“Are you sure I can’t just go to a school near home?” Lena asks evenly, knowing that her mother would never even consider allowing her to go to the public school near home. Her mother may not love her but it wouldn’t look good if Lex went off to the best schools in the nation and she was left to ride the bus to a public school - even if that’s what she wanted.

“A public school?” Lillian scoffs incredulously as she continues to tap impatiently at the tablet resting in her lap. “Why on earth would you want to go to a public school, Lena?”

Lena sighs and looks out the window again seeing the boarding school grounds come into view, wordlessly cursing Lex for getting both of them expelled from their last school. Starting over is never easy to do, especially with a last name like Luthor hanging over head. Little does Lena know that a bubbly ray of sunshine that she has yet to meet is hell bent on making sure she settles into the new school as seamlessly as possible.

Update: Spring Break for Supercorp and Sanvers
Warning: Coarse language, but seriously I have much more of a potty mouth than any of these characters, although I'm sure Maggie and Alex could curse a blue streak if I let them. Also, just and FYI Lillian Luthor is more subtly abusive and so is Lex later on - the two are manipulative and more emotionally and psychologically abusive but there may be some physical abuse. School settings often tend to include bullying, which unfortunately Lena will experience given her family history and some kids can just be cruel. So, as much I love having people read and enjoy my work I don't want anyone to get upset or get triggered by something they read. Be safe.

The impending sense of doom rising in her chest, along with the increasingly unsteady bouncing of her knee, is at odds with the serene country side that passes by outside of the car window. Lena absentmindedly sighs for what must be the hundredth time in the past half hour, finger tapping restless against her knee. They’ve been driving non-stop since 9 am this morning and its almost noon, leave it to her mother to find a school out in the middle of nowhere to leave her at. The last three hours have been filled with Lillian making numerous phone calls, bitching out some of her staff and rescheduling meetings. Every now and then she’d grouch at Lena to sit up straight or to stop shifting about nervously. Brushing a strand of long, wavy hair from her face and tugging uncomfortably at the collar of the oxford shirt Lena asks a bit wistfully, “Are you sure I can’t just go to a school near home?”

“A public school?” Lillian scoffs incredulous as she brushes wrinkles out of her business suit before continuing to tap impatiently at the tablet resting in her lap. “Why on earth would you want to go to a public school, Lena? It would ruin your chances of getting into an ivy league school, or do you not want to carry on the family tradition of running the corporation?”

The girl stares back at her impassively, making no comment about her remarks as a series of regal buildings and neatly kept game fields come into view. She has several cutting retorts in mind but figures that it’s best to just keep her thoughts to herself as she’ll be rid of Lillian for another few months soon. Lillian is still staring at her as if expecting an answer – an answer that Lena knows no matter what she says will be warped and twisted to be used against her. But a cellphone ringing draws her mother’s attention away from her, “Yes, Barbra I need you to move my 2 o’clock appointment back further. This is taking longer than I expected and may need to actually schedule a flight back.” Lillian grouses into the phone, after a moment she responds again, “Yes, I know that rep from Dynax Labs is coming in as well. I’ll be bringing Lex along to assist in the negotiations as soon as we’re done here.”

Lillian hangs up the phone, putting it away with an angry little huff. Looking out the window towards the gated school she drops the tablet onto the center console, “Glen, if you take a right once on the school grounds you’ll find Alcott House at the end of the circle.”

“Of course, ma’am,” Glen responds as he guides the vehicle into the que of those already waiting to drop off students and parents at the correct houses.
“Well, Lena, I’ve had a word with the headmistress and she assured me that you should settle into this school quickly and without incident. And try not to fret too much, it’s only a couple more years and then you’ll be off to university,” She tells her calmly as the car pulls up to the rather large, Victorian style house. Other parents and their daughters are moving around the grounds, carrying bags and trunks about. A lot of them are laughing and hugging often, knowing that it will be a few weeks before they meet again – Lena wonders what that would feel like to leave a loving family for school instead of viewing it as a kind of warped escape. “The uniform shop should already have sent over your uniforms and other accessories. I’ve already set up an account for you, so you don’t need to call if you’re missing something.”

Lena looks completely apathetic as she gets out of the vehicle, she’s still rather angry and upset that Lex’s psychotic meltdown had gotten her barred from her previous school. She’d actually found a couple people that didn’t seem to hold it against her that she was a Luthor – at least not until the lawsuits and settlements started rolling in. She tries to muster a smile for Glen who pats her on the shoulder as he collects her things from the trunk. Her mother has gotten out of the car and has raised herself to her full height as she looks around, nose scrunched up and her mouth in a disapproving pucker that reminds Lena of a cat’s butt. Lena almost chuckles at the thought as she quickly takes her satchel from Glen as well as the duffle bag, telling him gratefully, “Thank you for driving me, Glen.”

“Have a good term, Ms. Luthor,” he tells her, tipping his hat playful to get her to smile.

“Come along, Lena,” Lillian barks impatiently, just glaring at the few parents that give her disapproving, sideways glances. Lena just sighs again and follows after her, hoping that Lillian will be leaving sooner rather than later.

A middle aged woman with salt and pepper hair pulled back into a tight bun approaches them, immediately offering her hand to greeting them, “Welcome to Cabot House School, Mrs. Luthor, this must be Ms. Lena.”

“Indeed, Lena this is your head of house, Ms. Ellison,” Lillian tells her, laying a firm hand on her shoulder. Lena tries not to glare at the touch and resists the urge to shrug off rather inelegantly.

Offering her hand she tells her new guardian as neutrally as possible, “A pleasure to meet you, Ms. Ellison.”

“We’ve already had Lena’s uniforms sent up to her room this morning, the house tea will be starting soon as most of the returning girls are already here,” Ms. Ellison tells them, rather unfazed by Lillian’s coldness and barely concealed impatience.

“I have to be returning to National City shortly, but I’m confident that Lena will settle in quickly,” she assures with a suave smile to smooth over the declination. “Lena, might I have a word with you before I go.”

Lena grudgingly steps to the side with her, looking at Lillian seriously but not making any effort to speak up. Lillian is quick to chide, “You don’t have to look so excited to be here. I would say something encouraging and tell you to have a nice time, but we both know it wouldn’t be true.”

“I really could have taken a cab or an Uber here, it would have been preferable,” Lena states darkly, clearly starting to get rather irritated with Lillian’s snide comments. She’s been in her presence for about four hours now starting since she woke up around 8am – which was a rather shitty way to start off the morning if you ask Lena.

“Oh hush now Lena, there’s no reason to be all dramatic. Things happen and we have to adapt – Luthor’s are always adaptable. I know you enjoyed going to Summerfield College, but this school
will be better equipped for getting you into Harvard Business School,” Lillian scolds, taking Lena’s hands firmly in hers to make sure that Lena is listening.

“This isn’t exactly what I had in mind,” Lena hedges carefully, but knows after the last argument they’d had about future college majors it’s best to not get Lillian riled up again. She would just have to put her plans into action on her own and hide it as best she can from her family.

“You’ve had enough time to meddle with your computers and electronic toys. It’s time to grow up Lena, I suggest you keep your head down and tend to your studies,” the senior Luthor tells her firmly, a hard edge to her tone that makes Lena fight a scowl from her features. Being indignant or rebellious wasn’t an option for Lena, she knows this from all her failed attempts in the past and just schools her expression into something blank to finish listening to the lecture, “Hopefully, once you’ve finished here you’ll be able to catch up with Lex at university and start helping out with the company.”

Lena rolls her eyes, but a hard, jolting shake that makes her teeth click together makes her mutter a bit crossly, “Okay, keep my head down and study. Got it, you can go now.”

“Very well, I will send Glen for you at the end of term,” she tells her and takes her leave, looking around to ensure that no one else had seen their little heart-to-heart.

Before Lena can take a breath and be relieved at her step-mother’s absence Ms. Ellison has already found her way over. The woman has come over with another girl her age – a tall, rather athletic looking girl with striking blue eyes and blonde hair that falls in such perfect waves Lena would swear that she’s seen her on the cover of some fashion magazines her mother keeps in the parlor. Ms. Ellison smiles warmly at Lena, either genuinely this happy or straight up ignoring the calm, blank look on the brunet girl’s face, “Lena, this is Ms. Kara Danvers, your roommate.”

Lena plasters on a smile that she uses to get through her mother’s parties and her father’s business dinners. Politely she offers her hand to the stunning girl, “Ms. Danvers, it’s a pleasure to meet you.”

“Ms. Danvers, would you mind showing Lena to your dorm room before taking her to the common room for tea?”

“Of course,” Kara beams with a blinding smile, turning to Lena she takes her hand and tugs her gently towards the stairs while telling her enthusiastically, “You’re going to love being here at Cabot, it may take some time to settle in but I promise after a couple of days it’ll feel just like home.”

Lena follows her up the flight of stairs, having gently extracted her hand from the blonde’s rather tight grip. She hopes this place won’t feel like home, trying to push the thoughts of her mother’s ‘inspirational’ conversation from her mind. Wincing she looks at all the other starry eyed girls that she’s going to be sharing a dorm with for the next year – most of them talking to one another while trying to get their things settled into their rooms. Weaving in between several girls and their parents, keeping track of where Kara stops in front of a door that has a colored piece of paper with her name written on it in rather girly script. She notices that beside the door is a trunk with her last name neatly stenciled on the side and brand new books and notebooks stacked on top.

“Oh yeah, a very nice man and woman came by about an hour ago with your stuff,” Kara says, giving Lena an open smile as she blushes and sheepishly admits, “I’m afraid I didn’t get their names.”

“Jeffery and Margaret, they’re…well, they’re my mother’s assistants. But I like to think of them as friends, I guess,” Lena tells her as she peaks into the room that’s going to be her safe haven for the next school year. Half of the room is already neatly organized, books lined up on the bookcase, a
laptop charging on one of the desks by the window – pictures of a family at the beach with a golden
dog is already pinned on her part of the desks divider – and a bright blue comforter that matches
Kara’s smiling eyes. Lena’s side however is as barren as ever – an empty bookshelf, vacant desk,
and a naked mattress with a plain white duvet folded up at the end.

Kara gives a soft laugh as she goes in and perches on her desk as she assures, “It doesn’t look very
inviting at first, but once you start to unpack it starts to look a little more livable. Besides the only
time we’re really in our room is for study hours and sleeping – which I wish we got more of.”

Lena scrutinizes the room as she sets her satchel and duffle bag on the desk and says quietly, “I hope
you’re right, or it’s going to be a really long semester.”

“Kara, I thought you were supposed to be unpacking.” Comes the gentle, teasing voice of whom
Lena assumes to be the other girl’s father. The older man with a head full of dark hair is rather tall
which makes Lena nervous initially. But his casual slacks, untucked shirt, and the genuine smile he’s
giving Kara puts Lena at ease a bit. Similarly, the woman appears to be as laid back and kind as her
husband, gentle eyes and warm smile that Lena doesn’t think she’s ever seen directed at her. The two
notice Lena, who is trying to blend into the wall without being noticed.

“Oh, how rude of me. I’m Jeremiah Danvers and this is my wife Eliza, we have another girl
wandering around here by the name of Alex. Moving Kara and Alex back in has been a family
endeavor.” Jeremiah teases, cuffing Kara’s shoulder as she rolls her eyes in a fake annoyed manner.

“Lena Luthor,” she says softly, shaking hands with the father and noting that his grip is firm but not
crushing or brutish like she was expecting. Eliza shakes her hand and holds on longer than she was
expecting. Looking sheepishly at the empty room behind her she runs a hand through her unruly,
dark hair trying to explain as calmly as possible, “I kind of got a late start on moving in.”

“Oh, well, Kara why don’t you help her out. We’ll go to the bookstore and get your textbooks and
some school supplies.” Eliza encourages before turning her gently brown eyes towards Lena. Eliza
with a gentle smile, easily asks, “Lena, do you need anything? We don’t mind picking somethings up
for you.”

Lena looks a bit surprised at the offer, but smiles politely and answers, “No thanks Mrs. Danvers, I
think I’m all set.”

A couple seconds after the parents have excused themselves Kara must have thought of something
as she pops up quickly from her seat and leans around the doorframe. The blonde calls desperately
down the crowded hall, “Hey, don’t forget to get some snacks for me please. You know how hungry
I get when I’m studying – and I can’t order pot stickers to my dorm room without getting a demerit,
again.”

Lena snickers at the blonde’s enthusiasm as she starts to unzip her satchel and to unpack her laptop,
mouse, and the additional screen she’d snuck out of Lex’s room. Kara has brought in the bags of
books and school supplies, setting them on Lena’s desk before wrestling with the trunk but Lena
quickly tries to take the trunk from her assuring as she goes, “You don’t have to help me unpack, it’s
not a big deal.”

“Well, they’re going to be taking the trunks up to the attic during the welcome tea party. That and
you’ll probably want to make sure you got everything from the uniform shop,” Kara notes kindly as
she starts to unwrap some of her own uniform items and putting them away in her armoire.

“Yeah, thanks for the heads up,” Lena says as she quickly opens the trunk and sees the note on top
of the new plaid duvet cover and the neatly folded uniforms and other clothing. Reading it quickly
she smiles a bit as she sees the well-wishes from Jeffery, Margaret, and her family cook, Alyosha. Quickly she empties the trunk and puts it in the hallway, following what she’s seen other girls doing.

“Did your mom and dad leave you a note?” Kara asks curiously, wondering if the quiet girl was smiling because her father left her note even though he couldn’t be there in person.

“Uh, no. Just Margaret, Jeffery, and our family cook Alyosha left me some good luck notes. I should really write them a thank you as they’ve gotten all my stuff together and even left me a couple treats as well,” Lena says with a small, somewhat sad smile as she thinks about how she’s going to miss them. This school is much further away than her last one and it’s likely she won’t be able to take weekend trips home to visit judging by Lillian’s parting remarks. Picking up the little tin of treats she pops it open and takes out one of the sweets for herself before offering one to Kara, “Homemade Ptasie mleczko – it’s like chocolate covered meringue.”

Kara takes one giving it a quizzical look as Lena pops hers in her mouth and savors the chocolatey sweet treat before going back to hanging up her clothing. Quickly she puts away the clothes and shoes before starting on the books as Kara groans happily at the flavor of the treat which makes Lena chuckles softly, “Told you it was good.”

“Now I know why you’d be bummed to be here for school, I wouldn’t want to leave home if someone was there making this all the time,” Kara exclaims, hoping that Lena will get more of these treats in the future. “You think they could send pot stickers or pizza?”

“I think we’ll probably have to wait for the free weekends for that,” Lena says quietly, a bit amused at the other girl’s love of food and wonders how she stays so fit with such a voracious appetite.

“So, you went to a different school before this one?”

“Yeah, I was hoping to stay at my last school, Summerfields College, but that wasn’t an option,” Lena grumbles softly, still angry that Lex had ruined the only thing she really had going for her.

“What happened?”

“I can’t discuss it really, legally speaking,” Lena says with a wince as she realizes that she didn’t mean to let her roommate know so much about it. Sighing she says, “Let’s just say my older brother did something he shouldn’t have and got himself expelled and I was asked not to return as well.”

“That bad?” Kara says softly, worry and nervousness coloring her tone and her rather expressive blue eyes.

Lena nods, deciding that her sweet seeming roommate has the right to know just who she’s been roomed with, “Yeah, that bad. But no one would be able to tell since he just got a full ride to Harvard for mechanical and materials engineering.”

“So, a legal settlement. I’m guessing the woman that was talking to you in the courtyard was your mother and she had a lot to do with that,” Kara asks softly, wondering if Lena is anything like this bother she’s talked about – or the stern, unhappy looking woman that had been with her very briefly.

“Yeah,” Lena says quietly, wrestling the duvet into its cover and the pillows into pillow cases before making the bed. Taking a quick glance around she sees that even with the few things she has with her have made the room look a little less dismal.

“Kara, the tea party is about to start and its almost time for the parents to go. We got some goodies for you and Lena to share, just some sodas and granola bars. Things like that.” Eliza tells her as she comes in and sets a new stack of books and various supplies on her daughter’s desk. Brushing
matching blonde hair from Kara’s face she presses a kiss to her forehead and tells her, “I know we say it all the time, but I’m going to say it again – we’re so proud of your Kara and I hope you have a wonderful term.”

“Yeah, my super girl. Can’t wait to visit for your water polo games,” Jeremiah says with a grin, pulling her into a bear hug and kissing her temple, “Love you, sweetheart. We’ll call you and figure out fun things to do on you and Alex’s long leaves.”

“Love you, mom and dad,” Kara tells them genuinely, before opening a box of the snacks and popping a few gummy bears into her mouth. Her parents look at Lena who has managed to get all of her stuff organized in record time.

“Lena, I know you said you didn’t need anything but I hope this helps brighten up your side of the room,” Eliza says tenderly, setting a small wind up robot on the desk that doubles as a computer USB hub. “We hope you settle in and have a good semester. I’m sure we’ll see you around this term.”

“Thank you,” Lena says genuinely, plugging in the small robot USB hub and winding it up to watch it take a few shaky steps. Smiling Lena gets up from her desk and offers her hand to Eliza and is surprised when she’s pulled into a warm hug by the older woman. For a second she’s not sure what to do and tries not to be so tense – but the last person to hug her was Lex a few years ago before he’d gotten distant and moody.

“I’m sure you’ll do well, and don’t let Kara get stingy with the sodas and snacks. We got so much if she hoards it all she’ll end up in a sugar coma,” Jeremiah teases, grinning warmly at her and shakes her hand before following his wife out. The two quickly finding a red headed girl who squawks embarrassedly as she’s wrapped up in a surprise hug.

Lena winds up the little robot again and watches it wistfully for a second as Kara sorts out the snacks and books. Kara looks at the three cases of soda and numerous boxes of various gummy snacks and granola bars, “Well, I think my parents bought out the store. You really are going to have to help me with this. Maybe. I’m sure you’ve probably figured it out by now that I’m hungry basically all the time.”

Lena chuckles softly as she looks at the snacks, a little shocked and reeling that someone had thought of her. More than just thought of her, but really tried to make sure that she was settled in and making progress towards being happy here, “No kidding, we may be set until Christmas.”

“Or we’ll be sick of granola and gummy bears by then,” Kara says, glad to see that her mother’s thoughtfulness has gotten Lena to perk up quite a bit and genuinely smile. Her remark gets another soft huff of laughter out of the dark haired girl and it makes her cheeks warm a bit and her heart flutter a bit. She knew her parents had discussed with her that her roommate – which they had to agree to with the headmistress directly – had a troubling family history and encouraged her to be friendly with the other girl. She thinks that given Lena’s mother’s abrupt departure and how serious and quiet the girl is means that she must be rather lonely and sad. Kara makes up her mind right then that Lena’s going to be her new best friend and she’ll do whatever it takes to help her feel safe and comfortable at this new school.
An abrupt knock on the door makes Lena and Kara quickly turn to the door to see a short, brunet girl peeking around the doorframe, “Hey, it’s time for the welcome tea party downstairs, you don’t want to be late.”

Upon seeing Kara still snacking on the gummy bears she grins warmly and tells her, “Oh, hey little Danvers, snacking already?”

“Sure thing, Maggie,” Kara says, giving the other girl a quick hug and an offer to share some of the gummy treats.

“Yeah, well we might want to get moving before Sam and Alex start making their rounds,” Maggie says with a wiry grin, “You know how anal those two are about the rules, and you don’t want to be the stragglers they pick on for the first day. ‘Cause you know Alex isn’t going to take it easy on you because you’re her little sister.”

“Yeah, Alex has been doing nothing but gloating over becoming head girl. I’m sure Sam was already intolerably smug before she was made a prefect. At least your still cool…for a prefect at least,” Kara teases with a playful grin as she pulls on her jacket, getting ready to head out.

Lena gets up from the desk and pushes in her chair, ready to follow Kara’s lead as she’s not sure where they’re supposed to be going. Kara leads them into the hallway, keeping pace with Lena as she says softly, “Oh hey, Maggie, this is Lena. My new roomie.”

Maggie gives Lena a sideways glance, clearly hesitating before offering her hand to Lena for a handshake. Lena shakes her hand, trying her best to keep eye contact with the other girl even though she would rather just look away. Kara seems oblivious to the tension between the two girls as they descend the stairs and explains, “Maggie is one of the prefects, she also plays on the water polo team and she’s crushing on my sister Alex, hard.”

Maggie nearly trips and falls down the stairs at that last comment, but Kara catches her by the arm and teases her with a good natured laugh, “Oh don’t get all worked up over it, Alex can’t stay this oblivious and school obsessed forever.”

As they get to the common room there are about 40 other girls taking advantage of the punch, finger foods, and tea cakes. Lena can’t help a little chuckle as Kara’s eyes light up and she quickly drags her and Maggie towards the table of goodies – already loading up a plate with more food than Lena thinks she could eat at a regular meal. Lena settles for a couple tea cakes and glass of the punch, not really hungry after the morning she’s had. Taking a sip, she looks around as Kara is talking animatedly beside her with some of the other girls. It seems with her bubbly charm and sweet smile Kara is quite popular.

Lena sips as she listens to the conversations around her, having spent years sitting through evenings
and afternoons like this she’s become somewhat of an expert at eavesdropping. It wasn’t often that people spoke with her so she’d just become accustomed to listening. A voice behind her picks up her attention and shortly thereafter the soft sound of her name causes her ears to prick up.

“Luthor? Really?”

“I’m telling you, Lucy. That’s Lena Luthor, you know Luthor Corp and that nerdy brother of hers that nearly got arrested.”

Lucy, the confused girl who’d asked, is about Lena’s height in a neatly pressed oxford shirt and a well-tailored pant suit. She looks familiar but Lena can’t place her. The other girl however, sipping punch in a floral print dress, is completely unknown to Lena – but it would seem the stranger knows quite a bit about her and her family. More than Lena’s comfortable with when she catches the girl out of the corner of her eye leaning in and loudly whispering to Lucy, “I heard her brother did what he did because he had a mental breakdown after her father committed suicide after being threatened with federal prison over some white collar offenses. Luckily she’s stuck with the miniature Danvers as a roommate and not either of us.”

Lena feels a pang of pain lance through her chest at the mention of her father, trying to keep her hands from shaking as she takes a sip of the punch. She glances over at the other girls again and winces when she makes eye contact with Lucy. For the brief moment they’re staring at each other Lena can see a guilty look pass over Lucy’s handsome features, but she quickly turns to leave as she hears Lucy scold the other girl, “I think she heard you, Siobhan.”

Lena feels her stomach turn as she thinks about how she’d been woken in the middle of the night by the house matron and house mistress to tell her that there was a family emergency and she was needed at home immediately. She’d never really been close with her father – he was distant and aloof with everyone but it stung even worse because Lillian made sure that she knew she didn’t belong. Tears sting in her eyes as she disposes of her punch and tries to keep herself from trembling as she heads towards the stairs. She hopes that no one else will see her as she tries to make an escape to the safety of her room.

However, it would seem she’s out of luck, two girls slightly older than herself are guiding a couple of what look like new girls – around age 11 or 12 – away from the stair well and towards a group of similarly aged girls. Lena makes to go around them quietly but a stoic looking girl with short, wavy auburn hair steps in front of her, “Everyone should be at the welcome party, no exceptions”

“Oh,” Lena says, trying to keep her emotions in check even though she’s already blinking back tears. It wouldn’t do to cry on the first day – especially since Luthor’s aren’t supposed to cry and it would just further add to her humiliation.

“Easy, Alex. She’s new and probably doesn’t know what’s going on,” Sam reasons calmly, nudging Alex with her elbow in hopes of getting her to stop glaring at Lena. “Didn’t realize you transferred here, Luthor.”

“Luthor?!” Alex looks a bit shocked, not sure what she expected the Luthor’s only daughter to look like. But the quiet girl with tears in her eyes who looks like she wishes she was anywhere but here wasn’t exactly what she had in mind. She’d gotten the same lecture Kara did from their parents but she just expected Lena to look as calm and aloof as Lillian and Lex did in all the news prints and television segments.

Lena nods, not finding her voice and cursing herself for being so weak that a few comments about her family have already made her such an emotional wreck that she’s already trying to retreat to her room. As the seconds of silence stretch on she wonders what’s going to happen if she can’t find her
“Hey, Lena!” Kara calls out as she runs up and sees Sam and Alex with her new found friend.

“No running in the house,” Sam warns with a grin, Kara’s enthusiasm is commendable even though Sam doesn’t quiet share it. She knows her senior year is going to go quicker than she expects and the rigorous academics, clubs, and sports are going to keep her on her toes. She wishes she had some of Kara’s inexhaustible energy. “You don’t want to get lines on the first day again, do you?”

Kara immediately starts to pout, “Not on the first day, Sam. Please?! I promise not to do it again.”

Sam chuckles good naturedly and pats her on the back in apology as she tells her, “Alright, I’ll give you a break this time. But seriously, you should be setting a good example for the younger students.”

“Don’t go easy on her, she’ll never learn if you do,” Alex huffs, partially annoyed by Kara’s lack of regard for the house rules but also she can’t help but find it endearing the Kara is still as energetic as when they got up this morning. “You don’t want me to have to call mom and tell her you’ve already gotten in trouble.”

“Aww, you’re no fun,” Kara teases, but she sees that Lena looks a little more closed off than when they’d come down stairs. The telltale glistening of tears in pale green eyes make her heart clench a bit, worried that Lena was already feeling a little overwhelmed or homesick, “Hey, everything okay?”

“Yeah, you looked a little upset,” Sam says, wondering if her childhood friend was doing okay. She’d heard about the news regarding the Luthors’ in the last 18 months – it would have been hard not too – but she’d never expected Lena to end up at their quiet boarding school in the countryside.

“You two know each other?” Kara asks, smiling once again at the thought of Lena having another person she can rely on for support.

“We kind of grew up together, went to the same boring social parties and business dinners. Even went to the same junior school for a while,” Sam says fondly, recalling the mischievous raven haired girl who would be the first to suggest they sneak into the kitchens to get an extra helping of dessert while the adults talked about boring things. Of course, when they were much smaller Lex usually helped them get away with that and many more shenanigans.

“Cool, so now you know at least two people here,” Kara says, and then drapes an arm around her sister’s shoulders, “Well, three now that you’ve met my sister, Alex!”

“You’ve already met?” Alex asks, passing a scrutinizing look between Lena and Kara.

Kara just smiles brighter at Alex’s “detective” look as she explains simply, “We’re roomies, remember?!!”

“Well, I suggest the two of you get back to the tea party so you can hear Ms. Ellison’s speech. Just because you’re my sister doesn’t mean I can go easy on you,” Alex teases, nudging Kara off of her and towards the common room again where the chatting is starting to dwindle.

Kara huffs out an agreement to placate Alex as she takes Lena’s hand and starts to lead her to where the girls are gathering in the meeting room. Lena almost seems to be flinching away when another girl moves too close into her personal space. On their way to the back row of chairs they come across Lucy is talking with a couple of the new girls.

“Hey Luce,” Kara says with a friendly smile, and having taken it upon herself to help Lena get
settled she quickly introduces the two, “Lena meet Lucy Lane, she’s the senior cadet in the ROTC and works on the school paper with me.”

Lena offers her hand to Lucy, hoping that this goes well, “Lena Luthor, it’s nice to meet you Lucy.”

“Nice to meet you too,” Lucy says softly, feeling a little guilty about the gossip she heard from Siobhan. Especially since she knows a little bit about having to deal with your family’s reputation – especially after the bigoted things her father was caught talking about with a senator at dinner ended up splashed on the front page of the national papers. “Hopefully we’ll have some classes together or at least extra-curriculars. What sports have you decided to play?”

“Sports?” Lena asks, genuinely confused. She knows she must look like a complete fish out of water as Lucy and Kara exchange looks and giggle a bit.

“Sports, everyone plays a fall and a spring sport,” Kara says matter-of-factly, wondering how this bit of information managed to slip by Lena. She seems like a rather smart, competent girl who would be on top of these things.

“Yeah, I think my mother intentionally forgot to mention that,” Lena says softly, wondering what that means for her and really hopes at that very least it isn’t track or cross country. Just about anything else she’ll survive, but Lena wholeheartedly believes there is a warm spot in hell for the person who promoted running as a fun way to exercise. “I’m sure whatever sport I’m in will be just as much of a surprise to me as it is to you guys.”

“Really?!” Kara asks in shock, “She didn’t even ask you what you wanted to do?”

“Not exactly,” Lena hedges, “But it’s not really important, I’m not very sporty.”

“We’ll get it worked out,” Lucy says, “I’m sure we can find a way to switch you to something that you might actually like doing. Especially since you’re going to be spending just about every afternoon working on one sport or another.”

After a few minutes Ms. Ellison enters the room and Lena forgets to listen to the address. She knows what a bunch of motivational drivel about new beginnings, working hard, and having passion for learning are key to a successful school year. Once you’ve heard one “Welcome to a New School Year” you’ve basically heard the formula for all of them. Instead Lena lets her mind wander thinking about the whirlwind of a morning she’s had, the people she’s met so far – a smile crosses her lips as she thinks about Kara. She wasn’t so sure of the bubbly blonde a couple hours ago but she has to admit that she’s glad they were roomed together. Her thoughts also drift back over the nightmare that has been her life for the last 18 months, the Senate investigation into Luthor Corp’s insider trading and less than ethical business practices.

As the investigation kept uncovering more and more damning evidence, Lionel began to drink more and more. The impending consequences of his crimes were hanging over his head and rather than wait to see the indictments come down he instead chose to keep control over the situation – even if it meant shooting himself in his study after dinner. After that Lillian took over and Lex was under more and more pressure to help with research and development as well as board meetings. He started to have anxiety attacks and violent mood swings that had frightened her, but she never expected him to snap at school like he did. Lena wonders what Lex is up to right now, if he’s settled into his college dorm and trying to make friends. She wonders if he’s feeling just as overwhelmed and anxious as she is right now. Despite all the pain and suffering he’s caused her and many other people she still genuinely hopes that he’s having a better time than she is.

Lena hears clapping and absentmindedly joins in as she tries to shake herself from her thoughts. The
head of house is still speaking and she catches the tail end of the instructions about getting dinner and enjoying their last night of freedom before the rigorous academics set in. Lena heaves a sigh of relief when she gets back to her room taking off her blazer and tossing it on her bed before sorting through her books and notebooks hoping to find her schedule and a map of the school – just to get a jump on where she’s going to heading in the morning. She hears other girls coming back upstairs when she finally sees what looks like a schedule in a stack of papers.

“So, what’s your schedule look like? Any interesting classes?” Kara asks as she comes in and drags her chair over to sit next to Lena, putting her feet up on the desk. Judging by the fiery glare that Lena is giving the piece of paper Kara’s surprised it hasn’t burst into flames. “By the glare on your face I’m guessing it’s pretty bad.”

“So for yourself,” Lena grumbles as she hands over the paper to Kara, instead of trying to prepare for the dreadful classes that Lillian haphazardly selected. The clubs and sports selected were just the cherry on top of the shit sundae – Classics Society, Choir, and Cross Country and track and field. Lena suppresses an annoyed growl as she pops open her laptop and switches it on. She could at least get some work on her newest computer program done before dinnertime.

“Holy shit, this schedule sucks! I don’t think I’ve seen a schedule structured so well for maximum misery,” Kara exclaims, re-reading a couple of the classes before looking to Lena, “No offense but you don’t strike me as the type that would enjoy classics, philosophy, or stuffy Russian literature.”

“It’s not what I would have chosen for myself, no,” Lena admits honestly, and then gives her a melancholy little smile as she adds, “I also wouldn’t have picked choir because I can’t sing, and running is going to be interesting because I’m not the most coordinated person.”

A knock at the door draws their attention and a rather serious looking Alex leaning against the doorway holding a note out, “Looks like the Head Mistress wants to see you, Luthor.”

Lena looks a little surprised but it’s quickly replaced by anxiety and dread – she wonders what if anything she could have done wrong already. Another thought slips into her brain unbidden the school may have changed their mind about her admission. She could very well be packing up her things and doing the walk of shame again. Suppressing a sigh, she gets up and takes the note from Alex, noting the building and office number. Alex just smirks as she asks, “Classes haven’t even started and you’re already heading to the Head Mistress’s office. I’m kind of curious what you did, I don’t think we’ve ever had anyone get into this much trouble so quickly.”

Kara gets up, shooting her sister a glare and she all but growls a warning, “Alex.”

“It’s fine,” Lena says quickly, already feeling the tension rising between the two sister and not wanting it to get out of hand because of her. Reaching over she picks up the campus map and shrugs on her blazer and buttons it neatly.

“You know where you’re going?” Kara asks as she lays a comforting hand on Lena’s shoulder, immediately feeling how tense Lena is so she tries to make her feel better by assuring, “I’m sure it’s nothing serious, Lena.”

“I’ll be okay,” Lena says waving the map a bit to reassure the blonde that she won’t get lost on the way. As she heads out the door she decides that there’s no point in being upset or worrying about the meeting any longer. Whatever happens she’ll get through it just like she’s gotten through everything else that’s happened in her life.

In Lena’s absence the dorm room is uncomfortably silent as Alex and Kara are locked in a staring contest. It seems neither of them is willing to back down as the younger Danvers demands with an
“Don’t ‘Alex’ me!”

“You were just a complete jerk to Lena. She’s already kind of a nervous wreck being at a new school and you know damn well that she hasn’t had the time or space to have gotten into any serious trouble,” Kara admonishes, annoyed that her sister had been so rude and condescending towards Lena.

“She’s a Luthor, you do know about her family right? What her brother did at the last school they were at?” Alex counters, huffing out and angry breath she’s been holding in at her sister’s naivety and overly trusting nature.

“So…I’m not getting what you’re trying to say. Lena isn’t her brother,” Kara states, feeling her face heat up with anger.

“Her brother put your cousin Clark in the hospital, and no one’s quite sure what awful things he did to get expelled from their last school. Apparently money covers a multitude of sins,” Alex retorts, she doesn’t really care to find out if Lena is just as bad as the rest of her family. But she does care that Kara seems too unconcerned about putting herself at risk just to try and see the best in this new girl.

“That’s not fair, Alex. Lena didn’t do anything to anyone, do you honestly think Ms. Grant would let her be here if she had?!” Kara argues trying to get her sister to see how unfair she’s being to Lena. Just from what she’s seen the last couple of hours she has a very strong suspicion that Lena is a lot more kind and caring than people give her credit for. It may just be hunch but Kara’s going to go with her heart on this one as she asks her sister seriously, “How would you feel if I hurt people and everyone blamed you for it too?”

“But you’re not a bad person Kara…”

“I’m sure you’d feel shitty. That you’d be lonely and sad since everyone would expect the worst from you and avoid you like they would a plague victim,” Kara tells her softly, her voice and posture losing some of her anger. She hates fighting with Alex, especially now that they’ve finally worked through all their differences and have been pretty close lately.

Alex sighs, rubbing her throbbing temple as she calms down too, “Look, I’m just trying to look out for you Kara. I know you want to see the best in everyone but I don’t want to see you get hurt.”

“I know you want to protect me, but there’s no reason to be a jerk about it, okay? I know I’m not always going to be the best judge of character, but I just have a feeling that everyone is wrong about Lena. Could you at least try to be polite?” Kara asks softly, giving her sister her best puppy dog pout in hopes that Alex will relent.

Alex sighs but smiles as she concedes, “Okay, but only for you. God, I’m such a sucker when it comes to you.”

“Good, maybe you can get me out of lines in the future,” Kara cheers as she wraps her older sister in a crushing hug.

“Not a chance.”

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The walk to the Head Mistress’s office went by much more quickly than Lena expected. As she trudges quietly up the stairs to the second floor – passing by portraits of women who were head
mistresses of the past – she can feel her heart pounding nervously in her chest and wonders if someone was standing next to her would they hear it. Going to the office she can hear the animated talking of someone on the phone and the quiet buzz of a television playing the afternoon news at a low volume. Taking a deep breath Lena steels herself and knocks on the door without any further drawing out the ordeal.

“Come in,” comes the calm, but sharp command that has Lena opening the door and entering without a second thought.

The office is in stylish modern yet comfortable décor, all of the books and paperwork are neatly in their place. A television on the wall sure enough is playing the news softly, probably as some sort of white noise. What looks like a full bar to the left is stocked with expensive wines and liquors that Lena quickly recognizes from her parents own personal bar. She imagines it must be taxing to have to run a school full of hormonal teenage girls bursting with energy and the occasional bout of drama. Behind the desk is a slight woman about Lena’s height, but her slim form is dressed in a rather stylish blue dress that makes her blonde hair stand out even more. The woman is perched on the edge of her desk, cellphone in one hand and a glass of wine held delicately aloft in the other.

