agree M’gann should be released then? That’s at the heart of this, you know.” Cat was impressed with the scope and size of the movement, that one woman’s work could do so much for so many.

Kara lowered her head. “I know she’s done a lot of good, but her people…”

“Look around, Kara. Would you say any human should be judged by their religion, their sex, their nationality, the color of their skin? Just because someone like them might have done something horrible? We’d all be guilty of multiple crimes by that metric.”

“It’s not the same.”

“It is. You’re judging one woman by her species’ actions rather than her own.”

“White Martians committed genocide on J’onn’s people, Cat. He’s the last of his kind.”

Cat swiveled her chair to face Kara head on. “Yes, you’ve told me. I felt that sadness in him when he read my mind. As a mother, I can’t imagine what he’s been through. But I’ve known M’gann for a long time. While I understand she may have fudged some details since she got here, I can hardly blame her now seeing the way you and the DEO have reacted. Look at all those aliens, from different planets and galaxies. They’re united, maybe for the first time ever. They’re taking a stand for M’gann because she’s saved thousands of lives with her work. Are you going to judge her by her deeds or by her DNA?”

Kara sighed. “I can see both sides, but J’onn is my family. What do I do?”

“The right thing,” Cat told her. “And I have faith in you to figure out what that is.”

“I’m scared for everyone marching, though. What if Cadmus use this as an opportunity to hurt them? One big, scary weapon. Gas, maybe.”

Cat sighed herself. The thought had certainly crossed her mind. “A public attack against the alien population and their allies on national television would only turn more people against them. I wouldn’t rule out a xenophobe or two causing trouble, however.”

“Seeing our numbers like this, it will frighten others, push them into Cadmus’s column, won’t it?”

Cat couldn’t bring herself to lie to her even if it would be a comfort. “Probably.”

“I wonder if I’ll ever feel like I truly belong here,” Kara murmured, staring at the television. “I lost my world, and now I feel trapped between two different ones.”

“You belong with me,” Cat told her bluntly, and Kara’s head whipped around to stare at her in surprise. “And with Alex, J’onn, Eliza, Carter, James, and the little cardigan hobbit. A world doesn’t have to be a planet, Kara. It can simply be the people in your orbit. But this is how acceptance begins.” Cat glanced back at the news report. “With awareness. When it comes to aliens’ rights or lack thereof? The people of National City and the rest of the country are about to get woke.”
“Woke?” Kara asked, bemused.

“Any reporter worth her salt stays up on the vernacular of the moment.” Cat’s lips turned up in a self-deprecating grin. “It’s how you convince people what you have to say is relevant. That you’ve been paying attention.”

“Good note.” Kara settled in her seat and relaxed a little. “You know we’d be there already if I were doing the flying, right?”

“Nobody likes a show off, Kara.” But Cat found it quite irresistible all the same.

***

After fourteen hours of testimony and two more ironing out a new role for her between the police and DEO, Maggie was done. No charges. No prison cell. Her gun and shield were already clipped back on her belt.

She was free to go.

She gathered her gym bag and stepped out of the locker room. Major Lane was waiting, uniform crisp and makeup still flawless. Maggie felt dowdy in comparison as she tried in vain to smooth the spare shirt she had dug out from the back of her locker. “Thought you left,” she muttered.

“I promised Agent Danvers I wouldn’t leave until you did, and I keep my word. You okay?”

Maggie’s thoughts careened over the events of the last few days. It was dizzying. After all the twists and turns, she was left standing, relatively unscathed. “Yeah. Just… now what?”

“You go home. Get some sleep. Come Monday, you go back to work protecting this city.”

“I should be in jail.” Maggie’s lack of punishment rubbed her innate sense of fairness raw. People had lost their lives due to her actions. She’d listened to the brass justify everything and make excuses for the inexcusable. She’d argued, but Chief Young had refused to budge. He wanted her back on the job, and so did the DEO.

“You’re a perfect fit for the liaison role. The alien population respects you, and the DEO and the NCPD know you’re beyond reproach when it comes to Cadmus. Why wouldn’t we leverage you as an asset?”

“I don’t deserve some kind of damn promotion, Major.”

“You get more work. No additional pay. Grueling weeks of DEO training in the desert. By the time you’re done, it will feel like punishment.”

Maggie shook her head, unconvinced, but too tired to argue the point. Sometime in the last few hours, she’d sunk into near apathy.

“Come on.” Lucy took her by the elbow and steered her toward the elevators. “I’ve made the press aware you’ve been released and arranged a ride so you can avoid them.”

The chants from the protesters swelled as they rounded the corner. Maggie had been able to hear them, if not what they were yelling, all morning. “You want them to chill, you should release M’gann, not me.” They stepped into the elevator, and Lucy pushed the button for the top level of the parking garage. Maggie slumped wearily against the wall. “All this is pointless anyway.”
“Why?”

“Cadmus will take me out soon enough.”

“Don’t count on that. Word is out you’re not to be touched. Cadmus want the public on their side. Killing you after Cat and Kara’s story blew up? Bad PR.”

“But I can ID Luthor. You heard the chief. They’re setting up a task force to—”

“Right now, it’s your word against hers. She’s got bigger things to worry about.” The elevator slowed. “You can stop carrying the weight of the world for a while, Maggie. You’ve shouldered it long enough.”

The doors slid open, and they stepped onto the roof of the parking garage. One lonely, black SUV waited, and Maggie froze when she saw the figure leaned up against it.

“Agent Danvers,” Lucy greeted smugly. “One Detective Maggie Sawyer, walked out of the NCPD as promised.”

In jeans and a maroon t-shirt that brought out the fire in her hair in the late morning sunlight, Alex had never looked more beautiful. Maggie could only gape in disbelief.

“Thanks, Major.” Alex’s voice was full of warm gratitude that made Lucy smile.

“Ladies.” Lucy gave them a wink and left the way she came.

They stared at one another, not sure where to begin.

Alex cleared her throat. “You okay?”

The gentleness in her voice threatened the shield Maggie had managed to stitch together. Without it, she would collapse under her own weight. She didn’t answer, not sure what to say.

“Figured you could use a ride,” Alex tried again.

Maggie dredged up a weak smirk. “Didn’t know you worked for Uber part time, Danvers. I assume this liaison gig you all signed me up for doesn’t pay so hot?” Her attempt at banter felt forced, like the sad deflection it was.

Alex’s mouth twisted in an effort not to smile. “Like what? More flash grenades?”

Alex rolled her eyes. “Don’t think I’ve forgotten you held onto one the night we rescued Cat.”

Maggie looked away, studying the skyline as she tried to swallow past the lump in her throat. She still half-expected a bullet in the back out here in the open, but there was only the sun, the breeze, and Alex. “You didn’t have to come.”

“I kinda did.” Pushing off the SUV, Alex drifted closer, narrowing the gap between them from feet to inches. Maggie could smell the soap she used, the fresh, citrus scent she associated with Alex. The only thing missing was a hint of leather.

“Why?” Maggie wasn’t sure what question she was seeking an answer to, what answer she hoped she’d hear. Alex fumbled for words, that cute, frustrated half-smile of hers making a brief appearance. Finally, she shrugged and simply held out her hand.
Maggie’s pulse quickened. With all her secrets laid bare, all her lies exposed, Alex was still there, still reaching out. Needing desperately to touch her, Maggie gave in, sliding her hand into Alex’s warm, calloused grip.

Alex tangled their fingers and for the first time in months, Maggie finally felt safe. “Come on. Let me take you home.”

***

The SUV rolled to a stop along the curb outside Maggie’s small apartment building. Alex shifted the vehicle quietly into park, conducting a quick, visual sweep to ensure nothing was amiss. Her instincts remained dormant, so she turned her attention on Maggie.

Before they’d left the NCPD parking lot, Maggie had leaned her head against the passenger window and almost immediately drifted off. She was beautiful with the sunlight warming her hair and skin, and Alex had guiltily snuck glances at her the whole drive over.

Feeling anything for this woman was a bad idea. Maggie had lied to her practically from the moment they’d met. That she’d done it out of necessity and the desire to protect innocents and the people she cared about lessened the blow, but didn’t erase everything. Her head told her to be wary, to keep her distance, but for the first time in her life, Alex’s heart was louder than her head.

And her heart wanted Maggie as close as she could get her.

Taking a fortifying breath, Alex ran her fingers down Maggie’s shoulder, whispering her name. Blinking awake, Maggie raised her head and looked around, confused. Alex smiled at how adorably drowsy she was.

“Sorry.” Maggie saw Alex’s grin and scowled, which only made it widen. “Guess I’m more tired than I thought.” She glanced at her apartment building, studying it quietly.

Alex followed her line of sight to the window she knew was Maggie’s. “Agents swept your place. No bugs, no bombs, no snipers camped out on the rooftops. There are agents nearby to keep an eye out for Cadmus. You’re safe.”

“Don’t suppose they did my laundry? Thought I’d never have to do another load, so it kind of piled up.” Maggie’s hand twitched where it rested on the door handle.

“You, uh, want me to come up?” Alex wasn’t sure what she was offering; she only knew she didn’t want to let Maggie go.

“Alex, I…” Maggie drew a breath and let it out. “I’ve just… I’ve been living with a death sentence for most of a year. I don’t…” Tears gathered in the corners of her eyes, and Alex barely resisted the urge to wipe one away when it escaped.

“It’s okay. You need time and some sleep.”

Tilting her head to the side, Maggie nodded, her chin quivering as she fought more tears. Alex leaned across the center console to wrap her in an awkward, one-armed hug, relieved when Maggie snaked her arm around Alex’s shoulders and returned the embrace tightly. Alex let it linger as long as she dared.
“I’ll be here when you’re ready,” she promised. “In whatever way you need me to be.”

Maggie smiled when she pulled away, offering Alex a brief flash of her dimples, and then she was gone, trudging toward her apartment building. Alex waited, her eyes fixed on Maggie’s window until her silhouette appeared, waving at her before disappearing again behind the curtain.

She sat there for a moment, the engine idling, before she drove away.

***

Savoring a generous measure of Lagavulin to steady her nerves, Cat watched an inferior Metropolis news channel. She had never quite lost her relish for finding fault with other networks, even after all these years. Once she would have reclined in a comfortable desk chair, but, since her spell at Cadmus, she’d found it hard to sit for any length of time in front of screens. Predictable as traumatic responses went, but if Cat didn’t keep in motion, that metallic taste would creep up her throat, and her wrists would twinge as though fresh bruises might form at any moment.

So she paced, she sipped, she watched.

The protests had ballooned in size, spreading to major cities all over the globe. Even now, high above the streets of Metropolis in her luxurious hotel suite, she heard their united voices demanding change and acceptance. She raised her glass to their efforts before taking another swallow.

“What’s happening?” Kara appeared at her shoulder without warning, but Cat didn’t jump. Despite her recent anxieties, Kara’s presence never spooked her. “Look at them all,” she breathed, a note of pride in her voice. “Do we need to get back?”

Cat changed the channel to CatCo. “James is on the case. I couldn’t have directed it better myself. Well, I’d have broken out the special bulletin branding by—” The chyron and logos updated accordingly and she smiled. “He’s learning.”

“You were right to pick him,” Kara said, her voice warm.

