The Intricate Lives of Powerful Women

by AgentGrey

Summary

Starting from right before Season 2, Lena leaves behind her best friend Sam to save her company in National City. Filling in the Supercorp blanks through Season 2, and fixing some BS by the Supergirl writers. Some canon adaptation, especially towards the end. All Lena or Kara POV. Trust issues and gayness abound.

Notes

This is my first attempt at writing fic. I'm an obsessive SuperCorp fan, and while I'm not trying to reinvent the wheel here, I think there's more interesting stories to be told than what we were given with the actual second season of Supergirl. Mostly this sticks to canon, with background filled in more, until it comes to Supercorp and Mon-El stuff. Yes, he's in it, but I promise it is important to the story and won't be awful. I promise!

Mostly just a lot of dumb gay Supercorp trying to be their best selves. I've got a long story planned out, so stick with me. Also, I love comments, so if you wanna say hi please do!
Chapter 1

For just a second, Lena was able to lose herself in the gorgeous pinks and oranges of the sunset over the distant horizon beyond the urban landscape of Metropolis. Then the reality of the past couple of days came rushing back, causing her to take another sip of the scotch in her right hand. Lex’s scotch, she couldn’t help but think.

Her brother had gotten what he deserved, but that didn’t make any of this easier to process. Looking out over the city, she thought it was strange how peaceful things looked from up here. She was standing in front of the floor to ceiling glass windows of Lex’s penthouse-level corner office at LuthorCorp headquarters. I guess I’ll have to start thinking of it as my office now, she thought uneasily.

Two weeks ago, her genius (but at this point undeniably twisted) brother Lex Luthor had been arrested and dragged out of the secret panic room at the old Luthor mansion, where their mother had been hiding him after his very public attempt to murder Superman. Lillian was gone without a trace by the next morning. Yesterday, after several closed meetings of the Board of Directors of LuthorCorp, the youngest Luthor was chosen to take up the mantle of interim CEO while the company tried to avoid the fallout of Lex’s recently uncovered violence and bigotry. Lena was … less than thrilled to be plucked from research and development, the LuthorCorp division she had been running—quite happily—for the past two years. She had no clue what they thought she was going to do as CEO, given that her background was primarily in science and technology. Of all the Luthors, she had always been the least fond of the spotlight, and she had just assumed she would always be able to stay out of it. Lex would, of course, run the company for decades to come. And yet here she was, the new face of the company that was now best known for financing Superman’s greatest villain.

She felt completely lost.

Fortunately, Lena was more than adaptable enough to handle this new challenge, even if she didn’t quite have a plan yet. Deciding that she wasn’t helping anyone just standing here drinking scotch, she picked up her phone and hit the first contact in her favorites list. It took just two rings for Sam to pick up. Lena didn’t give her a chance to speak first, using her best CEO voice to command LuthorCorp’s Senior Vice President of Finance to stop working for the day and meet Lena at her place. Unfazed, Sam replied with a snort, “Oh fine, see you in twenty.”

Sam and Lena had been friends for years. The only two young women in executive positions at LuthorCorp, they had both made an impression on the other as they rose rapidly through the ranks. Lena found Sam’s career quite a bit more impressive than her own, to be perfectly honest. Samantha Arias had put herself through college in just three years despite being a single mother, without any real support system. Lena didn’t know much about Sam’s life before college, but she knew that things had not ended well with Sam’s mother when she decided to keep Ruby. It was, frankly, incredible that Sam was able to reach an executive position at LuthorCorp only a year after Lena had—Lena got through school at a much younger age and without the burden of caring for a child. Oh, and that whole thing about Lena’s name being on the top of the building. The youngest Luthor was captivated and amazed by Sam, and the two had quickly developed a bond. As twenty-something women in a sea of predominantly old white men, the two raven-haired executives had
developed quite a reputation for not taking anyone’s shit. And while Sam was a dedicated worker, she never let that stop her from being the mom that Ruby needed.

So of course, when facing a tragedy and the most insane challenge of her entire life, Lena turned first to Sam. As she walked in the door, Ruby barely acknowledged her presence and instead chomped down on some pasta and focused on the textbook in front of her. (Lena gave her the slightest wink when Lena caught the Teen Vogue logo on the screen of Ruby’s phone—a little distraction from homework every now and then never hurt anyone.) Sam had two glasses of wine waiting and was quick to wrap her friend up in a deep hug. The two paused there, as Lena briefly allowed herself this moment of weakness and let herself completely lean on Sam. As Lena pulled away, the women shared a look that silently said everything, and Sam asked Lena with just the faintest hint of playful snark, “So what’s your glorious plan to raise LuthorCorp out of the ashes?”

Lena sat down and gazed at Sam for a bit longer before replying in a less confident voice than she would’ve liked, “If I knew that, I’d still be in Lex’s – shit, my office.” Glancing over to be sure her daughter wasn’t too distracted by her phone, Sam turned her full attention back to Lena, handing her a glass of wine and sitting down next to her. She waited for Lena to compose her thoughts, knowing that she had come here for a reason. After a minute, Lena looked up at her friend, with the slightest twinkle in her eye, and told her, “I have the tiniest seed of an idea.”

“But I can’t possibly do it without you, darling.”

Over the next couple of weeks, Lena and Sam spent most of their waking hours together, plotting out every minor detail of Lena’s vision for the future of LuthorCorp. The plan was quietly vetted through several of the board members either Lena or Sam had good working relationships with, so when Lena officially presented to the Board, it was basically guaranteed that they would follow Lena’s lead. Her vision was bold and almost naively idealistic, but the company didn’t really have anywhere to go but up. And while most of the old, straight, white men who occupied these seats of power would never admit to being taken in by the sheer charisma and confidence of Lena’s presentation, she was perceptive enough to know when she had a room in her thrall. She may not love the spotlight, and may never have expected it, but Lena could work a room when she had the time to prepare.

By the end of the month, plans were underway for the most radical restructuring LuthorCorp had ever seen. Lena’s first major step was eliminating the weapons program that was the biggest drain on LuthorCorp’s public goodwill. Oh, if only they knew, Lena thought darkly. The defense contracting department at LuthorCorp was just the tip of the iceberg on Lex’s secret war against Superman, and while she had uncovered and liquidated many of Lex’s secret projects, it would likely take her years to root out everything. If she even could. Lena was brilliant, insightful, and knew her brother very well, but in the last year or so, he had become so secretive that she had no way of really knowing whether she would ever uncover the full magnitude of his darkness. But as far as the public was concerned, LuthorCorp had ended all weapons-related projects, and diverted those resources in equal parts to its charitable foundations and medical research division. But that was only the first step.

Next, and most importantly, Lena knew that she had to leave the Luthor name behind. She wasn’t stupid. She knew that the name would follow, and often haunt, her no matter what she did. Moreover, she knew that it certain circles she would have to continue to frequent, the name would continue to be an asset to her. But the company needed a new face. A new identity.

And so it was that Lena found herself uprooting her entire life to reestablish the new global
headquarters of LuthorCorp, or as it would soon be known, L-Corp, in National City. She did not make this decision lightly, and Sam had been a huge influence in assuaging Lena’s fears about trading in one Super for another. Because of course, by now, everyone knew that as much as Metropolis was the home base for Superman, so was National City for his cousin, Supergirl. (Cousin, right? She thought she had remembered reading that in a Cat Grant exclusive interview.) But Sam was right, something about Supergirl was inspiring, and for a company reinventing itself under the leadership of a powerful woman, what better place than the city best known for Supergirl and Cat Grant? There were other major cities with LuthorCorp branches, but after much deliberation, Lena knew this was right. And while she didn’t expect to hit it off immediately with Supergirl—who of course, was too smart to trust a Luthor—Lena believed that if she could prove to Supergirl that she was determined to leave her family’s dark legacy behind her, then it was possible the rest of the world might follow suit.

That’s how, just three short months after Lex’s arrest, Lena found herself on a plane to National City, with no return ticket. She had promoted Sam to CEO of the Metropolis branch of what would soon be L-Corp, trusting no one else to champion her vision in LuthorCorp’s former home city. Knowing Sam, she might just be able to remove the stain left on that building by Lex. After all, Sam not only had a better head for numbers and business than Lena, but she was an inspiration to anyone with a heart. A single mother who put herself through school and became the CEO of a major branch of an international tech company before she even reached the age of 35. Lena hated leaving her best friend behind, but she knew that Sam was the only one she could trust. For her part, Sam wasn’t ready to uproot Ruby anyway, as much as she hated the idea of Lena moving completely across the country.

Still, it was Sam who saw Lena off when she boarded the plane. Sam who, after a warm and loving (and lengthy) hug goodbye, stepped back and barked at Lena, “Now go show National City what you’re made of, Ms. Luthor.” Sam who Lena glanced back at one last time, keeping her tears in check, as she moved down the corridor to her plane.

Just like that, she was riding into the sunset for a new adventure.
The First Time We Met

Chapter Summary

Lena moves to National City, and meets Supergirl. She then deals with assassination attempts and unexpectedly cute reporters.

Chapter 2

Lena had expected that Supergirl would be strong and inspirational, and probably more than a little cold to Lena, given her last name. She knew that the Kryptonian had a sunnier reputation than her cousin, with his more Midwestern sensibilities. What she hadn’t expected was that Supergirl would be adorable from the minute she met her. That was … a welcome surprise.

She had narrowly avoided being on board an experimental spaceship named the Venture, which was sabotaged and would have crashed if not for Supergirl. Oh, and of course, Superman was suddenly in National City shortly after Lena had completed her move, because there’s no way the Man of Steel was going to trust a Luthor to try to do some good in the world. So Lena found herself in the frustrating position of allowing the Daily Planet’s seemingly erstwhile reporter Clark Kent into her new office in downtown National City for an interview. The minute she saw the mild-mannered girl who quietly followed Mr. Kent into the office, Lena was certain that she was Supergirl. After all, it was no coincidence that Superman and Clark Kent both found themselves in National City shortly after her move. The farm boy had annoyingly followed her all the way from Metropolis just to paint her with the same broad brush as he did Lex. But that wasn’t really the biggest source of her frustration with Mr. Kent. Lena wasn’t stupid, and she could put two and two together. She knew that Lex’s increased secrecy, paranoia, and anti-alien bigotry had ramped up the less and less she saw his former friend Clark coming around. Besides, did these Kryptonians really think humans were so oblivious that glasses and a bumbling affect were all it took to hide their god-like personalities?

Lena was certain that Clark Kent was, in fact, the same angry, overly righteous superhero who had spearheaded the effort to have her brother arrested. But she was too captivated by the delightfully bashful blonde to his right, who quickly inserted herself into the conversation with a not at all subtle “And Supergirl was there too.” Lena turned and walked away from the reporters in her office to pour some water, and not at all to try to hide the grin and giggle that came out as she asked the girl (who was clearly not Supergirl) “and who might you be?”

Kara Danvers, as she introduced herself, had no idea what kind of initial impression she had already made on Lena, but the CEO wasn’t about to tip her hand. She continued bantering with the reporters, knowing that her wit was the best tool for interacting with the press. She couldn't help but slip in the very subtlest hint of flirting as she talked to Kara, it was too much fun. Less subtle was her jab at Mr. Kent about there being some steel under that Kansas wheat. Soon she had given a flash drive to Mr. Kent in the hopes of getting him off her case, at least long enough for her to get through her press conference to unveil the renaming of her company. As she watched Kara leave her office, her breath caught for just a moment. For some reason, she found herself hoping that this woman she had only just met actually listened to Lena’s heartfelt plea to allow her the opportunity to actually make a fresh start and do some good. She dared to believe that she saw the tiniest gleam of empathy behind Kara’s glasses before she had followed her cousin out the door.
Yes, Kara was almost certainly Supergirl, but Lena knew herself well enough to know that this was not the only reason she hoped she made a good impression. If the risk of death aboard an experimental aircraft was all it took to meet the refreshingly sunny Kara Danvers, Lena was glad to have aroused the suspicions of Clark Kent, even if it meant more trouble down the line.

After being saved from an attack on her helicopter by none other than Supergirl, Lena was certain that Kara Danvers and Supergirl were the same person. Also, as it turned out, the girl was surprisingly terrible at lying for an alien superhero supposedly trying to hide her secret identity. Flew here on a bus, my ass, Lena thought with a chuckle.

The other thing that became blatantly obvious in her first weeks in National City was that her new direction for the company had not gone unnoticed, and now her life was constantly in danger. Lena had expected some blowback, but she had not guessed at how influential Lex would be from his prison cell. Maybe she was paranoid for assuming that Lex was behind John Corben, the assassin who had gone from trying to murder her to openly antagonizing the Supers with some sort of kryptonite-based weapon in his chest. But the only other obvious option she could think of was Lillian, who had seemingly dropped off the map after Lex’s incarceration. Either way, it wasn’t exactly helping her mental state that one or both of her only living family members were almost certainly trying to kill her. Lena was never one to shirk away from a challenge or to give into fear, but her first month in National City was among the darkest in her life. It didn't help that she could still remember a version of Lex, not too long ago, who cared so deeply for her, and always sought to protect her from the world.

The only bright spot was that she had somehow earned, if not the trust, then the cautious support of Kara Danvers. Lena saw the blonde’s potential that first day that they met, but was nevertheless surprised when Kara explained that she was CatCo Magazine’s newest reporter. (But why the sudden shift to real journalism for the magazine? she thought to herself.) Lena was even more surprised when Kara’s visits became more frequent.

They didn’t have the easiest of starts, which Lena expected. The first solo interview she conducted with Kara had been about an alien-detection device L-Corp was developing. Truthfully, the idea was a holdover from LuthorCorp and Lex’s anti-alien paranoia, but Lena had no intention of actually designing a prototype, much less mass-producing the product. Lena was queasy at the thought of being associated with a device that did little more than forcibly out human-passing aliens. But she had wanted to see how the baby reporter would react. Would she jump to conclusions about the youngest Luthor's anti-alien sentiment?

Lena played the whole thing straight, careful not to let Kara in on the fact that this "detection device" was really no more than a sleek-looking light up button. She couldn’t resist the urge to poke the blonde a little and see if she could get her at least a little flustered. She suspected Kara would try to fiddle with the device, but she hid her delight well when she smelled a slight burning odor from what she could only assume was Kryptonian heat vision. It was only after she noticed Kara’s relief at passing the test, and caught the concerned face she made as Lena put the device away, that Lena realized she had just fucked up. She tried to smooth things over a bit, but Kara had the quotes she needed and quickly left. Almost too quickly, for a human anyway.

When Kara left that meeting, Lena was sure that she was going to write the most scathing criticism of L-Corp and it’s typical Luthor bigotry towards aliens. She was equally sure Kara would never walk into her office with that smile ever again. She was really not happy with how that meeting went. She was, after all, a semi-closeted queer woman herself, and the parallels were obvious to her. Even if she never intended to build the thing, she hated that Kara probably now thought of her
that way. Lena would never forcibly out another gay person; she couldn’t in good conscience allow her company to do the same to aliens.

As it turns out, Lena had nothing to worry about. Kara’s boss, who Lena very quickly became aware was “a huge butthead” (Kara’s words, not hers), had insisted that Kara drop her obvious pro-alien bias in writing about Lena. What Lena couldn’t figure out was how “don’t write an obvious hatchet job” turned into what was clearly a very positive article on Lena and her attempts to leave her family’s darkness behind. Lena wasn’t about to let Kara know this, but she couldn’t remember a time she was more touched by the words of a stranger. And she certainly wasn’t going to give any hint to the bubbly reporter sitting across from her on the couch—in a dark red dress and cardigan that so perfectly suited her—that the CEO was developing the tiniest bit of a crush on her. She was Lena Luthor. She had come here to make up for the evils of her family, not to develop silly crushes on gorgeous blonde superheroes.
Chapter Summary

The story shifts to Kara's POV, and we get our first hints at some Sanvers action. Is our sweet bisexual superhero developing some feels for the sexy CEO?

Chapter 3

Alex could tell something was different, Kara was sure of it. Her adoptive sister somehow always manages to see to the core of Kara. Not that she’d have it any other way, it was just annoying right now. Kara was desperately trying to avoid getting bogged down in the drama of her life at the moment. Fortunately, Alex seemed to know better than to ask her about it. That was something she loved about Alex, that she almost always knew when to push Kara and when to let her figure stuff out on her own.

Everything felt so different now. Ms. Grant was gone. And as much as she loved Eliza, Ms. Grant was the sort of mentor Kara had never had before. Not since … Thoughts of Astra flashed through her mind, and suddenly her aunt’s death was heavy on her heart yet again. She had just been getting over that loss, which was a whole bundle of emotional complications by itself, and now Cat Grant was throwing her in the deep end and leaving her to try to survive it on her own. She was proud that Ms. Grant believed in her, but she felt like a ship without a rudder, missing the older woman’s guidance and advice. Supergirl was as much Ms. Grant’s creation as she was Kara’s, and Kara knew that she wouldn’t be half the woman she was today if not for the mentorship of the Queen of All Media.

Don’t even get her started on James being her boss now. Rao, talk about adding insult to injury, Kara thought in frustration. She’s sure that Ms. Grant had good reasons for making an art director the new acting CEO of CatCo, but Kara couldn’t help but feel like Ms. Grant did it just to make things as difficult as possible for her former assistant. On top of working for her best friend turned makeout partner turned hurt ex, she also had to try to overcome a huge amount of inexperience to prove herself to her direct supervisor Snapper Carr, who seemed determined to prove that Kara was a worthless piece of garbage who couldn’t string three words together.

And that’s without even mentioning Lena forking Luthor, she thought as Alex snapped her out of her reverie.

“I’m trying not to make a big deal about the fact that you seem more interested in staring out the window than in eating the pot stickers I brought you, but Kara. I. Am. Worried,” Alex said, with just a hint of sarcasm. Before she could blink, Kara had already shoved no fewer than five pot stickers into her mouth in an attempt to reassure her sister that she hadn’t forgotten the takeout Alex brought her. Alex was still staring at her with a knowing look, and Kara quickly changed the subject.

“Is Detective Sawyer doing okay after everything with overly rude fire alien?” Kara asked while reaching for more food. She was so wrapped up in her own thoughts that she didn’t even notice the quick look that passed over Alex’s face before she caught herself and answered with a nondescript “yeah, I think so.” “Honestly, I think she really enjoyed it,” Alex continued, “but I’m not exactly
thrilled that she figured out we’re with the DEO so quickly. So much for covert ops.”

Kara giggled slightly before replying. “I don’t know, maybe it wouldn’t be the worst thing to have a contact on the police force. You two certainly seem to work well together.” This time it was Alex’s turn to change the subject, and she quickly moved herself to the couch before asking Kara whether she wanted to watch the most recent episode of *The Good Place* or continue their third binge watch of *Jessica Jones*. Alex was disappointed, but not at all surprised, that Kara chose the comedy without any actual curse words in it. She tossed a pillow at her sister, but Kara knew it was all in good fun. Alex would never admit it, but she always ended up in better spirits when they watched a light comedy over *Jessica Jones*. As much as Kara had a huge crush on Trish, she struggled not to be confused and frustrated with how much of a downer Jess always was. Alex was starting to get annoyed with Kara’s exasperated cries of “that’s not how superheroing works!” every other episode.

Kara managed to make it all the way to her bed later that night before she thought about Lena again, as she was drifting off to sleep. She tried not to dwell on the effortlessly breathtaking CEO or the way she seemed to put Kara at ease even in the middle of a disagreement. Lena was … confusing. And that’s all Kara would let herself think about the Luthor for now.

The more she got to know Lena, the more Kara was convinced that she was nothing like the Luthors Kal had warned her about. She would more quickly believe that a White Martian could be a hero than that Lena Luthor was capable of murder like her brother. Despite the dark cloud surrounding her, the woman was like a shiny beacon of goodness, so determined to pay the debt to society created by Lex. Sometimes, Kara felt like Lena had no idea just how virtuous she clearly was, deep down. And it made her a little sad for the woman who was quickly becoming one of her best friends.

But Kara also knew that not everything was quite as it seemed with Lena. Obviously, there was that alien outing device that she seemed so enthusiastic about, as if it wasn’t exactly the sort of thing Lex would have put out in the world to make life that much harder for non-human refugees just trying to find a new home. But something in Lena had seemed to shift during that interview, and Kara almost felt like the CEO had been on the verge of apologizing as Kara awkwardly made her escape from the frustrating conversation. It wasn’t until later that Kara happened to follow up and find out that Lena had scrapped the project entirely. Kara didn’t know what it meant that she felt like she was flying when she found that out.

Since then, things had been remarkably easy and comfortable with Lena. Even though Kara could tell that there was always something of a wall up with her friend, Lena was always so warm and supportive. She wasn’t surprised Lena was reserved or had trouble trusting people, given that the youngest Luthor was raised by (as far as Kara could tell) some of the most awful people humanity had to offer. And Kara couldn’t fault anyone for holding onto some secrets—it wasn’t like she was about to tell Lena Luthor that she was Supergirl. Although… maybe someday?

Kara had been both shocked and a little thrilled that Lena wasn’t mad at her for forcing her way into Lena’s office that one night. Poor Jess, she was so flustered when Kara used just the tiniest bit of superspeed to blow past her. She knew it was poor etiquette, and she expected she would have to do some apologizing before Lena would agree to talk to her. So she was kind of stunned when Lena took a breath and told Jess that “Kara Danvers is to be shown in right away, whenever possible.” As if it was completely normal for a brilliant CEO billionaire to give a rookie reporter free rein to enter her office whenever. Kara didn’t even have to give Lena her puppy dog eyes—in fact, Kara had to check herself quickly to be sure she wasn’t accidentally floating. In hindsight,
Kara shouldn’t have been surprised that Lena helped them save J’onn from Roulette’s fight club. Lena was everything she marketed herself as, and Kara was starting to be convinced that she was every bit as trustworthy as Winn or James or Ms. Grant.

She just wouldn’t tell anyone about the electric thrill it sent down her spine when Lena said, in what could only be described as a sultry voice, that she was sure that Kara “would be there for me when the time comes.”
Chapter Summary

Alex comes out to Kara. I tried not to reuse too much of the show's dialogue, but in some places it was necessary. This was important to me, and I wanted to expand on Kara’s sexuality.

Chapter 4

“… I mean, I started to develop feelings for her.”

“Feelings, like?”

“Yeah, those … those, those feelings.”

“Oh.”

Alex hadn’t looked at Kara once since they had left the DEO. Kara could read the fear rolling off her sister’s body. Which made no sense. Alex was never afraid, but here she seemed to be telling Kara about a crush on a girl like Kara would hate her forever for it. Rao, how had I missed this!? Kara’s brain yelled at her, as she began to spin out in a cloud of guilt and confusion. She had to sit down.

She was such a terrible sister.

“So… so she’s gay?” Kara asked quietly.

Alex took in a nervous breath before answering, “Yeah.”

“And are you saying … you’re gay too?”

Kara’s head was still spinning. How could she have been so wrong? Why did she just assume? “Alex, it … it kinda sounds like you’re coming out to me. Have you felt like this before?”

As they got into the conversation, it became clear to Kara that Alex was misunderstanding everything Kara was saying. Kara just barely managed to stay in the conversation, because internally she was so angry at herself. The woman who had supported her and protected her all these years was sitting here telling her that she’s been burying this part of herself for her entire life, and Kara never noticed.

Kara’s thoughts raced. Alex can’t be gay, why wouldn’t she have said anything sooner? Surely she knows I’m bi! But … we never really talked about it. Still, no way she felt pressure to stay in the closet. She just … never seemed into anyone. Boys or girls! How did I miss this? Was our childhood so focused on me and my secret that I never gave Alex the support to figure out this basic aspect of her identity?

Stop it! Kara thought suddenly. This isn’t about you. Be here for Alex and sort your own guilty feelings out later. Kara tried to feel her sister out, to see where she was at. “So … are you and Maggie like um, I mean do you know if she likes you?”
And just like that Alex was walking away, and Kara could tell that her sister needed her to back off for a bit. She’d never seen Alex so shaken. Meanwhile, Kara Danvers felt like the worst sister in the entire world.

Kara knew that Alex wanted to try to talk to her again back at the DEO, but she hadn’t processed yet. She just couldn’t face her shame and guilt. Couldn’t expect that Alex would ever forgive her for this.

Other than the early days when they were both stubborn kids, Alex had always made Kara feel safe and supported. She’s the only reason Earth ever felt like home. Alex never made her feel alien, and even though she never understood Kara’s obsession with NSYNC, she always gave Kara room to be herself. Well… other than the whole “never use your powers” thing, but that was Jeremiah’s idea originally and Alex was really just being overprotective. Once Kara stood up for herself, Alex got it.

And yet somehow, Kara had failed to do the same for her sister.

Back on Krypton, no one had made a big deal about sexuality or gender. People were who they were and loved who they loved. Houses and communities were valued over individual relationships anyway, but Krypton had long since moved past the urge to judge people based on such arbitrary characteristics. When she got to Earth, Kara vaguely understood that things were different, but questions of sexuality never really came up living with the Danvers. Eliza and Jeremiah seemed straight, and very much in love. And Alex dated a few boys in high school, but never seemed enthusiastic about them. She never really talked about it with Kara.

It never occurred to the Kryptonian that Alex would have felt some pressure to conform to a societal expectation that she be straight. Kara knew that American society still had a lot of progress to make on that front, and that in many ways, queer people were still treated as second class citizens. But that felt like more of an abstract issue—something about society to be fixed and changed. It never really felt relevant in her own life. Kara always knew she was attracted to people regardless of gender, but growing up an alien refugee, dating was the furthest thing from her mind. Until she became Supergirl, the thought of being intimate with someone had always terrified Kara. To let someone in was to let them know she was an alien. And until Supergirl became a beacon of hope, Kara couldn’t fathom how she could even explain herself to a person she might fall in love with. She didn’t go there. She had Alex, and she didn’t really need more.

And there it is, Kara gasped as she made the realization, and nearly dropped her bowl of popcorn. Growing up, it was always about Alex and Kara. They didn’t need anyone else. And now Kara could see that so much of Alex’s life had been so tightly caught up in supporting Kara and protecting her secret, that Alex had never had the space to really figure herself out. Kara had never given her that space.

She was on the verge of tears and had no idea how she was ever going to make this up to her favourite person in the whole world. Of course, that’s exactly the moment Kara heard Alex walking down the hallway to her apartment. When she came in, it was clear that Alex was angry.

“You’ve been weird ever since I told you.”

“I don’t mean to be.” Kara replied, trying to get her thoughts together.

“Kara, I know when you’re sad. Or when you’re disappointed. I don’t know what I would do if
you were disappointed in me.”

*Oh. Oh no.* Kara’s voice started to rise a little as she assured her sister that she would never be disappointed in her. “But, you said you didn’t want to talk about it anymore.”

“Well I do if you’re not okay with it!”

“I am *so* okay with it!” Kara paused, calming herself, because she knew that her sister needed her right now. “Sit down. Alex… come and talk with me.”

Swallowing all her fear and guilt, Kara fessed up. She apologized for not creating an environment where Alex felt safe enough to talk about this. About always making those nights spent staying up late talking and sharing all about Kara and her secret. “Alex, I am *so* sorry,” Kara whispered, as she tried to hold back tears. “I can’t believe that we’ve never talked about this, and I feel like it is all my fault, but I’m not straight either.” Kara could tell that Alex struggled with that bomb, but she let her younger sister keep talking. “On Krypton, we didn’t judge people based on gender and sexuality like people seem to do here on Earth. And growing up with Eliza and Jeremiah, it just never seemed to be an issue, you know? We were raised by a couple of kind-hearted scientists—it never even occurred to me that you might have felt pressured to live up to some sort of standard.”

Alex snorted a little at that, and while she still seemed really uneasy, Kara could tell she was making some progress. “I could never be disappointed in you, and if I had realized that I never gave you the space to figure this out for yourself, I would’ve asked you about your sexuality a lot sooner. Honestly, I just sort of assumed you were somewhere on the asexual or aromantic spectrum! You never seemed interested in dating anyone, regardless of gender. I just figured it wasn’t important to you, and I never considered that it might be something you would need to process and discover for yourself. I feel so horrible.”

“Alex. You are not alone.” Kara ended her speech, placing her hand firmly over Alex’s and looking firmly into her eyes.

The elder Danvers sister looked away briefly as she tried to hold in the tears that threatened to spill out. Looking back at Kara with eyes full of relief and love, Alex could only get out a strangled “I can’t do this without you,” before she started crying.

“You don’t have to.” Kara was smiling at her sister now. “I’m so so sorry that I haven’t been here for you on this, but I am now. And I’m not going anywhere. … So what about Maggie? What is she like?”

Kara couldn’t contain her grin as her sister, the imposing DEO agent, went on the most adorable baby gay ramble about how Maggie was smart and tough and beautiful. The sisters hugged for a good twenty seconds, all the tension between them completely gone, before Alex pulled away sharply.

Alex gave Kara the most outraged look she could muster before asking, “How could you never tell me you’re bi??”

“I don’t know! It just never came up. I’m an alien, I never really let myself think about the possibility of getting close enough to anyone because that would mean I would have to let them in on my secret. And until recently, the only real crushes I’ve had were on straight cis men, as far as I know. It wasn’t really until I became Supergirl that I started to think I could actually try dating. In the past, it was always like letting someone in meant revealing that I was this scary alien, but now… now, if I get close enough to someone, I can tell them that I’m *Supergirl*. That comes with its own challenges and dangers, but Supergirl is something that humans can understand. That they
are inspired by, rather than scared of. And now here I am making this all about me, when we were talking about your coming out journey and—”

Alex could tell Kara was rambling now, so she cut her off with another hug.

Then pulled back again, a mischievous look in her eye as she asked, “Wait, what do you mean until recently?”

Kara immediately blushed, and turned away from Alex as thoughts of Lena Luthor’s oh so kissable red lips leaped into mind. Fortunately, she was saved by an alert from the DEO.

“Oh look, an alien attacking civilians, I gotta go take care of this!” Kara said as she leapt from the couch.

“Don’t think this means we won’t come back to this!” Alex said, with just a bit of a playful threat in her tone.

Kara chuckled in response, but said only, “Hey, this is still about you right now. I’ll go get the alien. You get the girl.”

Supergirl flew out the window to the sound of joyful laughter behind her.

After waiting an hour for a response the many texts she sent asking Alex for updates on how her talk with Maggie went, Kara got a terrible feeling in the pit of her stomach. She rushed over to Alex’s apartment, and even from outside the door, Kara could tell Alex was hurting.

Rushing in through her sister’s window when she wouldn’t open the door, Kara knew that things had not gone well with Maggie. Alex was sitting stiffly on her couch, with what Kara was sure was not her first glass of whiskey for the night, on the verge of tears. As Kara softly tried to ask her sister about what was going on, Alex sprang up from the couch.

“Just forget that I said anything about this!” Alex practically shouted, voice straining to hold back the tears. “This was a mistake. I shouldn’t have said anything. I should have just kept my mouth shut!”

“What happened?” Kara knew she couldn’t rush her sister, had to let her get it all out before rushing to comfort her.

“She doesn’t like me. Like that.” Alex broke down at that point, and Kara’s whole heart dropped at the sight of her beautiful sister in so much pain. She rushed over to the couch where Alex collapsed, and wrapped her arms around her and held her close. “I’m so humiliated,” Alex gasped out between sobs.

“No no no. I am so proud of you, Alex.” Kara rubbed Alex’s back and let her get it all out. “What you did was brave, and no matter what I will always be here with you. I love you. Maggie doesn’t define you. You are you, and this is not a mistake, and whether or not Maggie wants to date you, I believe in you.” Kara shoved aside her annoyance at Maggie (HOW could anyone not immediately fall in love with Alex?) in order to focus on her sister’s feelings right then.

Alex was calming down a bit by now, and Kara moved away just enough that she could reach out and lift Alex’s chin slightly so that she was looking back at her. “Rejection sucks. I hate that you feel this way right now. But this is the first step on a long, exciting journey.” Alex looked at her a bit doubtfully, so Kara continued, with a playful gleam in her eye. “Do you have any idea how
many seasons of *The L Word* we need to catch up on?"

This time, Alex actually laughed, however briefly, before punching at Kara’s arm. “So I just need to jump headfirst into lesbian culture, huh?”

“We’ll do it together.” Kara retorted, tossing a pillow back at Alex. “Seriously, I don’t know what will happen with Maggie, and I know she’s the one who helped you realize this about yourself. But you being gay has nothing to do with Maggie. You need to figure out who you are, independent from anyone else. And I’ll be here when you need me, every step of the way.”

Alex sat her whiskey down and pulled Kara close before reaching for her TV remote. “As long as you’re here, we may as well get a start on *The L Word*.”
Family

Chapter Summary

It's Thanksgiving, and Kara has a lot to deal with. Alex is coming out, the head of Cadmus has revealed herself as Lillian Luthor, and Kara can no longer pretend she isn't falling for Lena.

Chapter 5

Kara hated that she was in this position. It was far from a shock that Lex Luthor’s mother was behind Cadmus, but it was much harder to reconcile her feelings about Lena with the pain she had already suffered at the hands of Lillian. She knew that Lena was nothing like her mother; she had seen that as they had grown closer over these past months. That didn’t make it any easier to face Lena after being tortured by Lillian at a Cadmus black site. And it didn’t change the fact that Lena was the only real lead they had to Lillian, however flimsy that lead might be.

Alex and Winn had wanted to hack Lena’s system to find any communications or other possible connections to Lillian and Cadmus. Neither of them outright suggested that Lena was working with her mother, but Kara could tell that they did not share her inherent belief and trust in the youngest Luthor. Supergirl did not care at all for their suspicion—she knew what it was like to be judged solely on your name or family. But now was not the time to fight her friends on this. She knew that they wouldn’t listen to any defense she gave for Lena, that they would say she was just being Kara, always seeing the best in people regardless whether they have earned it.

But Kara knew that Lena has earned it. She’s done nothing but good since coming to National City, and she had earned Kara’s—and Supergirl’s—trust. Still, no one would give Lena the benefit of the doubt, and that is why Kara had to be the one to try to talk to Lena about Lillian. If Lena caught the DEO snooping around in her private files, it would only confirm all of Lena’s worst suspicions about herself. Kara knew that Lena still carried the weight of the world’s suspicion of the Luthor name, that the young CEO was so isolated because she expected that no one would ever trust her.

Fortunately, while Alex and Winn gave her no credit for her ability to be sneaky with her reporter skills, they agreed to let her try to talk to Lena before employing more extreme measures. She made them both swear that they would not hack Lena unless Kara failed to get Lena to talk about Lillian. She just hoped her friend would open up about what had to be a hugely guarded and difficult subject.

Rao, this is a mess, she thought bitterly, as she prepared her cover story about writing an article on powerful women and the mothers who made them. This is hardly how she wanted to be spending her Thanksgiving week, and she really didn’t want this to be the first face-to-face conversation she had with Lena since she had escaped Cadmus.

Kara thought back on how she had gotten to this point. While she had been avoiding Lena, beyond a few texts, Kara had nearly invited her friend to Thanksgiving with Eliza and the Superfriends. She recognized that it was the right choice not to invite Lena, but it certainly wouldn’t help this
difficult interview she would have to have with her. As much as Kara was worried that Lena spent the holiday alone, Kara knew that she couldn’t trust herself to act normal around Lena with the unspoken cloud of Lillian’s villainy between them. Not to mention that she couldn’t do that to Alex.

Alex had planned on coming out to Eliza at Thanksgiving, and Kara couldn’t be prouder. She also knew it would go well, because she might have gotten a little overprotective about Alex’s baby gay journey. Now that she knew it was a big deal, she wanted to be sure Alex got all the support she deserved. While she had no doubt Eliza harbored no ill will towards queer people, Kara did worry that Eliza had always been oddly hard on Alex. The Kryptonian wasn’t leaving anything to chance. She took it upon herself to call Eliza to make Thanksgiving plans. She made it very clear that Alex had something very important to share and even if it came as a surprise, it was very good news, and Eliza would be the most supportive she’s ever been, or she was not invited to National City. Eliza had started to get defensive, but then went silent. After a pause, Eliza simply asked, “She finally admitted that she’s gay, didn’t she?”

After a tiny shocked pause, Kara just couldn’t help herself. “ELIZAAAAA! You knew? Why didn’t you talk to her about this when she was younger? Why didn’t I know? Why did you always have to be so hard on her?”

Eliza laughed a little, and Kara caught her breath enough to continue, “You know what? Nevermind. Fresh start. This is big for Alex. She’s super nervous about coming out to you. I trust that you will let her know how much you love her. Just don’t tell her I prepped you.”

“Sure thing, honey. I’ll see you both next week.” Kara quickly hung up, and she felt good about how Thanksgiving would go. It would be great for Alex, and she wasn’t going to let anything get in the way of that moment.

Ever since that conversation in Kara’s apartment, Alex had made it very clear that hadn’t forgotten her younger sister’s off-handed comment about having only had crushes on men until recently. The agent continued to push Kara on the identity of the lucky lady she was crushing on, but Kara thought she had done a pretty good job of keeping Alex off the trail. She had no idea that the young reporter’s interviews with Lena had led to casual lunches with Lena, which led to regular texting with Lena, which led to awkward flirting with Lena. Alex had backed off a little once the drama with Maggie had blown over. The two were “just friends” right now, but Kara would be really surprised if Maggie didn’t come around soon. Alex might not realize it, but Kara could see the way Maggie looked at her. Still, Kara knew that Alex would force her to fess up to her crush on Lena eventually, she just didn’t want it to happen at Thanksgiving because Kara unexpectedly invited her friend no one knew about who also happened to be Lena forking Luthor.

It was a few weeks before Thanksgiving that Kara began to suspect that she was no longer capable of being subtle about her attraction to Lena. Like at all. She couldn’t count the number of times she’d accidently inhaled a cup of coffee or kombucha when Lena had unexpectedly dropped an intentionally obvious double entendre on her. The older woman was just so confident and gorgeous and smart and cocky in the best way. Kara knew that most people saw her as a ray of sunlight, but for Kara, Lena was the ray of sunlight.

The CEO didn’t have any powers. She had the whole world against her, not because she did anything wrong, but because her family had very publicly dragged their name through the mud in the most violent, supremacist, and hateful way. Kara couldn’t imagine what growing up in that family had to have been like. And despite all that, Lena was honestly the sweetest and most
considerate person Kara had ever met. It was Lena who had helped her figure out that she wanted to be a reporter. Lena who listened to her and treated her with all the professional respect that Snapper never bothered with. Lena who had picked up on Kara’s love for crullers after just one quick breakfast together. Lena who was always quick to leave a small bouquet of flowers in Kara’s office each and every time she managed to get a piece published.

Kara knew that Lena had trouble trusting people, and she completely understood why. But part of Kara yearned to break down those barriers, to know everything about this mystery woman who was so thoroughly not at all what she had expected. She also knew that as much as Lena playfully flirted with her, she was almost certainly out of Kara Danvers’ league. Lena was rich and powerful and successful beyond anything Kara had accomplished in her human life. There’s no way a gorgeous CEO billionaire could find herself attracted to a goofy rookie reporter.

And yet… Kara couldn’t pretend that she didn’t feel a spark, when she and Lena leaned in for a hug or passed each other a cup of coffee. She just couldn’t imagine that it wasn’t all in her head. It would make sense if Lena was flirting with Supergirl in earnest, but Kara just couldn’t imagine the flirtation with her mild-mannered alter ego was anything more than friendship. Lena was so far out of her league.

She believed Lena when she told her that Kara was her best friend in National City, and Kara wasn’t going to let a silly crush hurt that friendship. Besides, it was very clear to Supergirl that Lena did not fully trust her. Ever since Kara had learned the hard way that Lillian Luthor was in charge of Cadmus, she thought back on her previous interactions with Lena with a bit more scrutiny. She had noticed things. Like how Lena avoided dwelling for very long on her family and always redirected the conversation, however smoothly, when the subject of her feelings on the Luthors came up. Kara doubted that Lena knew about her mother’s covert operations, but it was clear that Lillian was the absolute last topic of conversation the CEO wanted to cover with her friend. Lena’s walls were subtle, and well-hidden, but they were there. As much as she made Kara feel warm and comfortable (and yes, often quite flustered), there was no question that the reporter was being kept at arm’s length. At least as far as Lena’s feelings were concerned.

It wasn’t Kara’s place to push. She knew—though she would only ever admit it to herself late at night, just as she was falling asleep—that she wanted so desperately to earn Lena’s trust. To be let in, so that she could support her friend through what had to be a tremendously difficult and painful time. But she hadn’t let Lena in either. She was still hiding her secret identity from the woman who was becoming her best friend. She wanted to tell her. Kara had fantasized, at least a dozen times, about just flying into Lena’s office after a night of crime fighting and kissing the gorgeous CEO before she could psych herself out of it.

Something was holding her back. It wasn’t that Lena was a Luthor. She might not have let Kara all the way in yet, but the two women were close enough now that Kara believed firmly in her friend. Lena was not Lex. She was certainly not Lillian. Kara couldn’t quite figure out what was holding her back. Partly it’s that she knew Alex wouldn’t approve. Alex was always telling her that she was too loose with her secret anyway. But ultimately it was this. If Lena knew Kara Danvers was Supergirl, then Kara wouldn’t have any more excuse not to at least try to see if Lena might want to be more than friends. And the Kryptonian just wasn’t ready for that yet.

As it turned out, Alex didn’t get her chance to come out at Thanksgiving. She was interrupted by a mysterious (but really pretty?) swirling ball of blue light, that vanished as quickly as it appeared. Alex came out to Eliza later, and it went fine. Unfortunately, Thanksgiving weekend ended up not being about Kara’s family at all, but rather about Lena’s. That’s when everything changed.
Chapter 6

The past few months had been beyond hectic for Lena Luthor. She was finally making some progress with L-Corp, but her attentions had been divided. L-Corp, and Lena herself, would never feel safe until she got a grasp on the full scope of Lex’s secret projects and figured out what Lillian was up to. The fact that her mother had completely disappeared was like a massive storm cloud, hovering over everything Lena was trying to build.

At first, she had nothing but her gut instinct leading her to suspect Lillian was up to no good. Well… that and over a decade of experience with the woman. Lena’s relationship with her adoptive mother had always been difficult, and at her best, Lillian tolerated Lena’s presence. At her worst, she had a horrifying talent for emotional abuse, at least when it came to the daughter who would never be good enough. Never *Luthor* enough.

Lena had been too young to fully grasp the amount of hatred and biased thinking Lillian had instilled in Lex, under the facade of doting on her golden boy. Growing up, Lionel had always been distant to both of his children, but Lillian and Lex had a strong connection. Even when Lex would stand up to Lillian and protect his younger sister from their mother’s accusations and disappointment, he never doubted that his mother loved him and wanted the best for the family. It didn’t take much speculation to connect Lex’s anti-alien bigotry with the lessons Lillian had inculcated in him from a young age. His falling out with Superman may have been the inciting moment that took her loving brother and turned him into a monster, but Lillian’s influence had been poisoning Lex’s mind for years.

With Lena, such bigotry never took—mostly because the youngest Luthor always felt Lillian’s hatred on a personal level. After all, it was Lillian who made damn sure Lena never came out of the closet. The young CEO honestly couldn’t remember ever *not* being gay, but she did remember Lillian making her expectations clear from the beginning. Lillian was too savvy and sophisticated to openly share her backwards views on queer people, but it was never a question that Lena would grow up and marry a nice boy from another powerful, wealthy family. She suspected that Lillian valued her more for the potential of networking and building the Luthor empire than for the actual person who was her daughter. When Lillian first found out about Lena’s fling with a boarding school friend, the consequences were severe.

She had spent the last few years dating a dashing fellow named Jack Spheer, and she’s not sure Lillian had ever been prouder. Of course, that’s because an older and wiser Lena knew how to keep things hidden from her mother. Lillian would have shit herself if she had known that things with Jack were purely platonic, and Jack, who was himself homoromantic but with little real interest in dating or sex, found the whole endeavor of fooling Lillian and her judgmental friends quite entertaining. Jack was a good friend though, and he had always asked Lena if she wouldn’t be happier if she said to hell with her mother and lived an out and proud lesbian life. It wasn’t his
fault that Lena spoke with such longing about doing so, usually after a long night of drinking. She
had ended the fake relationship with Jack after Lex was arrested, but the two were still in touch.
She never let him in like she had Sam, but she was still very fond of the fellow tech geek. But with
Lillian off the map, Lena finally felt much less pressure to maintain some fake public persona.
Maybe it wouldn’t be too long until her public persona could finally be the person she always
wanted to be. Jack would be so proud.

All this passed through Lena’s head as she sat across from Kara Danvers, who had just come into
her office to interview her about a “puff piece” centered on powerful women and their mothers.
_Real sneaky, Kara, as if we don’t both know that my mother is the head of Cadmus._

The two women had grown closer recently. At first, Lena had done her best to avoid the very
obvious crush she was developing on the Girl of Steel, or to be more honest, on the girl she
pretended to be during the day. After the Roulette incident, the two had begun texting each other
more frequently. Maybe Lena was playing with fire, but she so desperately wanted to just get to
know the woman better. Surely Kara couldn’t be the perfect ray of sunshine that she seemed. No
one was that amazing, were they? Before long, Kara was coming up to Lena’s office for lunch at
least once a week, if the two weren’t meeting somewhere in town for lunch. Kara was a big fan of
lunch, Lena had learned. The more reserved woman couldn’t help but get swept up into the joyful
earnestness of the young reporter who had quickly become her best friend in National City.

And oh god, the flirting. Lena was sure any flirting from Kara’s end was either unintentional or
just Kara’s natural adorableness. Sometimes she was almost like a puppy dog. That is, if puppy
dogs came in a gorgeous blonde package with impossibly toned arms. Lena had gotten
comfortable enough that she had no problem openly flirting with the blonde. Kara would get
flustered sometimes, but never seemed to catch onto the fact that Lena was absolutely smitten with
her.

Regardless, Lena wasn’t crazy. She knew chemistry when she felt it, and there was something
here with Kara. Lena was a little worried that the reporter was so oblivious to Lena’s overtures—
she was pretty sure the peppy Kryptonian was not straight, but you never know. And it wasn’t like
Lena had directly asked her out or anything. Regardless, the timing wasn’t right, not yet. Lena
was more than content to enjoy her very good friendship with Kara Danvers, the one person in
National City with whom she could just sit in comfortable silence and never feel uneasy. It seemed
like Kara felt the same way, at least for now.

Lena wasn’t naïve. No matter how close they had become, Kara still hadn’t trusted her with her
secret. And she didn’t blame Supergirl for not trusting a Luthor, no matter how friendly she was
with Kara. She couldn’t imagine the things Superman had likely told her about how inherently
rotten and evil the Luthors were. As much as Lena felt sure that Kara wanted to believe in her,
surely that concern was always there in the back of her head. Until Kara was willing to fully let
Lena into her life, Lena was definitely not going to ever let herself drop her guard around the
superhero, not all the way.

She couldn’t let herself get distracted. Whatever might or might not be going on between the two
women, Lena couldn’t ignore that the reporter nervously stumbling over her words right now was
not the friend she had grown close to. Lena had guessed that Supergirl was working in
coordination with a covert government organization, and there was little doubt in her mind that
Kara had been sent by them. Honestly, Kara really could not have been more obvious. She was
here to pump Lena for information about Lillian, in the hopes of developing a lead on Cadmus.
She was sure that Kara had good intentions, and Lena had to stifle a grin as she thought to herself
“_I bet she thinks she’s being really subtle._”
Lena had her own plans for Lillian and Cadmus, and she wasn’t ready to share them with Supergirl. Kara’s warmth and affection had gotten her past many of Lena’s walls, but the CEO was nowhere near ready to discuss her struggles with her mother. She was sure as hell not about to air her dirty laundry with the government. She didn’t love giving her friend the cold shoulder, but she made quick work of deflecting Kara’s softball questions and then made up an excuse about a meeting to exit the conversation quickly.

Once Kara left, Lena quickly called her mother. It went straight to voicemail (of course), but Lena left a simple message: “We need to talk.” Hopefully that was cryptic enough to get Lillian to her office. If Supergirl and whatever government agency she was working with were planning on moving against Cadmus soon, Lena had to put her own plan into action immediately.

She had figured out that her mother was behind Cadmus not long after Lillian appeared suddenly in her office the night of the gala, over a month ago. She remembered, quite fondly, inviting Kara to the gala. She had decided to be bold, showing up to CatCo knowing full well that the CEO of L-Corp paying a personal visit to a rookie reporter during business hours would turn heads. What could she say, she liked to make an impression—at least when it came to adorable blondes.

When she arrived, she could see Kara scolding some boring-looking guy in a bowtie, and wow, the blonde had looked incredible in stripes. Although, seriously, she really needed to work on the secret identity thing. Lena was certain that she heard Kara say something about “Daxam” and “Rao” as she was walking up. Really, how does everyone not already know that she’s Supergirl? Lena had thought, stifling a giggle. She had jumped in quickly to personally invite Kara to her gala, worrying that Kara just might kick the frat boy out a window if she didn’t interfere. She could still remember the shock and joy in Kara’s voice.

“Lena!” It was as if the frustration just melted off of Kara’s face, as she asked Lena why she was there. “I’m here to see you, actually,” Lena replied, and Kara had seemed so genuinely touched when Lena called her “my only real friend in National City.” Lena remembered how she had scolded herself mentally when she couldn’t help but bite her lip—Kara’s earnest joy was just so very sexy. As an afterthought, she had also invited the man-child in the bowtie, lest she be too obvious with her Kara crush.

Lena had then used Kara to get Supergirl invited to the gala as well, and ultimately, the whole thing went off nearly without a hitch. She felt a little bad about manipulating Kara to get Supergirl to make an appearance, but it was the only way she could think of to set her trap for the ray gun-toting gang members who had been giving Supergirl more trouble that the superhero was accustomed to facing. Lena understood that Kara could take care of herself, but that wouldn’t stop her from doing what she could to support the hero and protect her. The point of the evening was for Lena to use an experimental new device to disarm the group, and she had done so. Plus, Kara had looked absolutely adorable in her dress that night, even more so after she tried to pull a whole Mrs. Doubtfire routine going back and forth between personas.

Lena had suspected that the alien weapons had a Luthor connection, and she had not been wrong. After months in hiding, it could not be coincidence that Lillian slid out of the shadows of Lena’s darkened office that very night, interrupting a delightful conversation she was having with Supergirl. Kara left, and Lena was facing her mother for the first time since Lex’s arrest. Lillian was as cold as ever, even if she hid it behind a sort of reserved but snarky persona that some people found charming. Lillian wouldn’t say why she was there or where she had been, claiming only that she wanted to check in on her daughter. But Lena knew better. She was certain that her mother was up to something devious, and it seemed pretty clear that Supergirl was her target.

Since then, she hadn’t heard anything from Lillian, but she had put in a lot of late hours going
through Lex’s secret files and doing her own investigation. It wasn’t long before she discovered the fanatical anti-alien terrorist group Cadmus. The group was originally started by Lex, with the help of a cabal of right-wing defense contractors and scientists who shared his views on Superman. After Lex’s incarceration, they had scattered, but Lillian had apparently picked up the pieces. Now Lena was doing her best to keep tabs on her mother’s activities, even though Cadmus was really good at keeping itself hidden.

She knew that Supergirl had likely been investigating Cadmus herself, but she didn’t know that Kara had connected the group with Lillian until this interview. Supergirl was sure to ignite what had so far been a mostly covert operation Lena was building against her mother, so it was time to take her best shot. She had no idea what Lillian was up to, but she knew that Supergirl wasn’t ready for it. Lena was confident that she was finally ready to face her mother, but Kara had no idea what she was up against. She didn’t want to lie to her friend, and she certainly didn’t want to give Kara a reason to doubt Lena’s commitment to doing the right thing. But she knew the best way to bring down Cadmus was to convince Lillian that Lena had come around to her way of thinking. The only way she could think to do that was to make it very clear that Supergirl and her team no longer trusted the youngest Luthor.

Lillian was too devious, and too resourceful. This was Lena’s chance to pay the debt her family owed the world, in full, and she was going to take it.

She only hoped Kara could forgive her.
Betrayals

Chapter Summary

Thanksgiving is a rough day for Kara. Cadmus’ Medusa plot begins to unfold, and Kara has to deal with surprising betrayals from two people she trusts.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter 7

Kara’s emotions had been through the ringer today. She had known that it would be difficult to get Lena to open up about Lillian, but she hadn’t expected her friend to blow her off so obviously. The fact that Lena had completely made up a meeting just to avoid talking to Kara had the reporter feeling hurt and confused. She had hated the idea of lying to Lena about her motives, but the CEO hadn’t even given her the time to do so. It was the first time Lena had ever treated Kara like just some reporter, not worthy of her time. And she had no idea why. Not that she had much time to worry about Lena’s cold shoulder, thanks to Hank Henshaw.

Kara’s hurt turned to anger when she found out what happened. She wasn’t one to experience negative emotions like hate. Not normally. But Lillian Luthor and Hank Henshaw were really testing the boundaries of the darker side of Kara’s emotions. She couldn’t understand how people could be so full of evil and bigotry, but she was done tolerating it. People were dead now. Kara’s heart hurt thinking of the innocent lives ended when Henshaw released that chemical agent at the alien dive bar. She was done playing nice now. Henshaw and Lillian were going down, whether Lena was willing to help or not.

Mon-El had only just barely escaped with his life, and now he was in quarantine while Alex and Eliza worked with the best DEO scientists to figure out how Cadmus had developed a toxin that was poisonous only to aliens. Kara was left to pace around while she waited for a lead. Mon-El had asked her to keep him company, but she was too preoccupied with her own doubts, fears, and anger to deal with the Daxamite’s frat boy antics and flirting right now. She felt a little bad when she found out that he had succumbed to the toxin from the bar shortly after arriving back at the DEO, but it hadn’t killed him, and he wasn’t her problem right now. While he was saying the right things about taking her hero mentoring seriously and had begun to fit it at least among some of the DEO’s more macho male agents, Kara couldn’t trust him. Not while he was lying about who he was. The Daxamite’s decision to assume an obviously Kryptonian name, and supposed membership in Kara’s own House, was a curiosity that Kara had no desire to pick at. Kara hadn’t pushed him on the clearly fake name "Mon-El" when they had first captured him, and discussions about Krypton and Daxam had been something Kara had avoided ever since Myriad. Lately, her heritage only brought her pain, and Kara much preferred to focus on the human life that brought her love, support, and purpose.

Unfortunately, the universe was clearly conspiring against her, and it wasn’t long before Eliza discovered a shocking revelation—the virus was Kryptonian. Another vestige of her dead home come back to haunt her.

Putting two and two together, Kara was sure that this was the reason Cadmus had kidnapped and
tortured her and stolen her blood. They needed it to get into the Fortress of Solitude. *Rao, Hank Henshaw is stronger than I thought, if he can pick up the key to the entrance*, Kara thought as she flew to the arctic stronghold. What she found when she got there shook her to her core.

Not only had she been forced to destroy Kel-Ex (her adorable robot friend had been reprogrammed by Henshaw), but then she had to stand there and try to process the fact that her own father had created this horror. It felt like her heart fell out of her chest as she stood before the hologram of Zor-El as it explained that he had created the toxin to kill alien invaders of Krypton without any risk to the lives of Kryptonian civilians. Supergirl’s chest felt tight, and she nearly doubled over with the weight of what she had learned. No matter how he tried to justify it, there was no getting around the genocidal implications of the weaponized virus. He might claim it was a purely defensive measure, but he and Jor-El had included its formula in the database of the Fortress of Solitude, without any apparent concern for who could potentially get their hands on it.

She shut the hologram off and rushed out of the Fortress. Kara felt like she couldn’t breathe. She had always thought of her father as a kind-hearted scientist, working for the greater good. She had always idolized his desire to understand and save life. Was it all a lie?

Zor-El’s priority had never been life—not all life anyway. To him, Kryptonian lives trumped any others. That made her think of Lena again. Was her father any different than Lillian? Lillian was more outwardly hateful and consumed with taking actions against non-humans, but clearly, they shared a basic worldview. My people are superior to all others, and any means justify the ends when it comes to protecting my people against perceived alien threats. It was a worldview that Kara could not stand. All lives were worth saving, that was the fundamental principle on which Supergirl stood. Kryptonians, Martians, humans, Daxamites, whomever—they might have different appearances, cultures, powers, histories, languages, and ways of living, but they were all, on a basic level, just people. People deserving of life and happiness and basic respect. Supergirl shuddered to think that her father was part of the very evil she had spent much of her time on Earth fighting against.

Tears fell from Kara’s eyes as she continued her flight back to National City. She felt one emotion stronger than the rest, on what had already been one of the more emotionally charged and difficult days in recent memory. It was an emotion she had never really felt before, not about her family or about Krypton more generally.