“Yeah, well when your boss, Betsy Devos, gets back from her meeting you let her know I called. We really need to have a chat about what she considers best for America’s students – and I can tell you frankly it’s not rolling back our standards to the 1950’s and bankrupting our teachers.”

The fire and conviction in the blonde woman’s tone startles Lena, but she quirks her lips into a small smile when she realizes that this woman is also going to be taking the United States Secretary of Education to task for her rather poor lawmaking decisions. But her smile dies out when the formidable woman turns her steely, cutting gaze to her as she sets her cellphone down on the desk rather roughly and rifles through an assortment of papers. Lena feels her heart skip a beat, while she knows she has no right to wish for this she’s really hoping this woman would look past her last name and let her stay. She’d rather not have to suffer another four-hour drive with her mother much less the amount of time it would take to find a different school.

“Why are you staring at me like I’m going to sentence you to a caning?” Cat drawls with slight amusement that quirks up the corners of her lips, “You know, corporal punishment went out of style in educational institutions ages ago.”

Lena’s a little taken aback but quickly recovers and points out with a tentative grin, “It’s the 2010’s and public schools are still using corporal punishment. But, I’d also prefer not start off the term with a laundry list of chores either. So, let’s just say it’s ideal to hope for the best but to be prepared for the worst, Ms. Grant.”

“Oh, so you always assume you’re in trouble or is it just me?”

“It’s a pretty standard assumption,” Lena admits a little sheepishly, as much as she likes this woman already she still can’t help but want to squirm under such intense scrutiny.

“Let me just cut to the chase here, Ms. Luthor,” Cat says very succinctly, “I’m already aware of what happened at your last school. Which, by the way, had nothing to do with you if I recall correctly.”

“I assure you it didn’t, ma’am,” Lena tells her earnestly, quick to dispel any misgivings the Head Mistress may have that she was involved in Lex’s epic fuck up. But she realizes that since she’s not being yelled at and so far, the joking about punishments had been just that, joking. Lena feels a bit more confident and a little relieved as she surmises, “So, this isn’t the pack your bags and get moving type of meeting is it.”
“Hardly,” Cat snorts as she holds out a piece of paper that Lena quickly takes from her and scans quickly. The woman calmly explains, “I’ve worked hard to get where I’m at. I didn’t get here by running from a fight or from adversity. Every step on this path has been a hard won struggle that took every ounce of grit and determination I had – it’s going to be the same for you. You’ve got quite the uphill battle with a name like yours – even more so when your own mother is trying to kneecap you this early in the game.”

Lena is at a loss for words, which she has to admit doesn’t happen very often even if she is rather quiet and reserved. But looking at the revised schedule she can’t help but wonder how this woman, whom she’s just met, could know her much better than her mother. The classes have changed dramatically – other than the required academics her electives are mostly math, science and technology. Her club registrations have been switched to the Ada Lovelace Society, which focuses on computer programing and an annual robotics tournament, Amnesty International, and the Cabot Service Club that focuses on volunteering in the local community. Unfortunately, Lena notices that her sports have changed but it relieved that she’s not longer on the punishing cross-country team. She has no idea what crew is but she imagines that it must be heaven compared to running, anything is better than running when there’s no emergency involved.

“You’re not going to cry, are you?” Cat asks seriously, a hint of apprehension in her tone of voice that makes it clear she neither has the time nor the patience for dealing with a crying girl.

“Uh, no,” Lena says giving her quizzical look before simply explaining, “I’m just a little surprised is all. This schedule is much more appealing that my original one.”

“That’s not surprising, your mother – in spite of her business acumen – still has rather antiquated views of women’s place in business and education. That and you don’t seem like much of a singer nor a cross-country runner,” Cat remarks with a conspiratorial smile.

Lena can’t help but chuckle a bit, “I don’t sing, not unless you want me to clear a room and I’m happy with whatever sport that is not running just for the sake of running.”

“Good, then it’s settled,” Cat agrees, but when Lena doesn’t move she goes back to sit at her desk and waves her off while telling her, “Okay, shoo, shoo. Off to dinner and bed with you, you’ll probably want to be rested before you end up wandering around like a lost little lamb tomorrow.”

Lena wants to protest that she is not going to look like a lost little lamb tomorrow but just shakes her head with a soft smile as she shows herself out. She tucks the schedule in her pocket after carefully folding it and quickly finds her way outside again. As she’s trying to navigate her way back to the dorm she sees a group of girls making their way over – clearly form a different house than her own as she doesn’t recognize anyone in the crowd. That however doesn’t stop a rather severe looking girl from stepping in front of her, “Long time no see, Luthor.”

Lena looks up to see another former classmate from junior school, Victoria Sinclair, and she internal groans. The other girl has gotten taller and Lena thinks she sees the coloring of a tattoo hiding in the shadow of her shirt collar. Something never change though, the perfectly manicured appearance and attitude only give the impression of calm and control. But one glance at her cold dark eyes and the smile that is all teeth and none of the happiness one would expect from such an expression make it easy for Lena to tell that Victoria is still as cunning and vicious as she was when they’d first met years ago. At their junior school Victoria had gotten into some trouble for egging on some of the younger students to get into fights and running a gambling scheme on top of it all. But a few words from her parents and a generous donation later it was all merely forgotten.

“Sinclair,” Lena says curtly, more than a little annoyed that her happy moment was being sullied by this girl.
“Looks like I’m not the only one to benefit from their parents’ wealth and connections,” Victoria says with a coy little smile that has Lena’s hand itching to slap it off of her face. “So, how much was the settlement with Summerfield? I heard from my brother that it was quite the fiasco.”

“You know I’m not at liberty to discuss it, just like you can’t really discuss the kiddie fight club,” Lena retorts with a subtle glare, but instead of sobering the older girl it would seem that Victoria finds her remarks amusing as she starts to laugh.

“Fun times, you missed out,” Victoria says with a sly little grin, “So, I also heard through the grapevine that you got put in Alcott House with the Danvers sister. Quite ironic if you ask me.”

The mention of Alex and Kara has drawn her attention, she not sure what’s so ironic about her placement in that house. So far as she knows she nor anyone else in her family was acquainted with Danvers’ family. Her bewilderment must be obvious as Victoria just laughs again then muses, “It’s not surprising you aren’t aware, not much has changed about you Lena. Still got your head stuck in a book or working on those computer programs of your.”

“I don’t understand, what’s so ironic?” Lena queries, her mind is still rapidly firing thoughts trying to process what Victoria could find so amusing.

“Really, Lena? You recall that violent little outburst of your brothers and the constant fights he got into with a few of his housemates? Apparently, there was a friendly rivalry between my brother, your dear brother and their cousin that got out of hand on more than once. But the last time he put him in the hospital for a few days, he had to sit out half of baseball season because of the injuries,” Veronica tells her with a sly little grin as she watches shock and then horror play out over the green eyed girl’s features with great amusement.

Lena feels the blood drain from her face as she realizes that Lex has hurt a member of Kara and Alex’s family. She feels a rush of guilt sweep over her as she recalls that not even a few hours ago Eliza and Jeremiah Danvers had been so kind to her – did they know it was her brother that hurt their relative? Surely they must have known the minute she introduced herself. Alex knew, it must be the reason that Alex had been so cold towards her, not that Lena blames her – if she had someone dear to her hurt like that she would probably be giving their attackers family a frosty reception shortly followed by a wide berth. A warm, steadying hand comes to rest on her shoulder causing her to start but isn’t not Victoria that’s entered her personal space but rather Sam.

“Hey Vic,” Sam greets with an overly charming smile as she knows the other girl hates that nickname. Looking at the group of other girls that are waiting up for Victoria she teases, “Shouldn’t you be showing your firsties where classes and dining hall are located?”

Veronica, clearly knowing she’s out of her depth with Sam present just offers another malicious looking smile and a casual retort as she walks away, “See you around Luthor.”

“If I was ever to say that Ms. Grant had a lapse in judgement about granting someone admission it would be her,” Sam all but growls lowly as she stands in front of Lena, trying to get the other girl to look at her, “Hey, you okay? Veronica doesn’t know when to shut up and she’s always looking to cause drama so whatever it is she told you just forget it.”

Lena just nods and tries to shake herself out of the shock, trying to pass it all off as nonchalant as possible, “It’s nothing, just Veronica wallowing with glee in other’s suffering.”

“The meeting with Ms. Grant go that badly?”

“No, if anything it went much better than I expected,” Lena says trying desperately to gain back
some of her better humor, “The atrocious schedule has been updated to something much more tolerable.”

“That’s good, but I’m really glad I found you. We’ve been waiting to head to the dining hall until you got back,” Sam encourages, guiding Lena towards the dining hall with a hand between her shoulder blades, “Kara is an absolute nuisance when she’s hungry so trust me we’ll all be much happier when she’s fed.”

Lena tries to laugh at Sam’s exasperation over Kara getting grumpy and irritable when hungry but she still can’t push the thought out of her head that Lex had hurt the girl’s cousin. Sam just continues to guide her to the dining hall, patting her back gently to try and keep her calm. She can tell that something is wrong but pressing Lena for information would get her nowhere and just put them both in a bad mood. They meet with Alex, Kara and Maggie on their walk to the dining hall, and despite the vast assortment of tasty looking foods Lena just picks at the pasta she’d selected and listens to the hustle and bustle of all the girls around her catching up with each other.

Kara must notice that she’s still a little rattled and asks her about her meeting, gleeful when she realizes that Lena’s schedule has changes. But other than that she remains close by but gives Lena space to just breath and think. Lena is still quiet as they settle into the evening routine of checking over uniforms and checking email for any syllabus updates. A few of the girls are watching TV in the lounge and Kara and Alex are playing a rousing game of ping pong that’s drawn a crowd. Lena opts to check on the new stack of books delivered to her room while she’d been out – a sticky on top of the stack that reads “You might need these – CG.”

Settling in Lena resigns herself to starting her reading early so that she won’t get too far behind when all of the professor invariably assign a mountain of homework for each class. She’s relieved that at least these subjects are interesting and they come more naturally to her. After a couple hours of getting ahead on readings for her classes on designing computer algorithms and advanced programming in C and C++. Kara shows up as she getting ready to change into her pajamas while Alex, Sam and Maggie are corralling some of the younger students to their rooms. After brushing her teeth, she settles into bed, grateful that the bed at least somewhat comfortable. After checking her phone once more to make sure her alarm is set she watches a Kara comes in still chatting with Maggie before turning the lights out and flopping onto her own bed and cocooning in her covers.

“Good night, Lena,” Kara utters softly before turning over to get comfortable.

“Good night, Kara,” Lena responds just as reverently, starring at the ceiling as she listens to the last of the girls closing their doors and flicking off the lights. She shifts around to try and get comfortable and just listens to her surroundings, next to her she can hear Kara’s breathing start to even out as she falls asleep.

But sleep eludes her as her eyes start to sting again, and the thought of who else may also be crying on the first night at school crosses her mind. Her mother and father told her when she first started boarding as a child that everyone cries their first night there. And they were right, in her shared dormitory her and a half dozen other 8-year-old girls were all trying desperately not to cry in front of each other. But she also remembers Lillian had also told her that Luthor’s never cry. Luthor’s did and didn’t do a lot of things, but at this moment in time Lena doesn’t give a solitary fuck. If she could give up this name and the burdens attached to it she would do so in a heartbeat. Besides, Lena thinks bitterly to herself as a few tears slip past her careful control and roll down her pale cheeks, if no is there to see the tears were you really crying?
First Day Ups and Downs

Chapter Notes

Warnings: Mentions of off-screen bullying because Victoria Sinclair is an ass per usual.

Happy reading!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Lena is awake and getting ready long before the first bell startles awake most of the other girls. It would seem that Kara is also a heavy sleeper as she just groans at the loud ringing of the bell before rolling over, knocking a pillow to the floor in the process, before snoring softly as she falls back to sleep. The sights of the blonde tangled up in the sheets and still dozing is endearing but Lena knows they both of them need to get a move on or risk being late on the first day. As she finishes straightening her house tie and pulling on the clean, pressed sweater she calls out teasingly, “Hey, Kara if you’re not careful you’ll have to skip breakfast to avoid being late.”

Just like that Kara is scrambling out of bed and grabs up the clothes she laid out the night before, Lena laughing a bit at the worried look that puts a crease in the blonde’s delicate brow. She knew the promise of food would be the most likely bet to get the other girl to wake up and start getting ready. When Alex comes by to check on their floor she’s genuinely surprised to find Kara already out of bed and Lena packing the things she’s going to need for her classes into a shoulder bag.

“She’s already up? I thought I was going to have drag her out of bed,” Alex jokes with a grin as she tells Lena, “It usually takes Kara a couple weeks to adjust back to the early mornings, she’s more of a night person.”

“I don’t blame her, I’m much more productive at night too. But, I told her she’d have to skip breakfast to avoid being late and that seemed to do the trick,” Lena replies with an easy quirk of her lips, hoping that Alex being at least cordial to her will be a long term thing.

“Food is her weakness.”

As Alex moves on to check on the younger girls Kara’s back and clearly struggling with tying her tie correctly. Growling she realizes that she’s tied it into a plain knot instead of the standard Windsor knot, tugging at it roughly she suddenly stills when pale, soft hands rest lightly on hers. Looking up she sees Lena has moved closer and with a soft smile, “Need some help?”

“Ah, yeah,” Kara admits sheepishly as she feels a flush rise to her checks as she rubs the back of neck a bit nervously, “I usually just leave them tied so it’s not surprising I always forget how to tie them.”

“No worries, it took me a while to get used to tying them too,” Lena assures, biting her bottom lip as she concentrates on looping the tie around in the correct manner. After a couple minutes she straightens the tie and pats a blushing Kara on the shoulder, “There, all done.”

Kara’s blushing profusely, so much so she can feel her cheeks burning as she smooths a hand over the tie and reaches for her sweater. Lena seems to be toeing on her shoes, clearly in no rush as she waits for Kara to get her books together before heading towards the dining hall together. They both
settled down to breakfast with the others, Sam is already handing her a cup of hot chocolate while Kara stacks her plate high with waffles, topping them generously with butter and maple syrup. After that the morning picks up rather quickly, filing into the massive auditorium to listen to Ms. Grant’s rather unique and inspiring speech about working hard and taking risks before she quickly dismisses them to get on with the school day. After the dismissal everyone seems to go in a million different directions in a frantic crowd of bodies.

Lena notes that her first classes aren’t shared with anyone else she knows, computer science and robotics with some professor name T.O. Morrow. A rather unfortunate name Lena thinks but she realizes the irony of that thought. As she enters the class room she sees the computers lined up and at the back are lab tables with robots set out with an assortment of tools and parts – clearly looking to be upgraded. As a couple other girls file in the man with wavy hair and thick glass greets them with a serious smile, “So, it looks like we have enough girls for a team entry at the RoboCup.”

Lena’s eyes light up when he motions them over to the lab tables with the robots on them. Looking over them quickly Lena takes note of the frame, various servos motors, and omnidirectional cameras. The other girls around her murmuring quietly between each other as they look at the parts with a mix of excitement and nervousness.

“Meet the middle size robots that are going to be your project for the next year,” Morrow tells them, before handing out packets over the regulations and requirements for the RoboCup. “Lena why don’t you pair up with Jess and take bot’s 1 and 3 to a computer to look over the base coding.”

As Lena turns to see an equally shy girl give a small wave at her she grins and quickly picks up bot number 1 as she says to Jess, “This is going to be so much fun.”

On the other side of campus fun isn’t remotely what Kara is having as she looks over the updated reading schedule for her classical literature class. Kara sighs heavily, the course work that the Professor droning over is boring as compared with the thoughts running through her head of her next few classes. She knows reading literature from some of the best writers in human history is supposed to help her become a better writer – but some of the works selected for their readings were debatable at best. Luckily, her next class is photojournalism with Ms. Grant and she’ll get one of the school’s cameras and the go ahead to start working on news pieces for the first publication of the new year. After that was creative writing and lunch, followed by the two classes she shared with Lena and a couple of the easiest on her schedule – physics and calculus.

As the hours slowly melt away and lunch rolls around the girls meet again with each other as well as Sam and Maggie. Kara piles her plate high with slices of pizza, grinning like a kid on Christmas as she sits down with them. Alex is already working on filing in her day planner with her assignments, society meetings, and the dates of upcoming soccer scrimmages. Sam’s already fretting over the term assignment for her finance class and the fast paced schedule of the debate society as she picks at the salad she selected. Maggie snatches up her papers to look at the details of the assignment as Sam complains, “That and our first debate, open for the school to watch, is only two weeks away?! The faculty definitely don’t know how to start things off gently.”

“I’m sure you’ll do well, Sam. You always worry more than necessary,” Lena tries to reassure, a little worried at how stressed Sam seems to be this early in the year. She lays a hand over Sam’s that’s restlessly tapping against her notebook trying to calm down her friend.

“Don’t worry Luthor, Sam’s just being Sam,” Maggie assures, then with a wicked grin she teases, “Besides, Sam is a master debater, been doing this for years.”

Sam, who had just taken a sip of her tea spits it out rather violently, as the other girls start to laugh at Maggie’s witty quip. Sam just shoots Maggie a withering glare that makes the shorter brunet just
shrug and laugh even though Alex elbows her in the ribs as a warning. Sam quickly searches for a napkin and gratefully accepts one offered by Kara as she checks her watch to see that their lunch has dwindled to just a few remaining minutes. Alex is already tucking the couple of granola bars she picked up into her bag knowing that she’s going to need a snack before she’s going to need the extra fuel before Coach J’onzz runs her and the other soccer players ragged.

The afternoon is a blur of ice breakers, going over syllabuses, and enduring the first day introductory lectures. Lena is carrying bot 1 back to her dorm room, hoping that Kara won’t mind the guest that she’s going to take a part and program. When she gets back to the dorm she finds Kara eating two granola bars at once while stuffing a Gatorade and a clean towel into her gym bag. She turns to see Lena and offers her a smile, asking with a full mouth, “Everything going okay?”

“Yes, so far,” Lena says, setting the bot on the desk and quickly tossing her backpack aside to look through her drawers for her athletic clothing.

“Is that one of the bots for the robot soccer game thingy?” Kara asks, slinging her bag over her shoulder as she looks over to bot – kind of curious as to how it works and what Lena has planned for it.

“Yeah, it’s going to be interesting taking it a part and figuring out how to best optimize the programming,” Lena chuckles at Kara’s eagerness, wondering how in the world the other girl is always so bright and optimistic. She wonders just how happy Kara really is, if this is all just a façade even though she hopes it isn’t.

“So, it’s going to be staying? Cool, you should give it a name,” Kara beams, as she jokes, “It’ll be like we have a dog in our dorm room.”

Lena genuinely laughs at the idea of the little robot wandering around like a dog, she imagines Kara would even try to get it playing fetch – which would help with testing out the object tracking algorithms. Pulling out a pair of shorts, a tee and a sweater she heads to the bathroom to change as Kara wishes her luck before heading out. The blonde hopes to get a few laps in to warm up before the rest of the team gets there to formally start practice.

Lena quickly changes and tossing her dirty clothing in the hamper she checks her schedule again to see where she’s supposed to go – but she’s not sure what sport she’s even in.

“Hey, you’re going to be late to the playing fields,” Alex says from the doorway, tossing and catching a soccer ball in her hands. A quick scan of the room tells her that Kara’s already had a snack and headed out to practice, “Luthor, you know where you’re going?”

Lena hesitates, she was hoping that she’d be able to find it on her own. She recalls all the passive aggressive comment from her mother on the good days when she’d asked something the older woman found to be annoying or trivial. Intuitively she knows there’s nothing wrong with admitting that you don’t know something, it’s how you learn and grow, but it still makes her uncomfortable. Especially since it’s just Alex and her at the moment, with a soft, self-depreciating sigh she admits, “Not exactly, I’m not even sure what this sport is.”

Alex just holds out her hand to look at the schedule, making no comment about the younger girl being a bit hesitant nor does she say anything about her not knowing which sport she’s in. She promised Kara she’d play nice, and in all honesty it looked like Lena could use some friendly faces and a little bit of encouragement. But looking over the smaller girl she can’t help the little snort of laughter as she asks quickly, “You know how to swim right?”

Lena’s eyebrows raise in surprise at the question, a little confused, “Yes, why?”
“It’s rowing, like tiny unstable boats type of rowing,” Alex tells her a bit amusedly as she watches Lena contemplate this for a few moments in silence.

“Oh,” Lena says softly.

“I’ll take you by the docks before heading to the soccer fields, they’re near enough to each other,” Alex tells her, watching as Lena quickly pulls on her sneakers and grabs up her duffle bag clearly not wanting to make Alex late to her own events. As they fall into step with each other Alex notices that Lena seems hyper-aware of her surroundings as they walk towards the sports fields and keeps a careful distance between them. Alex realizes that Lena is staying just out of arms reach – most likely as skill she learned as a child under traumatic circumstances. Her heart aches as she realizes that maybe Kara was right about Lena. But Alex suspects that the trauma of her brother’s actions was only scratching the surface.

As they pass by the aquatic center Maggie and Kara are already at the outdoor pool, laughing as they take turns diving off the edge of the pool into the water. Seeing as its still warm outside the two are enjoying a playful, pre-practice diving competition. When Kara sees Alex and Lena walking by as she climbs out of the pool again she waves cheerfully at them, making Alex and Lena both smile. Maggie yells out, “Like what you see?!”

Both Alex and Lena blush profusely at the brunet’s comment, the two exchange mild looks of surprise. Alex wonders which one of them Maggie is yelling at, and judging by the look on Lena’s face the other girl is most likely thinking the same thing. She won’t lie, she’s felt a pull of attraction to Maggie ever since they first met, and seeing her in the rather revealing swimsuit definitely doesn’t help her blushing situation. Lena seems to be in a similar predicament as she gives Kara a once over and notices the outline of defined abdominals under the swimsuit and well defined arms and legs. Lena is both impressed and somewhat surprised as she asks Alex incredulously, “How does she even have abs when she eats all the time?!”

“Don’t ask, it’s like she doesn’t even have to try,” Alex grouses with a small smile, noticed the scarlet red blush on Lena’s cheeks.

“You two should probably quit gawking and get to your own practice,” Maggie yells across the pool with a wide grin as she tries to push Kara into the pool. Instead Kara grapples with her before picking her up and throwing both of them into the water as more of their teammates show up for practice.

Alex and Lena laugh at their antics before continuing towards the boat house by the lake, a few people are already gathered at the edge of the dock. Alex pats the younger girl on the shoulder, feeling her tense a bit so she pulls back a bit, “Hey, try to have fun okay?”

Lena just nods and starts the long, slow trudge down to the boat house, grumbling and cursing internally as she realizes the dreaded time to participate in sports has finally come. It appears that Cabot House School didn’t seem to have a fencing team she could join and nor did yoga fulfill the physical activity requirements. Deciding to just suck it up and hope for the best she joins the others on the dock and quickly realizes that she doesn’t see anyone from her house or from any of her other classes either.

“All first time rowers, come towards my voice,” comes the commanding voice of a tall, blonde woman who looks rather fierce and even more disagreeable. Her commanding presence and confidence remind Lena of her mother and it makes her cringe. “Everyone else should be getting their a…..butt in a boat and start rowing. 2000 meters minimum, ladies.”

The older girls and several of the younger ones quickly make their escape to the boat house, a chorus
of quickly uttered acknowledgements of, “Yes, Ms. Willis.”

Lena looks around at the three other new girls who look equally as unsure of their instructor and the unstable looking boats the experienced rowers are taking out of the boat house and placing them in the water. Ms. Willis looks them over, giving Lena a curious look but she doesn’t say anything about Lena being much older than the other new girls, “You four can swim, right?”

After answering in the affirmative she gives a quick run-down on the boats – a single scull with two long oars – and the basic mechanics of rowing. As she pairs them up with older girls and heads over to the rescue boat she quips, “Oh, and hold onto the oars at all times. If you let go of them you’re going to fall in.”

An older girl slightly taller than Lena holds her hand with a warm smile, “Hey, I’m Megan.”

“Lena,” she says softly.

“Well, let’s get you into a rowing scull,” Megan tells her with a grin, and gives her instructions on how to take down a boat and place it in the water with one of the oars on the dock to help stabilize it. She offers her hand to Lena and tells her how to step into the boat, keeping her balanced as she sits on the little moving seat and grasps the oars, “Okay, I’m going to give you a little nudge and as soon as you’re clear put the oar in the water. Use your legs to give you more leverage with the oars when you’re ready to get moving. Don’t let go.”

“Trust me, I’m going to hold on for dear life,” Lena quips, already feeling to boat shifting under her bottom as Megan gives her a gentle push from the dock. Gripping the oars, she dips them into the water and pushes back with her legs to do a full stroke, but she’s not expecting her center of gravity to shift so violently back and forth. She tries to regain stability over the wobble and ends up pulling one of the oars completely out of the water and before she knows it she’s sliding off the seat and into the water. The chill of the water is shocking causing her to choke back a cry of surprise as she surfaces and grabs at the boat that has luckily not capsized.

Megan is at the end of the dock and is giving her instructions, “You alright? What you wanna do now is take the oars in one hand and grip the opposite side of the boat and pull yourself up. Careful not to get too eager or you’ll flip over the other side.”

Flipping over the other side is just what Lena does, this time taking the boat with her. After a couple of attempts, she manages to right the boat and get seated again, her whole body is shaking and swaying to try and maintain her balance. After a few wobbly attempts she manages to get the boat moving and the stability gets better. Soon enough she’s setting out to do the exercises that Willis had assigned them, trying to make the 2000 meter request. She seems to set a good pace but quickly realizes that rowing is a sport that engages all of the muscles but she decides to just deal with the burning as she’s finally gotten the boat under control. Or so she thought, after a half hour of rowing wearing her down physically, on a particular stroke she’s not as careful when lifting the oars out of the water and one of them catches hard on the water and she feels her body leave the boat seat and is greeted with cold water once again.

Coming up sputtering and coughing, Lena looks around for the boat and finds it has drifted a few paces away under its own momentum. Swimming towards it she holds onto the capsized boat for dear life, having the wind knocked out of her leaves her chest aching as she tries to catch her breath. A few of the other girls that had seen the debacle where chuckling, but Megan and a couple of the senior girls call out to her to make sure she’s not hurt or struggling in the water. She grudgingly admits that she’s just a little surprised but not hurt as she hears the motor of a boat getting closer. Leaning her head against the boat she’s floating along with she curses softly, “Fuck.”
“That was quite the ejecting crab, I haven’t seen someone literally get launched out of their boat for quite some time,” Willis laughs as she guides the rescue boat alongside the capsized scull and reaches down to catch Lena by the collar of her sweater and pulls her to the edge of the boat, “Come on kid, take my hand.”

Lena’s pulled into the boat and when directed helps the instructor right the upended boat, she’s shivering a bit at the wind is picking up and the water had been quite the shock to her system. Lena tries to right her disheveled hair but settles for brushing the wet tendrils out of her face. She’s a bit disappointed with her performance, she’s seen a couple of the more veteran rowers fall in but not even the other beginners had fallen in quite as many times as she did. That coupled with Ms. Willis’s teasing hasn’t helped her flagging self-esteem, as they pull up at the dock she gets ready to try again but the older blonde woman taps her on the shoulder, “I think you’ve taken enough of a beating for one day, Luthor.”

“Yes ma’am,” Lena answers in defeat, a little disappointed she doesn’t get the chance to try and make up for all the times she fell into the water. She’s not sure how she feels about rowing as a sport, but she’s absolutely sure that she hates the feeling of failure. A heavy hand pats her on the shoulder and her first instinct is to flinch away but she manages to just tense at the contact instead.

“Don’t take it personally kid, everyone sucks the first time on the water,” Willis assures and then nods to the boat, “Help me put her up and then you can go get changed into something dry. You can try again tomorrow.”

When Lena is finished putting up the boats she heads out to pick up her bag and finds Megan is waiting with a dry towel and wiry grin as she offers it to her, “Looks like you could use this.”

“Thanks,” Lena says with a thankful smile, quickly wrapping the towel around her shoulders as she realizes that she’s still leaving a watermark on the dock.

“Don’t be so hard on yourself,” Megan assures gently, “It just takes some practice to get better at it, even the rowers on the team get a good dunking from time to time.”

Lena shivers again and quietly mumbles a goodbye to Megan before collecting her bag and hurrying back towards the dorm. On the way back it would seem that Maggie and Kara are finished with practice and chatting it up with a couple of the younger girls as a soaking wet and angry looking Victoria Sinclair stomps by in a huff much to all of their amusement. Judging by the older girl’s soaking wet uniform it looks like she fell in the pool fully clothed after getting dressed again for dinner. Lena steps out of the way and watches as she continues her angry march towards her house.

“Lena?! Why are you soaking wet?” Kara asks quickly, seeing a rather forlorn looking Lena still trailing water along the sidwalk and shivering a bit.

“I’m not that talented at rowing,” Lena says with a shrug of her shoulders, hoping she won’t have to give them a play by play of her failures. A gust of wind bringing in a series of low hanging clouds makes her clutch the towel around her tighter as she starts shivering again.

“Geez, you must be cold. That lake water is freezing even on warm days,” Kara exclaims sympathetically, reaching back and digging around in her duffle bag to pull out an extra towel. She unfolds the towel and wraps it around Lena, rubbing her hands up and down Lena’s arms briskly to try and warm her up. Lena’s blushing again at Kara’s gentle touch, thinking about how nice it is for someone touching her to not hurt or cause her to flinch. The warm, encouraging smile Kara flashes at her makes her heart skip a beat and she lets herself be led back towards dorms.

Once back at the dorm Lena showers, turning the water up warm enough to make her skin turn red.
from the heat. The shivering subsides as she gets dressed in a pair of sweatpants and a soft tee. She heads back to her room after hanging up her wet clothing in the shoe room and smiles when Kara offers her one of her warm looking sweatshirts. Lena takes and quickly puts it on, relishing in the warmth on her still chilled skin and signs contently as she says softly, “Thanks.”

“Well, it would seem your mother didn’t let your friends pack you much in the way of casual clothes. Hold on to it, I’ve got a half dozen hoodies already,” Kara tells her with an encouraging smile.

After dinner Lena sets to work on taking apart the robot to examine all of its moving parts before linking it to her computer to look at the software and coding it runs on. Kara returns later from dinner, having been called to meet with the prefects and Alex is following right behind her already in one of her overprotective lectures. Lena tries to mind her own business as Kara comes in with a blue notebook she throws down on the desk in a huff.

“I can’t believe you’ve already gotten lines?! It’s day one, Kara!” Alex scolds in exasperation, shaking her head in disbelief.

“You already got lines?” Lena asks, a little startled that the sunny, cheerful girl had already gotten into trouble. She hopes it’s nothing serious, but judging by Alex’s amused grin she imagines the story is going to be interesting.

“She pushed Victoria Sinclair into the pool – fully clothed,” Alex snorts with a small smile, she knows she shouldn’t find it amusing but with all the headaches and tears that the other girl has caused Alex just thinks payback is a bitch and today if found someone who deserved it.

“I slipped, honestly!” Kara exclaims holding her hands up as she tries to defend herself.

“Yeah, sure. You just happened to slip at the right time to get her to stop picking on a few of the younger girls?” Alex asks with a wiry grin and quirked eyebrow. Accident her ass, she thinks to herself, she knew her sister better than that and Kara wouldn’t tolerate a bully.

Kara’s rubbing the back of her neck and avoiding eye contact as she sheepishly, “I uh,…I guess.”

Lena snickers quietly as Alex just shakes her head as she leaves and Kara takes out a pen and starts to neatly number the lines. Kara starts to write the first sentence on the stark white page and groans, “Writing sentences is such a waste of time…I could be working on sketching out a news article or a creative writing piece.”

“How many lines?”

“Only 100,” Kara says as she writes out another iteration of ‘I will be careful and not run in the aquatics center.’ She checks to make sure that she has 40 characters per line as she continues the mind numbing punishment. Looking up she offers Lena a bright smile as she tells her, “But hey, I’m okay with it. Victoria got 500 for bullying so it’s not so bad.”

Lena genuinely laughs and it makes Kara smile even brighter. As the evening wears on the two of them continue to chat amiably about the classes they don’t share and even some of the mishaps during their sports practice. Lena even feels comfortable enough to tell Kara about getting thrown from the boat and that she does have plans for the bot and Kara can even help her when it comes time to teach it how to fetch. She even agrees to let Kara call the thing Krypto even though she’s pretty sure it has nothing to do with cryptography or cryptocurrency like she’d expected. As the last bell rings to signal lights out Lena thinks that maybe her mother sending her to this school was the best thing she could have done for her. Sure her rowing performance left a lot to be desired and she’s still cautious of letting people close enough to get know the real Lena Luthor – but she feels like with
time she might have the chance to develop real friendships and make the human connections she’s been denied for as long as she can remember.

Chapter End Notes

Author’s Notes:

Hope you enjoyed the chapter update, drop me a comment or something if you enjoyed it or have any cool ideas. I'm open to suggestions and am already working on the next chapter with some artwork to go with it! Cheers!

RoboCup is an actual annual competition where robots are programmed to play five on five soccer. It’s fun and hilarious because the bots can get fouls and even carded like real soccer players. It's pretty damn cool,(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nIeQLd5M1S4)

Rowing is hard, and I fell in (or was ejected from the boat) like three times the first day and I’m pretty athletic – just not so much at rowing and I wanted Lena to feel my pain. Ejecting crab for your viewing pleasure, (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=htBfHnnH3Vc).
A few weeks pass by much more quickly than Lena or the other girls expected, it seemed just like yesterday they were all awkwardly settling in to a new routine. As she sits in her and Kara’s room in pajamas working on the next bit of coding for Krypto she thinks about everything that’s happened in the last couple of weeks. Rowing has gotten better as she’s gotten more used to the motions and her muscles don’t constantly ache as they’ve adjusted to the strain. She seems to be making friends and academically speaking the only class where she isn’t at the top grade-wise is religious studies. At the moment Kara is in bed reading one of the Harry Potter books, the two of them shared a love of all things Hogwarts and agreed it would be a good stress relief for both of them to re-read and discuss the books.

“Which one are you on?” Lena asks softly as she saves the word document and commands her laptop to sleep for the night.

“Just got to the part where Fred and George give Harry the Marauder’s Map so he can catch up with Ron and Hermione in Hogsmeade,” Kara says with a bright grin as she looks over at Lena and admits, “Damn, I still get excited reading these even though I’ve already read them half a dozen times. I just think it would be so much fun to play quidditch. I would probably make a really awesome seeker, either that or a chaser.”

“I probably wouldn’t fly unless it was required for a class,” Lena snorts, smiling a bit when Kara starts to laugh again.

“Come on, you know it would be so much fun to fly.”

“No, I don’t know that flying would be much fun,” Lena says with conviction as she jokingly tells her, “I don’t even like flying on planes or helicopters, it’s just terrifying to me.”

“You could fly with me, I wouldn’t let you fall,” Kara tells her confidently with a warm smile.

Lena’s taken aback for a moment, but the more she thinks about it the more she agrees that she’d be safe with Kara. She realizes Kara is still looking at her with a certain warmth in her eyes that makes her heart skip a beat. Nodding with a shy smile she admits, “I imagine you would keep me safe.”

“We’d also get to have fun in Hogsmeade, I’d want to drink a butterbeer – or several – at the Three Broomsticks. But mostly I want to raid Honeydukes and eat all of the candy.”

“Of course you would,” Lena laughs, imagining the stomach ache she’s sure the blonde girl would get from trying each and every one of the imaginary treats.

“Absolutely,” Kara agrees enthusiastically, “I’d even want to try the ice mice, pepper imps, and
Bertie Bott’s Every Flavour Beans.”

“You know a candy company actually makes a version of the Bertie Bott’s every flavor bean. But careful what you wish for because it has all the flavors – good and bad, right? Like vomit, earwax, and other horrible things I’d rather not imagine.”

“But there’s also cherry, lemon and tons of other good ones – it would be worth it,” Kara proclaims with such confidence Lena almost believes her. The bell rings for lights out and they can both hear Alex and Maggie in the hallway kindly reminding the other that it’s time for bed. Both Kara and Lena turn off their reading lights and settled into bed, the blonde does what she does every night – softly speaking into the darkness, “Goodnight, Lena.”

A small smile plays on Lena’s lips and she’s really pleased that the darkness covers her pale skin blushing as she whispers back, “Goodnight, Kara.”

Turning over she pulls the blankets up over her shoulders and settles further into her pillow, closing her eyes as she tiredly starts to drift in and out of sleep. Lena’s dreams start off pleasant, filled with wonderful things such as the memory of Kara belly flopping in the pool her warm laughter ringing through the air and feeling like electricity across her skin, robots that exceed her wildest expectations, and the children she reads to at the hospital getting well and going home. But soon enough she starts to move and twitch in her sleep as dark things start to creep into her subconscious – the crack of a glass as it shatters against the wall just a few feet away from her head. The memories mix together into a hellish nightmare that Lena doesn’t recognize as a dream.