“Miss him?” Despite their closeness of late, Cat couldn’t help but feel a little jealous of the ease with which James Olsen kept slipping into Kara’s affections. They’d been more on and off again than Charlie Sheen’s sobriety, so Kara’s previous reports on their breakup might not mean much. They were a little too close at Noonan’s, and it still rankled, even if Cat wasn’t proud of it.

“Why?” Kara’s confusion was genuine at least. Only then did Cat tear herself away from the TV to check on the dress selection. Turning, she was glad she’d hadn’t put her heels on yet, because she’d surely have fallen off them.

“Jesus Christ,” Cat whispered.

“No, Kara Danvers. We’ve met.”

“That line is older than you are,” Cat scolded, gathering herself. “Turn, turn,” she urged, with a snap of her fingers. Kara complied with a bewildered smile, gathering the skirt a little to avoid treading on it. “Well, I’ll say this for Monique, she has a way with fabric.”

“It feels like…” Kara looked down at the glossy pale blue fabric, draped over her exquisite figure. Cat’s mouth went dry at the slope of those hip bones covered in silk, the pattern of pale cherry blossoms down one side so inviting, so easy to touch. She pulled her hand back to stop from doing exactly that. “It’s perfect. I feel like I’m in a Julia Roberts movie.”
“Well, you have the smile for it, beaming like that,” Cat tried to deflect. They were going to make quite the pair at the gala. Any chance of staying under the radar was lost with Kara dressed to the nines, and Cat couldn’t have been more pleased. “Come along Cinderella, or we’re going to be late for the ball.”

***

“I know you’re out there,” M’gann informed him as the minutes stretched out. “You know how loud a deliberately closed mind can be.”

J’onn didn’t move from the shadows. Morbid curiosity had drawn him there, gnawing at him like an insistent parasite. Alex had been right. He needed answers, but he wasn’t sure he was prepared for what he might learn.

“K’hym.” He offered the name of his first daughter as condemnation and prayer alike. “Tanya.” Smaller than her sister, but so determined to follow in her footsteps wherever possible. Her hand, so tiny in his own. That long summer before the war began, building sand palaces in their garden. Their laughter warming him, My’ria’h covering her mouth and laughing hardest of all. The memories burned as brightly as though they were yesterday. The pain every bit as fresh, squeezing his heart until he wiped away tears.

_The children I freed, it was safer not to ask their names_, M’gann said, opening a bridge between them. A gesture on her part.

J’onn got a fleeting glimpse of her in that connection, of who M’gann M’orzz was down to her marrow. She startled him with her compassion and regret, and his stomach twisted before he quickly shut her out. “None survived but me.”

“That seems likely.” M’gann’s tone was respectful, mournful. “I tried to help as many Greens as I could. In vain, but I tried. I fled off planet before I was killed.”

“You’ll get no sympathy from me.”

“Don’t expect any.” M’gann approached the glass wall of her cell. She peered at him as though barely seeing, her hand reaching instinctively for the tempered glass.

J’onn looked away. “Those aliens in the streets. I know you hear them. They’re too loud for me to block them out of my mind. Don’t you feel remorse for deceiving them?”

“I haven’t deceived any of them. Most don’t know what I am or what I claimed to be, and most don’t care. They judge me for my actions, not by where I come from, and I do the same in kind.”

“Why help them?” he demanded. This whole encounter clawed at his conscience. He didn’t want to believe her. He didn’t want to forgive.

“Because someone has to. Because no one else would. I can’t change what happened to the Greens, but I can help others who could suffer at the hands of an unwelcoming race.”

J’onn shook his head, clinging fiercely to his anger as doubt crept in around his jagged edges.

“I’ve heard stories about the DEO,” M’gann said unexpectedly, “though few returned to share them.”

Bristling, J’onn stepped closer to the glass. “A race as barbaric as yours has no ground to stand on and judge.”
“Be careful not to become what you hate, J’onn J’onzz. How many have you locked away because of what they are and not who they are? How many others are here who have committed no crime on Earth save for being different?”

Her words made J’onn profoundly uncomfortable. They struck to the heart of the thoughts that often kept him up at night.

“For what it’s worth, I am sorry. For your family. For your kind. For the choices I made that hurt you.”

“Maybe you are,” J’onn finally conceded, his voice quiet and heavy with pain. “I just don’t know what difference that’s supposed to make.”

“Only you can decide that, J’onn.” M’gann retreated back into her cell, leaving him with more troubled thoughts than when he’d arrived.

***

“So…” Kara smiled at Kal, tracing the lip of her champagne glass as they stared out at the Metropolis skyline aglow through the museum’s gigantic windows. Swing music filled the air, more playful than Kara had expected for such a formal event. Her eyes had almost recovered from all the flashes on the red carpet. Without an assistant, Cat hadn’t bothered to RSVP, so the press had been blindsided by her appearance. Hopefully Lillian would be too. “How’s… Mike? Is that what he’s going by these days?”

Kal pursed his lips. “I can’t believe we fought over him.”

Kara chuckled, quite comfortable with her level of pettiness. Alex would be delighted by the news. Vasquez too. “I warned you.”

“You did,” Kal admitted with a begrudging grin. “I do enjoy the days when we spar, and I can wipe the floor with him. It’s satisfying on a level I’m not truly comfortable with.”

“I might have been looking forward to that myself.”

“You’ll get your chance.” Kal turned toward her before his gaze skimmed the crowd. He seemed a little lost without Lois at his side, but she was crushing a deadline and had no intention of being around her father. They hadn’t spoken since his engagement. Kara spied countless famous faces dotted throughout the museum’s grand hall, making small talk over canapés and trying not to touch the priceless exhibits. “Still, he’s on patrol tonight so I can be here without any quick changes. Metropolis has a backup hero now, I guess. How’s Cat?”

Kara bit her lip. “She’s… Cat. Even when she’s not completely okay, she’s still more formidable than the next five people. You know how she is.”

“How’s her memory? She still have it in for me, or am I safe to mingle?”

“Don’t joke about it.” Kara bumped him with her elbow, relishing the way he could absorb her unchecked strength. She settled her hip against the rail, glancing across the ballroom and spying Cat deep in conversation with Oprah. “I hated seeing her doubt herself, not knowing how much damage they’d done. Whatever they were trying to do, they fell short. And the Luthors are definitely involved, she was right about that.”

Kal gave her a smug little smile. “You’ve been looking out for her? The two of you seem… closer.”

There was more than journalistic curiosity in his tone.
“I told her.” Kara decided to get it over with. She’d been keeping the news from him since their argument over Mon-El, and she hadn’t wanted anything to bring down her high as she and Cat had grown closer. “Cat knows. About me.”

“Is that wise?”

“Maybe not. But it’s… necessary. For both of us,” Kara added. “I haven’t told her about you, but she’s likely figured you out already. Rao knows she worked me out fast enough. But I trust her completely, Kal. Even if she still doesn’t entirely trust herself.”

“Sounds like more than simple trust.” He was coaxing, gentle.

Kara said nothing, her eyes feasting on Cat, the way she looked in the soft, twinkling lights around the dance floor. Men and women alike circled her like moths to a flame. The kidnapping may not have been publicly known, but Cat Grant had been absent from the spotlight for weeks. Everyone wanted to say they’d spoken to her first. Kara sighed wistfully, and Kal’s eyebrows twitched higher.

“Kara?” he prompted.

“It’s more, for me at least. Or I want it to be.” She tore her gaze away from Cat to meet his eyes. “That world jumper I told you about, Zatanna? Before she took me, Cat and I had… a moment.”

“What kind of moment?” Kal asked, and Kara tried not to blush. Her fingers drifted unconsciously to her lips. “Ah. Kara and Cat, sitting in a tree?”

“You can’t retain one Kryptonian poem, but that inane Earth taunt just trips off the tongue?” Kara tried to hide behind her bluster. “Trouble is, she doesn’t remember. Zatanna wiped her memory.”

“Does she suspect? If it happened once, surely it could happen again?”

“I can’t believe I’m talking to you about kissing Cat. I can’t believe I’m talking to you about kissing anybody,” Kara admitted. “What would you do, if it were Lois?”

“Tell her the truth.” Kal laid a hand on Kara’s shoulder, squeezing without holding back. “Once you shared who you really are, that was a promise of sorts. If you go back to keeping things from her, there’s a chance she’ll never trust you again.”

“How do you reconcile it, Kal? Loving Lois, while knowing that being with you could get her hurt? Or worse?”

“I wrestle with it every day, but as she keeps telling me, what’s the point in saving the world if you don’t get to be happy in it? We spend our days reuniting families, stopping wives from losing husbands, children from losing parents. Why shouldn’t we have some of that love for ourselves?”

“Love’s a big word.” Kara drained the rest of her glass. While the alcohol did nothing for her, she still enjoyed the fizz of champagne bubbles against her tongue. Her mind drifted to how it would taste to kiss Cat again with this champagne on her lips.

“Cat’s a big presence.” They watched her round on a Republican Senator who’d come after Planned Parenthood. Kara almost felt sorry for the guy. “A big word could be what it takes.”

“It could.” Kara was quiet for a moment. If they didn’t stop Cadmus, all the excuses in the world wouldn’t mean a damn thing.

***
Maggie woke to the last rays of sunlight streaming through her windows and striking her eyes. She grumbled, leveraging herself up to find the rest of her apartment dark and oppressively quiet. A glance at her watch told her it had been seven hours since Alex had dropped her off.

She shuffled into the kitchen. In all her daydreams of a life after Cadmus, none involved a crick in her neck and a barren fridge. It had been more rustic cabins in Idaho and fake names, like witness protection mixed up with Little House on the Prairie. Since she had to go foraging for food, she figured she may as well shower first.

Hot spray hit her face, snapping her fully awake and into a moment she never thought would come. She was alive. Her friends and family were safe. Against all odds, she had a second chance, and a convulsive sob of relief and regret shook her. One led to another, until Maggie slid to the floor, crying in a way she hadn’t since the night her dad had thrown her out. She stayed there until the water ran cold, until she finally felt equipped to handle whatever came next.

Drying off, she wandered into her bedroom, changing into fresh clothes and running a brush through her damp hair. Deciding she’d make a decent-looking corpse at least, Maggie grabbed her wallet, leather jacket, and courage, and headed out the door.

No one waited in the hall to pounce, just the elderly woman in 6B that kept encouraging Maggie to meet a nice girl and settle down because that was “legal now, you know.” She escaped with a few mumbled pleasantries and stepped into the elevator, planning on hitting the vegan place down the block. If she wasn’t whacked by the time she was done, she’d figure out something to do with the rest of her night.

***

Weary of small talk about plans she hadn’t made and new ventures she hadn’t embarked upon, Cat headed for higher ground.

The museum was stunning in a way she’d previously become jaded about. Tonight, the fairy lights and swathes of silk festooning the arches and aged brickwork had taken on a refreshing, almost romantic quality. Cat rested her elbows on the railing of the balcony and sipped her champagne.

Romantic, she scoffed. Maybe Cadmus had made a permanent adjustment after all, if words like that sprang to mind. Or maybe it was the company she’d kept lately. Kara’s relentless optimism had a way of rubbing off. Cat had once dismissed it as the foolishness of youth. Now she saw the achievement of it, that Kara could experience all she had, and still believe good would triumph in the end.