Supergirl was deeply, painfully ashamed of her heritage. Ashamed to be Zor-El’s daughter, to bear his name. And she wasn’t really sure how she would recover from this soul-crushing revelation.

Fortunately for Kara, just as she felt most betrayed by her birth father, her current father figure proved to her why she loved him so much. Jonn J’onzz (or “Space Dad” as she and Alex jokingly called him in private) had his flaws, but he was at his core a kind, supportive, and inspirational mentor. He found her as she was gazing out at the stars, stewing in her anguish over the loss of her idealized version of her father. He didn’t say much, but he did give her a single shining beacon of hope to break through the darkness of this terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day. He reminded her that whatever else her parents had done, the loved her and they raised her to be the person—the hero—that she was today. Their legacy didn’t have to be death and destruction, because she was their legacy. Kara Zor-El was the last living member of her family and the only true Kryptonian survivor—whatever Krypton had been, she was its only future. Only she carried the culture and history and experiences of Krypton inside her. She could decide what her planet’s legacy would be, how the universe would remember the Kryptonian people and the House of El. And she would do that by living up to everything she believed in and tried to stand for as Supergirl. Zor-El may
have had a warped view of what *el mayarah* meant, but Kara knew that it wasn’t only Kryptonians who were stronger together. It was everyone.

And the rest of her feelings about her father would have to be sorted out later, because Eliza and Alex had figured out where Cadmus would strike next. The toxin needed a dispersion agent to become dangerous on a city-wide level—and that agent was a rare material that could only be found at L-Corp. Kara got there just after Henshaw did. Henshaw was a violent and formidable as ever, but Supergirl wasted no time in beating back the cyborg. Until she was distracted by a familiar scent, the jasmine with undertones of vanilla and rose she had come to associate with feelings of joy and butterflies in her stomach. She was briefly disoriented enough that Henshaw was able to throw her through a concrete L-Corp sculpture, and as she pressed herself up on her hands, her breath caught in her chest.

Lena Luthor was staring at her, and there was a look of sheer terror and concern on the CEO’s face. Lena seemed almost on the verge of tears at the sight of Supergirl in danger—*but why?* Kara was held there in Lena’s worried gaze, but she had no time to ponder the surprisingly powerful emotion she could read on Lena’s face before their roles were reversed. Henshaw picked up the felled concrete logo and tossed it at Lena. Kara’s heart leapt into her throat and she moved as fast as she’d ever moved to get between her friend and the giant slab of concrete. As the chunk crumbled on impact with Supergirl’s crossed arms, she nearly shouted at Lena to get out of there, doing everything in her power to hide the protective worry in her voice.

Then Henshaw had her pinned again, prattling on about how no one would save her as the police fired round after round of bullets uselessly ricocheting off his impervious back. Out of nowhere, the weird blue wormhole appeared again, distracting Henshaw and giving Supergirl enough time to get back to her feet and knock his out from under him. She had no idea that he had a laser built into his cybernetic eye and was too startled to stop him as he shot Maggie just below her collarbone. Kara rushed to the detective’s side, ready to fly her to Alex at the DEO, but Maggie insisted that Supergirl get Henshaw. *The woman has a fire in her,* Kara thought approvingly as she scanned the room for Henshaw. Unfortunately, he was gone, having attacked Maggie solely for the purpose of escaping.

Supergirl carefully picked up Maggie, much to the smaller woman’s chagrin, and informed the nearest officer that she was taking Detective Sawyer to a doctor. *Which was only half a lie,* she reflected as she let Alex know she was bringing Maggie into the DEO for medical attention. Wincing through the pain, Maggie shouted over the air rushing past them, “You know I’m not some damsel in distress, right?”

Supergirl’s mouth broke into the very slightest of smiles, as she continued flying in silence. Maggie made no further attempt to argue, and the two parted amicably as Alex rushed in to take assess Maggie’s wound. Alex shot her a grateful look as she took Maggie away, and then Kara was pulled into a conversation she absolutely did not want to have with Eliza, Winn, and J’onn. All three of them ganged up on her with their not so thinly veiled accusations that Lena was working with her mother. It had been a very long day, and Kara was nowhere near mentally or emotionally stable enough to deal with her family accusing her best friend of this level of villainy. She angrily snapped at Winn that she knew Lena better than any of them, and the youngest Luthor was nothing like her family. Then she flew off before her anger got the best of her.

Lena seemed to be expecting Supergirl to show up, but all of the raw emotion that had been so obvious on her face less than an hour ago were completely hidden behind Lena’s professional CEO mask now. Even though Lena smiled brightly as she quipped that her balcony door was not really an entrance, Kara knew her well enough to know that it wasn’t a real smile. Not the smile that Kara was used to seeing. *Why the sudden shift in demeanor?*
Kara was too frazzled to worry about it; she and Lena would talk later, once Cadmus was taken care of. She couldn’t think of any other way to break the news to her friend, so she just bluntly told Lena that Lillian was the head of Cadmus and Supergirl needed Lena’s help in finding her. She had expected the brunette to be shocked, but Lena’s face only appeared more indecipherable.

“You know, I thought you were different.” Lena’s words came out flatly, as her lips quirked into a soft sneer that bordered on contempt. “You wear that symbol on your chest, and everyone thinks you’re good. How many times has your cousin put on that high and mighty costume and come after Lex? My mother’s no saint, but you come in here and accuse her of being the devil incarnate? How long before you come after me?

Supergirl managed to keep the shock off of her face. She was completely shaken by this turn in Lena. She’d never seen her like this, either as Kara or Supergirl. What is going on? She pushed through her confusion, and thinking of her own parental turmoil, she told Lena in her best Supergirl voice that she understood how it feels to be disillusioned by parents. Her own personal feelings towards Lena began to seep into Supergirl’s voice as she became more forceful in her soliloquy. “You are not like your mother. She is cold and dangerous, and you are too good and too smart to follow in her path. Be your own hero.”

There was the briefest flash of something on Lena’s face, and Kara would’ve missed it if she wasn’t staring so intensely at the CEO. But Lena immediately locked down whatever it was, and turned away from Supergirl, dismissing the hero as she looked back down on her tablet. “You can leave the way you came in.”

Kara felt like everything was falling apart all around her. Terrible thoughts passed through her head on the short flight back to the DEO.

Could everyone have been right about Lena?

No, it’s impossible! I know her, and I meant what I said when she was too good for this. What does Lillian have on her? Why would Lena defend her?

Could I be wrong about her? Naïve? Has she been manipulating me this entire time?

The blonde Kryptonian didn’t want to believe it. There was only so much betrayal she could handle in one day. At the last minute, she changed course. The DEO was not the place for her to be with all these doubts swirling through her head. She shot a quick text to Alex to keep her up to date on Cadmus as she glided into her apartment through the open window. She quickly changed into some comfy sweats and grabbed a bucket of ice cream. This was the worst Thanksgiving ever.

Chapter End Notes

Look, I know that other than the first chapter, this story has so far been mostly rehashing and retelling content from the show. I promise it won’t be that way forever. Once we get past Medusa, I’m going to start diverging from the canon more and more. We’ll see if anyone actually likes my original stuff when I get there, but if you’re frustrated with slight reworkings of major Season 2 scenes, please just hang with me a bit longer.
Bait and Switch

Chapter Summary

Finishing off Medusa. I always felt like there was so much more going on with Lena than the show was able to convey in this episode.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter 8

It was only after she was sure Supergirl would not return that Lena was able to look back up from her tablet. She walked out to the leftmost corner of the balcony, where she was sure that she couldn’t be seen on the surveillance cameras in her office. Once there, her shoulders slumped, and the tears started to come. It had taken all of Lena’s considerable willpower to treat Supergirl so harshly, to pretend to be the version of a Luthor that she herself hated so much. Kara had done an impressive job of keeping her emotions off her face, but the CEO knew the kind of pain that her words had to have caused her friend. And Kara had been completely unable to keep that emotion out of her voice as she insisted that Lena was too good to follow in her mother’s footsteps.

“Be your own hero” had nearly broken Lena’s façade. Her crying intensified as she thought of how passionately Kara believed in her. The blonde had to realize by now just how much Lena was keeping hidden from her, despite the intense but comfortable relationship the two had built together. Worse, Lena had been nothing but withdrawn, cold, and now outright antagonistic towards Kara and Supergirl, and even then, here she was practically shouting at Lena that she believed in her inherent goodness.

She was terrified that her secret plot was going to irreparably damage Kara’s opinion of her. But she had no choice. Lillian was a danger to aliens everywhere, and especially to Supergirl. Lena would stop her mother, even if it cost her any chance of seeing where her chemistry with Kara might lead. Lillian was perceptive, cunning, and brilliant—if Lena couldn’t convince Kara that she had gone full Luthor, there was no way she could convince Lillian.

The Luthor matriarch gave Lena the perfect opportunity when she sent that robotic goon to L-Corp. Lena figured out what Cadmus was planning, and more importantly, what they needed from L-Corp to execute such a plan. Her emotions got the best of her again as she thought back on the events of earlier that night. How was it that she knew how powerful and impervious Supergirl was, but she was nevertheless so consumed with worry for her friend when actually witnessing the violence she faced on a daily basis? Lena had not expected the level of fear and worry that had overwhelmed her as she watched the cyborg throw Supergirl through the concrete L-Corp logo in the building’s lobby. She couldn’t move, couldn’t breathe, she just stood there willing Kara to get up, to be okay. She didn’t notice until it was too late that she was a distraction for the hero, who nevertheless saved Lena for what had to have been the fourth or fifth time now. Lena did as she was told and left the lobby in a hurry. But she stopped at the nearest security hub to continue watching the confrontation on the monitors.

As Henshaw escaped and Supergirl flew the injured police officer away, Lena collected herself and began rethinking her plan. Her coldly rational scientist brain quickly overtook her more emotional
side, and she realized that now she had her way into her mother’s organization. She quickly took the elevator back up to her office. Lena knew it wouldn’t be long before Supergirl showed up to confront her about Cadmus and her mother. She wasn’t an idiot. Kara had tipped her hand with that ridiculous excuse for an interview, and the youngest Luthor’s suspicions were confirmed when she found traces of the government hack into L-Corp’s files. They hadn’t discovered her own personal files where she kept all documentation relating to her covert investigation of Lex, Lillian, and lately Cadmus, because Lena was of course two steps ahead of them. The youngest Luthor had always been an excellent chess player, both literally and figuratively. She knew that Supergirl and her team had to be at the end of their rope, scrambling without any real leads and feeling the pressure of Lillian’s plot coming together quickly. She knew it was only a matter of time before the hero showed up to confront her about Lillian, with no other obvious options available to her.

But Supergirl didn’t know about the cameras in Lena’s office. Cameras which Lena was sure that Lillian had hacked her way into. The brunette had needed an opportunity to show her mother that Lena was not on team Supergirl, so to speak, and this was it. So she sat in her office and prepared herself for what would have to be the greatest acting performance of her life. She had to sell it. When Kara showed up, Lena had to make it clear to Lillian that her loyalties lay with her family.

As much as it had hurt Lena to pretend to betray her friend, Lillian wasted no time in proving that Lena had correctly predicted how both her friend and her mother would react. In the thirty minutes since Supergirl left, Lena had collected herself, touched up her makeup to mask the brief moments of crying she had allowed herself, and taken the briefcase containing isotope 454 from the safe where she had been storing it and left it conspicuously on top of her desk. She was standing at her office windows, gazing out thoughtfully at the night sky, when she heard someone enter the room. She didn’t need to look to know it was Lillian.

Knowing that her mother had fallen into her trap, Lena wasted no further time on pleasantries. Without turning, she stated confidently that the Medusa virus was the reason Lillian had sent her goon to L-Corp, that she knew Cadmus needed the isotope as a dispersal agent. Never one to miss an opportunity for a bit of flair, she turned slightly to finally look back at her mother as she said aloud what she had known for quite a while now.

“You’re in charge of Cadmus.”

To Lillian’s credit, if she was surprised at Lena’s insight, she didn’t show it. The older woman had seen Lena’s confrontation with Supergirl, and yet she still had the slightest look of suspicion on her face as Lena told her that she was ready to help Cadmus. “It’s that easy?”

Lena didn’t blink, answering, “It’s that easy,” as she opened the briefcase to reveal the isotope. As she followed her mother out of the building, Lena maintained her cold Luthor exterior, determined to convince Lillian that she was committed to the anti-alien cause. They got into a nondescript black SUV and began traveling … somewhere. At first, her mother remained fairly quiet, and Lena calmly matched her silence, content to check her email and wait out the older woman. As they got further out of the city’s downtown center, Lillian finally spoke up.

“So, I have to know—why the change of heart? And why now?”

“I think you mean to ask why I would work my ass off to completely reshape L-Corp and move past the PR nightmare that was Lex’s very public antagonism of Superman, only to turn on Supergirl and support Cadmus in a plan to murder all the aliens in National City?”

Lillian’s eyebrows raised in question, but she let her daughter continue. “Frankly, Mom, I’m tired. I’ve finally got the company in a position to recover from the damage your golden boy did to our family’s name. But it hasn’t been easy. Despite all the good I’ve done, Supergirl and her secret
government agents still look at me the same way Superman looked at Lex. They’ll never see me beyond the name Luthor. I realize that now.”

Lena paused, knowing that the key a good lie was including just enough of the truth to really sell it. “Maybe some dark twisted part of me is still trying to earn your love, even though you’ve never been willing to give it to me. Is that what you want to hear? I’m done swimming upstream. Whatever our differences, you’re the only one who is going to give me the benefit of the doubt. So fuck it.”

The SUV had stopped in the middle of Lena’s little speech, but Lillian must have bought it, at least a little. “Okay then,” the elder Luthor said quietly, as she opened the door and stepped out into the night air. They were at the National City Port Authority, and Lillian wasted no time leading Lena over to what appeared to be some sort of large, military grade gun mounted on a truck.

The CEO couldn’t help making a quip, barely bothering to hide her snark. “Some mothers wear lockets with pictures of their children. You wear the keys to a bazooka.”

Lillian had apparently become a weapons expert in her spare time, as the head of Cadmus retorted, “It’s a rocket launcher.” Well excuse me. “And… it’s yours.” Lena made sure to continue playing her part, keeping her face equal parts confident and suspicious, as Lillian looked right at her and continued. “Take it. Prove you’re with me. Unleash Medusa and end Earth’s alien menace one and for all.”

Lena took the keys to the rocket launcher with a hint of unease still on her face, before stepping up to the launch device. She had just begun to worry that she wouldn’t have any backup once Lillian realized she had been played, but thankfully, Kara and her green friend showed up just before Lena turned the key. All would be revealed soon, so Lena didn’t feel quite so bad about the final flourish of her performance. She responded to Supergirl’s exhortation that she not do this with a final “Why not? I’m a Luthor,” performed with all the angst that Lena could muster. Then she launched the rocket.

Predictably, Kara went flying after it, but Lena knew that the Girl of Steel wouldn’t be able to stop it. Meanwhile, Lillian’s goon started a fight with the green guy, who oddly enough shared the same face as the cyborg. Lena couldn’t give that much thought as she and Lillian got out of the way of the fight. Once the rocket reached its apex just above the tallest building in downtown National City, Lillian activated it. The rocket exploded into a brilliant cloud of radiant orange material.

As the particles rained down on the city, Lena couldn’t help but stop and appreciate how beautiful it was. And not just visually, though it did look remarkably like some sort of magical fairy dust was washing over the city. It was beautiful to Lena because she knew that this was no weapon. Her bait and switch had worked—the virus was now inert and would never hurt anyone ever again.

She grinned as she heard the confusion in her mother’s voice as she lamented that all aliens should be dead. Lena could see the exact moment when realization hit Lillian and spread across her face. “You. You switched out the isotope. You made the virus inert.”

“I did.” Lena allowed her voice to carry all of the pride and irreverence that was coursing through her at the moment. Glancing over at the approaching sound of sirens, she informed her mother that she had also called the police.

The cops wanted her to come back to the police station to give her official statement, but they
agreed to wait on her after Supergirl asked to have a word. As the two women walked away from all the commotion, Lena felt more nervous than she had in a long time. They stopped and faced each other, and for the first time that day, Lena let herself just look at her friend normally. No masks or facades.

Supergirl seemed equally nervous and maybe a little confused on top of it. Not yet ready to reveal that she knew Kara’s secret, Lena approached her cautiously. “Supergirl? Was there something you had wanted to discuss with me?” The Kryptonian stood up straight, as she seemed to realize that she hadn’t yet spoken a word.

“Ms. Luthor, I trust you know how dangerous your plan was?”

Lena knew that Kara could read all the guilt on her face right now, so she didn’t bother trying to make excuses. “Yes, Supergirl, I was aware. And I imagine that this whole series of events have not left you with the highest opinion of me. For that I’m sorry. You don’t know Lillian. You don’t know what she’s capable of. It had to be me.”

Supergirl looked ready to interrupt and tell her why everything she was saying was wrong, but Lena gave her a very emphatic look and continued. “Seriously, you and I don’t know each other very well, but I don’t do anything halfway. I’ve been investigating Lillian since I moved to National City. I’ve been working on a version of this plan for over a month. You’re incredible Supergirl—you’re powerful and inspirational and beautiful and resourceful. (Oh shit, did I just call her beautiful?) But Lillian isn’t a big monster you can punch. She is the most devious, calculating, manipulative, and awful person I’ve ever known. I had to be the one to take her down. I had to.”

“You couldn’t have let me in on your plan? I could’ve helped you, protected you!” Lena loved how protective Kara was, even as she tried to hide behind her Supergirl persona.

“I know, but I had to play this close to the chest. It wasn’t enough to stop Lillian—we needed to ensure that the virus was made inert so that it could never be used again. And to do that, I had to make Lillian think I was on her side. I wasn’t even sure I could do it. But if I couldn’t convince you I had gone full dark and evil Luthor, I had no shot at convincing her.”

“Well … mission accomplished,” Supergirl replied darkly. “But at least I was right about you. You are too good to be anything like your mother.”

“And you have no idea how much your belief in me means, Supergirl. It’s really hard to be constantly looked down on and distrusted by anyone who has ever heard the name Luthor, but you have proven that you don’t see me that way. Sorry if I did anything to cause you to doubt me. Bygones?”

“Yeah okay.” The hero was grinning just a little now. “You should probably go chat with the officers now.”

Lena gave her a wink and the tiniest salute as she turned to walk back to the police cars. As she heard Supergirl’s trademark “swoosh” as she flew off, Lena pulled out her phone and shot off a quick text to Kara.

[10:47 p.m.] Hey Kara! Sorry things have been weird between us lately, and I’m especially sorry that I blew off your puff piece about mothers. Check the news in the morning, and you’ll probably understand why. Please forgive me and can we chat soon?

With Lillian behind bars, maybe it was about time she started letting Kara in more. Test the
waters and see if she couldn’t get more than a flustered giggle in response to her no longer subtle flirting. Lena tended to have a fairly cynical view of life, but she felt like she was floating. She couldn’t begin to describe how good it felt to have one-upped her mother and (hopefully) put an end to her criminal activity. She felt like she could do anything now. Maybe even get the girl.

Chapter End Notes

Alright done with Medusa! Woo! Get ready for some more original stuff for the next few chapters, including more dialogue, more angst, and definitely more fluff.
Where is She?

Chapter Summary

Kara’s been away to help out on Earth 1, and Lena is feeling abandoned. Kara finally tells Alex about her crush, but it doesn’t go how she expected.

Chapter 9

A storm hung over National City. Lena knew this was a rare occurrence (this sort of dark and stormy weather seemed so much more Vancouver than National City), but it also felt appropriate. The harsh rain matched Lena’s mood, and she looked down from the floor-to-ceiling windows of her apartment to her phone, clutched tightly in her hand. A single message was displayed on its face.

[10:52 p.m., 11/24/16] Lena! Nothing to apologize for! If anyone I’m the one who should be sorry. I can’t imagine how you must be feeling right now, but I’m so proud of you! You saved the city!! I absolutely wanna catch up ASAP—let’s get lunch this week?? :) :D <3

Kara sent that nearly a week ago. Since then, the reporter had dropped completely off the map. Well, not completely. It wasn’t like Supergirl wasn’t still around, stopping bank robbers and pulling cats from trees. But since their talk at the port, neither Kara nor Supergirl had made any attempt to reach out to Lena. The CEO had sent a couple of texts to Kara trying to schedule a day to have lunch, but her messages went unanswered. This was the third straight night she found herself drinking scotch and binging Orphan Black to try to keep herself from uselessly checking her phone every thirty minutes. Tonight, however, even that couldn’t distract her, so here she was, staring out at the storm. Even barefoot, in a simple green tank top and black yoga pants, she cut a striking figure against the backdrop of her impressive windows and equally impressive view. But the tension was visible not only in her face, but in the tightness of her shoulders and the fidgeting of her hand with her phone. She took another sip of her scotch.

Lena couldn’t believe she had let this girl get under her skin like this. The CEO was distracted, unfocused, and emotional—the opposite of how she normally comported herself. Fortunately, no one at L-Corp expected her to be functioning at 100 percent right now. Not after the news broke that she was the one to foil her own mother’s attempted genocide. Lena had very much appreciated the outpouring of goodwill she had received, including a call from the mayor to thank her personally. However, there was only one person’s opinion of her she was concerned with. And Kara was completely ignoring her.

She thought Kara would forgive her. She couldn’t have misread the blonde’s body language that night. Supergirl had been angry with her, but also kind and eventually, understanding. She did not give Lena any indication that she felt so betrayed that she would completely ignore the CEO. And she had responded so positively to Lena’s text!

Lena couldn’t understand what was going on. She felt… abandoned. Kara, what did I do? Why won’t you talk to me? She couldn’t keep going in circles on this. Lena looked back down at her phone to check the time. 8:17 p.m. Okay, so 10:17 in Metropolis. She’ll probably be done with work by now, the brunette contemplated, pulling up Sam’s contact info and hitting call.
Sam’s voice was warm, immediately soothing the turmoil swirling in Lena’s chest, at least a little. “Hey lady, how are you feeling?”

Lena paused for a good five seconds, collecting herself before she responded, “That’s a tricky question to answer.”

“Oh no! Did something else happen with Lillian? What’s going on? When we talked before you were over the moon.”

“Kara is ignoring me.”

Sam stopped herself from giggling, knowing that her friend would take it the wrong way. “Of course it’s about the reporter,” she remarked, trying to keep herself from sounding too cheeky. “Are you sure she’s ignoring you?”

Lena explained that Kara had agreed to lunch and had seemed so excited and proud of Lena, but then had completely ignored the brunette’s follow ups for nearly a week now. She left out the part about her conversation with Supergirl, because she wasn’t about to out Kara, even to her closest friend.

Sam could tell that Lena was leaving something out, but even then, this didn’t add up. “Lena, are you sure she’s okay? Like she didn’t have some sort of family emergency or something? I get that she maybe felt a little frustrated that you blew off her interview, but she clearly wanted to clear the air with you. And based on everything you’ve told me, I’m pretty sure the girl is captivated by you. It doesn’t make any sense that she would just ghost you out of the blue.”

Lena thought about that for a half second, but no, she knew for a fact that Supergirl was still active in National City. Kara wasn’t missing or anything. But again, Lena couldn’t quite explain that to Sam. “No, I know she’s still in town, still at her job. It isn’t like I can call her sister or her boss and just casually check in to see if she’s okay. ‘Oh hi, Kara has been ignoring my texts, and I have a huge crush on her, so I absolutely had to call you and check to see if everything was alright.’ Can you even imagine?”

This time Sam did chuckle. “Sweetie, I know. I get it. But still, this doesn’t make sense. I have no idea what might be going on with Kara, but maybe give her the benefit of the doubt. I can tell you care about her a lot, or this wouldn’t be getting to you.” She went silent for a moment, then teased, “Actually, I don’t think I’ve ever seen you this worked up about someone, and you aren’t even dating Kara.”

Lena blushed, frustrated that Sam could see through her even from halfway across the country. But there was no point in denying it. She sighed audibly before replying, “Fine, yes, you found me out. I really like her. The only other person I’ve ever connected with like this is you.” She stopped, trying to find words. “I don’t understand what I did wrong. Why won’t she just talk to me?!?”

“Lena, I’m sorry. It’s been a challenging couple of weeks for you. I can’t tell you everything will work out perfectly, but give it time. I’m sure she’ll reach out eventually, and hopefully she has a really damn good reason for making you feel like this. I’d hate to have to fly out to National City to beat up a goofy blonde reporter.” Lena snorted at the thought of Sam trying to beat up Supergirl, even in her Kara disguise. Sam continued, “Just know I’m here for you, always. I’m the Abby to your Carol.”

Lena smiled brightly at this. Because she did know that Sam would always be there for her, just like Lena would do anything for Sam, and Ruby. “You’re the best, darling. I’d be lost without
“Well, your company certainly would be, I’ll give you that.”

Lena giggled again. Calling Sam had been a really good idea. “It’s just too bad no one will ever know that you’re the real power behind the Luthor throne. You’re my hero, Sam. I’ll leave you to enjoy the rest of your night. You really helped me get out of the dark hole I was in.”

“Well, your company certainly would be, I’ll give you that.”

Lena giggled again. Calling Sam had been a really good idea. “It’s just too bad no one will ever know that you’re the real power behind the Luthor throne. You’re my hero, Sam. I’ll leave you to enjoy the rest of your night. You really helped me get out of the dark hole I was in.”

“Anytime. Chin up, and let me know as soon as Kara talks to you again, okay?”

“We’ll see… night, Sam.”

“G’night, dum dum.”

Kara had just gotten back from another universe, where she had met a dozen other superheroes and fought off an alien invasion, and yet there was only one thing she could think about: Lena forking Luthor. The first thing she had done upon returning to Earth 38 (which still felt like such a random number to her—who decided these things?) was to check her phone. And just like that, the thrill of saving another Earth was forgotten as Kara’s shoulders slumped.

I completely forgot about Lena. I charged off with Barry without a second thought, and now it’s been four days and she must think I hate her and shit! How can I fix this?

The blonde shot a quick text to Alex, letting her know that she was back in this universe and that she needed her sister right now. Alex quickly responded that she was on her way and that she had news of her own to share. Over the next twenty minutes, Kara sat nervously pondering how much she was ready to tell Alex about her feelings for Lena.

She’s going to see right through me, and she’s been pestering me about my crush for over a month now. There’s no way I can get her advice on apologizing to Lena without her figuring it out. May as well just admit it.

What if Alex freaks out? I can hear it now, ‘A Super and a Luthor can never work.’

Kara didn’t get to spiral into her worries any further, as she heard Alex’s distinctive steps coming up the stairs. When Alex burst into the apartment, Kara was struck by the pure joy radiating off of her. On the surface, she was the same Alex as ever—a nondescript top under a well-fitted leather jacket, slightly tucked in the front into a pair of functional skinny jeans, with black combat boots—but her energy was totally novel. The Kryptonian had never seen her sister so … blissful. Kara’s whole face became caught up in a grin at the sight of her sister, all worries forgotten. Alex wasted no time wrapping Kara up in the biggest hug possible.

“Alex! If I didn’t know any better, I would think that you were the one capable of flight! I don’t know if I’ve ever seen you so happy.”

Alex giggled uncontrollably. Now Kara was worried. Alex Danvers does not giggle. Kara, more than anyone, knew that there was a tender bubbly soul beneath her gruff and at times scary exterior. But even for Kara, this was a more euphoric Alex than she ever thought possible.

“Something you want to share with the class?”

Suddenly Alex went from gleeful to bashful, and now Kara was very confused. But she gave her sister time, looking at her expectantly. Finally, Alex whispered, “Well. Thanksgiving night, after the whole Medusa thing, uhhh … Maggie came over? And. And well she gave me this whole
speech. The most beautiful speech.” At this point, Alex just kind of made a couple of stuttering noises and began to grin again.

“Alex, are you trying to tell me that you have a girlfriend?”

In response, Alex did the most adorable little hop and grin maneuver before giggling again and stammered, excitedly, “I have a girlfriend!!”

In the blink of an eye, Kara had her sister in the tightest hug she could manage without breaking her. Her smile as she looked down at Alex could’ve powered an entire solar power plant. “Tell me everything! You said she had a speech?”

Kara’s pure joy for her had put Alex a bit more at ease, and the giggling had stopped—for now at least. They sat together on the couch, and Alex stopped to recall the exact words Maggie had used before the diminutive detective kissed her.

“She came to my apartment late. I mean at that point it had to be after midnight. I was already in my PJs, which she thought were cute! She knocked on my door and brought me beer and pizza.”

“She sounds perfect for you,” Kara snuck in.

Without stopping to indulge Kara’s remark, Alex continued, “She almost died, from her encounter with Henshaw, and it got her thinking. She said that she was scared by the idea that I came out just for her, but that life was too short. She said that we should be who we are, and we should kiss the girls we want to kiss and, and that she wanted to kiss me. And she did! She stepped right up and put her hands on my face and kissed me!”

Kara beamed at her sister. “That’s the stupidest, most romantic thing I’ve ever heard.”

“Kara, I feel so stupid. I’m like a dumb sap, I’m so happy. It’s pathetic and I don’t even care.”

They laughed together as Kara brought her sister in for another hug. “So that’s me,” Alex noted, “What about you? Did something happen to you while you were on Earth whatever with your speedster friend?”

Now it was Kara’s turn to clam up. She had been so caught up in Alex’s happy news that she had completely forgotten the reason she invited her over in the first place. Her eyes fell to her hands in her lap as she tried to figure out how to start this conversation. “It’s uhh, no, nothing to do with what Barry needed. And believe me, I’ve got stories to tell you, but first I need your advice.”

Alex’s eyes got wider as she asked, “Oh! Does this have something to do with the lady crush you refuse to tell me about?”

Kara was sure that her silence said it all, but she did offer up a meek “yes” without looking up at Alex. The agent rested her hand gently onto that of her sister, and softly replied, “Kara, no pressure, but I know you asked me here for a reason. Whatever it is, whoever she is, you can tell me. I’m here to help—I am, after all, an expert now that I have a girlfriend.” Kara smirked at this, before finally looking up at Alex.

“It’s Lena. I have the world’s biggest crush on Lena forking Luthor.”

Kara isn’t quite sure what she expected from her sister, but Alex’s face immediately went blank. Like this revelation broke her brain. The Kryptonian waited with baited breath for some sign of what her sister was thinking.
“You have a crush? On Lena … Luthor?” Alex paused, rubbing her forehead with one hand. “Kara, you know I love you, right? That I just want to protect you?” Kara didn’t like where this was going, but she remained silent.

“I know you can’t help who you fall for, but I’m worried about this. I don’t see how it can work. I know that she has been very vocal about breaking from her family’s past and doing good in the world. I know she betrayed Lillian and saved us all from Medusa. That’s earned her the benefit of the doubt. I don’t say this because she’s a Luthor. But you can’t possibly think that you can date her.”

Now Kara was actively frowning, her brow crinkled in distress. “Alex, you don’t even know her. And I haven’t said anything about dating, I haven’t even told you what the issue is, why I needed to talk to you.”

“Just think this out, really. If Lena Luthor started dating a rookie reporter, that’s going to draw publicity. Is she even out? How long before Kara Danvers’ face is on as many websites and tabloids as Supergirl’s is? Do you really think your secret identity can survive that? Did you even think of that!?”

Now Kara was angry. “No, I didn’t think of that! I’ve barely admitted to myself that I have feelings for her! I don’t even know if she likes me like that, though I doubt it! She’s gorgeous. She’s twice as smart as me and three times as good. She’s so far out of my league I can’t even pretend like I have a shot. She’s a billionaire CEO at the age of 28, and I’m just some junior reporter at a magazine.”

Alex started to say something, but Kara cut her off with a stern look. “My point is, I never said anything about dating her. She’s my best friend. I trust her, and I feel like she trusts me, even though it’s obvious how hard that is for her. I’m her only friend here in the city, and I’m not going to ruin that over some crush!”

“But I never expected you to be so mean about it.” Alex seemed taken aback by the accusation, but Kara wasn’t done. “Look, I’m beyond happy for you and Maggie, but maybe I need to handle this problem on my own. I know you’re just trying to protect me, like always, but who I like isn’t for you to decide.”

With that, Kara got up from the couch, standing very straight and staring at the door. Alex looked like she was going to argue, but then sighed and got up. “Kara, I’m sorry. I had no idea you were that close to her—you’ve never even talked to me about her. I know I probably overreacted. But I do want to protect you, and I can’t pretend like I’m not worried about this. I’ll go, but I want to hear about your adventures with Barry soon, okay? I really am sorry.”

Kara nodded at her, and gave her sister a brief, one-armed hug. Alex left quietly, noticeably different from how she entered. Kara couldn’t quite believe how that had gone. She couldn’t remember a time when she was this hurt by her sister.

She also had work to think about. J’onn had done his part using his shapeshifting to play Supergirl while she was gone, but she’d had to take leave from work. She hadn’t had time to ask for time off formally, but Alex had let James know what was going on. Even so, there’s no way Snapper was going to be happy about it. And she had no idea how she was going to smooth things over with Lena. It would take more than a text message; Kara would surprise her with lunch at her office tomorrow. She knew that if she could just apologize to Lena in person, her friend would forgive her for her abrupt absence and lack of communication.

Kara just had to think of a good cover story.
Kara has to try to explain where she's been for a week, but she won't reveal that she is Supergirl. Will Lena forgive her? (I mean, come on yes of course she will, but how is the lying going to affect their relationship going forward?)

Chapter 10

Kara gave Jess her brightest smile as she walked confidently passed the assistant’s desk towards the door of Lena’s office. “Ms. Danvers!” Jess shouted after her, stopping Kara in her tracks.

“Is there a problem, Jess?”

“I think I should probably check with Ms. Luthor before you enter.” Jess replied, not bothering to hide the protectiveness in her voice.

Kara gave her best unworried chuckle. “And here I thought Lena had given me a free pass into her office at any time. And that you and I were on a first name basis now.”

“Yes well, clearly things change, and you haven’t exactly been around lately.” Jess held up one finger as she rang Lena’s office and told her that Kara was in to see her, apparently with lunch. There was a brief pause before Lena responded, flatly, “Yes, alright, let her in.”

The young reporter was briefly frozen in place by the tone of Lena’s voice, but she came here for a reason and would not be deterred. She steeled herself and walked through the door with her best smile on her face. Unfortunately, Lena didn’t see it, as she was studiously focused on the computer in front of her. As Kara continued into the office, it became clear that Lena had no intention of recognizing her presence, and the reporter’s nerves got the best of her.

“Lena I’m so sorry!” she blurted out quickly, before bumbling forward with an increasingly high pitched and regretful tone. “I know you must be so unhappy with me, and I absolutely deserve that, and I know I left you hanging, and you were probably worried in addition to feeling ignored. But what do I know, I’m just a reporter, and you’re this brilliant powerful CEO. You were probably busy; you probably didn’t even think about me at all. Except I can tell you are upset with me, so I guess you did notice that I was gone and I didn’t say anything, and have I mentioned yet that I’m really sorry?”

Lena had yet to look at her. Kara paused just long enough to catch her breath, before asking, in what had to be the saddest voice to have ever left her lips, “Will you please at least look at me?”

Still… Kara had calmed down just enough that she didn’t fail to notice that the corners of Lena’s mouth were pointing just slightly up rather than down. Having awkwardly apologized enough, at
least for now, Kara just sat there and looked expectantly towards Lena.

The brunette cleared her throat. “Kara. I suppose I really can’t stay mad at you even if I want to, but surely by now you know that I consider you my best friend. You know that, right?” Kara nodded, unsure of herself. Lena continued, “Then I hope you can understand why your lack of communication hurts. What I went through with my mother last week was extremely trying, and I could have really used a friend after it. I get that my behaviour towards you was cold when you came here for that interview, but surely you understand now why I had to do that. And your text made it seem like you were as eager as I was to catch up and clear the air.”

She paused, her pale green eyes fixed on Kara’s shimmering blue ones. “Then you completely ignored me for nearly a week.” Kara’s whole face dropped, and she dropped her eyes to her hands in her lap. “Where did you go? Why were you ignoring my texts? I can’t imagine what I’ve done to you to deserve that.”

Kara sniffled a little, but kept the tears in. She collected herself and then looked back to Lena. “The first thing I need you to know is that I really am sorry. I feel awful, and there’s no excuse I could give you that would justify my silence.” Kara’s hand lifted and then paused, hesitant, before reaching out to rest on Lena’s. “I really wish I had been here for you, because I genuinely care about you, Lena. A lot. But an emergency came up.”

The CEO’s eyebrows raised at this, but she let her friend continue. “Early the next morning, after your mom was arrested, I got a call that honestly just freaked me out. My friend, Barry, lives in Central City. We don’t talk as much as we should anymore, but he is one of my dearest friends in the whole world. We have the sort of bond where we would put our lives on the line for each other. And I got a call that morning from his foster dad Joe, that Barry had been struck by lightning and was in the hospital.”

Kara thought she saw something like confusion on Lena’s face, but she wasn’t sure. She certainly couldn’t tell if the brunette was buying her story. Still, she continued, “Alex was with me, and she got us onto the first flight to Central City. I was shaken. Worried. I threw together a suitcase and rushed out. It wasn’t until my flight was over halfway to Central City that I realized I didn’t have my phone.”

The reporter looked back at her friend, realizing that this was probably the weakest part of her story. Lena’s face was indecipherable, however, and she asked, hesitantly, “So that’s where you’ve been all this time?”

Kara nodded. “Barry was in a coma for three days. Joe, Barry’s girlfriend Iris, best friend Cisco, and I took turns sitting with him in his hospital room. Then he just woke up, like it was nothing. Lena, it was crazy! We thought we might lose him, and then suddenly he was awake and talking and carrying on as if nothing had happened. Barely a scratch on him. The doctors had no idea what happened. It was like a miracle or something. We still don’t know how it happened.” Kara was proud of herself for the story she had come up with—when Barry had first told her how he got his powers, she had been entranced. Struck by magical lightning after the explosion of some experimental particle collider, then awaken from a six-month coma only to discover he was “the fastest man alive.” (Kara always thought this moniker was cheesy, and probably inaccurate, but it wasn’t like “Girl of Steel” wasn’t cheesy too.) Because the story had made an impression on her, Kara knew she could discuss it with some degree of believability to her voice.

“Lena, I am so so sorry that I have been out of touch. I got back yesterday evening, and the first thing I did was find my phone. I felt so guilty seeing your messages. Once we knew Barry was going to be okay, honestly, you’re the only thing I could think about. I can’t imagine how hard this
week has been for you, and I feel like the worst friend in the world. I really did want to be here for you. Can you forgive me?”

Kara waited nervously, as Lena’s eyes focused on her without giving anything away. It felt like an hour passed in silence, and then Lena’s face erupted into a genuine smile. “Well I suppose I have to, if I want a shot at this lunch you’ve brought me.”

As Kara got into the heart of her story, Lena started to get confused. She had expected some flimsy excuse at best, or that the reporter had for some reason decided she didn’t want Lena in her life anymore, at worst. But she could hear hints of authenticity in Kara’s voice as she talked about this friend, Barry. As she continued, Lena’s thoughts swirled. She knew Kara had to be lying; after all, there wasn’t a single day since her mother’s arrest that Supergirl hadn’t been in National City, doing her normal crime-fighting routine. But she found herself wanting to believe a story she knew had to be false.

Lena felt so conflicted. She so very much wanted to forgive Kara, but it hurt to be lied to. It hurt to be ignored. And she couldn’t pretend that her feelings for the blonde had nothing to do with it. Lena had been prepared to confess her feelings to her friend. Maybe that was partly the rush she felt after putting her mother behind bars, but she knew it was more than that. She was finally ready to see where things might go, assuming she felt confident it wouldn’t mess up the friendship.

Then Kara completely disappeared, and now was sitting here spinning an elaborate lie. It was one thing that Kara wasn’t ready to open up about Supergirl. This was something else entirely. Still, she couldn’t deny that she wanted the woman in her life. She couldn’t deny how Kara made her feel, how they just clicked. Even if she didn’t feel that she could trust her, not until the lies stopped. The turning point for Lena was when Kara told her how guilty she felt, how much she had wanted to be there to support Lena after Medusa. She could see, without any doubt, the sincerity in those baby blues—it was clear that Kara was on the verge of tears as she sought Lena’s forgiveness. Even more, she could tell the blonde meant every word—even the “you’re the only thing I could think about” line that caused Lena to momentarily lose her breath and wonder again what if?

So she made a decision. Simple as that. She had no intention of letting Kara past her walls, any further than she had already breached, but she would forgive her. Hopefully someday Kara would realize that she could trust Lena, but until it was a two-way street, Lena would remain slightly on guard. However, she made a decision, that was that. She smiled brightly at Kara and made a quip about the lunch the reporter had brought them and then completely forgotten about.

While the two women ate, their conversation was much lighter. Eventually the subject of Kara’s sister came up. Having only met Alex a couple of times, and then only briefly, Lena didn’t know the woman well enough to be surprised or not as Kara told the story of her coming out. The way Kara talked about it, she seemed so happy and proud of Alex. Lena found herself caught up in the moment, and without thinking, blurted out, “I hope you’ll let Alex know that she can come talk to me anytime.”

She realized immediately that she had jumped the gun a little, but clearly, she felt comfortable enough with Kara to lower this particular wall, at least a little. Kara for her part, gave a puzzled look before inquiring, “Ermm okay, but talk to you about what?” Lena grinned, her earlier reservation not forgotten but at least calmed for the moment. “Oh darling, isn’t it obvious?”

The only thing obvious to Kara appeared to be the fact that Lena was teasing her, so the CEO decided to be just a bit more straightforward. “You and I have spent a lot of time together the past
few months, and I am quite certain that my overt flirting has not gone unnoticed.” Lena smiled at
the immediate blush that rose into Kara’s face. “I’m not out publicly, but if Alex needs another
queer woman to talk to—other than Maggie of course—I’m happy to give her all the support she
needs. It can be lonely without any kind of queer community, that much I know from experience.”

“Hey!” Kara stammered, suddenly caught up in an unexpected emotion. “I’m not straight either,
you know!” Kara immediately clammed up, and Lena knew that she hadn’t meant to say that out
loud. Lena just grinned wickedly and raised an eyebrow.

“Believe me, I had some idea.”

At that, Kara turned the brightest red Lena had ever seen her. She sat there, stunned, with her
mouth wide open. It might have been the cutest thing Lena had ever seen. But as much as she
enjoyed flustered the reporter, she came to her rescue this time. “Anyways, my point is that if
your baby gay sister wants some impartial advice, or simply someone to talk to who isn’t her sister
or girlfriend, please send her my way.”

Lena couldn’t tell quite what Kara was thinking, but there was something on her face that the CEO
hadn’t seen before. Whatever it was, it passed quickly, and Kara smiled widely. “I’ll tell her, but
don’t be offended if she doesn’t reach out. Alex doesn’t really let people in easily, and she isn’t
one for the mushy emotional talks with anyone but me.”

“Something she and I have in common, it would seem,” Lena said, smirking as Kara got flustered
yet again. Then a silence settled in, and it felt more uncomfortable than a quiet had ever been
between the two friends. It was also obvious to Lena that Kara wanted to say something but didn’t
know how to say it. So, she waited.

Finally, Kara opened her mouth. “Lena. I know we’re probably still in kind of a rough place, what
with you having just forgiven me and all. But… you did forgive me, and I want to be honest with
you about something, and I know that if I don’t do it now, I might not be brave enough to try again
later.”

Oh. If this is going where I think it’s going, I am so not ready for this conversation yet.

“I … ummm, well. Like you said, you and I have gotten pretty close the past few months, and you
know, as we both just pointed out, neither of us is exactly straight.” Lena knew exactly where this
was going, but even still, she couldn’t stop grinning at how cute it was that Kara had reverted to
full panicked jabbering mode. “Look, I’m just gonna say it. I hope you know, by now, that I care
about you. But it isn’t just like a friend sort of caring. I … I like you, Lena. I think you’re
captivating and brilliant and inspiring and you’re easily the most beautiful woman I’ve ever seen.
And I definitely don’t want to ruin our friendship at all—I’m not even like saying we should date
or anything—unless maybe you want to?—no I don’t know, but I just, couldn’t keep hanging out
with you without being honest about how I feel. And based on your flirting with me, I’m pretty
sure that’s what it is, I’m guessing you’re probably not grossed out or anything by the fact that I
like you. … Ugh, and now I’m babbling again.”

Lena was smiling brightly now, content to let Kara tire herself out. The blonde was still going,
though. “I get that I’m just a rookie reporter, and you’re … well you’re Lena forking Luthor, and
of course you’re way out of my league. I know that. But still, I had to tell you and now I have, and
now I’ll just leave, and things can be awkward for a few weeks before we return to just being
friends and everything being fine, okay?”

With that, Kara moved to exit the office, but Lena caught her arm and pulled her back down to the
couch. “Kara wait.” The blonde paused, glanced down at Lena nervously, and then settled back onto the couch. Lena released her, grinned, and asked casually, “So you watch The Good Place?”

Kara turned bright red for what had to be the third or fourth time today, and whispered, “That’s what you’re focused on?”

Lena laughed, and then took Kara’s hand in her own. “Look Kara, you’re right. We’re in a weird place right now. You disappearing on me really hurt. I’m going to need some time to process that. But it isn’t like I’ve been subtle about my attraction to you. I care about you too, and the flirting, while it is definitely fun, is not a joke. I just … I am not ready to have this conversation yet. Is that okay?”

Kara nodded emphatically, a small and cautious smile across her beautiful face. Lena let out the breath that she hadn’t realized she was holding. “Good.” She released Kara’s hand, and smiled at the blonde again. Then she rose and explained that she needed to get back to work. She and Kara briefly hugged, and they promised to have lunch again next week.

Well. It’s a start at least. Lena took a brief second to gaze out her window, not quite sure how to explain the unease that had settled into her gut as Kara left. She gave it another few seconds of thought, before filing it away for later and buzzing Jess to come prep her for her 2:00 meeting.
Chapter Summary

Maybe Lena didn't need as much space as she thought, and maybe everyone is finally going to get the SuperCorp kissing that I know you all want :)

Chapter 11

There was nothing on the DEO’s radar that required Supergirl’s attention, so Kara found herself lounging on her couch after work, thinking about Lena. The Kryptonian was wearing a pair of dark blue sweatpants that matched the lettering on her favourite grey and blue National City University sweatshirt. She was working her way through a couple of boxes of pizza from the Italian place around the corner from her loft. And she wasn’t quite sure how to feel about her lunch with Lena. It certainly could have gone worse. Kara wouldn’t have blamed Lena at all if she hadn’t forgiven her. Heck, she didn’t even know for sure that Lena had believed her story about Barry’s coma. But she forgave her. And she likes me back!! Kara giggled to herself, then immediately got sad again. She remembered the hurt look on Lena’s face, and how unsure (but amused?) the she had appeared when Kara confessed her feelings. Kara hated lying to Lena, and that’s why she had bitten the bullet and admitted how she felt. That didn’t change the fact that she had lied about her absence and would continue to lie about Supergirl whenever she had to. It definitely didn’t change the pain she had caused Lena by disappearing without telling her, and then seemingly ignoring her for a week. Rao, and she likes me too—she must feel so betrayed.

As Kara began to spiral into doubt and self-accusation, she heard a knock at the door. She had been so lost in her own thoughts she hadn’t noticed the sound of someone get off the elevator. She jumped off the couch when she looked through the door and saw Lena standing there. The CEO looked gorgeous as always, but also … nervous? Suddenly Kara realized that she was floating above her couch, gawking at the door, and immediately crashed back to the floor, embarrassed even though no one could see her.

“I’ll be right there!” she shouted. Why is she here? Did she reconsider forgiving me? Is it all too much to handle for her? Does she not want to be my friend anymore? Crap! These thoughts raced through her mind as she padded slowly towards the door, already resigning herself to her fate.

She opened the door and feigned surprise. “Lena! What are you doing here? Is everything okay?” Kara closed the door behind Lena as the brunette walked in. She didn’t walk very far, and Kara nearly bumped into her as Lena turned back to face her. She was suddenly very aware of how close they were, and took a step back, resting her hand on one of the chairs around her dining table. There was a curious look on Lena’s face—not quite nervous, but something similar. “Kara …” she began, before trailing off into silence, clearly unsure of exactly how to phrase what was on her mind.

Kara’s anxiety over Lena’s reasons for coming over was only getting worse at that point. I thought she wanted space right now, but now she’s here just a few hours later? And why can’t she say anything?? Kara thought back to their earlier conversation, and she was again mortified at how embarrassingly awkward she had been, vomiting her feelings all over Lena. She had never felt so
vulnerable in her entire life than she did right then, with this gorgeous woman standing in her apartment, less than a foot away from her. Lena opened her mouth to speak again, then hesitated, again. At this point, the two women had been standing there wordlessly assessing each other for several minutes.

Out of nowhere, Lena’s face shifted decisively, from tentative to set. The blonde had no time to process the change because the brunette impetuously declared, “Oh fuck it!” Then she had closed the distance between them, taking Kara’s face into both hands, and leaned in slowly enough for Kara to register what was happening and stop it. But Kara didn’t stop it, and now Lena’s lips were on hers. Rao they’re soft. The kiss was gentle and a little unsure, but it somehow lit up every nerve in Kara’s body. As Lena pulled away, her pale green eyes looked deeply into Kara’s, questioningly. The blonde just stood there, stunned, her mouth wide open.

After what was probably only a few seconds, but felt like longer, Kara registered that Lena was hoping for some response. Suddenly she got nervous all over again. She tried to think of what she should say. Failing to come up with anything else that made sense to her brain, all she could get out was a soft, “Wow.” At this, Lena grinned, and now Kara was grinning too.

“Look, I meant everything I said this afternoon,” Lena started, ending Kara’s momentary relief from her nerves and anxiety. “But … well, I couldn’t stop thinking about you all afternoon. It was distracting as hell, even if only Jess noticed. I don’t know what this is, but I know that I’m not ready to put a name to it yet. I know that there’s more between us than just friend feelings. The chemistry is undeniable.” At this, Kara nodded emphatically, her head moving without her brain’s permission. She blushed, looked down momentarily, and then looked back at Lena as she continued. “I’m not ready for a relationship. I don’t think I could let you in like that if I wanted to right now. I do need time.”

Kara gulped, very confused at this point.

“But I just … I couldn’t go another day without knowing what it felt like to kiss you. To see how your face would react.” At this point, the CEO seemed to realize that Kara was floundering, completely unsure of what Lena was saying. She took Kara’s hand in an attempt to reassure her. “I’m not sure what I want right now, but I want to have this conversation eventually. No promises on when I’ll be ready for that, and you have every right not to take this any further in the meantime. But, if you’re amenable to it, I’d really like to go sit on your couch right now and just cuddle and watch television or a movie or something, and not talk about anything serious again for the rest of the night.” Lena raised her left eyebrow just slightly and looked at Kara from under her eyelashes as she softly teased, “And maybe try kissing each other one or two more times?”

Now Lena was looking at her with that questioning look in her eyes again. Kara felt completely overwhelmed, like her brain was underwater. She walked past Lena without having any conscious thought about doing so, and sat down on the couch. The brunette stayed where she was, waiting for Kara to say something. The Kryptonian distractedly lifted one hand to her chin as she tried to focus her thoughts and was surprised to feel the unmistakable shape of a smile across her face. Now was not the time for thought. She still felt astonished, but now that she had processed Lena’s words—she wants to cuddle with me?—her whole body was suddenly relaxed. Things were still uncertain, but she never imagined that the afternoon’s conversation would lead to Lena coming to her apartment and kissing her and … oh crap I still haven’t said anything!

Kara cleared her throat, trying not to be any more awkward. Then she steeled herself and looked straight at Lena. “Hey! Would you like to maybe come sit by me on the couch for a while?” She beamed at the brunette and tried to keep her face looking brave even as her insides had shifted firmly from numbness to tossing and turning. Lena looked Kara up and down, as if looking for
confirmation that this was, in fact, what Kara wanted. Then she smiled brightly, kicked off her heels, and sat down close enough to the blonde that their thighs were touching. Kara froze for a second, before relaxing into the woman next to her. She grabbed the nearest fuzzy blanket and draped it over their legs before asking the most important question of the night.

“So, are you all caught up on The Good Place?”

Over the next several weeks, Lena and Kara settled into a new routine. They returned to regular lunches, two or three times a week. Except that Lena was now much more open with her flirtation, and Kara only got flustered every third lunch date or so. On nights where Lena didn’t have to work late and Kara didn’t have to spend time with Alex, James, Winn, Maggie, some combination of that group, or friends from work, the two women would spend their time on Kara’s couch as the blonde exposed the brunette to her many television fandoms. Lena suspected that “friends from work” was code for Supergirl stuff, but Kara hadn’t come close to opening up about that yet. And as much as Lena found the reporter’s girlish obsession with television absolutely adorable and endearing, she wasn’t entirely disappointed when the cuddling led to hand-holding, which led to more … involved … cuddling, which eventually led to the couple making out almost as much as watching the TV.

Lena had even gotten into the habit of borrowing loungewear from Kara when she would come to the loft, which Kara had insisted on after the first time she noticed the CEO fidgeting in a particularly form-fitting pencil skirt on one of their Netflix and chill nights. (Kara had insisted on calling them that, and Lena found the taller woman’s smirk too precious to argue the point.) More often than not, the brunette insisted on taking Kara’s National City University sweatshirt, despite her protests that it was her favourite sweatshirt. Lena learned quickly that the best way to stop Kara’s protesting was through a kiss—although after the first few times Lena used this strategy, Kara became just as likely to kiss Lena back hungrily than she was to sit there dumbfounded by the lip lock.

As comfortable as the women were becoming with each other, they were both very careful to avoid any questions or discussions that could lead to a more serious conversation about what exactly they were doing. And there was an unspoken agreement between them that whatever it was, it was for them and only them. Other than Alex and Jess, no one knew that the two were good friends, much less that they were now spending at least one night a week giggling into kisses and playfully groping each other under blankets.

Lena felt happy. Genuinely happy, for the first time since well before Lex’s arrest. She knew she had absolutely been right that whatever there was between Kara and herself was special. She had dated as much as a semi-public figure living in the closet allowed her too, but it had never been like this. She would never tell anyone this, but she felt giddy literally every time Kara walked into a room.

And yet, there was a dark cloud hanging over all of it. The youngest Luthor couldn’t ignore it much longer. Kara’s lying and secrets still hadn’t been addressed, and they still very much bothered Lena. Enough that she knew there was no way that she could let their relationship grow into its full potential. It made her feel uneasy despite the joy that being close to Kara brought her. By indulging in their shared attraction despite the many secrets and walls between them, were they endangering any shot they might have had at something real in the future?

She needed to talk to Kara about it. She wouldn’t be able to keep ignoring it much longer, not without taking her frustrations out on her … friend? Is there even a word for what we are?
Friends with benefits is too shallow. Fuck, this is a mess. And she didn’t know how to have this conversation with the blonde. How could she be honest about her reservations without revealing that she knew Kara’s secret? It was really important to Lena that Kara make the decision to share her secret of her own volition. It continued to sting that this was something the Kryptonian refused to trust her with, and she knew that if she forced the issue and took that decision from Kara, they could never build something lasting together. Lena would always wonder.

She was currently working on a presentation for the Board, alone at her desk. The CEO paused for a moment, clearly distracted from her work—then a thought occurred to her. What if I make the conversation about my own insecurities? Confess to Kara that I have trouble letting people in, that trust isn’t something I give lightly. Maybe that will force her to think about her own reasons for not letting me in. At the very least, I can be honest with her that I can’t commit to a real relationship until I know that we can trust each other and that there won’t be secrets between us. Hopefully that will be the push she needs?

Lena felt simultaneously optimistic and uneasy at that last thought. But it was the best plan she had. She wanted so desperately to get this right. Determined to get back to work, she sent off a text to Kara.

[9:38 a.m.] Hey you ;) Can we hang out at your place tonight, maybe around 8? I want to talk to you about some stuff I’m feeling, and it’s really important to me. Let me know?

Lena showed up to Kara’s apartment promptly at 8. The two hadn’t sent any further texts after Kara responded that she would be sure that her evening was clear, and the brunette felt a little too much nervous anticipation as she knocked. Maybe I’m not the only one who is nervous, she thought as Kara immediately opened the door on Lena’s first knock. She was either waiting for me at the door, or she super sped there when she heard me coming. Lena smiled at Kara and leaned into kiss her briefly before following her into the loft.