There’s the sound of raised voices coming from the study as Lena pads down the hallway, having been woken by her father’s shouting. Lately he’d been away from the house quite a bit and when he was home Lena didn’t enjoy his presence as it was usually accompanied by numerous calls and texts from his mistresses or business associates and a seemingly endless supply of alcohol. Lillian was there but she was just as volatile, when they argued it usually devolved in to a string of yelling curses and a hail of flying objects that would be cleaned up and replaced by the staff the next morning.

This evening is no different accept that two of Lionel’s personal attorneys and a couple of members from the company board of trustees had shown up. The dinner had been tense and deadly quiet so she had just eaten what little she desired quietly before excusing herself. Lex also bowed out soon after her, stopping by her room to tell her he was going out and to keep to her room. Soon after he left the yelling and screaming had started, and after a while she heard the telltale sounds of glass breaking and the heavy thumps of much bigger objects being thrown around. Despite her better judgement and Lex’s loving warnings she tiptoes down the stairs and as her bare feet touch the tile floor she hears the shot of a gun causing her to flinch.

A couple more shots ring out, making her ears ring a bit but she’s concerned that their fight has escalated further than they usually did. The last time Lionel has pulled the revolved from his desk and fired it out of anger Lillian required stitches from a shrapnel injury. As she moves closer to the study she peers through the crack in the door and hears Lillian’s shrill crying and angry curses.

“It no longer matters, so just drop it you damned woman,” Lionel roars, his voice so loud and terrifying that Lena would swear that she could feel the vibrations ripple over her skin – making the tiny hairs on her arms stand up. There are bottles of port and wine littering the study, a few are sitting empty on the desk, a few more on the floor and the rest are in tiny glittering pieces strewn about the floor. At least the empty revolver is laying abandoned on an end table next to a half full glass of wine.

“You bring your bastard into our home and now you still can’t stay away from all of your whores,” Lillian screams furiously, flinging the glass in her hand at her husband. The glass explodes into
pieces against the bookcase off to his left. Both of them are so drunk that their aim is atrocious but Lena knows it doesn’t mean they can’t get a lucky shot in.

“You leave Lena and her mother out of this, you vile bitch,” Lionel screams again stumbling towards the woman and shoving her violently which causes her to crash into the end table, both of them ending up in disarray on the floor.

But Lillian always gave just as much as she was given in all things, getting up she soundly slaps Lionel across the face – an angry red welt leaving a print on his cheek. As she heads towards the exit an empty bottle comes careening out of the study and smashes into the wall just off to the right of Lena’s head. She whimpers and flinches, looking at the glass shards littering the floor around her bare feet. Before she can react Lillian has her arm locked in her clawed hands like a vice shaking her so hard her teeth click together, “This is your fault.”

“Lillian!” Lionel barks out a warning as he struggles to right his drunk body and intervene. But before he can get there Lillian has brought her arm back and cracks Lena across the face – the sound echoing down the hall as Lena folds to the floor feeling glass sting against her knees and palms.

Lillian tries to strike again but Lionel comes barreling out of the study and wrestles with Lillian, the two of them collapsing into a drunken heap of angry cursing and flailing limbs. Tears are draining down Lena’s cheeks as she scrambles away from the two adults striking each other repeatedly on the floor beside her. She gets up to run but the glass bites into her feet and she hears Lillian shrieking at her to get back here.

On the other side of the room Kara awakens to her heart pounding rapidly, the sound of blood rushing through her ears is deafening in the silence. It’s clear within seconds that her fight or flight response was triggered in her sleep. Quickly sensing that the only other presence in the room is Lena she sits up and assesses the situation. Looking at the younger woman in time to see her fighting against the sheets and whimpering, locked in the throes of a particularly violent nightmare.

Lena’s small body is tense, a sheen of sweat glistening on her skin as she continues to jerk and cry, striking out against an invisible attacker. Tears are flowing down Lena’s cheeks as her fists clench the covers she’s tangled in. Kara gets up and quickly goes to sit on the edge of the other girl’s bed, debating on whether or not she should try to wake her up or go get Alex or Sam. Deciding that Lena would probably but uncomfortable with anyone else seeing her so upset and vulnerable, she speaks clearly and calmly, “Lena. Wake up, Lena.”

Lena keens and cries out in fear, arms spasm as she tries to defend herself from whatever, or whoever, is hurting her in the dream. Kara knows that sometimes touching someone coming out of a night terror or in the grips of a strong flashback can trigger violent outbursts. She’s once given Alex a bloody nose one time while dreaming about something particularly distressing in her own past. A pain has lodged in her chest as she sees Lena’s sleeping features twisted with fear – no, sheer terror, Kara thinks. Throwing caution to the wind Kara very tenderly lays a hand on Lena’s shoulder, feeling the smaller girl flinch violently and sob. Shaking her as gently as possible Kara calls out as quietly as possible, “Lena, wake up! It’s just a dream, Lena.”

When Lena’s soft green eyes snap open and she gasps hungrily for air she quickly sits up and pushes away from the hand on her arm. Her mind is still reeling from the memories that assailed her sense, rubbing her eyes she feels her stomach turn. Stumbling out of her bed and past Kara she reaches the waste bin just in time, vomiting into it as she collapses weakly to the floor. Kara’s still sitting on the bed in shock. From the movement of Lena’s shoulders and the stilted breathing that’s so loud in the dark stillness, Kara can tell that she’s crying. Moving closer she makes enough noise for Lena to
know she’s there, also telling her, “Hey, Lena. It’s just me, Kara.”

Lena looks at Kara who has kneeled down next to her, but she doesn’t say anything as tears flood her eyes and spill onto her flushed cheeks. Kara tentatively reaches out a hand and lays it on Lena’s shoulder, relieved that she doesn’t pull away, so she offers a warm smile as she encourages, “Come on, let’s get you cleaned up.”

Kara checks the hallway before guiding Lena towards the bathroom, one arm wrapped around Lena’s waist and the other carrying the waste bin. Once in the bathroom she sits Lena down on one of the benches in front of the mirror and sinks. Searching her locker, she finds a clean washcloth of hers and wets it with cold water before gently pressing it to the back of Lena’s neck. Lena is still shaking as she sits there, tears still rolling silently down her cheeks as she stares off into space with a sad, lost look. Kara rubs her shoulders as she tells her, “Hey, let me clean this up and then we’ll go back to our room.”

Kara works quickly before taking Lena back to their room, hearing footsteps behind them she quickly guides Lena into the room before turning around to see Sam rounding the corner in pajamas and sporting a small flashlight. The older girl looks sleepy but worried as she lays eyes on Kara and says quietly, “I thought I heard someone, everything okay?”

Kara silently curses in her head as she stands in front of her doorway, realizing that the smell of sickness hangs faintly in the air, at least enough to be noticeable, “Yeah, everything’s fine…”

“Is someone sick?” Sam asks, starting to awaken more and more by the second giving a thoughtful look to the dorm room door Kara seems to be protecting with her body – even if she doesn’t realize it. She knows it’s probably Lena, but she’s not about to intrude on Lena if she’s sick – or worse having one of her night terror episodes that she’d had in junior school. She’s honestly surprised that she’s letting Kara help her out, with how secretive and private Lena usually is.

“Oh, uh…yeah,” Kara stammers a bit before offering Sam a sheepish smile that doesn’t reach her eyes, “I just ate too much sweets and got a stomach ache, no big deal.”

Sam doesn’t believe her in the slightest, but she just sighs in resignation before telling her seriously, “Okay, just…if you still don’t feel well let me or Alex know and we’ll take you to the infirmary.”

“Yeah, thanks,” Kara says quickly, hoping that her relief isn’t quite as obvious as it feels.

As Sam heads back down the hall Kara quickly slips back into her room and finds Lena sitting on the edge of her bed, her sniffles and hiccups are starting to dissipate. She joins her a bit timidly, sitting down next to Lena and asking quietly as she moves to put an arm around her, “Is this okay?”

Lena nods, grateful when Kara moves closer and wraps an arm around her shoulders. Closing her eyes, she leans into Kara’s side and rests her head against the blonde’s shoulder just breathing. When Kara wraps her in a hug and rests her cheek against her forehead she hugs her back just as tightly. Lena thinks to herself that this must be what safety and affection must feel like. After a while Kara whispers quietly to her, “It’s okay to go back to sleep, I’ll be right here the whole time.”

“I can’t,” Lena whispers back, her voice high with panic at the thought of having another nightmare, “I don’t want to dream again.”

Kara guides her lay down and instead of going back to her own bed, she surprises them both by laying down beside Lena. After a beat Lena turns on her side to face her, moving a bit closer and sighing with relief when Kara wraps her up in another hug. Lena doesn’t protest, instead she cuddles closer to the other girl’s warmth and rests her head on her shoulder. Kara waits patiently for Lena to
get comfortable, stroking fingers through long dark hair – something she’s thought about doing for days – as she says, voice barely at a whisper, “Just close your eyes for me.”

After a couple moment’s hesitation Lena does, and Kara starts to hum softly. It takes Lena a couple bars of the familiar tune to place it as a lullaby. After a few more bars Lena’s body unconsciously starts to lose its tension, the trembling finally dissipates as she relaxes. Soon enough she’s drifting off to sleep listening to the sound of Kara’ sweet humming. When Lena wakes again the first rays of the rising sun are filtering through the blinds, but more importantly Kara still has her arms wrapped around her. A quick check of the alarm clock tells her that they have a few minutes before the first bell to rise goes off.

“Hey,” Kara says softly, letting Lena know she’s awake. When Lena pulls away to sit up she feels the loss more keenly than she expected, but she knows they both can’t get caught like this by anyone. She sits up beside Lena and asks, “Are you feeling better?”

“Yeah, much.”

Kara isn’t convinced, and the way her blue eyes are watching Lena sadly Lena knows it too. But Kara doesn’t push, instead she just says, “You don’t have to tell me if you don’t want to.”

Lena opens her mouth to protest, but Kara just takes her hand and soothes, “I know you’d rather keep it to yourself and that’s okay. But, if you ever want to tell me I’ll listen. You don’t have to deal with whatever it is by yourself, okay?”

“Okay,” Lena answers softly, squeezing Kara’s hand softly.

The bell rings and both of them are loath to get up and get dressed, the closeness between the two of them comforting. But they both grudgingly get dressed in silence, Kara puts a pair of shoes in her duffel bag before turning to Lena, “Hey, if you want I can just tell my parents I have too much to do to go visit this weekend.”

“No, go Kara,” Lena says softly, “I’ll be alright. I’m really grateful for everything, but I don’t want you to miss out on your family weekend.”

“Are you sure?”

“Absolutely, I have to get a few things done this weekend anyway,” Lena tells her earnestly, feeling bad that Kara’s torn between staying at the school or going on a family trip for her free weekend. So she figures it will be easier if Kara knows she’s okay, “If it makes you feel better you can text me while you’re away.”

Kara brightens at that suggestion and quickly remembers to pack her phone charger as she agrees, already sending Lena a smiley face just for good measure, “Good, you can text me anytime, or call. You can always call too.”

In the hallways Sam and Alex both give them sideways glances but neither of them say anything. Lena struggles through breakfast and the morning schedule, the memories that surfaced during the nightmare leave her with an anxious knot in her stomach. She hopes that she doesn’t have a panic attack, or worse get so worked up over it she throws up again. As the morning passes by slowly she’s incredibly grateful that most of her instructors give her space. She knows with the dark circles under her eyes she must look like she didn’t sleep at all the night before. She absentmindedly scribbles down some notes when she is paying attention and hopes that later when she goes over them again she’ll be able to make sense of the lazy scrawl. After lunch the girls going on the long weekend are already packing up and a few of them have already left with their parents. Sam’s
already left with her step mother even though she hadn’t shown any interest in going home for the short break. Maggie has decided not to go home, instead deciding to take advantage of the other options she school offered for the long weekend – an overnight trip to a nearby national park.

“So, what are you two doing again this weekend?” Maggie asks Alex and Kara, as she tosses a bag of skittles to the youngest Danvers who beams as she tears into the package.

“Family camping weekend,” Kara says with a grin, as she explains, “There’s going to be hiking, s’mores, kayaking, star gazing, and more s’mores.”

“I still don’t see how you are so thin,” Alex cajoles, ruffling Kara’s blonde hair and getting her to huff with annoyance.

“I have great genetics and a freaking ton of energy,” Kara reminds, popping a couple red skittles in her mouth and savoring the candy before she turns to Lena and asks, “You have any plans for the weekend?”

“Not really,” Lena hedges, but then she feels three sets of eyes on her and just shrugs casually, “I’m volunteering this afternoon and with most everyone gone it’ll be a quiet weekend where I might can get some more coding finished.”

Around 2pm Kara and Alex has been picked up by their parents and after a brief hello Lena is changing into some nice casual clothing and packing a few presents for the children she volunteers with regularly. At the first meeting of the Cabot Service Club – the school volunteering organization – Lena had come prepared with her research about the surrounding cities and made a suggestion that one of the service projects could be to work with children in long-term hospital care keep up with their peers academically and to have a nice distraction for treatment. She and the other girls worked out a schedule where they could take one afternoon biweekly to read with them. She even presented academic articles that showed that children gained improved vocabulary, increased concentration and memory skills, as well as increased empathy and critical thinking skills when read to regularly.

The idea had been an immediate hit and the instructor overseeing the club had agreed to make travel arrangements and the girls put together a book drive to help stock the children’s hospital library. On the ride to the hospital Lena wonders how the week has been treating the children she normally reads with, hoping that this week there will be good news. As she’s dropped off she thanks the driver and quickly makes her way up to the playroom in the long-term ward and sees two of her regulars are already in the play room. The nurse and children all smile as she comes in and warmly welcomes them, setting down her bag and pulling out the stack of new coloring books and large boxes of crayons – the boy and girl are giggling with excitement as they each select a book and flip through the pages eagerly.

“So, how is everyone’s week going?” Lena asks with a genuine smile as she sits down in the floor with them.

“Maya went home this week and she said to tell you goodbye. I’m going home soon too!” Cameron, a little girl with short blonde hair that’s growing back in after aggressive chemo treatments, exclaims excitedly. She’s sitting next to Lena and leaning into the older girl’s side as she also lifts up her prosthetic leg as she says, “I also got my new leg so I can do sports when I go home.”

“I bet you’re really happy about that, you’ll get to see your dog again and go to school,” Lena responds while hugging the child, she knew that the girl had had a rough battle with Ewing’s sarcoma – a rare type of bone cancer. She’s relieved that Cameron is going to be going home soon to resume her life, even if she’s going to miss these afternoons reading with her.
“Yeah, but that also means I have to see my brother everyday too,” Cameron complains as she colors in a few flowers with a red crayon.

“Brothers can be annoying,” Lena agrees with a laughing, always impressed that the children seemed to be in good humor even on their worst days.

“Hey!” Winn cries out incredulous at the statement about brother’s being annoying, huffing he informs them, “Boys aren’t always annoying.”

“Of course not, Winn. You are a very thoughtful, sweetheart,” Lena assures, smiling to herself when the blue-eyed boy’s indignation quickly morphs into a bright smile at her compliment. He wasn’t in long term care but severe asthma and allergies had him being admitted regularly and much to his mother’s relief a few nurses referred Winn to the children’s reading group. Lena surmises that he must be doing better as he’s not having to be accompanied by a nurse with an oxygen tank and mask. She wonders what’s going on with the other children she normal sees and really hopes it’s good news too.

“How was your week, Lena?” Winn asks after coughing a bit, careful to cover his mouth. He always enjoyed hearing about Lena’s work on the robots and the times she would show them videos of the little bots in the practice arena.

“No robots this week, Winn,” Lena says with a soft huff of laughter, the little boy was always curious and full of questions any time the roboCup came up. “But I did manage to make it through rowing practice without falling in this week.”

Cameron and Winn both giggle as another nurse escorts a new girl into the room, “Lena, this is Aiden. Aiden this is Lena, she comes by once a week to read and play with you guys.”

The girl seems rather shy so Lena talks gently with her, “Hello Aiden, we were just about to start reading, why don’t you pick out a book and we’ll all read it together.”

Aiden goes to the bookcase and looks at the books, taking out a few to look at the covers. After a couple minutes she comes over and holds out the book to Lena who is getting situated. Cameron is leaning against her side and Winn being as small as he is has decided to take up residence in her lap. Tugging over one of the fluffy floor pillows Lena pats it and Aiden quickly cuddles close as Lena shows them all the cover of the book and says, “Where the Wild Things Are, good choice.”

The little girl beams a bright, toothy smile at Lena that warms her heart as she opens the book to the first page and reads aloud, “The night Max wore his wolf suit, and made mischief of one kind and another, his mother called him, ‘Wild Thing!’”

After reading a few more books and coloring with them for a while she heads back to campus and sits down to finish up the last of her project for physics. For the rest of the three-day weekend Lena thinks about Kara – wondering what she’s doing at the moment, if she’s having fun with her family, and also remembering the way the other girl had held her and comforted her the night she’d had the nightmare. It’s not really an epiphany that she’s starting to like the other girl – she pretty much knew she was probably gay when boys still had cooties when she turned 13. That and the failed teen fling with Jack Spheer at her last school was really telling. Jack was really sweet and never made her feel uncomfortable but she still never developed much of an attraction to him even though she honestly had tried. They’d parted on awkward terms as he was clearly more invested in the relationship than she had been. She honestly hopes he’ll be happy with someone who can love him fully like he deserves.

Even though she’s only known Kara for a few weeks she feels things that she never felt with Jack, or
anyone else really. She felt like it was safe to tell Kara things she ordinarily wouldn’t dream of telling another living soul. She’d cried on her shoulder and they’d fallen asleep in her bed, Kara’s arms around her. She was starting to feel more than platonic feelings for the blonde, but she’s not sure if the feelings are mutual. Kara was overly friendly and protective of just about everyone she meets, and while she’s definitely okay with her sister being gay didn’t mean she liked girls.

Sighing Lena sends Kara a text asking how the trip went. As a reply she gets a couple pictures, one of the sisters on a dock at the lake smiling for the camera. The second shows a rather pissed looking Alex flailing in the water with Kara doubled over laughing. Chuckling she texts back with a picture that Winn’s mother took of her and Winn playing a game of Mousetrap. Shaking her head at Kara’s antics she puts on her headphones and turns up her music, cringing when the first song that comes on is “Bodyworks” by Tegan and Sara as it reminds her of ogling at Kara’s abs every time she walks past the water polo practice. Laughing at the irony she flops down on her bed and decides that she’ll treat herself to a nap while waiting for the others to return from their trips.

Chapter End Notes

Fan Art - https://i.imgur.com/LSM0kyI.jpg
“Come on, Kara, I know you understand math better than anyone else. I just need a couple hours to go over some calculus problems, you know I need to get a good score in this class so I can go pre-med,” Alex practically begs, she feels like she’s on the verge of a panic attack as she thinks about the work she has to do in the next couple weeks so that she can apply for early decision university applications. She also has to keep her grades up as well so she will qualify for the scholarships available. She understands the chemistry and biology parts of medicine but remembering the steps and the significance of their order when doing the more advance math problems get her all turned around.

“I don’t know, Alex,” Kara says carefully, remember the last time they’d tried to tutor one another in different subjects, the one being tutored would get bored and frustrated which would make the one explaining agitated and angry. “You know, I’m sure you could always go see the math tutor.”

“Kara…”

“No, the last time we tried tutoring each other we ended up in a wrestling match in the living room and broke that ugly looking vase. I love you sis, but you aren’t a good student and I am definitely not a good teacher,” Kara says seriously, hoping that Alex would get the academic help she needed from someone more patient and understanding than herself.

“But if I go to a tutor then they’ll be obligated to send mom and dad an email letting them know I failed my last exam…”

“And then you won’t get to spend the upcoming free weekend at Maggie’s,” Kara concludes with an obnoxiously bright grin, winking at Lena who is trying to ignore the two siblings’ squabbles but can’t help but smile back. Leaning back in her chair she still says, “I know how much you want to kiss your new girlfriend but I still don’t think it’s worth risking us getting into another argument.”

Alex looks like she’s about to protest and start the argument at the current moment so Lena intervenes, quietly asking, “What’s giving you trouble?”

“These differential equations just don’t make any sense to me, I’ve gone over the lecture notes a half dozen times but once I try it out I just get lost,” Alex says a bit sheepishly, she feels a little ashamed that she’s not quite as good at math as Kara and Sam. She would have preferred to go to Sam but it just didn’t seem right since she was also prepping for entrance exams and college applications as well.

“When’s your test?” Lena asks calmly, reaching over to her bookshelf to pick up her calculus book and notes to check on where her class it at.
“End of next week?” Alex all but whispers while rubbing the back of her neck and looking at her shoes.

Lena feels bad for her, getting lost in a math problem is frustrating and overwhelming, but she’s lucky that after a bit she usually catches on quickly. Fishing out some of her older notes that detail the concepts and functions Lena holds them out to Alex, “You want to get together tomorrow and go over some equations? I don’t know if I’m good teacher, but I’ll try.”

Alex is wide eyed as she looks over the notes that are a rainbow of different colors of ink – neat writing explaining the order of things and why it’s done that way. She doesn’t realize that Lena is waiting for an answer as she’s impressed with the notes, mouth almost hanging open in shock. Kara nudging her leg brings her out of her inspection of the notes and she stammers out, “Yeah, uh, sure. If you don’t mind of course.”

“It’s not a problem,” Lena assures with a soft smile.

Alex holds up the notes and points at them, clearly still a little confused but impressed as she asks seriously, “Are you sure you don’t need these? I don’t want you to get confused…or something.”

“I wish you were this concerned about my notes when I lend them to you,” Kara mutters, shaking her head a little – Alex looks like she’s just discovered the holy grail of mathematics. She finds her sister’s stammering and the reverent way she handles the notes kind of funny – the last notes she’d let her borrow for a physics course had come back with coffee stains and water damage.

“It’s fine, Alex,” Lena assures quickly, throwing a balled up piece of paper at Kara for teasing her sister. “Take a look at those and see if it helps you work out a couple problems – we’ll meet up Monday before study hours and I’ll help you with some tips and tricks that make it easier to work them out.”

“Thank you so much, Lena,” Alex tells her earnestly, feeling the constricting anxiety that has her chest in a vice seems to loosen a bit letting her take a deep breath. “Seriously, this is a life saver.”

“Okay, your date with Maggie is safe and you have a math tutor, you can stop interrupting our studying now,” Kara grouses as she scratches through a line of text and replaces a few of the verbs and adjectives with better ones. The deadline for this article is tomorrow and she wants it to be perfect – mainly because she likes the kind-of praise she gets from Ms. Grant (if one can count “Well, it doesn’t completely suck” as some form of praise or constructive criticism) but mostly to avoid having to endure one of the head mistress’s frightful lectures about punctuality.

Lena expected Kara to at least be a little awkward around her after the night they’d slept in her bed together, but if anything Kara was even more caring and considerate. She often checked in with Lena to make sure everything was okay, but she didn’t press her to talk about what had given her such a frightening nightmare. Lena also didn’t exactly want to bring it up either, she valued Kara’s friendship and while she is starting to develop feelings for her she doesn’t feel like risking a friendship over it – at least not until she has a better understanding of how Kara feels about her.

Before she can bring anything up there’s another knock on the door and Kara grumbles under her breath as Sam peeks in. Lena brightens as she sees the other girl, greeting her, “Sam, what brings you by? College applications and classes going well?”

“It’s going, I guess. I was just wondering if you could help me out with my moderated speeches portion of the Model United Nations,” Sam tells her, a pleading look on her face as she’s about ready to beg Lena to help her out.
“I actually don’t know much about the Model UN,” Lena says carefully, not sure why Sam thought she’d be helpful for that. Sure math, science and even business and economics were a few of the topics she excelled at but politics was something that she was never going to be a part of. Being a Luthor was damning enough but she also never really desired to run for any type of public office.

“Well, I’m on the Human Rights Council Committee and I picked ‘Reinforcing Businesses’ Responsibility to Protect Human Rights’ as my topic. I just figured if anyone could give me pointers on ethics and business it would be you,” Sam says, remembering the conversations that she and Lena had about what type of business they would prefer to run. Lena had always been so concerned with doing good for people – employees, consumers, and investors – so Sam was convinced that Lena would be the person to go to ask for help.

Lena grins a bit, she’d just agreed to help Alex study calculus and now she was going to help Sam with her speech. Relenting with a playful sigh she says, “Okay, Sam. But I’m going to Kara’s game tomorrow so it’ll have to wait until evening.”

“Great, we’re all going to go to the game but I’ll meet you afterward lunch in the speech room?” Sam confirms before leaving just as quickly as she came.

Kara just chuckles as she teases, “Looks like someone’s popular.”

Lena blushes at the teasing compliment and mutters, “Just trying to be helpful.”

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The next day Kara is an enthusiastic ball of energy, her and Maggie are discussing a few of the tactics they’ve been going over in preparation of playing Grier School’s water polo team. The two are excitedly talking as they both stack more waffles onto their plates and grab an excessive number of bottles of orange juice. Lena and Sam are quietly picking at their breakfast, those two and Alex were a little reluctant to get out of bed early on one of their few free Saturdays. But all three had gotten dressed in comfortable clothing, having opted for some school spirit as they’re going be cheering on their friends.

“I can’t wait to get in the water,” Kara exclaims, mouth half full of waffle as she goes over all the strategies they’ve been practicing – she feels her body humming with pent up energy and she can’t wait to get her hands on the ball to score.

Beside her Maggie is just as jittery in anticipation of the event, she’d been up since the crack of dawn and had even started warm up stretches before they left the dorm. Her and Kara both seem to inhale breakfast and are rushing their companions to hurry up so they can get to the pool early. Sam sneaks out a few snacks in her backpack as Alex refills her coffee, both grumbling about how they should have gone to bed earlier instead of trying to keep studying. Lena is not happy about being up early but she has to admit that for once she’s happy that she’s not working on coding or math problems this early in the morning. Once at the gym Kara and Lena meet up with a couple teammates and start getting prepped to play as the others get comfortable in the bleachers.

Kara kicks out of her sweat pants and tosses them on her gym bag, pulling on her head guard and swim cap before fishing around for her goggles. She doesn’t notice that Lena is looking at her clad in only the team swimsuit with wide eyes and a furious blush so strong it burns across her cheeks and down her neck. Maggie beside her nudges her and points at their cheer section, “Looks like someone
likes what they see.”

“Really?” Kara asks hopefully, locking eyes with Lena whose blush deepens further makes her hopeful that the other girl had the same warm, fuzzy feelings she did when watching her row the few times she got out of practice early.

“Yeah, you are blind if you don’t see it, Little Danvers,” Maggie jokes, shaking her head at the blonde before tugging her sweatshirt over her head.

In the stands they’ve all settled down to relax, Alex is still sipping at her coffee and trying to hide her burning cheeks. Lena is still half asleep and fights the urge to pinch herself – wondering if seeing Kara in a swimsuit is some strange dream or figment of her imagination. Sam however, has leaned back and put her feet up, unboxing a strawberry Danish as she is teasing both Lena and Alex mercilessly, “Geez, could the two of you make it any more obvious?”

Alex and Lena both give her owlish looks of surprise and start stammering at the same time, but Maggie taking off her sweatshirt has pulled Alex’s attention away. The water polo player tosses the sweatshirt at Alex, catching her in the face as she teasingly calls out, “Like what you see, Danvers?! I haven’t even done anything impressive yet!”

Sam snorts with amusement, she really should be working on her accounting and finance homework but the water polo match was going to fun to watch – almost as fun as watching the two goofballs beside her try to deny that they’re falling desperately for the two showoffs that are jumping into the pool at the moment. Nudging Lena with her elbow she offers her half of the sweet pastry, while watching as the other team files in she takes another jab at Alex and Lena, “You two really are hopeless.”

“Well, you’re not wrong,” Lena admits with a small smile, “I’m really enjoying this but I’m still completely confused as to what is going on.”

Alex, finally shaking off being flustered by Maggie’s witty barbs and strutting, she settles in to get comfortable as she and Sam try to explain the game to Lena, “So, it’s kinda like soccer – just in the water.”

“Well done, Alex,” Sam scoffs playfully, “Just remember that Kara is leading the offensive side of the team – going to score and steal the ball. Maggie is a defense specialist; her job is man-to-man coverage to block them from scoring. Of course, they’re trying to do this without getting too many penalties or fouls. A major foul and you swim in the penalty box for 20 seconds, too many fouls or a really bad foul and you’re out of the game.”

“Oh,” Lena says softly, not really sure she got all the information but as she hears the whistle blows and she watches as Kara and her team surge forward after the ball. Quickly she’s enraptured in watching Kara battling it out with the other players – the slim blonde girl is a strong, aggressive player who deftly lunges out of the water and skips the ball at the goal. She should be impressed with the skill and teamwork that Kara’s good with but instead she’s mesmerized by the way she can still see the faint outline of Kara’s abs in that sleek looking swimsuit.

By halftime, with the score being 3 – 1 in their favor, Lena is surprised that neither she nor Alex had burst in to flames since the blushes they got seemed to be a permanent fixture for now. Kara and Maggie are rehydrating and looking over a tablet discussing a few more strategic moves. As they get ready to get back into the water Maggie flashes Alex a smile and wink that makes Lena laugh as she nudges Alex in the side, telling her, “Come on, wish her luck Alex.”

“Yeah, blow her a kiss,” Sam teases as she comes back up the stands with a few drinks and a bag of
cotton candy. She sets a coke down beside Alex as she tears open the cotton candy bag and offers some to Lena, “So, did I miss a bunch of blushing and awkward longing stares across the pool?”

“Ass,” Lena mutters, elbowing her friend to try and get her to lighten up. Opening her soda, she sees Kara looking at her and her cheeks heat up again at the way the blonde grins and winks at her before getting back in the pool. Lena watches as she swims about for a bit, absolutely mesmerized at the way the water cascades over Kara’s well defined shoulders and biceps. Alex seems to be equally enchanted by the way the water and the way the opposing team fight showcases Maggie’s strength and agility. As they start their offensive moves Alex and Lena are both cheering for them as Sam watches in amusement.

In the fourth quarter, Maggie blocks a shot on goal, quickly out maneuvering her opposition before winging the ball across the pool to Kara. The blonde catches it and immediately zeros in on the goal, swimming into position before powerfully springing out of the water. Deftly blocking the defender in her way she flings the ball at the goal and watches as it skips just under the goalkeeper and into the net. Howling with joy she slaps at the water, feeling Maggie tackling her as they both go under the water. Coming up they’re both cheering as the buzzer finally rings leaving them with a clear victory of 7 – 2.

Kara is quick to jump out of the water and greet her friends, laughing as she wraps her sister up in a hug before drying off. Maggie is there to tag team as well, piling onto the hug just to see how flustered and annoyed they can make Alex. As they back off their coach is shooing them off to the showers but the damage is already done – Alex has water marks all over her sweatshirt and shorts as she yells at Maggie, “You happy now, Sawyer? You got me all wet!”

“I bet I did,” Maggie says with a charming smile, laughing when Kara chokes on her Gatorade and Sam grins and teases as Alex hides her face in her hands. Maggie can’t help but lean in and whispers, “In more than one way I’m sure.”

As Sam heads to the speech room early and Maggie opts to clean up at the dorms – suspiciously with Alex in tow – Lena waits outside the aquatics center for Kara to appear. The other girl rushed through her shower, dressed in a tee and sweatpants she jogs outside to meet up with Lena, tying her long blonde hair up in a ponytail as she goes. Before Lena can say anything she’s swept up in a crushing hug that she returns without hesitation, elated that Kara is so happy. As they draw back Kara’s overcome with an overwhelming desire to kiss the dark haired girl who’s still in her arms – so she does.

Cupping Lena’s cheek she leans in and gently presses their lips together – both of them gasping with surprise at the shock of electricity goes through them at the touch of soft lips. Pulling away slowly, Kara isn’t sure if this was the right course of action. However, Lena leans in and presses in for a longer kiss, hand coming up to caress Kara’s cheek. Kara kisses back with everything she has, spurred on further as she feels Lena’s free hand grasp her waist.

When they pull away both are grinning openly, Lena looks up at Kara with an amused look as she says quietly, “That was unexpected, pleasant but unexpected. I was just about to ask if you wanted to celebrate with some pizza?”

Kara laughs as she presses another soft kiss to Lena’s mouth, already addicted to the sensation of kissing the other girl. Blushing she takes Lena’s hand in her own before saying, “Pizza sounds great.”

As if being consulted Kara’s stomach grumbles making them both laugh as they head towards the dining. The two meet up with a rather disheveled looking Alex and a very cocky looking Maggie, both are already talking with the rest of the water polo team. Kara being quick to load up a plate with
slices of cheese and pepperoni pizza, balking at Lena who has selected something much more nutritious – greens which Kara suspects includes nasty kale. The lunch is mainly enthusiastic recaps of the game they just had, and Lena is really surprised that Kara and Maggie are still as energetic after such a long, grueling game.

After the meal Lena is quick to excuse herself, remembering her promise to help Sam with her Model UN project. On her way to the auditorium her phone buzzes in her pocket, the id reads ‘Lillian’ on it and she isn’t sure she wants to answer. Opting to just feign ignorance she presses ignore but after a few moments she’s hit with a flurry of texts – a few pictures of Lillian visiting with Lex. In the pictures Lex is smiling but it doesn’t reach his eyes, instead she notices the dark circles under his eyes and the drawn, gaunt look about his cheeks. Lillian is beaming in the photos and it’s a clear attempt to upset Lena and make her feel even more inferior to her brother. Lena notices the chastising texts that remind her to keep studying hard and to also go to the gym and not let herself go. Sighing she deletes the text thread and goes into the auditorium to meet Sam. She’s grateful to be helping Sam, patiently listening as she goes through her speech and then lays out her arguments and positions.

The two lose track of time going over the points and eventually digressing into conversation of what visions they have for businesses they’d like to run in the future. The two keep talking as they pack up and head out. On the way Lena’s phone pings again and she sighs as she checks it. Sam gives her a somber, concerned look when she sees Lena looking at her phone like it’s a weapon being pointed at her. Taking a breath Sam decides it best to just be upfront with Lena, “So, you had one of your night terror episodes a few days ago? Are you feeling better now?”

Lena looks at her with wide eyes that quickly turn cold and distant, “Did Kara tell you?”

“What?” Sam asks a little confused but she quickly clarifies, “No, she didn’t tell me. She’s just really bad a lying.”

Lena’s lips quirk into a wistful smile, “She is bad at lying. It’s just my mother – you know how it goes.”

“Sometimes moms can be your worst enemy,” Sam assures, knowing that she and her own parents are definitely not on friendly terms. Her and her step mom trade witty barbs and passive aggressive remarks, but she’s grateful that she’s never had any physical altercations with her – she knows Lillian was much more of a brute towards Lena. For that woman psychological and emotional abuse wasn’t visibly damaging enough to sate Lillian’s anger at Lena’s existence.

Beside her Lena snorts as she says in a soft self-depreciating tone, “I don’t think enemy is a strong enough term for Lillian.”

“Probably not,” Sam agrees easily, remembering that her gut instinct upon meeting Lillian was to give that woman a wide berth and try not to piss her off. When Lena shivers she wraps an arm around her shoulders as she asks as carefully as possible, “I know your nightmares are about her. Lena, is she still hurting you?”

Lena shuffles around uncomfortably, she knows that Sam’s her friend but at the same time a part of her doesn’t feel comfortable discussing Lillian. She’s also never spoken about the abuse – keeping the weight of that knowledge to herself as if not saying anything about it would mean that it wasn’t real, that none of it happened. She feels tears burning in her eyes but she still tries to reassure Sam, “Not in a while, she’s...she’s been away more often since...The other night was just a nightmare...from the past.”

Sam closes her eyes, feeling Lena trembling sends a surge of anger burning through her veins as she
takes a breath to remain calm. Lena brushes away a few tears and Sam draws her into a gentle embrace as she tells her sincerely, “You don’t have to tell me anything you don’t want to, Lena. Just know that I’m always here to listen. But I’m glad you have sweet, excitable Kara Danvers wrapped around your little finger.”

“Kara is so sweet and so friendly,” Lena says, quickly adding, “with everyone.”

“Sure she’s friendly with everyone, but the looks she gives you are less than platonic,” Sam snorts, feeling Lena start to relax and calm down, “But seriously, if you need help you can always come to me.”

“I know,” Lena whispers while still fighting back tears, hugging Sam back tightly, “And I’m so grateful you’re here too.”