“You’re a long way from National City,” said a familiar, chilling voice. Even without Kara’s strength, Cat’s glass almost shattered in her hand. Her stomach seemed to bubble with acid, and sweat prickled at her hairline.

“Secretary Luthor.” Cat affected her best fake smile, not bothering to turn around. “I’d say I’m surprised, but everyone knows the most dangerous place in Metropolis is between you and a press gaggle.” A cheap shot, but enough to steady the nerves.

“The president asked her Cabinet to be here,” Lillian responded, unruffled. “Otherwise I’d find better things to do than make small talk with a bunch of self-important millionaires.”

Cat faced her then. “And I’m sure you picked up that Vera Wang at a thrift store, Lillian. Besides, you mean billionaires. Millionaires are for pancake breakfasts. This is heavy hitters only.”
“Olivia will be thrilled you’ve made an appearance, and you can put an end to the rumors.” Lillian sipped her champagne, taking up position closer to Cat as though they were simply two old friends watching the world go by.

“Rumors?” Cat dug her nails into her palm, panic and rage competing to let her run her mouth off. Not yet.

“Come on, Cat. One pill too many and it’s off to Betty Ford, isn’t that right? I thought a nervous breakdown was more plausible, plus I can see from the lines around your eyes you haven’t had work done.”

“No, I’ve been reconnecting with my roots.” Cat flagged down a waiter for another drink, willing her hand not to tremble as she plucked it from the tray. “You might have seen my recent article – oh, not that retracted one, of course. Detective Sawyer had an interesting tale to tell, and I’ve heard it made quite a splash.”

First, the tightening of that irritatingly perfect jawline, then a flicker of the muscle in Lillian’s cheek. In poker Cat would have cleaned her out from those tells alone, but instead her fist clenched with the urge to lash ouch.

Cat closed her eyes for a moment to contain her fury. It had all been real. She hadn’t trusted photographs and second-hand accounts, and it wasn’t just the legal implications that left all mention of Lillian from their Cadmus article. A tiny part of Cat had still doubted, had needed to be in the presence of her captor to be sure. In that second, she could practically feel the mist descending again. Lillian had tried to turn her against Kara, against her own principles. For that, she would pay.

“You should be careful,” came the threat once Lillian composed herself. She might be a villain, but she was wearing the hell out of that black gown at least, delicate sequins shimmering on the bodice and catching the light like an oil slick. “You’re not exactly some hardened beat reporter. The people using the police force for their own ends might find your little stories… inconvenient.”

“I have great security,” Cat dismissed with a flip of her hand. “Super, in fact.” Right on cue, Kara appeared at the foot of the stairs. When she saw Lillian, Kara zipped through the milling few on the stairs and stopped just short of them. “But I’ve had a productive day here in Metropolis. Funny how many people are willing to talk about Cadmus, about all the interesting things they’ve heard. I see another exclusive in my future. In fact, I came tonight to give Olivia the heads up on that front. Possible government involvement.”

Lillian whirled to face Cat properly, closing the last remaining distance between them as she towered over Cat. “That would be unwise,” she warned, raising her finger as though admonishing a naughty child. “Unfounded allegations are more trouble than they’re worth, and you know Olivia won’t forgive attacks from the media. She feels so strongly about loyalty.”

“I feel just as strongly,” Cat argued. “Nobody will abuse CatCo’s reach anytime soon. I’m personally putting an end to fake news.” She had more confidence now she hadn’t been turned, wasn’t being manipulated from the shadows. Publishing the article and bringing down an arm of Cadmus’s operation had proven that.

“We’ll see about that,” Lillian snapped, but as she took one last step, Kara inserted herself between them, her arm casually slipping around Cat’s waist and pulling her back from Lillian almost imperceptibly.

“Hello,” Kara murmured politely, but Cat didn’t miss the undertone of menace in her voice as she extended her hand. “Kara Danvers. Cat’s date for the evening.”
Lillian barely contained a sneer, refusing the hand that was offered.

“But you already know my name. Don’t you, Mrs. Luthor?”

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“Forgive me.” Lillian conjured up one of those Stepford smiles Kara had seen in pictures too many times. “Not everyone can keep track of Kitty’s love life. I’m sure you’ll have a lovely few days, or however long it usually lasts.”

“I thought the name would be familiar,” Kara rubbed her thumb over Cat’s hip when Kitty had caused her to tense up. “I believe you’ve met my sister, Alex.”

Lillian’s eyes narrowed dangerously. “I meet a lot of people in my line of work,” she deflected, but her steely glare suggested Alex refusing her offer to join Cadmus still rankled.

“Like my foster father? You know Jeremiah, right?” She hadn’t meant to do it, worried that even speaking his name would have him in line for some kind of punishment at Lillian’s hand. Finally being close to the woman who had him captive had engaged Kara’s mouth before her brain. The fact that Lillian looked briefly startled counted as a win.

“Let’s find Olivia, shall we?” Cat interrupted, clutching Kara’s arm. “We shouldn’t waste time with monkeys when I’m here to see the organ grinder.”

“The president is downstairs,” Kara answered evenly. “Shall we tell her about our next article? And how we plan to expose everything about Cadmus?”

“Enjoy the rest of your night.” Lillian continued to glare at Kara, her words ringing hollow. “The main event is still to come.”

“What in the hell is that supposed to mean?” Kara guided Cat away and down the broad staircase towards the safety of the throng. “Did she try anything? Did she touch you?”

“She kept her hands – and needles and sprays – to herself.” Cat pulled away just a fraction. “Can we… I need a moment, but I don’t want her knowing she got to me.”

Kara peered over her glasses at the nearest corridor. “Here.” She guided Cat towards a nondescript door and wrenched the handle hard enough to render the lock useless. Inside was a perfectly serviceable storage room, the contents of the shelves shrouded from view. With the buzzing overhead light and the door closed, they could have been anywhere, even back at CatCo. “You’ll be safe in here.”

Chapter End Notes

We have been so, so, SO encouraged and heartened by your comments. Some of you on every chapter, sometimes joy, sometimes amusing threats, but every word of them is appreciated. It’s a long story and you won’t get time every day, but whenever you are moved, PLEASE comment on the art and on the writing. It means the world, and it makes this feel like a real community effort. Thank you.
Act IV

Chapter Summary

There are big developments for both Supercat and Sanvers in this act, and we wanted each to get their moment to shine. So enjoy one lot of reading, and TWO lots of art. The first is here, and the next is AFTER tonight’s act!
It was one thing when @supergaysupercat just suggested drawing this. Quite another heart-stopping thing to actually see it. Give love and praise in the comments or hit the ask box.
Cat and Kara have some quality closet time, but unsurprisingly they’re interrupted. Plus, it's Maggie's first night as a free woman, and there's only one place she wants to be. This act is NSFW!

Chapter Notes

Getting fancy from @xy0009!
Hit the comments or ask box about the pretty.

Our editors have carried us this far, so give it up for them please. catherinegrant (ao3 | tumblr), @spaceshipsarecool (ao3 | tumblr), @Revolos55 (ao3 | tumblr).

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Maggie stared at the door to Alex’s apartment, as if there had ever been any doubt where her conscience would lead her before the night was over. She nervously knitted her fingers, unsure what she wanted to accomplish with this unannounced visit.

Blowing out a shaky breath, she knocked and waited. At first there was nothing, then Maggie heard a muted thump and a curse. She barely suppressed a smile before Alex jerked open the door.

“Hey.”

Alex was disheveled, her usually-neat hair tousled and her shirt more rumpled than it had been earlier. She seemed like she’d stumbled out of bed, and Maggie had to admit it was a good look for
“Hey,” Alex blurted, sweeping a hand through her hair to tame it. “Everything okay?”

“Yeah. Sorry I didn’t call. I just… This was probably a bad idea. I should…” She took a step back, mentally berating herself for giving into her craving, but Alex swung her door open wide before she got far.

“Get in here, Sawyer. I was asleep on the couch.”

Maggie stepped inside, glancing around at Alex’s apartment. It was mellower than expected, the furniture clean and modern. She suspected Alex spent more time at Kara’s homey studio and the DEO than she did here, but it was nice.

Alex locked the door and leaned against it. “Didn’t think I’d see you until you reported for training next week.” She frowned as she took in Maggie’s features. “How’s, ah, how’s your jaw?”

“It’s fine.” She quirked an eyebrow at the purple bruise still slightly visible beneath Alex’s light makeup. “How’s the eye?”

Alex shifted her feet, and shrugged. “I… should apologize. I was out of line…”

“I started it.”

“I shouldn’t have ended it, not…” Alex’s gaze skittered away before fixing on Maggie again. “Not like that.”

“It’s fine. We both did some things we’re not proud of.” Palms perspiring lightly, Maggie slid them into the pockets of her jeans as she shrugged. “I walked over here, you know, trying to tempt fate. Goad Cadmus into taking their shot. They passed.”

“You can’t keep living your life like that, Maggie.”

Damn if it didn’t do delicious things to her body when Alex used her first name. Maggie cleared her throat. “I didn’t expect to have a life right now.” She turned, pacing the length of the island before facing Alex again. “I kinda don’t know what to do with myself.”

Pushing off the door, Alex wandered into her kitchen, pulling a heavy crystal tumbler down from a cabinet. Maggie noticed another already on the island as Alex poured them both a finger of scotch and passed a glass to Maggie. “So… now that you’re back from hell, what are you going to do, Sawyer?”

Maggie blinked. “Did you just quote Heathers at me?”

Alex nodded with a small smile, pleased Maggie caught the reference.

Chuckling, Maggie shook her head. “I think the better line is, ‘You look like hell…””

“‘Yeah, I just got back,’” Alex finished the quote, clinking their glasses together. She came back around the island and leaned against it. “So now that you’re back from hell, what are you going to do, Sawyer?”

Maggie shrugged again. “The liaison thing, I guess. Help bring down Cadmus.” She took a sip, the smooth liquid burning pleasantly on the way down, before broaching one of the reasons she’d come. “I’d like to help M’gann.”

Alex’s eyes narrowed. “Lucy is representing M’gann. I doubt she needs help.”
“M’gann hasn’t done anything wrong, Alex. The DEO have no right to hold her.”

“She’s a…”

“I learned what she is, and what her people did. I also know she betrayed them to save lives. She’s a good person, more worth saving than me.” Maggie’s gaze dared Alex to contradict her.

“You’re worth it,” Alex countered seriously. “I just wish you’d let me help you sooner.”

“I was trying to protect you.”

“From Cadmus?”

“From me.” Maggie sighed heavily, setting her glass down. “You deserve better. You deserve someone you can trust. Someone with a future. Someone who doesn’t have blood on their hands.”

“You think I don’t have blood on my hands? You want a list of all bad things I’ve done, all the lines I’ve crossed? Aliens I took into custody wound up at Cadmus, and I never, ever questioned where they went, what happened to them.” Alex paused, her hand clenching at her side. “The things I’m ashamed of, they would make a long list, and at the very top would be how I treated you.”

Maggie shook her head in protest, but Alex cut her off before she could speak. “You’re a good person forced to do terrible things. Me? I choose to do what I do. What does that make me?” Her voice softened, and her gaze dipped to Maggie’s lips. “If anything, you deserve better than me.”

“I hurt you. Lied to you. You…” The heat from Alex’s body distracted her. They weren’t touching, but there was only a finger’s breadth between them.