The blonde led her to their regular spots on the couch, and Lena noticed that Kara had a couple of bottles of her favourite kombucha waiting. She sighed at her … friend’s thoughtfulness, feeling just a little bit more at ease. The two settled in on the couch, facing each other. Lena had stopped briefly by her apartment to change, so she was now wearing a pair of deep forest green jeans, with a silky grey v-neck and simple black flats. Her thin black leather jacket had been left on Kara’s kitchen table. Kara probably wasn’t aware of it, but Lena’s most beloved version of the blonde was in her loungewear—tonight, Kara was wearing a pair of fitted heather off-white joggers and a looser long-sleeved navy top with the phrase “Power to the Girls” on the front. She had her right leg pulled up sideways on the couch, leaving her shin pressed firmly against Lena’s left knee. Her feet were bare, and Lena loved the shade of seafoam that the blonde had painted her toenails. One more little hint that Kara was Supergirl that Lena had picked up on: the woman absolutely loved having her toenails painted in bright colors, but her fingernails were never painted. Couldn’t have anyone notice that Supergirl and Kara Danvers are wearing the same nail polish, now can we? Lena kept the smirk off of her face at this thought and reached down to pick up her kombucha.

“So, what did you want to talk about?” Kara asked with a smile. Lena was a little taken aback by her willingness to just jump into it, but the question actually made her feel that much more collected and ready for this conversation.

“Well. We’ve been doing … whatever this is for over a month now. And that first night I kissed you, I made it very clear that I still had some issues and that I wasn’t ready to really talk in depth about our feelings. Since then, things have been wonderful, Kara, truly just delightful. You make
me happier than I’ve been in a long time. What’s more, I really appreciate that you’ve given me the space to just enjoy this. You haven’t pushed me to have any more serious conversation, even though I’m sure that has been hard on you.”

Kara grinned a little at this and bobbed her head from side to side as if to say, “I suppose so, but I’m okay with it.” Lena smiled back at her and asked, “So I guess first of all, I’m just wondering how you’re feeling about, well, us.”

She guessed the question caught Kara off guard, at least a little. The blonde drew in on herself just a little, but then Lena reached her left arm, which was resting on the back of the couch, out just enough that she could gently brush her fingers along Kara’s right bicep. She relaxed a little under Lena’s touch, and looked back up at the brunette, pausing ever so slightly on her lips before shifting her gaze all the way up to her eyes.

“Lena, I’m over the moon about us. I’ve had a crush on you for a while now, but the past month has been more than I could’ve imagined. Sure, I’m a little confused about what we’re doing or what our future might look like, but I’m more than content with just getting to spend quality alone time with you, for now. It’s clear that you want to talk about something, and I’m here for it. Just know that I’m not going to push you any further than you want to go, and I’m just as happy as you are with how things are going with us right now.”

Lena was smiling again, which wasn’t exactly a rare occurrence when she was with Kara. She took Kara’s right hand into both of hers and lifted in to her lips, pressing a delicate kiss on the back of her hand before holding it gently in her own lap. “That means a lot to me, you know?” Kara nodded just enough to respond to Lena’s question, before the brunette continued. “I’m just … ready to talk about us and what this relationship could potentially be. I was really hurt that you disappeared on me, but you’ve been nothing but good to me since. There’s just … some things you need to know about me.”

“You can trust me with anything, Lena.” That threw the brunette off just slightly, but she tried to mask the considerable doubt Kara’s statement brought up in her mind.

“I don’t want to hurt you. But I can’t keep doing this,” Lena gestured with her right index finger, back and forth between them, “without having an honest conversation about a few things. First, I’m a Luthor. That comes with a lot of power and privilege, but it also means that I grew up in a family where outward appearances and proper manners were more important than being honest about your feelings. I have … well let’s just say that it’s not exactly easy for me to let people in.” Kara turned her hand over in Lena’s, grabbing on and rubbing her thumb softly over the inside of Lena’s index finger.

“I really like you, but dating me isn’t easy. I’m aware of that. And you should know what you’re getting yourself into. I’m not ready to make any kind of commitment to anything more serious than what we’re doing now until I feel comfortable—until I know I can trust you.”

Kara’s face darkened at that, and Lena leaned in, quick to try and comfort her. “No, I don’t mean. Kara, really, I’m not trying to hurt you. My trust issues are my own. I just … it could take a while, and you deserve to know that. My entire life has been full of secrets and lies and things left unsaid, and you’re special. I don’t want my past to affect any possible future you and I might have.” Lena left unsaid the rest of it, that Kara’s own secrets and lies were also a stumbling block for the brunette. But her words had clearly affected the blonde, whose eyes were still on Lena but whose head was clearly wrapped up in thought.

Her first words were tentative. “Lena … this is the first relationship of any kind that I’ve really been in. I’ve never really done the whole dating thing, if you can believe that.” Kara chuckled,
with only the slightest note of bitterness. “This is all new to me, and yeah, it’s really confusing sometimes. I don’t know what I’m doing, and sometimes I feel like I have no idea what you see in me. But I do know that I care about you. That I’ve never felt like this about someone.” She looked down at her hands in her lap, seemingly embarrassed to admit her inexperience to Lena. The brunette reached back over, just briefly, to tap her index finger against Kara’s hands, which were wound tightly together. The gesture was meant to say, “hey, it’s okay, you’re okay, just talk to me.”

Kara got the message and continued. “Yeah, I feel lost sometimes, overwhelmed by whatever this is. But it’s wonderful—you’re wonderful! I’m so happy that we’re doing this.” The blonde rolled her eyes and shrugged, wordlessly conceding that she was aware she was slipping into her typical effusive bubbly rambling. “But you know, I already told you that I’m not trying to rush you into anything. I want nothing more than to prove worthy of you opening up to me. I’m sorry for whatever your mother put you through growing up, and I wish I could take away whatever pain or troubles that still causes you today. I just … I will be here for you. There’s no rush to jump into anything serious, so long as you keep talking to me about it.” Lena sensed a touch of hesitation in that last sentence, but Kara was smiling at her confidently again.

Taking in that bright smile, Lena couldn’t help but question how Kara could honestly expect that she couldn’t see through her disguise. Like Lena, admittedly a brilliant young mind, wouldn’t recognize that National City’s larger than life hero—who has now dropped by L-Corp more than a few times—shared the same gorgeous face as her make out partner Kara Danvers? Honestly, no glasses, however cute, could possibly mask those eyes—Lena could lose herself in the blue ocean of Kara’s eyes, regardless whether they were framed by a pair of glasses or waves of perfectly curled blonde hair. She almost smirked at the thought, but then Kara was talking to her again.

“I mean, what would your fancy business friends think if they found out the mighty Lena Luthor was dating some nobody reporter?” Kara’s face betrayed the tiniest bit of mischief, and now this was something else Lena could jump on to explain her own qualms about entering into a serious relationship with the Kryptonian.

Yeah … and that’s something else. I’m not out, not publicly anyway. But if you and I do get serious, I would never ever want to hide you. You’re not some nobody reporter; you’re Kara Danvers. You’re one of the loveliest people I’ve ever known. I would never be ashamed to be with you.” Even Lena was a little surprised at the steel in her own voice, the passion. *I really do care about her, more than maybe I’m willing to tell myself.* “But even though I don’t care if the general public knows I’m gay, it’s a whole different story when it comes to my mother. She has made it very clear that she disapproves, and it is equally clear that she is dangerous. Even if you and decided we were ready for something more serious, I cannot put you in danger. I’m not putting that target on your back until I know Lillian is locked up every bit as securely as Lex is.”

That made a definite impression on the blonde. Her expression told Lena that she understood the gravity of the situation with Lillian. She swallowed, and then surprised Lena. “That actually works for me too, right now,” Kara offered. She paused, then clarified, “I haven’t told anyone about us, but I want so badly to be able to talk to Alex about this. It hurts me not to be able to talk about this wonderful new thing in my life.”

Noticing the guilty look that flashed across Lena’s eyes, Kara cautioned, “No! No. Not your fault Lena. It’s just … before any of this, I told Alex that I had a crush on you. She had been bugging me to try to figure out who I had a crush on for a while, and when I decided that I was finally ready to tell you how I felt, it was important to me to discuss it with Alex first.”

Lena had an idea what happened when Kara told Alex, and a painful stab of sympathy for Kara
rushed through her chest. “She uhhh, she didn’t handle it well. I don’t want to give you the wrong impression of Alex—I love her. She is the best person I know. She will always be a huge part of my life. And I promise that her reservations aren’t about your last name. … That’s not her biggest concern anyway. I think if she just had a chance to get to know the real you, she’ll see why I care about you so much. But I’m not ready to have that conversation with her yet.”

Lena was sure that Agent Danvers’ problem with her had more to do with protecting Kara’s secret identity than anything else, but obviously Kara wasn’t going to tell her that. But she was relieved that they were on the same page.

“So … how about this?” Lena began. “You and I are obviously more than friends. We’re … let’s just say we’re dating, yeah?” Kara nodded enthusiastically, and Lena went on. “We just aren’t telling anyone about it yet. There’s no reason not to take our time, get more comfortable with each other, and see if the walls start to come down a little. I can’t promise it won’t be difficult, but it sounds like you’re on board. My mother’s trial is coming up. Let’s keep doing what we’re doing, now that the cloud of this conversation isn’t hanging over us, and then once I’m sure Lillian isn’t a threat anymore, we can decide for ourselves what our future looks like.”

Her head continued to face downwards towards her lap, but her eyes lifted to focus on Kara’s midway through her speech. She didn’t bother to hide the vulnerability she was feeling. The blonde reached over and pulled Lena into a firm hug. She enjoyed the feeling of Kara’s powerful arms around her, the faint smell of her shampoo washing over her. Lena relaxed again, then they pulled apart slowly.

“That sounds like a great plan! And in the meantime, you should kiss me a bunch before you finish off that kombucha.” Kara giggled at her own boldness, and Lena rewarded it by leaning in slowly, eyes firmly fixed on the blonde’s grinning lips. She moved in for the kiss slowly enough to tease Kara, who impetuously closed the rest of the distance and locked her lips around Lena’s.

The brunette leaned back ever so slightly, as if to tease Kara further, but she only took the moment to whisper provocatively, “Well if you insist,” before pressing Kara back onto the arm of the couch. She caught the Kryptonian off guard, and Lena was immediately straddling her, pressing down to wrap Kara up in a much steamier kiss, her tongue tracing the inside of her lips. The blonde gasped into Lena’s mouth before wrapping her arms around the brunette’s waist and returning her passion. The two spent the rest of the evening wrapped up in each other, oblivious to the world around them.
I took the first 7 minutes or so of "The Luthors" and made it into a chapter. Kara struggles with not telling Alex about Lena. Then she tries to help Lena relax during Lillian's trial.

Chapter 12

It had been a couple of weeks since their talk, and secretly dating Lena Luthor was surprisingly amazing. She had thought it would be harder to have this huge part of her life that she couldn’t share with her friends and family, but at this point, Kara realized that she had gotten used to compartmentalizing her life to an extent.

That it was easy for her to keep this secret did not make it easy for her to emotionally handle doing so. Especially tonight. Her whole friend group had gathered to that Alex could officially introduce everyone to her girlfriend. Kara couldn’t help but feel a pang as she looked around the table at her closest friends speculated about the guy (seriously James and Winn? Heteronormativity much?) who had captured the attention of Alex Danvers. As much as she loved how things were going with Lena, some part of her wished she could be making the same sort of introductions soon.

She meant what she said to Lena; she doesn’t want to rush anything, and it was super important to her that Lena feel comfortable. She couldn’t begin to imagine what hell it must have been to be raised by Lillian Luthor. And she couldn’t help but feel like someone of Lena’s trust issues were her fault too. Every time Kara had to lie to Lena to further her secret identity, her heart broke a little more. She hated it. Some of her lies had been pretty weak, especially early on, and Lena was brilliant. The blonde hated herself, because she was sure that Lena knew she was hiding something big. Of course she can’t let me in. There’s no way she believes that I trust her. I wouldn’t want to be my girlfriend either.

Kara’s mental train of self-condemnation was suddenly halted as she noticed Alex coming into the bar with Maggie in tow. Alex was practically glowing—in fact, both of them looked like they were floating on air. Kara could see that Maggie was still a little nervous though. Still, the new couple made a beeline for the group, and then Alex was introducing everyone to Maggie. Shockingly, Mon-El had the best reaction. Neither James nor Winn could hide their surprise, but Mon-El was surprised for a different reason. Realizing that the big announcement Alex had been nervous about was that she has a girlfriend, he blurted out in confusion, “Oh, that was the thing? Is that like a problem here on Earth?” Daxam might be a slave-holding hellhole controlled by elitist dictatorial monsters, but at least they had no problem with a wide variety of sexualities.

Alex’s arrival only added to Kara’s dark and stormy demeanor. As much as she hated lying to Lena about Supergirl, she hated not being able to talk to Alex about Lena even more. There had been a distance between the sisters ever since their fight about Lena. They had never gone this long without addressing a problem between them. But Kara guessed it wasn’t surprising—they were both distracted by a new lady in their lives after all. The difference was that Alex could talk to Kara about Maggie.
Watching Alex and Maggie hanging out, chatting with J’onn, Winn, and James, Kara felt overcome with longing for the close relationship she and Alex had always had. She missed her sister. Her stomach was in knots—she couldn’t believe that they had let themselves grow distant like this, but she also felt strongly that she couldn’t trust Alex to be reasonable about her feelings for Lena. Even as she grinned a little at Winn’s nervous insistence to Maggie that he knew how to play pool, her focus was on the news playing on the TV behind the bar. The top story throughout National City was the first day of Lillian Luthor’s trial. Lena had wanted to be alone last night, and all Kara wanted to do was be able to talk to Alex about how nervous she was about the trial. But she couldn’t trust Alex not to blow up at her again if she brought up Lena.

She noticed that James had followed her over to where she was standing, stopping just behind her and to her right. The stood there in silence for a few seconds, before he spoke. “I noticed you’re pretty withdrawn tonight. Is there anything you need to talk about?” Kara’s head snapped towards James in surprise at his concern, but she caught herself and looked back towards the TV.

“James, please don’t take this the wrong way, but ever since … you know … you haven’t exactly been eager to check in on how I’m doing. Why are you suddenly interested?” She hoped that didn’t sound too mean, but James had absolutely been much more distant since Kara broke up with him. Before she knew any better, Kara would’ve blamed it on the added workload of being the interim CEO at CatCo, but she knew he wasn’t exactly throwing himself into that job. Things between the two had been even icier since Kara found out that James was moonlighting as the costumed vigilante Guardian, constantly putting himself and Winn in unnecessary danger while lying to Kara about it. So yeah, she was surprised that he was suddenly concerned about her feelings.

Sensing her standoffishness, James took a breath before trying again. “Kara, I’m sorry. I know you don’t approve of Guardian. And I know that I haven’t been the best friend since you decided you didn’t want to date me anymore. We can talk about that sometime if you like, but I think you’ve got something else in your mind.”

Kara considered that for a moment, thinking about what to say. Obviously, she couldn’t talk to James, of all people, about Lena, but it would be helpful just to talk to someone—anyone—about her issues with Alex. And maybe she missed her old friendship with James. So she let him in, just a little.

“Alex and I had a fight a while back, and there’s been some distance between us ever since. I’ve got a lot going on in my life that I don’t want to get into right now, but it is so hard not being able to lean on her like I usually do. And now with Maggie, she has less time than ever to hang out with her sister. Not that I don’t love Maggie! Ugh and now I’m rambling, as usual.” She cut herself off with a “hmph,” and kept her focus on the news.

“Kara, I’m sorry. I know how important Alex is to you. But I also know what kind of bond you two have. Whatever it is that’s between you, it won’t be there forever. She’s going through something new and exciting, and I’m sure that has a lot of her attention right now. But that won’t last forever either. You and Alex will be fine. We may not be as close as we used to be, but even I know that.”

Kara turned towards James this time, the faintest smile across her face. “Thanks James, that actually helps.” She took a step back so that they were standing side-by-side. A few moments passed in not-unpleasant silence, before the news program shifted from Lillian Luthor to the attendance and testimony of her daughter. Seeing Lena’s face on the screen, Kara’s body tensed ever so slightly. Without thinking too hard about it, she confided her thoughts to James. “Oh, what an awful thing to have to do.”
“Well, the Luthors have never shied away from doing awful things.”

The blonde shot him a stern side eye before retorting, “Yeah, but she’s not like them. She knows Lillian is evil. She’s doing the right thing.” Like she always does, Kara leaves off. “What Lena did was brave.”

Kara could tell James wasn’t willing to give the youngest Luthor the benefit of the doubt, and rather than start shouting at him, she walked back to their table to check her phone. The first thing she saw was a text message from the woman in question, sent about 10 minutes prior.

[9:03 p.m.] Kara. I really need you. Can you come keep me company right now? I’m still at the office.

The blonde knew that it wasn’t like her … more-than-a-friend to be this open about her own vulnerability and need, so she responded with a very quick “Be right there!” as she walked quickly out the door.

Kara had probably arrived a little too quickly to not be suspicious, especially given that she brought Lena donuts, but she was too worried not to care. She was surprised to see Jess was still there so late, but probably she shouldn’t have been surprised. Jess seemed to be expecting her and opened the door to Lena’s office.

The brunette was watching the news herself, but Kara could see the relief on her face when she walked in. Kara paused just long enough to appreciate the view, before walking over to wrap Lena up in a hug.

“This felt like a night for fried sugary goodness. You eat donuts, okay?” Kara made sure her tone made it clear that the question was rhetorical and there was no actual question whether she expected Lena to share in the donuts. Lena took the bag as they walked over to her couch. “So, was it awful?”

“It actually felt good to testify. I got to say my piece, even if I didn’t quite wipe the smug look off Lillian’s face like I had hoped. I think I’m finally starting to distance myself from the Luthor name. Or I did, until I got back here to twelve calls from her lawyers.” Kara sighed before Lena continued, “Yeah, she wants to see me.”

“What do you think she wants?”

“Probably to tell me that my outfit in court was horrible and that I need a makeover?” Lena joked through a mouthful of donut. The blonde was pretty sure that she was the only one who saw this goofier, less refined side of the CEO. Kara loved that Lena was holding onto her humour, even though she could see the weight of the stress the brunette was carrying. “I don’t know, and I don’t care.” Lena sighed before lamenting, wryly, “I just thought I was done with her, that I had finally shut the door on being a Luthor, but there she was on my damn phone sheet again.”

“Twelve times…”

“You don’t think I should feel guilty for not wanting to go see that monster, right?” Kara scooted her butt over until she was right next to Lena and placed her free arm around her. “Of course not! Screw her; you don’t owe her anything. But I don’t think you should make it about her. Do you think you would find peace of mind by visiting her and telling her how you feel?”
Lena was looking down at the half-eaten donut she was picking at. She responded much more softly, “I don’t know if there’s any fucking point, darling. She’s been the same way since the day I met her. Besides, I know my mother, and the only reason she wants to talk to me is to try to manipulate me. That’s the only reason she ever talks to me.”

Kara pulled Lena closer and kissed the top of her head. Her heart ached at the pain in the brunette’s voice. This was the first time Lena had ever really opened up about Lillian, and the blonde was surprised to discover that her opinion of Lillian had not already reached rock bottom before now. She had to focus on the amazing woman in her arms to keep her thoughts from turning violent.

“I’m not here to tell you how to deal with your mother. In a few days, she’ll be convicted and sentenced, and you’ll never have to see her again. I’m here for you. If you think you might be able to get some closure, or hell, if you just want to yell at her while she’s a captive audience, go for it. If you’d rather ignore her, and not give her the satisfaction, that’s great too. What do you want?”

Lena finished the last bite of the donut and looked out towards her balcony, thinking. “I can’t pretend I’m not curious what last ploy the bitch has up her sleeve. I guess I’ll go see her. No promises that I’ll be civil though.” Kara chuckled at this and gently turned the brunette so that she was facing away from Kara.

“Well now that that’s decided, I need you to relax tonight.” Before Lena could argue, the blonde had her hands wrapped firmly around her shoulders. “Close your eyes and enjoy this. Or else.” Kara loved the feel of Lena’s shoulders under her hands, loved the sensation of her stress very slowly, but surely, being worked out under Kara’s tender grip. Years of practice on Alex has allowed Kara to perfect the fine motor control necessary to really work a person's muscles to create relief and pleasure rather than bruising and/or broken bones.

“Let me tell you a story. And I’m only telling you this because you clearly need a treat. You’re not allowed to make fun of me for more than five minutes.” Lena’s only response was a slight murmur of acknowledgement that slid into a pleasant moan as Kara hit a tender spot below her neck. “Okay. So. Do you remember Mike? The exasperating intern you met that one time at CatCo? Well he’s not an intern anymore. Because he was terrible, at basically everything. Anyway, somehow he’s managed to … umm … hang around my friend group. Somehow. Don’t ask. And yes, I’m getting to the funny part. Or the part that I’m sure you will find funny. It’s really not funny at all.

Kara paused to appreciate the warmth of Lena’s skin as Kara worked her hand up the back of her neck. The brunette practically purred under her touch. This is going better than I expected; Lena must have been really stressed out.

“So then last week he and James were both being particularly insufferable when we were … you know, uh hanging out. Oh! At game night! Yeah, they were just so annoying. In boy ways. Yeah. And then the next day. Mo-Mike has the nerve to show up outside my apartment, waiting for me to get home from work. And I could already tell where that was going.” Lena giggled, not loud enough for Kara to hear it, but she could feel the gentle bouncing of the brunette’s body.

“Hush, you. At least let me get through it before you start laughing. So, I invited him in, and it was clear that he was nervous about something. Meanwhile I just wanted him to hurry up, so I could have the rest of my night to myself. He kept rambling about how blue my eyes were, and clearly didn’t get the hint from me taking off my glasses pressing my hand to my head in frustration. So then he said he cared about me and then just looked at me expectantly, like he
thought I was just going to proclaim my love for him. Meanwhile, I was struggling just to keep my face from showing how grossed out I was. The best I could manage was telling him that I didn’t care about him like that, and then he just started stammering apologies and trying to play cool. Lena, he literally told me ‘good talk’ and insisted that I high five him. And he’s been awkward ever since then.”

As Kara finished the story, Lena reached back and took Kara’s hands in her own. She then turned around to face Kara, with a distinctively rogish grin on her face. “So, you’re telling me that a frat boy has a crush on you?” Lena wagged her eyebrows at the blonde, pursing her lips in mockery. Kara couldn’t stop herself from laughing at the brunette’s antics, but gently (very gently) punched her in the arm.

“Shut up! I can’t control his weird feelings. It makes no sense to me—half the time, he’s beyond rude and patronizing. I can’t even imagine what gave him the idea that I might be interested—hey!!” Kara cried out as Lena poked her playfully in the side. “Not fair!” Then Kara reached both hands out to delicately tickle Lena just above her hips.

Lena shrieked and jumped up from the couch, and Kara chased her. When she caught the brunette halfway between the couch and the desk, she simply pulled her around and wrapped her up in a deep, passionate kiss. Tickling forgotten, Lena melted into her as she kissed back. They pulled away just enough to rest their heads on each other’s shoulders, holding each other firmly for several minutes. In that moment, Kara felt as if they were one being, two souls breathing in unison. She didn’t want the moment to end, but eventually Lena sighed and began to loosen her grip on Kara.

A thought popped into the Kryptonian’s head. “You’re sleeping at my place tonight. I insist.” Lena’s head sprung up, and she raised her eyebrows in a sultry question. “No, no, get your head out of the gutter. I just … I don’t want you to be alone tonight, okay?”

“Well, I guess if I must. Spending all night comfortably cuddled up next to my gir---umm. Next to you. Sounds just terrible.” Lena’s snark was completely undermined by her slip up, and Kara wasn’t so naïve that she didn’t know Lena almost called her “girlfriend.” Instead of lighting up the entire room with the sheer joy she felt at the not-quite-spoken word, Kara restrained herself to a knowing grin. I’ll let it go for now. Lena needs to relax.

“Yeah, yeah you just hate spending time with me. I’m making you come with me regardless, but if you keep this up, I’ll make you sleep on the couch.”

Lena stood up very straight and teased, “Yes, ma’am.” Kara wrapped her arm around Lena’s waist, and waited for the brunette to grab her purse before walking them towards the door. “I really can’t believe you haven’t made Jess go home already.”

Lena snorted. “Yeah okay, I’ll let you try to make her next time. See how successful you are with that.”

As they walked out the door, Kara fixed Jess with her most stern gaze. “Jess, I’m taking Ms. Luthor home now. You better go home too. You should have gone home hours ago.” Jess looked properly scolded at this, then winked at Lena as Kara turned her head toward the elevator.

“Yes, Ms. Danvers,” Jess retorted, in her snarkiest possible voice.

They stopped by Lena’s place so that she could grab a change of clothes and an overnight bag. Once they got to Kara’s loft, they didn’t do much more than change, wash their faces, brush their
teeth, and get in bed. Lena insisted that Kara use the bathroom first, so Kara was already cuddled under the covers in her tank top and silk boxer shorts when Lena stepped out of the bathroom. Kara’s brain froze as she looked over at the brunette. Lena’s sleepwear was similar to Kara’s but like a thousand times sexier. The blonde forgot how to breathe for a few seconds, as she unashamedly took Lena in. She was wearing nothing but a thin grey camisole and black lace underwear. And she was clearly enjoying how captivated Kara was by the view.

But what was Kara supposed to do, other than stare? *Rao, I’ve seen Lena’s legs before. But they were just so … leggy! And sleek and powerful and smooth and radiant, and oh no oh no how am I supposed to just sleep and not do anything else? Has Lena always been this … sexy?*

Neither woman spoke. Lena sauntered to the bed slowly, clearly savoring the adoring look in Kara’s eyes. She slipped into bed like nothing had happened and looked innocently at the blonde. “Ready to go to sleep, darling?”

Kara stammered over her words and had almost no idea what she was trying to say. She knew that Lena needed to rest, but everything in her was screaming for a more strenuous activity. The blonde sighed, collected herself, and shot Lena a look of exasperation. “Lena, that was very rude. You are, like, way too sexy.”

“Oh really? You think so? You sure you just wanna sleep tonight?”

“Leeeena! Stop trying to seduce me. I promise that you can seduce me later, but tonight you need to rest.” Suddenly Kara realized that Lena had just been teasing her, as the brunette grinned at her and then turned and shifted back against Kara, pulling the blonde’s arms around her waist. Kara smiled into Lena’s hair as she held her tight, and before she knew it, she was asleep.
I'll Find You

Chapter Summary

Lillian frames Lena for her escape, and everyone turns on Lena. Kara does not handle it well.

Chapter 13

The darkness in the inside of the van seemed fitting for the situation Lena found herself in. She was still wearing her dark prison uniform, though she now had a warm coat over it. She hadn’t moved or said anything since Metallo shoved her into the back of the van. This was the closest to falling apart she had felt in a very long time. Her face was pulled tight with fear and anger—the only measure of control she maintained was that she refused to let the tears come. She wouldn’t give that bitch the satisfaction.

Driving along at night with no clue where she was being taken, Lena allowed herself to ponder how she had gotten here. Going to visit Lillian before the next day of the trial had been a mistake. Lena had known that its only purpose was to manipulate her, and she had let herself be drawn in anyway. Now her mother had framed her for breaking the elder Luthor and her mindless henchman out of prison and convinced the whole world that she was part of Cadmus. Everyone but Kara. She held onto the hope that her paramour would not stop until she found Lena. She just had to stay alive long enough for Supergirl to rescue her.

Lena’s conversation with Lillian before the trial had left her feeling uneasy, but the full extent of the shit her mother had planned for her didn’t sink in until Detective Sawyer showed up to arrest her. Kara had been there, ostensibly to get a quote for CatCo but really there just to comfort Lena. Probably she was also trying to protect Lena in case Lillian came after her. Then Maggie showed up with doctored footage that showed her removing synthetic kryptonite from a safe at L-Corp—kryptonite that had somehow next turned up in the chest of John Corben as he and Lillian escaped from the courthouse—and told her she was under arrest. Lena had protested; the footage was doctored, L-Corp didn’t even have kryptonite on the premises, synthetic or not, and Lena was sure her mother was trying to frame her. She understood, however, that Maggie was just doing her job, and allowed herself to be taken away. Lena had fixed Kara with a very firm look as Maggie handcuffed her, emphatically telling the reporter that it was okay and she absolutely should not interfere. She couldn’t have Supergirl accidentally outing herself to the NCPD because her emotions got the better of her in the moment.

She hadn’t seen Kara again until Supergirl showed up at the jail just as Metallo was attempting to break Lena out. Supergirl had fought so hard to protect her, and Lena had been so terrified for Kara. This was exactly why she had worked so hard to keep the hero out of her efforts to take down Lillian—her biggest fear was always that Lillian would hurt or even kill Supergirl, if given the chance. She could tell that the synthetic kryptonite her mother had developed for Metallo was somehow unstable, and that frightened her even more. She had no idea the effect it could have on Kara. The two women only briefly locked eyes before Metallo hit her full in the chest with his kryptonite beam. Supergirl had been weakened and disoriented, but not quite unconscious, as Metallo dragged the brunette away. A fresh wave of anger washed over her as she thought about how vulnerable Kara had looked.
They had been driving for a good thirty minutes when Lillian got out of the passenger seat and moved to the back of the van to sit across from her adopted daughter. Lena breathed in deeply, taking control of her emotions and fixing her face into a cold, expressionless mask. She was determined not to give her mother anything with which to manipulate her further.

“You’re still angry I had Metallo liberate you from that jail.”

“Of course I’m angry!” Lena spat, refusing to look at Lillian. “This was your plan all along, wasn’t it? Convince the world that I’m with you, so that I have nowhere else to turn. No other option than to join you.”

Lillian wasn’t even phased. “Even if they found out the truth about you, no one would change their mind. The public wants to believe the narrative that they expect from us, that Luthors are evil.” I can’t imagine why people would think that, Lena scoffed mentally. Her mother continued, “We don’t get second chances. Look at what they did to Lex! He could have fixed this planet for generations, but Superman twisted what he was doing and they all turned on him.”

This time Lena couldn’t keep her thoughts to herself. “Lex was insane.”

“Exactly.” The head of Cadmus didn’t even skip a beat, rolling with Lena’s outburst and insinuating it back into her attempted manipulation. “If they could take the brightest mind on Earth and drive him crazy defending himself, imagine what they could do to you.”

“You can’t convince me to join you. I’m innocent, and I’ll prove it.”

“How? You have no life anymore, Lena; you have no one on your side. You’re guilty, just like me. You’re on the run, just like me. Join Cadmus. And together we can do all the great things you ever dreamed of. And with no Luthor men to divide us, I can finally be the mother you always wanted. Because I do love you. Let me prove it to you now.”

This was the last straw. Lena was done playing her cards close to the chest, done pretending to be the meek daughter. Something inside of her snapped, and she turned to face Lillian, anger and pain all over her face in equal measure. “Fuck Cadmus!” she shouted. “You may have poisoned Lex, but I am not some genocidal xenophobe. I’m done playing your games. I’m done holding my tongue. I’m done being a goddamn Luthor. You have never loved me. You’ve never even known me. I was always a pawn to you. A pretty face. A brilliant mind to be controlled in service of yours and Lex’s agenda. Fuck all of that. I never trusted you, even before I discovered the depths of your evil. If you really think you had any shot of indoctrinating me into Cadmus, you’re every bit as deranged as you made Lex.”

Lillian’s façade broke for just a moment, and Lena could see the cold fury lying beneath the surface. Then that controlled smirk was back, and the older woman shrugged as if Lena’s anger was irrelevant. “We’ll see about that.”

Kara felt lost and alone. That morning she had woken up with Lena in her arms, and now the entire world had turned against the youngest Luthor. Even her closest friends and family. She was at the DEO, maybe an hour after Metallo abducted Lena from her cell. Supergirl had flown an unconscious Guardian back to the DEO, and now Alex was stitching James up. Kara hadn’t bothered to change out of her Supergirl uniform, and she was pacing back and forth in the med bay, arguing with James, Winn, and J’onn. The atmosphere was tense, as everyone could see how agitated Kara was.
“His kryptonite isn’t right,” James offered. “I think it’s hurting him.”

Alex, who was applying a healing agent to the kryptonite burn on James’ left shoulder, noted that he was lucky he didn’t take a direct hit. “Very lucky,” Kara snapped, cognizant of the fact that she had actually suffered a direct hit, and yet she had been the one to carry James out of the jail. This is exactly why she disapproved of the Guardian.

James, however, wasn’t taking any of it seriously. “I had my shield. I love my shield,” he offered cheerfully. Kara stopped in her tracks and glared at him, failing to mask any of the contempt welling up inside her. She just happened to have come to a stop right next to that same shield, resting on a nearby table. Her fingers began tapping the edge of the shield as she forced the conversation back to her number one priority: saving Lena.

“Even if Metallo’s weakening, he is still a fanatic follower of Lillian Luthor. We have to find out where he’s taken Lena and help her.”

“What is it going to take for you to figure out that Lena is a criminal? She’s not the victim. She got the kryptonite. He broke her out of prison.” This again. Kara had already had this argument with James earlier at CatCo—he had made it very clear what he thought of Lena, and Kara was this close to punching him in the throat over it.

“Lena’s not a member of Cadmus! She’s not!” Almost everyone seemed to wince slightly at how angry she sounded. Her tapping on the Guardian shield increased as she launched into a full-throated defense of the youngest Luthor. “She stopped the gang with alien weapons.” Winn’s face lit up just slightly, probably as he remembered helping Lena overcome a tiny flaw in her device that night. “She saved Alex’s life when Corben tried to kill her.” Alex’s face was much harder to decipher, but it wasn’t like Kara didn’t already know what Alex thought of Lena.

James, whether stupidly or bravely, argued back at Kara in a frustratingly patronizing tone. “She shot Corben, and then her crazy mom turned Corben into Metallo. So that could have been the plan the entire time.”

Now J’onn weighed in, and Kara’s heart fell out of her chest. “We have to start treating Lena Luthor like a hostile. The evidence is too overwhelming.”

“Of course the evidence is overwhelming!! Lillian is an evil genius—she isn’t going to half-ass her framing of Lena. Lena only visited Lillian this morning at Lillian’s request, and even then, she wasn’t sure she wanted to go. This is all a set up!” Kara was dangerously close to revealing how much she cared about Lena, as well as the fact that they spent the night together, but part of her didn’t care. “Winn?” she whispered plaintively, unable to disguise the fear in her eyes as she looked over at her friend. “If you watch that video, I know you’ll find something.”

Winn hesitated, not wanting to let Kara down. “I did. It’s … It’s clean, Kara.”

“Then find something to prove her innocent!”

“Everything we’ve seen so far says the exact opposite.” J’onn’s tone was meant to be soothing, but it had the reverse effect on the blonde. She reacted without thinking, and her fist came down hard on James’ shield, tearing through it like paper and completely warping the table it was resting on. The entire room gawked at the superhero, stunned and a little afraid.

Kara took a breath, closing her eyes to collect herself as much as possible. “Lena is my … friend.” Her voice was softer, but no less fervent. “And I believe in her.” She turned and walked out of the room before she could do anymore damage. It was clear that she wasn’t convincing anyone of the
truth right now.

As she stalked off, she heard James come after her. Which was one of the stupidest things the former photographer had ever done. “I’m your friend,” he emphasized. “Which is why I don’t understand why it’s so hard for you to believe me.”

“We are not friends, James! We haven’t been since I ended things between us. You got all distant, and now we butt heads about everything. I don’t understand why it would be hard for you to understand why I don’t believe you.”

James looked down, seemingly a little intimidated by the virulence with which she responded, but he continued. “People don’t remember this, Kara, but Clark and Lex used to be best friends.” She grunted in frustration, but he kept going. “For years! And Clark believed in Lex for the longest time. No matter what people said, no matter what kind of proof he saw with his own eyes. No. Lex was his friend. But Clark was wrong.”

Kara immediately cut him off. “Lena is not Lex!”

“But they grew up in the same house, Kara. I don’t understand why you keep defending her. And you have so much faith in her, but none in me, as Guardian.”

Kara’s insides were filled with white hot rage now. “I’m defending her because she’s innocent! And I believe in her because she is doing tremendous good in the world with the natural gifts and abilities she was born with, not throwing herself in the dangerous world of vigilantism because of ego and a childish desire to ‘be a hero.’” Lena is more a hero than the Guardian will ever be!”

She could feel her eyes heating up, and she quickly turned and shut them. “James, you need to leave me alone right now, before you get yourself hurt. I’m done having this argument with you.”

He turned and left quickly, having finally realized that Kara was barely holding it together right now. She stalked off to find something to hit.

Supergirl had found a couple of hefty reinforced steel and concrete blocks in the basement training room that were nearly as tall as she was, and she was taking out all her fury on them. Punch by punch, she thought of every person she felt betrayed by today. First there was Maggie, who had arrested Lena based solely on video footage anonymously sent to the NCPD. She was just doing her job, Lena had made that very clear as she was escorted out, but Kara had wanted to stop her. She had nearly blocked their exit, but Lena had stopped her. Good thing too, as any confrontation probably would have led to Kara using her powers to protect Lena.

She had then immediately called Alex and yelled at her about Maggie. Her sister had barely been able to get in a word edgewise. Kara had forgotten any trepidation she had about discussing Lena with Alex, and she had ranted for several minutes about Lena’s innocence and her goodness and how badly Maggie was screwing everything up. She demanded that Alex talk to Maggie and force her to free Lena, but then hung up before Alex could respond. She wasn’t interested in Alex defending her girlfriend, not right then.

Things had only gotten worse at CatCo. James and Snapper had decided on the fly that the entire cover story for the magazine, which was set to publish tomorrow for Rao’s sake, would be tossed out in favour of an outrageous story detailing Lena’s arrest and alleged involvement in her mother’s escape and criminal activities. She had just barely been able to contain herself from shouting at Snapper, insisting that Lena was innocent. His insistence that she was biased by her friendship was
Lena was completely out of bounds. And then James sided with him! At that point, she had walked away, realizing that she would have to be the one to prove Lena’s innocence. James had followed her that time too, making it clear that his conclusion that Lena was guilty was based solely on prejudice against the Luthors and his own conspiracy theories. ‘If she can betray her own mother, what is to stop her from pulling the long con on you?’ Kara recalled James’ words bitterly, attacking the block even more furiously.

Once the sun went down, Supergirl had shown up at the jail in case Lillian tried anything. Kara was sure Cadmus’ plot was only just beginning. She had been primarily focused on Lena’s cell — so stupid! she disparaged herself — and so she hadn’t noticed either Metallo or the Guardian slipping into the jail. She only noticed them once they began fighting down the hall from Lena, and she burst in just as Metallo knocked the Guardian unconscious and started towards Lena’s cell. Supergirl’s first thought was that the synthetic kryptonite was weaker than the natural stuff, and she had surprisingly little difficult fighting Metallo back. But then she looked over at Lena, through the bars of her cell. The brunette’s pale green eyes were dark with a fear that froze the hero. And in that moment, Metallo hit her dead in the chest with his kryptonite beam. It didn’t knock her unconscious, but she was hurt and disoriented enough that she couldn’t get up to stop him from dragging Lena away.

Her chest was painfully tight thinking of the terror that stained Lena’s beautiful face, and she kicked the block with all her strength, cracking it in half in a deafening blow. Only then did she notice that Alex had slipped into the room. Her sister had a pained look on her face, and Kara couldn’t tell if she was scared of her or worried about her. Supergirl sighed and turned to Alex. “Here to say I told you so? Try to convince me to give up on Lena?”

Alex winced at the venom in her sister’s voice. She waited a minute before responding, again fixing Kara with that worried look. “Kara, I’m here for you. I’ve never seen you this angry, this out of control.”

The blonde was genuinely taken aback by this. She had expected another lecture, especially given how much she had avoided the topic of Lena since Alex’s initial troublesome reaction a couple months prior. She didn’t know what to say.

“I … I know how you feel about Lena. Or, I think I do, even though you’ve been avoiding me a lot since we first talked about your feelings. I’m not here to convince you of Lena’s guilt — the evidence seems clear to me, but that’s really not my concern now. I’m worried about what you’re going to do.”

Kara turned away from Alex, whispering, “I’ll do whatever I have to do.”

“That’s what I’m worried about. Kara. Whether Lena is innocent or not, Supergirl is more important than one person. I’m terrified that you are going to let your emotions get the best of you, and take on the DEO, the police, and whoever else you have to, just to protect Lena.” Kara glowered at her but kept listening as she walked past Alex and took a seat on the bottom step of the stairwell. She was still angry, but Alex’s concerns were well-founded — she had been planning something exactly along those lines.

“The world needs Supergirl. Not just for your power or your heart, which is amazing. But the world needs you as a symbol. You’re an inspiration. You represent hope, strength, and a belief in goodness. If you turn against the DEO or the NCPD, you destroy that symbol. I know that you know that—just think about how much you’re still haunted by the actions you took while under the influence of the red kryptonite.”

Kara’s whole body shrunk in on herself, feeling the shame all over again. Alex sat down next to
her and took her hand. “This time you are you. You have no excuses, and no justification. I won’t pretend like I know what you’re going through. But Kara, you have to get control of yourself. If you believe Lena is innocent, never stop until you prove it. You just have to do it within the system. I love you. I want to protect you, above anything else.” Alex sighed, as if she were actively remembering the times her overprotectiveness created friction between the Danvers sisters.

“Kara, look at me.” Supergirl’s head stayed down, but she did lift her eyes. “I’m sorry that you felt like you couldn’t talk to me about Lena before all of this. I hope that whatever happens today, we can talk more later. But the most important thing I need you to trust is that I am with you. Don’t worry about my doubts. I. Am. Here. For. You. And I’m sorry that you feel like everyone is against you. The evidence is what it is, and people are going to draw their own conclusions. Still, whatever happens, you can lean on me. You can believe in me.”

Kara believed her. She still didn’t trust Alex to save Lena unless she could get more evidence to back up the CEO’s innocence, but she believed that her sister was on her side. Her whole body released the tense stress it had been carrying since she arrived at the DEO. She had missed Alex so much, missed relying on her. Kara’s faith was bolstered, and for the first time in hours, she felt the faintest hint of optimism.

The moment was interrupted abruptly by a message from Winn over their comms. “Hey guys, I don’t mean to interrupt sister time, but I think I found something. Better get up here.”
I Believe in You

Chapter Summary

Things come to a head between Lillian and Lena, and in the aftermath, Kara and Lena start to get honest with each other.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter 14

So this was why Lillian needed her. All the bullshit and manipulation, all the “I love yous” and “we can accomplish anything togethers”—all because Lillian needed Luthor DNA, and as it turned out, Lena was more Luthor than Lillian, at least on a genetic level. The irony was almost too much for Lena. She still hadn’t quite recovered from the shock of learning that her father was actually her father—her birth father—and no one had bothered to tell her until today. She had thought she could leave the Luthor name behind once Lillian was behind bars, but no, it would be with her forever. But I don’t have to let my lineage define me.

They were in a bunker hidden away under a mountain, probably four or five hours north of National City. If not for being a literal secret mountain base, it would actually appear perfectly inconspicuous. There were trailers and Mack trucks around, suggesting that it was some sort of shipping and storage hub, but she couldn’t see any actual products being stored. The place looked abandoned on the inside, cold and sterile. But Lex had always been smart. Combine that with the secrecy and paranoia he developed in recent years, and of course he would have his remote facility disguised as a nondescript nothing of a warehouse. Even if someone got into the base, they would have no idea what it was, regardless of the fact that no one puts an innocuous shipping warehouse inside a mountain. Lena knew for a fact that he had several such facilities, and a few bunkers, scattered on the west coast and a few closer to Metropolis. She had been working hard to find them all and to deal with the weapons Lex had been developing. The fact that she hadn’t discovered this one was ominous.

Her moment of thought was interrupted by Lillian clearing her throat softly. Oh right, she needs me to unlock this fucking thing. “I don’t know what’s in that vault, but I’m not about to let you into it,” she snapped at Lillian.

Suddenly she was grabbed harshly from behind and pushed forward. “I think you should listen to your mother,” Henshaw threatened, his gravelly voice just behind her. As he shoved her forward and forced her hand down to the biometric scanner, she fought as much as she could, unwilling to let the pain he was causing her show on her face. A large portion of the floor in front of them, the size of a small living room, slid open and the vault rose out of the ground.

Lillian and Metallo lead the way into the vault. Lena followed, knowing that the cyborg would force her otherwise. As the doors slid open, her heart dropped. Lex had another war suit. That’s what made this bunker special, why Lex had hidden it so well that even Lena and her trusted forensic team at L-Corp hadn’t been able to find it. That suit was Lex’s greatest achievement, and now it was Lena’s biggest nightmare. Lex had nearly killed Superman in that suit. Earlier that year, he had revealed himself to the world for what he had truly become—a xenophobic warlord,
bent on destroying Superman. The suit made him nearly Superman’s equal, physically. The war suit could fly, and it was nearly invulnerable, made of something called “nth metal” (an alien metal stronger and thinner than anything on Earth) and equipped with powerful shields to protect from heat and cold. It augmented Lex’s physical strength and reflexes and had an internal AI assistant that took in data at an astoundingly fast rate, allowing Lex to assess and predict Superman’s moves. The worst part was that it was equipped with several kryptonite emitters, thin layers of kryptonite strategically built into the suit. When open, they looked like glowing accent colors to give the suit an aesthetic flare, but they were strategically placed so that Superman would be constantly weakened if he fought against Lex in close quarters. In short, it was the perfect weapon for killing Superman—or Supergirl, Lena thought, her eyes wide with terror.

It had been pure luck that had saved Superman. That and Lex’s last gasp of love for Lena. The two had been fighting for nearly an hour, causing collateral damage all over Metropolis. Once she figured out what was happening, Lena had rushed up to the roof of LuthorCorp to try to get a view of the fight. Some part of her hoped that if they got close enough to the building, she could reach Lex and convince him to stand down somehow. As Superman’s strength began to flag, the fight had finally moved close enough to LuthorCorp that Lena could hear Lex’s continual taunting and vitriol. He sounded so deranged, so drunk on expected victory. She had tried to shout his name, but as she did so, Superman flew overhead to avoid one of Lex’s laser beams. Superman escaped it, narrowly, but the beam had cut a significant fissure in the roof right behind where Lena was standing. The force and heat of the blast, along with the wobble of the ground under her feet, pushed her towards the edge of the building, and she shouted Lex’s name as she felt herself tipping over. For one terrifying moment, the only thing in her vision was the city 75 stories below her and as she felt gravity begin to pull her down, she was caught by Lex, who shoved her roughly back onto the roof. Superman had used this moment of distraction, and what was probably every last bit of strength and energy he had left, to superspeed down and crack the back of Lex’s war suit wide open, from the neck all the way down to his ass. The whole thing shut off, and Lex fell forward onto the roof beside Lena. Superman pulled Lex forcefully from the suit, and then took him away. Lena would never forget the look on Lex’s face as Superman flew off. It was a glare of pure fury and betrayal that broke through her.

For Lena, seeing another version of that war suit brought her right back to that moment, when she realized she had lost her brother forever. The picture of bloodied, beaten, and nearly broken Superman, barely able to stand but gritting through his pain to ensure that Lex was defeated and captured, was as vivid in her mind as if she was back on that roof. Then the mental picture morphed into a horrifying image of Supergirl similarly wrecked, with Lillian standing over her to deliver the killing blow.

Lillian’s gloating had apparently continued, “… Everything we need to rid this planet of Kryptonians and every other alien invader once and for all. I promise you I will be on the right side of history. Maybe then you’ll believe that I was looking out for your best interests after all. Whether you like it or not, I’ll always be your mother.” Lena’s eyes narrowed in hatred and resolve. Gone were thoughts of buying time until Kara could save her. The youngest Luthor was determined that no one would make it out of this bunker alive. She would protect Kara no matter the cost.

Her mother was suddenly distracted, and Lena began scouring the room with her eyes, looking for any sort of explosives Lex might’ve left lying around. She vaguely registered Lillian’s adoring “oh my beautiful boy, I had no idea … you finished it” and then suddenly there was a loud boom as Supergirl crashed through the side of the mountain and into the bunker.

As they walked out to meet the superhero, Lena surreptitiously grabbed Lex’s atomic axe, holding it behind her while Henshaw and Metallo were distracted by Supergirl’s arrival. “Supergirl!” she
cried out, hoping that the worry in her voice would register as surprise in her mother’s ears. “I can’t believe you’re here,” she added, trying to sell it. Her mind was already working on how she could protect Kara from everything in that vault.

“Kara Danvers believes in you,” Supergirl declared, keeping up the façade of her secret identity while simultaneously doing what she could to inspire and reassure Lena. Their eyes met briefly, and Lena couldn’t even try to hide the love and appreciation on her face right then.

“Supergirl, you’re just in time. I’ve been wondering if these worked,” Lillian taunted, and Lena flinched as Supergirl caught the device the head of Cadmus tossed at her. As far as Lena could tell, nothing happened, but then Kara was abruptly on the ground, crying out and pressing her hands to her ears as if a sound was causing her tremendous pain.

Lena lost all control over herself then. “Don’t hurt her!” she shouted and swung the axe at Henshaw. Her aim hadn’t been great, but the atomic axe was designed with a blade so sharp and precise that it could even cut Kryptonian skin in some circumstances. Henshaw gaped in shock as his left arm dropped to the ground, severed mid-bicep. Then he roared in pain and anger, grabbing Lena by the head and throwing her to the ground. All her fear and rage collapsed into darkness as she lost consciousness, and her last thought was of Kara.

Lena woke up in Kara’s bed, the first rays of sunrise just beginning to fill the room. She shot up in the bed, terror gripping her again. Her brain caught up to the fact that she was in Kara’s apartment, not the bunker, and she relaxed ever so slightly. She was disoriented, but she was alive. Where’s Kara? she panicked again, mind rushing to the worst possible scenarios. She pushed herself to the edge of the bed to find her phone, and that’s when she saw the note.

The CEO already knew Kara well enough to be able to recognize her handwriting. Suddenly she could breathe again. She unfolded the note and began to read.

Lena,

Everything is okay. Please stay in bed as long as you need to. Supergirl brought you home to me last night. She said that the DEO (I guess that’s a group that she works with) would work on getting all the charges against you dropped, but that you probably shouldn’t go home or to work for a day or so, just to be sure. You were still unconscious when she brought you here, but she assured me that you weren’t injured. No concussions or anything.

Anyways, I wasn’t sure when you would wake up, but CatCo’s going to be crazy today. Snapper can’t stop me from writing the cover story on your innocence, especially given that I nearly yelled at him yesterday when he was so cocky and sure that you were guilty. So I had to leave early. Shoot me a text when you’re awake, but mi casa es su casa today. Please stay there. It’ll be your little oasis of freedom from the press. I can’t say for sure when I’ll be home tonight, but there’s some things I need to talk with you about. Big things, but hopefully good ones. I promise.

I’m so sorry you had to go through this, but I want you to know that I never doubted you.

Love,

Kara
She got up and walked to Kara’s bathroom to wash her face. Then she began planning her day. Her first call was to Jess, first to assure her that she was okay and second to give her a very specific set of orders to be relayed to Lena’s favourite florist in National City, Mavis. She also had Jess call her a car, not from her regular service, but from the company she used only when she absolutely had to avoid the press.

“Last thing, Jess, and I don’t want any sass on this.” Lena smirked, imagining the face behind her assistant’s silence. “I need you to make sure the Board knows that I will be out of the office for a few days while I wait for the charges against me to be officially dropped. Then I need you to drop by my apartment and bring me some clothes. I’ll meet you at the office. Tell no one I am there.”

“Yes ma’am. I trust you have your ways in terms of getting into L-Corp without anyone noticing you.” Lena chuckled. Jess knew her well. “Is there a particular outfit you had in mind?”

Jess’ tone was almost jovial, but she was following at least the letter of Lena’s order to avoid sass. The CEO was sure Jess had some idea what she was planning—the instructions to the florist weren’t exactly subtle. “Yes, Jess, I do in fact have something particular in mind. You’ll want to write this down. If any part of the outfit is wrong, you’re fired.”

It was around 2:00 p.m. when Lena received the message from her florist that the flowers had been delivered. Apparently there had been a bit of difficulty, something about the room being smaller than expected, but Mavis knew what she was doing.

As she had collected herself that morning, Lena had decided. She didn’t know why Kara hadn’t yet trusted her with the knowledge of her secret identity. And she didn’t care. Not anymore. All her reasons for not letting Kara in suddenly seemed so trivial. It had hit her then, the realization as shocking as it was obvious. I’m in love with Kara Danvers. Lillian didn’t matter. Lena’s trust issues didn’t matter. Coming out of the closet didn’t matter. She needed Kara to know how she felt, and the rest would take care of itself. So she had set her plan into motion.

It wouldn’t be long now. Lena grinned, mischievously, and then surveyed herself in the mirror. Her hair was pulled into a high and tight ponytail. She was wearing a tight, belted, sleeveless, black leather top, with a plunging neckline. The top was Lena’s secret weapon, as it perfectly framed and accentuated her cleavage. It was most definitely not safe for work. She wore dark gold earrings, with matching bracelets and a matching double layer choker that drew the eye to her collarbone without distracting from her cleavage. The outfit was completed by perfectly fitted black skinny jeans and one of her favourite pairs of heels, a pale burgundy color that perfectly matched the shade of lipstick she was wearing. Satisfied that she was sure to make an impression, she turned away from the mirror and headed to the couch. Yes, this will do nicely, Lena congratulated herself. Now to await my prey.

She didn’t have to wait long. The CEO was sitting on her couch when Kara walked through the door. The blonde took exactly one step into the office before she noticed Lena’s outfit and froze. Pleased with herself, Lena drank in the reporter’s reaction. Kara was standing rigidly, her mouth agape in a look of sheer appreciation and bewilderment. She had her hair half up, wearing more of
her golden locks down than she usually did in her Kara Danvers persona. Her simple rouge sweater was tucked just under her natural waist into an adorable navy and orange gingham skirt that stopped mid-thigh. Lena waited another ten or fifteen seconds to see if Kara would pull herself out of her paralysis, and when it became clear that wasn’t happening, she inquired, “Darling?” quietly, then beckoned Kara to the couch with a single finger.

Kara jumped, realizing that she had been staring openly at Lena for the better part of a full minute, blushing as she made her way to the couch. She sat down awkwardly, still completely thrown off by the outfit. Lena could feel that her grin was now occupying approximately half of her face, and she waggled her eyebrows at Kara before offering an impish, “Hi.”

A look of recognition flashed across the blonde’s face. “Lena!” she scolded. “You wore that outfit on purpose! What did I say about seducing me unexpectedly?” The brunette just shrugged, then battered her eyelashes in Kara’s direction. It wasn’t like she could explain her actions, that she wanted to go out of her way to shower her hero with affection and… gifts… for saving her life. Fortunately, now that Kara had come out of her trance, she was mostly back to normal.

“So. My office is, is overflowing with flowers.”

“Really?” Lena teased further.

“Yeah,” Kara responded, her face breaking into that gorgeous sunny smile of hers. She giggled and whispered, “You didn’t have to do that.”

“Yeah, I did,” the brunette assured her softly as she intertwined her fingers with Kara’s. “Supergirl told me that it was you who sent her. I don’t know how to thank you.”

Kara clearly didn’t know what to do with that compliment. She managed, “Well… that’s what girlfri—err, umm friends are for.” The blonde blushed at the flub, but Lena squeezed her hand reassuringly.

“I’ve never had friends like you.” Lena couldn’t resist emphasizing the word mockingly. “Hell, I’ve never had family like you.” She paused, trying to stay in control of her emotions as her love for this woman threatened to pour out of her. “No one’s ever stood up for me like that.”

“Lena, I will always stand up for you, no matter what.”

Lena had to collect herself again, before responding, “Well, Supergirl may have saved me, but Kara Danvers, you are my hero.” Kara smiled again, but this time there was a darkness to it. The blonde looked away, and Lena could read the guilt all over her face. Oh no no no, Lena thought to herself, and she gave Kara a soft smile, hoping to ease Kara’s stress about revealing herself. The blonde released Lena’s hands and visibly steeled herself.

Kara took hold of both her hands. Despite her resolve, the blonde’s eyes were watery, as if on the verge of tears. “Lena, I am so sorry.” Sorry? For what? “I… dammit. You’re brilliant, and perceptive. I’m sure you’re aware that I’ve been hiding something from you. Hell, that’s probably a big part of why you’ve been so insistent that you’re not ready for anything serious.” Oh. … Oh!

The blonde continued, “I’m sorry that it’s taken me this long. I should’ve told you a while ago. It isn’t because I don’t trust you. If nothing else, I hope this whole ordeal has proven that. It had, in fact, Lena thought to herself, and she gave Kara a soft smile, hoping to ease Kara’s stress about revealing herself. The blonde released Lena’s hands and visibly steeled herself.
“Lena. I’m Supergirl.” Kara paused, and then she was taken aback by just how unfazed the brunette was. Lena tilted her head to the side and raised an eyebrow, waiting for Kara to get there. “You? You knew?”