They sit like that for a while, Sam running her fingers through Lena’s hair and talking to her about the boring but necessary things she’s been doing for classes and college applications. She talks for as long as it takes for Lena to completely calm down and relax, knowing that Lena wouldn’t want anyone to see her at less than her best – a perfectionistic complex that no doubt came from constantly being compared to her brother. But little known to either of them Kara has spotted them, and on her way over she watches as Sam hugs Lena and ruffles her hair playfully as she guides her back towards the dorm. Sam keeps an arm around her shoulders and Lena laughs at something Sam said just to tease her.

The blonde feels a strange, twisting type of anger mixed with hurt starting to tingle along the back of her mind. She wonders how long Lena and Sam have known each other like this and if Sam coming down the night of Lena’s nightmare was more than just a coincidence. Huffing angrily, she makes her way to their shared room and quickly puts on a pair of headphones to settle down and work on her next article hoping it will be enough for Lena to give her some space. When Lena does come up she flashes Kara a smile as she sets her backpack on her desk while asking, “Did you find anything fun to do this afternoon?”

“Not really,” Kara shrugs non-committal, annoyed that Lena could come up here and act as if nothing had happened. She’s let Kara kiss her, she even kissed back, and then she went off with Sam – a pain lodges in Kara’s chest and it makes her angry so she snips a bit sarcastically, “You enjoy your time with Sam?”

Lena’s taken aback by Kara’s tone, confused as to why Kara’s being so sharp and cold. She feels a familiar buzzing of nervousness tingle across her skin making her want to tense and get defensive as she carefully says, “I guess, we mainly just worked on some of the points she was trying to make. Other than that it was mainly just talking about business ideas.”

Kara just gives her a look that makes Lena feel like she’s done something wrong so she just drops it and goes about putting her stuff away. When Kara’s mood doesn’t improve and she makes no effort to talk to her Lena decides to leave it be – while she’s hurt because she thought Kara was very clear about how she felt about her with the kiss at the pool but know she’s second guessing herself. Maybe Kara wasn’t sure about going out with her, or worse. Lena’s heart skips a beat as she wonders if Kara’s found out about the events between her cousin and Lex – that maybe she was starting to dislike Lena because of her family. After a few minutes in the uncomfortable silence Lena collects her calculus book and heads downstairs to the common room.

That night the two still aren’t talking as they head to bed, and for the first time since she’d arrived at the school Kara doesn’t wish her a good night. Instead the blonde is already in bed, headphones still in place, when Lena turns in for the night. Lena turns on her side to face the wall, not wanting to see Kara’s back turned to her while all she could think about was the kiss. During the night when the
nightmares come Lena just curls in on herself tighter and whimpers softly into her pillow – spilling even more tears as she realizes that Kara is upset with her and may never speak to her again. Worse still, she doesn’t even know what she did or how she could fix it.

Chapter End Notes

The next chapter should up shortly, I really hate leaving people hanging in the middle of an angsty chapter.
It doesn’t take long for everyone to figure out something was wrong. Maggie and Alex both give Kara odd looks when she shows up to breakfast early on a Monday morning and without Lena. Even when Lena does show up for breakfast, with barely any time to eat anything, she doesn’t join them and instead chooses to sit alone at the table in the corner nursing a mug of hot chocolate. Sam notes that Kara is more agitated and wouldn’t even speak with Alex about the issue and Lena looked stressed and like she didn’t sleep at all.

That evening when Lena meets with Alex to tutor her in calculus the elder Danvers asks about what’s up between her and Kara. She immediately regrets asking when Lena seems to cower away from her and stammers out that she’s not sure. The genuine confusion isn’t surprising – all Alex had gotten out of Kara was that it was personal and she definitely didn’t want to talk about it. But the fear and sorrow she sees in Lena’s eyes at the mention of her sister makes her a little angry at Kara. After all it was Kara who suggested giving Lena a chance and now it would seem she’d changed her mind – even after showing them all how sincerely kind and helpful Lena is as a person.

Midway through the week Maggie checks in on the two during study hours, noting the tension between the two – Kara’s still lost in her brooding anger and Lena’s quiet nervousness makes the older girl wonder what went wrong. While Alex and Maggie agreed that something was wrong they weren’t sure what to do about it. Sam on the other hand was becoming increasingly worried as Lena seems to suffer from Kara’s unusual mood, wanting to wait for them to work it out. However, as the week wears on Lena becomes more distant – eating and studying by herself, avoiding not just Kara but also Alex and Maggie as well, and the dark circles under her eyes become more prominent. The last straw was when Lena came back to the dorm absolutely distraught, eyes red rimmed and watery as she explained to Sam that she’d been distracted in one of her classes and ended up with 100 lines. The younger girl had burst into tears, all the stress and guilt coming out in body wracking sobs that Sam tries to calm.

After settling Lena down in one of the study rooms with a mug of chamomile tea and a box of tissues she heads out to find Kara on her way to water polo. The blonde girl, bag slung over her shoulders and a towel tucked under her arm, gives Sam an unsettling glare. Sam just stares her down with a dark look, raising herself to full height she states firmly, “Hey, Danvers, we need to talk.”

“You are the last person I want to talk to right now,” Kara snaps angrily, making to go around the older girl blocking her path but Sam just moves in front of her pinning her with a glare that conveys barely contained fury.

“I would have thought that would be Lena seeing as you’ve been ignoring her all week, I mean after you made her cry,” Sam tells her seriously, trying to reign in her anger but failing.

“Fuck off, Sam.”

“No you fuck off, Kara?” Sam asks, feeling her temper about to flare at the way the blonde girl has
been acting the past couple days. When Kara moves to go around her again she shoves her back, she was going to hear out Sam and explain why the hell she’d been so cruel to Lena for the past week.

“What the hell? Seriously Sam?!” Kara shoots back, glaring at the older girl.

“Lena’s been worried about you…”

“Then why don’t you go console her Arias. Just like you did after your study session,” Kara spits angrily, throwing her bag down and then the towel. Her anger at Sam for being the object of Lena affection and the sting of Lena’s betrayal making her more aggressive. But instead of being defensive or angry Sam just seems confused and it takes a moment for her to just shake her head and take a calming breath as a realization washes over her.

“You oblivious, jealous dimwit,” Sam states with a bark of laughter which makes Kara give her the confused puppy look briefly before turning back to glaring at her again. It had taken her a moment to figure out what Kara was talking about before she put two and two together. Kara was under the misconception that she’d seen Lena and her in a romantic context rather than one friend comforting another. “This would be hilarious if you hadn’t hurt Lena’s feelings.”

“What is so funny about this?” Kara asks a bit incredulous, she’s supposed to be mad at Sam and Lena at the moment but more than anything she’s confused. The dawning realization that maybe she was wrong about what she’d seen is starting to make her stomach twist into knots.

“Lena and I have known each other since we were children, I know she’s told you this at some point and you probably forgot. I know about her family and the night terrors she has sometimes, she got them in junior school too,” Sam tells Kara, deciding that she’s going to have to clear the air between the two of them since Kara despite her intelligence and gentle nature sometimes has the tendency to be a little narrow in her focus. “I knew it wasn’t you that was sick the other night, I just didn’t think she’d want an audience after that. Her mother started texting while she was helping me with the Model UN stuff – it was upsetting her.”

“Her mom was texting?”

“Yeah, Lillian Luthor’s favorite hobby – other than being a detriment to human rights and social progress – is terrorizing Lena,” Sam remarks with a dark look as she continues to explain, “I just wanted to talk to her in private, make sure she was safe and feeling okay. I do love Lena but she’s like a little sister to me.”

“Like a sister to you? So…”

“I wasn’t trying to steal your potential girlfriend, Kara,” Sam huffs out another laugh at the way Kara’s mood brightens almost instantly at the news, “I was just checking up on a friend.”

“Oh…”

“Oh?! That’s all you can say after being a cranky, jealous ass for a whole fucking week?!” Sam practically yells, causing Kara to wince and she honestly can’t feel bad about it. Kara’s looking so guilty and is already starting to nervously fidget, while she wants to take pity on her she still feels angry about how Kara treated Lena – that instead of talking to her she shut her out and ignored her like so many other people have already done. Pointing a finger in Kara’s face she takes her serious, prefect tone as she tells her with deadly seriousness, “Lena doesn’t trust a whole lot of people. I’m sure you know this but her family is kind of a cluster fuck but despite that she’s always forgiving and kind – more kind than anyone I know. She also has a weak spot for you that I will never understand.”
Kara just listens, knowing that Sam was generally serious but right now it went beyond that. She likes Sam and even though she’s being lectured and she feels so guilty for being such a jerk - she’s also really glad that Lena has a friend like Sam. Sam just gives her another pointed look as she takes Kara’s shoulders in her hands and says seriously, “So I guess what I’m trying to say is you take care of her, or I’ll kick your ass, Kara.”

“Duly noted,” Kara says cautiously, a little worried that Lena would still be angry with her. Not that she blamed her, she’d understand if Lena didn’t want to talk to her after what she’d done. She feels tears sting in her eyes as she realizes she may have ruined the best thing that happened to her at this school over a misunderstanding she didn’t feel like talking out.

Sam sighs, as she hands Kara her bag and towel while instructing gently, “Go on, I’ll tell your coach you aren’t feeling well. You can start off with an apology.”

“Yeah, but I don’t think that’s enough,” Kara admits morosely as she heads back to the dorm, turning over what she’s going to say in her head and none of it sounded like enough to make up for making Lena so upset without any explanation. As she heads to her room she surprised to see Lena curled up in bed, clearly she’s going to be missing her afternoon sports practice as well. Knocking on the door quietly she sees Lena flinch at the sound and she immediately wishes she could get a redo for the last week. Lena has sat up and looks at Kara warily, avoiding meeting her eyes or saying anything.

“Hey, Lena,” Kara asks softly as she steps quietly into the dorm room, shutting the door behind her so no passersby will be tempted to eavesdrop. Her heart breaks a little bit when Lena looks up at her hesitantly, green eyes reflecting worry instead of their usual quiet resolve. Kara nervously brings her hand up to rub behind her neck, realizing now just how much ignoring Lena and the few heated barbs she shot at her during the week have upset the raven haired girl. “Look, I need to apologize for being an ass.”

“An explanation of what the hell happened would be a nice start,” Lena says calmly, still confused as to why Kara was being so standoffish and cold towards her. Even if it did have something to do with her family she’d still rather know the reason why than constantly being anxious and wondering what it could have been.

Kara sheepishly shifts her weight from foot to foot as she lets the words tumble out of her mouth without halting, “I saw you with Sam, after your study thing…you two were in the garden and I clearly got the wrong idea. I thought you and Sam… were a thing, I guess…and…”

“You thought I was interested in Sam?” Lena asks with a perplexed look, all of Kara’s behavior starting to make a little bit more sense but she’s still a little upset that Kara hadn’t talked to her. Tears are welling up in her eyes as she chastises, “You could have just talked to me instead of acting like a petulant child. Sam’s a friend of mine, one of the few friends I have, but there is nothing between us.”

“Yeah I know, Sam definitely set me straight and you’re right I should have talked to you,” Kara answers quickly, moving closer to Lena but not reaching out to take her in her arms like she desires. Instead she looks in Lena’s eyes and tells her earnestly, “I’m so sorry Lena. I was a complete jerk – instead of talking to you I just made assumptions and I was just plain mean to you, I wish I could take it all back, and I’ll do whatever it takes to make it up to you. If you’ll let me.”

Kara watches as green eyes well up with tears that spill over into quiet sobs, Lena breaks into sobs. Getting up she moves to sit on the bed beside Lena, reaching out lay a hand on her shoulder she stops herself and whispers, “Is this okay?”
Lena hesitates, but the tears that shine in blue eyes let her know just how much Kara regrets what transpired between the two of them. She nods and feels Kara quickly move closer and soon she has her head resting on Kara’s shoulder, crying ebbing away as she feels like she can breathe again for the first time in a while. Kara rocks her gently, pressing a chaste kiss to Lena’s temple as she cherishes the feel of holding the other girl – all things she knows she doesn’t deserve but is grateful to have. Voice trembling she says quietly, “I’m so sorry, and I know I can’t make up for everything I did but I’ll do anything to try.”

When Lena finds her voice she asks, “So what does that mean for us?”

“Is there an ‘us’?” Kara asks, genuinely surprised, “I know I don’t deserve a chance with you after this past week…”

“I’d like there to be an ‘us’,” Lena admits, feeling Kara’s heartbeat increase at her words, “But I need you to promise me something.”

“Anything,” Kara says immediately and with so much conviction it surprises them both.

“Next time either of us has a problem, can we just talk about it? Please?”

“Of course,” Kara readily agrees, kissing Lena’s temple again. “I promise we’ll talk about everything, especially our problems.”

She feels Lena finally relax and sag against her tiredly, realizing that the smaller girl was exhausted from being so stressed and upset. A pang of guilt makes Kara feel bad but she just decides to start making it up to Lena. With a little maneuvering she guides Lena to lay down before she stretches out beside her grateful when Lena curls up against her. Kara cuddles her close, tears still stinging in her eyes as Lena settles her head on her chest and starts to drift to sleep. Kara tenderly rubs her back and links her fingers with the hand resting on her stomach, staying awake to keep a silent vigil over her sleeping girlfriend.

The next few days Lena’s still a little hesitant and quiet around Kara. The blonde with a heart of gold does everything she can to make it up to Lena, making every effort to communicate better. As the fall long leave approaches she and Kara have gotten back to normal for the most part and were discussing plans with everyone. Alex already had plans to go to Maggie’s Aunt’s with her parent’s permission – although Jeremiah made her agree to let them come to the soccer game beforehand. Kara decided that since Alex wasn’t going she would get Lena to take a break with her and already got her parents on board with the idea – she didn’t even have to plead her case at all.

After a Wednesday full of classes and practice Kara is still as energetic and upbeat as ever, she’s haphazardly tossed her book bag on her bed and is quick to pull out a package of what Lena thinks are chocolate covered peanuts. As she perches on the desk she asks, “So, what are you doing for long leave?”

“Nothing, unless the school is closed I usually don’t get to leave for a break,” Lena tells her honestly before adding, “Not that I’d want to, the more time I have away from my mother the better for everyone involved.”

Kara nervously fusses with the package her snack is in as she asks, “I know it’s a bit soon and everything… and you don’t have to go if you don’t want to… but I ask my parents if you could spend the weekend with us and they said it would be okay… We could go to the beach and there’s this amazing book store I always go to. I think it would be fun, but if you don’t want to I understand.”
Lena’s a little shell shocked, “Your parents would be okay having me over for the weekend?”

“Of course, they thought it would be a nice break for you,” Kara beams brightly as she thinks about taking Lena to the little shops along the boardwalk and potentially having a nice date night.

“Your parents seem lovely,” Lena says with a small smile, recalling the kind way Eliza and Jeremiah had treated her. The way both parents seemed to genuinely love their children and that Kara and Alex both felt safe and loved enough to pretend to be annoyed at the teasing, “I mean it seems like your Dad is always trying to embarrass you and Alex and much as he can, but they seem nice.”

Kara hesitates, her shoulders tensing a bit as she sets down her pencil after marking her place in the book she’d been reading, “The are really nice, but they aren’t really my parents. They adopted me after my parents were killed in a fire when I was 13.”

Lena’s first thought is just pure shock that this jovial, sunny girl - who has made her smile more than she expected and comforted her when she was struggling – has suffered such a terrible tragedy. Her second thought is much less helpful as it’s more a wish that she could volunteer Lillian as tribute. Seeing Kara shift uncomfortably before moving to sit on her bed, she realizes that she should probably say something, so she just tells her quietly, “I’m so sorry, Kara.”

“It’s okay, I mean…it’s not exactly okay all the time. But I know that they’d want me to be happy and the Danvers want that too. So, I guess it’s as okay as it gets for these type of situations,” Kara stammers out nervously, twisting a strand of her hair around her finger – a nervous habit she’s had for as long as she could remember.

Lena gets up from her desk and comes around to sit by Kara on her bed, taking the other girl’s hand in her own to stop the nervous fidgeting. Kara’s always been there for her and she wants to be the person she turns to when she needs help or comfort. There are tears welling up in Kara’s blue eyes and she shivers a bit as Lena hugs her close, “I miss them, every single day. Sometimes I wonder what they would be doing right now, if they’d be proud of me. I know they loved me I still think that somehow I’m going to let them down. But what really keeps me going is that I got 13 happy years with my family and I was really lucky enough to find another family that loves me just as much. It could have been a lot worse. I mean, no offense or anything I wouldn’t want your mother,” Lena feels the comment sting a little but she has to admit that Kara has a point, brushing fingers through Kara’s blonde hair she assures, “Trust me, I’m not offended. But, it’s not so bad – she was like this before my father passed away so I’m used to it.”

Kara looks even more sad now that Lena’s said that and she’s kicking herself mentally for making her friend even more morose. Before she can say something she hears Kara murmur quietly, “You shouldn’t have to get used to something like that, Lena. They don’t deserve you, you know that?”

“I’ll be fine,” Lena says as she guides them to sit with their backs against the wall and legs stretched out on the bed. She lets Kara rest her head on her shoulder as she holds her close, “I have you.”

“That you do,” Kara agrees easily, leaning up to steal a kiss before drawing back, “So, you’ll actually leave this prison for a weekend?”

Lena nods with a smile before dragging Kara back in by her tie to kiss her again. For several moments they kiss passionately, the teens savor the glide of kiss swollen lips and the soft caresses of a skillful tongue. Drawing back both girls are flushed and gasping softly for air. Grinning affectionately Kara tucks errant strands of hair from Lena’s face before bringing their lips together again. Lena’s hands find her waist, fingers skimming across her sides just under her white button up shirt. Lena nips playfully at her bottom lip, and when Kara groans she deepens the kiss. But a quick
The rap of knuckles on the door has the two of them pulling apart quickly only to see Sam peeking in and then shaking her head with a rueful smile, “Geez Danvers, at least try to keep it in your pants on school grounds.”

“Not my fault you’re a cockblock,” Kara shoots back a bit grumpily, refusing to move away from Lena who is blushing just as furiously as she is. She thinks it’s adorable that she can make Lena blush so easily given her ivory pale skin – she loves that even her playful teasing can make her blush so she’s started doing it on purpose lately.

“Eww, just be glad it was me and not your sister, and I really don’t want to think of you and Lena like that. She’s like my little sister,” Sam grouses which Lena finds amusing.

“Then don’t think about it, Sam,” Lena teases before leaning over to kiss Kara again, blatantly irritating Sam on purpose.

“Alright, I’m leaving,” Sam grumbles even though she has smirk on her face, “I’m just going to pretend I didn’t see anything, just try to avoid getting caught by anyone else. Maggie will just tease you but you know how Alex can be about the rules.”

“Even though she’s breaking them too,” Kara mutters under the breath making Lena giggle.

Sure enough when Sam goes upstairs to find the eldest Danver’s sibling sitting on her desk with Maggie standing between her legs. She stands in the doorway staring and just crosses her arms and shakes her head. Upon being caught Alex is gaping at Sam like a fish out of water, her cheeks redder than they’ve even been in her young life. Maggie however has a smug grin on her face, her hand still at Alex’s waist as she cheekily greets her peer, “Hey Arias, what’s up? Prefect meeting isn’t for another ten minutes.”

“Holy fuck,” Sam mutters before throwing her hands up in surrender, “You Danvers sisters should come with warnings!”

Alex is still burning and at a loss for words, having tucked her face against Maggie’s collar to hide her face. Something that Sam finds amusing as Alex being less than stoic and eloquent doesn’t happen ever to her knowledge. Maggie however just beams even more as she rubs Alex’s shoulders tenderly, giving Sam a wink, “They sure should.”

“Oh my god, Maggie,” Alex says, giving her a shove and quickly getting up and straightening her shirt and skirt as she complains to Sam, “And shut the door, Sam.”

“Yeah, we’ll be down to the meeting in a little bit,” Maggie teases them both, finding Sam’s exasperation hilarious and Alex’s blushing and stammering absolutely adorable. It wasn’t often Alex was so flustered and it was an absolute delight to see. Sam just sighs with an amused smirk as she shuts the door and heads towards the stairs vowing to just text the next time she needs to ask either of the Danvers sisters something.

Chapter End Notes
Up next the long weekend and our gay super couple get the opportunity to go further than just kissing and bed sharing.
The Weekend Away, Part I

Chapter Notes

No warnings. Just a lot of sweet, tooth rotting fluff and cute family moments.

The free weekend arrives much quicker than anyone expected, including Lena and Kara. The day they can leave early Jeremiah Danvers stops by the school just after lunch to watch Alex’s soccer match. Kara and Lena go to the game just to watch him cheering raucously for Alex who is doing her best to ignore it. Throughout the whole game Jeremiah cheers enthusiastically, even more loudly than the other parents that are in attendance and it amuses Kara to no end. Several times she laughs so hard she’s breathless and has tears rolling down her cheeks which makes Lena laugh as well. After the game, in which Cabot House School soundly beats their rivals 2 – 0 with Alex scoring one from corner, they wait for Alex to change and meet up with them. As she comes out of the locker room Kara and Lena both note that Maggie is already at her side carrying her duffle bag on her shoulder casually.

Jeremiah rushes towards Alex and she squeaks as he picks her up in a bear hug, “That was amazing, Alex. I took a bunch of pictures and some video to send to your mom since she got called in.”

Alex is struggling to try and get her father to put her down, squirming away when he does even though he gets a last good hair ruffle in. Maggie, Kara, and Lena find this exchange between father and very flustered daughter amusing. Alex tries to straighten out her wet hair as she states plainly, “Maggie, this would be my father. Dad, this is Maggie.”

“Hey, nice to meet you, Maggie,” Jeremiah says, quick of offer his hand to the girl.

Maggie’s beaming as she reaches out and takes his hand, “A pleasure, Mr. Danvers.”

“So, I hear Alex is going with you this weekend to work on a project,” Jeremiah says with a grin.

Kara nudges Lena and leans over, whispering with a light amused tone, “Yeah, a really gay project.”

Lena can’t help the snort of laughter that leaves her at Kara’s comment, drawing Maggie and Alex’s attention. Maggie looks a little uncomfortable but Alex shoots them such a sinister look that Lena almost gets worried that she going to ruin their weekend with a thousand lines just for making her blush and stammer in front of her father and Maggie. Jeremiah doesn’t seem to notice as he just pats Alex on the shoulder and tells, “Have a good weekend, and text or call if you two need anything.”

“Yep, got it, Dad.” Alex says, taking Maggie by the hand and already dragging her towards the dorm trying to ignore Kara shooting her a wink and two thumbs up. Even Lena is grinning and gives her a thumbs up as well. Shaking her head, she feels Maggie barely holding in her laughter, “Something funny?”

“Absolutely,” Maggie states with a wide grin, laughing openly as she quickly amends, “Your Dad is
sweet, and Kara and Lena are just wishing you the best of luck in getting laid.”

Alex snorts, knowing that she’s probably blushing again but at least she’s made it through the soccer game and talking with her dad without dying, “Well, let’s get out of here before they try and stop up again.”

As Alex and Maggie meet up with her aunt Lena and Kara return to the dorm to get their bags. Kara is practically bouncing with a grin permanently plastered on her face, Lena finds it endearing as it makes Kara’s whole being light up. It also has the added bonus of make her a little less nervous about visiting the Danvers. Kara picks up her gym bag while Lena tucks a few more things in her bag before pulling on Kara’s soft, grey sweatshirt.

“Remember to packs some warm things, the wind is a little cold coming off the water this time of year,” Kara reminds, noticing that Lena has gotten quiet once again. Coming closer she wraps her arms around Lena, while telling her genuinely, “Hey, there’s nothing to worry about, I promise. It’s just a weekend break – you seriously need a break – and my parents are going to love you.”

“You sure?” Lena asks curiously, actually concerned that Eliza and Jeremiah wouldn’t like her because of her family affiliation. She’s always waiting for the other shoe to drop when dealing with people.

“I’m very sure, just trust me, okay?” Kara assures as she picks up Lena’s bag and slings it over her shoulder with her own. They sign out and head outside where Jeremiah has pulled up the car and opened the trunk.

“You two ready? I figured we could stop at the place that makes those milkshakes you love so much, Kara,” Jeremiah says with a smile, ruffling his daughter’s blonde hair as Kara cheers joyously while tossing the bags in the trunk. “Come on, junk food and the beach are waiting.”

Kara and Lena get in the car and buckle up, Jeremiah playing chauffer turns up the classic rock station just in time for Don’t Stop Believin’ by Journey to come on. Kara can’t help but sing along, grinning at the smile it puts on Lena’s face. After a stop at the café where Jeremiah insists that Lena treat herself to a milkshake with Kara – the two girls get the ridiculous treats. Lena’s not sure she can eat the monstrosity – impressed that the cup is filled to the brim with chocolate ice cream, whipped cream, and sprinkles with a cherry on top. Kara downs hers at an inhuman rate and honestly didn’t need the extra sugar high since they still have a couple more hours before they reach Midvale. As Jeremiah and Kara chat – Kara excitedly trying to tell him everything that’s gone on for the last few weeks in a single breath while sipping the rest of Lena’s milkshake.

Lena however has finally relaxed, listening to the other two occupants talking with such ease has been much more calming than she’d ever known it to be. Kara’s hand is holding hers and the hum of the car driving down the highway all make it so easy for her to just lean back and close her eyes. She feels safe and comfortable, after a few minutes and before she realizes it she slips into a restful sleep. Kara doesn’t notice until Jeremiah directs a question at Lena and she finds her sleeping peacefully – looking so calm and relaxed Kara’s relieved that she agreed to come despite her misgivings. Meeting her father’s eyes in the rearview mirror she smiles as she says, “She fell asleep, which is a good thing given how hard she works. If we didn’t have a strict bedtime I’m sure she’d be up and about at all hours of the day and night.”

They continue to chat and the time passes quickly, as they reach the outskirts of time Kara knows it will take no time at all to reach the house. That and she’s sure Lena would prefer not to miss the view and get woken up at the doorstep after the car has been parked.

“Hey, Lena,” Kara says softly while gently rubbing the other girl’s arm, trying to wake her gently,
“Wake up, we’re almost here.”

Lena rubs her eyes with the hoodie sleeves before peering out the window with wonder, looking at the quaint seaside town – boats are floating in the bay and people are already out fishing or swimming despite the cool weather. Kara’s moved over to look out the window too, an arm around Lena’s shoulders as she points out the boardwalk – telling her about her favorite pizza place and the bookstore they can go to sometime this weekend.

Once at the house Kara takes Lena’s hand again and tugs her upstairs, going into her and Alex’s room and tossing her gym bag down by her bed. Kara squeals when she sees her cat Streaky curled up on her bed and basking in the afternoon sunlight. Picking him up despite the annoyed yowls and wriggling she turns around to show him to Lena who’s chuckling as she says, “I think you woke him up?”

“Oh, crap. I forgot to ask if you were allergic to cats,” Kara says as Lena comes closer and starts to pet the frustrated cat behind the ears cooing at him.

“I don’t think so,” Lena tells her honestly, fingers skimming over the cat’s soft orange fur when Kara sets him back down on the bed. Lena takes a seat beside the cat, cooing at him still and absolutely enamored with how he swishes his tail as he climbs into Lena’s lap. “We never had any pets, not unless Lillian’s racing grey hounds count but they didn’t really stay with us. What’s this adorable guy’s name?”

“Streaky,” Kara says with a bit of a blush, wishing her younger self had come up with a more inventive name for the cat when she’d found him. Instead she’d just called him the first thing that came to mind after seeing the lightning shaped streak on his sides.

“Streaky huh?” Lena asks the cat, looking into the cat’s bright yellow eyes and smiling at him as she scratches behind his ears tenderly. “Well, I’m guessing you got your name from the lightning streaks across your sides. A fitting name for such a handsome boy.”

Kara chuckles softly, “Yeah, well I wasn’t exactly feeling creative when I named him, I guess.”

“I’m guessing Harry Potter wasn’t published yet or you would have either named him Harry, or maybe Crookshanks,” Lena says with a smile as the cat stands up on her leg and affectionately head butts her chin seeking more attention.

“Well, he does tend to be cranky like Crookshanks,” Kara says, sticking her tongue out at the cat who seems to just look at her with a smug look as he starts purring even louder as he settles down in Lena’s lap and head butts the hand that pets him.

“Streaky are you cranky?!” Lena says in mock surprise, before cuddling the cat further as he flicks his tail at Kara, “No, I don’t believe it Kara. Streaky is the perfect gentleman.”

“Unbelievable, he’s known you for like two minutes and he’s already charmed you,” Kara says while shaking her head, “Just wait until he uses his super cat abilities to trip you in the hallway tonight or basically tramples you while you’re trying to sleep. He becomes infinitely less cute then.”

“Still not believing you,” Lena says chuckling as she continues holding the purring cat that’s lazing about in her lap. Streaky is very pleased with the situation, having curled and contorted so that Lena can rub his belly tenderly as he continues to purr as he starts to doze off.

A knock at the door draws their attention to Jeremiah standing in the doorway, he sees the cat in Lena’s lap and quirks and eyebrow as he says in confusion, “Streaky found a new friend? That was
“I know, right?!” Kara agrees, both her and her father giving the cat suspicious looks.

“He’s a sweetheart.” Lena affirms for the purring cat, clearly amused by the Danvers’ feelings for the big orange cat as she starts to pay even more attention to him just to annoy Kara. Jeremiah can’t help but smile, knowing that while Kara had found the little kitten stuck up a tree their cat was quite the character and usually didn’t find any of their usual company amusing in the slightest.

“He’s a dirty, dirty traitor,” Kara jokes shaking her head when the cat starts to purr even louder, starting to sound more like the low rumble of a car’s engine instead of a standard house cat. “So, what’s up, Dad?”

“I was just wondering if you two wanted to go down to the beach before dinner, your mother is running a little late at the hospital,” Jeremiah suggests with a warm smile, he’d seen the news articles over the Luthor family and his hear broke for the girl that had been through so much. He was more than happy to welcome her into his home, especially since she was the first friend that Kara had asked about having over for something other than studying or sports practices. “Lena, can you ride a bike?”

Lena looks a little confused by the question, but nods as she says, “Not like Lance Armstrong, but I can ride well enough… it’s been a while though.”

“Well, we’ll just make Kara carry the boards and I’ll get the fishing equipment,” Jeremiah assures with a chuckle at Lena’s witty remarks, watching as she gently picks Streaky up and puts him down in her place as she gets up.

Leaning down she presses a kiss to the flat of his head and ruffles the fur behind his ears, promising, “I promise we’ll be back and I’ll pet you some more, buddy.”

“Don’t spoil him, he’s already spoilt enough,” Kara muses as she guides Lena downstairs and to the garage where Jeremiah has already checked on and cleaned up the family’s bikes. Jeremiah packs a cooler into one of the packs on the back of his green bike as Kara picks up a couple helmets before handing one to Lena, “You should probably ride Alex’s bike since she’s a little shorter than me.”

“She won’t mind?” Lena asks politely as she puts on the helmet and adjusts the straps, secretly praying to any deity that she won’t end up needing it.

“Nah, she barely rides it anymore,” Kara says as she picks up her well-loved skim board before climbing on the bike.

Jeremiah has the fishing poles and tackle box and leads them out to the street, Kara rides with one hand on the handle bars and the other holding onto the skim board she has tucked under her arm – something she assures Lena she does all the time during the summers when the dark haired girl looks at her with worry. Lena fairs well enough, having forgotten how nice it felt to pedal along at a leisurely pace just cruising and feeling the wind on her skin. She has a few wobbles and brakes a bit too hard a couple of times but other than that she’s grateful that her muscle memory keeps her from making a fool of herself.

At the beach Lena parks the bike next to Kara’s, taking in the serene view of pale sand flecked with pebbles complete with waves crashing against the shore pushing the cold water towards them. Kara lays down the board and helps Jeremiah with the fishing rods and stands, handing Lena the cooler as they move towards the water. “This is our favorite beach, during the summer all the locals flock here to cool off in the water. It may be too cold to swim now but it’s perfect for fishing and just messing
around on the beach.”

“Up here is the best spot to fish,” Jeremiah says, sounding as if he’s trying to convince himself of this as well as the girls.

“You’ve only caught like two fish here, ever,” Kara laughs, knowing that he just likes the calmness of the beach and the routine of casting the lines and reeling them. Sitting down in the sand she takes off her socks and shoes and starts to work on rigging up one of the fishing poles, patting the sand next to her urging Lena to sit down beside her as Jeremiah pops open a beer before handing a couple sodas to the girls.

Opening the tackle box Jeremiah sees Lena watching Kara curiously, so he grabs another rod and reel and hands it to Lena as he asks, “You ever been fishing before, Lena?”

“Uh, not really,” Lena says as she inspects the fishing rod and reel, moving the reel and watching as the gears turn and tighten the line. She figures it should be easy to figure out how to cast the lines, kind of like she’d seen in movies and on television. Lionel went fishing fairly frequently but he was always out on the yacht with his business partners – it was more of an informal business meeting rather than the relaxing leisure activity it seems Jeremiah enjoys.

“Well, Kara and I can show you what to do, just be care of the hooks and don’t stick yourself. That can smart pretty badly,” Jeremiah warns carefully.

“Yeah, like the time Alex caught you while trying to cast a line,” Kara teases with a laugh as she hands Lena a hook on a steel line and shows her how to clip it to the already prepared line. “Steel lines in case we catch fish with teeth.”

“Like sharks?” Lena asks with a raise eyebrow, wondering just how calming fishing could be when you run the possibility of catching an apex predator.

Jeremiah chuckles before assuring, “It doesn’t happen often and when it doesn’t they’re pups, so don’t get your hopes up of seeing Jaws.”

Kara puts bait on her line and then on Lena’s explaining what it is and how it’s supposed to attract the fish they desire to catch. Lena’s not sure what they’re trying to catch exactly but she knows it swims and that if she feels a tug on the line she should reel it in. She watches as Kara stands with her feet in the water and casts her line, reeling a bit to put it in a good position. Jeremiah also shows her how to cast a fishing line as well, but she’s still a little hesitant to do so. He hands his rod to Kara who puts them in the stands and keeps an eye on them as he motions Lena over, “Okay kiddo, let’s get your line in the water. Aren’t going to be catching anything if don’t.”

Lena goes to the edge of the water after toeing off her shoes, feeling the cold water lap at her toes as Jeremiah shows her how to hold the reel and clicks off the brake. Lena does as he instructs, curious to see how the reel works once she’s cast the line. Jeremiah gently guides her to pull the rod back carefully and flick it in a wide arch into the water. She watches in surprise as the hook and bait fly a few dozen yards before sinking into the surf, she knows the physics behind it but didn’t expect it to work when she tried. Jeremiah pats her on the back and congratulates her, “There you go, you’re already getting the hang of it. Now reel it in just a bit to entice the fish.”

Lena settles down into the sand and watches her line, she’s enjoying the feel of the warm sunshine on her skin and the smell of the salty breeze coming off the water. The views are just mesmerizing, Lena tracks the sailboats that are sailing lazily along the horizon, colorfully patterned sails billowed out with the wind. The sounds of the waves crashing on the shore is a sound she hopes she’ll hear more often in the future. She’s not sure how much time has passed as she feels the line in her hand
twitch, barely noticeable that she’s not sure it even happened until it happens again. Lena looks between Kara and Jeremiah and asks hesitantly, “Uh… what do I do about this?”

“You actually caught something?!” Kara asks in surprise, having expected Lena to get bored before any of them got a nibble on their lines.

“Okay, pull back your rod sharply to make sure you hook the fish and then start reeling,” Jeremiah instructs, motioning the hard pull back with his own fishing rod.

Lena does as instructed and starts to reel in the struggling fish, she wasn’t sure what she expected but she didn’t realize that the fish she snagged was such a strong one. She finally gets it to shore and looks at it, a little disappointed at how small it is despite the struggle it put up. Her and Kara go to the water’s edge to inspect if further, the little thing has grey skin with white spots and bulging big eyes that look odd.

“Eww, it’s so ugly,” Kara grimaces as she looks over the unfortunate looking little fish that’s flopping about at the edge of the surf.

“What is it?” Lena asks as she reaches down and picks it up carefully with a hand behind it’s fins so she can get a better look at its sleek spotted body.

“That is a spiny dogfish,” Jeremiah says with a laugh at the girls’ wary looks as they inspect the fish, patting Lena’s shoulder he tells, “Congrats Lena, you caught a shark.”

At those words Lena’s eyes widen and nearly drops the poor creature as she jerks it out in front of her towards Jeremiah. Kara’s laughing as she hands her dad a pair of pliers and they both watch as he carefully removes the hook from the shark’s mouth before pulling out his phone, “Okay, picture time before you put him back in the ocean.”