“Maybe we deserve each other then.” Alex’s fingertips ghosted over her cheek, and Maggie sucked in a sharp breath as her body reacted keenly to the touch. “Why did you come here tonight?” Alex asked with a knowing smile, but Maggie saw the vulnerability in her eyes, the uncertainty.

She didn’t know if she had a future, or if they had a chance in hell to get past the messed-up circumstances that had brought them together. Maggie only knew she had to take her life back after months of fear and loneliness, and that started with the woman in front of her.

Hesitantly, Maggie slid her fingers through Alex’s soft, mussed hair to curve around the back of her neck. Alex’s breath hitched, and the sound obliterated the last of Maggie’s self-control. She couldn’t fight the sway Alex had over her anymore, and Maggie didn’t want to.

“For this,” she whispered, pulling Alex down into a long-denied kiss.

***

“Fuck,” Cat spat after a moment of edgy silence. She slammed her palm against the wall. “On some level, I always knew I was right. I just didn’t feel it until she was right in front of me.”

“Should we be worried about what she said?”

“Oh, she’s rattled. She thought her precious alien drugs worked when I hadn’t struck out against her until now, and she’s trying to find out what I really know. She was here to gloat about me still being oblivious, so at least we ruined that for her. God, just the thought of her being able to snatch me up like that, to mess with my mind…” Cat’s chest was too tight to continue.

“I can take her in right now,” Kara offered, stolid and steadfast as Mount Rushmore, arms crossed
over her chest like she was wearing her suit instead of Monique Lhuillier. “She can’t touch you from inside a DEO cell.”

“And the political fallout would mean we never got near her again,” Cat argued. “No, when we really go for her we can’t miss. She has to pay for what she’s done, and not just to me. But she doesn’t get to slink around ballrooms making threats like some WASPy Tony Soprano.”

“Cat–”

“She thinks she’s invincible. That there’s no way to expose her, or stop her.”

“At least you know now,” Kara tried. Her light perfume suited her, and avoided all of the strong scents that triggered headaches in Cat. Even in the smallest details, Kara made sure to be as pleasant as possible for Cat to be around. “You can trust yourself and your memories. But speaking of memory, there’s something we have to talk about, and I don’t want to wait any longer.”

“Kara–”

“Hear me out, please.” Kara grabbed a shelf to steady herself, and it buckled under her grip. Cat stilled, urging Kara on with a quirk of an eyebrow, hands on her hips. “It’s just… I don’t know everything that happened while Zatanna had me, but I know what went on before she took me away.”

“When you were at my place,” Cat supplied, mind racing. She’d known Kara was holding back, misleading her in some small – probably kind – way. Now ranting about her memories had spurred some kind of confessional instinct, and they were both going to have to cringe through it. If she were a betting woman, Cat would put a house or two on having made a pass that Kara hadn’t been ready for. “Listen, you don’t have to relive it. Whatever I did, I apologize.”

“You didn’t… I did… we did…”

“Jesus, Kara. The way you’re blushing, I’m beginning to think we slept together.”

That brought Kara up short. The way she bit down on her lip and gave a stuttering little breath suggested Kara Danvers officially had no problem with the concept. Cat barely concealed a smirk at the confirmation.

“Nooo… but we did, um, kiss?”

“I kissed you?”

“We kissed each other,” Kara clarified, wringing her hands like something out of a period drama. “Totally consensual, very mutual, really great kissing. Only we were interrupted by the whole magician from another Earth thing, and then…”

“I forgot it ever happened.” Cat’s heart thumped against her ribcage. “Well. Thank you for telling me. I suppose you can see how important it is for me to know what’s real and what isn’t, especially now. But why didn’t you say something in Midvale?”

“I didn’t want to embarrass you. I mean, me. I mean, I wasn’t sure if you’d be okay about it.”

Cat edged closer. “Was I okay when we were kissing?” To hell with Lillian, the president, crooked cops, and growing protests. In that moment, the world boiled down to one room, two people and the glimmer of a chance. “Did I complain? Protest? Slap you for being so bold?”
“Oh, you’re assuming I started it?”

“Did you?”

“Well, you… you leaned in,” Kara explained.

“Like this?” Cat moved forward an inch or two. In the limited floor space of the closet, they hadn’t been far apart to begin with.

“Closer,” Kara whispered, her hand rising to stroke Cat’s bare arm. They were close enough now, lips separated by a few molecules at best. Still Cat hesitated, the old rules of being the boss holding her back. “And then,” the words were a breath, nothing more, tickling at Cat’s meticulously applied lipstick. “I did this.”

Their lips finally met and Cat smiled into the kiss. For the first time in weeks, something tender blossomed inside her chest, warming her where there had so often only been chills. With careful hands, she reached for Kara. Smoothing a palm against her cheek, the other stroking the side of her neck, before settling just above the bodice of blue silk. A heartbeat there, thundering like Cat’s own, just a little slower.

Kara kissed thoughtfully, with the giddy enthusiasm she applied to everything else. Perhaps too gentle at first, but she was soon caught up in the moment. She almost risked messing Cat’s perfectly-styled hair, but ran those fingers gently over the back of Cat’s neck instead, silk brushing against silk as she pulled Cat closer. No denying now the shape of their bodies, how well they fit together.

“Hmm,” Cat hummed as they finally broke apart, lips tingling, the taste of champagne and Kara on her tongue. “Wish I’d remembered that. We should really go for it this time, make sure the memory lingers.”

Kara clasped Cat’s face in her hands, running her thumbs over Cat’s cheekbones and barely holding back a soft laugh. “You’re so…”

“Yes,” Cat interrupted. “I’m sure I am.” She kissed Kara again, those hands dropping from her face to tug at her hips. Emboldened, Cat let her own hands wander. An almost-innocent journey down Kara’s sides at first, but then she had the frankly brilliant idea to back Kara against the shelves, kisses more breathless and not a little forceful now. God help anyone listening at the door, because the moment Kara’s mouth strayed from Cat’s to the planes of her neck, any hope of staying quiet evaporated.

“Jesus,” she hissed as Kara grazed a hint of teeth over her pulse point. “Kara, if we’re going to…”

The thought tapered off as Kara slipped her fingers beneath the halter neck of Cat’s dress. She’d been expecting to have to issue an engraved invitation to get past first base, but with sufficient inspiration, Kara didn’t appear to need much guidance. Cat moaned into their next kiss as Kara’s thumb brushed back and forth over a hardened nipple.

Just as Cat began to worry about the logistics of full-length dresses and dusty rooms, Kara withdrew.

“There’s—” she started to say, but a crash and chorus of screams didn’t take superpowers to hear.

“Come on,” Cat urged, hoping she looked presentable as she pulled Kara towards the door. “You have to get out there. If this is Lillian’s doing I’ll—”

“I’m not leaving you alone, not even in here,” Kara said firmly. Another crash, voices rising in panic. “If it is her, getting you alone is probably her goal.”
Cat was oddly touched Kara had thrown the greater good aside, just to keep her safe. Kara clasped Cat’s hand in hers as they made their way cautiously back into the corridor.

“Aliens!” someone shrieked, followed by the sound of a substantial crash from a great height. The roof, if Cat had to guess. Kara was already scanning to confirm.

“I should get you out of here,” Kara tried again, every muscle in her body straining to go help.

“Let’s just see what we’re dealing with first.”

“But—”

“I’ll stay right by you,” Cat promised. “Come on, Supergirl. Metropolis could do with a real hero tonight.”

“Are you saying I’m better than Superman?”

“Unless he can kiss like that, it’s no contest. Now, chop chop.”

***

It wasn’t like Alex to crave someone this much, but Maggie was the exception to so many of her rules. Her hands snuck beneath the hem of Maggie’s t-shirt to explore smooth muscle and temptingly soft skin. Maggie kissed her with more urgency, their bodies moving restlessly against one another. Her blunt nails dug lightly into the back of Alex’s neck, sending heat flashing through her veins.

“Alex…” Maggie pulled away reluctantly. “Maybe we should slow down…”

“Do you want to?” Alex asked seriously. With all Maggie had been through the last nine months, Alex didn’t want to take advantage, but until Maggie told her to stop, she seemed incapable of keeping her hands off her.

Maggie licked her lips, and the glimpse of her tongue made Alex’s stomach clench. “We should go out or something. Do this right with a fancy wine list and candles and…” She shivered when Alex ran her fingers up her spine, teasing along the line of her bra. “Trying to do the right thing here, Danvers. You’re making it hard.”

“Who says this isn’t the right thing?” Alex dipped her head and slowly kissed her way up Maggie’s neck.

“Damn it, Alex,” Maggie almost whined, and Alex grinned.

“You really want me to stop?” she breathed in Maggie’s ear.

Maggie turned her head, her dark eyes staring into Alex’s, close and beautiful. “I want to take you to bed and never let you out of it.”

Alex’s whole body twitched as if touched by a live wire. “Yeah?”

Maggie kissed her again, hard and determined, and Alex whimpered when she gripped her hips and urged her back toward the bed.

Pulse pounding, Alex grabbed the lapels of Maggie’s jacket, half afraid if she let go, her knees might give out. “Listen. I–, I haven’t… um…” she began, figuring she should be honest.

Leaning back abruptly, Maggie stared at her in surprise. “You’ve never… uh…”
Alex huffed out a self-conscious laugh. “I’ve… yeah. I just… I haven’t really found anyone more interesting than my work and taking care of my sister, at least not until now.”

“How long has it been?”

“Over two years?” Alex shrugged, feeling the weight of Maggie’s gaze on her as she bit her lip and waited for a response.

Maggie kissed her again, softer this time. “I’m flattered, Danvers. Breaking your two-year vow of celibacy for me?” she teased warmly, and Alex rolled her eyes.

Her fingers splayed across Maggie’s jaw, careful to avoid the bruise, and Alex used her height to her advantage as she drew Maggie in, her tongue stealing between Maggie’s lips. Her hands roamed down the smooth skin of Maggie’s neck and over her shoulders, sliding the leather back. “How about less celibacy and more breaking, Sawyer?”

Maggie shrugged out of her jacket and let it drop to the floor as she walked Alex backwards, continuing their journey to the bed. Alex all but dragged her up the steps before Maggie gripped Alex’s belt and tugged her down on top of her on the bed.

Frantic to be skin to skin, Alex reached between them to undo her belt. Her fingers ghosted over Maggie’s stomach like the night they met on a warehouse floor.

“You could buy me dinner first,” Maggie murmured, clearly remembering the moment as well.

“Later,” Alex promised, letting Maggie peel off her shirt.

By the time they slid against one another, naked and eager, Maggie was on top. She ran her hands over Alex’s abs, her thumbs tracing the slope of muscle to her hips. Alex’s skin quivered beneath her touch, hungry for Maggie’s mouth on her.

Maggie wordlessly seemed to know what she needed. She kissed Alex roughly, before beginning a torturously slow journey down her body. Maggie worshipped her, her touches somehow both soothing and arousing, her focus nothing but Alex’s pleasure and drawing it out. The world fell away for a precious time where Alex knew nothing but Maggie’s hands, her body, her mouth, working Alex higher by degrees until she shamelessly begged for more. She wound Alex even tighter before finally settling between her legs, relentless with her touch and tongue.