Lena reached out and began stroking Kara’s forearm. “Yes, darling, I knew. I’ve known practically the entire time I’ve known you. But it was important to me that you tell me yourself, that you trust me with every part of you.”

Kara nodded gently, but the guilt was back on her face. Lena squeezed her arm before going back to moving her fingers soothingly along the soft fabric of Kara’s sweater. “Hey. It’s okay. Or, it is now. But that’s why I’ve kept you at arm’s length, even if I couldn’t lie about my feelings anymore. I’ve been so torn the past couple of months. I wanted you! I’ve had never felt a connection like this, and it sprang up so suddenly. I wasn’t prepared for it. But I couldn’t let you in, couldn’t fully trust you, until I knew that you trusted me. I didn’t just make up the insecurities I told you about. What’s more, I definitely wouldn’t let myself get committed to you with the lies still between us.”

She hesitated, collecting herself. Clearly part of her was still upset about this. “Kara, it really hurt, knowing that you were lying to my face. That’s why I was so angry at you for ignoring me after the Medusa thing. Actually, while I’m thinking about it, you owe me an explanation. I know you were here that whole time, Supergirl was still in the news, so why? How could you do that to me, knowing what I had just gone through?”

“Shit.” Even though she said it softly, Lena was a little surprised at the hero’s language. “Lena, I wasn’t here. I really wasn’t. My boss at the DEO—that’s the black ops group I work with, where Alex is an agent—he is a Martian. He can shapeshift. He played Supergirl while I was gone, so that the people of National City wouldn’t worry and so that it wasn’t suspicious that Supergirl and Kara Danvers were both absent at the same time.”

Lena blinked, then nodded. She hadn’t expected this explanation, but she believed it. Kara continued, “I didn’t completely lie to you. My friend Barry did actually need my help, it was just a little—okay a lot—more complicated than the story I told you. Barry did get struck by lightning, and he was in a coma, but that was before I met him. And it gave him superspeed. I know, right? But that’s not even the weird part.”

Kara paused, licking her lips as she prepared to reveal ‘the weird part.’ “Barry’s not from this universe. That week I was actually on another Earth.” To Lena, this part was not especially weird. She had always assumed some version of the multiverse theory was correct, though she had no idea how someone had figured out how to cross over between universes. “Barry’s friend Cisco has the ability to open breaches between Earths, and they came to get my help with an alien invasion on their Earth. It took longer than I expected but ended up being a fun adventure. I made a bunch of superhero friends there.” Kara stopped abruptly, realizing what she had just said. “Ah! That’s not even the point. The point is, I’m really really sorry you felt abandoned, and that I lied to you, but I didn’t know what else to do.”

Lena broke into a quiet chuckle. “Okay, Supergirl, okay.” Kara gave her a look at the use of her moniker. “I understand now. It sucks that you couldn’t just be honest with me though. I really thought that I had proven myself by catching Lillian, and I was so excited. That’s why I wanted to get lunch—I was planning on telling you how I felt and asking you out. Then you disappeared.”

“Lena, I —”

“So why didn’t you tell me then? Surely you knew that your cover story wasn’t going to fool me. Why not tell me then?” Now that they were on the subject, Lena had to know. This was her
stumbling block, the thing that had kept her from letting Kara in all this time.

“A big part of it was Alex. I told her I had feelings for you, and even though I didn’t even have any
intention of acting on those feelings, she blew up at me. She didn’t trust you, even though I tried to
tell her that you were trustworthy, and on top of that, she was terrified that by dating you, I would
open myself up to having my secret discovered. Not just by you, but by the public.”

“Because I’m a semi-public figure? Actually, that’s a legitimate concern. We should talk about
that more, one day. But it wasn’t just Alex, was it?”

Kara clammed up a little before admitting that no, Alex wasn’t the only reason. “Lena, you
became my best friend. Kara Danvers’ best friend. You saw me for me, not for Supergirl. Or at
least that’s what I thought at the time. Plus you told me that I was basically you’re only friend in
the city. I was sure that you were out of my league, as Kara Danvers, and I didn’t want to mess up
our friendship with my crush on you.” Kara must have noticed Lena’s confused expression,
because she stuttered a little before continuing.

“Ummm, I … I was focused on our friendship. On being the best friend I could be, and on
enjoying just being in your life. I decided that if we were never going to be anything more than
that, there was no rush to clue you into the whole alien superhero thing. That side of my life is
dangerous. I wanted to protect you. That’s why I didn’t tell you.”

“But Kara, you did tell me your feelings, and then—”

“That was an accident! I definitely didn’t intend to tell you how I felt—I went to your office to try
to get you to believe my cover story enough that you might forgive me. I wasn’t sure you’d ever
want to talk to me again. But then you were so compassionate to offer your help for Alex when I
told you that she came out, and then we were talking about how we’re both queer, and I … I just
got caught up in the moment!”

“Uh huh. Okay, so then why not tell me after I kissed you later that night?”

“You said you wanted to keep things casual! And I still hadn’t sorted things out with Alex.
Honestly, it felt so good to have you kiss me and then stay there with me, just cuddling on the
couch. I was sure that you would never see Kara Danvers as more than a friend. I just figured the
flirting was how you are with close friends.” Lena smiled softly, thinking of Sam. Kara wasn’t
completely off base with that assumption. “So, I was overwhelmed when you kissed me. And
then… things were just going pretty well. I still wanted to keep you out of danger, but it didn’t feel
pressing to tell you about Supergirl. And I remembered how hurt you were after Medusa—I was
scared of confessing that I’d been lying to you. I was worried it would ruin everything.”

Kara huffed, as if she was mad at herself, then she looked back up at Lena. “I am sorry. It’s a bad
excuse. And if I’m being completely honest with myself, I thought that maybe you didn’t want
anything serious. I didn’t want to rock the boat, even though the weird in-between place we’ve
stayed in since then has been really confusing for me sometimes. Ultimately, I guess I was afraid
of losing you. I’m sorry I didn’t just tell you how I was feeling. And I’m sorry I kept lying to
you.”

Lena held up a hand. She had gotten her explanation, and while it still hurt, she had no interest in
making Kara beat herself up about it. She scooted over, and wrapped her arm around the blonde,
pulling her close. She kissed the top of Kara’s head, then said, “You know, I was trying to protect
you too.”

Kara’s head jerked towards her in surprise. “Calm down, darling. There there.” Kara settled,
leaning her head on Lena’s shoulder. “I … I’ve never told you about my history with Lillian. One of these days, I will. I promise. It’s just … really difficult for me.”

The blonde began stroking Lena’s arm. “Kara, I’ve been investigating Lillian basically since Lex was arrested. I’ve been aware of Cadmus since before my move to National City, but it was a slow and difficult process trying to uncover all of Lex’s leftover secret weapons caches while also trying to figure out where my mother had disappeared to and what nefarious plans she had in mind without Lex to rely on anymore. Then I got to know you. And we became friends. And … I … began to fall in love with you. I knew then that Cadmus couldn’t be Supergirl’s problem. I had to be the one to take the bitch down. I knew that whatever she was planning, killing Kryptonians had to be at the top of her list. And then Cadmus was in National City, antagonizing Supergirl. I was terrified that she was going to hurt you. That’s why I took matters into my own hands with Medusa. Why I lied to you. I don’t know what I would’ve done if Lillian had hurt you, or… or k-killed you, Kara. I would’ve done anything to protect you from her.”

Lena straightened up out of nowhere, her face gripped with anxiety again. “Kara how did we get away from that bunker? She could’ve killed you! I was so terrified, and I did what I could to try to save you. Then that cyborg knocked me out, and my last thought was that I was never going to see you again.”

Kara wrapped her up in a deep hug, rubbing the brunette’s back to try and soothe her. “Hey, shh, Lena, it’s okay. I’m alive. We stopped her. The synthetic kryptonite she created for Metallo was unstable. I flew literally as fast as I possibly could to get to you once we picked up the radioactive signature. Even then I barely got there five minutes before it exploded. Rao, Lena, I was terrified that I wasn’t going to get to you in time. But I did! And J’onn followed me, saved me from Metallo. Henshaw and Lillian escaped, but I got you out just in time.”

The women sat in silence for several minutes, processing all their shared revelations while also just enjoying being close to each other again. Eventually, Lena pulled away and faced Kara. “No more secrets? From now on, I want us to be able to share everything with each other. … I don’t think my heart can handle pretending that this is just a casual fling anymore.”

At this, Kara gazed back at her intently. Lena felt that she could’ve been blinded by the brilliant smile that lit up the blonde’s face, and honestly, she’d probably have been okay with that. “I promise! I’m done with keeping things from you. Life’s too short, and you mean too much to me.”

“Good. Well, in that case … I was hoping that you would be my girlfrie—” Lena didn’t get a chance to finish. Kara used her superspeed to cut her off and answer the unfinished question at the same time, wrapping the brunette up in a kiss that told her everything she needed to know. But just to be sure Lena understood, Kara pulled back and blurted out, “Yes yes yes, of course, finally!!”

Lena laughed and held her girlfriend tight. “Excellent.” The two gazed at each other adoringly, and then Lena glanced away for a second. “I think we need to tell Alex, sooner rather than later. I know how important she is to you, and I don’t want to be the reason you’re keeping yourself at a distance from her. Plus I’m done hiding that you’re in my life and I’m in yours. I want to get to know your sister, and your friends.”

Kara nodded, positively glowing at the thought of introducing her girlfriend to her friends. Then her eyes got wide. “Okay but Lena, I have to warn you. Alex is the most overprotective adopted sibling ever. She was the one who comforted me when Lillian took you and I had to fight, well, everyone who was accusing you. But we’re still in a weird place, and she still might not trust you very much. Don’t take it personally if she threatens you with bodily harm. But you’re right. I
want to tell her. I miss her so much, and I’ll be glad to not have to keep things from her anymore.”

“There we are, step one. After Alex, we can play it by ear. I don’t really have anyone important to introduce you to, except for my best friend Sam. You’ll meet her in good time, she still lives in Metropolis. As for the publicity… maybe people won’t really notice. I mean… I’m a Luthor, and I’m a gorgeous, inventive CEO under 30. But I’m not Beyoncé. I don’t see the need for any big coming out announcement, but I promise, I’m done hiding you. Hiding us. If it comes up publicly, we’ll deal with it then. But hell, I don’t even know Jeff Bezos’ wife’s name, do you?”

Kara gave her a confused look that made it very clear that she had no idea who Jeff Bezos was, and Lena giggled. “Exactly. Nothing to worry about. Now! I’m going to tell Jess to take the rest of the night off, and to head on home. Then you can fly me back to your place, Supergirl.” Lena winked as she said Supergirl and was met with a scowl in return.

“Just because I’m your girlfriend doesn’t mean I’m now your personal airline.”

“Oh fine, darling, I’ll just find my own way out of the office then, but the press might hold me up for a while. I may also want to head back to my apartment to change and eat some dinner alone. I can’t really say when I’ll be able to make it over.”

Kara growled at her. No really, the blonde literally growled. It was adorable. “Or I could just fly you to my place and enjoy you in that outfit for as long as I want!”

“I knew you’d come around to my way of thinking.”

Chapter End Notes

So I made up that backstory of the battle between Lex and Superman. As a fan of the 90s DC animated shows, I felt like the war suit deserved a bit more explanation than just being one item in a list that Lillian rattles off. Plus, I really needed there to be a specific reason Lex went from protective, loving brother to trying to kill Lena. Something more than just “umm he went insane I guess.” So hopefully this worked in the context of the story.
Chapter Summary

Kara and Lena tell Alex that they're dating, and it goes about how you would expect. Then Kara takes her girlfriend for a surprise day at the beach.

Chapter 15

Kara couldn’t remember the last time she was this nervous. She had Saturday off, so she told Alex to grab a bunch of donuts and come over to her place. They needed to talk, after everything. The younger Danvers felt a little bad that she left off the part where Lena would be there too. After all, Kara’s girlfriend had taken advantage of the whole ordeal to take a few days off work and hide out in Kara’s apartment. But honestly, Kara was worried that Alex might not show up if she was expecting the conversation to involve Lena as well.

The couple were lounging about, drinking coffee, while they waited for Alex to arrive. Lena was wearing Kara’s sweatshirt again, with a pair of black yoga pants. Kara was in an oversized plaid button-up and grey sweatpants. An episode of Lost Girl was playing on the TV (Kara had insisted on exposing Lena to the wonders of Canadian TV), but Kara’s attention was solely on the brunette beside her. Lena Luthor. Gorgeous. Brilliant. Compassionate. Ingenious. Thoughtful. Mine. She giggled, totally by accident, and Lena fixed her with a knowing glance before rolling her eyes.

Kara’s reverie was broken by the sound of Alex’s steps coming out of the elevator down the hall. “She’s coming!” Kara whispered to Lena. They shared a look, trying their best to give the other confidence. The blonde turned off the TV, and the brunette took a seat on one of the stools around the tall table Kara used as a kitchen island. Before Alex could knock, Kara opened the door and welcomed her sister in. Alex smiled at Kara’s eagerness, but the expression shifted to mild annoyance as she walked in and saw Lena sitting there.

“You two are looking quite … comfortable,” the agent snarked, before turning to her sister. “You failed to mention that you would have company this early in the morning.” Kara winced, both at Alex’s tone and her implication.

“Alex. Please don’t be upset. We need to talk. All of us.” Kara made a circular motion with her arm as she said ‘all of us.’ “Now sit down and give me those donuts.”

Lena snorted at Kara’s bluntness, and Alex glared at her as she sat down. Kara plopped down next to Lena and across from Alex, already finishing off a blueberry cake donut. Silence settled in briefly, but the blonde felt energized by the donuts. “I don’t think you’ve ever really had a chance to actually talk to Lena, have you?”

Alex rolled her eyes, but Kara continued, undeterred, “Well it’s about time we changed that. This is Lena, my girlfriend.” Lena took Kara’s hand as she said this, and Alex’s eyes went wide, sweeping back and forth between the two women.

“Kara, I know you did not just say girlfriend.”

Kara winced, having anticipated that Alex wouldn’t take this well, not at first. “Yes, I did.
Because she is. And you’re the first person I’ve told.”

Alex dropped her donut, in either surprise or frustration, and of course, Lena took that as a cue to reach over and grab one for herself. Kara had to stop herself from chuckling, and Alex was clearly not pleased. Then the elder Danvers sighed and shook her head. “I suppose that’s why you’ve been so distant ever since you told me you had a crush on her?”

Kara nodded, feeling guilty again. She reached out with her free hand and took her sister’s. “Alex, I’m really sorry about that. You just … you blew it so out of proportion when I told you about my feelings, I was scared of what you might do if I told you that Lena felt the same way about me. Plus, at first we weren’t really sure what we were doing, and we weren’t telling anyone that we were anything more than friends. And honestly, I was pissed at you. Pissed that you reacted so strongly. That you disapproved even though you didn’t even know her. That you didn’t trust me to make that kind of judgment.”

Kara thought she saw a pang of remorse cross Alex’s face. Lena gave her hand a squeeze, and the brunette’s proud eyes filled Kara with reassurance. “But you were here for me when no one else was. You put aside your doubts about Lena and supported me when I was ready to leave everything behind to save her. You kept me grounded.”

Oops, guess I didn’t mention that part to Lena yet—we’ll talk later. She looked back at Alex and smiled. “I hated not being able to talk to you about Lena. She is wonderful, and so, so important to me. I need you to know that. And that I’m done keeping secrets. We both are.” She paused, then whispered, “I missed you, Alex.”

Alex’s face was hard to read, but she squeezed Kara’s hand. The elder Danvers ran her other hand through her hair, and then took a deep breath. Looking back and forth between Kara and Lena, she offered, “I missed you too. And I’m sorry that I made you feel like you couldn’t talk to me.” She paused, thinking. “I’m sure it didn’t help anything that I got caught up in the newness of my relationship with Maggie, and I’m sorry for that too.”

Kara let out a sigh of relief, releasing the other women’s hands and grabbing another donut. “Okay good, we’re both sorry. Let’s not do it again, okay?” Alex nodded, and then Kara grinned mischievously. “While we’re on the topic of no longer keeping things from each other, you should know that my girlfriend knows I’m Supergirl.” The younger Danvers said this casually, as if it was no big deal, and it took a couple of seconds to register with the elder Danvers. Then Alex choked on a piece of donut, before swallowing it down, and turning to face Lena. Her body language and features were suddenly tight, her movements aggressive.

Rao, Lena really shouldn’t antagonize Alex during the shovel talk. “I am not joking! I don’t care that you’re a powerful CEO or that you’re worth a billion dollars or whatever—and I assure you I can handle any bodyguards.” Now Lena was playing along, wearing a look of respect with just the right amount of fear. Kara knew it was an act, but she appreciated it.

Alex finished, “Kara trusts you, and I’ve done enough undermining her on this topic. But you will not hurt her, and you will not expose her. My sister is the most important person in my life, and I have spent most of my life protecting her. Don’t fuck this up.” With that, the agent grabbed her half-eaten donut and took another bite. The grumpy look did not leave her face, but her tone was much lighter as she mumbled, mouth full of donut, “So how did this thing happen?” she asked, waving her index finger between Lena and Kara.
Lena gave Kara a very suspicious look before facing Alex and ventured, “To be perfectly frank, it started with a bunch of lies and misdirection.” If Alex was surprised by Lena’s candor she didn’t show it, but Kara felt a little blindsided.

“Hey!” Lena glanced at her, pursing her lips, and Kara quieted down.

“Your sister asked how it started, and I’m just telling the truth, love.” Kara noticed Alex smirk almost too briefly for anyone to notice, and suddenly she felt a little better about how this conversation was going. Lena continued, “I don’t know how much Kara’s told you, though I take it not much. If it makes you feel any better about the Supergirl thing, I knew from nearly the first moment I met Kara Danvers.”

Kara purposefully avoided Alex’s gaze, but she could feel her sister’s glare as if she was the one with heat vision. Alex had always mocked Kara’s disguise. Lena noticed the glare, and chuckled. “I see Alex is not a fan of the disguise either. To be fair, I had already figured out that Clark Kent is Superman, and when Kara accompanied him into my office to discuss my absence on the Venture, I put two and two together. Especially given that the Supers had teamed up to save the ship just hours earlier. There were a few other hints, but for the most part, Kara had very little to do with me figuring out her secret identity.”

Kara could tell that Alex was impressed, even if the agent was probably doing a good job of hiding it from Lena. Ignoring (for now) the fact that she hadn’t even known Lena figured it out that long ago, the blonde jumped in, “So then Lena spent the next several months messing with me. I was oblivious, probably because I was distracted by the flirting.” She and Lena shared a brief conspiratorial look. “Still, we somehow became really good friends, despite the fact that I was hiding my identity and she was hiding that she already knew my identity.”

Alex cut her off before she could continue, addressing Lena. “So why didn’t you just tell Kara you knew?”

Kara wasn’t sure why Alex cared, but Lena’s face indicated that she suspected this was some sort of test. The blonde was pleased that her girlfriend answered honestly. “It was important to me that Kara trust me enough to tell me. Especially once I realized I was falling for her. I have … trust issues, I’m sure that comes as no surprise given what you know about my family. I knew that if I had a chance at anything serious with your sister, I would have to be patient and wait for her to let me in.”

This time, Alex actually smiled at Lena. Kara guessed that Lena had passed the test. Kara blurted out, barely containing her smile, “And everything came to a head after I saved Lena from that bunker. I finally told her, and then we came clean about all the secrets we had been keeping. And agreed that we were done with secrets.”

Kara hugged Lena tightly, still grinning at Alex. “And now she’s my girlfriend!”

Alex made a face like she was going to vomit—Kara was sure she was joking, but gave her a scolding look anyway—but then the agent’s phone rang. She answered it quickly, and Kara could hear Maggie on the other side. She was asking how the talk with Kara was going, and if Alex needed an out for any reason. Alex assured her everything was fine, better than fine, but that Kara had surprised her with a guest to their conversation. Suddenly Maggie was laughing, and Alex made a defeated face.

“Say it!” Kara overheard Maggie say, her voice filled with glee.

“You were right. I owe you 20 bucks.”
Maggie’s retort was almost loud enough for Lena to hear, “Aand a full body massage!”

“She must really like this woman. I should get to know her better.”

Maggie’s gloating continued, “I knew it! Of course Kara is dating Lena Luthor. That woman is like Tahani-level hot.” Kara busted out laughing, and Alex hung up the phone, embarrassed. Lena looked at her girlfriend, convulsing with laughter, and raised a confused eyebrow. Kara leaned in close, taking a second to breathe a warm breath onto the brunette’s ear before explaining in whispers what Maggie had said about her hotness. She got the reaction she wanted as Lena first gasped, though more quietly that Kara had hoped, and then blushed at Maggie’s comment.

That was clearly too much for Alex, as she snapped, “Enough!” Kara and Lena just grinned at her. Then Alex looked down at her lap, discomfort radiating from her. Lena opened her mouth to ask what was wrong, but Kara shushed her with a quick squeeze of her hand. The room got quiet, but Kara was determined to let Alex tell them what had come over her, in her own time.

Finally, the agent whispered, “I’m sorry.” She didn’t look up, but it was obvious to Kara that the apology was directed at Lena. “Lena, I don’t know you. Not yet. But Kara trusts you, and so far, you’ve done nothing but good since you came to town. Despite that, I was just as willing as everyone else to believe the worst about you and condemn you. You deserved better than that, and I am really sorry.”

“Alex,” Lena said the name firmly, and the elder Danvers looked up at her. “Thank you. That means a lot. I’m well accustomed to people assuming the worst from a Luthor, even if I have done everything in my power to break from that family name. Still, I’m shocked that you doubted Kara. It’s probably not my place to say this, but I’m going to anyway. You’ll get used to my audacity eventually.” Alex snorted at that, but Kara could tell she wasn’t offended. “Kara is a literal beam of light, and you know her better than anyone. If she was willing to vouch for me, you should’ve trusted her. I don’t care that you doubted me, but I am a little pissed that you hurt her.”

Kara was about to jump in, but Alex raised her hand to stop her sister. “You’re right,” she responded to Lena. “I won’t make that mistake again. I also want you to know that Maggie is sorry too. She feels awful, but you have to know she was just doing her job. She couldn’t just ignore evidence.”

“I know. I suppose she’ll just have to make it up to me with more compliments. Maybe when the four of us go on a double date next weekend, my treat.”

Alex seemed amused at the thought of that, and it left Kara feeling all warm inside. Maybe things would all work out after all, she thought, beaming.

The next day, Kara surprised her girlfriend with a trip to the beach. Lena didn’t really buy her whole “we earned a day of because you’ve been through so much this week,” but she didn’t put up too much a fight when the blonde showed off her seafoam green high-waisted bikini with the side cutout accents. Kara changed into her Supergirl uniform for the flight, and they stopped at Lena’s apartment so that she could change into her own swimsuit, which was a belted one-piece with a deep red accented top featuring a plunging neckline and simple black bottom. Kara was momentarily paralyzed by the sight of Lena in the suit, before Lena woke her with a kiss, and they headed off.

The blonde had found a remote cove tucked away between some cliffs, creating a private beach for
anyone able to fly there rather than trying to scale the cliffs. The night before, while Lena was in
the shower, she had flown out a tote bag with a gigantic beach towel for two and a good number of
snacks, along with a cooler full of water, kombucha, and some frozen cocktails for Lena that
Maggie had recommended.

“Darling, usually I’m the one who would provide a private beach for two, but I think I might like
yours better.” Lena was very good at faking confidence, but Kara held her tight—she knew that
Lena was afraid of heights. *Like I would ever drop this gorgeous creature.*

“Good, maybe we can make this a regular thing.” She gently set Lena down on the sand, pointing
her towards the tote bag. Kara quickly changed into her bikini, and stretched languorously,
soaking in the sunrays. She needed to go to the beach more anyway, being in this much yellow sun
was incredible for a Kryptonian.

She felt soft but firm hands wrap around her waist from behind, and Lena whispered in her ear,
“You’re fucking adorable, love.”

Kara turned toward her, faking a scandalized look, and responded, “Language!” Lena just laughed
at her before wrapping her up again, peppering the back of Kara’s neck with soft kisses. The
blonde giggled, then took Lena’s hand and led her over to the beach towel. Lena reached into the
cooler for one of the bottles of kombucha, as Kara broke into the snacks. The two settled in, side-
by-side, just enjoying the proximity to each other and the sound of the waves.

After a while, Kara pushed herself up onto her elbow, and began running her fingers along Lena’s
bare shoulder and upper arm. She had a question, a curiosity, floating around her head. Lena
looked up at her, her eyebrows raised over the top of her sunglasses. “So you’ve known I was
Supergirl this whole time?” Lena nodded, waiting for the real question. Well then … how many
times did I do something that tipped you off?”

“Ah well this should be fun. Where do I even start? You really need a better disguise, darling.”
Kara’s fingers pulled up long enough to thump her girlfriend’s shoulder gently. “Ow!” Lena
exclaimed, faking pain. Kara just stared at her intently, waiting for the story to begin.

“Okay okay, well I already told you that I knew about your cousin’s identity before I even moved
to National City. Lex knew—I don’t know how much you know about their relationship, but they
used to be friends, and somewhere along the way it obviously went very, very wrong. But that’s a
story for another day.” Lena stopped herself before she got too far down a separate path.

She started up again, “Anyways, Superman and Supergirl saved the Venture, and the next thing I
know Clark Kent is in my office with a beautiful blonde in tow. Sporting much the same
“disguise” as him—seriously love, I know that at least you have the whole hair up versus down
thing over him, but still, I can’t be the only person who has recognized your brilliant blue eyes with
and without the glasses.”

Kara glared at her, tired of having this argument and wanting to hear the rest of the story. Lena
took the hint. “All I’m saying is that it wasn’t hard to put two and two together. Then the next
time I saw you, you literally told me you flew to my office on a bus.”

The blonde blushed, confessing, “I was honestly terrified that you were going to figure it out that
day. I couldn’t relax for like the next three times we saw each other, but you never acted like
anything was out of place or said anything, so I assumed you just thought I was a weirdo or
something.”

“You are a weirdo, darling, but I love it. Did you really think I wasn’t going to notice that you
fried my alien detection device?” Kara gave her a faux look of shock, but otherwise ignored the question. “Joke’s on you, love. That was not an alien detection device, it just lights up when you press it. I never had any intention of allowing my company to manufacture any such product. That would’ve been a nightmare.”

This time, Kara’s look of shock was genuine. She couldn’t believe that Lena had lied about that, but she couldn’t deny the sense of relief she felt that her girlfriend hadn’t actually considered exposing innocent aliens solely for profit. “Wait, but why?” she asked, more than a little incredulous.

“I wanted to see what you would do! I was curious. I guess you might not have known I was a semi-closeted lesbian back then, but trust me, I would have never created something that was essentially an outing device. I feel sick just thinking about the possibility of it.” She stopped, caught in a thought. “Also, I wanted to get a feel for how willing you would be to give me the benefit of the doubt. And you didn’t disappoint, at least, not once Snapper talked you down.”

“You’ve been messing with me this whole time! You did it at the gala too!!” Now Kara was a little outraged. She waited on an explanation, arms crossed petulantly.

Lena sat upright, and leaned over, placing a hand on Kara’s cheek. *Ugh, how am I supposed to look angry when her hand is so soft??* The corner of Lena’s mouth was tilted slightly up, and she playfully scolded Kara, “No pouting, that’s not fair. Yes, I’ve been messing with you a little. But the first time, I didn’t know you yet, and I wanted to get a sense of you. What I said when I invited you to the gala was 100 percent true; you were my only real friend in the city, and I really did want you there.”

Kara’s face brightened at that, and her girlfriend continued, “Actually, I was really excited to see you in a fancier dress, though I wouldn’t have been disappointed if you turned out to be a suit kind of girl.” The blonde blushed deeply, noticing that Lena always seemed to enjoy her most when she was flustered.

She collected herself enough to snark back, “Sorry to disappoint.”

“I wouldn’t say that! You were gorgeous that night. In both outfits.” Lena winked before going on, and Kara could only roll her eyes. “But also, yes, I did need Supergirl there as bait for those goons my mother armed, so I could take them out myself. I couldn’t have them hurting my Supergirl.”

Kara tried to look disapproving, but honestly, she was thrilled that Lena was that protective over her way back then. She was sure that Lena could see right through her, and it made her heart soar.

Lena smiled at her lovingly, her eyes lingering on Kara’s exposed abs for a few seconds before the brunette remembered she had been talking. “You were pretty adorable trying to corral ‘Mike of the Interns’ when I came to give you your personal invite. What’s the story with that guy anyway—is he another Kryptonian?”

Kara could feel her face automatically crinkle up in disgust. “Rao, no! He’s a Daxamite. His name is actually... well, I don't know his actual name. But he calls himself Mon-El.”

Lena cut her off. “Wait, he’s not from Krypton but he’s a member of your house?”

Kara’s crinkle grew into a full-on scowl. “Noo. I. Lena.” She felt her frustration mount, and she let out a soft growl. “Ugh. He is **not** a member of the House of El. I have no idea why he has that name.”
“You haven't called him out on his lies?”

Kara's shoulders slumped. "No. Maybe I should, m-maybe he's dangerous somehow, but I just ... I don't want to know. And I really don't care enough about him to call him out."

"Is he that awful, or is there something else going on here?” There was worry in Lena’s voice, and she had reached over to put her hand on Kara’s. Fortunately, she chose not to push Kara on her reasons for not wanting to know the source of Mon-El's fraudulent name.

Kara sighed, and tried not to let her annoyance take her out of this lovely moment. “No—I mean yes—but. It’s more than just him. Daxam was sort of like … Krypton’s nemesis? It was a horrible world, ruled by heartless, slave-owning royalty. A society built upon excess and entitlement. Mon-El actually doesn't seem to be as bad as I initially thought he would be, but he claims to have served the prince of Daxam. He's so willfully ignorant. It never even occurred to him to question that enslaving people might be wrong. I think he's learning, but sometimes it is hard to tell."

“So why do you put up with him?” Lena looked really confused, and Kara wasn’t exactly sure how to answer the question.

Kara frowned. She hadn't really put that much thought into the decision. "He came to Earth in a Kryptonian pod, and he’s got all these powers. He’s not nearly as powerful as me, but he could do some good in the world if he puts his mind to it. I hadn't really stopped to question my decision to train him and try to instill the values he would need to be a hero. It was just ... what I knew I had to do.” She blew out a frustrated breath. "But he’s been a disaster! He never listens, and he only seems to care about himself! And worse, now he apparently has a crush on me."

Lena laughed at the way Kara shuddered at the thought. She shot a playful glare at the gorgeous brunette, but who waggled her eyebrows in answer. “Kara, really though, why you bother with him?”

Now the Kryptonian was really thinking about it. He’s such a jerk. I’ve cut him so much slack. But he can’t even get that the first rule is to protect people. It’s like he doesn’t even care. So why do I care so much? Then it hit her, and she could almost picture the light bulb over her head.

“He was my replacement for Kal,” she muttered softly, as the realization washed over her. She suddenly felt a little sick, reliving the death of Krypton all over again.

Lena inquired, “Kal?”

“Clark. Superman. His true name is Kal of the House of El. As Krypton died, I was sent with him to Earth, to protect him and raise him and teach him our ways. Because I got caught in the phantom zone, temporally frozen for 24 years before my pod escaped and finished its trip to Earth. So, when I got here, still a thirteen-year-old, Kal had grown up on Earth with a human family who found him and raised him as their own. He was already 25, and had no need for me. My whole purpose was gone, just like that. And I guess some part of me never got over that? That part of me saw Mon-El as a second chance, to teach someone with a shared heritage and instill the right values and ethics, and I never really questioned it.”

Lena hugged her tightly, and Kara’s sadness lifted a little bit. Lena pulled back just far enough to catch Kara’s eyes in her own, and she took Kara’s chin gently into her hand. “Kara, I don’t know the frat boy very well, but I’m pretty sure he’s never going to be Superman. He’s an entitled douchebag, and it sounds like he doesn’t give a shit about other people, not really. You should just accept that, and let it go. Not everyone who has powers has what it takes to be a superhero.”
The blonde knew she was right. And she wasn’t really sure why it took her so long to realize it. She felt like a weight was lifted off her that she hadn’t even realized was there. *Screw Mon-El.* She smiled and remembered how they had gotten on the topic in the first place.

“Okay but enough with annoying man-babies. You have more stories to tell!”

Lena shrugged, and Kara tried unsuccessfully to keep her eyes on her girlfriend’s face. The brunette caught her and winked again. “Speaking of cleavage, I guess you should probably know that I was actually present at Veronica’s alien fight club, that night I gave you the address.”

Kara couldn’t keep the astonishment off her face. Lena just smirked at her, and continued, “You know, she and I used to fool around back in boarding school?!”

“Whaaaaaaat?” was out of Kara’s mouth before she knew it. What is this feeling? I do not like it! She was picturing Roulette with her stupid gross tattoos and that annoying haughty way she carried herself, undressing Lena. Kissing Lena. Running her hands through Lena’s hair before pushing Lena down on a bed. *Rao, what is this? Am I … jealous?*

Kara looked up, and Lena was smirking at her. “I thought that might get a rise out of you? Is Supergirl jealous?!”

“You’re enjoying this too much; it’s really mean.” Lena pushed out her lips mockingly, then rolled her eyes and scooted closer. The brunette draped a leg over Kara’s, and that was going to be a distraction. The blonde couldn’t resist running a hand softly up and down Lena’s leg. She felt like the exposure to the sun was making her bolder.

Lena comforted her, “It didn’t mean anything. I was going through this self-hating lesbian phase, and Veronica was so damn sexy.” Kara started to get jealous again, but then she glanced over to the side. *She’s not wrong. Roulette really pisses me off, but I can’t pretend she isn’t stupid hot.* Lena waggled her eyebrows, as if reading the blonde’s mind. Then she admitted she was just trying to lose herself in some meaningless sex. It was a dark time—she actually hated Veronica, even back then.

Kara could feel herself blushing. She had no idea what that was like. But she was smiling again and decided to try to turn the tables on Lena. Kara teased, “Well at least I know you don’t have a type or anything.”

The pale green of Lena’s eyes darkened, suddenly devious. Kara felt something similar in herself, a heat that started low in her gut and radiated through her. Now that Lena had brought it up, Kara couldn’t stop thinking about Lena and sex. They’d been dating for nearly three months now, and the blonde had been hesitant about sex. She had certainly been tempted—Lena was probably the sexiest person she had ever met. But for however casual they had pretending things were, Kara knew that Lena was special. She didn’t want to rush things, plus she knew that she probably needed to discuss her powers with Lena before they got too physical. But now … *now felt right.*

Feeling even bolder, Kara used her superspeed to position herself on top of Lena, straddling her and gazing longingly down at her as the brunette blinked her eyes in surprise. Then they sparked in recognition, and suddenly Lena’s hands were on Kara’s hips. The blonde shuddered at how good her touch felt, and then let her eyes work their way up Lena’s body, from her cleavage to her collarbone, then to those full, enticing lips. She didn’t get any further, not with her eyes anyway. Her whole torso surged forward, but she slowed down at the last second to kiss Lena softly. Slowly.

She savored the taste of Lena’s lips. The fell of them against her own. All her senses felt
heightened, and Kara honestly couldn’t remember another time she felt this good. She tentatively traced her tongue along the inside of Lena’s lower lip. The brunette let her linger for a few moments, then her tongue reached out for Kara’s.

The Kryptonian moaned just a little, and stiffened, surprised by her body’s reaction. This only seemed to spur Lena further, and Kara felt herself wrapped tighter in her girlfriend’s arms. Lena deepened the kiss, and her hands began to wander, tracing impatient patterns along Kara’s bare back.

The make out continued, and suddenly all Kara could think about was Lena’s hands on her body. Suddenly they were both at her neck, playfully tugging ever so slightly at the knot of Kara’s bikini. Lena pulled back and looked into Kara’s eyes for confirmation; Kara nodded enthusiastically, then pressed her lips back to Lena’s. She felt a single sharp tug, and then she could feel her breasts exposed to the warm salty air. She shivered slightly, and Lena took the break in the kissing to move her head down from Kara’s lips. Soft lips traced her jawline and then her neck. The blonde could feel her breath becoming more jagged, and she reached back and ran her fingers through the back of Lena’s hair, just under her ponytail.

Lena’s lips continued downward, and Kara stiffened as she took her time tracing her tongue along Kara's collarbone. Suddenly she didn’t want Lena to linger any more, and she lifted her chest just slightly, hoping Lena would continue her descent. The feel of her girlfriend chuckling against her chest made Kara shiver again, but Lena took the hint. She gasped as Lena’s hand came to rest just under her right breast and her mouth brushed kisses further downward.

She couldn’t stop herself from whimpering, and her hand gripped harder at Lena’s hair. She caught herself, and relaxed her hand slightly, terrified to lose control and hurt Lena with her strength. The brunette didn’t seem too concerned, and suddenly Kara felt her girlfriend’s tongue tracing circles closer and closer to her nipple. Lena began to lightly take her nipple in between her teeth, and suddenly it was all too much for the Kryptonian.

She pulled back and caught her breath, then rested her forehead against Lena’s. “I … wow. Just. Wow.”

Lena smiled, her breath still heavy. “Do you want to get out of here?”

The only response Kara gave her girlfriend was the speed with which she had everything packed up and put her super suit back on, and then they were airborne again. Lena seemed less concerned with her fear of flying than with continuing to kiss Kara’s, neck and it took everything in her power to stay focused on flying until the couple floated through the window to Kara’s apartment and straight to the bed.
Chapter Summary

Date night for the new couple

Chapter Notes

Short chapter, heavy on the fluff. Plus some feels. Think of this as a small oasis before the heavy stuff to come next.

Chapter 16

Lena could get used to this. She and Kara had been officially dating for a little over a week, and this was the second weekend in a row Kara had surprised her with a flight to an impromptu scenic date. This time, Supergirl had whisked her away to the most adorable little clearing in the woods to the east of National City. There was a soft blanket and picnic basket waiting for them. Lena felt like she was the one who could float—she had no idea Kara was such a romantic, but she was so thankful for her.

She gave Kara a soft kiss, then lit the candles around the edge of the blanket and settled herself down on the blanket as the blonde sped into her casual date outfit. Lena grinned at her girlfriend. Honestly, she wouldn’t mind fooling around a bit with Supergirl, but she absolutely adored Kara in her current outfit—or any outfit really. Kara had changed into an olive green sweater over a flowy white button-up that hung perfectly below the sweater, along with skinny jeans and her delightful little ankle boots that matched the shade of her sweater.

Kara settled down to her left on the blanket, and the two laid back, their heads inches apart, and their fingers intertwined as they looked out at a clear sky full of stars. Lena’s thumb was softly caressing Kara’s, and she murmured, “You know, you make me feel so special, darling.”

Neither of them moved, still enjoying the stars, but she could feel her girlfriend smile in response. Looking up at the sky, she suddenly had a thought. “Kara? Can we see Rao from here? That was the name of your red sun, right?” Lena’s mind briefly wandered to the red sun lamps she had surprised Kara with in her bedroom last weekend. The brunette had been confident that sex would be on the table eventually, and she designed the lamps herself, fully cognizant that Kara’s powers came from yellow sun radiation. She was plenty excited to work the hero’s powers into their sex life, but for their first time, it had been important to her that neither of them had to hold anything back. She blushed a little at the happy thought, then turned her attention back to her girlfriend.

She glanced over, and Kara’s eyes were intently searching the sky. Her hand squeezed Lena’s harder as her eyes locked in on what must have been Rao. Lena smiled as Kara scooted a little closer and lifted Lena’s hand in hers as she pointed up and to the right a little. “Rao is there,” gesturing to a cluster of stars that Lena didn’t recognize.

Lena squinted a little, noticing that one of the stars seemed a little bigger and a little less bright.
“The bigger, slightly darker one?” Kara nodded. Lena was happy to have a sense, however abstract, of where the Kryptonian had come from. Still, her heart hurt to think of all the loss, the pain, Kara had been through. She reached her right arm across her body and stroked Kara’s arm calmly. “Are you okay talking about Krypton?”

Kara stiffened. Her eyes grew distant, and Lena waited patiently as her mind worked through some inner turmoil that Lena could only guess at. When her eyes turned back to Lena, their watery depths were more turbulent than Lena was accustomed to seeing in her bubbly girlfriend. "Krypton is a difficult subject for me. Which, duh, I’m sure you knew that. But it isn’t just ... what happened to my world. A lot has happened since I became Supergirl that has led me to question a lot about my culture and my family. I’m still processing it all."

Lena cupped Kara's jaw, but before she could give Kara an out, the blonde turned her head to press a kiss to Lena's palm. “It's okay. It’s hard sometimes, but I love that I can finally share my past with you. Speaking of which, I don’t think I’ve ever even told you my real name.” Kara shifted, turning to face Lena fully before explaining, “I’m Kara Zor-El.”

The brunette smiled. Her girlfriend—Kara Zor-El—was absolutely gorgeous in the candlelight, her silhouette framed by the stars. She reached her right hand up to Kara’s cheek and asked, “So which do you prefer, Danvers or Zor-El?”

Kara hummed in thought for a second, then looked back down at Lena. “Honestly, at this point, both are okay. It was difficult to get used to hearing ‘Kara Danvers’ at first, but not only am I used it at this point, I’m proud of it. The Danvers took me in and gave me a home when Kal was too busy to bother. I’m closer to Alex than I ever was with my parents or my Aunt Astra.”

She settled back down next to Lena. “Still, in public I’m Kara Danvers, but should you have an opportunity to use my full name in private, Zor-El sounds so pretty coming out of your mouth.”

Lena grinned, filing it away in the back of her mind that ‘Kara Zor-El’ was on the table next time she needed to scold the blonde. Then the next question occurred to her: “So, I’ve heard you use the name ‘Rao’ several times at this point, and it never seems to be in reference to a star. Is Rao also the name of your god? Do Kryptonians worship the sun itself?” She paused to pull herself into a seated position, so she could look into Kara’s eyes and assure her that she was curious, not judgmental. “Are you religious?”

Kara tilted her head, maybe not expecting this turn in the conversation, but she didn’t seem offended by the question. “So, I’m not really religious, no one in my family really was. I think most Kryptonians tended towards a more atheistic worldview, if we’re talking purely metaphysics. We were primarily a scientific society, but Raoism was a major cultural touchstone. Think of it as, I don’t know... I guess the closest analog on Earth would be like Judaism. But like, a polytheistic Judaism?”

Lena nodded, following along. Her first passion was science and tech, but she’d always found sociology, religion, and philosophy fascinating. “So not just Rao then?”

“No, there’s a whole pantheon of lesser gods and supernatural figures. But honestly, I don’t think many people outside of the Religious Guild believed in all of it, not really. Funny story, the members of the Guild wore these bright featureless masks that glowed—it was important that they eschew individuality in order to appear as though they were extensions of Rao rather than actual people. Personally, it always kinda creeped me out, but I guess I was just a kid. Oh! And fun fact, Rao isn’t actually our sun; he’s the god of life and creation—he created the sun, along with the other gods and eventually Kryptonians. You know, according to the myths.” Lena loved when Kara got on a roll with her beyond adorable rambling, and she listened with rapt attention. “In fact,
in a traditional Kryptonian marriage ceremony, the Guild priest would bless the union in the name of ‘Rao, who kindled the sun.’”

Lena blushed a little at the sudden detour into Kryptonian wedding traditions, but maybe someday that would be worth coming back to. Kara didn’t even seem to notice, and just kept going. “The other major traditionally religious event is the sending of the dead. A funeral.” Kara’s voice had dropped in volume, but Lena wasn’t sure why. She sat up, reaching over to rest her hand on Kara’s shoulder. The blonde looked up at her, unshed tears welling up in her eyes.

Kara took a deep breath, then explained, “The body would be placed in a shrouded pod, with the house crest of the deceased emblazoned over their heart, and after the prayer for the dead, the pod would be launched into the sun, sending the deceased back into Rao’s light. The traditional prayer for the dead was ‘You have been the sun of our lives. Our prayers will be the sun that lights your way on your journey home. We will remember you in every dawn and await the night we join you in the sky. Rao’s will be done.’” Kara’s voice cracked a couple of times as she recited those solemn words, and Lena immediately wrapped her arms around her and held her tight.

The blonde cried silently into Lena’s shoulder, as she stroked the blonde’s hair. Once she had collected herself, she whispered into Lena’s ear, “The last time I said those words was for my Aunt Astra. She … she had a darker side. Nothing like her husband, Non, but she wasn’t on Krypton when it exploded, and last year she came to Earth with intentions of ruling it. Benevolently, of course. She was … I … before I could get through to her, there was a fight, and she was going to kill J’onn. Alex had to kill her to stop her.”

The tears returned, and Lena held her tighter. “I’m so sorry, love. I can’t even imagine how hard that must have been. Must still be.” She pulled back a little, and with a hand on Kara’s chin, pulled her into a chaste but tender kiss.

One last tear slid down the blonde’s cheek, but she smiled brightly at Lena. “You know, she would’ve liked you. Growing up, she always told me that only a very strong-willed person would be a good match for me.”


“All that and more, of course.” Kara reassured her in a quietly joking tone.

“I’m sorry I never got to meet her, even if she had her problems.” The couple laid back down, with Kara cuddled into Lena’s side, her head against Lena’s chest as the brunette continued to stroke her hair lovingly. “Kara… thank you for sharing that. I’m glad that we’ve finally gotten to a place where we can be vulnerable with each other. You mean so much to me already, and I’m so happy to be here with you.”

Kara let out a soft “mmmmm,” and hugged herself tighter to Lena. The brunette smiled contentedly, and the couple just laid there, enjoying their quiet romantic night under the stars.
Why So Conspicuous?

Chapter Summary

Jeremiah Danvers is back, but Lena has her suspicions. What is Cadmus up to, and can Lena survive meeting the parents?

Chapter 17

Lena was deep in thought, reviewing the budgetary projections for the competing proposals the heads of her research and development team had presented to her earlier in the afternoon. They had been planning possible applications for the prototype black body field generator that Lena had thrown together earlier in the year, and today they had put forth their two most promising proposals. Now Lena was in the process of reviewing and critiquing the proposals to ensure there were no unexpected angles or miscalculations before she gave the project the go ahead for design and manufacture.

Kara had barely texted her at all since this morning, which was a bit odd considering that Lena hadn’t heard the unmistakable sounds of some alien monster crashing through downtown. But she wasn’t overly worried. Alex would let her know if something was amiss.

As it turns out, she needn’t have worried at all. A smile rose unbidden to her face as she heard the distinctive sound of her favourite superhero landing on her balcony. She stood up to greet her girlfriend, but she didn’t even have time to turn before Supergirl had used to superspeed to wrap Lena up into joyful hug, lifting the CEO off the ground and spinning her around. Then Kara sat her down gently and kissed her. Lena could feel the happiness radiating off the blonde. “Someone’s in a good mood.”

“Lena, we found him! We finally found him!” It was quite a sight to see Supergirl literally bouncing with glee in her office. Lena tilted her head slightly and raised an eyebrow. Kara answered the unspoken question, “Jeremiah! We rescued him from a Cadmus convoy! He was pretty beat up, but he’s alive, and we’ve got him back!”

Alarm bells started going off in Lena’s head the second she heard the name ‘Cadmus,’ but she knew she had to be careful how she talked to Kara about this. She couldn’t bear to wreck the blonde’s bliss. “You’re adoptive father? You rescued him?”

Kara nodded enthusiastically, “Yeah, J’onn and I! Winn got an alert of a convoy leaving one of the sites the DEO was monitoring for possible Cadmus connections, and we met them en route. Jeremiah was chained up in the trailer of the truck.”

“Kara, that’s wonderful. How is he doing? How long has my mother had him in captivity? She wasn’t there, was she? Or Henshaw?” Lena was careful not to let her suspicion register in her voice.

“Of course not, Lena, that would’ve been the first thing I told you. She’s still out there—they both are—but we’ll get her eventually. I promise.” Supergirl took her hand as she reassured her, then shifted the conversation back to the Danvers patriarch. “Jeremiah was pretty shaken up, and he had been beaten pretty badly. His right hand seemed pretty mangled. But he’s alive! And back
Fourteen years?! Very little of this story made sense to Lena, not in any positive way. Why would Cadmus send a convoy when they could easily move a single prisoner so much more covertly? It’s been nearly two months, and Cadmus has been completely dark. Then they just roll out a convoy to transfer Supergirl’s adoptive father in the most conspicuous way possible, using only disposable henchmen to do so? After holding him for fourteen years?

Lena swallowed hard, and fortunately Kara was too wrapped up in her happiness to notice the brunette’s comparatively much less joyful demeanor. “So, did you get a chance to talk to him? Could he tell you anything about Cadmus?”

“Yeah, after Alex patched him up some, he was comfortable enough to talk. The first thing he did was warn us about a nuclear fission bomb that Cadmus has built. Lillian is planning to explode it in National City and pin it on hostile aliens.”

The brunette butted in, shocked by the news. “Where the fuck did my mother get a nuclear fission bomb?!”

“Jeremiah said that it wasn’t something they could purchase; they made it. Using the radiation from my heat vision. You remember when I told you about my first meeting with Lillian, when she abducted me and forced me to solar flare?” Lena nodded, hoping that she was hiding her utter disbelief effectively. Kara continued, “Apparently they stored the excess radiation I gave off, saving it for the right evil plan. J’onn has Winn and several other agents scouring the city for any leads.”

The CEO turned away from her girlfriend, using the pretense of checking her phone to collect her thoughts. Christ, the DEO has a lot of talented people, but clearly none of them have any experience with nuclear material. You can’t just siphon off and … store … radiation, much less repurpose it into a bomb. Well maybe … Lena thought of her black body field generator, and jotted down a couple of notes on a blank sheet of paper. That’s a thought to chase later, she contemplated. Then she turned her attention back to her girlfriend, trying to think of the best way of raising some of her suspicions without upsetting the blonde.

“Kara … there’s a lot about this that doesn’t add up. And I would hope by now you’ve begun to realize how twisted and devious my mother can be. Everything about this is too clean, to neatly wrapped up.” Kara’s brow crinkled a little, but she at least seemed somewhat receptive, so Lena went on. “Cadmus has held Jeremiah for over a decade. The DEO has never even come close to finding him in that time, but suddenly a convoy just happens to be transporting him? Where to? For what purpose? Why now? After being completely off the DEO radar for two months? My mother would never tip her hand like this. There’s more going on than we realize.”

Now Kara’s body language shifted. Her smile had shifted into a confused expression, and Lena’s chest tightened as she noticed a little hurt in her girlfriend’s face. Suddenly the confusion resolved into something dangerously close to denial. “Lena, you can’t be accusing Jeremiah of what I think you’re accusing him?”

Lena stepped closer and took Kara’s cheek into her hand. “Darling, no. I’m not accusing Jeremiah of anything.” The word yet jumped into the back of her mind, unbidden. “I’m saying that Lillian is manipulating this rescue to her own ends—she had to be. Probably Jeremiah is just one more pawn in her game. Maybe she’s using him to feed the DEO misinformation. I don’t know yet, but there’s too much here that we don’t know. You can never underestimate my mother, okay? That’s when she will get you.”
Lena kissed Kara softly, feeling the blonde relax a little. “Just … promise me you’ll be cautious, and don’t jump to any conclusions. You need to be thinking about how my mother could be manipulating the situation. Oh, and love, that’s not how nuclear fission works.”

Supergirl looked up, surprised. “Wait, what?”

“You can’t just … look, trust me. There’s no way Cadmus could’ve just sucked up the radiation from your heat vision and then changed it into a bomb. That’s not science; it’s magic. I think. Anyway, just … I’m not saying Jeremiah is lying. Probably he knows as little about nuclear fission than your people at the DEO do, apparently.” Kara giggled, and Lena blushed, realizing she hadn’t exactly kept the derision out of her voice.

The brunette rolled her eyes. “All I’m saying is please be careful. Please keep in the loop. We need to do anything we can to bring my mother to justice. I am so happy that Jeremiah is back. That must feel so amazing for you and Alex. And Eliza! But don’t let that happiness, that relief, cloud your judgment. You need to be on your guard.”

Kara held Lena’s gaze for a moment, and the CEO could read the uncertainty still lingering in those baby blues. But then the hero nodded and pulled Lena in for a tight hug. “We’re having dinner at my place tonight. Just the family, plus J’onn. Will you come?”

Now it was Lena’s turn to be surprised. “Uhhh. You want me? At the first family dinner you’re having in a decade and a half?”

Kara pulled back and looked at her like she was crazy. “Cream puff, of course I want you there. You’re the most important person in my life, outside of my family. I know we’ve only technically been dating, you know officially, for a couple of months, but I want you to meet the people who gave me a home when I got here. Besides, Maggie will be there, too, I think.”

Lena couldn’t believe how nervous and self-conscious she felt all of the sudden, and _wait what did she call me?_ “Kara, darling, two questions. First, _cream puff_?!” She paused for dramatic effect, raising her eyebrow, waiting for an answer.

“Cream puff. Soft and sweet and fluffy on the inside. Gorgeous and delectable on the outside. And guaranteed to gain my parents’ approval.” Lena loved it when Kara got playful, loved seeing that impish grin cross her face. But she could hardly be expected to give Kara the satisfaction of knowing that.

“Oh huh,” she retorted, faking disapproval. “Well… second, what should I wear?”

Lena hadn’t finished her review of the proposals, because Kara had insisted that she come home with her. Given that she now had another angle or two she would need to discuss with the R&D team, Lena had agreed. They stopped by her apartment so that Lena could change into a more casual outfit—skinny jeans and a flowy green blouse, with a casual blazer. Back at the loft, Lena had been delighted to see that Kara had changed into the exact same outfit that she wore on their starlit date of a couple weeks prior.

The brunette was now sitting at the kitchen island while Kara feebly attempted to get the bread in the oven. Then there was a knock at the door, and Lena’s stomach flipped flopped. _Shit, they’re here. Okay Luthor, get it together._ Kara’s hand was suddenly on her back, and the blonde leaned in to whisper, “It’s just Eliza; you’ll be fine. Come on.”
Kara pulled her up, and they walked to the door together. Kara opened it, and Lena was struck by how much the graceful, middle-aged blonde woman resembled the youngest Danvers. They were even the same height! If Lena didn’t know any better, she’d have never guessed Kara was adopted. After a loving hug, Kara turned towards Lena and introduced her. “Eliza, this is my girlfriend, Lena!”

Suddenly unsure of herself, Lena smiled and awkwardly stuck her hand out. “So nice to meet you, Dr. Danvers.”

Eliza just tilted her head slightly and grinned, before ignoring Lena’s hand and pulling her in for a hug. “It’s Eliza dear, and I’m so glad to meet you. You’re practically all Kara has talked about the last two times she called me.” Lena blushed, but felt a bit more confident all of the sudden.

“So then where is the other Dr. Danvers?”

“Oh, he’s still at the DEO. Alex is bringing him over in a bit. I knew I needed to come sooner, because this one, as much as she tries, has never quite figured out the Earth cooking.” Kara huffed, but didn’t dispute Eliza’s claim. Lena made a show of kissing Kara on the cheek.

“Well, I’m not the best myself, but I’m much less likely than Kara to leave the kitchen in a smoldering ruin. If you need any help, just tell me what I can do.” Eliza responded with the most earnest smile Lena thought she had ever seen, and she got the idea that the two of them would get along. Eliza got busy preparing the meal, and Lena did her best to help out. Kara sat off to the side, pleasantly conversing with Eliza and taking the time to simultaneously distract Lena with a thousand casual touches and glances while also embarrassing her with story after story of how amazing Lena was.

Before long, a key was turning in the door lock, and Alex walked in with a tall, heavy-set man with hair even darker than Lena’s raven locks. Jeremiah was favoring his right hand, though he didn’t seem to need a sling. The brunette was suddenly nervous and shy all over again, but Kara rushed over to wrap up the Danvers patriarch in her arms. She took him by his good hand and walked him towards the kitchen, softly explaining, “Jeremiah, this is my girlfriend, Lena.”

Jeremiah stopped suddenly, his eyes searching her warily. “As in, Lena Luthor?”

Lena was suddenly emboldened by the naked suspicion, something she was used to handling with aplomb. She reached out her left hand to take his, and responded, “Yes, as in Lillian’s daughter. And I assure you Dr. Danvers, if there’s anyone in the world who has more reason to hate Lillian Luthor than you do, it’s me.” She said this last bit with a bright smile on her face, but internally, she wondered if that was actually true.