Jeremiah snaps a couple pictures as soon as Kara stops rolling her eyes and throws an arm around Lena’s shoulder. The dark haired girl however is beaming as she holds out the small dogfish proudly like it’s a prize winning sport fish. Afterwards Lena walks out ankle deep and waits for a wave to come in and take the fish back out. Kara has put away both of their poles and has gotten the skim board out, Jeremiah just laughs as his youngest takes off running towards the waves getting herself wet even though she’s still in her clothes.

“Come on Lena, you have to try this!”

Jeremiah waves her on, “Go on, we’re not relying on what we catch for dinner. With that one we’re probably going to have to order all the pot stickers that Hello Dumpling has to offer.”

Kara, who was in the middle of gliding over the incoming surf throws both her arms in the air and cheers, “Pot stickers!”

Lena starts laughing as she wades through the water to where Kara is watching for more incoming waves. Kara backs up and runs towards the waves, tossed the board down and glides over the surface of the water towards the wave that’s just started curling. Kara deftly spins the board around and lets the wave push her back towards the sand as she rides along. Lena’s a little jealous at how athletic Kara is but at the same time she’s not going to complain as the next run Kara launches high over and incoming wave and plunges into the water, coming up laughing and crying out about how cold it is.

Kara comes over and hugs her, getting her wet as she hands her the board. Lena just shakes her head as she says in exasperation, “No Kara, I don’t know what I’m doing.”
“Come on, I’ll explain it and it’ll be fun. I promise, it feels just like flying!”

Kara’s enthusiasm has Lena pick up the board with an uncertain look as she says, “Explain away, Miss ‘It feels like flying’.”

Kara brightens further as she guides Lena to pick up the board and hold it out parallel to the ground, “Okay, so what you want to do is throw the board across the water while running. Then jump on it and ride it out towards the waves – you’ll glide right across the top of the water. When you get to the wave just shift your weight around and ride the wave back in.”

“You make it sound so easy,” Lena deadpans, but she squares her shoulders and assesses the wave situation. She’s going to give it a go and hope that it goes well – it’s never going to go quite as well as Kara’s but hopefully she won’t hurt herself, “Just don’t laugh when I go flailing into the water.”

“No promises,” Kara says with a wide grin and a mischievous sparkle in her bright blue eyes.

Making a run towards the water she does just as Kara told her to, jumping onto the board she feels the incredibly unstable feeling of gliding on the water. However, it’s short lived as she reaches the wave her and board go in separate directions and the next thing she knows she’s coming up from the water laughing.

“Close, try again,” Kara encourages even though she’s laughing, picking up the board that’s washed ashore and hands it back to Lena.

So she tries again, throwing down the board and hopping on to it. Lena agrees that it feels like flying, but the sensation is short lived and quickly transforms into the feeling of falling. The impact with the sand is as painful as it is ungraceful, the stinging impact however is lessened by the cool, lapping waves as she inspects mentally assesses the damages as Kara rushes over – still half way giggling as she asks quickly, “Are you okay?”

Lena groans as she gets up, “I think I bruised my ass.”

Kara bursts into laughter again as Lena’s cheeks heat up as she rubs the offended butt cheek she landed on. Kara pulls her into a hug, and when she notices that Jeremiah is further down the beach and not watching them at the moment she presses a quick kiss to Lena’s temple and whispers, “You want me to kiss it and make it better?”

Lena can’t help but chuckle at that as she shakes her head, “I don’t think public indecency looks good on college applications.”

“Probably not, but I’m sure we’ll get some alone time this weekend,” Kara teases again, she and Lena had talked about going further than just kissing. In the last week they’d gotten bolder, unbuttoning shirts and reaching under skirts in the quiet safety of their dorm room after lights out. Currently she can see the way Lena’s eyes rake down her body in a suggestive way and the blush she’s sporting stays in place.

“I hope so,” Lena says with a coy little smirk before turning to pick up the board. Kara watches as she does, eyes lingering too long on the smaller girl’s curves that are being highlighted by the way her wet clothing clings to her for it to be just a friendly appraisal. Kara’s clenching her hands into fists as she has the desire to reach out and touch Lena in ways that are not only inappropriate for public consumption but would also be really awkward to try and explain to her father if she were caught. Lena, who seems to know that Kara’s been watching, shoots her a smile as she brushes her wet hair from her face as she hands the board to Kara, “Go on, I think I’ve taken enough of a beating for one day.”
Kara’s blushing now as she takes the board, blessing all her lucky stars right now that she’s not a guy or it would be plain for anyone to see how turned on she is by Lena. She tries a few more attempts at skim boarding, but her mind being distracted by all the dirty thoughts she’s entertained the past few weeks makes her clumsy. After a few more dunks in the cold water to try and cool her raging hormones and teenage libido she gives up much to Lena’s disappointment. The two head back to the spot Jeremiah’s still fishing at and pop open a couple drinks and watch as the sun starts to set over the sound. When half the sun is already sunk below the horizon they ride back to the house where Eliza is already home, the smell of Chinese wafting from the kitchen.

Jeremiah waves off any help putting things away, “Go say hi to your mother and get cleaned up for dinner.”

Kara doesn’t have to be told twice as she guides Lena inside where they see Eliza setting the table, but she’s quick to set down the glasses she’d been holding so she can extend her arms to Kara with a warm, welcoming smile, “Hey my beautiful, energetic girl! Why are you all wet and covered in sand?”

Kara embraces her tightly, smiling when she feels Eliza press a kiss to her temple and try to brush unruly wet hair from her face, “We were at the beach showing Lena how to fish! And how to skim board but that didn’t go so well.”

Eliza looks over at Lena who’s trying not to look so awkward as she has her hands clasped in front of her to keep from fidgeting. Smiling warmly at the girl she reaches to embrace her, feeling the girl timidly embrace her back as she greets her, “Hello Lena, I hope Kara wasn’t too rambunctious with the skim boarding.”

“Oh, no, it was interesting,” Lena scrambles to say a bit self-consciously, realizing she’s dripping on the wood floors and grains of sand are falling with the water drops.

Eliza picks up a couple clean towels from the laundry room and wraps one around Lena who’s shivering, rubbing her arms a bit to warm her up. Kara takes the other towel while stuffing a pot stick in her mouth, groaning with delight at having her favorite meal. Kara wraps the towel around her shoulders and sits down at the table while stating simply, “You can shower first, Lena.”

Eliza just shakes her head, thinking that Lena must be special since the shower and food were things Kara would fight to get to first at all costs. Lena just nods and hurries up the stairs, looking forward to a warm shower and clean, dry clothing. After both girls are showered and dressed in sweats they sit down at the table to dinner, Kara having already snuck a half dozen pot stickers beforehand. Eliza and Jeremiah talk about Alex’s soccer game; Kara helping her father go over the play by play. Eliza asks about the academics shortly thereafter and Kara complains about the literature and history courses she’s taking. But she does perk up when asked about the writing she’s been doing and even preens at the praise when both parents comment about having read the latest article she’d had published in the paper.

Soon the attention turns to Lena and she’s not exactly prepared for it – she was happy enough watching Kara discussing her life with her parents. When she talked with Lillian about school it was more akin to a police interrogation – she’s sure she would find the later much more pleasant. But when Eliza asks her about the classes she’s taking and if she’s enjoying working on the robots she does it in such a gentle tone Lena’s not sure what to say since she doesn’t have to defend herself. After a bit of stumbling she talks about how Kara enjoyed playing fetch with Krypto in the hallway and that it really helped her fine tune the robots coding.

When Kara brings up rowing Lena balks a bit, not sure she wants to broadcast how non-athletic she is but after Kara pouts she agrees to tell them about her first attempts at rowing. Jeremiah doesn’t
tease her about falling in, instead he just smiles and tells her that it was very brave of her to try
something new, just like she’d done with skim boarding and fishing. Eliza also assures her that she
doesn’t have to perfect at everything the first time she does it, that it takes practice and study to
perfect anything you try. The loving encouragement and kind attention are a little overwhelming for
her, especially since she hadn’t expected. Kara and her parents both notice that Lena’s eyes well with
tears she fights to keep at bay so they give her some space and ask about what movie they should
watch together.

Kara suggests either Beauty and the Beast or Harry Potter and The Sorcerer’s Stone, Lena opts for
Beauty and the Beast and is happy to see Steaky slink into the room as they settle on the sofa. Kara
complains that the cat is taking her space beside Lena, so Lena picks him up and cuddles him much
to his delight. When the movie ends the Danvers hug them and wish both girls sweet dreams. Just as
Lena’s tucked into Kara’s bed, reading a little to try and get drowsy enough to sleep, she hears Kara
coming back up the stairs. Most likely having gotten a before bed snack even though she ate more
than nearly everyone combined. A couple seconds later she hears a commotion in the hallway, Kara
dropping something before falling to the ground and the sounds of a liquid spilling.

“Kara?” Lena calls in concern, hearing Eliza also calling after Kara from the foot of the stairs.

“I’m okay!” Kara calls out quickly just to assure everyone that everything is okay before she glares at
the two yellow glowing eyes by her doorway and announces, “The traitorous cat got me.”

“Well, be careful darling,” Eliza calls after her, sharing a chuckle with Jeremiah.

Kara comes back into the bedroom, her pajamas are stained with the glass of apple juice she’d
unceremoniously dumped on herself when she tripped over the cat and fell. Lena tries to stifle her
laughter, covering her mouth with her hands as Kara rummages through her dresser to find a clean,
comfortable pair of PJs to change into. Streaky meows pitifully as he jumps on the bed and carefully
makes his way up to sit beside Lena – extra careful and gentle as he maneuvers around her feet and
over her legs.

“Oh you jerk cat, now you’re sucking up to Lena again after what you just did?!”

“Surely he didn’t mean to trip you,” Lena says with a wiry smile as she tenderly ruffles Steaky’s fur,
feeling a few wet patches that are likely from Kara’s drink. As Kara paces angrily while shooting
glares at the cat, Lena notices that Kara’s wet pajamas are clinging to her in all the right ways. Her
wet shirt hugging the lower curve of her breasts and plastering itself to taunt abs giving Lena so
many tempting thoughts she may have acted upon if the Danvers weren’t right down stairs.

“Oh no, he meant it,” Kara says in a deadly serious tone as she gives the cat the stink eye, “He’s just
jealous you were sitting next to me during the movie and weren’t giving him all your attention. Now
excuse me while I have to go put on clean clothing again…not to mention clean up the mess in the
hall.”

Kara stalks towards the bathroom with a frustrated huff, careful of the juice still puddled on the floor.
When Lena hears the bathroom door shut she looks down at Steaky who has stretched out beside
her on his back, tail flicking back and forth against her knee. Smiling down at him she chuckles and
rub his tummy as he starts to purr and close his eyes, “I suppose I should be thanking you for being
such an awesome wing cat, right? But next time try to be a bit more careful, I don’t want either of
you to getting hurt.”

Streaky shoots her a knowing – somewhat judging – look before stretching out further and purring
even louder. Lena takes that as an agreement of sorts and continues to pet him as she turns the page
of her book. When Kara returns she can’t help but shake her head and she sits on the edge of her bed
beside Lena, glad to see that she’s so happy – even if it is from her jerky cat. Lena looks at her, still smiling as she leans in to embrace her nestling into Kara’s arms with a happy little sigh.

“How are you doing? Everything okay?” Kara asks softly, she knows Lena’s been having a good time but she just wants some affirmation of that.

“Everything’s so good,” Lena says softly, soothed by her girlfriend’s warm embrace and Streaky’s calm but thunderous purring. “I don’t think I’ve ever felt this happy. You’re here, and your parents are just so sweet I’m not sure what to do.”

“I’m sorry we seemed to freak you out at dinner, they can be a little nosy,” Kara apologizes as she draws back to make eye contact with watery green eyes while brushing tendrils of dark hair behind Lena’s ears. “You should get some rest, there’s so much I want to show you around Midvale tomorrow.”

“Yeah, I’m also worn out,” Lena says with a laughing, cupping Kara’s cheek to draw her in for a kiss telling her sincerely, “Good night, Kara.”

Kara kisses her back and feels her smile against her lips, reluctantly she draws away and tucks the covers around Lena when she lays down, “Sweet dreams, Lena.”

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading, sorry it was a little long but I just had so much to pack into one chapter! Also, I swear to Rao that the next chapter is going to include very sweet smut. I promise.
A soft knock at the door rouses Lena from her sleep, she looks around for a moment her brain still waking up and trying to place where she is. The room is in soft shades of blue and white with bookshelves full of books, framed photos, and various nick knacks. Turning over she sees Kara is grumbling softly as she pushes back the blue quilt that she’s tangle in before rubbing her eyes with a yawn, her pajamas tee riding up to expose her mid-riff. The door opens and Lena sits up while stifling a yawn as Eliza chuckles a bit at Kara’s disjointed complaining, “Did you rest well?”

While Kara mumbles something incoherent Lena softly says, “Yes ma’am.”

Eliza gives her a soft look as she tells her, “Just call me Eliza, dear. Breakfast will be ready in a bit, you may want to beat Kara to the bathroom while she’s still drowsy.”

Lena blushes a bit but nods, climbing out of the bed and rummaging through her bag for clean clothing as Kara grumbles some more and rolls over. Eliza just chuckles as she excuses herself as Lena silently pads down the hallway towards the bathroom. She knows the Danvers are already awake but it’s a habit that makes her feel less anxious so she tries not to analyze it too much. After a change of clothes, she finds Kara already dressed and brushing out her hair – a little spark of jealousy at how the soft, golden locks seem to fall into curls on their own and without tangling. Lena wishes her hair would cooperate with her most days but getting it to look as good as it does usually requires a daily fight with the brush and a lot of hair product.

“Hey,” Kara beams with a mega-watt smile, “Did you sleep okay?”

“Yes,” Lena answers, not going to mention that the pillow and sheets smelling of Kara’s vanilla and lavender shampoo was comforting since she was sleeping in a new, unfamiliar place, “It’s also nice to sleep in past 8am.”

As the two go downstairs Eliza is reading the morning newspaper while Jeremiah is mixing what looks like pancake ingredients in a large mixing bowl. Sure enough he pours the last of the contents onto the griddle before adding an unhealthy amount of chocolate chips to each on. Streaky, who had abandoned Lena sometime after sunrise, is sitting in the chair next to Eliza and preening at the...
attention she’s giving him. Jeremiah grins at the two girls as they sit down at the table, “Chocolate chip pancakes, anyone?”

“Oh my favorite!” Kara exclaims as she bounces up to get the milk out of the refrigerator – before she can take a gulp from the carton Jeremiah hands her a glass. Pouring it in the glass she brings another glass over for Lena as Jeremiah sets a plate of pancakes on the table, “So I made a bunch of chocolate chip ones – for sharing Kara – a couple have chocolate and pecans, and these on the end have blue berries.”

Kara stacks a couple of each on her plate before dousing them in syrup, greedily tucking in to the breakfast and not caring when she gets sticky syrup on her chin. Lena picks out a couple blueberry ones and puts a dusting of powdered sugar on top, smiling as the first bite melts in her mouth. Jeremiah grins as he tells them, “So, I hope you have plans for today Kara. I have to go to the university and help out with calibrating some of the lab software. I’m also running an extra lab this evening.”

“Yeah, I was just going to show Lena around Midvale. Hit up the boardwalk – especially the book store and the little place by the docks,” Kara tells them, feeling a little bad that she’s hoping that Eliza is going to be working late too. She hopes the look on her face isn’t giving it away as Lena just looks so calm and collected.

“Just be careful on the bikes,” Eliza says then thinking better of it, “Actually, if you’re going to go anywhere past the boardwalk just take the car, you father’s going to drop me off at work anyway. We’ve also left money so that you can order out or go out – which ever you would prefer.”

“Oh, so you have work too?” Kara asks, not only just to confirm that she and Lena wouldn’t be interrupted if they decided to go a little further than just a heated make out session. Sure her parents were pretty laid back but she still didn’t want to deal with the type of embarrassment that she imagines comes with getting walked in – she also would want to involve Lena in that.

“You don’t have to look so concerned, Kara,” Eliza teases, sharing a secret smile with Jeremiah, “I was 16 going on 17 once upon a time and the last thing I wanted to do when I had friends over what hang out with my parents.”

Kara’s a bit giddy as she relents, before explaining that she’s going to show Lena around the board walk and take her lunch at one of their favorite places. After breakfasts Lena helps clean up, insisting as she thanks them for allowing her to stay with them for the weekend. Eliza assures her that she’s always welcome and Jeremiah jokes that she’ll have to visit often because Streaky is already attached to her. Kara makes a joke that since Streaky loves Lena so much she’s think about trying to get “kitten support and shared custody” to ensure the cat’s happiness. Their loving attention and genuine desire to be around her makes Lena feel a blissful warmth settle in her chest – she thinks this is what being a part of a loving family must feel like. She wonders again how Alex and Kara can be so happy and healthy away from home – but then she suspects that with such loving parents they could feel safe enough to take on the world.

As Jeremiah and Eliza head out, Kara and her pick up the bikes from yesterday and head out as well. As they ride down the winding streets to the trail that runs along the beach towards the board walk they bypass the Saturday morning joggers and cyclists trying to soak up as much sun before the weather shifts to the cold typical of fall and winter. As they get to the boardwalk Lena’s a little skeptical as she starts to see the television typical beach crowds – sun bronzed surfer boys and giggly gaggles of girls that follow them. A few of the guys give Kara and Lena both passing glances but she just rolls her eyes and follows after Kara – trusting that the blonde girl knows what she’s doing. As they pass by a few surf shops and the visitors center another line of more elegant looking shops
comes into view. Kara parks her bike in the rack outside a large windowed shore and Lena’s immediately glad she chose this place.

Likely Story is a quiet little bookshop that looks like it came out of Norman Rockwell painting, tucked in between a confectioner’s shop that specialized in salt water taffy and a specialty fishing shop. Just when Lena thinks she can’t love the little shop anymore they go inside to see the floor to ceiling bookshelves absolutely crammed with books. All of the books – of various sizes and colors – seem to have so much character that she wonders if she could stick to just choosing a few of them. The back wall of the store has several cozy reading nooks lite with strings of softly glowing Christmas lights and packed with an assortment of soft pillows and fuzzy blankets. Kara is already greeting the shop own and her college aged daughter, introducing Lena who’s still wordlessly in awe as she wonders where she should start first.

“I see you’ve found a fellow book lover,” the older woman smiles at Lena’s awestruck look, “We’ve expanded the young adults section and I’ve got to admit there were a few I figured you’d like, Kara.”

As they wander throughout the store Lena can’t help but smile as she lets her fingers drift over the spines of the books. Kara’s already got an arm full of books to check out as she hands a couple to Lena, clearly suggesting them as good candidates. Lena herself picks through the non-fiction – starting with technology and science – before finding herself wistfully looking through the fiction books and letting herself indulge her curiosity. After finding several books that suit her fancy she finds Kara already curled up in one of the reading nooks, leaning against a stack of pillows and covered in a blanket. Following suit Lena slips off her shoes before settling down beside Kara, curling up to her side as she digs through her own stack of books.

Lena peruses a few books, and while deeming them good reads she feels they hit to close to home for her to really enjoy them. She adds “Little & Lion” to the stack, thinking briefly of Lex and wondering if he’s still dealing with all the stress and mood swings still. After a few seconds “It’s Not Like it’s a Secret” joins the growing pile – sure she was gay but the last thing she need to get caught with was a book about two girls troubled coming out. Instead she picks up one of the books Kara had handed her, she reads the summary skeptically looking at the title as her heart picks up a bit as her fingers trace over the words emblazoned on the cover - “In the Skin of a Monster.”

Lena hesitantly opens the cover and skims over the first couple of pages, before skimming a few other sections nervously. She’s not sure she wants to read a story about a girl who has to live with the terrible things that her twin has done. She may not look just like Lex, but having the Luthor name branded on everything she does is a heavy enough weight. On one page a phrases stands out to her and she re-reads it again a couple times, “We've all got good in us and bad in us, and miles of murky greyness. I suppose the difference is what you choose to focus on.” Lena just shakes her head at how perceptive Kara is as she closes the book and looks at the cover again – getting the subtle hint that Kara thinks she’s chosen to focus on the good within herself.

“Kara?” she asks softly, looking from the book to Kara’s blue eyes – still not finding the words she wants to say to the other girl.

Kara just smiles and presses a kiss to her temple as she snuggles closer and it’s enough for Lena. Deciding to forgo any further adventures into fiction – putting “In the Skin of a Monster” to the side starting a keep pile – she delves back into the safety of non-fiction as she picks up a book on easy electronic hacks and basic coding in python. Beside her Kara’s already engrossed in the second chapter of “The Girl from Everywhere,” and already she’s invested in what happens to Nix as she goes through time, history, and even fictional worlds to find her father. Her mind is reeling as she thinks about all the places in time and space she would travel if she could – she also feels bad for Nix’s dad and knows that she’d be searching for Lena too if she lost her.
After a couple hours the two gather up the books they’ve selected and that Lena insists on purchasing, trying to thank Kara for letting her come on this wonderfully restful weekend with her. The two manage to get the books on the bike and back to the house where Kara sheepishly suggests that they could go on a date for real instead of all the study and coffee dates at the school. Lena readily agrees, shooing Kara out of the room so she can change into a simple sundress – a soft, comfortable dress that has pockets and an understated pattern of red long-stemmed roses. She’d packed it hoping she’d get to wear it, and she’s not going to pass it up since the opportunity has presented itself.

When Lena shows Kara she watches as blue eyes widen almost comically, but the blonde is quick to gush, “You look beautiful! I mean, we’re going to have to take the car – you…I mean, you can’t ride a bike in that. Well…technically you could but…”

Lena cuts her off with a gentle kiss to the lips before asking with a smirk quirking up the edges of her lips, “So, what place did you have in mind? I’m assuming you’re hungry already.”

“In more ways than one,” Kara mumbles a bit before she can stop herself, blushing profusely as Lena genuinely laughs, “So, uh, let me change and then we can go. You do like seafood right?”

“What no pizza or potstickers?” Lena teases at first as seeing Kara so flustered she’s tripping over her words makes her heart flutter. “Anything you pick is fine.”

“Great!” Kara says before bounding up the stairs to go and changes as well, feeling woefully underdressed after seeing Lena look so stunning in that dress. She rummages through her closet before checking her phone, seeing a couple texts from Alex she messages her asking her what she should wear since she can’t decide. A couple beats pass before Alex messages back telling her to just wear something comfortable and Kara almost face palms as her sister is being of no help. Before she can tell her that she gets a text from Maggie suggesting trousers and nice button down shirt and adding a winky face at the end. Ignoring Maggie’s unspoken sass she goes into her closet and picks out the items and puts them on.

Lena’s a bit nervous about Kara driving and holds on tight to the arm rests for the first few minutes, but Kara’s a conscientious driver and Midvale isn’t as traffic ridden or hectic as Metropolis or National City. They head out of town where the docks host a variety of boats – some sail boats with the colorful sails that have peaked Lena’s curiosity while others are larger boats with large engines. A few locals are milling about, some coming in from a morning of fishing on the waters while other are preparing to go out. As they park outside of a rather nice looking restaurant calling itself The Rockin’ Lobster that has a patio overlooking the bay where the boats are skimming in and out. They get a table by the water and Kara pulls out her chair for her with an easy smile before sitting beside her.

Kara tells her about the texts from Alex and Maggie – joking about how useless her sister is when it comes to giving fashion advice. Lena asks after the books she’d been so enamored with that morning and after Kara explains that the main character Nix can travel virtually anywhere they both debate the pros and cons of some of the place they’d prefer to go – both settling that there would be no cons to getting lost at Hogwarts. They dissolve into laughter when Kara tries to insist that she would not be a Hufflepuff, arguing instead that she’d be in Gryffindor.

“Really? The super girl with a heart of gold that’s loyal to a fault and hungry all the time?! You are so a Hufflepuff, a brave Hufflepuff,” Lena teases with a laugh before taking another drink of her soda she adds, “Besides, you have to admit you would appreciate being in the dorm closest to the kitchens.”

Kara groans as she has to admit that she would prefer to be closest to the food, she knows if she was
at Hogwarts her house – no matter which one – would never win the house cup because she’d always be losing points for sneaking in to the kitchens for snacks. Lena takes her silence as a victory and cheers, “You admit it?!”

“No,” Kara protests with a grin, “I’m just admitting that I would like to be close to the kitchens is all.”

Lena laughs, grateful that Kara doesn’t ask what house she’d be in – they both know she would probably be Slytherin even if she is the good Luthor. She asks about Kara’s latest writing project and if she’s considered pursuing writing and journalism in college. Kara brightens as she talks about the article over bullying she’s doing is going to be the focal point of the next publication and talks about how National City University has a writing program she’s been looking at pretty seriously. When asked Lena talks about how she wanted to be helpful and put her intelligence to good use – but that she lacks the tenaciousness and resolve to be a medical professional like Alex. She also admits that she could bear to have her heartbroken so many times when she wouldn’t be able to help a patient. Lena does tell Kara that materials sciences and biomedical engineering are where she feels she could be the most helpful.

As their late lunch is winding down both girls are aware of the nervous energy between the two of them – during the meal they’d unconsciously moved closer to one another. Even now Lena’s hand is resting on Kara’s forearm, both of the hyperaware of where this could lead. Kara clears her throat and suggests, “Walk along the pier before we go?”

Lena nods, taking Kara’s hand when it’s offered to her and walks with her towards the end of the pier. The sky which started out blue in the morning has faded to an ominous grey, the water a bit choppy and waves capped with white foam from the wind that’s picking up. Kara smiles out at the ocean and the wind that’s ruffling her hair as she says, “A storms coming in off the water.”

“I love the sound of the rain,” Lena tells her softly as the stand together and watch several boats coming into the safety of the docks. Kara’s arm snakes around her waist and she leans her head against the taller girl’s shoulder, wishing they could stay like this for a while.

“Especially when you’re going to bed or reading,” Kara agrees, feeling the first few drops of rain starting to fall down sporadically. In the distance, over the rolling waves far out at sea a streak of lightning strikes but the storm is so far away they don’t hear the accompanying thunder. “We should probably head back to the house before it really rains.”

Lena agrees, glad that on the walk back to the car and on the drive back to the Danvers home Kara never lets go of her hand. As they pull into the drive and Kara unlocks the door Lena feels her heartbeat picking up as the door closes behind her. Kara steps into her line of vision and rests her palm against her cheek as she asks, “Nervous?”

“A little bit,” Lena admits as she follows Kara upstairs, “You?”

“A strange mix of excited and nervous, kind of like you have to give a speech but better somehow,” Kara stammers a bit before smiling softly, brushing hair from Lena’s face and leaning in to kiss her. Sighing a bit when she feels Lena kiss back and her fingers find her waist. While they’re in the middle of kissing an annoyed meow interrupts them, Kara shoots the cat a death glare but Lena just starts chuckling as she picks up the cat and sets him down by the door.

“Sorry buddy, but Kara and I would like some alone time,” Lena says as she nudges the cat out of the bedroom and closes the door. The soft pitter patter of rain against the window is soothing her jitters as she turns around to face Kara who looks just as nervous – biting her lip and looking at her with a gentle yet longing look. When Kara offers her hand she takes it and allows her to draw her
Lena turns in Kara’s arms to look up at the other girl, biting her lip a bit nervously. She’d wondered all this time about what it would be like to be alone with Kara, when they could kiss and touch at their leisure. But now that that moment has arrived it would seem she’s not sure what to do and she’s a little nervous as the other girl seems to take the initiative. Kara smiles warmly at her, cupping her cheek and pressing a very soft, chaste kiss to her lips before assuring her, “We won’t do anything you don’t want to, okay?”

“I know,” Lena whispers back, leaning up to capture Kara’s lips in a searing kiss like the one they’d shared at the beach earlier. She feels safe with Kara and trusts her to be gentle and attentive with her, knowing that if she wants to stop the other girl would in a heartbeat. But stopping is the last thing on Lena’s mind as she leans into the kiss. Feeling the warm, velvety touch of supple lips and the press of Kara’s tongue against her lips – begging entrance – she cedes to it without resistance. Her hands find Kara’s waist, clinging to her as her racing heart makes her dizzy enough she fears falling over without being grounded by the other girl.

As they break from the kiss, Lena's panting with lips parted and pupils dilated watching as Kara pants with an open grin on her face. The taller girl guides them to the foot of her bed and with a hand on Lena’s shoulder guides her to turn around where her fingers find the zipper on the dress rather quickly. She fumbles a bit with the clasp on the bra, cursing quietly as a deep rumble of thunder sounds off in the distance. Even in the dimly lit room Kara can see a blush rising up to leave rosy traces on Lena’s pale shoulders as she brushes the straps over them, pressing a kiss to them she asks with a smile, “Blushing already, love?”

Lena lets the dress fall but her hands come up to cover her breasts, grateful at least that she still has on underwear as she steps out of the shoes. Kara’s hands are already roaming over the skin of her shoulders and upper arms, rubbing tenderly to try and soothe her nervousness, “I don’t think I’ve been this naked in front of someone else since the day I was born.”

Kara can’t help but laugh at the witty quip, knowing Lena is just trying to ease the nervous tension between them. Deciding to try and help make her soon-to-be lover feel better she tells her playfully, “You know, nudity is nothing to be ashamed of, you’re absolutely gorgeous. I could write books of lewd poetry about how attractive I find you – clothing optional.”

“So romantic,” Lena deadpans with a little smirk, even though she continues to kiss back fervently.

“Come on, it would be practically Shakespearean,” Kara teases again, knowing that she’s pushing Lena’s buttons but that at least it’s keeping her from being so nervous.

“Wasn’t that sonnet, I think sonnet 130, about how normal and culturally unattractive his girlfriend was?” Lena asks looking back over her shoulder with a teasing smile, quirking an eyebrow she also asks quickly, “Seriously Kara?”

Kara starts really laughing at how witty Lena can still be even though they’re in the process of getting undressed. She watches with gentle eyes as Lena turns around, still covering her breasts and blushing but at least smiling. Leaning down she captures her lips in a kiss, her hands finding the smaller girl’s bare waist as she deepens the kiss, hungrily tasting of her mouth. She’s sure she’ll never get tired of kissing Lena like this. As they part she grins and teases, “I could get used to this.”

Lena snickers and shakes her head as she starts to work on the buttons of her pink button down shirt and the zipper on her skinny trouser, finally letting her breasts be seen. Kara is drawn to them immediately, they’re bigger than her own and as fair skinned as the rest of Lena, but the tips are a rosy pink. She can’t stop herself from brushing a couple fingers over one of the nipples softly, feeling
Lena shudder at her touch and inhale sharply. Lena’s pause gives Kara the chance to divest herself of the shirt and tug the sports bra over her head exposing her own breasts.

Kara takes her hand and guides it to touch her breast, Lena feels her heart skip a beat as she strokes a thumb over the dusky nipple and watches it stiffen at her touch. Kara’s hand cups her cheek and strokes back to tangle in her hair and tug her into a bruising kiss leaving her breathless. Kara guides them both to the bed, pushing Lena onto the bed on her back and climbing on after her after stripping off her pants hastily.

Lena watches, mesmerized by the situation but also completely taken off guard. At school and while working on projects she was always in control and knew what she was doing. But now she was completely out of her element and opening herself up for new experiences and sensations. She was also confused by how swiftly and easily Kara had taken complete command of the situation, and now she found that she could only follow the other girl's lead – trusting her completely. Kara is unashamed about the attention shelavishes on Lena’s body, fingers skimming teasingly over a toned but trembling stomach as she leaves a trail of kisses along the smaller girl’s collar. With a hint of concern and slightly more amusement Kara reminds gently, “Lena, remember to breath.”

Lena takes in a shuddering breath, drawing Kara closer as she continues to take a few more calming breaths. She didn’t even realize that she’d been so anxious and overwhelmed with sensations that she’d been holding her breath. Kara just strokes along her sternum tenderly as she asks, “Do you want to stop?”

“No, I’m just a little nervous,” Lena shakes her head, licking her lips before answering a bit hesitantly, “I don’t want to mess this up somehow.”

“We’ll figure it out together,” Kara assures with more confidence than she’s feeling, but she knows that if she gets any more jittery the two of them mostly likely wouldn’t make it any further than this. And she really wants to go further than this, she’s spent countless hours wondering what it would be like to have Lena out of her clothes and sighing softly at her tender touches. Tucking Lena closer against her nude form she captures her lips and kisses her tenderly, trailing down her collar and onto her chest as her fingers tease achingly taunt nipples.

Lena’s blush has spread across her chest and it would be achingly adorable if she wasn’t so self-conscious. Kara leans in and kiss her again, soft, wet lips trailing along Lena’s jaw and down her neck drawing out content sighs as she whispers, “Still okay?”

“Better than okay,” Lena assures breathlessly, savoring the feel of Kara’s tongue darting out to trace over her clavicle as she continues her decent. She tangles a hand in Kara’s soft, blonde hair, wordlessly encouraging her newfound lover to continue what she’s doing.

Kara smiles against one of Lena’s breasts when the first kiss to an already erect nipple draws a needy whine from her girlfriend. Tenderly she sucks the taunt nipple into her mouth, savoring the taste and texture of Lena’s skin as she sucks gently. Lena squirms under her, eyes closed as her back arches towards Kara’s touch gasping sharply at the pleasurable sensations. Kara continues to kiss over to the neglected breast before giving it the same treatment, teasing it with her tongue just to feel Lena shiver before sucking it into her mouth. Her hand coming up to caress and massage the breast that’s not her current focus. She’s thought about Lena’s breasts for an unhealthy amount of time, imaging what they would look like, how they would feel – and how they would taste. Now that she’s been given unrestricted access she feels like a kid in a candy store at Christmas time and hopes she’ll have many more occasions to lavish attention on these perfect breasts. Especially since the soft, mewling whimpers Lena makes while rolling her hips unconsciously nearly drives her wild.

When Lena feels Kara press kisses along her ribs and over her stomach she tenses a bit, not sure if
she’s ready for that type of intimacy yet. Kara, having felt Lena tense looks up questioningly, “Do you want to stop?”

“No…not stop, but I kind of want to be able to see you and hold you for the first time,” Lena admits a bit sheepishly, but when Kara beams up at her and quickly scrambles back up to lay beside she feels so much better about having voiced her desires.

Kara leans in to kiss her as her hands roam below Lena’s belly button, fingertips dragging across the curves of her hips and under the hem of her panties. Lena moans softly as she cant her hips towards Kara’s touch, smiling to herself when Kara whines appreciatively. Hooking her fingers under Lena’s underwear she draws them down shapely legs, tickling and teasing along the way as she reveals her sex dusted with fine dark hair. Kara parts the fair, lightly muscled legs with firm hands, opening the young woman up to her, rubbing her hands along the smooth skin to feel the tremble of anticipation of her lover. She could hear Lena's gasp catch in the back of her throat, the low whine as she arches into her touch even without knowing what to expect. Kara recalls all the google searches she’s done and the forums she’s visited just to make sure she knows kind of what she’s doing. When Kara’s fingers brush over her sex searching for the tiny organ that makes Lena cry out and tremble. Kara takes her time teasing and working Lena up until the wetness between her legs leaves no doubt that she’s aroused.

Kara allows her fingers to wander further, finding the wet opening that causes Lena jerks a little and keens at the soft touch. Softly she waits as she asks, “This okay?”

“Oh god yes,” Lena murmurs, wanting to take everything that Kara can give her.

“Just relax,” Kara purrs softly, gently stroking around the pulsing orifice as she tucks Lena closer against her and kisses her temple. Lena relaxes, leaning into Kara’s embrace – cheek pressed against the other girl’s breast, her arm looped around her back holding onto her tightly. Her legs are quivering as she keeps them parted to give Kara free reign of her body, shivering as the tip of Kara’s index finger slips just inside of her. A twinge of soreness is masked by a thrill of pleasure tingles up her spine and down to her toes pulling a needy whimper from her. She feels Kara's warm, appreciative hum vibrate across her skin along with the tender strokes of the dexterous finger inside of her. Lena tensed initially but the full feeling in the absence of pain causes her to sigh and nuzzle closer to Kara, pressing a soft kiss to the column of Kara’s neck. Kara languidly kisses her while continuing to finger her, thumb brushing over her clitoris causing the younger woman to tremble. “Kara,” Lena gasps out, fingers pressing into her partner’s shoulder so hard she worries she may leave bruises – the pleasure of the new sensations are almost overwhelming like a fire trying to consume her. Leaning up she captures Kara’s lips again, the press of lips and sliding of tongues is intoxicating and addictive, an addiction that Lena’s slowly been feeding over the last month and has no hope of giving up anytime soon.