Alex came hard, and Maggie grabbed her hand, giving her something to hold onto in the sweet storm of sensation. When Alex finally collapsed, Maggie crawled up her body to curl around her.

“You okay?” she asked smugly, a pleased smile on her lips she had every right to wear.

“Very okay.” Alex chuckled weakly. She wanted to linger there, savoring the afterglow, but not until Maggie could enjoy it with her. Still shaking slightly, Alex tightened her stomach muscles and leveraged them over, pressing Maggie into the bed. She slid her thigh between Maggie’s, grinding into her, and Maggie gasped.

Any thought of taking things slow fled as Maggie arched into her, seeking more pressure and hissing through her teeth when Alex dug her fingers into Maggie’s hips.

“Alex…”

Determined to make Maggie moan her name like that again, Alex slid her fingers up the long muscles of Maggie’s stomach, taut and trembling, before cupping her breasts. Maggie curved into her
hands, whimpering as Alex’s thumbs flicked over her nipples. Alex wished she could tease and play, but Maggie was already bucking against her thigh, her breath catching each time Alex rolled her hips, moving with a desperation that felt like a plea.

Slipping her hand down, Alex curled her fingers and entered her just as she caught Maggie’s nipple between her teeth. Maggie moaned again, louder and longer, gripping Alex’s hips hard enough to bruise, and arched to take Alex deeper.

Alex set a rough and fast rhythm, and Maggie matched her pace, one hand tangling in Alex’s hair to draw her head up. Their gazes locked, and Alex didn’t look away, understanding Maggie wanted her to watch, to see how good she was making her feel.

“Alex!” She got her wish as her name fell from Maggie’s lips in another heady groan. Alex watched in awe as Maggie shuddered and came apart beneath her, thrashing hard against her hand. She drew the sensations out as long as she could until Maggie clutched at her, pulling her down and tangling their bodies.

Her fingers drifted lightly over Maggie’s skin, soothing her as she caught her breath. “Told you we weren’t done,” Alex said with a smirk.

Maggie grew unexpectedly quiet as they both absorbed the moment. “Are we… are we after tonight?”

“Not even close,” Alex said with conviction, but when Maggie didn’t answer, her insecurities bubbled to the surface. “Unless you don’t want–”

“I want,” Maggie whispered fiercely, but she sounded afraid to admit it. “I want the fancy wine lists and the candlelight dinners. I want Sundays cuddling on the couch watching the game. I want to bring you coffee at the DEO and have you bring me lunch at the precinct. And I just…”

Alex didn’t move, didn’t breathe. She’d hoped for this, but didn’t dare assume Maggie might want it too. Shifting until they were side by side, Alex gently brushed a lock of hair away from Maggie’s eyes. “You what?” she urged.

“I don’t think I deserve this.” Maggie searched Alex’s features. “But I want it if you do.”

“For a detective, you’re a little clueless. Haven’t you noticed I’m kinda crazy about you?”

“Yeah?” Maggie gave her the most beautiful dimpled smile Alex had ever seen.

“Yeah,” Alex promised.

“Good thing I’m your liaison then. We’ll have plenty of opportunities to… liaise.” Maggie quirked a suggestive eyebrow, her hands already on the move.

“Absolutely,” Alex agreed solemnly, earning her an adorable giggle as she rolled them both over to begin again.

***

Cat and Kara emerged on the edge of the main hall, absorbed by the crowd corralled in that corner. With people pressing in from every angle, Kara looked in vain for an escape route. At least the president was safe, spirited away by the Secret Service at the first sign of trouble.

Phones were snapping and streaming everywhere Kara turned, and cameramen capturing footage for
the campaign’s social media sites were now de facto photojournalists. She would have risked being exposed, but there was no way she’d leave Cat unprotected with Lillian in play. She spotted Kal only a few feet away.

Kara didn’t recognize the aliens. They were stocky, squat, reptilian. Mostly they seemed intent on property damage, and she didn’t see weapons beyond their claws and oversized teeth.

“What do we do?” Kara murmured, knowing only Kal would hear her in the din. Ceiling plaster rained down from a direct hit, and Kara shielded Cat’s head with her forearm. Kara had brought her suit of course, shrunk down with DEO tech and stashed in her clutch, but she felt oddly reluctant to rush off and change into it.

“I told you,” Kal said through his teeth, lips barely moving. Kara forced herself to pay attention, distracted by how good – how right – Cat felt in her arms again, despite the danger. Cat held on tight, and in Kara’s strapless dress that meant a firm grip on her bare shoulders. “I have backup.”

Right on cue, the Daxamite leapt in through a broken window. Kara balked at his sky-blue cape, his bodysuit a red version of Kal’s. If he’d been branded with the crest of the House of El, she might have vomited. Even Winn’s worst attempts had been miles better than that. Mon-El looked like an overgrown toddler in a onesie.

“Citizens of Metropolis!” he announced. “Do not fear.”

Kara’s murmured oh Rao almost drowned out Cat’s unbelieving scoff. She spied Lillian and Sam Lane edging away from the crowd into the relative safety of the corner that housed a large sculpture. Lillian watched the creatures’ campaign of destruction with something like glee. Despite a heated argument with the general, who clearly wanted to leave, she resolutely stayed put, glancing at Kara with a mocking little smile.

“Now we know what Lillian meant by ‘the main event’,” Cat groused. “How thoughtful of her to provide something other than Cirque du Soleil rejects for a change.”

“Kal,” Kara murmured, pulling out her phone to text Alex or Winn for help. It felt wrong not to do more, but it was hard to think beyond keeping Cat close and getting her out of there safely. Preferably to somewhere they could finish what they’d started a few minutes ago. “You’d better give him a hand.”

“He’s got this,” Kal replied, just as one of the reptiles tossed Mon-El right through a display of priceless antiquities.

***

Watching the aliens fight left a faint queasy feeling in the back of Cat’s throat. She pushed and prodded at the swirl of emotions, but thankfully nothing negative seemed to be present, not even a twinge of heartburn from too much champagne and not enough canapés. If Lillian was hoping for a reaction, she’d be disappointed.

Despite being less showy with his powers, the Daxamite Robin had clearly learned a trick or two from Superman. He knocked out aliens left and right, displaying impressive athleticism rather than just flying around. Cat almost suggested Kara try more of that wall-running, chandelier-swinging nonsense. It looked like more work, and people seemed to appreciate the effort he put into their rescue. Kara’s muscles strained with the urge to help, however, and Cat’s ardor from their make-out session enjoyed another spike at the sheer physicality of Kara, her heroine in couture.
Then the alien sideshow was abruptly over as two of them drew all too human guns and charged the crowd. People screamed and bolted for the exits, and Cat gripped Kara’s arm, sensing her superhero was about to do something foolish and out herself to the Washington elite. Before she could chide Kara to at least step into a damn closet to change, however, Cat caught a glimpse of Lillian through the chaos.

Lillian smiled as the aliens threaded through the crowd, waving their weapons menacingly. She tapped on a two-way in her ear, directing the carnage, and Cat surged forward, determined to stop her.

Cat forded the rushing bigwigs like so many salmon swimming upstream only to be cut off by two armed aliens. Clearly the convenience stores hadn’t drummed up enough press, so Lillian had unleashed her latest modified gremlins on a bigger stage. Cat knew her death would make headlines if aliens gunned her down at a presidential fundraiser. She’d walked right into Lillian’s trap.

“Well shit,” she muttered. Cat liked to think she learned from her mistakes. This time, she didn’t hesitate. “Kara!”

The aliens took aim and Cat’s life flashed before her eyes. Before she could get to some of the best parts, they pulled their triggers.

A blur of red and blue, and warm hands gripped Cat’s shoulders from behind, dragging her into a powerful embrace and pivoting her away from the gunman. Gasping, Cat breathed in the scent of gunpowder and Kara’s perfume, her hands clutching silk rather than the expected texture of Kara’s supersuit. Then everything went quiet save for a soft groan and the sound of someone falling to the ground.

***

“Are you okay? Are you hurt?” Kara was trembling as she spun Cat around none too gently to check her for injuries. Mon-El had been closer, reaching Cat milliseconds before Kara and shielding her from the bullets that would have killed her. Knowing she wouldn’t have been fast enough to save Cat shook Kara to her core.

“I’m fine,” Cat murmured, more confused than traumatized. She turned in Kara’s grip, going still as Kal reached them and knelt next to the Daxamite.

Statues and pottery had exploded everywhere. Light fixtures dangled from the high ceiling, and most of the structure had taken some kind of collateral damage, but the only victims appeared to be the aliens and Mon-El. Kara had assumed he had the same ability to deflect bullets she did, but as Kal gathered him into his arms, Kara saw blood.

Mon-El groaned again in a dusty, guttural way, his eyes meeting Kara’s. He’d found a way to be a hero in the end, and Kara wondered if he knew he was sacrificing himself when he’d stepped in front of Cat.

She would never know.

Before she could thank him, he wheezed a final time and went still. Cat gripped Kara’s arm as he turned to ash, the breeze rattling through the broken windows collecting all that remained of him and carrying him away.

They stood there, dumbstruck.

“What a shame.” Lillian sauntered over to them with General Lane at her side as the last of the
crowd stumbled through the exits and the doors slammed shut. “Looks like Metropolis has one less alien. What’s that joke about lawyers and the bottom of the ocean? Oh yes. A good start.”

Kal got to his feet, hovering protectively to Cat’s right as Lillian drifted closer.

“You seem surprised by your friend’s demise, Mr. Kent. Didn’t know he had a fatal lead allergy?” Lillian asked sweetly, before leaning towards him with a menacing smile. “Did you really think I’d let you build a damn franchise on my watch, Superman?”

Kara flinched, and she felt Cat do the same. Cadmus knew everything, seemed to have infiltrated every corner of their lives and unearthed every secret. She thought she understood what they were up against, but Maggie had been right when all this began. They had no idea who they were dealing with.

“I think the time for denial is behind us, don’t you?” Lillian purred, turning on Cat. “Next time, Kitty, don’t bet on some noble idiot getting in the way.” She stepped in close, and Cat let go of Kara just long enough to stand fully in front of her, brave and bold in the face of her enemy. “You think I wasted all that time and technology on your pill-addled brain just to walk away if you didn’t come around to my way of thinking? Have I ever given up that easily?”

“Doesn’t matter how many plans you have if they all fail,” Cat pointed out archly, tilting her jaw and all but daring Lillian to strike her.

If Lillian so much lifted a finger toward Cat, Kara would end her where she stood. She was tempted to do it anyway, to destroy this woman who’d hurt Cat, J’onn, and Jeremiah. Who’d put Maggie through hell and robbed Alex of her father. Kara’s hands curled into fists, and not even Kal’s strong grip on her bicep could hold her back.

Lane gripped his wife’s arm and jerked her away. “Let’s go. We don’t consort with aliens who wreck Metropolis’s most valued institutions.” Kara knew she’d see that spin on more than one newscast tomorrow. The sad thing was the number of people who would buy it, who would become even more afraid of them then they already were. They’d be manipulated into hating people they didn’t need to fear.

“Do give the doctor my regards when you meet,” Lillian called back to Cat before her gaze cut to Kara. “And tell your sister I said hello.”