Jeremiah shook her hand back, suddenly more pleasant, and then turned to Kara. “Well… that’s got to be, uhh, complicated, but you sure did land a catch here sweetie.” His tone sounded quite jovial, but Lena was suddenly on guard. She reached out her left hand to take his, and responded, “Yes, as in Lillian’s daughter. And I assure you Dr. Danvers, if there’s anyone in the world who has more reason to hate Lillian Luthor than you do, it’s me.” She said this last bit with a bright smile on her face, but internally, she wondered if that was actually true.

Jeremiah shook her hand back, suddenly more pleasant, and then turned to Kara. “Well… that’s got to be, uhh, complicated, but you sure did land a catch here sweetie.” His tone sounded quite jovial, but Lena was suddenly on guard. Kara took the compliment and waved her adoptive father off, laughing at the joke. Lena filed Jeremiah’s reaction away in her mind—either he didn’t trust her because he was afraid a Luthor couldn’t possibly be in love with a Super, and he was worried she would hurt Kara. Or he had been turned by Cadmus and was apprehensive at the prospect that she might be able to see through his charade. Either way, Lena knew she wasn’t winning him over as easily as she had Eliza.

It wasn’t long before Maggie showed up, and then Alex was introducing her own girlfriend. Jeremiah didn’t do too much better with that reaction either. He glanced at Maggie, then looked back over at Kara and Lena holding hands, and the best he could offer was “Wow, things really have changed a lot, huh?” Apparently, someone had just assumed that his daughters were straight.
But he recovered, albeit awkwardly, adding “There’s no man on Earth good enough for Alex Danvers, so it would have to be someone like you.” Lena could tell from her body language that Maggie found the compliment as uncomfortable as Lena did, but Alex seemed to have no idea. She just beamed at her father.

Maggie responded with a chuckle, saying, “Well you’re right about that. Alex does deserve the best.” And then the Danvers parents were off to the kitchen to “show the kids how margaritas are done.” Lena kept her eyes on Maggie, evaluating her body language and guessing that she had an ally on team “there’s something off about Jeremiah.”

Still, she couldn’t help grinning when Kara pulled Alex aside and whispered enthusiastically, “On a scale of one to crazy happy, how crazy happy are you?”

Alex shook her head and offered, “I can’t even. You?”

Kara grabbed her sister’s arm and shoulder in excitement. “Ohhhhh, I mean sometimes I can’t even, but right now I cannot even.” The three of them walked over to the living room, where Maggie had already claimed a spot on the couch. Lena took a seat on the end of the couch, and Alex bumped Maggie into the middle spot to take the other end. Kara settled in on the floor next to Lena, leaning her head onto Lena’s knee.

The happiness was written all over the Danvers sisters, who were chattering and laughing about having their family together again. They started sharing some childhood stories, and Lena and Maggie both did their part to play along with the sisters’ zeal. Before long the margaritas were ready, and they headed over to the dinner table. Maggie lagged behind just slightly, and whispered to Lena, “Danvers girls, am I right?”

The CEO rolled her eyes at the diminutive detective. “I know.” It was a shallow exchange, but there was meaning underneath it. They were on the same page, and after dinner, once everyone had settled in around the apartment, having a few different conversations and just generally enjoying the company, Lena found the right moment to pull Maggie aside and have a brief chat.

“So, you’re not buying this either?”

Maggie glanced about before answering. Both women were well aware how important it was that no one overhear them. Just before they all sat down for dinner, J’onn had arrived, and Jeremiah had done nothing to assuage Lena’s qualms when he asked the director to reinstate him back to the DEO. J’onn had welcomed him back with open arms, and Lena was seriously worried that she and Maggie were the only two people thinking about the bigger picture with clear heads.

“No, there has to be more here. I couldn’t bear to poke holes in Jeremiah’s story when Alex told me—she was too damn happy. I’m really worried she won’t listen to me when it comes to her dad. But it doesn’t make sense. Why a convoy? Why not move him more covertly? Why now, when your mom’s been so damn quiet since she framed and abducted you?”

Maggie paused there and looked up at Lena with guilt in her eyes. Lena responded quickly, “Maggie, I’ve forgiven you. You were doing your job. The evidence was all there. Please, I’ve let this go; you should too.”

The detective nodded, relieved, but then rubbed her forehead in frustration. “Thank you, but I really am sorry. And I needed to say it to your face. I think at this point, you and I have to be a team. We’ve got to be the voices of reason here.” Lena agreed, then asked Maggie for her phone. She entered her number into Maggie’s contacts, then said, “We’ll talk more later. Let’s not raise any suspicions just yet.” The two broke apart and headed in separate directions to find their
respective girlfriends. They spent the rest of the night playing the parts of devoted partners, excited to get to know their girlfriends’ parents.

Kara approached Alex slowly, fully aware she was walking into an argument. She and Winn had confronted Jeremiah in the middle of the DEO, in front of Alex and J’onn. Winn had been keeping an eye on her father—apparently, he and Lena were on texting terms, which was news to Kara, and Lena had asked Winn to monitor him. In doing so, Winn had caught Jeremiah breaking into the DEO’s central mainframe.

However, Jeremiah had a perfectly innocuous explanation. His old DEO passkey hadn’t worked, and so he hacked into the system to look at the case files detailing Alex and Supergirl’s missions over the past two years. Winn had backed down at that point, convinced that he had been wrong to assume Jeremiah was a spy. But Kara was more apprehensive than ever.

She hadn’t been in a good place to listen to Lena’s concerns yesterday. She was so overjoyed to have saved Jeremiah and brought him home to Alex and Eliza that she was completely blindsided by Lena’s concerns about Cadmus. She had been willing to listen to her girlfriend, obviously, because she trusted that Lena knew Lillian better than anyone and because, well duh, Lena’s a genius. But it hadn’t really sunk in how what could really be at stake here. Until now.

The DEO was still using resources to find a bomb that Lena assured her couldn’t possibly exist, and Kara couldn’t shake the growing feeling in her gut that Jeremiah was hiding something. She didn’t know what else to do but to talk to Alex, but the thought of the confrontation terrified her. The sisters were finally back to a good place, as close as they had ever been, and now she felt like all of that was broken again. The betrayed look Alex had given her after Jeremiah explained his actions was still frozen in Kara’s mind. But she knew that she had to at least try. Maybe Alex would see things differently, have a better explanation for the many, many holes in Jeremiah’s story.

That’s what she hoped, at least, before she stepped forward and asked Alex if they could talk.

“I don’t have anything to say to you.” The vitriol in Alex’s voice shot straight through Kara’s heart, but the fact that her sister wouldn’t even look at her hurt worse.

“Alex. Alex? I am here with you. I was just as overjoyed to have Jeremiah back as you were. We share the same feelings. But. There is also so much that doesn’t make sense here. Jeremiah was with Cadmus a long time. And we have never faced an enemy more dangerous, so we owe it to ourselves to look at every angle, no matter how uncomfortable it makes us feel.”

“Kara, where is this paranoia coming from? Lena? Is she so terrified of her own mother that she would throw our dad under the bus to try to go after her? Because otherwise, I don’t understand how you can be so disrespectful, how you can doubt a man who has been through so much just to keep us both safe.” There was an edge to Alex’s voice, and the blonde was terrified that she was incapable of thinking objectively about this, of actually looking at the evidence in front of her.

“This isn’t about Lena. This is about the truth, and the truth is that Jeremiah breaking into the DEO system is … it’s weird.”

“He missed out on over a decade as our father! I don’t blame him for wanting to catch up, however he can.” Alex’s words were getting sharper as her volume was increasing. Rao, that was the wrong thing to focus on. Lena is so much better at this than I am.
But Kara knew she had to keep trying, and she knew that she was right about this. “Then why not just ask us?! We’re right here. Why wouldn’t he want to spend time catching up with his daughters and hearing about our adventures first hand? Or heck, he was with J’onn for over an hour, why wait until he was alone to try to access those files?”

Alex’s eyes narrowed as she asked, “You really don’t trust him, do you?”

“No, I don’t trust Cadmus. And I will do whatever I have to to protect us.”

Alex pushed past Kara, as she taunted, “Well then I guess you’ve chosen your side.”

Kara couldn’t keep her emotions in anymore—she couldn’t believe how stubborn her sister was being. “This isn’t about sides, Alex!”

The agent turned back suddenly, a coldness in her eyes that Kara had never seen before. “No! It is. Cuz you’re either part of the family, or you’re not.” Alex’s tone made it very clear which of those options she believed applied to Kara, and the blonde’s heart broke in half.

She could barely get her words out. “You don’t mean that.”

“He’s my father.”

“He’s mine too.”

“THEN ACT LIKE IT!” Kara winced at the pure rage in Alex’s voice, and then suddenly, her sister was gone. She crumpled to the ground in a heap, tears welling up in her eyes. Whatever else was happening, it felt like she had just lost Alex. And that hurt her more than anything else possibly could.

Kara had been with Lena when she got the alert from J’onn that they had found the bomb. The brunette had warned her that this was a trap—the bomb wasn’t real. Kara knew that at this point, she had burned her bridges, and she wasn’t going to convince J’onn or Alex of anything. So she accompanied the strike team led by Alex, to protect them when things went sideways. Her sister hadn’t even acknowledged her presence.

Kara used her heat vision to melt through the door of the warehouse in which they had picked up the “bomb’s” signal. And … there was nothing there. Not only that, but their comms had suddenly gone static. J’onn was no longer directing the mission. Kara immediately took off, flying back to the DEO as fast as she could.

When she got there, she found J’onn unconscious in the primary server room. He was bloodied from a fight with someone strong—Martians didn’t bruise easily. The main servers had been completely destroyed. And Jeremiah was gone. He had betrayed them after all.
“The Danvers sisters are important to me.”

Chapter 18

“It’s been five days since Lillian and Jeremiah escaped with the president’s alien registry. People are being abducted left and right. I need to be out there.”

Lena sighed. “Love, you can’t be everywhere at once. And if you wear yourself out trying, you’ll be no help to them when we catch up with my mother.” And your father, she left off. “I’m afraid I have to insist that you take the night off, and at least try to relax.”

Kara continued to look distressed, but Lena could tell that she had made her point. She was in the kitchen preparing dinner, her own personal take on chicken and zucchini parmesan. She was both nervous and excited—this was her first time cooking for Kara. She hadn’t complained when Kara arrived at her apartment having already eaten half a box of pizza, but only because she knew about the blonde’s outsized Kryptonian caloric requirements.

She brought their plates over to the bar where Kara had posted up and rubbed the blonde’s back after setting the plates down. “How is Alex doing? Maggie told me that she’s not been sleeping much.”

“I wouldn’t know, she’s still not talking to me.” Kara’s tone was morose, and Lena just wanted to know what she could do to help.

“She’ll come around, darling, I know it. And you know it. She said she just needed some space, right? This is about Jeremiah, not you. We both know your sister loves you more than life.” Kara’s mouth lifted into a tiny smile for the briefest of moments. “Here’s an idea, if you’re up to it. Why don’t you tell me about some of your happy memories growing up with the Danvers?”

Kara’s face clouded, and she took a few moments to think it over. Then she sighed. “That actually might be a good idea.” Lena gave her hand a squeeze, before taking another bite. Kara played around with her own food, which was a worrisome sight in and of itself, before speaking up again.

“When I got here, I was lost. Devastated. Empty. And what was worse is that once I had been under the yellow sun for a few hours, my powers began to manifest. It was like sensory overload. I could hear everything, see everything, I felt like my body was on fire, too powerful for its size and shape. At first, I screamed, and Jeremiah tried to comfort me. I accidentally broke his arm. He was nice enough to never hold that against me. But he and Eliza kept their distance after that, still trying everything they could do to soothe me.” She paused, wistful.

“Eventually, I stopped screaming, and went catatonic. It was all just too much, and I just shut in on myself. They couldn’t move me for several hours. I think Eliza and Jeremiah were at their wits end, or close to it, but then Alex saved me. Well, actually she was just really pissed at me and tired of her parents coddling me.” Kara grinned. “She was so fearless, even after I had broken Jeremiah’s arm. She came up to me, grabbed my shoulders, and insisted that I snap out of it.
When that didn’t work, she took my hand, and placed it over her heart. She kept yelling at me to focus on her heartbeat, to shut everything else out. And eventually it worked. I focused on her heartbeat, and it took a while, but eventually that was all I heard. I could breathe again.”

“Kara, that’s lovely.” Lena’s eyes were watery. She had finished her food and now she was rubbing her girlfriend’s back.

“It really was. Of course, Alex didn’t talk to me again for like a week. She resented the attention her parents gave me at first as we learned to cope with my powers. She was a teenager, and she didn’t care how important it was to make sure I was safe to be around other people. And how much teaching I needed to try to learn the basics of American culture.” Kara chuckled, then smiled a genuine smile for the first time that night. “But she was my rock from that day forward.”

Lena stood up and pulled Kara up with her. She wrapped her arms around Kara’s lower back and drew her close. The blonde placed her own arms around Lena’s neck, and leaned in for a small kiss. Lena whispered, “So when did Alex realize you were hers?”

Kara pursed her lips in confusion. “I think part of my fear is that she never really did. I mean, I know she loves me, and she would do absolutely anything to protect me. But I don’t know if she relies on me the same way I rely on her.” Lena hated when Kara had these occasional bouts of self-doubt, but she didn’t know what to say. She didn’t really know Alex well enough yet.

“But! She did start talking to me eventually, mostly just to make fun of me. We never really got along until midway through high school, and something shifted in Alex. We did the whole Nancy Drew thing together when a friend of mine went missing. Turns out the local sheriff had murdered my friend, and he nearly killed Alex too, but I saved her. In the process, I nearly got caught using my powers. I think saving her life definitely helped my case.” Lena chuckled at that, before Kara continued. “But I think that’s when it really sunk in for her how scary my life was, and how little margin for error there was in protecting my identity.” A single tear fell down the Kryptonian’s face, and Lena kissed it away. “She’s been the overprotective Alex you know now ever since.”

Lena hugged her tightly and then reached for the plates to put them in the sink. Kara walked into Lena’s living room and plopped down on the couch. Lena walked over, and lifted Kara’s feet so she could sit, placing them on her own lap. Her toenails were painted a neon pink this time, and Lena got to work rubbing the hero’s feet. “Kara, I promise that we’ll stop Cadmus. And once Alex has a chance to confront Jeremiah and sort out her feelings, she’ll be your Alex again. I’m so sorry that you have to deal with this right now.”

Kara moaned a little as Lena hit a good spot, and then she smiled brightly at the brunette. “But no matter what, I have you. You take such good care of me. I’m incredibly lucky to have you in my life.”

“You’re damn right.” Lena and Kara both grinned at the Orphan Black reference.

Then Kara got thoughtful again. “I am worried about Alex though. She won’t talk to me, so I can’t be sure about anything, but she’s been increasingly erratic at the DEO. Especially since Cadmus attacked the alien bar. She nearly beat one of those Cadmus guys to death, Lena. I’m worried she’s going to do something rash to try to get to Jeremiah.”

“Keep an eye on her, for sure. Maggie told me that she is convinced that there’s an explanation that will exonerate Jeremiah—you know, brainwashing or blackmail or something similar. She’s skeptical, but she made it clear she’ll support Alex through this, even if it gets dangerous.”

“When did you and Maggie get all buddy buddy?” Lena hesitated at her girlfriend’s question,
afraid to be completely honest. “Well… at the dinner with the Danvers, I could tell she was also uneasy about Jeremiah, and we talked briefly. Agreed to look out for you and Alex and do our own digging to figure out what Cadmus was up to. We exchanged numbers, and have been texting ever since. She’s spunky; I like her.”

Lena thought Kara looked a little unsure how to react to that news, but then something else popped into her head. Her face clouded, and she shouted, “And nothing I do can convince Snapper to run a piece investigating the abductions! People’s lives are being destroyed, and he won’t ease of his ‘you have to have at least two sources on the record’ rule. Why can’t he just take Supergirl’s word for it?!!”

Kara was agitated then, and Lena rubbed her leg, trying to soothe her. “I know, darling. He’s a stubborn ass who can never see the bigger picture, but we already knew that.” The blonde looked dejected, but then Lena had an idea. “Hey! Don’t you have a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist friend in Metropolis?”

She was impressed by how immediate Kara’s reaction was. Her face lit up, and she smiled brightly. “Lois!! Of course, Lois would definitely run this story with only Supergirl as a source, and no one would question her about it. Lena! You are a genius pineapple!”

Lena snorted, not even bothering to touch that particular pet name. “See, problem solved. I bet she’s still up—you two can work on getting it ready to go up tomorrow. I know Metropolis is forever away and probably not a ton of people here read the Daily Planet, but they can run it online and you and I can share the article all over social media.”

Kara floated off the couch, and hugged Lena as tight as she could without hurting her. “I don’t know what I would do without you! I was nearing my wit’s end. I had actually thought about just blogging it myself.”

“Love, you’re still a baby reporter, that would’ve definitely gotten you fired. Maybe ruined your career. And I’m not sure that many people would’ve taken your blog all that seriously. I’m so glad you talked to me about this first. This is why you need to keep me around.” Kara’s smile was full of love, and Lena’s whole body lit up. “In the meantime, I’ll go through all my investigative files on Lex and Lillian and see if I can’t figure out where they might be keeping the alien hostages.”

Kara kissed her again, then called Lois.

Lena was sure she had found it. There were a few possible sites that were big enough to house a significant number of alien prisoners—Lena didn’t want to contemplate the possibility that Cadmus wasn’t bothering to keep prisoners—but this defunct LuthorCorp naval research facility had received some shipments in the last month, despite being closed down nearly a decade ago.

The brunette was so excited at the discovery, that she forgot the text she had received from Maggie. The detective had warned her that Alex had been put on leave because J’onn didn’t trust her to handle Cadmus and Jeremiah objectively, to put the mission first and her father second. But the couple were running their own investigation, and Alex intended to stop Lillian herself and save Jeremiah. Maggie had thought Lena deserved to know, given that her mother was involved. Lena suspected that she was also still trying to make up for arresting her. It went unsaid that Maggie assumed the brunette would tell her girlfriend, ensuring that Alex did in fact have backup, even if she didn’t want it.
But now her attention was on her accomplishment, and she called Kara, turning to look out the windows of her office. “I think I’ve found it!” she shouted triumphantly the second Kara answered her phone. Then she saw the reflections of two men dressed all in black entering the office behind her. “Someone is in my office, get here now!”

Lena dropped the phone and reached for the taser in her purse. She got one of them, but she was pretty sure it hadn’t done much other than piss him off. The CEO backed away, out onto her balcony. She knew that she had a better chance with a freefall than she did with the two men, so continued backing up until she was leaning precariously against the short wall of the balcony. Sure enough, after a brief tussle, one of the men pushed her off the balcony.

_Save me, Kara_, she prayed silently as she fell. And sure enough, she came to a rest in a familiar pair of arms after a few very long seconds. She kissed Supergirl on the cheek as she flew them back up towards her office, whispering in her ear in a teasing tone, “My hero.” Apparently inspired by Lena’s cheekiness, Supergirl looked down at the thugs when they reached the balcony and deadpanned, “You dropped something.” Then she disabled them with her freeze breath.

As Kara placed her back on her feet on the balcony, Lena’s face tightened into a frown. “Well it looks like I’ve got a mole in L-Corp, despite repeated efforts to weed them all out. I’ll have to deal with that soon. But at least this proves I was right!” Kara looked at her questioningly. “There’s a former LuthorCorp naval research facility. That’s where the aliens are being held. Here are the coordinates.”

They held each for only a moment, but for Lena it felt like an eternity. Yes, her life was regularly in danger, thanks to the bridges she had burned with her deranged family members. But she never quite got used to these brushes with death. Even if she never doubted her beautiful hero would save her. She framed Supergirl’s face with both her hands, and murmured, unable to hide all her love and adoration, “Thank you. You always save me.”

Kara mimicked her girlfriend’s gesture, and answered, “And I always will.” Lena inhaled deeply and closed her eyes. Then she opened them and grinned.

She kissed the hero before exclaiming, “Now go! Save the day. But also, be careful! You never know what my mother has planned. Oh, and could you please clear the trash off my balcony on your way?” Kara rolled her eyes, but dutifully grabbed both unconscious thugs on her way out.

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Having left Lillian’s henchmen with the NCPD, Kara was on her way to the facility where Lena said Cadmus would be. She hailed the DEO on her comms. “J’onn, I know where Cadmus is, and I’m on my way there. Track me and send in a backup team.”

“No need, Supergirl. We found it too. The DEO just registered the launch of a large spaceship. Supergirl, Alex is on the ship. She attempted to infiltrate the facility on her own, to get Jeremiah.” _Alex!_ Kara’s entire chest felt like it was collapsing on itself. She pushed herself harder, flying as fast as she’d ever flown before.

As the ship came into view, Winn shouted, “If that ship gets out of the atmosphere, it will jump to lightspeed!” Kara knew he wasn’t shouting solely at her, but she cursed internally anyway. The freighter was big, but not the biggest ship she had ever seen, not close. It was a dark grey, with a bulbous front. The back third of the ship was thinner stretch of metal jutting straight back, housing six circular, downward-facing flight engines. On either side of the large bay door beneath the engines were the two massive launch rockets, propelling the ship up through the atmosphere with disturbing speed. She had to stop those thrusters.
As she flanked the ship, suddenly its guns were trained on her. She took a couple of hits, one of them knocking out her comms. She dispensed with the weapons, and then she was at the nose of the ship. Alex was inside, and Kara could see a crowd of the freed prisoners behind her.

She understood that she needed to slow its ascent, stop it from reaching space and force it back down towards Earth so that Alex could take control of it and land it. But her entire focus in that moment was her sister’s face. The Danvers sisters stared at each other, and Kara could see all her own conflicted feelings of love, sorrow, and regret mirrored on Alex’s face. *It can’t end this way. I won’t let it!*

She put her hands on the hull of the ship, above and below the windshield, and began pushing against the thrust of the ship’s launch rockets. Kara heard Winn frantically yelling over Alex’s phone, and Alex just responded calmly that it was all up to Kara now. But she could feel it. She wasn’t strong enough.

Alex was watching her, and she shook her head in desperation. The terror felt overwhelming. The air was getting colder and colder as they moved further into the atmosphere. She wasn’t going to do it. Her sister was about to be blasted out to some distant star system, and she couldn’t stop it. Tears welled up in her eyes and began to freeze. Everything went quiet around her, and all she could hear was the pounding of her heart, and the fear coursing through her mind. *I’m going to lose her. I failed her. I didn’t get here in time. I didn’t protect her. I’m the worst.*

But suddenly Alex’s face was full of certainty.

The elder Danvers placed her hand on the windshield, starring Kara down. She raised her own hand to meet Alex’s. Her sister shouted, “You can do this!” and pounded her hand against the windshield emphatically. *Still my rock.* Kara gave Alex one more look, then turned her attention back to the ship, filled with inspiration.

With both hands on the hull, Kara reached down deep and pushed with everything in her. She could hear herself screaming at the struggle, and it was like nothing she had ever felt before. She could feel the exertion in every single muscle, the pain in her arms as if they would snap at any moment. Then she could feel it slowing. She caught her breath, let out a determined “Come on. Come on.” and gave a final effort.

The thrusters gave out, and the ship’s ascent halted entirely. Kara felt herself collapse onto the windshield, and all she could see was Alex’s face. So full of pride and love. The hero could hardly breathe and couldn’t feel her arms or legs. But she caught Alex’s eyes, and they said it at the same time.

“I love you.”
Chapter Summary

Danvers sisters night.

Chapter 19

Kara smiled as she glanced over at her sister. Alex Danvers was leaning forward, mouth just slightly open, attention rapt on the scene unfolding on the television screen. *Person of Interest* was Alex’s favourite show, and she had already rewatched it once with Kara. But this was the first time since Alex had figured out just how gay that she was watching Root threaten to torture Shaw with the hot hotel room iron. To Kara, this was a whole new level of obsessiveness from Alex.

She was so happy to be back in this bubble that so few were ever lucky enough to experience. The Alex Danvers comfort bubble, as she most often referred to it in her head. Alex would die before she let most people witness her losing her mind over a couple of fictional ladies flirting with each other over the threat of violence. At one point, Kara had been the only person allowed in the bubble. And for a little while, Kara was terrified that she would never work her way fully back into it.

This was the third Danvers sisters night since they foiled Cadmus’ plot to forcibly deport over a hundred alien citizens of National City. Kara had nearly lost Alex that night, and she was determined that she would never let anything get between them again. It appeared Alex shared this resolution; she was the one who suggested that they find time for two Danvers sisters nights a week, no matter what, for the foreseeable future.

Kara was still watching Alex when the elder Danvers paused Netflix and turned to glare at her sister. “Why are you watching me when there’s perfectly good television on?”

“I … geez Alex, honestly? I just missed you. Missed this. And you’re so cute with your massive Shaw crush.” Kara winced as Alex shoved her in response. “Deny it all you want, but it all makes sense now that I know how super gay you are.”

This time Alex didn’t bother protesting, she just grinned like an idiot. A cute idiot. Then Alex turned the tables on her sister. “Speaking of super gay, how are things going with the See Ee Oh?” The elder Danvers emphasized each letter jokingly, and Kara rolled her eyes.

“Ha. Ha,” she retorted sarcastically, then paused to think about her girlfriend. She was so lost in thought that she didn’t even notice the smile that broke across her face. “She is wonderful. Obviously. I mean, it’s Lena. She’s incredible.” Alex’s look told Kara that she was doing that thing she always did where she stammered on and on about how wonderful Lena was without ever actually saying anything of substance about her. Kara blushed, then continued, “She’s still pissed that we couldn’t get Lillian, and she won’t talk about it—yet—but I’m sure she’s working on something to try to track Cadmus down again. I told her the DEO is working on it, but let’s just say she is ummm less than patient when it comes to putting her mother back behind bars.”

Alex’s eyes were on her again, her look not exactly one of approval. “Not that she doesn’t trust the DEO!” Kara stammered. Now Alex was the one to roll her eyes.
“So, you and I have never really talked about your relationship with Lena, not since I blew up at you about liking her. Still sorry for that, by the way.” Kara nodded and shrugged to let Alex know that she was still forgiven for that. Alex went on, “I have no idea how to put this tactfully, so please don’t throw me into space or anything, but really Kara, how did that even happen? The whole you dating Lena Luthor thing?”

Kara ignored Alex’s lack of tact, because she was actually so excited to finally share this story with her sister. “Okay so it started with an interview. About President Marsdin’s Alien Amnesty Act. It was my first potentially big story, and well, I mean, I told you the interview went—how I thought it went, anyway. Turns out, that device was a complete sham, and Lena had no intentions to produce any sort of alien detection device. Too close to home, with the whole outing people thing. If I had known her better then, I would’ve never doubted her, but she didn’t know if she could trust me yet.”

Kara looked off to the side and grumbled, “Plus she knew I was Supergirl and couldn’t resist the urge to mess with me.” Then she looked up at Alex, worried she was giving the wrong idea about Lena. Alex’s face looked like she couldn’t decide between laughing at Kara or questioning Lena’s motives. Kara decided to let it go, and she continued her story.

“Anyway, you know how that turned out. I ended up writing the opposite piece I had originally written, and I meant it, you know? Even then, I could see that Lena wasn’t like her family. Didn’t share their twisted ideals. I guess that belief in her came across in the article, because it made an impression on Lena. She hadn’t expected me to write something nice about her, and she invited me to her office. She let me in a little, told me about her relationship with Lex. I think that was the first time I started crushing.”

Kara blushed again and had to look away. Alex was looking at her like she was a puppy or something. “It was a short moment, but she was vulnerable. With me! Even then, I could tell that I was being gifted with a rare experience. She’s a lot like you in that regard. But less violent.”

The blonde giggled at the glare Alex gave her as she responded, “Oh please, I am nothing like Lena Luthor.”

“Uh huh. Okay. Sure,” Kara cajoled, but didn’t give Alex a chance to retort. “The next time I saw her was when I asked her for help tracking down Roulette’s fight club. She told her assistant that I had a free pass into her office from then on, that I was to be shown in no matter what.” Kara’s face hurt just the tiniest bit, but she couldn’t help how big her grin was at that memory. “That cemented my crush on her and gave me the tiniest bit of hope that maybe it was reciprocal. After that, we started having lunch together pretty regularly, usually in her office.”

“Okay but how did regular lunches turn into dating that you kept a secret from your only sister in the entire world?”

“Hey! You know why I kept it from you. You’re not allowed any sass.” Alex faked an admonished look. “It started with the flirting. Yes, Lena is a massive flirt. With me at least. I can’t speculate whether she’s always that flirty. I mean. She’s gorgeous and witty and loves messing with people, so ummm probably?”

_Oh Rao, I’m doing it again._ “Yeah…. well, the flirting just sort of flustered me a little—okay a lot—at first. Which was probably Lena’s intention. But I got used to it, and eventually tried to flirt back. I’m sure it was terrible. Alex! She’s Lena Luthor, and I didn’t know she knew I was Supergirl, and what would a brilliant, beautiful, powerful person like her see in a bashful baby reporter like me?” From Alex’s face, Kara could tell that she had her own doubts, even now, about Lena’s intentions towards Kara. Her smile fell a little, and suddenly she felt the need to
defend her girlfriend’s honour.

“Alex, you know that Lena genuinely cares about me, right?” Alex still looked hesitant, so Kara pushed further. “I’m trying to tell you my epic gay love story, and you keep shooting me looks like you expect my girlfriend to lock me up and experiment on me at any moment. Please tell me I’m just misreading you.”

Now Alex looked genuinely chastised. “Sweetie, no. I’m sorry. I absolutely don’t think Lena wants to lock you up and experiment on you.” She seemed to notice Kara’s suddenly wide eyes and bright red face, and then immediately shouted, “Ewwww not like that! Jesus, Kara!” The blonde grinned, and her sister continued. “I just … don’t know Lena that well yet. We’ll fix that, I promise. Now tell me how you went from flailing at hot CEO flirting to actually dating the hot CEO.”

Kara’s face was hot again, but she was properly reassured now. “Everything changed with Medusa. Not for me, obviously. I believed in Lena before she proved herself by taking Lillian down. But something shifted for her, I think. Like she had decided to finally let me in. Then I completely screwed it up.”

Kara frowned, unsure if she’d ever stop feeling guilty for abandoning Lena. “That’s what I was trying to talk to you about when I first told you how I felt about her. Alex, I needed your advice so badly, on account of how royally I screwed up. She texted me that night, literally right after she talked to Supergirl, err you know, me. She wanted to get together and talk. I’m sure that what she wanted to talk about was us. Then I disappeared to another universe for four straight days without even telling her.”

“But you were able to make up a story, right? She couldn’t have held the radio silence against you that much.” Alex’s tone sounded almost … hopeful? “Is she rooting for us?”

“Well no, because she knew I was Supergirl, remember?”

“Oh fuck! She saw J’onn flying around pretending to be you, didn’t she?”

“Yup. But she was determined not to reveal that she knew, so I couldn’t understand why she was so mad at me. Not until later. She knew I was lying, and I guess at that point, she felt like she had done enough to prove herself. She couldn’t understand why I was still lying, and why I had ignored her texts and calls for four days while Supergirl was supposedly still around saving the city.” Kara felt the warmth of Alex’s hand come to rest on hers, and she could tell from the watery way that Alex’s face looked that she was on the verge of tears.

Kara blinked back the wetness in her eyes and smiled at her sister. “Somehow we got to talking about you and Maggie, which led to us both talking about how not straight we are. And then suddenly my mouth was betraying me and telling Lena how I felt about her. She admitted that she was attracted to me, but that she wasn’t ready to talk about it. Then she basically kicked me out of her office.”

Kara got up to get a box of half-eaten pizza from the refrigerator, continuing as she walked away. “Then she showed up at my apartment that night and kissed me!” She had timed this particular revelation so that she wouldn’t have to look at her sister. “After that … we just started hanging out here on a regular basis. Cuddling, kissing … who know, dating stuff. Kinda. She was still really hurt, because she couldn’t explain why I had been in town but completely ignored her for days. And she already had plenty of trust issues before that.”

The blonde quietly scolded herself as she walked back to the couch with the box of delicious cold
pizza. “That went on until Lena got framed and kidnapped by her mom. And you already know what happened there. I knew then that if I could just save her, get her to come back to me in one piece, I was going to tell her everything. And I did. Joke was on me though, since she figured it out the minute she met me. But whatever happened with her and Lillian during that ordeal, it changed her. The guarded Lena Luthor I had been casually dating was gone, and then she was asking me to be her girlfriend.” Kara felt her whole face light up again, and she sighed happily.

“So that’s how I became Lena Luthor’s girlfriend.”

Alex’s curiosity was apparently satiated, and she wrapped Kara into a warm hug. “Who woulda thought we’d both grow up to be dating gorgeous ladies.”

That sparked Kara’s own curiosity, and she pulled away. “Hey! Speaking of, I’ve never really gotten the full Sanvers story.” Alex’s nose scrunched up, staring confusedly at Kara like she was crazy. “Oh! Right! Sanvers is what Lena and I call you and Maggie. You know, Sawyer and Danvers?” Have you really never heard of shipping?”

Alex looked like she was about to ask a question, then shook her head. “No, I don’t care about this. So, you want to know about how Maggie went from leaving me crying in your arms to regular date nights at the weapons range?”

Kara nodded, more interested in the story than about teasing Alex further. Her sister paused, side-eyeing her a moment longer, before she was sure that Kara was done. “So I guess things changed for both of us because of Medusa. I already told you about Maggie’s whole ‘kiss the girls you wanna kiss’ speech.” Kara definitely remembered that, it was so damn romantic. “But the first time we met—”

Kara couldn’t help butting in to shout “Meet-cuuuuuuute!” That earned her a pillow to the face.

The elder Danvers went on as if Kara hadn’t interrupted. “Maggie showed up after Scorcher’s first attack on the president. I still think that’s the stupidest name, by the way. Anyway, she didn’t like that ‘the feds’ were handling this, and she tried to mark her territory. It was adorable. I didn’t realize it at the time, but wow the chemistry was insane. I would never let her know this, but she totally embarrassed me. I kept a straight face until she left the crime scene, but she called out our lab tech for mishandling evidence and made it very clear that she was familiar enough with aliens to make an educated guess as to what species the attacker was. Obviously, I couldn’t stop thinking about her after that.”

Alex scowled at her, and Kara could only guess that she had been squeeing again. Not my fault that my sister is such an adorable gay. She faked a chastised look until Alex started talking again.

“After that, she took me to the alien bar, and introduced me to the idea that maybe you and Clark aren’t the only good aliens in town. I felt really stupid once I realized how fucking prejudiced I had been. That’s what is so incredible about Maggie. She just … forces me to think about things I had never questioned before, with such ease. And it’s not like she judges me or anything. I can’t even explain it.”

Kara caught another side-eye, just to confirm she didn’t get all mushy again. The blonde actually loved that Alex took so much effort to pretend like she didn’t want Kara to be enthusiastic about her love life.

“Unfortunately, Maggie had a girlfriend then. I had no clue that I was super jealous—I thought it was totally normal that I suddenly had the urge to find all the dirt I could on the girlfriend and show Maggie that she wasn’t worth her time. I didn’t do that, obviously, but Maggie kept calling
me about alien-related cases. Kara, I can’t even explain what happened. It was like we just got each other from day one, you know?"

Now Alex was actually being vulnerable, looking at Kara with the question all over her face, as if the answer wasn’t obvious. “Yes, Alex, I know. No, you’re not crazy.”

“Then we investigated Roulette together, which meant fancy dresses and sexy masks. Maggie insists that she wasn’t trying to seduce me at the time, but I’m not convinced. Kara, she was so pretty. So pretty. But my conscious brain fought my subconscious brain pretty hard on what was happening. When that idiot girlfriend broke up with her, it felt like a huge weight had lifted off my shoulders, but I had no idea why. I became such a stammering idiot after that, until Maggie called me out. She suggested I was gay, and I denied it, then ran away.”

Poor Alex! She supersped closer, wrapping her arms around her sister. Alex squeezed her arm in response, then continued in a much softer voice. “I couldn’t even say the word ‘gay’ when I found her later and admitted she was right. And having admitted it, it was like my whole brain turned over. Suddenly everything made sense. But all I could think about was Maggie. And you know how that went…”

Kara’s brow crinkled again, remembering how much she hated Maggie for reducing Alex to a sobbing mess after she rejected her. She tensed up just thinking about it. The blonde had never seen her sister in that amount of pain. If Kara was being honest with herself, she still hadn’t fully forgiven Maggie for that.

Fortunately, Alex was preoccupied with her memories, and didn’t notice that Kara had tensed up. Then she turned back and smiled. “But it all worked out. It took me blowing up at her, and her getting shot with heat vision, but lez be honest, we were always on a path to each other. We just had to admit it to ourselves.” Kara chuckled at Alex’s use of ‘lez’ instead of ‘let’s’—clearly she had been immersing herself in her newly found culture. The blonde’s whole body felt warm with joy for her sister, finally getting to be herself after years of unknowingly hiding in the closet.

“I’m honestly really glad Maggie rejected me at first. I needed my coming out to be about me, not about her. And it took that extra time to figure that out. With a little help from my sis, obviously.” Kara giggled, and Alex rubbed her arm. “Maggie was right—I don’t think we could’ve worked if I hadn’t had the time to figure that out.”

Then Alex turned to face Kara fully, and reached out for both her hands. “Kara, I really want you to get to know Maggie. I know there’s a lot that has happened that could get in the way. I know she’s probably not your favourite person, given what happened with Lena.” Kara couldn’t prevent her hands from stiffening in Alex’s grip, or her brow from furrowing. “But please, give her a chance. I … I’m falling in love with her. She isn’t going anywhere, and I need you two to get along.”

Kara pulled away, standing and walking a few steps away from Alex. She breathed in deeply, knowing that she wasn’t being fair. But she couldn’t get the visual of Maggie taking Lena away in handcuffs out of her head. If Maggie hadn’t arrested Lena, Lillian might never have gotten her. Stolen her away. Nearly killed her.

Kara blinked back tears for the second time that night. Lena had forgiven Maggie. Lena was friends with Maggie. Why can’t I let it go?

Then she noticed the TV screen, still paused on Sarah Shahi’s face. Kara couldn’t stifle the laughter that came out of her without permission. She turned back to Alex, struggling to breathe, and her sister stared back at her agape, at a loss for what was going on in Kara’s brain. Once she
finally collected herself, the best explanation Kara could offer was “Holy wow, Alex, I just realized that you so have a type!”

Alex’s eyes were like small plates, they got so wide. But she didn’t move. It almost seemed like she wasn’t breathing. Kara started to get worried, but then suddenly Alex was doubled over, laughing every bit as hard as Kara had been. Which got the blonde going again.

Eventually, they both settled down. Kara’s sides ached from all the laughing. But she felt better and had a clearer idea of what to say to Alex. She decided that honesty was the most important thing—she was done lying to her sister. Kara turned back and sat down across from Alex. “I won’t lie to you. It still bothers me. I’m still angry at Maggie, on a subconscious level that I can’t figure out how to let go of. I know I should blame Lillian, but if Maggie hadn’t arrested Lena, she might never have been in danger.” Catching the fear in Alex’s eyes, Kara felt bad again. “But Alex, I promise, I’m trying. Rationally, I know it wasn’t Maggie’s fault. Lena has forgiven her; heck, they seem to be friends now.”

Both Danvers sisters shared a look—they weren’t really sure how to feel about the burgeoning friendship between their girlfriends. Kara swallowed, then added, “I think I just need to get to know her better. Replace bad memories with good.”

Alex nodded, looking reassured. “I’m so glad the Danvers sisters are back. I know it will take time, but eventually you will love Maggie as much as I do.” Alex sputtered suddenly and blushed, which Kara had to work really hard not to laugh at. “Well … not exactly as much as I do.”

Kara couldn’t resist. “We get it. You’re super gay for your tiny gay girlfriend. You’re the sappiest, most romantic killer secret agent ever. Calm down.” This time she caught the pillow Alex threw at her and made it very clear through her facial expression that Alex did not want to start something.

Unfortunately, that only earned her another pillow in the face, and then it was on.
I Have to Save Her

Chapter Summary

Alex gets kidnapped, and it exacerbates the existing conflict between Supergirl and Maggie.

Chapter 20

To say Lena was nervous about this dinner would be a tremendous understatement. Alex and Maggie were having them over at Alex’s place, and it was only the second time the four of them had ever hung out together. The problem was that the last week she had devoted an inordinate amount of time to trying to get Kara and Maggie to play nice with each other. She’d have bet her considerable fortune that Alex had been doing the same.

But it was clear that no amount of cajoling by Lena or Alex was going to stop the inevitable argument. Lena had barely had three sips of wine before Maggie was passive aggressively pointing out that Supergirl had wrecked (quite literally, as the detective went on to explain) 17 hours of hostage negotiation. Lena was so stunned by the length of the negotiation that Kara was halfway through mocking Maggie before it even registered with Lena. She and Alex exchanged a look—it wasn’t exactly normal for Kara to employ sarcasm. Things were already out of hand.

“Darling, I’m sure Maggie isn’t disappointed that you rescued the hostages without any violence,” Lena began.

Maggie interrupted, snarking under her breath, “Without any violence, my ass.”

Lena flashed a glare in her direction, before continuing, “Let’s not get petty please. My point is that Kara, maybe you can empathize a little here. You got the bank robbers, but Maggie might have gotten them too, and she spent an entire day working at it only for you to come in at the last second. Can you even imagine spending 17 hours working at something?”

Kara pouted a little, huffing before she admitted that yes, that was a lot of work, and she couldn’t really imagine how tough it was on Maggie. She wasn’t ready to give way though, and she looked back at Maggie sternly. “Still, there was no guarantee that all of your work was going to lead to an outcome where you apprehended the robbers without any harm to the hostages. I did that.”

Alex rubbed her forehead in frustration as Maggie responded. “You know, the police exist for a reason! Do you even know the kind of trouble you can cause when you butt in on normal human affairs? Did you know that criminals in National City have been escaping conviction based on the ‘Supergirl defense?’”

Kara looked equal parts confused and angry. “The what?!“

“Oh yeah, it’s all the rage with the criminal defense attorneys in the city now. Excessive force, evidence tainted by debris, vigilante justice … you might feel really great about apprehending those bank robbers tonight, but you also made it that much more likely that they will be out on the streets again in a few months.”

Alex spoke up, trying to mediate. “Maggie’s not questioning the good that you do, Kara. What you do is amazing. When we’re up against—”

“Giant purple aliens or murdery cyborgs!” Maggie interrupted again. “But most of the time, police work requires a more delicate touch. You broke one guy’s arm and gave another guy a concussion. And that was after tearing a hole in a building that is a National City landmark.”

“A thousand things could’ve happened between the 17th hour of your call and the moment when those hostages walked out of that building!” Lena stifled a giggle at the glare Alex shot Kara. “Maybe I broke some walls, but I saved all of those lives! That’s what matters.”

Before Maggie could retort, Alex jumped back in. “Kara, stop! We get it, you saved lives. You save lives every day. But not every problem needs Supergirl to fix it. You are way too reckless sometimes, and whether you will admit it or not, Maggie has a point. You don’t even bother to look before you leap.”

“That’s because I can fly!” Even Lena had to admit that Kara sounded beyond childish with that comeback. She breathed out heavily, then took a sip of her wine. Just as the silence was setting in, Kara stood up. “Clearly I’ve pissed Maggie off just by existing, so I’m gonna go.”

Alex immediately tried to argue with Kara to stay, and Lena took a moment to place a hand on Maggie’s and mouth “I’m so sorry” at her. Then she got up to follow her girlfriend, who she planned to scold thoroughly once they left the building.

Lena would later find herself wishing that their only problem as a group was Kara and Maggie not seeing eye-to-eye on crime fighting.

Kara had called Lena before she flew herself and Maggie to the DEO. She needed her girlfriend’s big brain at work on this, even if part of her just wanted to crawl into a ball in Lena’s arms and cry her eyes out. Lena couldn’t meet them at the DEO, but she promised that she would spend as much time as she could at L-Corp on coordinating with Winn and figuring out priority number one—finding Alex.

Alex! Her sister’s unconscious face flashed through her mind again, and her eyes heated up. She wasn’t sure if tears or heat vision were to blame, but she blinked hard to keep her emotions under control. Which felt impossible. Kara felt as if her whole world was falling apart. It had taken Lena’s voice on the phone to get the room to stop spinning after Alex’s kidnapper had called her from Alex’s phone. Even then, she could barely think straight enough to fly Maggie—who was with her when she got the call—to the DEO.

Talking the situation out with J’onn, Winn, and Maggie had focused her a little, especially once they had a plan, but it was taking all her energy not to blow through the roof of the DEO SUV and fly up far enough that no one could hear her scream. They were on their way to the prison where Peter Thompson was housed. That was the deal—Alex’s life for the release of Thompson. Without any other leads, it had been Maggie’s idea that they should visit the inmate and see if they could determine who might want to break him free. Meanwhile, Winn and Lena were coordinating to dig up any information they could on Thompson.

Kara glanced over at the detective next to her. Maggie was sitting a little stiffly, but otherwise was
breathing normally, looking out the window as if they were on a casual joyride. *How can she be so calm and collected right now?!* The blonde convinced herself that it made sense—Maggie hadn’t been around that long, obviously she didn’t care about Alex nearly as much as Kara did.

It didn’t even occur to her that maybe the detective was used to this sort of pressure and more than capable of keeping her terror and anger bottled up so that she could focus, laser-like, on the task of saving Alex. Kara wasn’t in the mental place to give Maggie that sort of benefit of the doubt.

Once they arrived at the prison, Kara put her best reporter face on and worked really hard to keep it there. She let J’onn—posing as FBI agent Hank Henshaw—and Maggie take the lead in interrogating Thompson. She leaned back against the wall with her arms crossed, sizing the inmate up. She knew he was in prison for murder, but his demeanor read more like a small-town dad, hiding his insecurities behind bad jokes and forced joviality. There was nothing remarkable about the man—middle-aged, stocky, with dirty blonde hair slicked backwards from a receding hairline. It was maddening how normal he was, when he was (1) a murderer and (2) the reason Alex was in danger.

Finally, he had responded to questioning with one joke too many, and Kara felt herself marching forward to the table where he and J’onn sat across from each other. She slammed her fist down on the metal table, meaning to control her powers but failing to do so fully—in her anger, she left a slight dent. “Enough! My sister’s been kidnapped, and her life is on the line until we find out who wants you out of prison.”

“Ms. Danvers—”

Kara continued, as if J’onn hadn’t tried to interrupt, “So save us the sarcasm. Who is it? Who has her?!?” She glared at him with all the authority she could muster.

Maggie’s voice came softly from behind her. “Calm down.”

That only pissed her off further, and Kara practically screamed at Thompson, “Who has my sister?!”

“I don’t know,” he snapped in annoyance.

Kara’s eyes narrowed further. “You’re lying.”

“He’s not. We’re done here.” J’onn’s voice was authoritative, and she looked at him angrily as she backed up from the table. Thompson was removed from the room, and then Kara turned back to the DEO director, her arms wide in outrage.

“Why’d you let him go?”

“Because I read his mind! He’s telling the truth.”

Now Maggie butted in with her two cents, raising a hand out towards Kara as if scolding a small child. “Losing control is not going to help us find Alex. It’s only going to get her killed.”

Kara tightened, her whole body primed to make Maggie the sole target of all the frustration and fear coursing through her veins, but the detective was saved from a rebuke by Kara’s phone ringing. It was Winn. Lena was now busy with a meeting she couldn’t reschedule, but she had helped Winn figure out who the kidnapper was. Thompson had only one semi-regular visitor, and while the visitor used an alias, Winn had determined that he was Thompson’s son. It had taken a lot of digging, because Thompson wasn’t even listed as the father on his birth certificate, but the kidnapper’s name was Rick Malverne.
Why does that name sound familiar? She voiced her thought, and Winn explained that Malverne grew up in Midvale. That sparked her memory. Rick was a kid in Alex’s grade, who had always looked at Kara like she was a complete weirdo. He had seemed nice enough, but Kara thought he always had a crush on Alex that was definitely not reciprocated. And now he had taken her.

I have to go now. I have to stop him. Winn had given her the address of his current home, just outside National City. J’onn and Maggie tried and failed to stop her from rushing off to confront him. Truthfully, she barely even heard what they said. Her mind was focused now. She had to save her sister—there was no time to talk it over.

The sun was setting when she left the prison, and by the time she touched down outside Malverne’s house, it was dark. She kicked in the door, and began frantically searching the house, yelling out Alex’s name. Kara stopped when she discovered a computer desk, with four monitors set up. Each was displaying camera footage of Alex, trapped in some sort of glass and metal cell, maybe four feet by four feet, set against the corner of two nondescript grey brick walls. She jogged over to the monitors, shouting Alex’s name plaintively, hoping that there was a microphone built in to communicate with the cell. Alex didn’t stop pacing around the cell, so clearly she couldn’t hear her sister’s cries. Kara was so distracted with worry that her superhearing didn’t register Malverne until he spoke from behind her.

“She can’t hear you, Kara.”

She turned, angry again. She didn’t let him finish his patronizing comment about not seeing her since graduation, lifting him by the front of his coat and slamming him into the nearest wall. “Where’s my sister?”

He stayed surprisingly calm, considering that a pissed off, superpowered Kryptonian was threatening him with physical violence. But Kara could hear the slight quaver in his voice as he asked if his father was out of prison yet.

“You know I can’t do that.”

“Can’t or won’t?” The snide response set her off again, and she tossed him like a rag doll across the room at another wall. He hit with a thud, and all the walls shook.

“Tell me where she is!”

It took him a minute to catch the breath she had knocked out of him, but the pain had apparently done nothing to lessen his cockiness. “That’s not how this works. Why don’t you try and play nice, Kara? You were always the nice one.”

She hated the idea of playing his game, but she took a steadying breath and lowered her voice. Alex needs me, even if that means I have to ‘play nice’ instead of pounding this asshole into nothing. She softened her expression and implored, “Just let me talk to her.”

This time, he agreed and hit a few buttons that opened up a line from the desk to the cell. She called out, “Alex?”

“Kara! Is that you? Rick Malverne, from Midvale, he kidnapped me.” Alex’s voice was a little higher and faster than normal, but otherwise she seemed as strong as ever. Leave it to Alex to keep it together through her own kidnapping.

“I know. I’m with him right now. Are you okay? Where are you?” She didn’t want to freak Alex out, but nothing could keep the overwhelming concern out of her voice.
“My tracker. Can you use my tracker?”

Kara shook her head. “It’s not working! We don’t know what—”

“Okay, that’s enough,” Malverne interjected, ignoring her pleas not to end the conversation. “It’s simple. She’s told you she’s okay. And now we trade my father for Alex.”

“Your father is a murderer,” Kara’s voice had shifted from concerned to bitter, along with her mood.

“Manslaughterer,” he retorted, as if that would make any kind of difference.

“Tell me where she is.” Supergirl was losing her patience again.

“Tick tock.” His voice was slimy and self-righteous, and as Kara’s fury drove her towards him, she felt her eyes heat up again. This time she knew it was her heat vision, and while she was in control enough not to blow his head up, she hoped that her glowing orange eye sockets might intimidate him.

But no, of course not. Malverne was sure of himself. Arrogant. He stepped closer, a snide grin on his face, and said, “Oh wow. That’s even cooler up close.” For a half second, Supergirl legitimately considered melting that grin off his face, before he backed up a step and warned her, “If you hurt me, you’ll never find her. And she’ll die. Slowly.”

Shit. Kara took a deep breath in, and her eyes returned to normal. She turned and took one last look at Alex, who was currently raging against the glass walls of the cell. Then she said a silent prayer to Rao for Alex’s safety before grabbing Malverne roughly and shoving him out the front door. She was taking him to the DEO.

“Hey! You know what’ll be fun? Finding out which one of you loves her more.”

That monster’s words, taunting and gleeful as she and Maggie left the DEO containment room where he was now being held, were still rankling Kara. How could he act so cocky after I accidentally broke multiple bones in his body? She and Maggie were arguing again, as had become a fairly regular occurrence when she was fully outfitted as Supergirl. But this time, there was more heat than usual.

J’onn’s ploy to shapeshift as Thompson and convince Malverne that they had met their side of the bargain was a bust. Malverne knew about J’onn and his powers. Then Alex had done something to her tracker that had allowed Winn to find it, and now she was off to save her sister. No one was going to stop her. Especially not Maggie.

“Kara, stop! You can’t just fly off—you always do this.” Maggie’s admonishing tone was normally annoying, but right at this moment, Kara didn’t even have time for it. She turned and continued walking down the hall, towards the DEO’s balcony entrance. Maggie kept pace and continued, “Something is fishy here. Malverne still thinks he’s in control. He’s not acting like someone who just lost. He didn’t even flinch. I’m telling you, he expected this.”

Kara stopped and turned to focus her meanest glare on the detective. “No! We are not listening to that psycho, and I am done playing his games. Every minute we wait matters.”

“I want to get her as badly as you do—” Kara scoffed, but Maggie went on, “—but we can’t punch our way out of this. We gotta get it right.”
Unbelievable. “If the shoe were on the other foot, Alex would already be out the door. I’m not waiting.” She turned and stalked off again, ignoring Maggie’s shouted “You’re not the only one who cares about her!”

As she tore into the sky, flying at her top speed, the cacophony of the wind around her matched the stormy thoughts in her head. She was furious with Maggie. All Kara’s previous misgivings about her and all their arguments had led to this final straw. Maybe Alex had forgiven Maggie for rejecting her, hurting her, making her cry, but Kara had never quite gotten over it. And now … how could Maggie be so cautious? Didn’t she care about Alex at all? Kara had meant what she said—if Maggie were in danger, Alex would have sprung into action immediately. That’s what Alex did for the people she cared about.

Kara and Alex had finally gotten back into the super close sister relationship they had shared before Maggie and Lena came along, and she wasn’t going to lose Alex again. Maybe Maggie had been there for Alex when Kara wasn’t, but she had only known her for a few months. She couldn’t possibly understand. Because clearly if she did, she wouldn’t be waiting around and coddling the monster who kidnapped Alex.

Typical Maggie, though. Trying to be sure she had checked out every possible angle and drawn up a strategy before ever acting, even if it risked people getting hurt in the meantime. And maybe that’s what good cops do, but Kara wasn’t a cop. And this was Alex. Supergirl was basically an overpowered demi-goddess on this planet, and she wasn’t going to play cop with Maggie when she had a shot at actually rescuing Alex. She was going to fucking save her sister. Right now.

When she reached the source of Alex’s signal, she slowed herself enough to break through the roof of the warehouse and land without destroying the concrete. She immediately heard Alex’s muffled voice shout her name. She must be close enough to that Alex heard her break through the roof.

“Alex?!” she shouted, and then followed the sound of Alex’s “I’m down here!” There was a lead panel on the floor that looked roughly the size of Alex’s cell. Kara immediately peeled it off its hinges and threw it away and …

Shit.

Alex wasn’t there. All Kara found was a timer, a laptop showing the feed from the camera in Alex’s cell, and the spray-painted message, “Now you have four.” As tears welled in Kara’s eyes, the timer raced, plummeting from over 20 hours down to only four. But that wasn’t the worst part. Kara’s stomach fell and her chest tightened as she saw on the screen that water was now pouring into Alex’s cell.

What have I done?
Chapter Summary

Kara and Maggie get over their differences and work together to save their girl.

Chapter 21

While Kara was tracking down and apprehending Rick Malverne, Lena found herself with her attentions divided. She wanted nothing more than to drop everything and go to the DEO to help find Alex. But she was more than a girlfriend to Kara or a friend to Alex. She was the CEO of L-Corp, and business wasn’t going to wait around. She had done her part, and she trusted that Kara and Maggie would be able to save Alex. Assuming they didn’t kill each other first.

For now, she needed her attention fully on the woman before her. Genevieve Teague, as she had introduced herself, was a very attractive brunette maybe fifteen or twenty years Lena’s senior. The woman carried herself with such dignity and grace, she could have passed for royalty. And Lena couldn’t help but notice Genevieve could wear the hell out of a suit.

But that’s not really what intrigued Lena. Genevieve had wowed her with a joint venture proposal that, if it was everything the older woman suggested, could radically change the entire world. Lena was 90 percent sure it was too good to be true, but on the 10 percent chance that it wasn’t, the meeting deserved her full consideration. Alex’s safety was important, but so was the future prosperity of the planet.

Genevieve was proposing a machine that could transform and reconfigure matter—basically a teleporter. When she first heard the idea, she had scoffed. The idea was something straight out of science fiction. But by now, Lena had learned not to dismiss such outrageous ideas without doing her due diligence—after all, her girlfriend was an alien superhero whose society had been superior to humanity in every possible scientific and technological way and whose body somehow converted yellow sun radiation into invulnerability, flight, super strength, heat vision, and most outrageous of all, freeze breath. Lena reckoned that basically anything was possible these days.