Kara can feel her own body tingling and throbbing with need, she can feel how tight and warm Lena is and yearns to make love to her like this more often. Slipping deeper inside her lover she can feel Lena clinging to her finger, trembling and tightening around her. The soft needy sounds that Lena makes also make her ache and squirm, the breathy little pants and moans that slip from her with even the slightest of touches make Kara feel intoxicated and lightheaded. Lena’s body is overheated, her skin almost hot to the touch as warm, wetness begins to accumulate between her legs as Kara’s finger slowly open her. At random Kara’s thumb brushes teasingly over her clitoris, making her whine and buck her hips up into her girlfriend’s hand seeking more stimulation. “How are you doing,” Kara asks softly, a satisfied like grin settling in when the only response she gets is feeling Lena’s hot breath on her breasts and when words fail nodding against her neck.
Chuckling softly, she starts to rub a second finger along the clenching opening before dipping it in carefully, relishing in the warm, smooth glide. Lena tenses momentarily before gasping, hips jerking towards the penetration and clenching around Kara’s fingers with a high pitched moan that makes Kara want to growl with pure desire.

Lena’s panting, feeling her muscles tensing as an internal coil tightens further and she just relaxes and lets it happen. A few more tender strokes and brush of her clit and she throws her head back, legs trembling as she moans Kara’s name over and over again with joy and pleasure, eyes closing as she could no longer fight the sensations sweeping through her. Kara feels her fingers grasped in a restrictive velvet embrace, pulsations squeezing them in rhythmic fashion until Lena’s head helplessly drops back against her shoulder, a deep sob tearing from her. Shaken herself, Kara slows her strokes, gently withdrawing and wiping her fingers off on the sheets before wrapping her arms around Lena’s waist, pressing a kiss to her temple.

"Lena," she said comfortingly. "It's all right. I'm right here, love."

Lena trembles in her arms and hugs Kara fiercely, her body still tingling pleasantly with aftershocks. Kara rocks her gently but when Lena hasn’t spoken with her for a few moments she asks with concern, “I didn’t hurt you did I? It wasn’t too much, was it?”

Lena shakes her head vehemently, trying to express both the emotional and physical sensations that just assailed her senses, “No, it felt good. Really good, just a little overwhelming”

“Good,” Kara says sighing with relief, soothing a hand over Lena’s still trembling stomach. Her girlfriend is still reeling from a powerful orgasm, her respiration just now starting slow back down to a normal rhythm, “I was worried, for a second I thought I may have broken you.”

“I promise you didn’t break me,” Lena says as she presses lazy kisses along Kara’s neck and across her clavicle. Sitting up more she draws Kara in for another kiss, letting the blonde deepen the kiss as her hands find the strongly muscled shoulder again. As they break a part for air Lena gives Kara a soft, appraising look as she tells her earnestly, “You have no idea of all the things I’ve been wanting to do to you.”

“I bet you’ve thought about this a lot, especially with all those long showers you’re fond of taking,” Kara teases mercilessly with a knowing smirk, leaning she kisses Lena again.

“Lay back and let me show you,” Lena says with a salacious grin that makes Kara’s mouth go dry and hang open in shock for a second before she gulps and nods. Lena finds goofy, gob-smacked Kara searching for words endearing, but she wastes no time in reversing their positions and pushing Kara back against the pillows and straddling her hips. Kara sighs softly when Lena’s hands gravitate to her breast, massaging softly as she watches her with a hungry look as she asks, “Is this okay?”

Kara nods while licking her lips, she feels like if Lena doesn’t touch her soon she’s going to die from the anticipation. Lena leans in and kisses her softly, Kara can feel the words being said against her skin as Lena tells her in between kisses, “You are so beautiful, Kara…built just like a goddess.”

Kara’s whine turns into a strangled groan when Lena’s lips close around one of her impossibly hard nipples, sucking and licking her tongue over the sensitive bud. Her hands come up to rub Lena’s shoulders and brush hair from her face as she presses her breast towards the greedy mouth that’s causing her body to tremble and heat to pool between her legs. Lena kiss her way over the other nipple and lavishes it with attention, enjoying feeling Kara writhing beneath her with pleasure. She’d been a little concerned that even with all the reading she’d done – and the couple porno’s she’d seen and dismissed as inaccurate – that she wouldn’t be able to make Kara feel good. But the breathy panting and little whimpered sighs tell her differently.
Wandering fingers press against her abdominal muscles, tracing the hard lines and soft curves delicately. Kara can’t help the smile as she’s caught Lena looking more than a few times at her muscles – especially when she purposely flexes them at the most opportune times like at the pool and the beach. Lena settles between Kara’s outstretched legs and continues her path downwards, tracing her tongue down Kara’s abs, something she’s daydreamed about doing a ridiculous amount of times. Smiling as she presses kisses along the flexing muscles she says playfully, “So I see you know one of my weaknesses.”

“Trust me, I noticed and even took advantage,” Kara can’t help the huff of laughter, Lena licking down her abdomen is as ticklish as it is erotic, the image of Lena pressing a kiss at along her hip before slipping her panties down her legs makes her pulse skyrocket.

Lena discards the soaked underwear as she settles down and guides Kara to part her legs further, guiding a knee over her shoulder as she asks, “Is this okay?”

“As long as you’re okay,” Kara assures, tenderly brushing her fingers through Lena’s hair.

Lena kiss the knee resting against her shoulder and smiles softly as she assures, “Just relax and let me know what you like.”

“I like anything you do,” Kara blurs out, blushing a bit as Lena teasingly trails soft kisses along the inside of her thigh. Sighing Kara relaxes back into the pillows, but her hands grip the sheets beneath her too hard when Lena finally kisses her where she desires it most – the fabric bunching and fraying under her nails as a needy moan tears from her throat unbidden, “Fuck…Lena.”

Lena smiles to herself, draping an arm over Kara’s waist to keep her from bucking her off the bed in her excitement. Using a couple fingers to part her lip she licks at the clit that’s stiff with arousal and Kara nearly shouts as she arches off the bed the sensations running across her nerves is simply just white, hot pleasure.

“Shit…” Kara grumbles, feeling herself reaching climax much sooner than expected. She tries desperately to calm down and make it last – seeing, hearing and feeling Lena had already gotten her more riled up than she can ever recall being before. Just as she thinks she’s got a handle on things Lena reaches up and guides her hand to her hair, causing another heady spike of arousal to shoot through her body and she whimpers, “Lena…”

Kara clutches at Lena, surprised that Lena doesn’t seem to mind when she threads her fingers in her hair and holds her in place, undulating her hips a small bit to increase the friction. After a few moments she’s starting to reach the point of no return, feeling the pressure building towards a beautiful crescendo from all the sinfully delicious things Lena’s tongue is doing to her. A few more moments and Kara’s body goes taunt, her head thrown back and mouth open in a silent scream as she comes undone – trembling and grasping as Lena guides her through it. Lena crawls up beside Kara, drawing her into a gentle hug and pressing a kiss to her temple as she asks, “You still with me?”

Kara nods, for a second she’s not sure if her brain is working again or not, but she mumbles out, “Yeah, I think my brain short circuited for a second. Wow…just, wow.”

Lena laughs softly as she settles in to lay her head on Kara’s shoulder, enjoying the afterglow cuddles as the storm finally rolls in off the ocean. Lightning flashing and brightening the room so bright for a second that it almost hurts their eyes before being followed by a slow building roll of thunder. The two of them lay together quietly for a while, just listening to the sounds of each other’s soft breathing and the rain against the window. As it starts to grow dark outside and the roar of thunder starts to fade along with the faint flashes of lightning the two get dresses in sweats and try to
tidy up the room.

Heading down stairs Kara opts to pile up pillows and blankets in front of the television while ordering a couple pizzas over the phone. Lena looks through the Danvers’ movie selection and immediately picks out Wall-E and shows it Kara who nods with a grin. Kara’s seen the movies a half dozen times already but she can tell by the way Lena’s eyes light up and she reads the summary on the back of the case that she hasn’t seen it yet. The two are making milkshakes using the blender and cleaning up the mess when the pizza arrives. Kara teases Lena as they eat and watch the movie, finding her love of the little robot adorable. Half way through the movie Lena curls up to Kara as they talk back and forth about how cool space travel would be and that neither of them would be able to sit still on such a cool ship. Halfway through the next movie – Kara insists on watching the Incredibles – Lena falls asleep on her shoulder and when the credits start to roll Kara too is sound asleep.

When Eliza and Jeremiah return from a late night, the two enter the house a little wary as it’s unusual for it to be so quiet with Kara home. The television is on and menu screen for the movie is still up as they round the sofa to see the two girls are sound asleep. Kara’s snoring softly, cheek resting against Lena’s head and an arm around her shoulders. Eliza just shakes her head with a small smile and picks up one of the quilts on the back of the couch, very quietly draping it over the two girls. Jeremiah chuckles as he whispers to his wife, “Oh to be young again. If we slept like that on the floor we’d have trouble getting up in the morning.”

Chapter End Notes

So, there it is! Hopefully it came off as romantic smut with feelings as I was aiming for. Let me know what you think and have a great week, thanks for reading!
Back to the Grind

Chapter Notes

Note: Oh my god, I'm sorry I haven't updated in a week! I've been in the hospital this week and I really meant to have this chapter up a lot sooner than this. So apologies on the lateness and double apologies because there are probably some errors because I've been distracted and drugged up pretty good. Also, Happy Star Wars Day - May the Fourth be with You!

Warning: Uh, some angst because of the Luthors, and another apology for making Lena cry. I'm an awful person.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

That Sunday Jeremiah and Eliza take them to the small pastry shop – charmingly named Busy B’s Bakery – for breakfast where Kara consumes a staggering amount of food. In the time it took Lena to eat her Bavarian cream kolache and the miniature cinnamon roll Kara had packed away a couple sausage roles, one of each flavor kolache, a cinnamon bun and was currently begging Eliza to get a few more cinnamon rolls to take back to the school with her. Eliza insists that Kara’s going to end up with diabetes from all the sugar and lack of vegetables that she eats on a regular basis. Jeremiah however comes back to the table with a box of treats, holding them just out of reach of Kara as he makes her promise to share some of them with Lena and her sister. Kara grudgingly agrees to share them with Lena, but makes no such promises of sharing with Alex, clutching the box to her chest like it was some ancient, long-lost treasures instead of pastries.

As it turns out only three cinnamon rolls survive the drive to the school, even though Eliza and Jeremiah take them to lunch in the town near the school. As the get closer and closer to the school Lena starts to feel like she did the first time she arrived at the school – like she’d rather be anywhere but here. Except this time, she would rather they just turn the car around and go back to Midvale. While Jeremiah and Eliza’s genuine interest in her life had been surprising at first she now finds that she craves it, just like she used to work so hard to garner even slighted attention and affection from Lillian. But the Danvers were quick to offer kind words of support and encouragement, and it was like a warm balm for her wounded soul. Now that she knows what it’s like to have people care for you without any ulterior motives she knows she’s going to miss it dearly.

Kara seems to notice her spike in anxiety and takes her hand in her own, giving her what she hopes is an encouraging look as they pull up beside the dorm. Alex and Maggie are in the courtyard talking with Maggie’s Aunt, the older woman is smiling at the two young women, listening intently as they talk about what’s going to be going on at the school in the next few weeks. Lena pulls on her jacket before collecting her books and her duffle bag from the trunk, not saying anything as she mulls over what she needs to do to get her mind focused back on schoolwork. Kara is already talking about the upcoming games and the RoboCup, but Lena’s still thinking about the last couple of days at the beach, the warm kindness of the Danvers, and of course the wonderful intimate evening with Kara.

“Hey, you okay?” Kara asks, concerned blue eyes meeting Lena’s as she rubs her shoulders gently to try and help her feel more grounded.

“Yeah,” Lena says softly, tucking her books into her duffle bag as Alex, Maggie and her aunt greet
the Danvers. She watches them all interacting and is glad to see that Alex and Maggie’s weekend had gone well, how well she isn’t sure she nor Kara really want to know but she’s happy for them all the same.

Lena’s trying not to shuffle about anxiously as Eliza kiss Kara goodbye and tells her to remember to study. But the older woman takes Lena’s shoulders in her hand and looks at her gently as she tells her, “Keep up the good work, Lena, and good luck at the RoboCup.”

“Thank you, Ms. Danvers.”

“Eliza will do just fine,” Eliza reminds gently, drawing Lena into a warm embrace and feels the girl hugs her back as well. She knows what an abused and neglected child looked like, and even though Lena doesn’t have any bruises and isn’t malnourished like some of the children at the hospital it didn’t mean she hasn’t suffered. Patting the girl’s back she draws back and looks at her seriously and tells her earnestly, “If you need anything, anything at all, you call me or get Kara to call me. Okay?”

Lena feels the tears welling up in her eyes and while she has so much she wants to say – to thank her for caring and for the amazing weekend – but words fall her. All Lena can do is just nod that she understands as she uses her sleeve to wipe away the tears before they can trail down her cheeks. She feels Kara take her hand and lead her back towards the dorm and up to their room – grateful when they both curl up on her bed. Kara brings over her pillows and blanket to Lena’s bed before turning on her laptop and putting on Star Wars – A New Hope which make Lena smile as she curls up against her.

Alex however is trying to get back to school life, answering the many questions her mother and father are asking – how was her weekend, did she and Maggie have fun, was she still doing well in calculus? Maggie is gracious and tells her parents a few of the things they’d done over the weekend, while she tries to look as calm and neutral as possible. She really hopes she doesn’t look as flustered and over joyed as she feels on the inside – especially after the last couple of nights with Maggie. As if the other girl knows what she’s thinking Maggie looks at her with that wicked, charming grin and asks, “Isn’t that right, Alex?”

Alex gives them a perplex look and realizes that she hasn’t been keeping up with the conversation and has been caught daydreaming, as she squeaks, “What?”

“We had fun this weekend, right?” Maggie asks with a knowing little smirk that threatens to melt Alex on the spot as she flushes bright red.

“Oh, uh, yeah. We had a lot of fun this week, which is great since mid-terms are coming,” Alex fumbles out barely, and luckily her parents haven’t said anything despite their wiry smiles and snickers. She feels like she could just die of embarrassment if it weren’t for the fact she’d never get another weekend away with Maggie if she expired right here.

Eliza takes pity on her oldest daughter and pulls her and Maggie both into a hug, “I’m glad you two had a nice weekend, we’re proud of both of you. We’ll see you at the upcoming games.”

Alex groans as she hugs her dad, she’s not sure if she can put up with another embarrassing couple hours of her parents cheering for her in the stands. Maggie however beams at them and assures them they should stop by for future games more often – not just because seeing Alex so flustered is cute but it’s also nice that when the Danvers go to Kara’s games they cheer for her too. As Alex turns around to head into the dorm with Maggie, she overhears her father chuckling softly with her mother. But what he says next has her cheeks aflame and Maggie trying to stifled her laughter, “Well, at least we don’t have to worry about bad boy boyfriends, or worse, teen pregnancy.”
“Jeremiah!” Eliza scolds as Alex has given them an equal parts mortified and angry glare of her shoulder, she can’t help but laugh as she gives her daughter an apologetic look while pushing her husband towards the car.

Maggie just wraps an arm around Alex’s shoulder and guides her back to the dorm while laughing at the red head’s predicament as she agrees mildly, “Well, he’s kind of right.”

The next few days take a little bit of adjustment to get back into the swing of school life, but soon enough mid-term exams have come and gone and the sports season is getting ready for several playoffs. The weekend of the RoboCup preliminaries has snuck up on them and Kara and Lena spend a lot of evenings fine tuning Krypto and the other robots handling skills and playing tactics. The morning of the competition finds Lena anxiously going over all the lines and lines of code she’s written for the last few months to make sure she hasn’t missed anything. She knows it’s ridiculous as she and the team have already gone over all the fine details and the competition handbook multiple times just to ensure they won’t be disqualified.

But still she’s awake early this Saturday, texting with Jess about a few details of the competition and the travel details since a few of her friends were going to come and show support. She chuckles as she thinks to herself that this is as close to Kara coming to one of her games as she’s going to get – to which she’s grateful the robots will be doing all of the running. Kara, Alex, and Maggie are all up early and are more than willing to help the robotics team – which Maggie dubbed ‘the NerdCorp’ and the team lovingly adopted – pack up the bots and computers on the bus.

Dr. Morrow is impressed that the team is actually going to have a sort of cheer section, wondering if this means that he’ll have more girls interested in tech soon. He manages to get them all on the school’s bus and checks they’ve got everything before giving the driver the okay to head out. On the drive some of the girl’s sleep – mostly Alex and Maggie – but the rest are chattering and going over YouTube videos posted by their competition. After a couple hours, as the sun starts to come up they arrive at the National City Convention Center and Morrow announces, “Alright, we better get moving, the bots first match is at 9am and we’ve got to check in with registration.”

Soon enough Lena and Jess are booting up the laptops while their teammates put the robots on the miniature soccer field and turn them on. Like they’ve practiced dozens of times in the last week they go through their pre-game checks and do a quick practice run of the code. At 9am sharp the ref blows the whistle and the bots start their battle with each other over the mini soccer ball. Bot 4 – or as Chloe called him ‘Weirdo’ – picks the pocket of their opponents leading bot and tosses it to Krypto. The bots race back and forth down the field stealing the ball, passing it and sometimes shooting on goal. Jess’s bot – Dotty – scores the first goal and they all cheer and the girls on the team are relieved to see that the programming is working well.

In the stands Kara is having a marvelous time watching all the bots work cooperatively to try and play a miniature game of soccer – it honestly kind of reminded her of the games she went to when Alex was younger. The small girls clumped together around the soccer ball and clamoring after it when it would get kicked away. When Weirdo and Krypto score Kara cheers, even Alex starts to cheer by the second score as her love of soccer gets the better of her. Maggie knows it must have taken a lot of work for Lena and her teammate to get the robots working but it doesn’t stop her from cheering, “Go you nerds!”

The first match is a knuckle biter, but NerdCorp comes out on top 7 – 6 and the celebration is short lived as they only have a short amount of time to check over the robots and get ready for their next match. But Lena notices a familiar face in the audience she hadn’t expected to see – the little boy however is out of his seat and running towards her with a bright grin on his face.
“Lena!” Winn shouts as she reaches her, throwing his arms around her waist and laughing happily when she picks him up and swings him around. “You guys totally kicked butt!”

“Hello, Lena,” Winn’s mother greets, “We weren’t sure we were going to make it but Winn insisted he had to see the match and this robot of yours.”

“You want to see, Krypto?” Lena asks Winn and her heart melts a bit when he gives her a pleading happy look while nodding furiously. She carries him towards the robots that Jess and the other are clearing for the next game and introduces him to the girls before sitting him down in her chair and bringing Krypto over.

Kara’s watching in awe as Lena shows the boy just how the robots are able to play the game and the code that makes them work. Her sweet girlfriend had told her all about the little boy that was so inquisitive and was just pleased as punch to hear about all the boring coding and robot testing. Seeing her now with the child warms her heart and leaves her with feelings she’s not sure she understands. Beside her Alex is giving her a wary look but doesn’t say anything – clearly not wanting to think about her sister’s love life. Maggie however has no qualms in remarking, “Keep it in your pants, Little Danvers.”

“Maggie!” Alex squawks while slapping her arm, clearly not wanting to hear her girlfriend discuss her sister and Lena’s sex life.

“That’s not… I wasn’t…” Kara fumbles for words as she watches Lena pick Winn up and set him in her lap as she types on the laptop. It would seem that she’s going to let the boy see the match up close and also show him the behind the scenes of how it works. “She’s just such an amazing person… sometimes I don’t think I could love her any more than I already do… then she goes and does something else that’s just so sweet and kind.”

“Oh you got it bad, Baby Danvers.”

“The cute kid probably doesn’t help,” Alex says with a grin as she nudges Kara, knowing her sister has a soft spot for kids being quite the big kid herself.

“So, how many little Danvers-Luthor’s are going to be running around?” Maggie keeps teasing, watching as Kara bluses a deep shade of crimson and she knows she’s hit her target. Seeing Lena being so sweet – maternal even – with the small boy had made Kara think about the possibilities of having a family and it would seem the idea was very much appealing to her.

Beside her Alex groans and rubs her temple in frustration, “None anytime soon, hopefully?! At least let me get through med school first, please Kara.”

Kara doesn’t bother to answer as the match starts, she really doesn’t feel like having to explain that she and Lena have only just discussed plans for college and careers. Luckily the two of them wouldn’t have to worry about accidentally getting pregnant, but Kara does wonder if Lena would want kids in the future – and more importantly would she want them with her. Kara sits silently contemplating this as she watches Weirdo take an unusually hard hit that damages his drive system. This game is much rougher than the last one, their opposing team gets two yellow cards and a red card in the first half of the match. But the damage was done as well – Weirdo – was limping about the field still trying to run interference but not capable of much else. Krypto steals the ball and nudges one of its adversaries a bit roughly and is awarded a yellow card and warning that the next time it will be a red.

“Aww come on ref, he just bumped the other bot!” Kara argues from where they’re sitting, and she thinks she sees Lena cover her mouth to keep from laughing. Lena peeks over her shoulder to give
Kara a wink, Winn popping up over her shoulder to wave at Kara who can’t help but wave back.

At the matches end their opponents – a group of boys from the local private school – are out two robots to red cards and end up losing 8 – 4 advancing NerdCorp to the quarter finals that take place after lunch. Lena wishes Winn well, introducing him and his mother to Kara, Alex, and Maggie – Winn just gushing about everything he’s learned even though he’s blushing at all the attention from the girls. Lena promises to send him updates about the next couple matches before joining the rest of them in clearing the arena before Morrow sets them loose on the food court. The girls mainly talk about strategies over piles of fries and slices of pizza – Lena passing around her phone with video of the mornings match of their upcoming opponents. Kara insists on getting cookies and ice cream to celebrate their first two wins, and Lena just smiles happily and accepts an ice cream sundae.

As lunch winds down Morrow lets them walk around to see some of the expo stuff that’s on display and catch a few glimpses of matches with difference classes of robots. Everyone agrees to go and watch the match with humanoid like robots but Lena’s thinking of a couple algorithms she wants to add before the next match – thinking that it could give them an edge against the other school’s aggressive offense tactics. After excusing herself she heads back to their staging area and opens her laptop. She puts in the couple lines of new code but before she can turn on Krypto to test them she hears footsteps approaching. Thinking it’s Kara she turns to look at her while saying, “I swear this is just going to be boring coding…”

Instead of Kara she turns to see Lex and her words die on her lips as she takes in his appearance nervously. The last time she’d seen him was more than six months ago when Lillian had picked him up from the police station in Metropolis and quickly taken him to one of their homes in the countryside so he could have some peace and quiet – and also to get him out of the limelight. But the visage of the man before her is startling – he’s ghostly pale and his gaunt complexion shows just how much weight he’s lost while they’ve been apart. It would seem he’s decided to shave his head to get rid of his thinning hair and there are dark circles under his similarly green eyes that are glassy and unfocused. He’s dressed in his usual trousers and smartly pressed oxford shirt – a Harvard cardigan half buttoned – but it does little to mask his sickly appearance.

Lex gives her a soft smile as he approaches, “Hey little sister, not expecting to see me?”

“Lex?” Lena says so softly it’s not even a whisper, her heart breaks at seeing him so unhealthy and broken. Despite her wishes she still holds some affection for her brother – he was the only one who had made her feel welcomed, even loved, when she’d first entered the Luthor household. She feels a pang of guilt as well – loving someone who has caused other people so many pain, including herself. “What are you doing here?”

“I came to check up on my little sister,” Lex says with a tired smile, “I just wanted to see how you were settling in and figured this would be the best time and place.”

“What about Harvard?” Lena asks, worried that Lex was missing school and also looking around cautiously as she expects to see Lillian coming around the corner at any second.

“I’m on a break,” Lex supplies easily and despite how calmly he says it Lena doesn’t believe him and wonders if something is going on that she doesn’t know about. As he comes closer he sees Lena try to hesitantly take a step back so he stops moving towards her, quickly assuring, “I just wanted to come see you, check on you. I’m glad to see you’re still doing well, your programming skills were clearly on display in the last match.”

“Yes, it’s been going well,” Lena hedges nervously, she can’t help the anxiety that’s rising in her chest as she keeps waiting for Lillian to appear. She knows if she does it’s going to be bad and she not sure she can handle the disappoint and mean spirited rebukes she’s likely to get from the woman.
who is supposed to be her mother. Tears are starting to sting in her eyes, heart hammering so hard in her chest that it’s starting to hurt, as she decides to ask weakly, “Is…is Lillian here with you?”

Lex gives her a sympathetic look as he moves closer, but Lena flinches a bit and he sighs softly. Reaching out again he offers her his hand, hoping desperately that she’ll take it, “She’s not here – business meeting in Metropolis.”

Lena looks at him hesitantly, trying to calm down as she reluctantly takes Lex’s hand allowing him to guide her to chair before sitting down next to her. Tenderly her rubs her shoulders while talking to her quietly, trying to keep her from panicking like the many times he’d witnessed in the past. Lena’s shaking and he takes off his cardigan and wraps it around her shoulders as he tells her, “There’s some things I need you to know, Lena.”

Lena’s heart seems to stop and her breath hitches painfully in her chest, her trembling getting worse and she meekly tries to protest, “Please, Lex…don’t. I don’t…I can’t…”

Lex just wraps an arm around her shoulders and tries to calm her. He knows there isn’t much time before they have to part ways and there’s so much he needs to tell her – even if he doesn’t quite know how to put it into words. Clearing his throat, he tries to tell her the many thoughts roiling around in his brain speaking softly and with a tone tainted with regret and sorrow, “I just need you to know that there are going to be things that come out soon…about me, mother and Luthor Corp. I don’t think you could ever be ready, but I wanted you to know that I’m sorry…”

“What are you talking about, Lex?” Lena asks as her eyes start stinging again and she clutches her stomach as it twists uncomfortably. Her mind wandering to all the horrible possibilities that could be coming her way soon and all the things it could possibly ruin in her life – her place at Cabot School, her potential to go to college, and most precious of all – her relationship with Kara.

“I’ve already taken care of some things so you don’t need to worry, and I know that’s not going to make it any easier,” Lex tries to explain with great difficulty, Lena’s never seen her brother so upset and on the verge of tears before and it frightens her to the core of her being. When Lex wraps her up in a tight hug she can’t help but embrace him back tightly – taking in his scent and letting him card his fingers through her hair comfortingy. Lex whispers lowly, “Just know that Lillian won’t ever hurt you again…none of us will.”

Lex presses a soft kiss to her temple before pulling away and heading towards the door where Maggie and Alex are entering. Tears are starting to well up in her eyes as she calls out desperately to her retreating brother’s back, “Lex?!”

“Take care, Lena,” Lex replies calmly, forcing himself to purge away his emotions as he doesn’t even give her a last glance. If he looks back he won’t be able to leave, and he has to leave since it’s what’s best for Lena – he didn’t always protect her when he could have but he’s damn well going to protect her now. Passing by Alex and Maggie he doesn’t acknowledge them as he slips away and into the crowds.

Maggie is quick to rush to the side of the shaken girl; Alex however hangs back as if deciding if she should go after Lex or assist Lena. After a few moments Alex goes over to where Maggie has wrapped Lena up in a hug as she starts to cry quickly trying to comfort her, “Hey, hey, little Luthor it’s okay. You’re safe.”

Lena holds on to Maggie, her mind still reeling as she doesn’t understand what Lex is going to do or what’s possibly already been done. His unsettled appearance and demeanor along with the jilted and disjointed apology and half explanation ratcheted her anxiety to a whole new level. Alex is quick to ask, “Was that your brother? What did he want?”
“Now is not the time, Alex,” Maggie scolds softly, knowing that Lena was in no position to answer questions as the panic attack is keeping her from even forming words at the moment. Calmly she’s dealt with these before so she just rubs Lena’s back and gives Alex a job to take her intense focus off of Lena, “Hey, could you go get her a drink and find some tissues or something? Maybe get Kara?”

Alex thinks for a second before rubbing Lena’s shoulder tenderly before leaving to go and find the items Maggie requested. Maggie helps Lena put her arms in the cardigan she figures must be Lex’s and rubs her arms to try and calm her shivers as she continues to talk to her calmly – assuring her that she’s safe and that no one would hurt her here. When Alex comes back with a bottle of water and some tissues she tells them, “We’ve got about ten minutes before she’s need for the next match.”

“Plenty of time,” Maggie assures calmly as she offers Lena a sip of the water as Alex sits down on Lena’s other side and rests a hand over Lena’s. They can hear the chatter of Kara and the others approaching so Maggie just tells Alex to help them stage the robots for the match and she and Lena would catch up with them in a minutes. She guides the younger girl to the bathroom – glaring at the group of girls sitting by the sinks until they leave.

Lena wipes her eyes as the last of her sniffles taper off, Maggie wets a paper towel and tries to help Lena clean up. She gently cups the younger girl’s cheek and wipes away the remaining tears as she assures calmly, “It’s okay, you’re safe now, okay?”

Lena nods, trying to push back the thoughts of what Lex warned her about to the side and focus on getting through the rest of the competition. She couldn’t let her team down after how hard they’d worked – sure they already had a place at the regional competition but they deserved a first place finish. Still shaking she lets Maggie straighten her hair and button the cardigan as the last of her trembling dissolves. Maggie smiles warmly at her and assures, “You’re okay, and you’re going to go out there and kick ass.”

“Yeah,” Lena agrees softly, she knows that later Maggie, Alex and likely Sam will want to discuss what happened with Lex and she’s not sure she should worry them. It’s not like she understood what Lex was trying to tell her other than to expect trouble of a general nature.

“Hey, come on, you don’t have to think about Lex right now. I’ll keep the Danvers sister’s off your back about it, but when you’re ready you can always talk to us,” Maggie tells her seriously, smiling when Lena gives her a sheepish look at being read so easily. “We’ve got your back, kiddo.”

Maggie guides her back to the staging area and Lena picks up Krypto, the two of them seeing Alex and Kara shoot them identical protective and concerned looks. Maggie can’t help but snort while guiding Lena back to her group so she can take the field with the others before heading over to the fidgeting sisters.

“Is she okay?!” Kara and Alex basically ask at the same time, just with varying degrees of concern and panic.

“She’s fine, she just panicked and need some space to calm down,” Maggie assures as she takes them both by the arm to their usual spot in the arena and sits down. “Stressing out about it or pressing her to talk about is only going to make her clam up even more, so could you both please just calm your tits?!”

“Her brother was here,” Alex states firmly, clearly annoyed that Lex has shown up here and even more angry that his presence had upset the younger girl.

“He made her cry,” Kara says with a dark glower that makes Maggie worry for Lex should he ever cross paths with either of the sisters.
“She was upset, we have no idea what it was about but she’ll tell us – but only when she’s ready to tell us,” Maggie tells them firmly, she knows they just want to help but she’s looking out for Lena at the moment, “Lena’s dealt with some fucked up family dynamics, and trust me when I say that’s not easy to talk about. When you can’t talk to your family without being judged – or abused – it’s hard to open up to other people. She’s probably afraid to get hurt again, so pressing her to talk is only going to make her feel worse.”

Alex sobers up from her anger rather quickly, reaching over to take Maggie’s hand as she knows that her girlfriend has a difficult time opening up to her about things. A lot of her problems with being vulnerable come from being betrayed by her parents and having to deal with vicious, hurtful words after revealing an important part of herself to them. Kara also seems to understand that Maggie’s only trying to do what’s best for Lena so she hugs her fiercely, thanking her for looking out for Lena. They watch the match in silence, each of them carefully eyeing Lena for signs of distress as the robots continue to battle it out on the field. By the time the second half comes to an end, with the NerdCorp winning in a close 5-4 match none of them could tell Lena had been upset before as she cheers along with her teammates. The girls take the field to pick up their robots, giggling and shouting at each other happily. After the awards ceremony and briefing on the regional competition they’re all back on the bus and heading to a restaurant on the way back to school.

Once they return to the dorm, Lena sets Krypto on her desk and takes the medal from around her neck and puts it on the robot with a soft smile. She’s happy they won, but she still feels the tension in her neck and shoulders from the stress of wondering what Lex had told her about. While getting ready for bed she can sense that Kara is watching her carefully, having congratulated her on the win and didn’t even ask about what had happened between her and her brother. But even now she knows Kara is curious, giving her what she thinks are subtle looks of concern over the top of her book.

“You know you aren’t even being subtle anymore,” Lena tells her with an amused smile.

Kara pouts that adorable pout that would make Lena say yes to anything she asked, “I’m being subtle.”

“Not at all,” Lena laughs softly, switching off the light before going to her bed. She pats the empty space next to her and that’s all it takes for Kara to climb into bed next to her and spoon her gently.

“I was trying to be subtle, but since that’s not working I just want to say that I’m not going to bug you about what happened with your brother,” Kara tells her honestly, needing for Lena to know that she’s not going to pressure her to talk and that she just wants her to be comfortable talking with her. She presses a kiss to Lena’s temple and brushes her fingers through her hair as she confessing, “I just want you to know that I’m always going to be here for you, Lena. I’ll always protect you, okay? Always.”

Lena’s touched by Kara’s sweet sincerity and while she isn’t ready to discuss Lex – especially not curled up against Kara and halfway to sleep – she knows that when she feels like it she can. Quietly she whispers back, “Thank you.”

Chapter End Notes

Seriously, I should be back to updating more frequently. Rumor has it I get to go home
tomorrow *fingers crossed* which will be good because apparently hospitals are no place to get rest or be productive without getting jabbed or scanned every couple of hours.

May the Fourth be with You and have a great weekend!
The first couple days Lena doesn’t notice the chatter that happens around her when she enters a room, just thinking that she’s still skittish and upset by Lex’s unexpected visit at the RoboCup tournament. But this morning, as she walks into the dining hall she notices that a few of the girls’ glares at her as they huddle together and start to whisper with each other. Lena just ignores it as she picks up a carton of yogurt and a glass of apple juice before heading towards her usual spot with the others. She listens to Sam and Lucy talking about the next Model UN and the upcoming debates they were going to be involved with. Alex is half asleep and so is Maggie, so Lena doesn’t disturb them but Kara isn’t above teasing them.

Classes roll around and Lena can’t help but feel the other girls’ gazes burning along her back as she heads into computer science. The robots and coding projects keep her distracted for a while, and Jess is being so wonderfully kind and even cracking a few jokes to keep the mood light. On the way to lunch Lena gets a text from Lillian, a couple questions regarding Lex and what they’d discussed. She sighs heavily before typing in a message explaining that yes, Lex has visited her at a school function but that they really only talked about each other’s academic work. Seeing as Lex didn’t disclose his creepy, confusing warning to their mother she sure as hell wasn’t going to bring up. She wonders for a moment how her mother even knew that Lex has visited her.

During her next class she requests permission to be excused to go to the bathroom and while hiding in one of the stalls does a quick internet search of her brother. The latest news articles are mainly about his pioneering work for Luthor Corp in the field of bio-chemistry and a supposed FDA trial of a new drug for treating cancer patients. She’s known that their family company and its subsidiaries dabbled in a lot of things including pharmaceuticals and bio-medical engineering but she wasn’t aware of this new project – not that Lillian was ever really forthcoming with that type of information. Scanning over a few more articles and making mental notes about recent acquisitions and projects she clicks over to images and scrolls through tabloid photos of her brother and her family.

There, near the top of the image search results, she sees a photograph of Lex at the convention center in National City. A few more photographs crop up of him in the stands at the roboCup match, and then much to her horror images of Lex and her embracing in the staging area. She stares for a few minutes at the images – remembering the very disjointed and disturbing conversation she’d had with her brother. Him wrapping her up in his university cardigan, the same one that sits on the back of her chair in her dorm room, and hugging her as he apologized for things to come. She doesn’t want to know what the tabloids are saying, but it’s like a train wreck in motion – you can see the accident that’s going to happen and there are going to be casualties but at the same time you can’t pull your eyes away from the tragedy.

Clicking the link to the trashy website she sees the photos at full size with inflammatory captions pasted across the bottom edges. “Luthor Siblings United in National City.” “What Do the Luthor’s Have Planned Next?” “Double Trouble? Lex and Lena Luthor Together at RoboCup and Technology Expo.” All of the expose pieces are crudely written and of a very biased nature, while
most of the writers depicted her unplanned and very short lived reunion with her brother as if it was a nefarious meeting between two criminal masterminds. Most of the scandalous writers wonder if the two of them were going to be going on crime spree together like an incestuous version of Bonnie and Clyde – and not exactly the white collar kind. Lex’s school meltdowns and her father’s suicide were heavily featured in every story, usually to fuel the readers already skewed image of her family as deranged, power hungry lunatics. Which wasn’t necessarily untrue, she just wished they would leave her out of it.