The locks on her rage snapped, and Kara surged forward, her eyes glowing white hot. Both Cat and Kal stepped in front of her as Lillian laughed, the police and DEO agents storming inside as she left.

“Kara, no,” Cat warned her. “Don’t give her the satisfaction.” She cupped Kara’s cheeks, her touch grounding Kara in a way nothing else ever had. The heat slowly vanished from her vision, leaving Kara cold all over.

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“What did she mean about the doctor?” Kal asked them.

“I have no idea, but I’m sure we’ll find out soon enough,” Cat sighed.

***

“Do you have anything in the safe?” Kara asked. Details. Lists. Bullet points. Kara could do that. Those were easier to focus on. Not Mon-El’s face, not the ash, not how close Cat had come to dying…

Cat crossed her arms as Kara hurried around their hotel room, packing up their things at a slightly
faster than human pace. It took her almost dropping both suitcases for Cat to speak up. “I’m staying. I’m not going to be intimidated, and we need to keep pressure on–”

Kara whirled, panicked at the thought of Cat going anywhere near Lillian right now. “You’re going home,” Kara commanded. Cat frowned, and Kara looked away, stuffing their toiletries into a bag to be sorted later. “I can’t do what I need to do if I’m worried about you, and as long as Lillian is here, you’re safer anywhere else.”

“You won’t come with me?” And Rao, Cat sounded wounded at the thought.

Caught up in running from the unexpected ambush and the loss of Mon-El, Kara had forgotten to consider Cat’s feelings. It wasn’t as though they’d been close, she couldn’t claim an honest grief over his sacrifice, but she didn’t have words to explain how watching the boy from Daxam die brought home the destruction of Krypton all over again. Another link, as faint as it was, gone to her home, to her family, to the sights and sounds of her world she’d never experience again.

“Kal and I need to perform rites for him. They won’t be quite right, but it’s better than Earth rituals.” Kara’s voice wavered as Cat drew closer. She zipped up the bag and set it on the floor, refusing to meet Cat’s eyes even as her warm hand gripped Kara’s shoulder. “I need to get you home, send Mon-El on his journey, and I have to… I have to…” Kara couldn’t fight the tears any longer. They spilled as readily as the sob from her throat, and Cat pulled her into the comfort of her arms.

“You don’t have to do anything, Kara.”

Kara rested her head on Cat’s almost-bare shoulder, crying out weeks of stress all at once. She took solace in Cat’s steady heartbeat, still going strong despite Lillian’s efforts to stop it forever.

“It’s okay to let your cousin handle this,” Cat said eventually, her hands running soothingly over Kara’s back. “We should just go to bed and–”

“No.” That was a luxury Kara was duty bound to deny herself. She stepped back, wiping at her eyes. “I can’t.”

“Then we should talk about what happened, before,” Cat insisted. “About the guilt you’re carrying. This wasn’t your fault.”

“Whose was it then?” Kara asked with a hollow laugh. “I sent him away when I could have trained him. I stood by and let him take on those aliens to protect my identity, to protect you. When you…” She shivered at how close she’d come to losing her. Mon-El had been closer to Cat by a few feet, the only reason he’d gotten to her first. Kara had failed them both.

“I’m always torn between being Kara and being Supergirl,” she continued. “Tonight I wanted to be just be me with you, and my holding on to that got Mon-El killed. Caring about you this much, it makes me weak. It makes me distracted.”

“You were in an impossible situation. The risk to your identity, to the people who care about you–”

“Stop making excuses for me! Please, just let me take you home so I can do what needs to be done.”

Sensing this wasn’t a fight she couldn’t win right now, Cat nodded reluctantly. “But why are you passing me off like this? Even at my most difficult, you’ve always handled me yourself.” She sounded genuinely hurt, and Kara added another dose of guilt to her growing mountain of it.

“Because…” Kara floundered, trying to let go of what could be for what was. What had to be. For both their sakes. “Because it’s not about having it all, or juggling. It’s about the way you make me
feel. If someone had offered me the chance to keep you safe tonight at the cost of all those strangers, I wouldn’t have had to think for a second before answering. I saw Lillian taunting you and that wasn’t just an urge to defend you; I was ready to attack her outright. It’s been… you won’t remember, but it’s how I prepared to rescue you. That anger, that depth of feeling… it’s not safe in someone with my powers. I’d become what they’re warning about.”

“Kara—” Cat growled, her concern giving way to irritation as Kara used a burst of superspeed to change into her suit at last. “You don’t have to be scared of feeling things. You deserve to be happy. The only one to blame for tonight is Lillian.”

“Cat—”

“No.” Cat’s voice was firm, commanding, and maybe just a little scared. “We have come too far and endured too much for you to…” She clenched her teeth. “I’ll give you the space you need tonight, but if you think I’m going to let you fly out of my life after what happened between us earlier, then you are in for a rude awakening, Supergirl.”

Kara blinked, a tendril of warmth cutting through the cold in her chest at the conviction in Cat’s eyes. There was enough there for both of them.

Cat came closer again, cupping Kara’s cheek with the most delicate of touches. “We’re talking about this tomorrow, when hopefully you’ll be more rational. No running away, understood?”

“Understood,” Kara breathed.

***

Cat had barely secured her seatbelt and picked up her freshly mixed Manhattan before her private plane began its slow roll to the end of the runway. Kara hadn’t boarded with her, opting to let the cabin crew handle the luggage without her pestering for once. Cat downed her drink as a defensive maneuver, refusing to believe they were over before they began. She’d talk sense into that thick, beautiful skull tomorrow.

The jet lifted and roared into the night sky over Metropolis. Cat willed herself not to look and feel like a fool, but an almost magnetic force turned her head to the right. She stared out the window, and her breath caught.

Kara was there, her face a mask of concentration as she moderated her speed and trajectory to keep pace with the Gulfstream G5. The last thing they needed was a cape tangling with the engine.

A faint smile came to Cat’s lips as the plane leveled off and Kara moved closer. She eyed Cat apologetically before putting her hand on the window. Without thinking, Cat placed her own on the other side, only the glass separating them. Somehow it felt like so much more than that.

All too soon, Kara took her leave, disappearing with a flutter of red and blonde.

Cat settled in for the journey home, relieved when a scurrying member of the cabin crew brought her a second drink. It was going to be a long, lonely flight.

Chapter End Notes

We have been so, so, SO encouraged and heartened by your comments. Some of you
on every chapter, sometimes joy, sometimes amusing threats, but every word of them is appreciated. It's a long story and you won't get time every day, but whenever you are moved, PLEASE comment on the art and on the writing. It means the world, and it makes this feel like a real community effort. Thank you.

And be sure to check out your second work of art for Act IV on the next page!
Act IV
@pinkrabbitpro? More like @pinkrabbitOMGOMGOMG. Stunning Sanvers moment, what a capture. Love and adulation to the comments or the ask box.
Act V

Chapter Summary

Previously on Supergirl Virtual Season...

Sanvers sexetimes brought to you by @supergaysupercat (ao3 | tumblr). Please leave comments on the art here or their tumblr ask box.
Act V

Chapter by sgvirtualseason

Chapter Summary

A return to National City. M’gann finally finds out what the future holds, and friendships are put to very good use. Kara and Cat work out how to move forward.

Chapter Notes

Getting fancy from @xy0009!
Hit the comments or ask box about the pretty.

Our editors have carried us this far, so give it up for them please. catherinegrant (ao3 | tumblr), @spaceshipsarecool (ao3 | tumblr), @Revolos55 (ao3 | tumblr).

Kara stormed into Noonan’s like it was the last chopper out of Saigon, or at least the last source of cinnamon buns on the West Coast. Alex couldn’t help it, in a haze of happy exhaustion, everything amused her. She grinned at her sister, who took her smile as some kind of insult.

“What happened to having a proper brunch when I got back? Why are you in line for takeout?”

“Wow. You’re in a charming mood. First of all, I didn’t know you were back until you sent a text thirty minutes ago,” Alex pointed out, stepping out of line and following Kara to their usual table. “Secondly…” She frowned as Kara flopped into her chair and hung her head. “What happened?” Alex asked, settling across from her. “Why are you back from Metropolis so soon, anyway? I
thought you’d stay a second night at least.”

“You didn’t see the news?” Kara’s tone was faintly accusatory.

Not unless CNN had started broadcasting from the apex of Maggie’s thighs, Alex almost snarked. “Um…”

“You were right. We shouldn’t have gone.”

Alex hesitated, her stomach tumbling with sudden nerves. “Kara, what happened?” she insisted.

“I underestimated Lillian, again. How many times before I learn? How many more people have to pay for my mistakes?”

The waitress arrived to fill their coffee mugs and take their orders. Alex stuck with her usual, but Kara only wanted coffee. That’s when Alex knew something was really wrong. “Bring her three sticky buns,” she suggested.

The waitress shot a dubious look at Kara’s slender figure before writing the order down and leaving them alone.

“Did she threaten Dad?” Alex leaned forward, keeping her voice low.

“She threatened Cat,” Kara say in a quiet voice. “She threatened you.”

Alex’s chin hitched higher. She’d welcome Lillian taking her shot. It meant she’d get one of her own. “Is that all?”

The spoon between Kara’s fingers twisted and bent, and Alex reached across the table to cover Kara’s hand before anyone noticed. “Mon-El is dead. Lillian had a plan. Had aliens attack the gala. He…” She swallowed convulsively before spilling everything. By the time she was done, the waitress had returned with their orders, and Alex’s own appetite was noticeably missing.

There was nothing she could do about Mon-El. While guilt churned her stomach that Cadmus had claimed another victim on her watch, Alex set it aside as Kara angrily attacked her first pastry. Lillian and Lane were similarly out of Alex’s reach, unfortunately. That left only one topic to tackle, one she’d been largely avoiding.

“You know, I’ve been promising you for a while now we’d talk more about Cat.”

Kara went still mid-bite. “There’s nothing to talk about.” She set her fork down. “No distractions, right? Jeremiah is the mission. We have to focus–”

“Kara,” Alex chided. “As much as I want us focused on finding Dad, I…” She suddenly felt like a hypocrite, allowing her own focus to be pulled away with Maggie, but Alex couldn’t find it in herself to regret it. “Don’t use him as an excuse. Not with me.”

Kara sighed heavily, and finally met Alex’s eyes. “I’m sorry…”

Alex held up her hands. “No teasing. No judging. Just listening,” she promised. “I know you needed some space with this, but with everything that’s going on–”

“Everything that’s going on is why there can never be anything between me and Cat.” Kara slumped back in her chair. “There’s always going to be something. Another Non. Another Cadmus.”

“But there’ll never be another Cat. You ready to let her go? Is what you feel for her that shallow?”
“There is nothing shallow about what I feel for her, Alex.” Kara sucked in a shaky breath, and Alex waited for Kara to speak a truth she was certain Kara hadn’t even admitted to herself. “That’s the problem. I think about someone coming for her again and I don’t know what I’d do… I’m not sure I could keep my temper. It was bad enough before, when nothing had happened between us, but now…”

“You’re falling in love with her,” Alex suggested gently when Kara didn’t continue. “Does she feel the same?”

“We… made out in a closet last night.” Kara cleared her throat, a blush rising on her cheeks. “At the gala.”

Alex’s eyebrows quirked. “Do we need to have the whole coming out of the closet talk as well?” So maybe she was going to tease her sister a little. “Always so literal, Kara.”