So, she considered Genevieve’s proposal quite thoroughly. Lena was aware that Genevieve had not shared everything, as the designs were still quite theoretical and abstract. But … it looked like it was possible, which filled Lena with giddiness. She had finally found the project that would be her great mark on the world, wiping away the corrosiveness of the Luthor name and actually contributing to the betterment of the world around her. If they could make it work, which was still a huge question mark.

She was so captivated by the project’s potential that she didn’t care that Genevieve was lying to her. The concept was so radical and out there, and so beyond anything that seemed possible under a human conception of math, physics, and technology, that Lena was sure Genevieve was an alien. She looked human enough, but then again so did Kara. Anyway, Lena wouldn’t bother with that, not yet. Genevieve, or whatever her real name was, had her own reasons for posing as a human, not least of which was likely Lena’s family’s reputation as xenophobic murderers. She had long since learned that many aliens are genuinely fantastic people, just looking for a new home.

And so she found herself smiling as she told Genevieve that her proposal was astonishing.
“Well, I saw your TED talk on the future of quantum technology, which made me think that this might be right up your alley.” Lena resisted the urge to chuckle. Genevieve was clearly no stranger to the tactful use of flattery.

She responded excitedly as she stood up from her desk, “This could revolutionize travel, energy, security … just about anything! You could move food and water to famine-stricken areas in an instant.” She crossed her arms and smiled genuinely. “Solve climate change. … That is, if it works.” She lifted an eyebrow, but the older woman was unflappable, merely looking at her with an amused half smile as she waited for Lena to finish her thought. “Your proposal is sound, but it’s entirely theoretical.”

Genevieve tilted her head slightly, before responding, “Yes well, that’s why I need you. My thought was, if we wed L-Corp’s work in zero size intelligence with my designs, I’m confident we can make it a reality. Now, of course, I did keep a number of key details out of the proposal. I needed to gauge your interest before revealing all of my secrets.”

“Oh, I’m interested,” Lena assured her.

“Well good, because I made us a reservation at Paca’s.” Lena was legitimately taken aback by this. She hadn’t expected to seal the deal over a fancy dinner at one of her favourite upscale National City eateries. And the pause was enough to distract her from all the momentous possibilities behind creating a working teleporter, the extreme danger faced by her girlfriend’s sister rushing back to the forefront of her mind.

“Actually, I’ve got some rather pressing personal business to attend to the next couple of days. Could we reschedule for Thursday night?” Lena hoped that her demeanor and tone made it clear to Genevieve that she wasn’t blowing her off. This proposal was near the top of Lena’s priority list.

A dark cloud passed over Genevieve’s face for the briefest of moments, but then she smiled warmly. “Of course, I absolutely understand. Do what you have to do; Thursday will be fine.” She paused to give Lena a look that was almost seductive, but not at all in a sexual way. Something about her eyes just radiated with the promise of all the things they could potentially accomplish together. And a desire to get started on them. In some way, it reminded her of the way Lex used to look at her. Lena continued to be impressed with the woman, who now glanced at the door. “I believe I can find my way out. Good luck with your personal business, and we’ll talk more Thursday.”

Lena smiled as Genevieve sauntered out of her office, then quickly checked her phone for messages from Kara. The last message indicated that she had caught the kidnapper, but that he wasn’t telling them where Alex was. That had been a couple of hours ago, and so Lena dialed her girlfriend’s number, hoping that everything had been resolved and that she was interrupting Alex’s welcome home celebration at the DEO.

She gazed out at the sunset fading away over the horizon as Kara picked up the phone. Immediately, Lena knew that Alex was still missing. Kara’s voice sounded lost, tinged with fear and … guilt? “Lena, I … I really screwed up. And now she’s … I’m so scared she’s going to die, and it will be all my fault. I was so stupid.”

“Kara, what are you talking about? What happened?” Lena did her best to make her voice as soothing as possible. Kara needed support right now.

“I … we found Alex’s tracker signal, and I flew out to save her. Maggie tried to stop me, tried to warn me that it was part of his game. That Malverne was screwing with us. But I didn’t listen. I never listen. I just rushed off, and now she’s going to die. We have less than four hours left
before Alex’s cell fills with water, and she drowns.”

Lena couldn’t stop her gasp, but quickly tried to reassure her girlfriend. “Kara, you’ll figure this out. I’m heading to the DEO right now, and we’ll figure this out together—” There was noise on the other line, and Kara hurriedly offered a quick goodbye.

“J’onn’s here, I’ve gotta go. I’ll see you soon.” She hung up, leaving Lena in a cloud of confusion and concern. She quickly collected her things and walked out the office.

“Jess, I’m taking my own car tonight, no need to call a driver. You’re free to head home now.” She was in the elevator before she could hear her assistant’s response, and she took a deep breath. No matter what happened tonight, she would be there for Kara. Everything else could wait.

Kara had rushed back to the DEO in a daze, feeling defeated. Numb. She barely even registered that her phone was ringing. She answered, only because it was Lena, and she had no idea what to say. Lena’s voice was soft and full of love and concern. “Kara, love, what’s happening? Did you get her?”

Suddenly Kara was fighting back tears again, and she couldn’t seem to get out any words louder than a whisper. She tried to explain, but she could do little more than rant about how Alex was going to die, and it was her fault, and she was so stupid. *I should’ve listened to Maggie.*

Lena was explaining that she was coming straight to the DEO, but then Kara saw J’onn walking up, worry written all over his face. She said a quick goodbye to Lena and turned to face J’onn. Before he could say anything, she was sobbing into his shoulders. He wrapped his arms around her, and she struggled to get the words out. “It was a trap. He’s still playing these twisted games. And now she’s going to die. She’s drowning, and it’s all my fault.” She pulled away and looked J’onn in the eyes. “We have less than four hours now. We have to free Thompson.”

He began to tell her that they would find another way, that she couldn’t have known it was a trap, that she was just trying to save Alex … but Kara barely registered his words. She had just remembered the laptop in her hand. The one that was still connected to the camera and microphone in Alex’s cell. She started walking, leaving a concerned J’onn to try to follow her.

She marched into the containment room and opened the laptop in front of Malverne. Before he could let out another of his snide remarks, she gave him a look full of fury and hate. “I don’t want to *fucking* hear it. You’re a psychopath, and I’m done talking to you. Let me talk to my sister.” Kara knew she wasn’t going to get anything out of him, so why bother? Alex was the priority here.

He typed in a few commands, and the microphone was live. She frantically explained to Alex about the trap and asked if she had any idea where she was. Alex’s response was full of frustration, but she somehow managed to keep the fear out of her voice. Too bad Kara could see it in her eyes.

“I was unconscious … I, I don’t know.”

“Alex. It’s Rick. I don’t want to hurt you, I keep telling your sister that. Tell her to get my father, and this can all be over. You can come home and get dry.” Kara resisted the urge to reach across the table and pop his head like a grape, keeping her attention on her sister.

“No! Kara, no!” Alex pointed her finger at the camera for emphasis. “You **do not** give that
terrorist what he wants. You cannot let yourself be blackmailed. You cannot open yourself up to
that, ever! Do you understand me? Supergirl is bigger than me.”

Kara’s shoulders slumped. She knew Alex was right, but she wasn’t sure that she could live up to
her sister’s belief in her. If it came down to choosing between Alex and the integrity of Supergirl,
Kara already knew what she would choose. She was just glad that the camera was one-way, so that
Alex couldn’t see the doubt swirling in her mind. Then Maggie walked in, and Alex insisted that
they be able to speak privately.

Maggie took the laptop out into the hallway, but Kara didn’t bother to force herself not to listen in
with her super hearing. She wanted to hear her sister’s voice as much as possible in case … No,
don’t think that way. Kara was immediately surprised; she hadn’t expected the emotion in
Maggie’s voice.

“No, don’t think that way.”

Kara was immediately surprised; she hadn’t expected the emotion in
Maggie’s voice.

“Babe, everyone here is working hard, and we’re going to find you.” Maggie’s voice was just on
the edge of cracking, and in this moment of vulnerability, Kara realized just how much Maggie had
been bottling up since Alex was taken. The woman sounded terrified.

“The water is rising fast, and there are things that I need to say.” Kara’s chest tightened, and she
choked back a sob. She could hear the increased pulse of Maggie’s heartbeat, and knew that
Alex’s words were having the same effect on her.

“No! Don’t start talking like this is the end,” Maggie ordered emphatically.

“I don’t want it to be, but in case that it is—”

“It’s not!” Maggie gasped. “You’re a badass, Danvers. And you’re gonna figure out a way to get
yourself out of there or you’re gonna hold on until I find you.” This time Maggie’s voice did crack
over the phrase ‘hold on,’ but Alex responded calmly.

“No!” The detective’s words were wobbling now, and Kara knew that she had been wrong about
how much Maggie cared. She had been wrong about so many things when it came to Maggie.
The detective was barely holding it together, and she absolutely refused to let Alex say goodbye.
“We just started this, you and me, and it’s not going to end,” she whispered, holding back tears.
“Not today. Not for a long time. We just had our first Valentine’s Day, and I wanna do more with
you.”

Kara could hear the desperation in Maggie’s voice, and yes, the love. Maggie continued, “I want
more firsts. I want to have a first vacation. We haven’t even argued about where we’re gonna go
yet, or, or how to load the dishwasher. Or what to name our first dog. Do you want to get a dog?”

“Yeah, ummm… Let’s name her Gertrude.” Alex said this so casually, as if realizing that Maggie
needed her to put on a brave face. Kara was so proud of her sister and so heartbroken for Maggie.
Everything had shifted in her mind, and even though she was still terrified, she was now filled with
resolution. Maggie and Alex are going to get those firsts, and I’m getting my sister back.

Maggie was still going on about a lifetime of firsts they would have together, and then she ordered
Alex to hold on. “Hold on until I get to you. You promise. Promise me!” Kara heard some static,
and suddenly Maggie was hyperventilating. She rushed into the hallway to ask her what happened,
just in time to see Maggie shut the laptop forcefully and throw it against the ground.

Then she registered Kara’s presence and looked up at her, tensing. Maggie’s face was blotchy
from crying, and her eyes were still watery, but she glared at Kara with all the force of Kryptonian heat vision. “I told you not to rush in! Now you’ve made things worse.” Kara started to defend herself, almost on impulse, but caught herself and shut up. She let Maggie continue.

“I should have been heard. I should have been listened to. I’m her girlfriend! You think you trump me, just because you’ve been her sister for years now. You think you know what’s right for her, but I … I got her to be herself, Kara.” Maggie’s voice cracked again, and now there was nothing but anguish on her face. “I have just as much to lose as you. You should have listened to me!”

Maggie turned to walk away, and Kara was so caught up in her own guilt that she almost forgot to go after her. “Maggie!” She turned back to Kara, and the tears were falling again. Kara placed a hand softly on Maggie’s arm. “You were right. You were right! I’m so sorry, Maggie. You were right.”

Before she could even register her own actions, she was hugging Maggie. The shorter woman stiffened, then relaxed into her touch. They both cried, and after what felt like ten minutes but was probably just thirty seconds or so, Kara pulled back. “I never gave you the benefit of the doubt. First you rejected Alex, then you arrested Lena, and I’ve never forgiven you for either. But that’s on me. I’ve been blind to what you and Alex mean to each other, and I’ve been too selfish and stubborn to give you a real chance.”

Maggie seemed shocked to hear Kara admit all this, but she made no effort to interrupt. “I mistook your calm for a lack of care. I thought that if you really loved Alex, you would be just as eager to act as I was. I didn’t realize that what I thought was coldness was actually strength. You were holding it together, because you knew that Alex would need you to hold it together, to think about this like a detective, not a girlfriend. Maggie, I’m so sorry. This is all my fault.”

Maggie opened her mouth to speak, her eyes displaying more compassion than before, but Kara jumped back in. “No, you know what? This isn’t about me or about us. There’s only so much time left, and we are going to save Alex. Together.”

“Kara! Maggie!” They had been so wrapped up in their conversation that neither had noticed Lena pacing down the hallway towards them.

Maggie looked up at Kara and said, “Catch your girlfriend up on what’s going on. Maybe she’ll have an idea that will save Alex. I’m going back in to talk to that little shit, and he is going to tell me where she is.” The steel in her voice was almost terrifying, and then she was gone. Kara turned just as Lena was wrapping her up in a hug. She felt a strong hand cradling the back of her head, and she leaned into the warmth and comfort of Lena’s shoulder. But just for a moment. She knew she didn’t have time to relax.

She pulled back, collected herself, and explained everything to Lena. Why Malverne had kidnapped Alex, how he had known that Kara was Supergirl, how he had tricked them when Alex found a work around to get her tracker signal out, and how Kara had recklessly jumped straight into the trap. She paused, not wanting to start crying again. “Lena, I really fucked up. Now, we’ve got less than three hours left to find her. Can you think of anything?”

The CEO glanced over at the broken laptop, and then went to pick it up gingerly. “I really wish Maggie hadn’t trashed this. I’m going to work with Winn and see if we can’t salvage it. This was connected to the live feed from Alex’s cell, maybe we can hack in and get a location. It’s the best I can come up with on the spot.”

“Okay, I’ll go with you. If I go back into that containment room, I can’t promise I won’t kill him.
And I’m sure that if anyone can get him to talk, it’s Maggie, not me.”

They walked in silence, holding hands. When they got back up to the main floor, Winn was waiting for them at the elevator. “J’onn said you had a laptop with a live feed connected to the …” His voice dropped as Lena held up the remains of the laptop. “Well crap. That’ll make this harder.” He caught himself and looked quickly at Kara. “But not impossible! I promise, we’ll figure this out. Lena, care to help out?”

“That’s the plan.” Lena squeezed Kara’s hand before letting go and following Winn to a workstation. Kara stood there and realized that she couldn’t just sit idly and wait for something to happen. She caught Lena’s eye and nodded her head towards the balcony. Lena nodded, understanding.

J’onn was out on the balcony, and she explained to him that she needed to be doing something. “I’m going to fly around the city, see if I can’t hear her. I know it’s a long shot, but there’s nothing I can do here at the DEO. My comms are on, so let me know if Maggie gets something from Malverne or if Lena and Winn are able to track Alex down through the laptop.”

“I will. Happy hunting.” She turned to take off, but he stopped her. “Oh, and Kara? This isn’t your fault—you only did what you thought was best to protect your sister. No one can blame you for that. We’re going to get her back. I promise.”

Kara nodded, then took off. She flew in a grid pattern, tracing along the streets of National City. She flew slowly enough that she could focus on the sounds of the city around her, listening for the telltale sounds of pouring water or Alex’s voice. She would guess that probably an hour had passed by the time she finished the downtown area. There had been a couple of false alarms—just be people pouring a bath—and now she was flying in slowly widening circles around the outskirts of the city. She was frantic and increasingly terrified.

Suddenly J’onn’s voice was in her ear. “Kara, Maggie disappeared without telling anyone. I can’t be sure exactly how long ago she left, but there’s only one place she could be heading.”

“That’s the prison,” Kara confirmed, before taking off in that direction.

“She has about 30 minutes left at this point. I can’t make this decision for you, but whatever you choose, do it soon.”

The blonde already knew what she would do, if it came to that, but she had one last gambit to try first. She elected to speed into the prison through the actual doors, rather than punching a hole in the roof, but she didn’t stop for any of the security measures. She didn’t know how long Maggie had been there, or if she had already escaped with Thompson.

Fortunately, her timing was just right. She caught Maggie only a few cellblocks down from Thompson’s cell. “Maggie, you know Alex wouldn’t want you to do this!”

Maggie stopped, one hand still locked onto Thompson’s arm, the other holding Alex’s favourite gun. “All I care about is getting her back alive.” Me too, Kara thought, but she couldn’t let Thompson know that. Maggie went on, “You were right. Sometimes words don’t work.”

“Sometimes punching doesn’t either.” Kara knew what Alex expected of them, and she turned Maggie’s words back on her, determined not to let her betray Alex’s trust unless they absolutely had to. She turned her gaze to Thompson. “She just came from your son. She was with him all day, trying to turn him, make him understand.” Kara noticed Maggie put the gun away, and just maybe they were on the same page now. “You know what kind of words your son’s been using?
Thompson looked confused, wary. Supergirl had no idea if she could get through to this murderer, appeal to his humanity, but she was going to try. For Alex. “Words like ‘rescue,’ and ‘love.’ He says he wants to rescue you, like you rescued him. But if he kills Alex Danvers in cold blood, he’ll never be rescued. He’ll have to live with that for the rest of his life. Surely you know, from experience, that that’ll be his hell.”

She stepped closer, searching his eyes for any reaction. She thought she saw a twinge of compassion, so she pressed further. “You’ve done a lot of bad things in your life, but you’ve done one thing you can be proud of. You are a father. A good one. And that’s what you need to be now. If he kills her, you will have failed at the one good thing you’ve done with your life. Be a father now.”

Thompson looked to the side, then looked down, blinking. Maggie’s phone beeped, and she pleaded, “She’s out of time. Five more minutes, and she’ll drown.”

Kara fixed her most idealistic Supergirl gaze on Thompson and exorted him, “Please, is there anywhere he would’ve taken her?”

“There’s one place.” He gave her the address, and she instructed him to go back to his cell. Then she picked up Maggie and blew a hole in the ceiling with her heat vision. This time, Maggie didn’t complain. They both knew there was no time to lose. Kara flew as fast as she could without hurting Maggie, and then she heard Lena’s voice over the comms.

“Kara, we found her! You have to hurry!” She confirmed the address given by Thompson, and Supergirl thanked her, explaining that Thompson had told them and that they were nearly there. The flight took about three minutes, and tension had completely taken over Kara and Maggie. The blonde could feel Maggie’s grip on her tighten, before Kara set her down in front of the door to the warehouse. Then she sped through the door, as fast as she could, knowing that Maggie would catch up. Kara got there just in time, and she heard Maggie run around the corner as Alex was swept out of the cell by the wave of water escaping the remains of the glass wall Supergirl had shattered.

Kara took Alex’s hand while Maggie supported her head, wrapping her arms around her and stroking Alex’s wet hair. The elder Danvers was gasping for breath and choked up a bit of water. Kara kissed her hand, then squeezed it tighter. “You held on.”

Alex managed to stammer out, “I held on,” and the superhero had never been more astounded by her sister. She was incredible. This tiny, fragile human had survived something that Kara was sure few humans could. Maggie kissed Alex on the forehead, and they all stayed there for a while, still recovering from the trauma but happy to be together again. Then Kara took off her cape and wrapped it around Alex, trying to dry and warm her, at least a little. None of them moved from the concrete floor of the warehouse, and Maggie and Kara took turns hugging Alex and trying to warm her up until a couple of DEO SUVs arrived to pick them up. As they walked out, on either side of Alex and each with an arm around her for support, Maggie and Kara shared a look of mutual appreciation and respect. They had gotten their girl back. Together.

Kara had stayed with her once she, Alex, and Maggie had gotten back to the DEO. She said she wanted to give the lovebirds some time together, and Lena was more than happy to have Kara all to herself. She had briefly explained to J’onn what had happened, and now the two of them were sitting together in a corner near the balcony doors, facing into the DEO so that they would know when Malverne was taken away.
Any thoughts of world-saving teleportation technology were so far back in Lena’s mind that they may as well not exist. Her sole focus was on the amazing woman currently huddled silently in her arms. Lena pondered amusedly that they must be an odd sight for some of the DEO agents who were unaware of their relationship. A Super, wrapped up in the comforting arms of her Luthor girlfriend. Lena grinnned at the thought. Kara’s head rested on Lena’s shoulder, and the cumulative stress of the day had finally caught up with her. Kara’s whole body had slumped into Lena, which the brunette found to be absolutely remarkable. She couldn’t quite believe that she was the one fortunate enough to give Kara, the most extraordinary and powerful person she knew, one of the few places she could be vulnerable. She kissed the top of Kara’s head, so glad that this ordeal was over. She couldn’t imagine what she had been through that day.

Kara was startled back to full awareness when Maggie’s voice called out across the DEO, “She refused to stay in bed.” Lena and Kara stood up at the same time, walking towards Maggie, who was supporting Alex’s weight as they walked out of the medbay.

“Are you sure you’re alright,” Kara asked, her face scrunching up with worry.

“I’m alright,” Alex insisted, but Lena could see that the agent was exhausted. Still, she leaned her head towards Kara and backed up Alex.

“Of course she’s fine, darling, this is Alex Danvers we’re talking about.” Alex winked at her, but both Maggie and Kara looked unconvinced.

The nice moment was interrupted by the sound of handcuffs. “Oh. You survived,” Malverne taunted, and then Winn, of all people, was in his face.

“Oh, you do not get to talk to her.” Lena felt Kara beam at the tiny tech wizard, but Alex didn’t even bother to look in Malverne’s general direction.

Alex turned to J’onn and asked, “What are you going to do with him?” He explained that he had only one option; in order to protect the identity of Supergirl and the DEO, he would have to mind-wipe the prisoner. Lena gaped. Kara had told her that the Martian was a telepath, but she didn’t know he had this kind of power. Fortunately, he seemed reluctant to use it, seeking Alex’s approval before taking Malverne away.

Lena hadn’t known Alex Danvers long, but she was entirely unsurprised by what happened next. Alex assured J’onn that the mind-wipe was the right decision, then added, “Just … before you do…” She let her fist finish the thought, breaking Malverne’s nose. “Make sure he remembers that.”

Lena chuckled, and Kara grinned wickedly. She glanced over to see Maggie’s reaction, and if she had to take a guess, she would say that this was the detective’s “quietly turned on” face. Which only made Lena laugh some more, raising an eyebrow that drew a quick grin and a shrug from Maggie.

Then Maggie drew Kara aside, and Alex and Lena stood together as their girlfriends took a moment. They only walked a few steps away, so Lena convinced herself that they didn’t mind being eavesdropped on.

Maggie started, “I need to thank you.”

“Thank me? For what?”

“I was so afraid of losing her that I wasn’t thinking. And I almost—”
Kara jumped to her defense. “Maggie no, you did the right thing! And that was all you. You had one moment of weakness and only because Alex was out of time—if I couldn’t get through to Thompson, I was gonna be right there with you. But you were the one who handled this correctly from the start. All I did was remind you of everything you’ve been telling me the whole time.” The former adversaries smiled at each other warmly, and Alex and Lena shared a knowing look.

Maggie asked, “You and me made a pretty good team, didn’t we?”

“Yeah well, we both love her.” Maggie let out a soft “yeah,” before wrapping the taller woman in a tight hug. Lena glanced to her side and was treated to the most proud look she had ever seen grace the visage of the formidable Alex Danvers.

Lena butted in. “Alright well now that you two are besties, it’s time to go home. Both Danvers sisters look ready to pass out.” Kara rolled her eyes, but Maggie just kept smiling. The foursome walked down to the garage together. Kara was in no condition to fly, and Lena had no desire to leave her car at the DEO. Alex and Kara shared one last long hug before they parted ways. It was no surprise to Lena that her girlfriend was fast asleep in the soft embrace of her leather seats before she could even drive them out of the garage.
Chapter Summary

Lena opens up about her childhood, then all the double date fluff you can handle.

Chapter 22

Kara woke up with a smile on her face. And it was only partially because she woke to Lena’s lips working their way softly down her body. She jerked when Lena hit a ticklish spot, then stretched languorously in the early morning sunlight. “Good morning!” she managed to squeak out.

Lena looked up at her for a split second, but it was long enough for Kara to see the desire in her eyes. She offered a soft and sultry “Good morning, darling” in return, then returned her attention to Kara’s body. The blonde allowed herself to enjoy Lena taking her time to explore for a while longer, then she straightened.

“One sec!” Kara used her superspeed to close the curtains and turn on the red sun lamps, then she was back under her girlfriend almost before she could register her absence. “I’m feeling lazy this morning.” Lena wiggled her eyebrows and leaned her face in towards Kara’s as slowly as possible.

Lena halted with her lips less than an inch from Kara’s, green eyes fixed on blue. “Okay,” she whispered, and Kara could feel her breath on her lips. It was too much, and Kara closed the distance by tentatively sliding the tip of her tongue over Lena’s bottom lip. She got the reaction she was looking for; Lena immediately gasped in surprise and delight. It seemed like they were both in a mood this morning.

Over an hour later, the ladies were fully clothed again. Lena was already in her outfit for the day, save for her sneakers. Kara, on the other hand, was still in pajama pants and a tank top. They weren’t meeting up with Alex and Maggie until lunch, so Kara was in no rush. She pulled Lena down onto her lap, taking care that the brunette’s coffee didn’t spill on the couch. Lena smiled widely then slid over so that her butt was on the couch next to Kara, but her legs were still draped across her lap.

There was something Kara had been wanting to ask about, and she figured now was as good a time as any. “Hey Lena?” She looked cautiously into her girlfriend’s eyes, and the sunlight was coming in just right that the tiny flecks of gold in her green irises stood out. *Rao, she’s so pretty.*

Lena’s “Yes, darling?” startled her from her reverie, and she felt her whole face blush furiously.

“Yeah, hahaha, ummm I was just curious, and you don’t have to open up about this if you don’t want to—I know your family is a tricky subject, and I would never want you to feel uncomfortable because of me, and….” Lena interrupted her by placing her index finger on Kara’s lips.

“Kara, it’s fine. We agreed, no more hiding things from each other, and I meant that. What do you want to know about the Luthors?”

Kara surveyed Lena’s face, wanting to be sure that she was comfortable. Convinced that she really
didn’t mind talking about it, Kara began, “Well… I guess with everything that happened with Alex this week, I realized that I don’t really know anything about your relationship with Lex. You know, growing up. The couple times you’ve mentioned him, you always sounded … I don’t know, wistful? Like there was more there. Were you two close at one point?”

Lena’s eyes went distant, and she responded softly, not at all focused on her words. “Yes, actually, we were.” She blinked hard several times, then her attention was back on Kara. “He was, well, everything to me. Lionel and Lillian adopted me when I was four. I didn’t realize it then, not on any conscious level anyway, but neither of them was comfortable with me there. Now that I know Lionel was my birth father, I get it. He was always nice to me, but distant. He never let me in, never really got to know me or let me get to know him. Couldn’t let himself get too close to the constant reminder of his infidelity.” She sighed in frustration, and Kara squeezed her leg. Lena gave her a thankful look, and Kara’s fingers began tracing shapes up and down Lena’s leg as the brunette resumed her recollection.

“Lex was there for me from day one. He barely knew me, and already I was his sister. It was like he knew that I really needed just one person in my corner, no questions asked. And that was just the way it was for my entire childhood. I was educated at many of the finest schools available, but Lex was the one who raised me.”

Kara was captivated by Lena’s story, but she couldn’t help feeling conflicted about it. Her heart broke at the idea of a tiny Lena, all alone in the world and ignored—and probably harassed, knowing Lillian—by her adoptive parents. She felt so thankful that Lex was apparently there for her, a light in the darkness. But the Lex she described didn’t make any sense to Kara. How could someone that kind have become the monster Kara knew Lex to be?

As usual, Lena knew exactly what Kara was thinking. “I know how this sounds. It must be hard to believe, since you only know the man Lex became later. But the boy, my older brother, was a different person entirely. He actually wasn’t all that different from Alex.” Lena stopped and chuckled. “Even their names are similar. Lex. Alex.” Kara had never actually thought about that. She’d have to mention it to Alex; she was sure that it would get a reaction out of her sister.

“He was 9 years older than me. At first, he was my doting mentor and my champion. He played with me and confided in me, always treating me like a peer even though I was his baby sister. I think he could always see my potential. By the time I was a teenager, we were practically partners in everything. Always bouncing new ideas off each other, collaborating on secret projects when we could get time away from school and work.” Her voice got even softer. “He was my best friend, and the only person in my life who made me feel truly loved. I always thought we were going to save the world together.”

Lena’s eyes were glassy, and Kara tensed as if poised to wrap her up in strong arms the minute those tears fell. But Lena just frowned, sadness written all over her features. “I try not to dwell on it, but sometimes I wonder. If Mother hadn’t poisoned his mind with anti-alien ideologies at such an impressionable age. If …” she glanced at Kara apologetically, “maybe if whatever happened between him and your cousin, back whenever they were friends. … I don’t know. Maybe he’d still be my loving big brother. Maybe he and I could be working together to tackle all of the world’s biggest technological problems.”

She wiped away the tear that had been threatening to drop from her eye. “I don’t hold that much of a grudge against Superman, I promise. I will never know exactly what went wrong with them, but I know how stubborn Lex can be. Maybe Superman broke his trust somehow; maybe not. But that was when Lex fell off that cliff he had been slowly walking to the edge of for years. That’s when I really lost my brother.”
Kal, what did you do? Kara leaned over and hugged her girlfriend. “Lena, I would never judge you for wishing your brother hadn’t gone down that path. I’m so sorry, for your sake, that he did. I know the pain of loss, even if yours was more complicated or uhhh metaphorical than mine.” Kara was worried that she had worded that awkwardly or given Lena the wrong idea, but the brunette smiled at her, seemingly reassured.

“Up till then—honestly up until the night he fought Superman—he was always protective, you know? Not overly so, but he did everything he could to make me feel safe and loved. He was my shoulder to cry on, my only confidante. And he did his best to protect me from Mother.” Lena’s face darkened. “She never forgave me for Lionel’s affair. I’m not entirely sure that she ever even really saw me as a person. At best, I was a bauble, a pretty little girl to be paraded around at high society events. And then once she realized that I was every bit the prodigy that Lex was, both she and Lionel were grooming me to play a key role in LuthorCorp. Dad actually believed in me, thought I was an important part of the future of the company. He wasn’t exactly doting, but he always made time for me. But Mother … I’m sure she saw me as a backup to Lex, a sidekick for him to utilize as he furthered her anti-alien agenda.”

“Lena, I’m so sorry,” Kara wasn’t surprised that Lillian was a terrible mother, but that didn’t stop her from hurting on Lena’s behalf.

“Oh, Kara, it’s okay. That wasn’t even the worst of it. Believe me. My point was, even though he was her golden boy, Lex always did what he could to shield me from the worst of the abuse. Mother was the one subject we always disagreed on, and eventually I learned to play along, pretend like she didn’t get to me. In hindsight, I suppose he did share some of that stubborn Luthor believe that excellence must be forged and sharpened through trials and tribulations. But he did his best to soften the sting of the verbal abuse and manipulation. In Lex’s presence, Lillian’s barbs were mostly limited to impossible expectations I could never meet. That and the constant digs at my lack of manners, my poor etiquette, my fashion choices, … my … potential lovers.”

Lena pulled her legs off Kara’s lap, tucking them under her so that she could lean in closer to Kara. Her voice softened, and Kara could hear the vulnerability in it. “... she was the reason I’ve been in the closet for so long. We never exactly talked about my sexuality, but Mother was always perceptive. She made it very clear that I was expected to be straight, finding opportunities to drop into conversation a comment about a cute boy here and mention of a future husband there. One time she caught me making out with a boarding school friend when I was fourteen, and I genuinely thought she might kill the girl. After that… I guess I just figured my life would be easier if I played the part of meek daughter, going along with whatever Lillian decided for me. And you know, doing whatever the hell I wanted in private. I just got better at hiding.”

Lena breathed in deeply, and Kara wondered what thought had interrupted her girlfriend’s reminiscing. Lena reached out and took both her hands, and her face abruptly lit up into a smile. Kara absolutely adored the way a genuine Lena smile created a slight crinkle at the edges of her eyes. Lena spoke more confidently this time. “But I don’t have to hide anymore. Lillian may still be out there, but I’m done trying to avoid her wrath. To play the good Luthor. This,” and Lena held up their intertwined hands, “is a good thing. A wonderful thing. Something I would never want to hide.”

She dropped their hands back down and bounced slightly, her eyes gleaming with joy and appreciation. “Kara, you did that. You helped me find myself. It was your example, your inspiration, your belief in me that helped me shake the twisted hold that woman had on me.” Kara could feel herself blush, and she couldn’t stop the giggle that escaped her lips.

Lena wasn’t done yet. “Not to lay it on too think, but you’re only the third person I’ve let in. Let
know the real me.”

“Wait, who’s the third? I’m assuming it was Lex, and now me—who else?”

“Sam.” Lena said her name with such tenderness that Kara felt a slight twinge of jealousy. “She’s my best friend. She and I were the only two women under the age of 35 in positions of power at LuthorCorp, and we just sort became attached at the hip. You would love her, darling. She’s fiercely loyal, like a certain superhero I know, and she’s probably the most resourceful and resilient person I’ve ever met.”

“How come you’ve never mentioned her?” Kara was trying really hard not to feel jealous as Lena praised another woman so thoroughly. *Best friends. Nothing to worry about.*

“Oh. Hmmm. I suppose until recently I’ve sort of compartmentalized. I kept you separate from anything relating to my past, and it’s only recently that I’ve started really opening up to you. I guess she just hadn’t come up yet. I left her in charge of the Metropolis branch of L-Corp, and we’re both so busy that it’s hard to find time to catch up.” Lena gazed lovingly into Kara’s eyes. “I really can’t wait for you to meet her, whenever we get a chance.”

Kara sucked down that annoying seed of jealousy and smiled brightly back at her girlfriend. “I’m sure we’ll hit it off. Does she visit often?”

“Actually, she hasn’t been to National City yet. I’ve only been out here eight or nine months now, and she’s found that the CEO position is a bit more time-consuming than CFO. Between her job and her daughter, she doesn’t exactly have a lot of travel time. But maybe this summer, when she can bring Ruby with her.”

Lena started and looked down at her watch. “Holy shit, Kara, we’re supposed to be at lunch in fifteen minutes. You have to get dress—oh.” The blonde grinned, having changed and thrown on some makeup before Lena could finish her sentence. She wondered when Lena would get used to her use of powers in everyday life.

“Alright pineapple, let’s go then! Maggie said they’ve got a surprise for us when we get there. I can’t wait to see what she has planned!”

Lena was stunned. The seemingly uptight, all black everything DEO agent Alex Danvers *had dyed her hair purple.* It was an adorable ombre look that suited her short, chin-length hair perfectly. The faintest hint of her dark brown roots gave way to a deep purple that faded into a brighter lavender halfway down. She looked incredible. Apparently, Maggie had dared her to do it, and Alex’s brush with death had left her a little more open than usual to that sort of persuasion. Still, everything about her body language screamed that she was horribly self-conscious about the decision, and Lena wanted to reassure her.

“Alex, you look fantastic! I’m so jealous. I can’t tell you how many times I’ve considered dying my hair a bright color or two, but I’m pretty sure my board of directors would put a hit out on me or something.” She walked closer, and played with Alex’s hair a bit, grinning brightly at the woman.

“See babe, I told you that you look stupid hot with your hair that color,” Maggie teased her girlfriend. Alex blushed, which was also something Lena had never seen the agent do. “Alright Li’l Luthor, that’s enough playing with my girlfriend’s hair.” Lena winked at her but moved her hand back to her side. It was only then that they noticed Kara hadn’t moved, frozen in place with her mouth agape.
Maggie stepped up, snapping her fingers right in Kara’s face. “Li’l Danvers? Earth to Kara.” Lena barely registered the shift in Kara’s face before Maggie was stumbling back, trying not to fall over from the force of a squealing Kryptonian rushing past her at not-quite-human speeds.

“AEEEEEEEEEEEX! I can’t believe you did this! Your hair is so cool and pretty! I love it, I love it!” Kara had wrapped her sister up in a tight hug and was now excitedly flitting around her, scoping out Alex’s new style from every possible angle. Lena felt her face break into a smile. *Kara is so fucking adorable.*

“Okay well now that we got that out of the way, should we actually get, you know, lunch?” Alex spoke nonchalantly, but she was clearly more relaxed after the positive reactions. They walked into the diner, which Maggie insisted had the best gourmet burgers in town. Not exactly Lena’s standard fare, but she was willing to expand her horizons. As she watched a grinning Kara follow Alex and Maggie closely as they all walked into the diner, she couldn’t help but think how glad she was that Maggie and Kara had mostly worked out their issues.

Lena wasn’t used to this. Having friends. Having a girlfriend she wasn’t hiding away from the world. It was … **nice.** She actually enjoyed the grossed out look Kara gave her as she explained to her what quinoa was. Lena adored her girlfriend, but they had radically different tastes in food. Lena had ordered a quinoa burger, whereas Maggie went with buffalo meat. Alex and Kara stuck with traditional beef, except that Kara ordered three burgers to her sister’s one.

And then they were just having casual conversations. Talking about their jobs, their hobbies, just … random things. Lena was surprised to find that she loved it. The way Maggie and Alex talked about their shared love of motorcycles was far outside Lena’s normal range of interests, but they were just so dorky and charming about it. Kara insisted that flying was so much less dangerous, and Lena joked that, “Not all of us mere mortals have that option, darling.”

As Kara ordered a sundae to top off her three burgers and two orders of fries, the conversation had shifted to Alex’s normal routine at the DEO. J’onn had placed her on leave for a week, to recover from her kidnapping and near death, but Alex was already chomping at the bit to get back. Lena noticed that Kara had a look on her face that the brunette was sure she’d never had the pleasure of experiencing before. “What is it, love?”

Kara’s eyes got wide, and she got unexpectedly bashful, glancing down at her lap then refusing to focus her eyes on any of them. “Well… I mean. I kind of have, like, some juicy DEO gossip maybe? I could be wrong, I mean, I am probably wrong. What do I know? But ummm… I think maybe Winn has a big ole crush on Lar!”

Alex spit out her beer, much to Maggie's amusement. Unsure of who or what "Lar" was, Lena simply raised an eyebrow at Kara in puzzlement, waiting for further explanation. Seeing Lena's confusion, Kara's eyes grew even wider, her lips drawing into a surprisingly adorable grimace.

"Oh gosh, I never told you, did I? Ummm, well I finally found out about Mon-El's real name. Which is Lar Gand. He's kind of the prince of Daxam."

Lena recognized the name from the mysterious alien transmission that had made headlines nearly a week ago. When Lena had asked Kara about it, all she would say was that the DEO was handling it. She hadn't wanted to talk about it then, and Lena had dropped the subject. Now, though, she felt more than a little hurt Kara had kept all of this from her. She was prepared to launch into a volley of follow up questions, but Alex silenced her with a quick glare. “We'll get to that whole story in a minute. Kara can't just drop a bomb like this and change the subject. What on Earth would give you that idea? I mean… is Winn even bi? I know he's kind of obsessed with your cousin but…’
Kara blushed wildly. “It’s something about the way he talks about Lar. Stuff about asking him out to go drinking again. Whispered comments about his muscles, which, I know! I’m not supposed to eavesdrop, but I can’t help what I hear when I’m not trying to tune things out. Now he’s talking about making Lar a super suit!”

That seemed odd to Lena, given her previous conversations with Kara about Mon-El. “Is Mon—sorry, Lar still helping out at the DEO? Even after you decided to stop mentoring him? And what made you confront him about his lies.”

Kara rolled her eyes, responding, “Oh, I didn’t confront him. I was barely even talking to him, but yes, he was still at the DEO. He was trying to help, anyway. I was doing my best to avoid going on missions with him, but he has apparently been a decent amount of help to some of the agents on missions that don’t require Supergirl.” Lena glanced at Alex, whose shrug seemed to confirm this. “But he still isn’t a hero,” Kara insisted. “I’m quite sure he’s doing this for the wrong reasons, and he definitely doesn’t need a suit.”

“So, he’s still pining over you?” Kara’s audible sigh was all the answer Lena needed, but her girlfriend proceeded to elaborate.

“Yes. He’s gotten better about not bringing it up, but he still makes eyes at me whenever we’re in a room together. And generally tries to act like an over-protective jerk whenever something dangerous comes up. Don’t worry, I always put him in his place, but it’s like he is completely incapable of learning a lesson. Which is why he will never be a hero.” She paused, smiling slightly. “At least his awful dictator parents left.”

‘Awful dictator parents?’ I’ve clearly missed out on a lot. Is that how you discovered his true identity?” Lena was surprised Kara hadn’t mentioned any of this, and judging by Kara's face, which blushed quickly before immediately fading into a rather dark and grumpy look, it was something of a sore subject for her. Lena tried not to take it personally that Kara hadn’t been sharing much of her life as Supergirl, but it was really hard not to feel left out.

Rather than wait for Kara to stammer through an explanation, Alex too charge. “Yeah apparently Lar had no problems continuing to pretend. Unfortunately for him, his parents showed up and blew up his spot. Kara had thought that Daxam was desolated by the explosion of Krypton, but it turns out that a lot of Daxamites survived. Including the royal family. So the king and queen showed up looking for their son, and the asshole lied to them too.”

Kara let out a noise somewhere between a grunt and a groan, but Alex continued. “They just wanted to take him home, so they could all get back to the business of ruling with an iron fist and living a life of luxury on the backs of slaves. Guess Daxam is being rebuilt. But Lar insisted that he needed to stay here on Earth because he couldn’t leave his girlfriend behind.”

“No!” Lena gasped, and now she understood why Kara had kept all of this from her. It was hardly a good excuse, but Lena relaxed a little knowing that it was embarrassment, and not any trust issues, that had motivated the silence. Brightening somewhat, Lena didn't bother to hide her smirk as she looked pointedly at Kara. Her girlfriend’s only response was to cover her face with her hands.

“Yup, you guessed it! Lar told them he was dating Supergirl, and she was training him to be a hero. Said he didn’t want to return to Daxam, that he was on a different path now.” Alex paused thoughtfully. “The hell of it is, I think he half-believed it himself. Not the part about dating Kara, obviously. But as much of a selfish frat boy as he is, it really seems like he doesn’t want to go back to Daxam. If it were up to me, I’d still kick his ass and throw him out of the DEO, but J’onn is a
big softy at heart. A guy decides he’s no longer okay with slavery, and suddenly Space Dad is all about the redemption story.”

Kara’s face was out of her hands, and she looked a bit less horrified and a bit more exasperated. Lena placed a hand on her thigh. She had only met J’onn briefly and didn’t know him well, but she loved hearing Kara, and now Alex, talk with such affection for their “Space Dad.”

Perhaps emboldened by Lena’s supportive hand, Kara took over the telling of the story at this point. “The DEO kept it under wraps pretty well, but there was a giant Daxamite cruiser hovering just outside the atmosphere for a little over a week while we sorted out Lar’s, ermmm, ‘disagreement’ with his awful, terrible parents.” Lena was surprised. The DEO must be really, really good—and terribly well-funded—to have hidden this from the world. “Anyways, Lar Gand, Prince of Daxam, didn’t think it was necessary to tell us the reason he had given his parents for wanting to stay, and then suddenly I was drowning in bounty hunters trying to kill me. Apparently Queen Rhea did not care at all for the idea that her beloved boy was dating a Kryptonian.”

Lena’s gripped Kara’s leg tighter, a little upset that her girlfriend had been in danger and hadn’t told her about it. Kara swiftly turned to her. “It wasn’t anything I couldn’t handle. I didn’t want you to worry. The bounty hunters were nothing more than a major annoyance… and honestly, Daxam is still a really sore subject for me.”

Lena rolled her eyes and poked Kara in the side. “Plus you were probably dying of embarrassment at the thought of dating the frat boy.”

Kara shrugged. “Fine, yes, it was embarrassing okay?! Anyways, once we figured out there was a bounty on my head, Lar finally fessed up to the lies he told his parents. I yelled at him a little.” Alex scoffed, and Kara admitted, “Okay fine, I yelled at him a lot.” She looked away and whispered, “J’onn had to hold me back.”

Lena laughed at the mental picture. She wished she could’ve seen that. “I really wanted to punch him. But I made it very clear that he was gonna tell his parents the truth and have them withdraw the bounty.”

Alex jumped in. “You also told him that you didn’t care if he had to go back to Daxam. That this was his mess, and he had to do whatever it took to clean it up. He didn’t exactly take that well.”

“If by ‘not taking it well’ you mean that he ran away like a petulant child avoiding his problems, then sure. That’s totally what happened, Alex.” Lena could hear the irritation in Kara’s voice. “Leaving me on my own when his mother confronted me with kryptonite daggers. Fortunately J’onn was there, and Rhea wasn’t strong enough to handle us both. She also wasn’t exactly willing to listen to reason when I tried to tell her that I would never in a million years date her dopey son.”

“But Lar came through in the end. Mostly.” Alex seemed more concerned with Kara’s anger than actually interested in defending the Daxamite. “He and J’onn teleported up to the Daxamite ship—” Lena’s heart stopped for a second, reminded of her own aspirations to build such a device, which was apparently an everyday piece of tech for the Daxamites, “—and after something of a scuffle with the royal guards, and Rhea herself, Lar got through to his father. He made it clear that he would rather fight his parents than go with them. Apparently Rhea was pretty pissed about it, but the dad agreed to leave.”

Lena made a note to talk to Winn at some point in the future, to see if the DEO had retained any of the Daxamite teleportation machinery. But that was a question for another day. Maggie had gotten impatient with story time, less interested in Kara’s vendetta against Daxam than the rest of them. She insisted they get a move on.
Inspired by Alex’s hair, Lena and Maggie had decided to get tattoos before the foursome went to check out the new brewery that had opened on the north side of the city. Lena had to work pretty hard to convince Kara that a tattoo would be really cute… and maybe a little sexy… but they were all on the same page now. As they walked the five blocks over to Maggie’s favourite tattoo shop, Kara’s grip on Lena’s hand tightened in excitement. Maggie was going to pick something spur of the moment—this was old hat to her. But this was Lena’s first tattoo. Kara had been uneasy when Maggie first brought up the idea at lunch. Rao, they’re just so … permanent. This was not a decision she thought was wise to make on the spur of the moment. And obviously, she could not partake, given the whole invulnerability thing.

Lena, on the other hand, was surprisingly enthusiastic in her immediate agreement with Maggie’s suggestion. Kara wanted to be supportive, but she worried that everyone was letting the tension and stress of the past week get to them. Fortunately, Lena just gets her. It was like she could just sense Kara’s unease. So before they left the diner, Lena pulled her aside and told her a secret. An adorable secret.

You see, Lena had wanted a tattoo for a very long time. But had never been brave enough to go alone. She sure as hell knew what she wanted though.

“Well okay so, you know how Buffy is my favourite show of all time, right?” Kara’s eyes lit up, because her girlfriend’s secret nerd status was one of the absolute cutest things about her.

“Lena!” she whisper-yelled. “You’re getting a Buffy tattoo?! Why didn’t you say so, I would’ve been on board immediately! Do you know what you want?”

“Of course, darling. I’ve thought about it extensively. Tattoos are permanent, you know.” Kara didn’t even mind the mocking tone, she was so excited. “You remember Kendra’s lucky stake?”

“You’re getting a Mr. Pointy tattoo?!” Kara couldn’t keep her voice down this time, and Lena rolled her eyes pointedly. “Where are you getting it?”

Lena’s eyes flashed mischievously. “Wouldn’t you like to know.”

“Lena, you’re my girlfriend. It’s not exactly rare for me to see you completely naked.” Kara was impressed with her own ability to keep herself from blushing or looking away. “I’m going to see it, wherever you put it.”

“I guess you’ll have to wait until you get me naked again, then.” Kara was pretty sure Lena enjoyed teasing her far too much.

“I. You. Ahh! You aren’t going to let me hold your hand while you get it?!”

Lena chuckled, and Kara was glad that even Lena had a limit to how long she could keep up the teasing before she relented. “I suppose I might need the emotional support.” She grinned at Kara, then went on. “Obviously, as a CEO of a major tech company, I can’t get it somewhere that would show while I’m at work. So nothing on my arms, chest, or legs. Probably not my shoulders either, just to be safe. That leaves …”

She paused, fixing Kara with a devious look that made Kara feel all warm and tingly deep in her gut. Oh, so the teasing isn’t finished yet. She waited as long as she could, not wanting to give Lena the satisfaction of seeing her beg. But then she couldn’t bare not knowing any longer.

Kara knew that Lena couldn’t resist her pout. Too bad she could never remember to utilize it strategically. It just sort of came out naturally when Lena was messing with her. They hadn’t been dating all that long yet, but they had already established some habits and patterns. And that realization thrilled her to no end.

“Fine. But don’t be mad at me,” Lena insisted.

“Why would I get mad…” Kara started to ask, before drifting off as certain …thoughts passed through her head.

“It shouldn’t be too big a deal. I’m sure we can work around it creatively,” Lena reassured her in what Kara was sure was her sexiest possible voice. “I’m getting Mr. Pointy on my hip. It’ll probably be sore for a while, but it shouldn’t be too much trouble for us to work around, should it?”

Kara’s whole body tightened at Lena’s implication, and she found herself speechless. But that didn’t stop Lena from staring at her, all sultry and what not. Kara gulped, then sputtered out softly, “Yup. Umm. I mean. Yeah, we can probably work around it no problem, I’ll just … Oh Rao Lena, why do you do this to me in public??”

Lena laughed at her, and Kara’s frustration was outweighed by how much she loved the sound of Lena’s laugh. Still, she needed to be far away from this conversation now. “Alright well, Maggie won’t wait forever. Let’s get the tattoo show on the road!” She grabbed Lena’s hand and pulled her back to where Alex and Maggie were paying the check.

And now they were in the tattoo shop, and Kara was holding Lena’s hands as a tiny pink-haired artist worked on Lena’s left hip. Lena’s v-neck had been rolled up to just below her bra, exposing her taut midriff. Her jeans were unbuttoned, and the left side had been pulled down just enough so that the artist could work unimpeded. Kara had given up on trying not to stare at Lena’s exposed skin after Lena had winked at her knowingly the third time she caught her gawking. Kara had already taken several pictures of the group on her phone, but she asked Lena’s (and the artist’s) permission before stepping back, positioning her phone just so, and taking one of Lena getting her tattoo. Lena already knew why Kara tended to take so many photos, but she explained to the artist, not wanting to seem awkward.

“I do a lot of painting, when I have time. And I like to document important moments, for inspiration and ideas for future works.” The artist gave her a look, and Lena laughed.

“Your girlfriend is adorable,” she told Lena, and Kara felt like she was going to erupt into flames with how hot her face was blushing.

“Of this I am quite aware, I assure you.” Lena was beaming at her, and Kara went from feeling like she would explode to feeling like she would just float away on a cloud of happiness. It was crazy sometimes how easy it was for Lena to affect her like this.

“And your girlfriend,” the artist was talking to Kara now, “is one tough bitch. I don’t think she’s flinched once, and we’re almost done.”

Kara stifled a giggle, before replying, “Oh I definitely already knew that.”

As the artist moved away, rattling off the after-care instructions and grabbing a bandage for Lena, Kara took a look at her girlfriend’s new ink. She lightly swept a finger along the skin under the tattoo, careful not to touch it. Mr. Pointy pointed downward at an angle, riding the top of Lena’s hipbone. It was mostly a black and white tattoo, with some really great shading work, but the artist
had embellished it with a few swirls and a small knot in the wood towards the top of the stake.

As the artist settled back into her chair to apply the bandage, Kara’s eyes rose, and blue met green. She grinned enthusiastically at Lena and said, “It’s perfect.”

Lena smiled and replied, “That works out perfectly, because so are you.”
Any mother should be proud to call you daughter

Chapter Summary

Lena’s big project is coming along, and she’s thrilled to tell the ladies in her life about it. She’s also found herself a sweet new mentor, but should she be more wary?

(I mean... you've seen the show, you know)

Chapter 23

Kara loved quiet nights in bed with Lena. Especially in her own bed. Lena’s apartment was incredible—elegant and so perfectly put together. But it didn’t quite have the same warmth as Kara’s loft. She didn’t even feel bad about that observation, seeing as how Lena agreed with her. Kara smiled as she cuddled up closer to her girlfriend.

Lena was propped up against the soft headboard of Kara’s bed, her knees up and her laptop in her lap. Kara was already drowsy, pressed into Lena’s side and enjoying the warmth of her body. She sighed into Lena’s shoulder. “It’s time for sleepies. You work too much.”

She could feel Lena’s body shake as she chuckled. This was how many of their nights went, at least when Kara wasn’t kept out late on Supergirl duty. Kara knew that Lena never put away her work on the first complaint, but she wanted nothing more than to fall asleep in her girlfriend’s arms right now.

“Actually, love, would you like to know what I’m working on? For once, you might actually find my latest project interesting.”

Kara hummed, then kissed Lena’s shoulders and opened her eyes. “Oh yeah?” she asked, doubtfully. She loved the lilt and melody of Lena’s voice, the hint of the accent she picked up while studying abroad in Ireland. Kara could listen to Lena talk about anything, but that didn’t mean that she understood most of the techno mumbo jumbo that usually accompanied explanations of Lena’s work.

“Mmhmm. I even promise I won’t bore you with the details of how matter transmutation, zero size intelligence, or quantum mechanics work.” Lena gave her sly look out of the side of her eyes, and Kara grimaced in faux exasperation. “I’m still not entirely convinced that we’re going to be able to figure out how to turn the theory into a workable prototype, but the short version is that I’m trying to build a teleportation portal.” Kara’s brow crinkled. *I didn’t think human science was even close to that sort of technology.*

As if reading her mind, Lena explained, “I’m quite certain that the foundational theory behind the device is alien in origin. I’d be further along in development if the DEO had been able to get their hands on any of that Daxamite teleportation technology, but alas, I’m left to my own devises. Then again, I’m not exactly an expert in alien technologies—maybe the Daxamite teleportation works in a completely different way than our designs.”

Kara frowned at the mention of the Daxamites. “Okay, so I’m no scientist, but I am fairly sure that human science hasn’t come close to teleportation yet.” Lena nodded. “So … where did your
theory come from?” Kara was genuinely curious. This is the first time she could remember Lena working on something explicitly involving aliens, other than that fake alien detection device.

“Well darling, my business partner is alien. Rannian, I think she said. She kept it from me at first, and I can’t blame her. Luthors aren’t exactly known for welcoming non-humans with open arms. But she saw something in me and took a risk in sharing her proposal with me. And when I finally confronted her about it, I made it very clear that I wasn’t going to hold her species against her.”

Kara had leaned back into Lena’s shoulder by this point, but she smiled brightly. She was so proud of Lena. So happy to have found a partner who saw people as people—not aliens vs humans. And Kara knew it wasn’t just that she was dating an alien. That’s just how Lena thought about the world, which was even more remarkable, given what Kara knew about her family.

“Apparently this sort of technology is fairly common on Genevieve’s home world, but she was traveling the galaxy in a ship with her son when they got caught in a meteor shower that wrecked their navigation system. They ended up crash landing on Earth, and the ship was too damaged to repair. Then her son abandoned her to run off with some girl, and she’s been working on a way to develop a transmatter portal to get her home ever since. She said it’s been a couple of years now, and that she believes I’m her best shot at figuring out a way to adapt human technology and actually build a functional prototype.”

Kara could hear the excitement in Lena’s voice, and she traced her hand along Lena’s bicep. “So, she wants to get home?”

“Yeah, she does, but she’s also been incredibly encouraging with regard to my ideas for the possibilities of this technology. Kara, the opportunities are endless. Think about a world without a need for cars. No obstacles to moving food and water—or medicine!—where it is needed, in an instant. I just … have to figure it out.”

Lena shut her laptop and stowed it on the nightstand on her side of the bed. She turned back towards Kara and twirled her hand to indicate that she should turn around. Then she felt Lena pressed up against her back, her arms wrapping around Kara’s waist and hips. She’d never let Lena tell anyone, but she loved being the little spoon.

She shuddered a little as she felt Lena’s breath on her neck. Kara loved that feeling. Lena squeezed her tenderly, and whispered, “As thrilled as I am at the potential with this project, I think the best part is finally having a real mentor in my life. At least … for the first time since Lex. And a woman at that! Someone who believes in me, encourages me, and pushes me—not because she wants something from me, but because she genuinely believes in what I’m capable.” Kara smiled, rubbing her thumb over Lena’s knuckles. She knew what Lena meant, and she felt a slight twinge in her chest. She really missed Ms. Grant sometimes. But knowing how Lillian had always treated Lena, she was beyond happy for her girlfriend. Lena deserved this.

Just before Kara drifted off, Lena asked, “Kara?” She murmured a nothing response, just enough to let Lena know she was still awake and listening. “I was thinking… if we can develop a working prototype, it’ll be a huge development. I was hoping to invite Sam into town for the first big test run. I can’t wait for you two to meet, assuming she can make the time.”