Stowing her phone as her stomach flip flops uncomfortably, she now knows why everyone has started to treat her like some sort of diseased pariah. She heads back to class but she doesn’t really take many notes, she’s already gone over the next two weeks’ worth of materials so just decides to let it slide – musing over what it means for her and her future to be related to people that the media and most of the general public feared and loathed. She’s lost count the number of times a well-aimed brick or stone smashed their car window, or came careening into the living room of their home. Her father had screwed over a lot people with his Ponzi scheme and the illicit insider trading, and his business tactics before that, while not illegal, were very much unethical and often times hostile. She and Lex could hardly get any privacy when in public, having to keep up calm, stoic appearances while camera flashes blinded them and nosy reporters screamed over one another to ask questions.

Lena wonders how she was every going to make it out from under her family’s looming shadows and clear her name after everything that’s already happened. Lex’s unsettling apology also hangs heavy in her mind, fearing that her problems were just about to start rather than being at an end. She wonders what Lex and her mother have been keeping her in the dark about, what things they’ve been doing that would make Lex want to apologize and try to give her heads up about. Whatever is coming down the pike is likely going to be devastating if Lex thinks it will take out himself and their mother. As the class ends she mindlessly wanders to the next and later skips lunch, texting Kara that she needs some quiet and is seeking it out at the library.

The thinly veiled hostility and turmoil of her peers follows her to rowing as well, a few of the other girls giving her the cold shoulder. A second group of girls are watching her carefully – looking at her like they might look at a wild animal they expect to howl and lash out at them with a fury. Everyone refused to help her with her when she tries to prepare her boat to take advantage of their last day on the water. A warm front had gotten Ms. Willis to agree to the pleading that one day on the water couldn’t hurt. Lena abandons her usual boat and stands by the docks watching the other girls already on the water, Megan tries to talk her into getting in a good workout. But she’s already feeling nauseous and being out on the water likely wouldn’t help matters much.

Ms. Willis approaches and Lena cowers a bit in the taller woman’s presence, really not mentally prepared to get a brutal lecture. But instead the coach just takes her by the shoulders and tilts her head to look at Lena’s face, a scrutinizing look on her face as she tells her, “Hey kid, you don’t look well at all.”

“Not really,” Lena admits softly, still trying to have the willpower to maintain eye contact.

“Yeah, you look like you feel like shit,” Willis states plainly, picking up Lena’s bag and handing it to her, “Head over to the infirmary Luthor, I don’t want you barfing on my docks.”

Lena just nods, realizing that she’s being dismissed from rowing for the day and she’s not going to look a gift-horse in the mouth, mumbling, “Yes ma’am.”

Lena sighs softly, she’d been doing so well in rowing until today and then Willis had dismissed her a bit crassly. Making her way towards the dorm she’s unfortunate enough to see a few familiar faces on the path with her – Siobhan and a couple other girls that are watching her carefully as she slows...
down her pace. Looking back over her shoulder she feels a spike of fear making her breath catch in her chest as she glimpses Victoria with that familiar vicious grin on her face with a couple other girls. Lena realizes now that she’s blocked in between the empty game fields and the thinly populated academic buildings. She’s also very aware that she’s alone - none of the friendly faces she’s used to are anywhere in sight.

“So, this is the Luthor girl?” one girl asks incredulously, as if she doesn’t believe the worried looking waif of a girl in front of her could be a Luthor. Lena backs away from the taller girl and Siobhan who’s beside her, but she feels herself bump into a strong, taller body behind her.

“She doesn’t look like much, it looked like she was crying in that news print with her brother.”

Lena feels the blood drain from her face as she knows just where this situation is going – she’s going to be ambushed and there’s nothing she can do about it. Her family name has gotten her into an unsettling situation she’s not sure she can get herself out of without things getting ugly. Turning around she’s looking up at Victoria as she feels her bag slip from her shoulder and hit the ground beside her feet. When she reaches down to get the bag it’s yanked away from her hands and she decides to cut her loses and just get away as quickly as she can manage. Trying to make her way through the crowd she’s met with resistance, hands grabbing at her wrists and others shoving her back against the fence along the sidewalk – the rough chain links digging into her back painfully.

“So you want to give them an explanation?” Victoria asks calmly, looking very much like a cat that’s toying with its prey – elegant, graceful and calm but still sinking its claws in deep. Around them a few of the other girls are angrily murmuring amongst themselves, having already decided that Lena is a threat that must be dealt with.

“I don’t know what you’re talking about,” Lena tells her trying to remain calm and collected, looking for anyway to get out of this volatile powder keg before it blows with her in the middle. She tries to keep her voice from trembling as she demands, “Victoria, what’s going on?”

“She looks scared.”

“She should be.”

Victoria tries to smooth a hand up and down Lena’s arm but the younger girl slaps it away violently, making her tsk at her like one would a small child. The other girls are getting more and more agitated and rough hands are grabbing and shoving even more after she’d slapped away Victoria’s hand. The older girl doesn’t seem fazed in the least, just smirking as she says in a syrupy sweet tone one would use with an old friend or lover, “Don’t be like that, sweet pea. They just want to know what happened with Lex, you know he hurt quite a few people at your last school. After that news article showing the two of you at the RoboCup we’re interested in knowing what the two of you are up to now.”

Lena balks at the nickname but doesn’t dare say anything for fear of sparking the girls’ tempers – she hopes that she can diffuse the situation however unlikely that may be. She brings her hands up in front of her, holding them out carefully to show them she doesn’t mean them any harm. But rough hands keep pushing her back against the fence and bruising, grasping hands are grabbing and scuffing her arms.

“What, no answer? Cat got your tongue?” Victoria asks in light, teasing tone that’s anything but, she just stands watching as the others move closer towards Lena in a blur of motion and angry questions and accusations starting from the group. She laughs as she sees the dawning look of horror on Lena’s face as the other girls press in on her – this really was much more interesting that making those little kids fight. She smirks, encouraging the one-sided grudge match, “Well, go ahead ladies. You best
get your hits in while you can.”

Maggie and Alex can see the altercation from the top of the hill, wondering why so many girls are grouped together so close and with such a loud commotion. Both have a bad feeling that’s confirmed when one of the girl’s rears her fist back and strikes someone else. The two of them are breaking into a run, making it to the group just in time to start pulling people away from each other. Curled up on the ground in the middle of the fray with arms up to protect her head is Lena, shuddering and trying not to make a sound. Alex is growling at all the girls to back up as Lucy and Sam show up – both look confused but upon seeing Lena curled up on the ground they both help Alex break apart the group. Sam runs to the nearest academic building to try and find one of the faculty members to report the incident and get additional help on the scene quickly.

Soon enough Ms. Willis and Mr. J’onnz are there and sorting things out and making the dreaded phone call to Ms. Grant. Alex has knelt down next to Lena at the same time as Ms. Willis, both are taken aback by Lena’s appearance. Despite the nasty bruise blooming under her eye and a bleeding split in her bottom lip she isn’t crying – though her lip quivers violently there aren’t any tears in her eyes. Instead she’s just staring off blankly – not hearing or seeing anything that’s going on around her – a defense mechanism when the brain can no longer comprehend what’s happening to it.

“Lena? Lena,” Alex asks softly but Lena doesn’t answer, she’s sad and upset for Lena but more than that she feels an overwhelming, fiery rage at the girls who did this. She knows that Ms. Grant will deal with the culprits but that doesn’t stop her initial urge to smash her fists into a few faces just for good measure. She also knows that she’s going to have to reign in Kara when she finds out about this, her sister would be upset and angry but in the end she would regret it if she actually hurt someone. Alex, however, doesn’t feel the same way at the moment.

“Hey kiddo,” Willis tries a firmer tone to try and snap the girl out of her episode, but feels bad when her tone just makes Lena tremble involuntarily. Sighing softly, she reaches out to try and comfort the young woman, but when she rests her hand over Lena’s the girl recoil violently with a cry of pain. Very tenderly she takes Lena’s left arm in hand and pulls back her sleeve to see black and blue bruises marring the pale skin of her wrist and knows this is going to be a job for medical. Ruffling the girls hair she tells her as gently as possible, “Okay, time for a trip to the infirmary, kiddo. Someone should take a look at that wrist.”

“Leslie, J’onn. I want the culprits in my office and a clear understanding of what happened ready for me by the time I get back,” comes the authoritative tone of Cat Grant who has just arrived. The woman is in her usual pristine attire and high heels, she’s all business including the cool, scrutinizing look she gives the rather guilty looking mob of girls. Calmly, she has a private word with Leslie before she orders calmly, “Ms. Danvers senior, help me get Ms. Luthor to my car.”

“Yes ma’am,” Alex answers quickly and gingerly helps Lena to her feet, picking up the girl’s bag and putting it over her shoulder before wrapping and arm around Lena’s shoulders. Lena now has tears welling up in her eyes as Alex guides her towards the main hall, following Ms. Grant to her car and once there settling Lena in the passenger seat and buckling her in as she’s having difficulty moving without pain. Alex kneels next to her for a moment and does what she does for Kara when she’s hurt or sick, rubs her shoulders and talks to her kindly, “Hey, Lena, it’s going to be okay.”

“Alright, Ms. Danvers, I need you to inform your House Mistress that I’ll be taking Ms. Luthor to the children’s hospital. If she’s released this evening I’ll escort her back to the house myself,” Cat informs the older Danvers girl calmly, watching as she pats Lena on the shoulder gently before shutting the door and heading quickly for her boarding house. Cat quickly shifts the car into gear and heads to the local children’s hospital, worried that her young charge may be seriously injured despite being so quiet.
Alex watches the car go out of view before she heads back. Kara has found her way to the scene where Lena was viciously ganged up on and judging by the way she’s causing a stir she’s aware of what happened. It also appears that there was already a secondary altercation as Maggie and Sam are holding Kara back as she screams at a crying Siobhan. Ms. Willis is yelling for the girls involved in the altercation to get moving towards the main hall without talking or any further outbursts. Mr. J’onzz has silenced Kara and the others with a shout before calmly informing them to go back to their house. Alex, still trying to process what’s going on now, just grabs her sister by the wrist and keeps walking towards their dorm while calling over her shoulder, “I’ll take care of it, coach. Come on, Kara.”

Kara huffs angrily, but doesn’t put up much resistance as Alex drags her towards the dorm with Maggie and Sam in tow. Lucy joins them as they get back to the house, Ms. Ellison already waiting for them – the older woman orders the other girls to head up to their rooms to get ready for dinner. She singles out Alex, Maggie, Kara, Sam and Lucy – informing the four older girls that they were going to be need to give statements about what they witnessed. After a lecture on how important it is to be honest and a few questions about what they’d seen take place everyone but the Danvers sisters are dismissed. Lucy is quick to leave, Sam giving the two a look that wishes them luck as she follows too. Maggie, being the quiet support they both need, pats them both on the shoulder before taking her leave.

In the following quiet Alex takes the moment to inform Ms. Ellison that Ms. Grant had taken Lena to the hospital and the look of fear and sadness that passes over her sister’s normally happy, sunny features makes her heart hurt. The older woman looks a little shocked and saddened by the news but quickly tries to assure both of her charges that she’d let them know whenever Lena returned to the school. However, Kara gets a warning about her behavior – having clearly done something out of line while trying to figure out why those girls done such a cruel thing to Lena. Kara just mumbles that she’s sorry – but Alex knows that that’s the tone of voice and posture Kara takes when she’s just trying to get through the punishment lecture. Another 100 lines about proper conduct get added to her already busy workload but she just shrugs and mutters another unrepentant apology.

Once dismissed the two are quick to head upstairs, finding the other girls waiting in the stair well for them. Kara quickly asks her sister, desperation in her voice, “What happened to Lena? Is she going to be okay?”

“They mobbed her, I have no idea why but they did,” Alex says softly, still in disbelief about what’s happened, but the worried look in her sister’s eyes has her quickly informing her, “They roughed her up pretty good, but she’s at the hospital. Most likely a broken arm.”

Kara is silently brooding as she heads back to her room, taking Lena’s bag from Alex and putting it on her bed. She throws her own bag down on the floor a bit roughly as tears fill her eyes – the guilt in her chest is threatening to rise up and suffocate her. She should have been with Lena, should have been able to protect her from such a terrible crime. A few tears slip from blue eyes as she looks at the empty half of their room and thinks of Lena being alone at the hospital – she knows Lillian won’t show up and that Cat probably isn’t the most comforting person to be suck in the ER with. Taking out her phone she hits speed dial as she can’t contain the sniffles, listening to the line ringing before it’s picked up, she hesitates before asking softly, “Eliza?...Mom?”

On the other end of the line her mother has already picked up on the tears in her voice and quickly asks what’s wrong, but Kara starts to cry softly as she curls up on her bed. She listens as Eliza calmly walks her through a couple breathing exercises and lets her sobs taper off before she asks her daughter what’s wrong again. The words spill from Kara in a rush so much so that Eliza has to ask clarifying questions to find out what had transpired. Eliza listens as Kara tells her how worried she is that Lena could be seriously injured or that she’d be scared being alone at the hospital. By the time
there’s a soft knock at the door Kara’s calmed considerably, instead of Alex like she expected, Maggie is quietly letting herself in to her room.

Maggie watches Kara end her call and drop the phone down beside her, eyes red and puffy from crying. She sits down and pulls the younger girl into a hug, ruffling her hair as she assures, “It’s going to be okay, Little Danvers. Ms. Grant will make sure Lena’s taken care of and she’ll be back in no time.”

Kara just nods, hugging Maggie back fiercely, too exhausted and upset to really answer her friend. They sit in silence until it’s time for dinner, Alex and Sam stopping by to walk with them to the dining hall. All of them are quiet and contemplative as the have to deal with all the less than subtle stares and the whispers going on around them. It would seem the schools rumor mill has already gotten churning once again and they were now a part of the wild stories that are going to be running rampant until the school deals with the perpetrators and makes a statement during a school assembly.

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For Lena the drive goes by in silence as does the going through the motions of following the older woman into the emergency room, filling out paperwork, and getting wheeled to an exam room that has brightly colored polka dot wallpaper. She knows she should be concerned that she’s probably getting admitted to the hospital she volunteers at but she can’t seem to care at the moment. Cat Grant quietly gives her space when she ends up having to change into a hospital gown and suffer through a nurse tourniquet her arm and pressing around for a vein. She watches quietly as the nurse talks to her calmly, explaining what she’s doing and what’s likely to happen to her during her stay. Lena just continues to silently watch as the nurse slides the needle into the vein in her hand and draws blood before taping it into place.

Cat paces the hallway while making a few urgent phone calls, Lena can’t hear what she’s saying but judging by the way she’s gesturing it’s likely about her. The friendly nurse has brought back a couple ice packs, placing her arm on a pillow and gently laying the ice pack over it before gently cleaning up Lena’s split lip and the cuts on her hands and arms. Cat comes back in when the doctor on call shows up and checks Lena over, ordering an MRI to rule out a brain bleed and a series of x-rays to check for broken bones. Cat signs off on the paperwork to okay the testing in Lillian Luthor’s place and assures Lena that she will get to the bottom of this.

A radiology tech comes and takes Lena for imaging, the young man jokes with her lightly as he guides her through the x-rays – careful when he has to x-ray her aching ribs and the swollen, discolored arm. For the MRI he asks what type of music she likes and plays it so that she has something to distract her from the humming and thumping of the machine that makes the sharp pain behind her eyes worse. Once back in the exam room she ends up vomiting and begging for the lights to be turned down, dizzy with a headache setting in. Cat sits with her as the nurse gives her some aspirin and hooks up a bag of saline – she’s offered dinner but politely declines.

Cat encourages her to try to eat something, offering to get her assistant to bring her something more palatable than a sandwich and Jell-O. Lena again declines but before she can argue with the Headmistress that she really isn’t hungry in the least the doctor comes in and flips on the light, x-rays and other files in hand as he sits down on the stool facing Lena and Cat. He gives them a polite smile as he says, “So, we’ve got good news and we’ve got bad news, which do you want first?”

“Dealers choice,” Lena deadpans tiredly, shielding her eyes from the light.

“Well, good news first is that you don’t have a brain bleed or any bruising of the brain,” the man assures quickly, checking over the files as he asks, “You likely have a concussion – so you may be dizzy, confused, and have headaches for a few days. You have two broken ribs and you have a
fracture in your arm – the radius - so you’ll have to have a cast for about 6 – 8 weeks.”

“Will you be keeping her overnight for observation?” Cat asks calmly, as a nurse comes in with a bucket of water and packages of what she assumes are casting supplies.

“Yes, I’d like her to stay overnight just to make sure that there are no complications from the concussion or the broken ribs.”

Cat gently rests a hand on Lena’s shoulder, waiting until she makes eye contact with the girl before she asks softly, “Are you going to be okay if I step out into the hallway and make a few calls?”

Lena just nods, quietly watching as the doctor sets out a few rolls of soft padding. She shakily holds out her arm when he motions for her to, hoping that putting on a cast won’t hurt as badly as she imagines. The doctor must sense her nervousness as he asks while gently manipulating her arm and hand into position, “Have you ever had a cast before?”

Lena shakes her head, looking like she’s not sure if she should laugh or cry at the moment. The doctor gives her comforting smile then tells her, “It’s kind of every kid’s rite of passage to break something and to get a cool colored cast. So, kiddo, which color do you want?”

“Blue,” Lena says, thinking it wouldn’t be so bad if the cast was as blue as Kara’s eyes. Silently she holds her arms still and watches curiously as doctor wipes down her arm with alcohol before carefully putting a long tube of material over her arm and over her elbow.

“Sorry kiddo, but since it’s your radius you’ll have a full arm cast,” The doctor apologizes, winding rolls of cotton padding around her arm and hand, getting a nice protective layer. He starts to unpack fiberglass casting tape and dips the first one in water, wringing it and starting to wrap at the fingers. Lena just sighs as she watches him put on roll after roll of light blue fiberglass, up her forearm arm and over her elbow the cast ending midway up her upper arm. Lena thinks everything is going fine, but she about cries when he pressed gently on the cast over the fracture to make the cast hold – her vision darkening around the edges as her arm starts to throb, “Just breathe, we’ll give you something more for the pain.”

Lena just nods, squeezing her eyes shut she really wishes Kara was here with her right now. She stays still and keeps her eyes closed until she feels the doctor putting a sling around her neck and guiding her arm into it. After the doctor takes his leave, wishing her well, the nurse gives her an injection of something that makes are little flushed and tired but the pain in her arm melts away. Cat returns with a coffee in one hand and her phone in the other, and Lena can tell that she probably knows just what happened. Cat just takes a sip as she sits down and asks, “So, I just got off the phone with Ms. Willis and it appears I’ll be expelling several students including Victoria Sinclair. I just want to hear from you what happened because I have my suspicions they were downplaying today’s events.”

“I don’t know what happened,” Lena mumbles, looking at the IV that’s been placed in the top of her hand since she’s afraid to meet Cat Grant’s eyes. She rubs the cast on her arm, feeling her heartbeat in her aching arm as she tries making a feeble excuse, “I don’t remember…”

“That’s funny, if I recall correctly the doctor said you had a mild concussion not amnesia,” Cat remarks casually, but Lena can pick up the wry sarcasm in her tone. She would like to tell Ms. Grant that memory loss is a very common symptom of concussion just to be snarky, but that’s not the reason she doesn’t want to talk about what happened. Judging by Cat’s quirked eyebrow and the way her lips are pressed into a thin line she clearly knows that Lena would rather avoid talking. Instead Cat tells her seriously, “I’d like to have more information before I call your mother to explain why her child ended up in the hospital.”
Lena’s head jerks up to look at Cat with wide, frightened eyes that are filling with tears despite her wishes, she’s angry that her voice shakes as she practically begs the headmistress not to contact Lillian, “Please don’t call her, Ms. Grant…”

“It’s a matter of school policy,” Cat tries to explain, a bit baffled and at the same time despairing at Lena’s reaction to being told she was going to phone her mother. She knows mothers can be a pain in the ass – Lord knows hers was – but she’d still want her mother with her if she’d just been hospitalized by her classmates. She would want to be there if her child was injured at school, much less victimized by a gang of bullies, “If you were my daughter I would want to know you were hurt at school and that steps were being taken to ensure that the people who hurt you were punished and that it would never, ever, happen again.”

Lena wants to explain that Lillian Luthor doesn’t have a maternal bone in her body when it comes to her, and her way with Lex was even debatable. Lillian didn’t see them as children or her offspring, to her they were just pieces on a chess board – Lex was just a more valuable piece than she was. She also doesn’t feel like pointing out that Cat Grant is likely a very decent human being, which is something that Lillian could never hope to accomplish in this life time or the next. She can’t explain to the other woman that she doesn’t want her mom with her at the hospital because she would only make stressful time even worse. Her heart also won’t let her admit that Lillian had put her in the hospital herself a fair number of times. If she says these things out loud then they become real and then Ms. Grant would be required to do something about it. A part of her wants the truth to come out but she still feels like she’s not ready to make it real - she also doesn’t want to drag Cat Grant into the middle of her family’s mess either.

“Lena?” Cat asks quietly, trying to get the panicked girl’s attention and watches her hesitated momentarily before turning greens eyes on her. She can see the turmoil and worry but she has to ask anyway, “Lena, if I’m going to help you I need you to talk to me.”

Lena has tears welling up in her eyes but she’s biting her abused lip to try and keep them from falling – no only to save herself the humiliation but also to avoid making Cat Grant uncomfortable. She knows the other woman isn’t going to leave without an answer so with a shaky voice she tells her, “They cornered me about Lex, and I didn’t know what they wanted or what to tell them. I really don’t know who most of the girls are, just that Victoria kept egging them on. I just tried to curl up and protect myself as much as possible…I honestly don’t remember everything that happened…it just, happened so fast.”

Cat is silent for a moment, which makes Lena shift uncomfortably as she waits for a response still looking anywhere but at the Head Mistress. The bed shifts and she looks up to see Cat sitting on the edge of the bed facing her, feels when she rests a warm, gentle hand on her good arm as she tells her softly, “Okay.”

Lena’s starting to feel drowsy from the pain killers and wonders if that’s really all Cat has to say on the matter, but she lays back when Cat guides her too. Feeling a warm blanket being draped over her, too tired and disoriented to care that it should be awkward, not comforting, to have a teacher tucking you into bed. A few tears slip down her cheeks but they’re wiped away gently as she hears Cat speaking softly again, “You may need to give a statement at the police department tomorrow but don’t worry about that right now. You need to rest and you’ll probably have to stay in the infirmary for a few days when you get back to school. So don’t fret, just rest while I take care of the situation.”

Lena’s blinking sleepily, trying to stay awake but at Cat’s reassure that she can rest while the situation is dealt with she further relaxes. Cat would handle the girls that did this to her and she’d also handle Lillian with just as much ease. As Cat turns off the light and closes the door, taking her leave Lena lets herself give into sleep. Her last conscious thoughts are that she hopes that Kara is safe and
that the other girl knows that she’s going to be okay. The soft beeping in the background is oddly comforting as she curls up into a ball and hides herself under the covers, slipping into a drug induced sleep.

At the school the girls in Alcott House have been informed that Lena will be staying at the hospital but that she’s going to be okay. Kara, who didn’t eat much at all at dinner, sits through the last half hour of quiet study in her and Lena’s room staring at the empty desk with Krypto the robot sitting on it. She’d tried texting Lena but she heard the phone buzz from inside her girlfriend’s backpack so she just sighs and tosses her phone onto her bed and stares at the blank screen on her laptop. Not only did she not eat dinner but as study time draws to a close and she hears Alex and Sam in hallway calling for lights out she realizes that she hasn’t done any of her prep work and didn’t even both to work on the lines she got as punishment.

She just flicks off the lights and slips into some sweats, including the hoodie of hers that Lena always wears. It smells like the rose and bamboo scented soap that Lena has a preference for and Kara teases her about sometimes. She tosses and turns, not being able to sleep because she misses the soft sounds of Lena sleeping on the other side of the room. She also misses the feel of the smaller girl pressed against, head resting on her shoulder like on the nights Lena would slip into bed with her – or the nights that Kara would find her way over into Lena’s bed wanting to be close. After a few more agonizing minutes of tossing and turning she slowly creeps out of her room and the stairs – pacing a bit outside of the door marked with Alex and Maggie’s names on it. She starts to knock but stops, and hesitates a few more times before the door opens on its own.

Maggie is looking at her with a sleepy smile as she opens the door wider and tugs Kara in by sleeve, whispering, “Come on, Baby Danvers, we figured you couldn’t sleep.”

Kara feels a bit awkward, interrupting Alex and Maggie’s peace and quiet but Maggie just ruffles her hair before collecting her pillow from Alex’s bed. She smiles softly and leans up to kiss Alex gently before going back to her own bed, quietly wishing them a good night. Alex is drowsy as well, but she gently pushes Kara towards her bed, letting her worm her way under the covers before settling down beside her sister. Kara’s eyes are misty again and she immediately curls up to Alex, wrapping her in a tight hug. Alex wraps her arms around Kara and presses a kiss to the top of her head, whispering assurances, “Everything’s going to be okay, Lena’s safe right now and we’ll see her tomorrow.”

“Promise?”

“I promise, even if I have to sneak you out we’ll figure out something,” Alex promises and she really does mean it, if she had to take a hit to let Kara sneak off to see Lena she’d do it. She can’t stand to see Kara upset and hurting, it made her heart ache and she would do anything to make sure she didn’t say sad and mopey for long. It also seems that her promise is just what Kara needed to finally settled down and get some rest. Within moments Kara relaxes fully and her breathing quiets and evens out, Alex stays awake for a while – listening to both Kara and Maggie’s quiet breathing letting it lull her to sleep.
again I'm sorry for making Lena cry again. Hopefully having Alex and Maggie being awesome big sisters helps soothe everything.

I'll hopefully be updating soon, I have surgery next week and I'm hoping to post before then and I promise it will be a bit lighter than this chapter.
On the Mend

Chapter Notes

Everyone is supportive and protective of Lena, like she deserves. Some smut at the very end - yay, reunion sex. Other than that it's complete and utter fluff.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Lena grumbles as the nurses make their morning rounds, she’s informed that she’s being released from their care and can get dressed as soon as the nurse removes her IV. Sitting up she rubs sleep from her eyes with a tired groan, her head still throbs a bit but nothing compared to last night – she also suspects that it may also have something to do with being woken up every 2 or 3 hours to be poked and prodded. As a nurse comes in to remove the IV she looks at the clock, and after a couple seconds realizes that it’s verging on 8am meaning Kara and their friends are about to head off to their first class of the day. The nurse tapes a wad of gauze over the needle mark on her hand and pats her on the back, telling her warmly, “You can get dressed now and we’ll have you on your way soon.”

Lena mumbles a thanks as she gets out of bed and rummages around for her clothes one-handed and finds them in a chair beside the bed. She grimaces as she realizes her clothes are dirty, and the blood stains on her white oxford and tie likely aren’t going to come out. As she’s assessing how she’s going to get the bulky cast into the arm of her shirt without tearing it there’s a soft knock at the door. Quickly making sure her hospital gown isn’t exposing her rear end she calls out, “Come in.”

The door opens and a blonde head pokes into the room, anxious yet hopeful blue eyes find hers and Lena can’t help but feel relief. Kara quickly comes in, followed by Eliza which startles Lena for a moment. Kara’s already wrapping her up in a gentle hug and not letting go, Lena hugs her back with her good arm.

“Kara, let her breathe, sweetheart,” Eliza reminds gently, the doctor in her wants to check the dark haired girl over and make sure nothing was missed. She isn’t sure whether or not she expected Lillian Luthor to show up, but the lack of her presence makes Eliza bristle with anger. If Kara or Alex had been injured she and Jeremiah would have been at their bedside as soon as humanly possible. “Lena, how are you feeling?”

Lena shrugs a bit, feeling bad that Eliza had come all this way just for her, offering quietly, “Better than yesterday.”

Eliza moves closer, giving Lena a soft, gentle look as she reaches out and cups her cheek – carefully turning her head to get a good look at the bruising under her eye and the split lip. Lena lets her look over the cuts and bruises on her arm that are showing even more this morning after having time to bloom into various nauseating shades of browns, blues and black. Eliza looks at the cast with a sad look as she rubs Lena’s shoulders, “You’re still going to need a few days to rest, sweetheart. Did the doctor say if you had a concussion?”

Lena nods, feeling a warm, fuzzy feeling in her chest at Eliza’s care and concern, answering softly, “Yeah, a concussion but no bleed and a couple broken ribs.”
Eliza guides her into a gentle embrace, stroking a hand over dark hair, “We’ll wait with you for Ms. Grant to get here and I’ll stay until we get you settled in at the school infirmary.”

Lena nods, tears stinging in the corners of her eyes as she hugs Eliza back, whispering, “Thank you.”

“Of course,” Eliza says, brushing away Lena’s tears and tucking errant strands of dark hair behind her ear, “We brought you some clean clothes to change into, Kara why don’t you help her while I wait outside.”

As Kara backs up she quickly sets her bag on the bed and unzips it, telling Lena with a calm smile, “Comfy clothes, some sweatpants and a tee shirt. Your favorite hoodie of mine, some fuzzy socks and house shoes.”

Lena’s sniffs, still brushing away tears, truly touched by how lovely Kara and her family are. She reaches for Kara and sighs with relief when she tucks her face against Kara’s collar and lets her tears fall. Kara holds her tenderly, after hearing about the broken ribs she’s afraid to hurt her girlfriend by hugging her too hard. She’s also worried that Lena’s crying from pain and that something’s wrong so she asks quickly, “Lena? Are you hurting?...Do I need to get a nurse, or the doctor…or something?!”

Lena chuckles with a sniffle, drawing back and wiping her face on the sleeve of the hospital gown before pulling Kara closer and pressing her lips to Kara’s, ignoring the twinge of pain from her bruised, split lip. The kiss doesn’t last long, just a chaste brush of lips that lingers a few seconds before Lena tells her honestly, “I hurt all over but that’s not why I was crying. I’m just...so relieved to see you, to have you and your family care about what happened to me. So, happy tears.”

Kara visibly relaxes a bit with a smile, drawing Lena in for another soft kiss. From there she gently brushes her lips over the bruise under a pale green eye, to the small cut on her jaw, and the bruise visible on collar. Lena can’t help but smile at Kara literally kissing her boo boo’s to make them better, chuckling softly as she reminds, “You’re supposed to be helping me get dressed, love. As much as I’d like to continue this, I don’t think either one of us wants to be interrupted by your mother or Ms. Grant.”

Kara stops, her face scrunched up in horror as she thinks about what Lena just said, with a wiry grin she admits, “You have a point, but I’m not sure which would be worse at this point.”

Lena chuckles, but wheezes a bit as a sharp pain lances through her side causing her grab at her side. Kara is quick to guide her to sit down on the bed, pulling the chair over to sit as she pulls off Lena’s socks from yesterday to slip on the fuzzy green ones. She holds the sweatpants for Lena to slide her legs into them, helping her bring them up to her hips. Lena turns around and lets her unfasten the sling and take it off before untying the hospital gown, she can hear Kara’s sharp intake of breath and she knows her body must look like it was used as a punching bag.

Kara can feel a whole mix of emotions washing over her, anger and rage at the girls who did this to a fellow human being. A deep, overwhelming sense of sadness that causes tears to quickly flood her eyes and roll down her cheeks knowing that Lena must have been so scared during the attack and hurting much worse after it was over. Very, very tenderly she skims her fingers over Lena’s naked back, needing to feel her pulse just under the skin to know she’s alive and that everything is going to be okay. Quickly she brushes away her tears, leaning in she presses a gentle kiss to Lena’s bare shoulder before helping her push and pull the tee over the cast. Lena starts to chuckle softly again at the fight they had with shirt is mirrored by the hoodie and Kara’s even starting to laugh a bit too.

“I don’t know what I’m going to do about the uniform shirt,” Lena remarks with a relaxed smile and she pulls her hair out of the hoodie and tries to brush the undignified mess out with her fingers. Kara
helps her with getting the sling in a comfortable position before she sits down and toes on the house shoes. Patting the bed Kara sits down beside her, leaning against her and resting her head on her shoulder tiredly she muses softly, “Showering and everything is going to be a pain in the ass.”

“You’ll have to cover the cast too, but I’m sure Eliza is already on it,” Kara tells her, content to just sit here and hold Lena gently. For a while the two sit their unmoving, just breathing and listening to the sounds of the hospital bustling around them.

All too soon there’s a knock at the door, Eliza has returned with Cat and the discharge nurse. Cat raises an eyebrow at Kara who can’t help but offer a sheepish smile and blush profusely, she doesn’t even try to talk as she knows she’ll be a stammering mess. Cat just sighs softly, flicking her gaze to Lena and then back to Kara, clearly giving her a very pointed message to take care of her. The nurse just smiles and explains some of the discharge requirements and follow-up appointments that Lena will need to attend to in the next few weeks. The nurse has Lena look over instructions for caring for the cast and how to deal with the concussion symptoms. As the nurse leaves to get a wheelchair to take Lena out to the car Cat explains, “I know you probably don’t feel up to this, but we need to stop by the police department and file a report. Veronica and a couple of the other girls are 18 years old, so there’s the possibility there will be criminal charges.”

Lena’s mind has gone numb again, she knows that Veronica will somehow manage to get away with this too – her family is just like Lena’s, money and power cover a multitude of sins. At least for a while. But she just nods softly, not bothering to leave the comfort of Kara’s embrace. Eliza asks a few questions that Lena doesn’t hear as she aches to just curl up in bed again and sleep for several more hours. When Kara moves to get up she whimpers softly, but Kara quickly assures, “Hey, sleepyhead, you can get some rest when you get back. My mom and I will get the things you need for the next few weeks, okay?”

Lena nods tiredly with a frown, but she lets Kara go and allows herself to be wheeled out to Cat Grant’s car – grateful that she doesn’t have to walk with how much her ribs hurt. While her arm pulses with a deep, aching throb she finds that’s preferable to the sharp, stabbing pain that happens when she moves or breathes too deeply. As Cat starts to drive she pulls up the hood on Kara’s hoodie and lets it hang in front of her eyes to block out the light. Once at the police station Lena becomes anxious, fidgeting with the hoodie strings as she’s not sure what to expect as she and Cat wait in an interview room.

But all turns out well enough. A very kind, soft spoken female detective puts her at ease enough to start telling her what happened, Cat sitting beside her with an arm on the back of her chair protectively. Lena gives a very brief history of her family and that she’s experienced harassment for it before, it just never escalated to violence until yesterday. Cat is clearly upset to hear the details Lena shares with the police officer, the way they stopped her from leaving, struck her and even kicked her to try and inflict maximum damage in the short amount of time they had. The officer listens patiently and asks a few questions before putting Lena in touch with a victims’ assistance coordinator who talks about what happens if it goes to trial and other resources that Lena declines quietly.

On the way back to the school Lena falls asleep from exhaustion, and Cat waits to speak with her until they’re at the school infirmary. She guides Lena into the infirmary, greeting one of the five on-call nurses and asks to speak with one of the three doctors she’d hired to staff the infirmary. Lena finds the bed furthest away from the window overlooking the lake where Kara has already brought a few of her books and a duffle bag with clean clothing and toiletries. Cat notices that Eliza has already gotten cast covers and a reusable ice pack already ready, she’s also aware of the vase with flowers and a card that has girls’ neatly written get well messages.

Eliza guides Lena to get into bed, tucking pillows behind her to ease the pain from her broken ribs
before covering her with the covers. Kara’s quick to help her take off the sling and puts it on the
nightstand before propping up the casted arm on a pillow and placing the covered ice pack over it.
Cat can’t help but smirk at how Kara has to keep clenching her fingers into a fist to keep from
touching Lena in some fashion. The nurse and doctor check her over, going over the hospital
documents and checking on the prescriptions Lena was discharged with it. As soon as they’re
finished Cat decides that she needs to inform Lena of a few things, and would prefer to do so in the
presence of the two Danvers women. Taking a seat on the bed beside Lena’s she clears her throat
softly, earning curious looks from Eliza and Kara and a slightly more worried look from Lena.

“There’s a few things we need to discuss,” Cat starts off diplomatically, but keeps her tone soft,
“Clearly you’re going to be staying here for a few days, and I’ve spoken with your mother. She’s
signed off on whatever care you need.”

“She’s not coming is she?” Lena asks before she can even process why she asks such a ridiculous
question, but it just seemed to slip out. It’s not like she wants Lillian here, it was likely to make her
more miserable than she already is – but a part of her heart still held out hope that one day a flip
would switch inside Lillian and she’d be a warm, loving mother.