Kara threw her napkin at her, but a faint smile graced her lips at last. “I don’t know what to do. I need to focus, but with Cat I just… I’m so scared, Alex.”

“I know the feeling.” Alex confessed. The waitress stopped by to check on them and Alex asked for the bill. “Oh, and can I get an order of the French toast to go? Thanks.”

The waitress left them alone, and Kara’s brow knitted in confusion. “Why are you ordering another breakfast? Unless that’s for someone… else?”

Alex tilted her head, willing her features to remain blank.

“Maggie?” Kara guessed slowly. “Are you bringing her breakfast at the precinct? That’s…” She frowned, and Alex wondered what tell was giving her away. Her heartbeat picked up as she remembered waking up with Maggie curled around her an hour ago. “Oohhh.”

“Kara…”

“Did you two… I mean, did she…?” She bit her lip, looking cautiously excited.

Alex blew out a long sigh and rolled her eyes. If knowing improved Kara’s mood, fine. “She stayed over last night.”

“So you could play the white knight and guard her while she slept?” Kara didn’t sound like she bought the excuse.

“There was… very little sleeping,” Alex admitted.

Kara let out a little yip of excitement, and the other patrons turned and looked at them curiously.

“Calm down.”

“You slept with Maggie?” Kara said in a stage whisper.

“Try not to announce it to the whole restaurant, Kara.”

“Alex… you deserve this,” Kara said sincerely. “You deserve to be happy. So does she.”

“And so do you,” Alex reminded her, emboldened by her night with Maggie and the bright new day they’d woken up to. “I’m not going to pretend I don’t have about nineteen questions and even more reservations, but I know you. If you’ve got it this bad for Cat, then she’s worth it.”
“But doesn’t it make me selfish? To put one person above everyone else? Everything else?”

“I don’t give a damn if it does. I make no apologies for putting the people I care about first. They’re why I survive against the odds. They’re the fuel that drives me to protect this planet. Without them, what do I have? Why would I bother?”

“We’re your strength, not your weakness,” Kara said slowly, absorbing what Alex was telling her.

“What’s this ‘we’ business? I wasn’t talking about you.”

A wider grin curved Kara’s lips. “I hate you.”

Alex smiled in return, taking a sip of her coffee. “I know.”

***

Naked and slightly damp from her shower, Maggie scooped up the maroon t-shirt Alex had worn the day before and slipped it over her head. It smelled like Alex, and Maggie drew in a deep breath. She took a quick glance at the clock, and her stomach rumbled at the thought of breakfast.

But coffee first.

Once it was brewing, Maggie prowled Alex’s kitchen. She peeked in the fridge, clucking her tongue at the presence of nothing but beer and takeout containers. If they were going to make a go of whatever intoxicating thing was happening between them, Maggie would make sure Alex was taken care of, starting with some healthier food options. She rolled her eyes. “In deep already,” she whispered.

She poured her coffee and wandered into the living room, studying a series of framed photographs on the mantle. They were the only personal touch in the whole apartment. Not surprising knowing how much family mattered to Alex.

Maggie set her coffee down and scooped up a photo of the Danvers. A teenaged Alex and Kara smiled wide for the camera, their mother and Jeremiah beaming proudly behind them. Maggie ached for what they had, and mourned for what Alex had lost.

A key turned in the lock and the door swung open. Alex stepped inside, pausing when she saw Maggie standing there in nothing but her t-shirt and a hesitant smile. “Hey.”

“Hey.”

Alex shut and locked the door, setting a bag on the counter before drifting closer. “You stayed.”

“You think I wouldn’t?” Maggie set the photo back on the mantle, and Alex’s gaze lingered on it for a moment.

Shrugging, Alex playfully snagging the hem of Maggie’s t-shirt. “This looks better on you than it does on me.”

“Hope you don’t mind,” Maggie teased. “I like the way it smelled.”

Alex grinned, charmed and bashful, and Maggie’s heart melted a little. “Definitely don’t mind.” Alex used her grip to tug her closer, dipping her head and capturing Maggie’s mouth in a slow, hot kiss that curled her toes in the shag rug on the floor.

They parted slowly, both breathing hard.
“Brought you breakfast. French toast, as promised,” Alex said before glancing at the photo of her family again.

“I want to help you find him.” Maggie wouldn’t have survived these last nine months without Jeremiah, and if she accomplished nothing else with her life, reuniting Alex with her dad would be enough.

“Yeah?” Alex blurted in surprise.

“I owe you both. Care… about you both. We could start with the drop sites. Not that there’s likely any evidence left, but we can look. I mean, if you want my help. I understand if you—” The rest of Maggie’s babbling was arrested by Alex’s mouth on hers. She slid her hands beneath the t-shirt to tease over Maggie’s curves, pulling her in tighter.

“Sorry,” Alex said a few distracted minutes later. “Your breakfast… And Lucy texted. They need you at the DEO.”

The news was more effective than a cold shower. Maggie jerked back abruptly. “Why?”

Alex smiled.

***

“Maggie?”

J’onn watched as she jumped a little at Lucy’s voice, spinning around to eye them as they approached. She tucked her hands in her leather jacket to keep from fidgeting.

“Hey,” Maggie greeted with a hesitant smile. “Alex said you wanted to see me. Everything okay?”

Lucy motioned at the conference table, and Maggie warily took a seat. “It’s about M’gann.” She dropped a file onto the table before sitting herself. “I understand you two are close? We’re in the process of establishing her conduct here on Earth, and we’re interviewing character references.”

Maggie straightened, her gaze darting to J’onn as he sat. “You’ve got be pretty pissed at her,” she murmured with quiet understanding. J’onn didn’t disagree. He hadn’t slept since his talk with M’gann the night before.

“Cat knew her well years ago, but you have a more current relationship with M’gann, is that correct?” Lucy asked.

“Yeah. She’s… my best friend, I guess.”

“Did you know?” J’onn asked. “What she really was?”

Maggie shook her head. “She told me the other night when we were in holding.”

“Telepathically?” Lucy speculated.

“You didn’t hear us yelling back and forth, did you?” Maggie pointed out, and Lucy barely suppressed a smile. “She told me about… everything.” Her gaze flicked to J’onn again. “Seems lame to say it, but I’m sorry.”

J’onn nodded, sensing her genuine remorse for him, but he didn’t want her pity. “As a detective, I think you can understand why we should keep her here for the protection of National City.”
“Actually no, I don’t. I’ve known M’gann for a few years now. She’s a good person, one of the best I’ve met, and her work has saved hundreds, maybe thousands, of lives. With all due respect, sir, she hasn’t broken any laws. You have no right to hold her.”

J’onn pursed his lips in disapproval, but Maggie didn’t back down.

“She murdered millions—” J’onn began.

“Her people did,” Maggie conceded, “but what proof do you have that she is implicated in their crimes? Give me one witness, even a shred of evidence.” She gestured toward the file in front of Lucy. “Show me.”

“You’re going to worry about due process now?” J’onn was aware he was lashing out but unable to help himself. “You didn’t give a damn when you were handing those aliens over to Cadmus. We had reason to believe they were a legitimate branch of the military. You knew better and still complied.” That was a lie and he knew it.

“J’onn,” Lucy warned, but Maggie pushed back from the table and stood.

“How many aliens do you have locked up in here who never got a fair trial? Or any trial? And what happened to them?”

Regret and fury radiated off Maggie’s petite frame, and J’onn took a deep breath, reminded that his ire was not with her. Perhaps it wasn’t even with the woman they’d gathered to discuss.

“I despise what I did, but your hands aren’t clean either. None of ours are, except, possibly, M’gann.”

Lucy laced her fingers and settled her hands on the file, neatly drawing their attention to her. “You vouch for her?”

“Absolutely. I can give you the names of plenty of aliens who would too. You got anyone who can testify to anything she’s done wrong?” Maggie challenged.

Lucy looked pointedly at J’onn. “We don’t,” she reminded him. It had been her very first warning to him about this situation.

Maggie put her hands on the table and leaned in. “Then let her go. Please. I can’t work for another Cadmus.”

J’onn flinched at the comparison.

“I can’t imagine what you must feel,” Maggie continued, “but she is not your enemy, Director, and the extra-jurisdictional detainments need to stop. For all of our sakes.” She folded her arms across her chest. “Let her go.”

They stared at each other for a moment, a silent fencing of wills. “I can’t,” J’onn said quietly. “I can’t.” Maggie sagged as he turned to Lucy, finding her already watching him with disapproval. “But you can, Major. The decision is yours.”

Lucy blinked, startled. “J’onn…”

“Follow the law, Lucy. Wherever that leads you.” J’onn stood and left the conference room, Lucy and Maggie’s compassion trailing after him in his wake.
“I know you’re out there, Cat.” M’gann pushed off her bunk and approached the glass. “No one thinks as loudly as you do.”

“That doesn’t get any less creepy, for the record.”

“Hey, I’m not looking. You’re the one practically yelling your inner turmoil at me.”

Cat stepped into view, letting M’gann see her in all her disgruntled and faintly hungover glory. It hadn’t been easy picking out what to wear to spring someone out of prison, but Cat had done her best in McQueen and Chanel. “You heard the news?”

“What news?”

Cat pressed the code Vasquez had given her into the door and it swung open. “Detective Sawyer made your case, and while she’d like to do the honors, I insisted. You’re a free woman.”

“Alien.”

“Well that’s not very intersectional of you. Now come on, there’s a lot to do and we don’t have all day.”

“J’onn wouldn’t okay this,” M’gann murmured, glancing about as if her release were some kind of trick.

“He didn’t, but lucky for you, he entrusted your case to someone more objective.” Cat handed over the bags she’d carried all the way down, despite Vasquez’s enthusiastic offer of help. So maybe her dress was cut a little higher than her usual workwear, but Cat liked to do a little something for the troops’ morale where she could. “I guessed at sizes and tried to stick to your…” She waved at M’gann’s improvised DEO clothing. “Grunge aesthetic?”

M’gann took the bags but didn’t look inside, setting them on the floor. “When I want help, I’ll ask for it.”

“And if this was an uninvited makeover, I’d accept that. What you seem to forget is your home is largely gone thanks to the little pyro party the other night. You can’t take up your position wearing borrowed fatigues and baggy t-shirts, can you?”

“What position? What the hell are you talking about?”

“Oh, you’re becoming a community leader. Officially, that is. And if you start about these clothes again, can I remind you how many you’ve clothed, fed, and housed over the years? I may not have numbers right now, but you know I’ll get them.”

“Goddamn journalists.” M’gann sighed. With one of her shimmering transformations, she appeared dressed in a simple gray top and black jeans from the bags that Cat had brought. How she’d gotten them out of the bag undetected seemed to be part of the trick, and Cat knew better than to pry. “I really didn’t think I was getting out of here. I thought the past had finally caught up to me.”

“It did. It does, for all of us.” Cat reached over, brushing a piece of lint from M’gann’s shoulder. “I won’t patronize you, but you need someone to show you how to capitalize on all this. The strikes. The protests. The notoriety. They’ve raised your profile. You could do a lot worse than having the Queen of All Media as your advisor.”
“I’ve got bigger problems,” M’gann pointed out, not unreasonably. “Like finding out if my bar is still standing, finding somewhere to live…”

“Handled,” Cat said as she tossed her a set of keys. “It’s sparse, but it’s clean and safe and on your side of town. Yours for as long as you need it.”