That sent a nervous thrill through Kara’s body, but not enough to wake her at all. She knew that Sam was important to Lena, but still didn’t know all that much about the woman. If she had to guess, the nerves she felt were what normal people would feel regarding the prospect of meeting the parents. But Lena was so sure that they’d be fast friends, and Kara trusted her. It can’t be any worse than when I actually met Lena’s mom. Kara chuckled softly at that, then let herself drift to sleep to the rhythm of Lena’s breathing.
Lena could no longer pretend like she knew what she was doing. The frustration and defeat seeped into her, and she threw her work tablet down on the table beside her. (Fortunately, it had a sturdy protective cover.) I’ll never get this to work. Why can’t I find the right power source? Lena had been sure that she and Genevieve had finally cracked this project wide open, collaborating on a design that should work. At least now that Lena’s very expensive vendors, who specialized in off-world barter, had obtained the final elements they needed. And yet, here she was with another failed test of the small-scale prototype her team had constructed.

It was unusual for Lena to let her emotions show at work. For some reason, as she had gotten to know Genevieve, the older woman had put her at ease. Lena had relished the opportunity to get her hands dirty, working on an actual project herself rather than overseeing the entire company. And working with Genevieve had put her right back into scientist and engineer mode. Arguably the last time she had ever felt fully relaxed at work was back when she had just been another team member in LuthorCorp’s research and development division. This project almost felt more like one of her engineering labs from school than a super secret L-Corp side project. So she guessed it was unsurprising that she was more willing to lose her cool here in the remote research facility than she would back at L-Corp headquarters.

“Failure is a part of the process, Lena.” She felt Genevieve’s hand on her shoulder, and it was reassuring, but not enough to stop the spiral of self-deprecating thoughts in Lena’s mind. “I told you it was going to take time.”

But it had already taken time—they’d been at this for a month and a half, and now she felt stuck behind an immovable obstacle. She had tried about ten different methods of powering the device, and in each case, the whole thing overloaded before it could begin to project the anion field through which they should theoretically be able to transfer objects. Why can’t I figure this out?

Lena’s subconscious mind jumped to a place she hadn’t allowed herself to visit in a very long time, and as much as she hated herself, she couldn’t stop the thought from bubbling up to spite her. I bet Lex could figure this out. He had clearly never had trouble powering the technological wonders of his anti-Superman arsenal. Lena felt that she was the more creative thinker of the two, but she had always known that Lex outstripped her in pure engineering talent.

She brought herself back to the present moment, barely. “Gen, it isn’t about time. We’ve spent time, and this should work. I’m just not getting it.” She couldn’t keep the bitterness out of her voice, and then her mouth was spitting out all the dark thoughts swirling inside. She was horrified at her lack of control but couldn’t stop herself. “Maybe we should pay a visit to Stryker Island. Get Lex Luthor to come in and save the day.”

She tried to pass this off as a joke, but she was sure that she had failed to hide the way she bit out the words ‘Lex Luthor.’ Genevieve was as unflappable as possible, gazing down at the basketball-sized prototype without showing any reaction to Lena’s acerbic tone. “You think he could get this working?”

Genevieve’s tone made it sound as if she doubted this, but it was Lillian’s voice that screamed at Lena from the back of her mind. Of course Lex would have figured this out already. He was always the best of us. Always meant for great things. You were just an unfortunate burden left behind by an uncaring father caught in an illicit affair.

Lena tried to talk down the voice, was furious with herself that she hadn’t yet let go of Lillian’s negativity, her constant comparisons and prodding. But it was there, and she couldn’t ignore it.
She quietly rejoined, “Lex was the genius who was supposed to save the world. Or ... we were supposed to do it together, at least. He … became distracted from that goal, or maybe he just had a horrible vision of what saving the world looked like, but … You know, I … I just thought if I could make this work, I could get out of his shadow. Prove that I am every bit the genius he is, but I, I could also show the world that Luthor ingenuity can be harnessed for something good. That we aren't all monsters.” Left unsaid was the part Lena hated most about herself. The part that still wanted to prove something to Lillian as well.

Genevieve was looking directly at her now, her face poised but kind. “You don’t have to prove anything. I don’t know him, but I would bet a lot of money that you’re smarter than Lex.” Lena’s face tightened—she wanted to believe that, but she also worried that Gen was pitying her. Maybe the older woman picked up on that fear, because she reassured Lena, “No, I’m not saying that to make you feel better. I’m saying that as a scientist. As someone who knows.” She turned back to the device, as if to say, “I’m absolutely right about this, and I’ll tolerate no arguments on the point.”

“You need to stop trying to think like your brother. From what you’ve told me about Lex, he is first and foremost a man concerned with power. For some reason, that’s how you’ve been trying to fix this problem—give it more power, different power, and eventually it will work.”

Lena interjected, “I know, but no matter what I do, it just keeps blowing before we can create a stable field.”

“That’s because this isn’t a problem of brute force. There are angles to this you are ignoring. Unlike Lex, you are not a person consumed with power.” She paused, then looked back at Lena pointedly. “Are you?”

Lena smiled. This is why she had so enjoyed working with Genevieve. A good mentor saw the parts of yourself that you can’t, or that you’re too scared of or self-doubting to notice. Gen never failed to make Lena feel like she was capable of anything, if she just got creative. It was something her life had been so sorely missing, and she was hit with a pang of sadness, knowing that once the project had resulted in a large-scale working transmatter portal, her mentor would be leaving.

Genevieve had a sly grin on her face as she asked, “So, if you weren’t trying to figure out what Lex would do, what would you do?”

It clicked. The problem wasn’t just the power source, it was how the anions interacted with the energy created by the device. Thinking out loud, she answered, “I’d try to find a way to increase the anion input without overloading the energy output, by focusing on maintaining the element synthesis rate at a constant to avoid overload.”

Genevieve didn’t smile, but the pride was visible in her expression and tone. “Not power. Balance.” Lena smiled, genuinely this time, and wasted no time in going back to a work station and rethinking the design and calculations required to accomplish such a balance. She couldn’t remember the last time she felt this inspired in her work life.

It was another couple of days before Lena’s new design produced that beautiful neon purple energy field, but when it happened, she could not contain her exhilaration. She and Genevieve hugged briefly, and the team clapped enthusiastically. “We did it!” Lena practically giggled the words, thrilled that she had finally figured it out after weeks of failed attempts.
Genevieve simply turned calmly towards her and corrected, “You did it.”

There were a few more calculations to run and possibilities to account for before they actually began testing the effects of putting an object through the portal, but this was a major accomplishment. Producing a constant and stable field had been the hardest part.

She smiled brightly at Gen and admitted something that she hadn’t expected to say out loud. “If my mother had given me pep talks like you, imagine the things I could’ve done.”

“I’m happy to have mused you.” Lena appreciated the use of the word ‘muse’ as a verb; she wasn’t sure she had heard anyone put it quite like that before. Genevieve looked down before adding, “But trust me, it isn’t always easy being the parent we aspire to be.”

Lena didn’t know what response she had expected, but it wasn’t that. Not really interested in giving Lillian any benefit of the doubt, she shifted the conversation back to their accomplishment. “In the next couple of days, we can begin material trials, and when those prove successful, we could have the large-scale model developed by the end of the month.” She grinned. “I’ve already got the perfect site picked out.”

Genevieve was unusually still and quiet, and Lena guessed that her thoughts dwelled on the son who abandoned her. Who wouldn’t be returning home with her. Lena’s heart sank just a little. “I keep forgetting that success means you’re leaving. Working with you has meant so much to me.”

Gen’s face lifted a little at the sentiment, and she responded warmly. “Me too.” She placed her hands on both Lena’s shoulders, ostensibly for emphasis. “I want you to remember never to doubt yourself again. You are a marvel, Lena Luthor.” Lena tried really hard not to let any tears escape her eyes. She didn’t want to embarrass herself in front of this woman who believed in her, who showed her what she was fully capable of. But that became even more difficult when Gen said, “Any mother should be proud to call you daughter.”

Fuck, I’m going to miss her when she’s gone.

Lena’s timeframe had been spot on, as it turned out. Construction on the large-scale prototype and been completed with surprising speed, and now the large ring, approximately six stories in diameter, stood imposingly in a deserted piece of land 30 miles southeast of the city. There had been a tense moment where the first test of the field sputtered and flared unsteadily, but it turned out they just needed to reinforce the base of the machine and its emitters. The next day, they had successfully created a stable field, and they were set to conduct the first material tests after the weekend.

There had been a number of kinks to work out on the small-scale prototype, and the first few attempts at object transfer had resulted in various incidents of splicing, where parts of the object were destroyed or reassembled out of order, or in one terrifying instance, exploded on reassembly. But they had eventually corrected the issues and were able to use the device to safely and consistently teleport small objects across the room.

Lena was both anxious and exhilarated by the prospect of testing the large-scale model. The principles were the same, but everything felt so much more daunting with this next test.

Her face lit up as she remembered how excited Kara had been when she had told her that they were in the final stages of testing the final prototype. Lena thought she had never felt more accomplished than when she saw the fierce pride that practically shown from Kara’s eyes. She had
insisted that her girlfriend attend the first material test, and now she had just one other matter to sort out before she could move forward with it.

Sam had to be there. Lena wouldn’t have it any other way.

Sam answered the phone on the third ring. “Lena Luthor! And here I was beginning to think you had gone all girl-crazy and forgotten about li’l ole me.”

Her sarcasm did not disguise the warmth in her voice, and Lena grinned before slipping into her snarky voice. “Well well, isn’t someone jealous of the gorgeous blonde I go home to every night?”

“Low blow, Luthor. But joke’s on you. You haven’t been to Metropolis in a minute, so you are clearly unaware of the steady stream of hotties banging down my office doors, looking for a piece of this.”

“Sam, tell me you’re not using my desk for sex. There are a lot of things I can forgive but…” She let the implied threat hang, a smirk on her lips.

“Wouldn’t you like to know?” Lena knew that this was all just banter. She had known Sam to maintain one or two fairly casual paramours at a time, but she wasn’t one for the whole lothario routine. Especially not at the office—Sam took her career every bit as seriously as Lena.

“I missed you, you goof.”

“Yeah okay, maybe I missed you too. How’s the girl?”

Lena kinda liked that Sam always called Kara ‘the girl,’ even after learning her name. “Everything is wonderful, Sam. I know you get tired of hearing me gush, but life with Kara is more than I could’ve ever imagined.”

“Oh yes, how could I forget? That smile like the sun. The oceans of her eyes. The adorable awkwardness. You may have mentioned it.” Lena chuckled, only a little embarrassed about how her phone calls with Sam usually ended up devolving into overly sappy stories about Kara. “You know I’m beyond happy for you, right?”

“You’ve a funny way of showing it, what with all this mockery.”

“Yes, well, maybe I’m worried you’re gonna run off with the girl and forget about your gorgeous, brilliant, overly supportive best friend wasting away on her own, with nothing to keep her company but her moody teenage daughter and her thankless job running your company.”

“Sam, you don’t really think I could ever forget you, do you? Kara’s wonderful. She’s kind of impossibly good. And adorable. But you’re Sam. You’re my Sam. You’re family. You know that.” Lena knew that Sam was aware of all this but did not at all mind reminding her. “Speaking of family, how is the moody teenage daughter?”

Sam’s snort was audible. “I know she loves me, but that girl could not have been more excited to get out of town to her two weeks of summer camp. I’m trying not to take it too hard. But she’s mostly good. Good grades last semester. She seems mostly pretty happy, despite the onslaught of all the terrifying teenager hormones. I worry she’s getting bullied a little bit, but she insists I not butt in, so I haven’t.” She paused, before laughing softly. “You know she thinks she wants to be a superhero now? She’s obsessed with Supergirl.”

Lena smiled broadly. “Your daughter has good taste.” Sam didn’t know that Kara was Supergirl,
but she was aware that Lena had had her share of run-ins with the hero.

“I tried to explain to her that she’s lacking in certain innate traits, like being a superpowered alien with laser eyes, but she wouldn’t hear it. Insisted that science would figure out a way to give people powers before too long.” She paused, then asked slyly, “Hey we’re not working on anything like that, are we?”

“Yes, love, I’ve got a whole team working on human laser eyes, and I never mentioned it to you. You caught me.” Lena could tell Sam was trying and failing not to laugh. “But I guess it works out, I was planning on making Ruby our first test subject. She’ll be so excited. I always knew I’d find a way to get her to love me more than you.”

“Yeah yeah. So, what’s up? I know you didn’t call just to gush about your girlfriend and ask to experiment on my daughter.”

“Actually, it’s just my luck that Ruby is at summer camp. That leaves you free and clear for an impromptu trip to National City.” Lena smiled into the phone, preparing for the convincing she would have to do to lure Sam away from work.

“Lena, a vacation sounds lovely, but I don’t know if I can get away. What’s the occasion? You’ve been out there for nearly a year now, and I know we’ve talked about maybe visiting each other, but this is the first time you’ve ever specifically asked me to come.”

“As a matter of fact, your best friend has invented a literal teleporter, and she absolutely refuses to conduct the first material test of the device without you there.”

Lena could picture Sam’s eyes go wide as there was a noticeable silence on the other end of the line. Then Sam started in on her, cautiously, “Wait, is this a real thing? You did just claim to be working on laser eye tech so….”

“Yes, Sam, this is a real thing. And I’m 90 percent sure it is going to work. So you absolutely must take a few days off from running my company, and not just because it is my company, and I order you to take a vacation to come celebrate your best friend’s accomplishments.”

“Well, when you put it that way… I want to hear absolutely everything about how you managed to create something straight out of science fiction. How soon do you need me there? And do I finally get to meet the girl?” The last question was more or less shouted through the phone, and Lena appreciated how genuinely excited Sam was to finally meet Kara.

“I figure you can get everything squared away tomorrow sufficiently so that L-Corp Metropolis won’t completely fall apart if you take a five-day weekend. You can fly out Thursday. I can take you to the best spa in town, maybe the best lesbian bar also, depending on how frisky you’re feeling.’ Lena could almost hear Sam’s eyes rolling. “I can tell you all about my genius accomplishments, and yes, you can meet Kara.”

Lena was cut off by Sam’s eager shouting into the phone, which could only mean one thing. “I take it that’s a yes, then?
Kara finally meets Sam, gives Lena a present, and is adorably awkward.

Chapter 24

*Rao, what is she getting me into?* Kara already been nervous about meeting Sam, but walking into this restaurant turned her anxiety up to eleven. She hadn’t realized dinner was going to be at such a fancy place, with such beautifully romantic golden lighting. She suddenly worried that her pale pink, black piped sleeveless sheath dress was nice enough. She had changed into a cute pair of black heels and left her cardigan at work, but she still felt slightly underdressed all of the sudden.

She instructed the hostess that she was here for the Luthor party of three, and she immediately led her back towards the table. Sam had gotten into town around one, and Lena had spent the afternoon with her at L-Corp, probably discussing at length all the confusing technical aspects of Lena’s transmatter project. Now they were all having dinner together, and Kara tried her best to focus on just putting one foot in front of the other without tripping. Then she saw them, standing up as Kara approached.

*Is it possible to die from looking at too much gorgeous?* Lena had changed since she left Kara’s apartment that morning. She was in a simple black dress that hugged her curves perfectly. Over it was a perfectly tailored burgundy shawl lapel blazer that perfectly framed the dress’s unique neckline, which curve just under her collarbone and split into a deep v-shaped slit that showed off a tantalizing hint of Lena’s cleavage. Her hair was down for once, straight and sleek and parted to the side. Kara thought she might pass out before she reached the table.

And this must be Sam. *Wow.* Her hair was down also, and her loose curls could give Supergirl’s hair a run for its money. She was brunette, but with these gorgeous honey-brown highlights—*I think that’s call ‘balayage’?* Sam was wearing a form-fitting high-necked sleeveless deep blue blouse, tucked into a pair of high-waisted, wide-legged grey patterned slacks, with a narrow black belt.

Kara somehow managed to make it to the table, and as the hostess walked away, Lena greeted her with a warm kiss before Kara could even look at a menu, requesting two orders of shrimp cocktail and an order of vegetable rolls. Kara gave her a thankful half smile, knowing that the extra shrimp was totally for her. Then Sam spoke up again.

“Looking forward to it.” Just then the waiter arrived to ask if they wanted any appetizers. Lena spoke up before Kara could even look at a menu, requesting two orders of shrimp cocktail and an order of vegetable rolls. Kara gave her a thankful half smile, knowing that the extra shrimp was totally for her. Then Sam spoke up again.
“So Kara, tell me something completely random about yourself.”

She felt her eyes grow wide at being put on the spot, but she thought about it as quickly as she could. “I’m …” then something hit her, and she spit it out without any further thought. “I’m an NSYNC superfan! Alex has always tried to make me feel embarrassed by that, but I don’t even care. They’re the best.”

Sam chuckled softly under her breath, and Kara couldn’t tell if she was laughing with her or at her. Her nerves were suddenly alight with anxiety again. Then Sam grinned, leaned in, and asked in all seriousness, “Justin or JC?”

Kara was dumbfounded. First, because maybe Sam was also a huge fan, and second, because what the hell kind of question is that? She snorted derisively, before answering, “Oh come on. It’s been over a decade, we all know the answer to that question.” Sam rolled her eyes, and Kara glanced over to see Lena sitting back comfortably, enjoying the back and forth. “But! As much as I love him, he’s gotta be the only one holding up the reunion right now.”

Lena jumped in, “Well obviously, darling, but let me ask you nerds this: Would you rather have an NSYNC reunion or JT & Britney back together?” Kara felt her brow furrow and noticed a similar expression on Sam’s face. Then she glared at Lena and retorted, “Ugh my OTP!” She immediately stared across the table with wide eyes—Sam had said the exact same thing, at the exact same time. Kara’s face heated up, but Sam just winked at her, then turned back to Lena. She scoffed, “Lena, that is an impossible question, and you know it. It’s not nice to mess with your girlfriend like that.” Sam’s nonchalance and playful tone inspired Kara slightly, and she followed up, “Yeah! You’re just cruel.” Then she threw in a wink at Lena, for good measure.

“Well, I am a Luthor.” All three ladies shared a laugh at that. Kara was starting to see what Lena saw in Sam. She hadn’t expected her to be this effortlessly funny—Sam’s wry but spunky sense of humour was something Kara was unused to, and she kinda liked it. At the very least, it was putting her much more at ease.

Taking a couple of bites from the newly appeared shrimp, Kara swallowed and then asked, “So, Sam, tell me a little about yourself. Lena gushes about how amazing and talented you are—”

Sam interjected, pointing out with a playful sarcasm, “Oh yeah, because she’s been real quiet about your virtues, Kara.”

Kara froze for just a second, not expecting the quick rejoinder, but then Lena rested a hand on her leg. “Well, I don’t know anything about that. So… you have a daughter?”

“Yeah, I do. Ruby’s a good kid, even though she’s going through this annoyingly hormonal early teenage phase right now. She’s probably going to be mad at me when I tell her I came to National City without her.” Sam leaned closer and whispered, “She insists that she’s Supergirl’s number one fan.”

Kara glanced over at Lena, who beamed back at her. She didn’t really mind, but Kara couldn’t help but think that Lena was doing a terrible job at hiding her pride that her friend’s teenage daughter was obsessed with her girlfriend. Still, she squeezed Lena’s hand on her thigh.

Sam didn’t seem to pick up on the silent exchange, and she asked, “What about you Kara, tell me about your family.”

Lena gave her a brief look of concern, but Kara just smiled back to reassure her. She was used to
telling this story by now, and it only hurt a little. “Actually, my parents died when I was thirteen. I was adopted by the Danvers, and Eliza and Jeremiah were always really good to me. My sister Alex and I are super close.” Lena made a noise under her breath—Kara couldn’t tell if it was a mocking noise or a supportive noise, but she scowled at her just in case.

She looked back up at Sam to notice the look of empathy in her velvety brown eyes. “I’m an orphan too, actually. But I never knew my birth parents. My mom raised me by herself. …” Sam’s voice had gotten softer and softer until it trailed off. Lena reached out and took her hand, her eyes full of concern and sympathy. Kara hadn’t realized that she and Sam had such similar stories.

Sam took a breath and smiled at Lena appreciatively. Then her gaze shifted back to Kara, and she continued. “Until I got pregnant, that is. I was seventeen and hadn’t graduated from high school yet. Mom gave me an ultimatum, trying to force me to get an abortion. I honestly can’t say for sure why I refused—an abortion would have made so much more sense at that time in my life, especially given all my aspirations. But I just had this feeling, like … I don’t know, like my life was at a crossroads, and something deep down inside was sure that if I didn’t have Ruby, life would not go the way I wanted it to. That probably sounds crazy, and maybe it was! But I knew what I needed to do for myself, and Mom couldn’t except that. She kicked me out.”

Kara gasped. “Sam, that’s horrible! I’m so sorry. You didn’t deserve that.”

Sam smiled softly at her. “Thanks, Kara. But I know. And I did what I had to do. I graduated early and had Ruby. We jumped around from city to city with me working odd jobs and taking night classes until I could get a business degree. After that, we moved to Metropolis, where I was accepted into a work-study program at LuthorCorp. That program is really the only reason I’m where I am today. I was able to earn my MBA at Metropolis U while proving myself at the company.”

Lena jumped in, and Kara could read the pride and admiration on every facet of Lena’s face. “And from there, no one could stop her. She shot up the ranks but didn’t let it stop her from being a good mom. You know, she’s only a year older than me, and yet she rose to the level of executive almost as quickly as I did, in a much more competitive division, I might add.” Kara thought Sam looked a little uncomfortable with the praise, but she didn’t interrupt Lena, so Kara assumed there was no hyperbole involved here. “And Sam had none of the advantages I had—beyond the obvious, raw talent and stupid good looks.” Lena winked at Sam, and for the first time that night, Sam looked somewhat flappable, blushing wildly. Suddenly, Kara found herself wondering what was this weird feeling back in her chest again?

“So how long have you known Lena?” Kara didn’t recognize the tone in her own voice, but she was sure it was nothing. Sam certainly didn’t seem to think anything of it.

“What’s it been, Lee, about six, seven years now?” Lena shrugged, and Sam rolled her eyes. Kara knew she wasn’t the most observant person, at least not when it came to the subtleties of human social interactions, but even she could see the history and comfort in the natural ease and familiarity of the interactions between the two. “I mean… I tried to get rid of her several times—I didn’t have time for some introverted nerdy heiress—but I never could shake her. Too cute I guess, or too stubborn. More the latter, as I’m sure you have figured out by now, Kara.” Sam’s smile was so genuine and bright that Kara couldn’t help but chuckle.

“You’re not wrong, though I have found a few creative ways to convince her to change her mind about something.” Kara was a little surprised at her own boldness, slipping that sort of implication into her tone. Something Kara couldn’t quite read flashed through Sam’s eyes, but then she was
laughing warmly.

“I bet you have.”

Before Kara could think too hard about the exchange, Lena butted in, making a face at them both. “Well now, if you two are quite done making fun of me, let’s talk more about what to expect from my big event on Monday.”

Kara didn’t think Sam was any more convinced by the change of subject than Kara was, but they let it go. Plenty of time to needle Lena in the future.

As she unlocked the door to her apartment, two giggling ladies behind her, Lena couldn’t help but reflect on how well the night was going. She had known that Kara was beyond nervous about meeting Sam (and detected maybe a slight hint of jealousy as well), but the two had really hit it off. Lena knew they would. Sam had a sort of bold gregarious impishness on the outside, but inside she had the same goofy candy core as Kara. Oh wow, maybe I do have a type.

Lena walked into her apartment and down the short entryway hall to the point where the space opened up into the vast living and dining area. She turned to her immediate right, to grab a bottle of scotch from her gigantic liquor cabinet rested against the small wall between the dining room and the entryway, but something caught her eye just beyond the cabinet, on the far wall behind the dark wood and white leather of her dining table and chairs. Displayed prominently on the charcoal accent wall, under a set of newly installed ceiling accent lights was a gorgeous new pop of colour she had absolutely not expected. The accent lights and the ambient light from the floor to ceiling windows perfectly framed the new painting hanging on the wall.

Lena was captivated, such that she didn’t even notice that her penthouse was suddenly silent. She walked silently forward, taking in the sight before her. The canvas made perfect use of both vivid colour and negative white space, and Lena could feel the tears in her eyes as she grasped what was depicted. In the foreground were four silhouetted figures, each accented by a distinctive colour palette. The figures were minimalist, with colour-saturated shading to give them shape and texture. From left to right was Kara, Lena, Maggie, and Alex.

The first thing that drew her eyes was Lena and Kara. The green of Lena’s eyes were accented —how did Kara get the colour so perfect?— as was Mr. Pointy, in a few different shades of green. Her figure was standing casually, her hair in her characteristic high ponytail, arms drawn as if she was holding open the top of her jeans to show off her new tattoo. Kara had an arm around her and was painted as if she were gazing down at the tattoo, her other arm splayed out in excitement. Her golden hair was accented, and Lena just adored the way the greens and golds met and blended between the two of them. Kara’s figure also had just a hint, the barest implication, of a goldeny yellow cape—it was so subtle that you wouldn’t recognize it for what it was unless you expected it.

On the right of the painting, Alex was posed with her hands on her hips, head held high. A very Alex pose. The emphasis was on the intermingling purples of her hair, with purples also defining her elbows, hips, and feet. Maggie was to her left, her right arm around Alex, but leaned facing towards Lena. The blues of Maggie’s figure depicted a finger gun pointed at Lena’s hip. Her leather jacket was also accented in the darker hues of blue, and her outlines blended perfectly with Alex’s purples. The four were in the foreground, and the ground beneath them was in darker shades of black and grey, but behind them were the gorgeous, but subtle pinks and oranges of a sunrise. The little details were the most remarkable. Kara’s use of colours, framing, and posture
accented the two separate couples, but without detracting from the point of the piece, which was the comradery of the foursome. Lena also loved that the accent piece for both Danvers sisters was their hair, subtly tying them together as well. It was perfect, and Lena couldn’t hold back her tears.

She felt the warmth of Kara’s arms encircle her waist, and her girlfriend’s chin came to rest on her right shoulder. Face still hot with joyful, awe-filled tears, Lena whispered, “What is it called?”

Lena could feel the movement of Kara’s chin as she smiled and answered, “I couldn’t think of a name; I was hoping you could help me out with that.”

The word came out of Lena’s mouth without any deliberate thought: “Friends.” Something until recently, Lena had only had one of. Something she now knew she had at least five of, including her beautiful Kryptonian.

She could feel herself and Kara, however briefly, sharing this deep moment, as if completely outside of time and space. Just Lena, the woman she loved, and this beautiful symbol of the new life she and Kara had begun to build together. Love. That’s the first time I’ve openly thought that word to myself. But feeling the warmth of Kara’s body behind her, the soft but powerful hands around her waist, the sweet breath on her neck… she knew it was true.

Then the moment was broken. “Okay, this is really sweet and all, but I can’t hold it in any longer. Lena! You finally got your Mr. Pointy tattoo without me?!”

She winced at Sam’s indignation, then turned. Before indulging Sam, she turned to Kara, looked deep into those lovely blue eyes, and kissed her passionately. “Thank you, darling. It’s the most wonderful gift I’ve ever received.”

Kara practically glowed, and her gorgeous smile could’ve lit the night sky. Lena then turned to Sam, slowly extricating herself from Kara’s grip. “Now you, how dare you interrupt such a sweet moment with my girlfriend? That was entirely rude, Samantha.”

Sam was undaunted by Lena’s scolding. “Almost as rude as going and getting a tattoo that you and I have discussed on no fewer than five separate occasions over at least three years, without me?” She put her hands on her hips and fixed Lena with a look that made it clear she would not be out-guilted here.

Lena sighed, half-jokingly. “I’ll have you know it was a spur of the moment decision, and I didn’t give it much thought. Maggie suggested it, and it was a whole bonding experience thing.” She paused to let Sam huff sardonically, before snarking, “I suppose you’ll want to see it then?”

Sam wiggled her eyebrows suggestively, “And here I was worried I would have to think up a contrived reason to get you out of that dress. Now I just have to think of one for Kara.”

They both glanced at Kara, who was now as bright pink as some of the shades in the sunset of her painting. “I. Uhhhh. What?”

“Oh great, now you’ve gone and broken my girlfriend.” Sam grinned, apparently feeling accomplished. Lena hugged Kara, and then pointed her and Sam across the apartment to the living room. “I am going to go slip into something more comfortable, and you are going to fix Kara.” She glared at Sam, then turned and walked off to her bedroom.
Kara had no idea what to do with her hands. She and Sam had sat down at opposite ends of the larger couch in the living room, opposite the insanely large wall-mounted television on the other charcoal accent wall in the apartment. Kara eased back against the supple black leather of the armrest, her gaze fixed firmly on the lush purple carpet under her now bare feet.

*Rao, I have never felt this awkward in my entire life.* Kara was aware that Sam was staring at her, probably in amusement. Except there was no amusement in her voice when she softly asked, “Kara?” Her voice sounded all … concerned and apologetic.

She looked up, and Sam looked legitimately worried about her. Which only confused her further. “Umm, yes, Sam?”

Sam smiled a little at Kara, before asking, “I make you a little jealous, huh?”

Kara felt her face scrunch up and was about to offer a strongly worded denial, but then something in her stopped her. Sam’s words were not judgmental or competitive, just curious. Kara felt so confused by this woman, and her eyes wandered bashfully from side to side. She had no idea how to respond.

“Calm down, Blondie,” Sam offered, playfully. “I’ve been trying to get a reaction out of you all night. Maybe I tried a little too hard, and if so, I’m really sorry. I’ve been told I come on a little strong, especially when Lena is involved. I’m a wee bit protective.”

Kara wasn’t sure how that was supposed to reassure her, but she believed that Sam was sincere at least. “I guess … yeah, I got a little jealous at points. And maybe even before I met you.” She blushed, not quite believing she had admitted that last part. Then as if suddenly posed, her mouth kept on blurring out her insecurities. “But I mean, just look at you. You’re stupid attractive, and you and Lena have known each other forever. And you’re like a CFO or CEO or whatever and a great mom and I’m just like a baby reporter, and you have all these adorable inside jokes and shared history and—”

“Woah there, don’t forget to breathe, Kara.” Sam was definitely amused again, almost like she thrived on other people’s awkwardness. “You really don’t have anything to worry about, I promise. I know that jealousy isn’t always something you can control, not right away. But seriously.” She shrugged playfully. “I mean, yes, Lena and I are super close. And yes, we’re both insanely gorgeous queer women. And yes, I mean I’m very aware of how excellent a cuddler she secretly is…” Kara felt her face scrunching up again, but then Sam just grinned at her mischievously. Kara realized she was being messed with again, and rolled her eyes in exasperation.

Suddenly Sam shifted back to sincerity. “I’ve never seen Lena happy like this. That moment you two just had with that painting—which, holy shit did you paint that yourself?—it was like nothing at all existed in the world outside of the two of you, like all you could possibly ever need was each other. I had total heart eyes.” This time, Kara grinned. “Lena looks at you like you’re the literal sun that lights her entire world. This year has been impossibly difficult for her, and I have a feeling that you are a huge part of her making it through mostly unscathed.”

Sam shifted closer, and Kara couldn’t avoid noticing how amazing she smelled, even after a long day of travel. She fixed Kara with a very firm look. “Hey, just, don’t lie to her again.” Kara immediately shrunk into herself a little, guilty all over again. Sam went on, “Don’t leave her hanging again. I know that she has forgiven you. And she insisted that you had a good explanation, even if she won’t trust me, her best friend, with that information. I am serious though. Lena is the best person I know, and she deserves the best. I’m not saying I’ll kill you if you hurt her, but some things are so much worse than death, ya feel me?”
Sam’s eyes narrowed, but there was still a playfulness there. Kara actually had to work really hard not to laugh at Sam’s (unintentional?) Aladdin quote. But she comported herself, and then smiled her brightest smile at Sam. Kara was filled with appreciation for this woman who cared so deeply for her Lena. She found her body moving of its own accord to wrap Sam up in a tight hug. All her anxiety and jealousy were gone, reforged into genuine affection.

Of course, this was the moment when Lena faked a cough to let them know she had rejoined them. Kara beamed up at her, full of love and contentment. Lena was every bit as gorgeous as she had been in her dress, but now she was in a thin shimmery boat-necked short-sleeved blouse over a pair of simple black yoga pants with dark mesh cutouts criss-crossing just above the knee. She looked at them both in fake suspicion and joked, “Well if you’re quite done groping my girlfriend, I guess I could show you my tattoo now.”

Sam scoffed, but Kara giggled, annoyed that she was blushing again. Sam slid back just a little, and Kara reached up to pull Lena down to her, wrapping her arms around Lena’s shoulders. She sighed happily, and Lena turned her head enough to kiss her gently on the cheek.

Then Sam winked at them both and whined, “Okay okay, I’ve been patient enough. Give me Mr. Pointy!”
Another Broken Trust

Chapter Summary

Lena activates the large-scale prototype transmatter portal, but Rhea reveals herself, and the Daxamites invade. PLUS CAT GRANT IS BACK.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter 25

It was finally Lena’s big day, and Kara was really impressed with what her girlfriend had accomplished. Sure, this sort of technology was pretty basic on Krypton, but Kara was well aware that this was well beyond anything humanity had previously been capable of. Even with the help of her Rannian business partner, Lena’s work was astounding, groundbreaking. Kara couldn’t be more proud.

She and Sam had just arrived, and Kara was eager to meet this Genevieve lady. Unfortunately, she was running late. Lena didn’t seem too concerned, though. She was much more focused on telling Kara and Sam everything she could about the prototype and what the plan for the day was. There was a landing zone nearby, and if everything went according to plan, the drone they would fly through the portal would reappear there instantaneously. The techs posted at the site would then bring the drone back for extensive testing.

If Kara was being perfectly honest, the whole thing sounded pretty underwhelming, but she absolutely adored the look on Lena’s face as she explained it. It wasn’t until they turned it on that Kara understood.

Rao, it is beautiful.

She interlaced her fingers with Lena’s as they gazed at the massive swirling wall of purple energy contained within the giant metal ring. The ring itself was now lit up with the glowing white light of the emitters that lined its surface in perfectly spaced stripes.

Lena turned and asked, “Is the drone ready?”

A nearby tech answered jovially, “The field is stable, and the drone is ready for its maiden voyage. Do you want me to give Laura the go ahea—Wait. Something’s wrong.” Lena’s eyes flashed, and she immediately released Kara’s hand and rushed over to look at the nearest computer screen. Kara could see the emotions contained in the green of her eyes, the furrow of her brow, the tenseness of her shoulders. Lena was confused, but curious. Then something shifted, and her features became frustrated and suspicious.

“This power spike makes no sense; everything was perfectly calibrated at the minimal power setting necessary to get the drone through to the landing zone. And this—” Lena paused, and Kara could practically see the imaginary cartoon lightbulb over her head. “It’s been reversed. None of these readings make sense unless … no. I. Why would she do that?”

Sam asked, “What’s going on, Lee?”

“The only way this makes sense is if our transmatter portal has been linked to another
corresponding portal somewhere else. Which was not part of the plan—we were a ways off from working on a prototype that could accomplish that. This—” Lena gestured at the still glowing ring, “—was supposed to be a one-way device, that can send matter to a specified set of coordinates. Genevieve must have altered the designs and put in additional work without telling me.” She looked around the room and then at her phone. “Where the hell is she?”

Lena looked down at the monitors again, and now Kara could see fear in her features. Her girlfriend looked up, directly at her, and the fear was obvious in her voice now too. “Kara, something is coming through. I don’t know where the other portal is or what could be coming.”

Kara projected confidence and reassurance in her voice, even though she was just as scared as Lena. “Can you turn it off?”

“No, I’ve been shut out of the system. I … I don’t know how Gen did this.” Kara winced. Lena’s whole body had shrunk, and she sounded so betrayed and hurt. Just then, the door opened, and Kara’s eyes went wide.

Rhea?

The Daxamite queen sauntered into the room. Lena shouted at her, “Genevieve, what is this?!”

Kara’s eyes were torn from Rhea as she looked back at Lena in shock. Suddenly everything was starting to make sense. The Daxamites had never actually left. Rhea had been posing as an innocent Rannian to manipulate Lena—but why? Kara wanted to shout at Rhea, to pin her to a wall and force her to explain what exactly she was trying to accomplish. But she couldn’t, not in front of all these witnesses. Not with Sam there.

Rhea continued walking until she was next to Lena, and she placed a hand on Lena’s arm, only to have Lena jerk away from her. Her eyes flashed with outrage and anger. Only then did Rhea finally speak. “I’m doing what I have to do, for my people.” She paused to give Lena an almost motherly look. “Sweetie, I want you to know that the affection I have for you is real.” Then she turned specifically to Kara and added, “Welcome to New Daxam.”

Before Kara could react, Rhea reached out for Lena and the two were gone in a flash of greenish yellow light. The yell ripped through her throat, “NOOOOOOO!” She could feel the rage pouring through her body and immediately locked it down. She couldn’t blow her cover right now, and anger wasn’t going to save Lena. She had to get with Alex and figure out what was happening.

Kara heard a gasp from behind her, and Sam whispered, “Oh my god.” As Kara faced back to the window, she froze. A stream of spaceships were coming through the portal. The Daxamite fleet. I have to go. Now. “Sam, we’re going to get her back. I promise. I need to call my sister. She … ummm, okay I’m trusting you with this. She works with Supergirl.”

Sam’s eyes flashed with surprise, but she nodded. Kara called Alex, and at the sound of her sister’s voice, the tears started coming. “Alex! Rhea has Lena. She took her. We have to get her back. I have to get her back, Alex!”

Alex paused, clearly surprised. “Kara, I am so sorry. The Daxamites took Lar too. I don’t know what Rhea is planning yet, but we’re reading nearly a hundred ships that have appeared over the city, out of nowhere. Do you have any idea why Rhea would want Lena?”

“The ships came through a portal Lena built. Was tricked into building. Alex, she thought she was onto a discovery that would save the world, but that bitch was manipulating her the whole time. I don’t know why she took her. I’m still here, with Lena’s best friend Sam. Alex, please. We have to save her.”
“We will, sweetie. Get here as fast as you can. Don’t engage with the Daxamites until we can put together a plan.”

“Okay.” Kara hung up, then reached out for Sam’s hand. “Do you have somewhere safe you can go?”

“Yeah, I can hide out at L-Corp. But Kara, what about you? What’s going on?”

“That’s a long story, and I don’t even know how much of it I can share with you at this point. The important thing is that you’re safe. Here.” She took Sam’s phone, and entered her contact information. “You have my number, text me so I have yours. I’ll let you know as soon as we have information on Lena, okay? Now go.”

Sam nodded, still confused and worried, but reassured. “Aren’t you riding with me back into the city?”

“No.” Kara paused, realizing that she needed a cover story. “Ummm actually Supergirl is coming to pick me up.” She put all of her best Kara Danvers “aw shucks” softness into that line, and Sam seemed to buy it.

“That’s a hell of a perk.”

Kara shrugged, too angry and hurt to engage in jokes right then. “I’ll stay in touch.” They hugged briefly, then Sam left. Confirming no one else was around, Supergirl sprung into motion and was out of the building and into the city in seconds.

They are everywhere. It had been hours since Lena was taken, and Supergirl, J’onn, and the DEO had been skirmishing with Daxamite soldiers ever since they had deployed from the newly arrived fleet. Despite their best efforts, the Daxamites were spreading through National City, slowly and surely. They were armored in dark black and grey faceless uniforms—almost Guardian-like, Kara thought derisively, as she took a group of them out. They weren’t attacking the citizenry, not yet anyway, and they seemed to be focusing on police stations. Supergirl was doing her best to help where she could, but she was proud to see that the NCPD was defending itself, and any nearby innocent bystanders, remarkably well so far.

The Daxamites hadn’t attacked the DEO yet, and J’onn had left Alex—much to her chagrin—in charge of the base to coordinate agent movement and activity throughout the city. Alex had begrudgingly accepted this role, knowing that J’onn could do more on the streets than she could. He needed someone he trusted to protect the DEO and oversee the strategic coordination of the DEO resistance.

Supergirl and J’onn had been doing their own thing, as the only fliers available, and Kara hadn’t heard from Alex in a while. Then her sister was in her ear, shouting frantically, “Supergirl! We’re under attack. I’ve evacuated the DEO.”

“Hold on! I’ll be right there.” Supergirl stopped mid-flight, only slightly feeling the force of the immediate halt, and then sped off in the opposite direction. Be okay, be okay, be okay.

Halfway there—maybe 5 seconds had passed—Alex shouted, “There’s no time! Meet me outside.” Supergirl smirked, just slightly. ‘Meet me outside’ meant something very different to her and Alex than it did to most people. As she approached the DEO building, she witnessed Alex leap from the balcony, backwards, shooting some Daxamites for good measure before she began
her descent. Her purple hair somehow caught the sunlight perfectly as she twisted in the air to fall forward, like an Olympic diver. *What a showoff*, thought Kara, before catching Alex easily and taking off towards the station where Maggie worked.

“Maggie’s okay so far. I’m taking you to her. Where’s J’onn?”

“He evacuated the DEO and gave everyone orders to spread out in teams, to try to handle some of the Daxamites. Kara, we’re severely outnumbered here, but J’onn’s flying around like you, trying to help as best he can.”

“Good. Now let’s help your girl.” Maggie and five other cops were spread out, taking cover and trading fire with a squad of Daxamites. Kara held Alex close to her chest to shield her as much as possible as she came down in the center of the Daxamites, landing with enough force to shatter the concrete and send the Daxamites sprawling. She sat Alex down, and she ran to Maggie. The embraced, kissed briefly, and then took a back-to-back stance, weapons ready. Supergirl couldn’t help but marvel at the badass pair, like a warrior couple of old.

As the Daxamites rose, Supergirl moved closer to the others. She encouraged them, “Stronger together,” and they both nodded back at her. Then the action began. The Daxamites were significantly weaker than Kara, but still far stronger than the humans. Maggie and Alex worked as a team, methodically taking out one Daxamite at a time through speed, skill, and teamwork. Meanwhile, Kara superspeeded back and forth, taking Daxamites out in multiples. A couple of times she had to save Maggie or Alex with a well-placed heat vision strike. Supergirl was trying her hardest not to kill anyone, but she couldn’t avoid a few severed limbs and concussions. This was war.

Just as they started to take an advantage, two more squads appeared. “Shit!” spat Maggie.

J’onn radioed in. “Supergirl, Agent Danvers, this is a battle we cannot win, not this way. There are too many of them.”

“Yeah we’re seeing that for ourselves, J’onn!” Alex retorted, as she and Maggie retreated behind the protection of Supergirl.

“We need to regroup and establish a base of operations. I’m instructing the DEO teams to stay in the city, so they can do what they can to protect civilians. You two meet me at the alien bar—it’s out of the way and inconspicuous.”

“Got it!” Supergirl answered, then fired off a wide swatch of heat vision at the approaching crowd of Daxamites. The toppled to the ground, crying out in pain as they suddenly all found themselves lacking in shins and feet. Her heat vision should have cauterized the wounds so they wouldn’t bleed out, but they were definitely out of this fight indefinitely. Kara could feel the guilt and conflict tighten around her chest, but if she had to choose between Daxamites invaders and the civilians they were trying to intimidate, harm, and maybe kill… that was no decision at all.

She scooped up Maggie and Alex and took off. They were at the bar in just a few minutes, and J’onn was already there with a pair of DEO agents and Winn. The bar was cleared out, and the agents were setting up some communications relays and computers. Kara and Alex hugged J’onn tightly, then did the same for Winn.

J’onn was the first to speak. “Kara, can you try to reach out to Superman? We could really use some backup here, and I haven’t been able to reach him.”

Kara frowned. “I already tried. He’s not answering his phone, and I called the Daily Planet—he’s
not there either.” Left unsaid was that she specifically called Lois, who told her that Kal had disappeared, and she had no idea where he was. She made Kara promise that if she found him, she would call. It was unthinkable that Superman wouldn’t have responded immediately to an invasion of Earth. But Kara didn’t have time right now to ponder what Kal was doing—she could only hope he would arrive soon.

Another squad of DEO agents, led by Susan Vasquez, entered the bar, and several were injured. Among the injured was James, in full Guardian attire, except for his mask. Winn rushed to his side. “Dude, what the hell? How badly are you hurt?”

“My pride is hurt more than my body. Your suit did its job. These guys—” he gestured at the agents, “—thought I was one of the Daxamites, and tried to take me out.”

A couple of them looked guilty, but Vasquez just glared at him. “Look buddy, it’s not our fault your vigilante getup looks like Daxamite armour.” Kara and Vasquez shared a brief grin as James scowled at the agent, then J’onn cleared his throat.

“We need a plan, people. The DEO mainframe is down, so we don’t have much in terms of information on the Daxamites or ability to coordinate with the entire DEO. I’ve called for reinforcements, but we have to get our communications hubs up ASAP.” He looked pointedly at Winn, who nodded and immediately got back to work.

J’onn continued, “As far as the Daxamite military patrolling the streets, there isn’t much we can do. It’s a war zone out there, but they’re slowly gaining a hold on the city, establishing martial law. Our priority has to be Rhea and the high command. Does anyone have any idea how we can get aboard that ship?”

The silence was deafening, and everyone jumped at the sound of the back door opening. Weapons were raised quickly as Lillian Luthor entered the bar. “Maybe I can be of service,” she offered, casually. Her hands were in her pockets, and she was smirking, as if completely unfazed by the arsenal trained on her. “What, not happy to see me?”

Supergirl bristled. “You made a mistake coming here.” She needed to get to Rhea, to save Lena and then the city—she did not have time to deal with Lillian’s bullshit on top of it all.

“I find it as distasteful as you do, Supergirl, but I need your help.” Lillian emphasized ‘Supergirl’ ever so slightly, mocking the hero. “And you need mine.”

Alex stepped directly in front of Lillian, gun pointed at the taller woman’s chest. “Where’s my father?”

“I don’t know.”

“That’s the wrong answer,” Alex spat as she moved even closer and pointed the gun under Lillian’s chin.

“Well, it’s the truth.”

As much as Kara hated to ignore the open question of Jeremiah’s whereabouts (and loyalty), now was not the time. “Alex, back off.” Supergirl approached Lillian and asked, “What do you want?”

Lillian launched into full evil maniac monologue mode. “To take down our common enemy. Everything I warned against has come to pass. Alien invaders have come to destroy our way of life and claim our planet.” She strolled casually to the bar and took a seat. “Just as I said they would.” Kara didn’t know if she had ever seen anyone look so smug. “So, now you can shoot me,
Supergirl immediately grasped the implication of what Lillian was saying. *How does she already know that Lena was taken? And why is she pretending like she gives a damn about Lena anyway?* Kara was angry again, stalking towards Lillian as she rebuked, “You mean your daughter who you *kidnapped and framed*? Even if I believed that you cared at all about Lena—which, trust me, I do *not*—we aren’t going to work with you. We don’t need you.” Her friends and teammates spoke up behind her with shared words of support.

Lillian stood slowly as she spoke. “Don’t let your pride get in the way of your objective. That ship is armed with Kryptonite canons. You have no transmat portal, and the Daxamites shields are nearly impervious.” She took a sharp breath, as if the next words would hurt her to utter. “I need your help to get onto that ship. But you need mine also.”

Alex responded, “If there’s no way onboard, what good are you? Clearly you have a plan, or you wouldn’t be here. What is it?”

Lillian smiled at Alex, as if impressed. “That you don’t get, not until I have your word that we’re in this together.”

Alex glanced at Supergirl, and she shook her head furiously. Kara absolutely would not trust Lillian. She knew better. Alex gave their answer, “No, we can’t trust you.” Then she ordered the nearest agents, “Take her into custody. Everyone be on high alert for Hank Henshaw. If Lillian tracked us down, he can’t be far behind.”

As they moved to handcuff her, Lillian stepped forward and grabbed Supergirl’s arm. “I understand why you don’t trust me, but you’re making a mistake. Whatever happened in our past, I’m asking you to leave it there. The love I feel for my daughter is real. Please, Kara. Help me save her.”

Supergirl kept her face straight, uncaring. Inside, however, her stomach was knotted up, and her mind was racing. It wasn’t a surprise that Lillian knew her identity, but it still felt like a kick in the gut to have the confirmation. *Does she know I’m dating Lena? Is she going to expose me? Why hasn’t she already?* Lillian had put on her most convincing distraught mother act, but if her intention was to play at Kara’s emotions, it had backfired. Kara was more convinced than ever that Lillian could never be allowed to escape again, even if it meant ignoring any potential help she might be able to provide.

“I don’t believe you. And I’ll never help you.” Lillian grimaced as the agents took her into a back room, and Kara did everything she could not to let her fear and frustration show. She needed to be Supergirl right now. The city needed her. Lena needed her.

Winn broke the silence with a yelp. “Guys, I’ve got comms up, and you’re not gonna believe this, but I’m picking up a transmission from Air Force One. Give me a sec—I’m trying to patch into it.”

Alex sighed. “Don’t tell me the president is heading towards the conflict and not away.”

Kara’s heart jumped, and she rushed over to where Winn was seated in front of two large monitors. “Every time I think I can’t get happier I voted for that woman!”

Winn was able to hack into the audio from the transmission. President Marsdin and Rhea were trading barbs, as the President insisted that the militaries of the world would unite against her. Rhea appeared completely undaunted, and even a little amused. *I hate her so much.* Just as the tensions rose to a level of unavoidable conflict, the most unexpected voice entered the fray.
“Oh my god, enough. All right, ladies. If I wanted to listen to this adolescent macho posturing, I would’ve stayed in D.C.” Cat Grant was scolding the President of the United States and the Queen of Daxam as if they were a couple of obnoxious school children. It was just like Ms. Grant, and Kara grinned genuinely for the first time since Lena was taken. She had no idea how Cat was involved in this, but she was overjoyed to hear her voice again.

“Is this really who you want to be? Testosterone-driven windbags, boasting about your big guns.” Cat’s voice was somehow condescending and cajoling at the same time. Kara, Winn, and Alex were all frozen in astonishment, mouths agape. “Surely we don’t need to measure anything; we’re women. We’re tough, we’re wise, and we’re way above this pettiness.” Kara snorted. Cat had clearly never met Rhea. “Let’s just roll up our sleeves and talk peace.”

Rhea sounded taken aback as she asked who Cat was. Cat’s retort of “I’m the Queen of All Media, Bitch” (okay, that’s not exactly what she said, but Kara knew that’s what she meant) was received icily. “Well, Cat Grant, I am Rhea, an actual Queen. First of Daxam, and now of Earth.”

Cat, of course, had the perfect comeback. “Oh. Ohh. Well! Let me just give you a little bit of friendly advice, Rhea. That tiara, that you have on the top of your head, it’s overkill. Real royals, they don’t need to try that hard.”

“Oh snap!” Winn shouted, and Alex glared at him, immediately settling him down. Cat continued to explain how she was perfectly capable of mediating peace between Daxam and Earth, as if the president wasn’t even involved in the conversation anymore. Kara didn’t even know how to feel about that, given how much she admired both women. She did chuckled at Cat’s “we all know the future is female; we’ve seen the t-shirts” line—there was no way Rhea had seen the t-shirts, but it was hilarious that even negotiating with a ruthless dictator, Cat Grant was still Cat Grant.

Rhea did not take it very well, and as she began to make it very clear that she would not be negotiating, Kara realized what was about to happen. She tore out of the bar as fast as she could, trying desperately to make it to Air Force One before the Daxamite super cruiser could blow it out of the sky.

But she was too late. Supergirl could only watch in horror as the orange beam of energy fired from the cruiser’s primary cannon blew the plane out of the sky. She screamed in pain and helplessness, having just witnessed her beloved mentor and the president murdered in a sickening ball of fire. She could feel the sobs wracking through her body, but as the roar of the explosion faded, her comms crackled. Then that miraculous voice was talking directly to her.

“Supergirl, you didn’t really think we’d try to take on an alien warship with a 747, did you?” Kara laughed through her tears—of course the first thing Cat would do was scold her for her doubt in the woman.

“Ms. Grant?! You and the president are safe?”

“Yes, Supergirl, we’re safe. Olivia and I were broadcasting from a secret bunker in National City.” Ms. Grant is on a first name basis with President Marsdin? “She was alerted of the invasion almost immediately and given that these Daxamites—” Ms. Grant said the word with such derision that Kara’s face lit up in approval, “—were targeting my home, I insisted that I tag along on Air Force One. We landed in National City about forty minutes ago. Olivia’s going to stay here, where it is safe, but I was hoping you might come pick me up? I simply must be where the action is—my city needs me.”

Supergirl began to argue, but Cat cut her off. “Supergirl, that wasn’t a request. Get your skinny
As Lena woke, she was startled to find Genevieve—no, Rhea—creepily watching her sleep. Rhea had injected her with something, knocked her out shortly after bringing her on board. Lena could see now that the façade was completely gone. The older woman had traded in her tailored suits and tasteful dresses for a flowing pale blue gown, with long sleeves and exposed shoulders. Over her torso was some sort of formal armour of the same pale blue, an alien garment that looked both fluid and metallic, graceful but solid. It wrapped around her middle just under her breasts, then formed a V shape, with two layers of curvy patterned material rising up to form stylish shoulder pads and a wide collar. This was the first time Lena had seen her with her hair down, and wrapped around the top of her head was a blue-green tiara of sorts, with distinctive curving patterns that framed her face in a peculiarly alien way.

As Lena sat up in surprise, she realized that someone had removed her clothes as she slept, dressing her in a long black gown with sheer lacy sleeves down to her wrists. Her brow furrowed at the violation of her privacy and her body, then she turned angrily to Rhea. “Where the hell am I?”

“You’re in one of the finest sleeping chambers available on my ship. It’ll be yours for the time being. I teleported you here before that awful Kryptonian could interfere. I had no idea you were friends with Supergirl.” Rhea pronounced ‘Supergirl’ as if the moniker were the stupidest word she had ever heard of. And she knows Kara’s identity—but not that we’re dating. Good. Another wave of betrayal and hurt washed over her as she remembered all that had transpired. Another deranged mother figure manipulating me into doing something terrible. How do I keep letting this happen to me? How could I not have learned my lesson with Lillian? She lashed out in anger, “You lied to me and used me.”

Rhea didn’t shrink from the accusation. “I did what I had to do for my people. But I did it for you too. I meant what I said—you are a marvel, Lena. And I know that you are meant for bigger things, better things!” Rhea stood and began to walk around the room. Lena shifted over to the edge of the bed and stood cautiously as the queen continued. “This is a planet of wasted potential, and you represent the best of your race. I am going to make a society worthy of you.”

Lena couldn’t disguise the look of horror and disdain that overtook her face as Rhea reached out as if to embrace her. Lena flinched, but allowed Rhea to walk her over to the window. “You are right where you belong, beside me, presiding over this new world that we will create. Together.”

Coming to her senses, Lena broke away from Rhea. “Fuck you! You manipulated me, betrayed me. Now you’ve kidnapped me. I’m not creating anything with you.”

The adoring expression on Rhea’s face contorted into one of scorn. She immediately controlled herself, but Lena had seen her true face, however briefly. Just like Lillian. “Don’t be silly. I admit, my methods were deceitful, and for that I apologize. As I said, I did what I had to do. I’m certain you’ll come to see things my way, sooner or later. I am, however, truly sorry for the subterfuge.”

Lena glared silently, and Rhea requested that she follow her. Lena didn’t feel as if she had much choice, so she followed. “As I mentioned when we arrived, I am Queen Rhea of Daxam. My planet was decimated by the destruction of our nearest neighboring planet, and my people have been recovering ever since. I came to this backwards planet intentionally, and no, I wasn’t trying to get back home. My son—” Lena could hear the frustration in her voice at the thought of Lar,
“—came here and took up with that Kryptonian. I came here to get him, and take him home so that we can rebuild our society. But he defied me, refused to come.” She made a face at Lena, as if expecting her to sympathize. “Both Lar and that girl need to be punished—” Lena bristled at this threat to her Kara, but fortunately Rhea was facing forward again,—and since he refused to go to Daxam, I’ve decided to bring Daxam to him.”

They had arrived in a large chamber, which Lena guessed was near the center of the ship. To her right, raised up on a platform toward the back of the room, were two thrones. I wonder what happened to Lar’s father—Kara said they came here together. Behind the thrones were three golden statues, probably of the gods she had heard Rhea thank on occasion.

As Rhea walked up and took her seat on the right throne, she gestured towards the guards at the other door. They opened it, and in walked Lar, who she had only ever met as ‘Mike of the interns.’ He looked up as he walked into the chamber, and then halted, gawking at her. “Lena?”

Lena said nothing to him. She was determined not to give Rhea any more information than she already had. The queen, however, was amused by her son’s awkward display. “Wonderful! You already know your beautiful, brilliant bride-to-be.”

“Excuse me, bride-to-be?!” Lena spat, but Rhea ignored her, continuing to address Lar.

“But of course you do. She is the absolute best Earth has to offer. That is why she is your perfect mate, as we remake Earth into New Daxam.” Rhea again ignored Lena’s interruption, this time a muttered, “That’ll never fucking happen.” Lar came to stand beside Lena in front of the throne, still obviously very confused about the situation. When he finally spoke up again, his voice was contemptuous. He clearly had no love lost for his mother at this point.

“What are you planning, Mother?”

“Isn’t it obvious?” This planet has amazing potential. It’ll be beautiful when we’re finished with it. This ship is stocked with Daxam’s best—the leaders, the merchants, the military strategists—”

Lar interrupted, responding snidely, “The robbers, the liars, the killers—”

Rhea glared at him, then continued. “The elite who once led our people to greatness. Here, we will rebuild and make way for the rest of our ravaged population.”

“Mother, the people of Earth will not just lie down and take this.”

“Oh yes, I am aware. That is why we must unite our people with the people of Earth. You’re—” she gestured to Lar and Lena, “—the key. Your marriage is vital to the successful joining of our peoples.”

Lena could feel Lar’s eyes on her, but she remained stoic, facing Rhea. He cleared his throat, and then, apparently giving up on getting Lena’s attention, turned back to his mother. “I’m insane to even try to get through to you, Mother, but eh hem, here goes.” Lena rolled her eyes. Even trying to stand up to his crazed mother, Lar sounded like a whining frat boy. “Lena and I are not getting married.”

“You can make this easy, or you can make this hard. But there will be a wedding, and you will produce an heir—”

Lena shuddered at that new and horrifying mental picture and interrupted. “Are you not listening?!” She paused, summoning up her best Luthor poise. “Rhea, darling, I’m sure your kid
has some sort of redeeming qualities, but let me make this very clear. I am not fucking him. There will be no heir.”

Lar spoke up beside her, his voice suddenly quiet, defeated. “She doesn’t need us for anything. She just needs our genetic material. Daxamites can generate a child without sex. All it takes is something as small as a lock of hair.”

“Which I collected while you slept. My son knows me well. I hope for the best, but prepare for the worst. The wedding is non-negotiable; it will legitimize your union in the eyes of the Daxamite people.”

“You’re insane if you think I’m going through this pageant for you.” Lena was beyond restraint at this point. She was confident Kara would find a way to rescue her, but that didn’t mean she was just going to stand here and listen to Rhea blather on about Daxamite rituals.

Unfortunately, her outburst didn’t faze Rhea in the slightest. “Yes, you’ve made your feelings for me abundantly clear, Lena. I don’t expect you to do it for me. But! There are people you do care for.” Rhea was walking towards a display panel raised up from the wall, and Lena’s heart sank, terrified that Rhea knew about her relationship with Kara after all. Rhea tapped the screen, bringing up an image of a set of buildings.

Lena paced towards the screen. “Wait. … Wait, what is that?”

“The Luthor Family Children’s Hospital, of course. One of the things I’ve found most intriguing about you, Lena, is that you do more with your money and power than just live lavishly. You care about the … little people.” Rhea’s derision for the so-called ‘little people’ couldn’t be more obvious. She turned back towards Lena and Lar, stone-faced. “The two of you will get married, and after that you can spend the rest of your days rotting in a cell for all I care.” Her lips turned up at the corners slightly, and a bit of sweetness re-entered her tone. “Of course, I’d much prefer to have you both come around, and take your rightful places as part of this royal family. But for now, the only question is whether you will agree to the wedding ceremony now, or only after I’ve murdered thousands of lives in the city below?”

Rhea’s point was made, silencing any remaining insolence by Lena or Lar. How could I ever have trusted this homicidal lunatic? What is wrong with me? Lena felt defeated, lost. She whispered, “Fine.”

“We will do as you ask,” Lar agreed.

“I know it’s hard for you to see now, but in time, you will realize you made the right choice.”

Chapter End Notes

We're in the final stretch of this story now. I wasn't quite sure how much of the canon finale I would keep, but it turns out, I'm keeping quite a lot. Hope that isn't too unoriginal. Trying to make it my own though.

ALSO this fic will have a sequel, and it will be a little different. Looking forward to getting started on that as I have time.
Chapter Summary

Lena isn’t here for any of this marrying Lar Gand nonsense, and Kara teams up with Lillian to save Lena. Then Kara and Kal duke it out, because kryptonite. Also, have I mentioned that I love Cat Grant?

Chapter 26

As Supergirl entered the bar with Cat, Winn sighed and reached out to hug his former boss. “Ms. Grant, you’re alive!”

If Cat was surprised to see Winn there, she didn’t show it. She shrugged off his hug and muttered, “What did you think, Winslow? My city is under siege. Do you think I would just allow myself to die?” She rolled her eyes and flung her hair out of her face as she walked around the bar, taking in the scene. “Supergirl, I understand you setting up your rebel headquarters in a dive bar. It’s very French Resistance. But what are all these monitors and satellites and these handsome armed men dressed in black?” Cat eyed a nearby agent hungrily.

“Well, um, Ms. Grant, I work with a clandestine government organization called the DEO. We’re devoted to protecting the planet from extraterrestrial threats.”

Cat nodded sarcastically. “Yes well, you’re doing a bang-up job.”

Winn jumped in, trying to dispel the awkwardness. “Hey uhh Ms. Grant, how did you happen to, you know, grab a ride here with Olivia?” He winced a little as he used the President’s first name, and Cat just looked at him like he was an idiot.

“Olivia was my RA at Radcliffe, but that’s really not important right now.” Just then, she was interrupted by a call, and promptly walked outside to talk in private.

“Speaking of the President, we now have our orders.” J’onn strolled into the room authoritatively, and Kara was immediately suspicious. “We’re going to break back into the DEO and access the positron cannon mounted to the roof.”

Winn jumped in, “Hey, hold on, I’m sorry, what?! We have a positron cannon? Like a ‘vaporize anything it shoots’ positron cannon?!” His face was full of awe.

J’onn narrowed his eyes, ignoring Winn’s outburst. “Agent Danvers, you’re the only person I can trust to lead this mission. You will use the cannon to destroy Rhea’s cruiser, then the surrounding Daxamite ships. That cannon is the only shot we have of taking down Queen Rhea.”

“J’onn, you cannot do that!” Kara was in his face instantaneously, shouting with all the fear and fury she had been holding in. “Lena is up there! I don’t care what the President ordered, I won’t let you do this! Not till I can rescue her!”

“Supergirl!” Alex’s arms were wrapped around her, futilely trying to pull her away from J’onn. Kara sucked in a breath, and let her sister pull her away. “Come on, I need to talk to you outside.”
Kara followed her sister, shaking with rage. The minute they were outside, she shouted, “Alex! You know I can’t let this happen! I won’t let Lena die!”

“Kara, enough! I know, okay?” Alex leaned in, grabbing each of Kara’s biceps with her hands as if to steady the Kryptonian. Her voice softened. “I know. But you have to stop and think about this, really think about what is right.” Kara immediately broke free of Alex’s grip, glaring daggers at her again. “Just! Hear me out. We have no way of getting on that ship, and we have no idea what Rhea will do next. For all we know, she’s planning on leveling the city as we speak. Sweetie, I wish there was another way—I would do anything to be sure that Lena comes back to you, but what choice do we have? The city, maybe the planet, is at stake!”

“There’s got to be another way. Imagine if it was Maggie!”

“I can,” Alex responded confidently, but Kara could hear the waver in her voice. The sadness. “Which is why this is so hard. But we don’t have a choice. If Maggie were up there, I know she would tell me I have to do this, and I’m pretty sure Lena would tell you the same thing. I’m so sorry—”

Kara cut her off. “I can’t. … Look, give me some air, okay? Just let me think.”

Alex nodded, hesitating only slightly before turning and walking back into the bar. Kara turned, running her hands through her hair in frustration as she paced through the alleyway. She was so lost in thought that she jumped several feet in the air when Ms. Grant sauntered around the corner and faked a cough to get her attention.

Landing awkwardly and blushing all over, Kara stammered, “Ms. Grant … what are you doing out here?”

Cat smiled, then hopped up to sit on a piece of wood balanced over a keg. Kara was briefly warmed by the thought that Ms. Grant somehow carried herself in such a way that the keg may as well have been a throne. “I was just hoping for some contemplation under the stars, but alas, there isn’t much to look up at tonight.”

Supergirl snorted derisively. *Besides the alien ships holding my girlfriend hostage, you mean.* Perceptive as always, Ms. Grant asked, “So, who’s up there?”

Kara gaped at her former mentor in disbelief. Cat simply rolled her eyes and said, “Oh please, you’ve never been very good at keeping secrets from me.”

Not wanting to think too hard about what Ms. Grant could possibly mean by that statement, Supergirl caved. “It’s my girlfriend. She was taken by the Queen of Daxam. And I don’t know what to do now. “ She swallowed, hard, forcing herself not to start crying again. “Supergirl has a responsibility to protect everyone. But all I can think about is the fact that the person I love is trapped on that ship, and destroying it means destroying her. I can’t do it! I just … it would break my heart.” Her control wasn’t good enough, and a tear slipped down her cheek. She blinked several times and sighed deeply. “I’m selfish,” she muttered darkly.

“No, no, no, that’s not selfish, Supergirl. That’s human.” Supergirl looked back at Ms. Grant, and her expression was as empathic as Kara had ever seen it. “Do you wanna to know the real reason why I left National City? I wasn’t happy. So I asked Siri, ‘Where is the happiest place on Earth, Siri?’ And she answered, “Bhutan,” so I booked my passage to the Himalayas, and I moved into a yurt.”

Ms. Grant was on a roll now, and Kara had genuinely missed her connection with this remarkable
woman. She felt herself smiling, despite the sorrow that filled every part of her. “Now. Do you have any idea what is in a yurt? **Nothing.** Nothing! Not even central air conditioning. But these people, they are **happy.** A child learns how to walk; they sing. A group of people come down from a hike from the mountains, and they dance. And a couple, they go on their first date, and they throw a damn festival!” Cat shook her head in wonder, emphasizing, “And all of a sudden, the secret to happiness just dawned on me. It’s human connection. I could conquer the world at CatCo, or I could twiddle my thumbs in a yurt, and the loneliness would feel exactly the same, because I was missing the point.”

She looked straight into Supergirl’s eyes, and Kara felt as if her mentor was gazing into her soul, speaking directly to her. “It’s not about what you do. It’s about who you love. And the person you love is trapped in an evil spaceship. Wanting to rescue her is not selfish; it’s everything.”

“Yeah.” Cat’s words were running furiously through Kara’s head, and she found herself nodding, her feelings coalescing. “Yeah.” Could she even continue to be Supergirl, continue to inspire hope and save people and bear the weight of the world, if she lost the light of hers? She drew a sharp breath in, knowing what she was going to have to do. Then she turned back to Cat. “This means I’ve gotta do something that I **really** don’t want to do. … Still, I’ve really missed your advice, Ms. Grant.”

“And I’ve missed giving it, **Kara.**” Supergirl nearly fell over in surprise. She caught herself and blushed furiously. Cat just narrowed her eyes and grinned. “Come now, you didn’t really think I would fall for your little trick with the shapeshifter, did you? And honestly, who would’ve thought, a **Super** and a **Luthor,** in love?”

Kara’s forehead crinkled, and she looked at Cat without any clue what to say in response. “How did you …?”

“I told you you were bad at keeping secrets from me. But we can talk more later. For now, shoo. Go get your girl. No time to lose.”

Kara smiled broadly and turned to go back into the bar. She walked straight past Alex, past J’onn, and back into the room where they were holding Lillian. “So how do we get onto this ship?”

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I still can’t believe I’m working with Lillian Luthor. Kara wasn’t sure when, but she was sure that Lillian would betray her at some point. It sucked that the whole plan hinged on Henshaw using his stupid cybernetic core to fiddle with the Daxamite computer systems to avoid detection. Without him, Supergirl would probably be detected as she used the Phantom Zone projector Kal had stored in the Fortress of Solitude and surrounded by Daxamites the minute she was onboard. Sure, it was possible that Lillian was lying, but Kara couldn’t risk Lena’s life on that chance. She had no idea what Rhea had planned, and stealth was the best option.

So here she was, letting her sworn enemy into the Fortress of Solitude. As she, Lillian, and Henshaw approached the projector, Kara could no longer resist. She had to know. “I’m curious about something. ‘You know my real identity, but you never told Lena. Why is that?”

Lillian looked her up and down, sizing her up. Perhaps gauging her sincerity. Then she put her cards on the table. “Don’t play games, Kryptonian. I know you’re dating my daughter. Lena’s not exactly been subtle about it lately.”

**So she does know. So be it.** “I’m never going to let you hurt her again.” Kara put all the authority
and menace she could muster into those words.

“Neither you nor Lena can stop me from accomplishing my goals. Lena’s gone down a tragic path, and if she stays on that path, only tragedy will await her. But let’s save that for another time.” She turned away dismissively, adding, “Right now our interests are aligned. When this is over, we’ll go back to being enemies.”

Supergirl contained her white hot rage, knowing that she still needed Henshaw to get her onto the ship. She ignored Lillian, and instead thought of Lena. I’m coming for you. I’m not going to let either of these awful women hurt you ever again. Hold on just a little bit longer. She then checked over Henshaw’s shoulder. She was antsy, because their window was small. Alex and Maggie were sneaking into the DEO right at this moment—J’onn could not continue to delay following the president’s orders. Kara had a very limited amount of time to get onto the ship, rescue Lena, and get her back before Alex blew the ship out of the sky.

“It’s ready,” he growled. And with that they stepped forward, and a bright white light consumed them.

To say that Lena was irate would be an understatement. She couldn’t believe that she had been forced to wear this ridiculous, over-sexed red dress. If it was just the form-fitting red gown with a plunging neckline, that would’ve been acceptable, as far as forced wedding outfits went. But the dress had this stiff fucking half-shoulder pad, half-cape thing sewn into the top of it, with ridiculous forearm sleeves and what felt like a cage of the soft metallic substance she had noticed on Rhea’s outfit earlier, draped suggestively over her cleavage. She felt like a fucking idiot.

The guard who had escorted her from her room stopped to retrieve Lar from his room also—they were being led back to the throne room for the wedding ceremony. As they turned into a narrow hallway, Lar stopped. He turned to the guard and commanded, in what Lena was sure he thought was a ‘princely’ tone, “As your prince, I order you to lay down your weapons, and let us go.” The helmeted guard’s only answer was to point his gun at the wayward prince.

“Yeah, I didn’t think that was going to work either.” As he said it, he turned to look back at Lena, then jerked forward suddenly, knocking the gun from the guard’s hand. While the two of them scrabbled, Lena took her opportunity, walking calmly over to the dropped gun, and then shooting the guard in the back.

Lar dropped the body in surprise, but Lena couldn’t care less. She was already walking in the other direction, looking for a way out. She heard him mutter, “Thank you,” before rushing to follow her. She took a left, and then a right. She was doing her best to remember the general directions of both her room and the throne room and navigate a third path. As she opened a door, her heart dropped to her feet. The door opened to a squad of Daxamite royal guards. Lena was sure that this was it.

Then Supergirl knocked out all three guards and gave her a smile so overwhelmingly bright, Lena had to blink. It felt like time stopped for just a second as green eyes met blue, and then they were kissing each other. Kara’s arms wrapped tightly around her, and Lena finally felt safe again in the warm embrace of her hero. Until she noticed her mother coming down the hallway.

The words were out before Lena could control herself. “What the fuck is she doing here? Supergirl, I don’t know what con she sold you to get you working with her, but she has an ulterior motive. We can’t trust her.”
Kara withered slightly, but her answer was confident, “Believe me, I know. I had no choice. Henshaw was the only option for getting aboard this ship. I couldn’t leave you here.” Lena could hear the terror in her girlfriend’s voice, she sounded like she had been a wreck after Lena was taken. But Kara took a step back and warned, “We have to leave now. Alex is going to blow this ship up any minute now. Lar, I guess you can come too.”

Suddenly Henshaw shoved Supergirl out of the way, and Lena felt Lillian grasp her hand tightly before they were surrounded by a white light. When she could see again, she found herself in the strangest place she had ever seen. The whole structure appeared to be made of massive translucent white crystals that criss-crossed far above them to form a ceiling of sorts. As Lena looked around, she noticed that only Lillian and Henshaw were with her.

“Where is she?!” she shouted at her mother.

“Humans only dear, I had to leave your little girlfriend behind.” Lillian began walking forward, pulling a high tech radio transmitter from her pocket as she ordered Henshaw to disable the projector.

Lena pled with Lillian, her voice heavy and anguished. “No! Turn it back on, Mother!”

Lillian ignored her, and spoke into the radio, “Agent Danvers, this is Lillian Luthor. We’re clear of the supership and safe. Fire at will.”

Alex’s voice came back immediately, and Lena could hear her anger. “Not a chance Luthor. I need to hear it from Supergirl first.”

Lena shouted, “Alex! She left Supergirl behind! Please, you can’t destroy that ship. Not yet!”

There was no immediate response from Alex. Lillian shrugged then nodded at Henshaw, who grabbed Lena roughly. They began walking towards the exist, but then static erupted from the radio. It continued for close to 20 seconds, then Alex’s voice returned. This time, it was filled with shock and horror.

“It’s gone. The positron cannon is gone.”

“Superman?!” Kal glowered back at her, unseeing. Kara’s face still stung from where he had punched her. She hadn't seen it coming, and the force of it flung her across Rhea’s throne room. Before she could say more, Kal stalked forward, ranting about how this was his planet and these were his people. He lifted her roughly from the ground and punched her across the room again. She was too stunned to fight back. He gazed down at her, insisting that he wouldn’t allow her to harm the people of Earth, and Kara could see silver flecks shining unnaturally in his deep blue irises.

Something was very wrong with Kal-El, but Kara couldn’t afford to hold back right now. She powered herself off the ground and back onto her feet, then used the full force of her superspeed to knock Superman back against the far wall. He was briefly stunned, and Kara turned to Rhea.

“What have you done to him?!”

The queen smirked at her and explained that she had poisoned him with silver kryptonite. Before she could continue, Kal was up again, his face a mask of fury. He grimaced, “You should have stayed away, Zod.”

*He’s hallucinating.* Kara turned to him and tried to break whatever spell this kryptonite had over
him. “Kal, it’s me, Kara. You don’t want to do this.” She could see his eyes heating up and tried one last plea, “Kal, please, listen to me!”

Then his eyes went orange, and she met his heat vision with her own. The two circled each other, neither able to gain an advantage. Kara could vaguely make out Rhea taunting her in the background, but she kept her focus steady on her now very dangerous cousin. The standstill ended when he charged her. She caught him, but he was moving with enough force to propel them through the window of the ship and down towards the city below.

They fell through the roof of a building, plowing through several stories before they slowed enough to slam into a floor that would hold them. She had maneuvered them so that Kal bore the brunt of the fall. Kara got up, immediately moving to protect the woman and child who had just exited the nearby elevator. In his hallucinatory state, Kal assumed she (or Zod?) meant the innocents harm, and he grabbed her by the cape, catching her off guard as he whipped her overhead and threw her through the window.

Her momentum did not carry her far before he was on her again, and the two rolled and tumbled in the air, struggling to stay aloft as they traded blows. After a moment, which was like minutes for the Kryptonians, she gained an advantage, grabbing hold of Kal and flinging him towards the ground. She was still holding back, not wanting to hurt her cousin, but her throw was powerful enough that he came to a halt crumpled into a larger crater in the stairs surrounding a nearby public fountain.

Supergirl landed nearby, hoping that maybe the force of the landing had jarred Kal from his delusion. She knew it hadn’t when he sprung up and drove her backwards into a nearby car. The collision briefly pained her as the car exploded around them, but she caught her breath and lifted Kal up into the sky. As they rose higher and higher, she tried again to break him from his reverie. “Kal! Cousin, please, come back to me.”

He didn’t respond, and his eyes still shown with those creepy flecks of silver. The air around them thinned, and he pulled away just enough to swing his fists again. As they traded blows, the air around them shook and boomed with the force of their attacks. She caught his punch and drove her fist across his face. He recovered quickly and punched her in the kidney. She doubled over briefly in pain, then brought her head back up forcefully into his chin, sending him flying backwards.

As he recoiled, Kara briefly separated herself from him, but he used the space to regain his footing and take off at full speed towards her. He hit her like a train, driving her back down towards the Earth. She recovered about halfway down and tried to free herself from Kal’s grip. She peppered his face and shoulders with punishing blows, but she couldn’t shake him. At the last minute, he let go of her as he stopped on a dime, and she felt herself break through one wall and then slam into another.

Fortunately, the split second after Kal released her was enough for her to gain control of her momentum, and she wasn’t even stunned by the collision with the wall. She immediately sprung back up and flung herself at Kal’s hovering form, driving him back and into the ground. He grabbed her and flipped her momentum on her, spinning her around and tossing her forty feet or so. She could feel the water almost before she splashed down into the shallow pool. She stood slowly, and briefly mourned the scenes of destruction all around her. *This isn’t what we’re here for Kal. How do I reach you?*

He landed across from her, visibly winded but still just as menacing. Their heat vision met again, but neither of them had the strength to keep their heads straight enough to maintain the battling beams of energy. Kara could feel her body wearing out, her solar energy depleting. She hadn’t felt
this way since her battle with Non almost a year ago. She felt ... scared. Weak. I love you Kal, but I can’t hold back anymore. This city needs me.

Her entire body was soaked, weighing her down further, but she trudged forward to engage Superman again. She drove a swift uppercut throw his chin, but he recovered fast enough to duck under her next swing. Her momentum left her open to his next devastating punch, which collided with her cheek and drove her back a step. Her face ached, but she was still cogent enough to see the next swing coming, and grabbed his arm, and then used the tiniest bit of superspeed she had left to clothesline him. Kal fell to his knees but stumbled up almost immediately. Her wet hair partially obscured her vision, but she was just barely able to avoid his uppercut, feeling the sting of the wind around his fist. He blocked her punch, then held onto her wrist, reaching his other arm around to lock her into a chokehold.

His body tensed, and Kara thought he was having another hallucination. She used the brief respite to break her wrist free and drive her elbow into his gut. She pulled his arm back around behind him, forcing him to the ground and yelling at him to fight it. Instead, he broke her grip, and used the momentum of his spin to hit her square in the chest, stunning her for the briefest of moments. It was long enough for him to pull back and get his full weight behind his next punch, which threw her back a good ten feet. She crashed into the water and felt the concrete beneath her crack. Her ears were ringing, and at this point, all she could hear was the sound of her own ragged breath. Before she could find her footing, Kal was on her again, and she nearly cried out at the pain caused by his kick to her head. But she couldn’t lose this fight. She forced herself to stand up, but just as she was regaining her footing, he hammered another fist into her face, knocking her back to the ground.

She thought that this might be the end for her but noticed that his recent flurry of attacks had left Kal gasping for breath. The break in the action was just enough for her to recover, and she rose to her feet. Neither of them could hold their bodies up straight at this point, and Kara felt she was close to her breaking point. She had to end this fast.

Supergirl blocked the next punch and countered with a powerful blow that sent Kal staggering backward. They faced each other, neither capable of speed or agility anymore. This was a brawl. They traded blows to the face, slowly and painfully. Then Kara saw her chance. Superman put all of his weight forward into his next punch, and Kara remembered all her training with Alex. She ducked under the strike, low to the ground, and used all of her moment and remaining strength to spin around and catch Kal by surprise with an overwhelming upward blow to the chin. The force of it drove his body several feet in the air, and he came back down in a heap.

Superman didn’t get up. Kara slumped to her knees. I did it. Rao, I beat Superman. I just hope Kal will be okay. She could feel the world going black around her, and the last thing she remembered was Alex’s voice and arms around her, catching her.
I Did This

Chapter Summary

Lena feels that the Daxamite invasion is her fault, and can't forgive herself for trusting Rhea's lies. Then Lillian shows up to rub salt in the wound, but also to provide a possible solution. And Lar does the right thing, for once.

Chapter 27

Lena poured her first glass of scotch of the day, then sat down roughly on her office couch. Sure, it was 10 o’clock in the morning, but hey there was an alien invasion going on outside that was entirely her fault and her girlfriend nearly died fighting a brainwashed version of her cousin. Lena had only slept maybe a couple of hours last night, kept awake by her concern for Kara and the guilt that had haunted her from the first moment she saw what the Daxamites were doing to National City.

Lena had arrived at L-Corp late the night before, beamed into her office by Henshaw’s operation of that bizarre Kryptonian projector. She had no idea where Lillian and her cyborg had disappeared to, but she wasn’t exactly in a position to stop them. Her first thought was to call Kara, and when she didn’t pick up, Lena called Alex. She explained that Superman had been brainwashed somehow—the DEO wasn’t sure how just yet—and that he and Supergirl had fought. Kara was okay, but was severely weakened and was resting under the most powerful yellow sun lamps the DEO had. Lena had insisted that she find a way to get to the DEO right then, to be with Kara when she woke. Alex made it clear that she absolutely couldn’t do that, because there’s no way she could navigate through the Daxamite checkpoints and patrols. They had argued briefly, but Lena was too exhausted from one of the worst days of her life to put up an effective fight. Forcing herself to be satisfied with the knowledge that her love was safe, she confirmed with Alex that she and Maggie were okay and that Alex would let her know when Kara woke up.

She had then stumbled down the hall to the high security door behind which she had a bedroom that doubled as a panic room—you can never be too safe when your own brother is trying to assassinate you from prison. She had planned to pass out there, exhausted from the day, but she was surprised to find Sam in the room. Neither was really capable of words last night, and they had embraced tightly. They had cried into each other’s shoulders for longer than Lena would normally allow herself, and then fallen asleep together on the bed. Unfortunately, Lena only slept fitfully, and after a couple of hours, left Sam sleeping soundly in the quiet room. She had spent the rest of the early morning hours trying to figure out what she could do to fix the mess she had helped create. And now she was having a glass of scotch, because it sure felt like there was fuck all she could do to stop Rhea and the Daxamites.

As she fiddled with one of the white knights on the chess set that always occupied her stylish black coffee table, Sam burst into the room. “Lena, thank god! I can’t believe I slept that heavy, but when I woke up and you weren’t there, I freaked out.” Lena could tell the exact moment Sam noticed the glass on the table. “Really, Lee? The world’s falling apart so you figured why not have a good game of chess over a glass of your best scotch?”

Lena couldn’t even bother with a comeback. She felt numb all over. The world is falling apart,
and I’m to blame. I have no plan. Kara couldn’t stop them. The DEO couldn’t stop them. What else is there to do at this point than wallow? “Sam, I don’t know what to tell you. I did this”—she gestured towards the window,—“and I can’t think of a way out of it. So yeah, scotch it is.” She took another sip.

Sam walked over and sat down beside Lena. She took the glass from her hand, sat it down on the table, and wrapped her arms around her. Lena let herself be hugged, but made no effort to return the sentiment. Sam’s voice was firm and caring in her ear. “You cannot do this right now.” She pulled back so that she could look into Lena’s eyes for emphasis. “This isn’t your fault. You were manipulated and betrayed. You were trying to accomplish something extraordinary, that could—and still can—literally save the world. None of this is on you.”

Lena really loved that Sam instantly rose to her defense, but she couldn’t accept her interpretation of events. Lena should’ve known better. She had lived through years of Lillian’s manipulation. She had only recently broken free of her mother’s web, able to see her fully for the monster she was. And all the same patterns had been there with Rhea. Except that I genuinely trusted that she believed in me. A fresh wave of conflict threatened to wash over Lena, but she forced it down.

Sam was right about one thing: now wasn’t the time for this. So Lena did the only thing she knew how to do when her emotions became too much for her to handle; she completely closed them off behind her practiced wall of Luthor ice. She looked back at Sam and grabbed her hand warmly, trying to reassure her friend that she had gotten through to her. “You’re right, darling. As soon as Supergirl is back in action, I’ll do whatever I can to help her. That’s where my focus should be now.”

The change of topic worked like a charm. Sam raised an eyebrow, leaning back slightly. “And when were you going to tell me that you had an in with the Girl of Steel?”

Now was absolutely not the time to bring Sam into the Team Supergirl loop, not that Lena would ever do that without Kara’s express permission. So she made up a version of the truth. “Yeah, Kara’s sister Alex works for a government black ops group that supports Supergirl. We’re not friends, exactly, but yes, I know Supergirl, and I’ve worked with her a few times now.”

“So, do you know what happened last night? Did she really fight Superman? I could hear the sounds of it from here—it was like a terrifying storm of thunder out of nowhere. And now the internet is swirling with rumours.”

“Yes, they fought. But they’re both okay, just … recharging. The Daxamites found a way to brainwash Superman. But our girl won, if only just barely. I’m waiting for a call from Alex.”

“And Kara? Is she okay? Where is she now?” Lena’s heart stirred fleetingly, warmed by Sam’s concern for Kara.

“Of course she is. I wouldn’t be holding it together at this point if she weren’t. She’s at their secret base or whatever. She and Maggie are there, providing moral support to Alex. I was this close to taking on the entire Daxamite army to get to her last night, but she and Alex talked me down.”

“Okay, good. We’re going to make it through this—we can’t give up hope. You wait on your call from Alex—but no more scotch—and I will do what I can to keep the rest of L-Corp running as smoothly as possible. Now I’ve gotta go check in with—” Her voice dropped off as the door to Lena’s office opened up and a figure stepped into the office.

Fucking sure, this is just what I need. “Lena, is your dear Kara aware that you have another
girlfriend on the side?” Lillian’s question was snide and dismissive, and Lena’s body tensed in an ice cold fury. Seeing the reaction brewing, Lillian raised a hand. “No, I’m sorry. Old habits die hard, dear. I didn’t come here to fight.” She turned her eyes to Sam, who had placed a supportive hand on Lena’s forearm. “Could you please give me some privacy with my daughter?”

Lena and Sam exchanged a look. Lena thought about it for a moment, then nodded to Sam. She needed to know what her mother was planning—as untrustworthy as she was, they needed as many powerful minds working on a solution to the invasion. Lillian was nothing if not a brilliant strategist when it came to fighting aliens. Sam squeezed her arm one last time, and then stood to leave. She glared at Lillian as she walked past, then turned back to add, “I’ll be right down the hall if you need me, Lee.”

Lena bristled when her mother mouthed “Lee” mockingly, and in her frustration, she knocked over the two rows of white chess pieces in front of her. “That chessboard’s been in the Luthor family for generations,” Lillian admonished.

Lena rolled her eyes and picked up her empty glass as she stood. “Did you come here to yell at me for not treating the family heirlooms with respect, or to blame me for what’s happening outside?” Sorry, Sam, but I’m gonna need some more booze for this conversation. As she picked up the decanter to pour another drink, Lillian’s rejoinder came from behind her like a sword through her chest.

“How could you let that woman deceive you? I taught you to be a scientist, to question everything.”

Fuck this. “No, what you taught me was to doubt myself. To look for validation elsewhere, so much that I was willing to take it from the first mentor that offered it to me.” Lena stalked back to the couch, and the icy numbness from before had melted into white hot rage. This invasion was her fault, for trusting Rhea, but it was Lillian’s goddamn fault that she was so easily manipulated in that specific way.

As she sat, she pointedly avoided looking at her mother, so the woman’s next words startled her. “I’m sorry.” She scoffed, loudly, but Lillian insisted, “I am, Lena.” She walked slowly over and sat down on the couch. Lena kept her eyes on the scotch glass she was holding in her lap.

Lillian’s voice was now soft, apologetic. “When you came to visit me in jail, I honestly wanted to be a better mother to you. But every time I’ve had the opportunity to choose you over something else… I’ve chosen something else.” Her voice was thick with emotion, or at least what constituted thick for Lillian. If Lena didn’t know her mother so well, she might almost believe that she felt sincerely regretful.

She stared off into the distance, the numbness setting back in. As she lifted her glass to her mouth, she retorted, “Well, congratulations on saying the first honest thing in your life.” In Lena’s head, her words were full of sarcasm and mockery, but the voice that came from her mouth was pure monotone.

“I have justified the worst behavior for the best of causes. But I was right.” Lillian began setting the chess pieces back in their proper places. “The threat was real. But maybe I backed the wrong child to stop it. Lena looked over at her mother, face devoid of all emotion. So, this is her ploy. The transmat portal you created, that was brilliant, Lena. If you could do that with the portal, maybe you can do something with this.”

Lillian pulled a medium-sized metal cube from her bag, and Lena recognized it instantly as the
device Lillian had been so captivated by in Lex’s secret vault. Her eyebrows raised in curiosity. Whatever this thing was, she had no doubt it was absolutely dangerous for Kryptonians. But Daxamites were not so different from Kryptonians, and maybe this could finally be the solution that Lena had been grasping for all morning. “What is it?”

“Lex created this to get rid of Superman, but wasn’t able to get it into working condition before he was so tragically taken from us. You would have to adapt it, obviously, but if you can, you will be the Luthor who saved the world. And after all, that’s what you were trying to do with the transmat portal, wasn’t it?”

“Fine. I’ll bite. What does it do?”

“It was intended to irradiate Earth’s atmosphere with trace amounts of kryptonite, not enough to cause any significant problems for humanity. But it would’ve made Earth uninhabitable for Kryptonians.”

Lena glared at her mother and silently cursed her brother. The device was terrifying. If it could be made to work, Kara would eventually die from prolonged exposure if she stayed on Earth. Thank god Lillian didn’t have the technical expertise to finish it. As she calmed down from her initial disgust, she thought about what the device meant for their current situation. Kryptonite didn’t affect Daxamites … but lead did! Lena remembered Kara telling her that when she was explaining how Lar’s powerset (and weaknesses) were different than hers.

“I will make this work, but you’re never getting it back, Mother. I won’t let you harm her.”

“Yes, yes. Obviously I knew I was taking that risk when I brought you the device. But the Daxamites are a much larger threat right now than your precious Kryptonian. Do what you must.”

“Good. Now you sit here and shut up—I’m going to see if I have any of Lex’s old plans for this device. We’ve only got one shot to make this work, and I’m not taking any chances.”

To her complete and utter surprise, Lillian did as she asked. Lena quickly brought up the secret files her team had compiled on all of Lex’s unearthed projects. Over the next couple of hours, she dug into the designs of this device, figuring out how it worked and how she could modify it to reach the goal she desired.

At some point, Lillian turned on the news. It had been playing in the background for a while, this and that about the invasion and the martial law established in the city, and the potential actions that could be taken by the US military. But Lena tuned it all out, focused on her work. Until something stuck in the back of her brain and forced her to look up. “It’s being touted as the intergalactic fight of the century. Supergirl and Rhea of Daxam face off in a trial by combat for the very fate of our world.”

Lena was close to a breakthrough, but her attention was immediately grabbed by the mention of Supergirl. She listened to the breaking news story with bated breath, realizing she hadn’t been paying attention for Alex’s text or call that Kara had woken. Starting to comprehend what the news was telling her, she dropped the tools she was holding in shock. “Goddammit! What is she doing now?!”

“ … And how was I supposed to know that Lena wouldn’t like me volunteering for a one-on-one battle with a literal evil queen. I mean, that’s basic hero stuff, right? Hasn’t she ever read a fairy tale? Is that a relationship thing I didn’t know, you’re supposed to ask your girlfriend for
permission first before engaging in trial by combat?"

Superman kept his eyes forward, refusing to engage, but Winn was looking over from his position in Kal’s arms as if Kara was some sort of adorable puppy. She made a grumpy face at him, and then he startled, remembering that he was currently a thousand feet in the air. Lena had called her immediately after the news got wind of her challenge to Rhea and insisted that she and Superman come to her office immediately and bring Winn. She also warned Kara that Lillian was there, which was fine, because they weren’t about to let that monster escape again.

As they touched down on the balcony of Lena’s office at L-Corp, the Luthor women walked out to meet them. Kara could tell she was in trouble from the furious look on Lena’s face. She walked straight up to her, finger extended right in her face, and shouted, “What the hell are you thinking?! You could’ve died fighting him—” she gestured towards Superman, “—and barely 12 hours later you’re volunteering to fight Rhea one-on-one?! Are you crazy?! Are you trying to kill me?! I won’t let you do this! I’m not losing you to that bitch! She’s taken too much from me already!”

Kara winced, feeling suddenly very guilty. Her thoughts had been with the city, with the world, and she hadn’t realized how her decision would affect Lena. She put her hands on Lena’s elbows and responded softly, “Hey. I’m sorry, okay? I was thinking big picture, and I didn’t think about how difficult this would be for you, and I just jumped at what seems like our best option of saving the world here. If there was another way, I would take it. But this is how we get rid of the Daxamites, without anyone else getting hurt. I need you to understand that, Lena.”

Lena’s eyes went wide with fear and concern—and Kara was pretty sure she saw some guilt there too, even though Lena tried to hide it. Then her eyes rose, and she rolled her eyes as she turned to walk back into the office. “Fortunately for you, I’ve got a better option.”

Lillian couldn’t resist jumping in. “Yes, if we’re done with this little lovers’ spat, my daughter has a way to save the planet.”

Before Kara could threaten her, Lena shouted, “Shut the fuck up, Mom. Honestly, it’s like you just love hearing yourself speak.”

Kara grinned at her girlfriend, and Lillian grimaced but did as her daughter ordered. Lena led them to the grated metal cube sitting on top of her desk, explaining, “This is a horrible device that Lex invented to get rid of the two of you.”

Lillian interjected, “To keep humans safe—”

Lena cut her off with a glare. “It was meant to irradiate the atmosphere—of the entire planet—with kryptonite.” Kara gasped, and Kal looked really pissed. Winn remained quiet. “Trace amounts of Kryptonite in the air probably would’ve been harmless to humans, but you would’ve been forced to leave. Prolonged exposure would’ve killed you.” Kara could hear Lena’s voice nearly break with this last statement, and she placed a comforting hand on her back.

“Good thing I put him in jail before he could finish it.” Superman’s glare was directed at Lillian, and his voice was full of righteous anger.

Lillian scoffed and retorted, “You’re just lucky that I found it, Kryptonian.”

“My mother excluded, I think we’re all pretty happy that Lex never figured this thing out. But I’ve been tinkering with it, and I’m fairly sure I can get it to work, but with lead rather than kryptonite. It might create a few minor issues for your x-ray vision going forward, but the atmosphere would become toxic to Daxamites. There’s no need for Kara to put herself at risk with this foolish
challenge.” Lena glanced back at her pointedly.

“The aliens would be forced to leave. Or stay and die,” Lillian concluded.

Finally, Winn spoke up, softly but firmly. “What about Lar?”

Kara and Lena both looked at him with sympathy. Lena explained, “Sorry, Winn. I really am. But he’ll have to leave.”

“Well then we should at least talk to him, involve him in this conversation. I’m not saying he should be the one to make this decision—I get that you all will do what you think is right, and we can stop you. But he deserves to know what’s about to happen.” Winn looked straight at Supergirl. “Please, Kara?”

She activated her comms, asking for J’onn. When he responded, she asked that he fly Lar over to L-Corp immediately. They waited, very awkwardly, for maybe five minutes, then the Martian and the Daxamite arrived.

Lar immediately spoke up. “What’s going on? And uhh why is she here?” Winn quickly explained the situation, breaking it to him as gently as possible but not avoiding any of the hard details. Kara actually found herself impressed with the Daxamite. His initial shock gave way to a quiet resolution written all over his features.

“I see.” Lar paused, then asked, “Can I have a minute with Winn, alone?” Kara nodded, and the two of them walked out onto the balcony. She could overhear them, obviously, but tried not to invade their privacy too much. Kara could vaguely hear Lar apologizing that they couldn’t have more time, that he had wasted so much time pining over Kara when Winn was right there the whole time. Winn’s heartbeat and breathing sounded as though he were on the verge of tears. Lar told him that he knew Winn would continue to do great things for Earth, and that he would try to live up to Winn’s inspiration as he returned to Daxam. Then the two kissed, and Kara tried not to squee, because as cute as it was, her heart hurt for Winn.

As they returned to the office, Lar faced the group. “I want to apologize for everything. This whole invasion is my fault. These are my people, and my mother is here for me. If I had just gone with my parents earlier, none of this would be happening. But now I have my chance to make amends. Your planet doesn’t deserve any of this, and I now realize that neither does mine. Things must change on Daxam, and that will never happen with my mother in charge.”

He looked straight at Lena. “You have to do this.” Then he looked as J’onn, Superman, and Supergirl, one at a time. “But you have to make sure that my mother doesn’t make it off this planet alive. Once the air becomes toxic, my people will leave. But if I am going to have any hope for creating a better future for them, I cannot have my mother challenging my authority. There will be many among the elite who will want to resist the reforms I will propose, and it is important that I’m the only royal.”

Kara could feel Kal stiffen beside her. He was strongly opposed to killing, she knew that. Lar was perceptive enough to pick up on that, to Kara’s surprise. “Look, I know that I’m asking a lot. But she won’t stop, and too many of my people will follow her. She murdered my father. She’s ordered the deaths of hundreds in National City already. Please, for the sake of my planet and yours, we have to take her out.”

Superman sighed. “I won’t be a part of killing Rhea, as evil as she is, even if it is just keeping her on-world long enough for the lead to kill her. But I won’t interfere. I trust J’onn and Supergirl to do what they believe is right. In the meantime, I will be out in the city, protecting the civilians
who need our help.” He flew off.

Kara spoke up. “Okay. Lena, you and Winn get to work. We’ve got a little over three hours until I’m supposed to fight Rhea. I’m still going to the fight—” she put up a hand to ward off Lena’s glare,—No, don’t you glare at me, Lena Luthor. This is the only way we can get her down here, exposed. J’onn and Lar will back me up. Lar, you can take her teleporter, and prepare your people to leave as soon as the device is activated. J’onn and I will make sure Rhea doesn’t escape. Are we all on board with this plan?”

She could see on the faces of her friends—J’onn, Winn, Lena, and (fine) Lar—that everyone was in. Kara didn’t much care what Lillian thought. “Okay. In that case …” She looked over to J’onn.

“Right!” He moved swiftly. “Lillian Luthor, you’re under arrest. Again.” If Lillian was surprised by this outcome, she didn’t show it. Kara didn’t like how unconcerned she seemed, but they would worry about that later. J’onn restrained her, and with a nod to Supergirl, flew her and Lar back to the DEO.

Lena asked Winn to get started looking through the plans she had already been working on. Then she and Kara walked out onto the balcony. Lena faced her and stepped close, wrapping up Kara’s hands in her own. After this was all over, Lena would need a lot of love and care and support. It scared Kara that her eyes look so haunted. She could see the anxiety and exhaustion in the lines and dark circles under Lena’s eyes, but even then, Kara thought she looked like the most beautiful thing she had ever seen.

Lena’s lip trembled and her eyes were watery, but her voice was strong when she spoke. “Promise me. Promise me that you will come back to me.” The city was burning around them, but Kara had hope. Because her girlfriend was a genius. An incredible, resilient badass who had figured out a solution to a crisis at the last minute. Despite having spent the past day being betrayed by a trusted mentor, having her crowning life’s achievement undermined and twisted to an evil purpose, and being literally kidnapped by an evil queen. People called her a hero, but Lena was a wonder. Kara loved her so much.

“I promise.” Kara kissed her, deeply. She held Lena tight, putting all her love, admiration, and devotion into the kiss. She wanted to tell her that she loved her, that Lena was her heart. But not like this. Lena was scared, worried about her. Kara couldn’t have her feeling like this was goodbye. There would be time to tell her over and over just how much she meant to Kara after the Daxamites were taken care of.

As she pulled back, she placed a hand softly on Lena’s cheek. “I promise I’ll come back. We can handle Rhea, and you can handle the rest of the Daxamites. Now go! Fix that awful box Lex created. The clock is ticking.” She winked at Lena, kissed her cheek, and the brunette beamed at her, the first genuine smile Kara had seen from her since they found each other on Rhea’s ship. Lena wrapped her into another tight hug, and then turned and walked back into the office.

Kara smiled, took a deep breath to steady herself, and took off to go help Superman put out fires around the city until Lena was ready with the device.
Chapter Summary

Lena and Winn cheer each other up and are adorable friends. Kara faces off with Rhea. The good guys win. And our ladies love each other.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Chapter 28

Lena was pleasantly surprised that she and Winn were good for each other’s morale. Focusing on getting the dispersal device operational and keeping Winn from being sad that his crush was leaving gave Lena a reason to ignore her own issues. She was impressed that he was still capable of humour in the face of all this.

“I mean, yeah, I know you probably fly around with Kara all the time, but come on! **I got to fly with Superman!** He even remembered my name! And called me ‘buddy!’ If not for everything else, this would be the greatest day of my life.” The grin on his face was genuine, even if there was a hint of sadness at the ‘everything else’ part. Unfortunately for Lena, the topic of Superman was a sore subject. Kara might have missed it, but she didn’t. That look of distrust on his face when he looked at her. The same look he gave her mother.

*_He must think I’m just like my mother and brother … or at least that I have the potential. And I do, don’t I? I know I’m capable of doing horrible things if I need to. I murdered that guard without a second thought on the Daxamite ship. Even when I try to do good, it results in widespread violence and destruction._* Lena knew that Kara would probably punch Superman in his self-righteous face if he tried to suggest that Lena would ever hurt her, but that’s what he was worried about. She was sure of it. **But what if he’s right? What if I do hurt Kara someday?** Lena’s stomach dropped. No matter what she did, she was still a Luthor, and hurting people was what Luthors do best.

Almost as if he could see her drowning, Winn offered, “Hey did you know Cat Grant figured it out almost immediately that James is the Guardian?” Lena looked up from the device in front of her and smiled at him, genuinely thankful for the amusing distraction.

“Of course she did. She’s Cat Grant. I’m sure she figured out Kara’s secret as quickly as I did.”

Winn snorted, but didn’t look up from the tablet he was working on. “Oh, not quite as fast; I don’t think she was paying nearly as much attention to Kara Danvers as you were.” Lena giggled at his implication. “But it didn’t take her long. Did Kara not tell you that Ms. Grant tried to fire her at first?”

“What?! But Kara loved that job, surely Cat wasn’t that clueless.” Lena didn’t know Cat Grant extremely well, but they had crossed paths on a number of occasions, and she always struck Lena as observant and compassionate under that exterior façade.

“She was, at first. Then J’onn did his whole Supergirl shape-shifting act to convince Ms. Grant
that Kara couldn’t possibly be Supergirl, and she let Kara keep her job.”

“Wait, that really worked?”

“Who knows? She at least pretended to be convinced, and she hadn’t tried to fire her again since.” From his tone, it sounded like Winn thought Cat still knew the truth. Lena was inclined to agree. And for the first time that day, she actually felt like joking.

“Good. Maybe she can beat some sense into Snapper Carr now that she’s back in town. That asshole has tried to fire Kara twice already, even though she’s one of his best young reporters.”

“Yeah, cuz you’re not biased at all.” Lena glared at him playfully, not actually minding his snark. She could tell that they were close to having the device ready, which means it wasn’t going to be long before she had to confront him with an unpleasant fact that he apparently hadn’t considered yet.

He spoke up before she could though. “You know, you’re not the only one with a criminal psychopath in your family?” She couldn’t hide the surprise in her face as she looked back up at him. “Yeah. My uhh dad is Winslow Schott, Sr. Or ‘The Toyman’ as the newspapers so colourfully nicknamed him.”

Lena snickered, then felt bad about it. “Sorry! They really called him that? How ridiculous. So what did he do? Ever try to murder an entire city’s worth of alien refugees?”

“Nah, he’s not the same sort of big picture crazy person that your mom is. He just killed several people with bombs disguised as toys, because his boss screwed him over one time.” Lena felt a pang of sympathy for Winn. She had no idea that kind of trauma was in his past. She was even more impressed with his regular cheeriness now.

“Listen, Winn. We’ve almost got this thing ready to go and—”

“And it’s obviously not really capable of seeding the entire atmosphere with lead, but I can’t warn Lar, right? Yeah, I figured that out almost immediately, Ms. Luthor.”

She had underestimated Winn at every turn. If they all lived through this, she had a feeling they were going to be much better friends. “Okay, first, I think we’re on a first name basis at this point. Second, yeah, that’s right. I’m really sorry. He could stay on Earth, just not in National City. I know how hard this is for you, given your feelings, but we cannot risk giving the Daxamites any reason to believe the Earth is still here for the taking.”

“Well, I know. I get it. It just really sucks. He could live as close as like … Star City, and we could figure out whatever this is between us. I hate that the possibility is just there, teasing me.”

She got up and walked over to him. “Is it okay if I hug you? I feel like we could both use a hug right now.” He nodded, and she wrapped him up in her warmest friend hug. Apparently I have a go to hug for friends now, Kara what have you turned me into? She pulled away and looked him in the eye. “I think you know that this is best for him too. He’s finally living up to his potential—his people need him, and I think he probably needs them to need him. You should be very proud of this sacrifice he is making, and of his intentions to try and make his people less shitty. I don’t know him that well, but I know that he’s not exactly been the bravest or most self-sacrificing guy since he got here. I have to believe that’s your influence. I mean—” she grinned at him, “—Kara gave up on getting him to be a decent guy a long time ago.”

He smiled at that. “Yeah, I don’t think she found his whole flippant jock routine as appealing as I
did. Seems to prefer kind-hearted brilliant CEO types.”

“That she does.” They laughed together, then Lena felt her phone vibrate. She glanced at it, then added, “Speak of the devil.”

“Supergirl! The device is almost ready.”

“Supergirl huh? You know, it’s kinda hot when you call me that. You know, in the right circumstances.”

“Yes well, I’ll have to remember that for later.” Lena made sure her voice included just the hint of seduction under the surface. “Are we out of time?”

“Yup, we’ve gotta go meet Rhea right now. I’m going to be fine, okay?” Lena’s anger flared again, and her whole body tensed. She desperately wished she could have been there to kill Rhea herself. She’d have to settle for creating the device that would poison her.

“Okay. I believe in you. Give us maybe five minutes to prime the device and get it to the roof. You’ve got the button to release the lead dispersal agent.”

“Lena, you’re truly incredible. I’ll see you soon, gotta go!” Kara hung up before Lena could respond. Her heart was in her throat. She did believe in Supergirl, and her team, but she couldn’t stop worrying. She whispered under her breath the words she wished she could’ve said right then, before Supergirl hung up.

“I love you, Kara Zor-El.”

Kara landed herself and Lar on top of the building, where she had agreed to meet Rhea. Immediately, the queen and her second teleported down. “I see you brought some moral support.” Rhea taunted.

Lar stepped forward. “I’m here for you, Mother. This ends today.”

Rhea jeered, “Is that so? And you would just hide behind your boyfriend, Supergirl? You’re that afraid to face me, even with your adopted world on the line?”

Kara was done with this bullshit. “He’s not my boyfriend! He never has been, you egomaniacal despot. But I’m going to make you pay for what you did to Lena!”

For once, Rhea looked legitimately surprised, and Kara used that moment to catch her off guard. She used her superspeed to pluck the teleportation device clipped at her waist, right where Lar had said it would be. She tossed it to him, before Rhea could register what was happening, and then she shouted out, “Now!”

J’onn appeared out of nowhere and quickly knocked out Rhea’s second. That’s when Rhea attacked. Kara just had to keep her distracted long enough for Lar to get to her ship and begin calling back her—hopefully now his—troops. Plus she wasn’t going to pretend she wasn’t going to enjoy making Rhea suffer for a bit before the lead poisoning set in.

Kara dodged Rhea’s attack then grabbed her by the cape, swinging her around and tossing her through a nearby air-conditioning unit. Before Rhea could get back up, Supergirl was on her again, pummeling her in the face and abdomen. Compared to the fight with Superman, this was a piece of cake. Rhea was a queen, not a warrior. And a Daxamite was no match for Kryptonian.
As Supergirl landed another punch that sent Rhea flying a good ten feet, J’onn insisted that it was enough. Kara could feel the rage flowing through her, the desire to get revenge for everything this woman had done to Lena and to the people of National City. For everything her Daxam stood for. But J’onn was right. This wasn’t what Supergirl stood for.

And it would all be over soon, anyway.

Rhea made as if to call an order up to her super cruiser, and Kara quickly sped to her and silenced her with a firm hand over her mouth. Locating the communication device, Kara crushed it in her hand. Then she locked Rhea’s arms behind her back and nodded to J’onn to activate Lena’s lead dispersal device with the remote she had given him.

The effect was not immediate, but Lar must have instructed someone on the Daxamite ship to scan the air to prove his story about the lead irradiation was true. Almost instantly, pinpoints of yellow-green light could be seen all around the city as the Daxamites retreated to their ships. Then the entire fleet, led by Rhea’s own cruiser, took off for space.

“It’s over, Rhea. Lar Gand will lead Daxam to a new, more just society. The slavery, the elitism, the excess of your Daxam is no more.” Feeling the former queen begin to weaken in her arms, Supergirl released her. “And it ends here for you too.”

Rhea collapsed and looked up at her foe, face twisted, in fear and pain yes, but also in defiance, to the bitter end. “You can feel it, can’t you. For all your treachery, your manipulation… Lena beat you. She’s irradiated the atmosphere with lead. You will die here, and no Daxamite will ever be able to return to this planet. She is a greater scientist, strategist, and leader than you have ever been. Return to your gods with the knowledge that your tyranny, your plans, your everything was a failure.”

Rhea made as if to respond, then she seized. Her body shook in reaction to the lead now coursing through her system, and within seconds, she was gone.

It was over. They had won.

Lena gazed out over the city, another glass of scotch in her hand. After the Daxamite ships left, Winn had left for the DEO, leaving Lena to wait out on her balcony for Kara’s return. She was worried about Kara. What if Rhea had Kryptonite? J’onn was powerful, but what if Rhea was double-crossing them (just like they did her)—what if she had backup? Hopefully that bitch was dead already, the lead had been in the air for a good five or ten minutes now. But Lena wouldn’t be able breathe again until Kara was safe in her arms again.

As she looked out at National City, all she could see was devastation. Fires still roared in at least five—no, there’s six—places Lena could see, and the streets were littered with rubble and garbage. This is my fault. She moved back from the edge and began pacing. Now that it was mostly all over, Lena felt wracked with self-doubt, like never before. I thought I had grown so much in the last year, and yet I fell into the same old traps. Another mother figure who manipulated, used, and betrayed me.

For all her gifts, all her genius—for all her good intentions—she had caused just as much destruction as Lex had. Was she really any better? Her heart was in the right place, but was that enough? Does the intention matter, when the outcome is this awful? Lena bit back tears, then slammed her fist into the wall. She barely registered the pain.
And then she could breathe again. Kara’s strong arms wrapped around her from behind, and Lena let her entire weight lean back into the warmth of her girlfriend’s embrace. She breathed a sigh of relief, savouring the moment, then turned to face her hero. Losing herself in those sparkling blue eyes, she could see the hope of everything she wanted to be, everything Kara saw in her. Kara lifted her off the ground and pulled her into a passionate kiss, and Lena could feel all the tenderness her girlfriend felt for her.

Pulling away and setting Lena down, Kara gushed, “Lena, you did it! You saved the entire planet.” Lena felt taken aback. How can she think that? Lena’s mind began to spiral; all she could think about was the death and destruction that had happened because of her misplaced trust. She could feel herself begin to hyperventilate and turned to resume her pacing. But Kara immediately pulled her back. As she felt her girlfriend’s firm hands cradling her face, she opened her eyes and looked back up to Kara’s bright smile.

“Lena, I can see that doubt in there, spinning around in the back of your head. I won’t let you doubt yourself, not today. You hear me?” Kara’s voice was so melodic yet so firm. Lena was stunned by how loving and proud she sounded. “Today, you were the hero. You saved me from having to fight Rhea alone. You stopped the invasion, saving I can’t even imagine how many lives.” Kara affectionately tucked Lena’s hair behind her left ear, and continued. “The people of Earth will be forever in your debt. Trust me on this. I have a tiny bit of experience here, okay?”

Lena felt … reassured. She even smiled a little at Kara’s adorable joke. The doubts, the fears, the guilt were all still there, but Lena pushed them down. Her girlfriend, the most beautiful and powerful being on the planet, thought she was a hero. The most remarkable person Lena had ever met was holding her tight, looking down at her like Lena was her entire world. That’s all that mattered to her right now.

I’m alive, Kara’s alive. And we’re together. Happy. Lena nodded and reached her arms around Kara for a tight hug. Kara turned her head, her lips so close to Lena’s ear that it tickled a little, and she whispered, “Oh yeah, and I love you, too, Lena Luthor.”

Chapter End Notes

Okay so I couldn't resist putting up these last two chapters together. I hope you liked it. Writing my first fic has been a crazy wonderful experience, and I've loved all the feedback I’ve gotten. I already have a sequel planned. It'll feature our two girls, plus much more Sam, and take place roughly over the same time period as Season 3. But it will be much more original, and less canon-dependent. Don't worry, Sanvers isn't going anywhere.

Thanks for reading!

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!