“I can’t accept—”

“It’s nothing you haven’t done for others a hundred times over,” Cat reminded her as M’gann scooped up the bags and approached. “You’re in a position to make an even bigger difference now, M’gann. You’ll hear a lot of talk about taking the fight to Cadmus, to their crooked cops and their paid-for politicians, but I’ve been in this game a long time. Nothing beats a good message. That’s what changes hearts and minds.”

“You like giving those little speeches, don’t you?” M’gann actually smiled, stepping forward and giving Cat a brief hug. “Let me think about it, okay?”

“Don’t think too long. I’m in high demand, you know.”

M’gann snorted as they parted. Cat led them on a shortcut back to street level, away from the main bank of elevators. Strange that this place had become so familiar. They walked in silence until hitting the lobby. “My driver will take you anywhere you need to go. I can walk from here.”

“I wouldn’t rush off.” M’gann tipped her head at Kara who was trying and failing to look inconspicuous on the sofa in the waiting area. Cat’s heart leapt in surprise and anticipation at the sight of her. “And Cat? Thank you.”

“It’s nothing.” Cat dismissed, but she couldn’t help a pleased smile all the same. “Just promise me one thing? If J’onn reaches out—”

“He won’t,” M’gann shot her down fast and Cat glared. “Fine. If he does, I’ll listen. Now go do the same with your Kryptonian.”

Cat glanced back at Kara. “Maybe I will. Go salvage your bar, Miss Martian.”

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Kara took a deep breath and stood as Cat approached. She was far too appealing in her shift dress and blazer, every bit as gorgeous as she had been in a ball gown. Her hair was down again, back to the loose curls Kara longed to run her fingers through. She clenched her hands to resist the urge, not sure what to expect from this moment or Cat after last night.

Stopping a few feet away, Cat eyed her expectantly. “Come to your senses yet this morning?”

“Cat…”

“I know, I know. People died, the world is in chaos. You have to be a hero and a sister and a reporter and a friend. Busy,” Cat summarized. “Pressure. Duty. What if you lose your temper? None of it is a deal breaker, not for me.”

Kara nodded, even though she felt faintly mocked. “I need to be able to trust myself,” she admitted. “I need to know I can keep control, even when it comes to you.”

“Then find a way.” Cat was blunt. She hesitated before reaching for Kara’s hand, and Kara’s heart stuttered at the contact. “I lied to you about my reasons for leaving CatCo. Well, not completely. I
did need new adventures. I got more than I bargained for, but still…” She drew a shallow breath. “I left because I thought I couldn’t have this. Couldn’t have you.”

Not even kryptonite could make Kara as weak in the knees as Cat’s revelation. “Cat…” she breathed.

“While my excuses for denying myself were different than yours, they were still that. Excuses. If I overcame mine, surely a woman who can leap tall buildings in a single bound can surmount hers.” Cat stepped closer. “But I needed time to come to grips with this and so do you. So I’m taking myself off the board for now.”

“Are you… breaking up with me?” Kara winced, wishing she sounded less like a teenager with a crush.

“No,” Cat corrected with a barely suppressed smile. “I, the world’s least patient woman, am giving you patience. I’m giving you room. We’ll keep our friendly, professional distance until you wrap your head around how to do this, how to be the person and the hero you need to be. I’m not going anywhere, Kara. Trying to run from this proved pointless, so I will be right here waiting, and you know I don’t wait for anyone, or anything.”

Kara gathered Cat up in a tight hug, saying with actions what she couldn’t with words. “Thank you,” she whispered.

“Yes, well.” Cat pulled back eventually, but there was real reluctance on both their parts. Why did the prospect of hitting pause make Kara want to rush in head first? She could kiss Cat right now if she wanted, and all the tragedies and crises of the world around them couldn’t stop it from happening. “It’s good timing, since I plan on going back to work on Monday. To break the rest of this story, I need CatCo resources. It’s Labor Day so I won’t have to deal with as many questions, thankfully.”

The thought of walking past Cat’s office and seeing her safely ensconced there once more felt like the kind of security Kara had doubted she’d ever have again. She didn’t do well with change, and the prospect of something changing back, for the better, made her want to turn somersaults.

“That’s great,” she said, barely able to keep her feet on the ground. “We could… meet at Noonan’s, before?” she asked hesitantly, unsure what she should and shouldn’t expect from Cat now.

“I’d like that,” Cat agreed. “But first, I need a favor.”

The first glimpse was a punch to the gut. So much so M’gann almost bent double at the sight of her bar, her home. She tried to count her blessings that the structure was mostly still standing, but the scorch marks and debris were ugly wounds on a place intended to be a sanctuary.

Clutching the bags Cat had given her as a highly ineffectual shield, she pushed through a side door hanging on by a hinge and cut through the storage area to the bar, bracing for more destruction. She found it, but amongst the ruins was something she never expected.

Maggie was setting stools back on their feet at the bar. Alex was helping, wiping the soot from the seats with a rag, and she spied M’gann first, giving her a tight, almost apologetic smile before nudging Maggie with her elbow.

“What?” Maggie glanced up, and a wide, dimpled smile graced her features as she moved toward M’gann. “Hey, cellmate.” Her voice was as warm as her arms as they wrapped M’gann in a short,
forceful hug.

M’gann nodded numbly, taking in the other faces around the room. Many she didn’t recognize, but there was a surprising mix of aliens and humans alike, all working to restore the bar, or at least work out what could be recovered from it. The extent of the damage suggested a new permanent home might be in order. Cat sauntered toward her, Supergirl a step behind, and M’gann shook her head. “You had Supergirl fly you here just to get here ahead of me? Show off.”

Maggie chuckled at Cat’s bored shrug, but Kara’s soft smile was answer enough. “Think I’ll get back to work. Try to behave, you three.” Maggie touched Kara’s shoulder as she passed, squeezing lightly, and Kara’s eyes brightened at the gesture.

“I suppose you organized all this?” M’gann wasn’t sure how to feel about Cat’s insistence on meddling with her life.

“No, no.” Cat reached for the tall man directing volunteers and handing out trash bags. “I don’t believe you’ve met my second in command. James Olsen, M’gann M’orzz. I think you two will have a lot to talk about.”

M’gann shook his hand. “Why are you doing this?” Maybe it was rude, maybe it was ungrateful, but she’d had one hell of a week.

“Because you’ve made friends like mine feel welcome when others didn’t,” James replied with an easy grin. “But all I did was give the people who wanted to help a focal point. It’s no big thing.”

“Yes, it is,” Kara chided, passing another bucket to her sister. Alex lingered by Maggie’s side, and even without the ability to read thoughts, M’gann could see the shift between them. Something to celebrate when Maggie was ready to talk about it. “You were right that I could do more to help. We all could, and going forward, we will,” she promised.

“Enough talking. More cleaning,” Cat instructed all of them. “Chop chop.” Kara eyed her for a wistful moment before she got back to work. “I have to go, but you have my number if you need anything.”

“Not going to stay and help?” M’gann joked.

“Looks like you have plenty.” Cat patted M’gann wordlessly on the wrist as she walked away, casting one last, longing looking in Kara’s direction before stepping back out into the sunlight.

Setting her bags down on the bar, M’gann went around the various people clearing and cleaning, greeting Brian and retrieving a can of spray paint for one of her regulars who still hadn’t given her his name, three years on. A young blonde she hadn’t seen around in a while — Eve, wasn’t it? — had struck up conversation with Winn. He’d been kind to her at the DEO, less severe than the agents toting weapons around in a permanent attempt at intimidation. Lucy arrived a short time later with her small arms piled high with pizza boxes, much to the delight of everyone.

Fighting back traitorous tears, M’gann threw herself into the work. With purpose and company, the stench of fear lifted, replaced by cleaning supplies and fresh air as windows and doors were propped open.

“M’gann.” Alex’s voice, hesitant but kind, interrupted her an hour later. “You’ve got a visitor,” she said with the ghost of a smile.

J’onn stepped into the bar under the guise of bringing supplies, but M’gann could sense how hard this was for him, what it had taken for him to come. She met him halfway, taking the boxes from his
“Thank you,” she murmured.

“It’s for… well.” He sighed, his gaze darting around the room, taking in the progress that was being made. “Someone reminded me I should be doing more for people like me.”

“Someone sounds smart,” she dared to tease. “Can I get you a drink? I have some r’hum in back that survived the siege.”

“No.” He softened after a moment. “Not today.”

M’gann nodded. “I understand. Some other time?” she asked hopefully.

“Some other time,” J’onn agreed, and the smile he offered, though meager, was genuine.

It felt a little like forgiveness, like healing, and M’gann swallowed past the lump in her throat as she watched him walk away.

“You okay?” Maggie asked at her elbow, taking some of the boxes from her.

M’gann managed a smile of her own even though more tears threatened. “Yeah,” she breathed.

“You know, since we’re all here,” Maggie continued after a couple of minutes of cleaning in companionable silence. “We need to start thinking about a bigger plan for Cadmus. Not just ducking them each time, not just getting away by the skin of our teeth. They’re as weak as they’ve ever been, now they don’t have a chunk of the police force in their pockets.”

“We will,” Alex piped up, having followed J’onn out and returned to join them. “But if I’ve learned anything lately, it’s that sometimes you need to take a breath. You need to get trained up at the DEO. Kara needs a little time to grieve. And M’gann, you’ve got all this to rebuild or relocate. We might need a base outside of work at some point.”

“Then you’ll have it,” M’gann promised. “And you’re both right. We’ll take the fight to them, but we can have today, at least. Faster we salvage what we can from here, faster you can all raid the fridges, deal?”

“I call dibs on the chicken wings!” Winn called out.

“It’s an alien bar. How do you know that’s chicken?” Kara asked with a grin as Winn blanched and James chuckled.

M’gann turned away for a moment, long enough to wipe away any evidence of the tears that had fallen. For the first time in too long, she was much better than okay.

Chapter End Notes

We have been so, so, SO encouraged and heartened by your comments. Some of you on every chapter, sometimes joy, sometimes amusing threats, but every word of them is appreciated. It’s a long story and you won’t get time every day, but whenever you are moved, PLEASE comment on the art and on the writing. It means the world, and it makes this feel like a real community effort. Thank you.
DON’T FORGET: MORE ART *AFTER* THIS CHAPTER TOO. Keep clicking!
Previously on Supergirl Virtual Season...

Act V

Chapter Summary

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When Cat talks sense, Kara has to listen. Whipping up new Supercat feels with @mitski

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Chapter Summary

Coming next week...

NEXT WEEK ON SUPERGIRL VIRTUAL SEASON!

Cat makes her triumphant return to CatCo, but Cadmus has plans for her first day back.
Lucy gets to know her new stepsister.

And J’on and M’gann try to put the past behind them..

Don’t miss episode 8 - STORM by @bridgetteirish! Beginning Monday on the Supergirl Virtual Season!

Immense thanks to @reginalovesemma (ao3 | tumblr) for the lovely gifset!! You can leave comments about it here, or hit the tumblr ask box.
Chapter Summary

By the one and only @supergaysupercat... something a little extra (no, not Cat. Although she is very extra.)
Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!