Cat hesitates and she feels a pang of sympathy but she knows Lena needs to know the truth and
would settle for nothing less, “No, she’s not coming. She said to give you her regards but she has a
meeting overseas she has to attend.”

Lena quickly hides the flash of sadness that passes over her features, which concerns both of the
adults present but neither say anything. With a well-manicured composure and a maturity that
surpasses her age Lena asks, “I’m guessing we also need to discuss the aftermath of what happened,
how the school is handling the expulsions and any announcements that need to be made.”

“Indeed,” Cat says softly, regarding Lena carefully as she explains, “In total nine girls are being
expelled, their parents were called last night and they have to be off the premises by this evening –
including Victoria Sinclair and Siobhan Smythe. I’ll have extra security posted to the infirmary while
you’re here to ensure your safety.”

Lena nods tiredly, doing her best to stay focused on what Ms. Grant is saying even though there’s a
familiar pressure at her temples. Kara’s beside her, listening intently enough for the both of them
apparently, having not moved or said anything other than reaching over to take Lena’s hand.

“As for informing the school of the news, and addressing anyone that may be fostering ideas of
retaliating against you, will take place during a school assembly tomorrow morning,” Cat tells her,
wanting to make sure that Lena can once again feel safe at her school, although she has a feeling that
the two Danvers girls and their trio of friends is hardly going to let the youngest Luthor out of their
sight for a few weeks, “Also, I know you probably would prefer not to do this but it’s just a
precaution, we’ve set up a couple appointments with the school psychologist for you.”

Lena, who was a few seconds away from full on dozing, snaps awake at the news – recalling the
few times Lillian had sat her down with an ancient psychiatrist of hers that Lena thought would kill
over at any second. She’d just sat and stared at the old man waiting as the seconds ticked by slowly
as he droned on about her attitude and behavior. Shaking the memories from her head she sees that
both Cat and Eliza are giving her soft, concerned looks so she just tries to go with it for now, “Sure,
that’s fine…I’m just, tired right now.”

Cat looks like she doesn’t believe her but she doesn’t call her on it, for which Lena is incredibly
grateful for at the moment. Instead she stands as she tells them, “Well, I have to be going. Get some
rest and heal up, Lena.”
Lena hums in agreement, too tired to really answer as she leans back while trying to stifle a yawn. Eliza rubs her arm gently and tells her softly, “Get some sleep, Lena. I’m taking the girls to lunch and I’ll make sure they bring you back something to eat. Get well soon, sweetheart.”

Lena nods with her eyes closed, settling further into the pillows and warm blankets she allows herself to drift off. Kara gets up and makes sure that a bottle of water and other things are easily within Lena’s reach as Eliza waits patiently for her. She’s nervous about leaving Lena but she knows the younger girl needs to rest and would be safe with the medical staff and extra security. Trudging to her mother she hugs Eliza who quietly assures her that she’ll be back soon and Lena needs to sleep to heal. They pass by a couple school security officers as they meet Alex and Maggie outside – the two older girls dressed just as casually as Kara and both looking hopeful for good news about their friend.

When Lena wakes again she sees a few more cards, a couple flowers and packages of snacks have appeared at her bedside. Sitting up she whimpers as her ribs shift painfully, gentle hands are helping her as she breathes through the pain. As she becomes more aware she sees Alex’s concerned brown eyes and hears her talking to her softly, “Hey, take it easy. Don’t move so quickly.”

Lena blinks a bit before looking around, seeing Maggie is at her other side wrapping up a new ice pack for her arm. Kara is sprawled on the bed beside hers, having not even bothered to take her shoes off before falling asleep – snoring softly with one arm hanging off the bed. Sitting up she displaces a package of brightly colored sharpies that Maggie picks up while chuckling as she explains, “Kara was excited for everyone to sign your cast, so of course she got a ridiculous number of markers. I think she also ate some of the candy a few of the other girls left for you.”

Lena chuckles as she notices that Kara’s already signed her cast while she was sleeping – her neatly printed name with a heart and a string of x’s and o’s on her forearm where she’d broken it. There’s also a little drawing on the top of her hand that looks like Krypto the robot throwing a ball that makes her smile warmly as she takes the pack of markers and offers them to Maggie and Alex, “You may as well make this thing look a bit more artistic. I’m still not sure how I’m going to get this into the uniform shirt.”

Maggie chuckles as she picks out a purple marker before signing “Big Sister Maggie” and a get well message over her elbow. Alex smiles, nudging Maggie playful as she picks out a blue marker and signs her name and wishes for a quick recovery along with a few stars for decoration. Lena watches with fascination, she’d never had a cast before but she’d signed a few of her friends after various sports injuries. Softly she asks, “How long have I been asleep?”

“It’s an hour or two after lunch, Eliza had to leave but she didn’t want to wake you up,” Maggie tells her softly while uncapping a bottle of water and handing it to Lena, “Are you hungry? We brought you back some potato soup from the café.”

Lena nods, which is shortly followed by her stomach rumbling in agreement, she hasn’t eaten anything since yesterday. Maggie collects the food for her, going to warm it up. Alex has been watching her quietly the whole time, a worried, pensive look on her delicate features. Lena tries to make the older girl feel better, knowing she must have been rather upset at having witnessed everything. Lena realizes that just like Kara, Alex was feeling guilty that she hadn’t been able to do more for her during the attack. Lena feels so much compassion and thankfulness towards the red head as she tries to assure, “Alex? I’m going to be okay. You did everything you could, okay?”

Alex just nods somberly, eyeing the cast and the younger girl’s bruised face causes a resurgence of her angry at the girls who did this. She’s glad that Veronica and Siobhan have already left the campus as she had half a mind to pay them a visit. But she knows Lena doesn’t need her to get into
trouble and that being angry or upset would likely just make Lena upset as well. Instead she offers a small smile and sets out a couple board games she’d taken from the dorm game room and asks, “So, which do you wanna play? Pandemic, Risk, or Dead of Winter. Just for reference Maggie always kicks everyone’s ass at Risk.”

Lena quirks a smile, picking out Pandemic as she knows Alex will get a kick out of the three of them fighting super diseases. They set up the board with the brightly colored infection cubes and their little figurines, Alex of course asks to be the Medic. Maggie comes back with the warm soup that Lena eats slowly while they settle in to play the game. Alex and Maggie sit at the end of her bed, nudging and tussling with each other playful as they argue about who should cure which disease and which continent she should focus on preventing an outbreak. Lena, being the ever so the tactician had decided to be the dispatcher, ran the board with quick and brutal efficiency that took both her cooperative players by surprise.

“Damn, Little Luthor, that is some cold calculations,” Maggie laughs as she takes a few cubes off the board and puts them in a pile, her player character having been dispatched to the other side of the map to deal with a potential outbreak.

“I prefer the term ‘efficiency’, ” Lena remarks as Alex ruthlessly clears a few more disease cubes from the board. She can tell that Alex is going to make a great doctor, she shows an unnerving amount of care for the imaginary people being effected by unreal diseases during the game. She feels like Alex’s future patients are going to be very fortunate to have such a fiercely loyal and protective doctor.

“Very efficient,” Alex agrees with a grin, poking her tongue out at Maggie who just playfully elbows her in the side. She flips over a card and groans when she realizes that she’s pulled another one of the epidemic cards and they were going to have to spread the diseases again. A Lena starts to put the colored cubes in their place all three girls realize that the game mechanics have outsmarted them as the infections overrun the board. Alex groans as she teases, “Well, we’ve been over run. Now we’re all going to die horribly in the zombie outbreak.”

“Speak for yourself, Danvers. I’m the outbreak specialist, I have a biohazard suit so I’m sure I can survive until it dies down,” Maggie quips back, showing Alex her figure that indeed has a biohazard suit, laughing when Alex knocks her character over.

“Zombies don’t care about hazard suits, your tiny ass would get overrun by a pack of the undead in no time,” Alex snorts as she helps Lena sort out the cards and clean up the small pieces as Kara starts to stir in her sleep. She picks up one of the pillows she’s been sitting on and tosses at the grumbling blonde, watching as it bounces off her head and falls to the floor, “Wake up, sleeping beauty.”

Kara perks up at hearing Lena’s soft huffs of careful laughter, sitting up and brushing hair from her face as she assesses the situation. Alex and Maggie are straightening up things and setting the board game aside, Maggie pats Kara on the shoulder, “We’ve got to head to sports and make sure the other girls in the house are getting along too. See you after dinner?”

“Yeah, thanks,” Kara mumbles tiredly, getting up to hug her sister who’s grumbling that she wishes she didn’t have prefect responsibilities to deal with. Kara knows that Alex has to deal with all the minor issues that come up with girls in the house, and with Thanksgiving fast approaching everyone was getting restless and into some minor trouble, “Try not to make anyone cry, Alex.”

“No promises.”

As Alex and Maggie take their leave Kara moves over to sit next to Lena, smiling when Lena leans up against her, tiredly yawning as she complains, “I can’t believe I’m this tired…I just woke up a
couple hours ago.”

“I’m surprised you aren’t still asleep, if I were you I’d be curled up in a little ball and wouldn’t leave
the comfort of my covers for as long as possible,” Kara admits with a smile, looking around to make
sure the nurses are preoccupied with other things before pressing a kiss to Lena’s temple as they both
settle back against the pillows.

“You could sleep through a nuclear explosion,” Lena teases with the ghost of a smile on her lips, “I
on the other hand am too impatient to take it easy for long. The next few days are going to be so long
and boring.”

Kara just chuckles, adoring the fact that Lena is already wanting to get back to their normal routine
but she knows she shouldn’t rush it. Before she can say anything she feels Lena snuggle closer and
sigh softly like she usually does when she’s about to fall asleep. Kara lets the words die on her lips,
instead smiling as she relaxes and decides that she may as well get more restful sleep knowing that
Lena is safe and sound right next to her. She knows she’s going to be swimming suicides for missing
water polo and she should be concerned that she hasn’t even started the 100 lines she needs to
complete before the week is out. But right now, she really couldn’t care as taking care of Lena has
become her number one priority.

Of course, by dinner time Kara’s been ordered back to her dorm to work on her homework and the
dreaded lines. She’s about to argue with Cat Grant but Sam quickly comes to the rescue, quickly
assuring Kara that she was bringing Lena dinner and was going to be staying with her for a while.
Lena is still groggy which isn’t helped by the pain medication she’s been given to keep her broken
bones from becoming unbearably. She’s grateful to see Sam, hugging her fiercely despite her
protesting ribs and grateful when her childhood friend sits down beside her. Sam looks tired and
worried, but when Lena offers her the markers she breaks into a grin.

“I see the others have already gotten a hold of your cast,” Sam says as she reads over the other sweet
well wishes and Kara’s drawing of the little robot. Picking out a magenta marker that she finds
appealing she also signs the cast neatly and puts a couple little hearts and stars around her name just
for good measure which makes Lena grin. “How are you feeling?”

Lena can’t help but chuckle at Sam’s calm, even tone and the way she looks at Lena like one would
look at a young child. Absent mindedly she rubs at her side where her ribs are aching a bit as she
tells her honestly, “Not going to lie, broken ribs hurt like a bitch. But it’s much more manageable
than it was earlier this morning.”

Sam looks at her for a second, deciding that Lena’s being honest about her pain, before setting out
two packages of food. Setting a kale salad in front of Lena with a side of fruit and a bottle of
lemonade before opening her own parcel – looking forward to savoring her Chinese food. She likes
a salad every now and then, but she doesn’t quite have Lena’s dedication to leafy greens and fruit,
sometimes she just needs to eat something savory and enjoyable to put up with all the studying and
exams. Shaking her head at Lena grinning at the salad she tells her, “I figured you’d want your
comfort food, you weirdo.”

Lena snickers as she takes a forkful of the salad, “You should have seen the hospital food I refused.”

Sam grimaces, “That bad?”

“Jell-o…”

Sam laughs, “What, is Jell-o for peasants?!”
“No, it’s just weird. The texture is all wrong,” Lena tells her seriously, having never understood how people could enjoy the gelatinous blobs that melted into a mushy, slippery mess when you tried to eat it.

“Well, you have some fresh berries for dessert instead, Miss Priss,” Sam teases as she sets out a chess board in front of them, “I figured you’d be bored out of your mind by now so I figured we could play a few games like we used to in junior school.”

“You bet, I’m going to make your King grovel before me, Arias,” Lena says as she starts to set up the board, letting Sam have the advantage of playing with the white pieces. For some reason she always plays a better game when she knows she’s at a disadvantage. She also gets a thrill when near the end of the game when her opponent puts her in zugzwang – forcing her into a disadvantaging move when she’d rather do something else. It really tests her skills and requires her to think quickly on her feet to turn the game around.

Sam moves out her pawn and on the next move brings out her knight rather quickly, making Lena smirk in a way that reminds her of the way they’d been part of the chess club as children. Lex taught them all sorts of moves and ways of reading their opponents next moves – both of them eventually getting so good that Lex stopped playing either of them and instead brokered games for them. Lena puts her in check twice after only eight moves and Sam just laughs realizing that after a few years of focusing intently on prepping for exit exams and college applications she’s gotten rusty. She fights back well enough but, taking out both bishops that were sacrificed to protect the more valuable pieces and a single rook that Lena looks at longingly when it’s removed from the board.

When Lena takes her king Sam laughs as she says, “I want a rematch, best of three?”

The next match ends in a stale mate when Sam puts Lena’s king on the run and meets it with hers, grateful to not get beat two games in a row. The second one Sam wins, but she suspects that Lena’s going easy on her but when she sees Lena try and cover a yawn with her free hand she knows it’s time to let her rest. Putting the pieces away Sam helps Lena lay down, making sure she gets comfortable and her wounded arm is elevated before draping the covers over her lightly. She ruffles Lena’s hair and tells her affectionately, “Get some sleep, Lena, and I hope you feel better soon.”

Lena tugs Sam into a hug, telling her, “Thank you, Sam.”

The next couple days Lena’s trapped in the infirmary are filled with sleeping and visits from her various housemates and classmates. Jess visits her one morning with a card signed by the NerdCorp team, tea and bagels, filling in Lena on the coding for the next RoboCup match but more importantly she tells her that Morrow had approved of their personal project to work on 3D printing prosthetic parts – part of a biomedical project that the two of them had talked about. Lena begs for Jess to bring her laptop so she can get a good look at the 3D modeling programs to start working. But Jess refuses, telling her to rest, but she does relent and show Lena one of the printing prototypes that Lena takes apart and puts back together by lunchtime.

After lunch Lena is surprised when Lucy stops by after ROTC drills in uniform, she brings a stress relief coloring book citing that she’d had her fair share of boring infirmary stays. She also sneaks in a Sudoku book, suspecting that Lena would like the problem solving puzzles and she definitely wasn’t wrong. The two talk and Lucy apologizes for the things that she knows Lena overheard at the start of term. She also tells her that she knows what it’s like to have a hard ass parent that could really care less about what happens to their kids. The two talk for a while before Lucy wishes her well, signing her cast before departing for field hockey practice.

By the time her imprisonment is up Lena’s cast is covered in signatures, well wishes, and little doodles that make her smile. Ms. Willis had even stopped by to check in on her and drew a crude
representation of Lena bobbing up and down in the water holding onto her capsized boat. As she packs up the last of her belongings into her duffle bag she lets Kara sling it over her shoulder before checking out. As she returns to the dorm she’s greeted by several people and is a little surprised that there are so many people wishing her well. In her room Kara’s put up a Welcome Home banner on the door and inside there are a few vases of flowers, a stack of cards beside a pile of treats. Lena even lets Kara get her pizza when they go to dinner, admitting that being out of the infirmary is something to be celebrated.

Alex and Maggie check in on her during the quiet study hours while Lena’s trying to catch up on her homework, grateful that she was on top of her assignments before she was hospitalized. The two older girls tell her to come to them if she or Kara have problems with anyone or anything. Lena promises that she will while smiling at their protectiveness. As things start to settle down Kara’s trying to work on her lines as Lena flips open her laptop, booting it up and quickly opening the 3D modeling software and opening the prosthetic hand files to check on their design. She can’t wait to get back to class and work with the printer herself.

Kara curses softly, scratching out another sentence about how she won’t antagonize another student, scribbling over it before scrunching up the piece of paper and tossing it at the waste bin. She sees Lena giving her an equally concerned and confused look so she sheepishly tries to explain, “I may or may not have yelled at Siobhan…and tried to shove her…I was angry, and scared when Alex explained what happened…I don’t know what happened, I was just angry but I didn’t hurt her… Just…just don’t be mad at me?”

“I’m not mad,” Lena assures, definitely not mad at Kara for getting upset, “I’m just worried, you aren’t in serious trouble are you?”

“No, just lines that I don’t want to do,” Kara admits, relieved that Lena’s not upset with her.

“Good, I don’t want you getting expelled over me. Trust me, there are better things to get expelled for,” Lena teases wirily as she hears the bedtime bell ring and Sam calling down the hallway for the other girls to get to bed.

“I’m going to have to agree with you on the not getting expelled part, I really like going to school here,” Kara admits and Lena gives a smug look that Kara takes pleasure in erasing with her next words, “But I have to disagree with you implying you aren’t worth it. You are worth that and more, Lena, and maybe in time I can really show you just how worthy you really are.”

Lena gets up, rounding the desk and tugging Kara up so that she can pull her into a heated kiss. Kara very carefully lets her hands rest against Lena’s waist, closing her eyes as she lets her lips move languidly against Lena’s. Lena savors the delicate brush of lips and the way Kara’s tender and gentle as she deepens the kiss – a strong hand strokes through her dark, wavy hair. It has been a week or longer since they were last intimate – having managed to get some quiet time together in a quiet, comfy part of the library repository. But now, in the privacy of their room Lena’s more than happy to feel Kara moving closer and gently touching her.

“Let me take care of you?” Kara whispers softly, fingers skimming just under the edge of Lena’s shirt to touch warm, bare skin. She’s ready for Lena to answer either way, knowing that it may still be too soon for her to want to be intimate with her ribs still aching.

“Please?” Lena agrees easily with a breathless whisper, desiring more than anything to be reassured of how much Kara cares for her. Kissing Kara again she lets her guide her to the bed and get her settled down comfortable, both of them chuckling about the bulky cast as they prop it up on a pillow. Kara settled down beside her, leaning over her and careful to not put any weight on her as she gently liberates Lena’s beautiful, pale body from her clothing.
Kara gets the opportunity to finish what she started a few days ago – kissing all of Lena’s fading bumps and bruises. Lena blinks back tears at how sweet and earnest Kara is being as lips skim gently over her bruised neck and the fading marks on her chest. Kara kisses over her breasts, taking time to kiss and lick over straining nipples before kissing along the ribs tenderly. Lena reaches down to cup Kara’s cheek to draw her back into a series of soft, loving kisses as Kara’s hands wander.

Confident, teasing fingers trace down her sternum and farther over the plateau of her stomach. Lena’s squirming a bit, relishing the ticklish touches that also leave a delicious ache burning in her abdomen. Kara’s gentle fingers move even lower, two fingers teasing over her clit a few times before they slip gently inside of her, pushing the air out of her lungs as pleasure sweeps through her body. With a sigh she rocks against Kara’s hand while nuzzling against her neck, kissing along the smooth skin she finds there. Kara sets a gentle, steady pace with her fingers, letting her thumb brush over the sensitive organ that makes Lena bite her lip to keep quiet as her body trembles.

After a few more strokes Lena’s gasping softly as her body tenses and she spasms around Kara’s fingers as Kara whispers softly to her about how beautiful and loved she is. Kara slows her hand and gently removes her fingers when Lena can’t take anymore overstimulation, pulling the blankets up to cover them as she continues to press kisses along Lena’s jaw. After a while of gentle cuddles and whispered worse of affection the two of them drift off to sleep curled up close to each other. Finally, able to relax peacefully after the trauma of the last several days.

Chapter End Notes

So, Happy Friday! Surgery sucked worse than I expected and I now have a nasty wound on my chest but they gave me some good meds - so for that I should apologize if I missed grammar and spelling errors when editing. Cheers for pain meds.
So, sorry about the delay, healing from surgery is a bitch but that’s not exactly the reason I’m shamefully late in updating. Ever have that issue with writer’s block – like you’re working on one chapter and you’re stumped but you have a wealth of ideas for a part two or three chapters away? Yeah, that’s what happened… I wrote chapter 15…so I’ll be happy past me wrote it ahead of time. I’m also in severe denial about the last few episodes that have aired…nope, not even going there.

Warning: Uh...Tooth-rotting fluff

The next morning Lena’s awake early and excited to get back to classes – especially the computer science class – but she’s still struggling with figuring out how the full arm cast and the school uniform to work. Kara returns from the showers, brushing out her freshly blow dried hair as the ridiculously perfect blonde locks start to curl neatly. Kara sees Lena fussing over the shirts, standing there in only half her uniform as she’s look at the shirt with an adorable glare that creases her brow. Kara can’t help but chuckle softly as she rummages through her closest for a bit before pulling out one of her clean summer shirts as she tells her, “Try this.”

Lena takes the shirt and looks it over before glancing outside at the blustery weather and wonders if it’s going to snow. Sighing she can’t help but smile as she says, “Short sleeves in winter, wonderful.”

“You can just wear one of my sweaters,” Kara teases, rummaging around for a clean pullover for her girlfriend to wear, “Besides, you’re always telling me I have great, well-muscles arms so I’m sure we can get it to fit over the cast.”

Lena carefully buttons the shirt, grateful that she has one less garment to fuss with but upon pulling a new tie out of her draws she wonders how in the world she’s going to get it tied without hurting herself. Her slinged arm is protesting at having to do much more than just rest and heal. Kara just laughs as she leans in a presses a kiss to Lena’s nose, “Don’t worry, I promise I was paying attention when you showed me how to do this the first time.”

Lena chuckles as she watches Kara carefully loop the tie on itself until it’s neatly formed just how she likes them. It’s neat and crisp like the ones she ties herself while Kara’s are usually a haphazard disaster she tries to avoid untying at all cost. The small act just shows that Kara knows Lena better than she thought she did. Kara’s already packing up Lena’s books and her lap top into her bag and slips it on her shoulder easily before picking up her own.

“Thank you so much Kara,” Lena says softly, taking Kara’s hand in her own and squeezing it gently.

“Hey, no worries. I’ve got you covered,” Kara assures tenderly, linking her fingers with Lena’s makes her heart pitter patter quicker than usual.
Lena lips curl into a small smile as she tells her earnest, “It’s more than that, so much more than that.”

“I know, but I’ve still got you covered. No matter what,” Kara promises as she walks with Lena out of the boarding house and towards the dining hall.

Alex, Maggie, and Sam are already tucking into breakfast by the time they arrive – Maggie’s still half asleep as she leans against Alex tiredly while sipping at a coffee she must have snuck out of the faculty dining room. Alex is beaming this morning and Kara knows better than to ask what has her in such a perky mood this morning – she doesn’t need to know that about her sister, or Maggie for that matter. Sam however has no qualms about teasing the two – asking with a smirk why the two of them left her alone to complete the morning prefect duties.

“What?!” Alex asks, snapping out of her happy daze to look at her fellow prefect with confusion.

“Yeah, was just wondering if you were feeling okay,” Sam states with a small smile as she continues to subtly tease the easily flustered red head, “You’re usually pretty punctual, and I thought I heard you tossing and turning last night.”

Everything at the table stops – Alex looks like a deer caught in the headlights of a speeding truck, mouth slipping open but she’s yet to say anything. Maggie snorts into her coffee, choking momentarily as she shoots Alex an amused look. Kara’s eyes are bugging out as she looks between Alex and Maggie with a dawning look of horror while Lena sits there with a smirk on her face as she takes a bite off her donut and just watches amusedly. After a moment Maggie seems to recover and grins ruefully with a laugh as she sees Alex hasn’t moved a muscle since she’s still frozen in shock.

“I told you to be quieter,” Maggie mutters as she reaches over to ruffle a hand through Alex’s hair affectionately. She can’t help but grin with a hint of pride as Alex blushes profusely and can’t seem to stammer out a viable excuse.

“Oh my god, Alex!” Kara screeches as her face scrunches up in horror and revulsion, just the thought of Alex’s sex life makes her cringe. She’s so horrified that her brain doesn’t even recognize that she was presented with the perfect opportunity to tease Alex about being less that punctual – which was usually a favorite activity of hers. Having a sister means you argue and tease each other mercilessly – it’s just what siblings do – but you’ve always got their back when push comes to shove. But not in regards to this, Kara agrees with herself that Alex is totally on her own for this one.

“Hey, how is this my fault?!” Alex asks back, incredulously before jabbing an accusing finger at Sam, “I didn’t say anything! It was Sam you have to blame for getting an earful.”

“If I may clarify, I said nothing about hearing anything ‘intimate.’ I was only inquiring about your wellbeing.” Sam states plainly, but the mirthful smile that breaks out over her features speaks volumes that she knew exactly what she was doing. Further sweetening the teasing, she casually gestures towards Maggie, “Besides, your beloved girl friend is the one who outted your less than platonic activities.”

“Jesus Christ, Sam,” Alex complains, covering her face with her hands.

Beside Alex, Maggie just laughs and shrugs as she offers, “Yep. And I’m not the least bit ashamed.”

“That and you find amusement in tormenting Alex,” Lena quips as she sips at her tea while watching the exchange with amusement. Kara beside her is just as flustered as Alex, blushed red to the tips of her ears and gaping at them with an open mouth. Lena completely understands why Maggie is amused as she tells her, “I can’t really blame you, the Danvers girls are adorable when flustered. And it’s so easy to ruffle their feathers.”
“Exactly, Little Luthor,” Maggie agrees with a wide grin, high-fiving Lena as they both watch the Danvers sister vehemently protest that they aren’t easily flustered or adorable even if they do get flustered – on occasions.

“No, no more,” Alex whines with a blush still burning high on her cheeks, she points at Lena stopping the dark haired girl from making any new statements, “I’m sorry about Sam and Maggie having no sense of propriety right now, but I definitely do not want to hear about you and my little sister.”

“Good, because I don’t kiss and tell,” Lena says matter-of-factly with a charming smile, her calm demeanor seems to make the uptight, already worked up older girl even more frustrated.

Alex just huffs as she gets up, slinging her bag over her shoulder as she leans in a presses a quick kiss to Maggie cheek as she reprimands, “I hope you’re happy with what you’ve started, Mags.”

“Very,” Maggie says, tugging Alex into a hug that the red head can’t resist, “Even though I’m pretty sure Sam started it.”

Sam just shrugs with a polite smile as she demurely sips at her juice while marking down a couple notes on one of the essays she’d been editing for her literature course. As she watches Alex looking back as she leaves the dining hall she can’t help but remark in an amused tone, “Someone’s going to be sleeping in her own bed tonight, huh?”

“Hardly, Alex just can’t resist my natural charm,” Maggie quips back with a suave grin that makes both Sam and Lena believe her.

“Gross! Please, my ears are already doused in napalm – anymore talk of my sister – like that – and they’re going to be burning from a nuclear fallout,” Kara exclaims, quickly getting up to put some distance between her and Maggie. She’s really happy that Alex is happy – that she’s comfortable enough in her sexuality to have found a very caring – if occasionally crass – girlfriend to spend time with. But for all that is holy she just wants them to be happy in a way that keeps the details of their private life just that – private. She has no idea how she’s going to get back at Sam for the earful, she doesn’t even know if that’s a game she wants to play.

Maggie watches Kara go with a smile as she gets up and picks up Lena’s bag, telling her warmly, “Come on, Little Luthor. It would seem we’ve been abandoned by our girls.”

Lena’s giggling as she wishes Sam a good day before heading out with Maggie, “You would think with how chill their parents are Alex and Kara would be a little bit less – uptight – about things.”

“Yup,” Maggie agrees, but tells her, “But, I think it’s just their personalities. Alex is just uptight in general and little Danvers can get her panties in a twist about certain things. Either way, I find it amusing and totally endearing.”

“Agreed,” Lena surmises easily, thanking Maggie for walking her to class before heading in to find Jess already going over the boot up process for the 3D printer. The two quickly set to work, huddling together to look over the new models they both came up with to test. It would seem that she and Jess had similar ideas about how to design prosthetics – both working on a wire system that used wrist movement. But it would seem they’re both rather ambitious as well, when Lena shows Jess some blueprints that include small servos to make a completely robotic hand that relies on sensing the electrical impulses of muscle movements for robotic movement Jess’s eyes light up as she pulls up a document on her laptop outlining some code pieces for optimizing servo movements.

Across the campus Kara is working on a new article – doing some research into Ada Lovelace while...
she rolls around some more ideas for her next big reporting piece. She’s hoping that the next run of
the biweekly paper will be headlining the piece she’s working on entitled “Compassion is NOT a
Weakness” that focuses on the altruistic acts of the students as Thanksgiving approaches. She’s
already gotten together pictures and a few paragraphs going over Jess’s group that has been
volunteering with seniors at the assisted living facility – spending time socializing with them.
Another section highlights Chloe’s group that works on getting school aged girls involved in STEM – a few of the pictures show Lena among the older girls that are helping out a group of what Kara
guesses are 2nd graders work on coding for a line following robot.

“Ms. Grant?!” Kara asks as the blonde woman comes by after okaying Lucy’s piece on bully
policies and practices.

“Yes, Keira?”

“Can I have permission to go with the volunteer group to the children’s hospital this afternoon?”
Kara asks quickly before she loses her nerve, “I need to get a few quotes and photos for the
Thanksgiving cover piece.”

Cat tuts softly, shaking her head but it’s apparently a yes when at the end of the class period she
leaves a permission slip on her desk before leaving. Kara can’t help but grin as she puts away her
notebook and checks out one of the photojournalism cameras. She scrambles through her next couple
of classes excited for lunch to come around where she asks Lena if she could come with her on her
volunteering trip for the afternoon. Lena notices the camera and rolls her eyes but she can’t help but
smile at Kara’s infectious smile and easily agrees. She knows Kara’s up to something but she’s not
going to ruin the surprise and tells her to meet her at the main administrative building around 3pm.

By the time the afternoon rolls around Kara’s there before Lena, bouncing on her toes and quick to
take the bag of new coloring books and crayons from Lena. The two are chatting about what she
normally does on the days she volunteers when Ms. Willis shows up with car keys in hand, “Alright,
let’s get going. Cat’s busy today and I have some errands to run in the city, so climb in.”

The two are quick to follow instructions and hope that the instructor at least drives in a less
frightening manner than her attitude would imply. Lena and Kara are both a little white knuckled and
clutching each other tightly when they arrive at the hospital. Leslie just laughs as she pulls up to the
drop off, checking to make sure Lena’s going to be okay before telling them to meet her at the café
down the street. Kara beams as she asks for clarification on whether or not that means she could get a
snack. Leslie just shakes her head and tells them they can have a snack later and to take as much time
as they would like at the children’s hospital.

When they get to the playroom a group of several children has already gathered, some with parents
or nurses with them. The crowd was steadily growing bigger by the week as she and the other girls
settled that volunteered had settled on reading chapter books. As they enter the room Lena greets the
staff present as she notices that there are some new faces again who are starting to look at her and
Kara.

“Lena?!” Winn calls out as he gets up to greet her. The nurse with them is keeping an eye on Winn
as he pants a bit with the exertion of having walked to the playroom, an oxygen mask in place on his
little face that makes Lena’s heart give a worried little lurch. His smiling blue eyes see that casted arm
in the sling and they quickly turn sad as he exclaims in despair, “What happened to your arm?!!”

“It’s okay,” Lena coos softly when a sea of small faces looking at her with concern and chatter sadly,
trying to keep them calm. But it would seem Winn is upset and so are a few of the others as Lena
gets closer, little hands reaching out to touch as if to make sure she was going to be okay.
“Did it hurt bad?” a little girl with curly brown hair tied up in pigtails asks, looking at Lena’s arm with wide eyes. The small child has an IV in her hand and a few bandages, so Lena knows she must understand what it’s like to hurt and that breaks her heart.

Kneeling down she lets them crowd around, rubbing the small girl’s back gently as she explains, “At first it hurt pretty bad, but I came here and the doctors put a cast on it and now it doesn’t hurt much at all anymore.”

“How’d you break it!” Winn asks curiously, looking curiously between Kara and Lena before blurtng out with typical lack of tact children are wont to do, “Who’s your friend?”

“I’m Kara, and I go to school with Lena,” Kara says and fishes around in her bag for the pack of markers she brought with her and lays them down, “You think Lena would let you sign her cast?!”

“Really?!” Winn’s eyes light up as he looks at Lena hopefully.

“Of course, pick a color,” Lena says as she shoots Kara a grateful look for distracting the kids and suggesting something so sweet. She takes her arm out of the sling and helps the kids pick a place to sign – smiling as they’re all really careful to print their names as neatly as they can.

“This is Mike!” Winn introduces his friend – a slightly older boy in a wheelchair with a cherry red cast up to his hip – to Lena and Kara enthusiastically. “He broke his leg playing soccer, he has a cast too.”

“I’m here for observation,” Mike clarifies as he beams up at Kara, blushing as he blurts out, “Wow, you’re so pretty.”

“Thank you, but you’re a little young for me,” Kara says with a genuine chuckle as she asks, “So what position do you play? My sister’s a midfielder on our school team.”

“A forward, I score the goals,” Mike preens happily with a cheeky grin that let’s both girls know that he must be quite the handful, “You know, I’m young right now but I’ll grow up soon.”

“I’m sure you will, and you’ll find a girl your age that’s just as pretty,” Kara tells him, clearly amused at the child’s affections but politely trying to let him down easy, “I promise.”

“You sure?” he asks a little hesitantly.

“Absolutely, girl’s love soccer players,” Kara assures with a grin, ruffling his hair as she takes the crutches from the nurse and holds them out for Mike to get up and hobble towards the group. She can’t help but chuckle as she wonders how much a player he’s going to be when he’s older.

“He’s quite the little charmer,” Lena tells her with an amused smirk as she picks up the worn copy of Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone from the bookshelf as the kids squeal and giggle with excitement. “So, who remembers where we were in the book?”

“Troll in the dungeon!” a few children cry out in a chorus that makes Lena laugh warmly as she flips through the pages to find the page she dog-earred a few days ago. She settles down in the floor, leaning back against the sofa as children crowd in around her and Kara – eager faces lighting up in anticipation of being read to about Harry’s great adventures.

“‘How could a troll get in?’ Harry asked as they climbed the stairs.” Lena reads with a playful little grin as the kid’s crowd around her to see the book even though there aren’t any pictures. She reads to them in such an animated way Kara sits with her and is just as enraptured with Lena’s voice and the way she reads as children are. A little girl tugs on Kara’s sleeve to get her attention and before she
knows what happened she has two kids in her lap, cuddling up to her and each other as they settle in to listen. Lena has Winn and the small girl with pigtails in her lap, and Mike leaning into her side as she continues to read unfazed in the least, ‘‘Don’t ask me, they’re supposed to be really stupid,’ said Ron. ‘Maybe Peeves let it in for a Halloween joke.’”

Lena reads through Ron, Harry, and Hermione’s adventures with the cave troll in the girl’s bathroom and through the next chapter that entails a quidditch match. By the time she’s finished a few of the children have to leave but the ones that are allowed to stay longer are set on playing with the new stuff she’d set up for the hospital – including an interactive wall tablet that had learning games and puzzles kids could play. But it would seem that the Lego sets and RC vehicles were a few of the children’s favorites. Lena watches from the sidelines, keeping an eye out on each of the children as Kara comes and sits down beside her smiling at her in the customary way that makes her blush. The two of them watch the children in silence for a while, just enjoying each other’s company and the sounds of the children talking and laughing.

“You ever think about having kids?” Kara blurts out, she’d been thinking about asking Lena about this but she hadn’t meant for it just spill from her lips with such a lack of tact. So much for easing into the conversation she thinks to herself as she chances a glance at Lena who’s still watching a couple children playing with the interactive wall tablet. Winn’s drawing a cat with pointed ears and whiskers, laughing even with the oxygen mask on his small, cherubic face as he chatters away with the new boy Mike. Lena’s watching them with a small smile on her face, and Kara feels like she needs to clarify, “I mean, clearly not right now. I mean, we are still in school and then there’s college… graduate school for you I’m guessing…and I’m sure you want to settle into a career as well. There’s plenty of time to think about it…if you haven’t, I mean…”

Lena chuckle softly, reaching over and taking the blondes hand to cut off her mumbling as she tells her calmly, “I think about children and family sometimes.”

“Really?!” Kara asks hopefully, perking up like a puppy that hears a squeaker toy so any chance of her hiding the fact that the idea of children and family appeals to her is gone.

“Of course, why wouldn’t I?” Lena teases gently, smiling as she watches Winn help Mike with his crutches so that the two of them can wander over to the children’s table with a number of Lego sets, both of them bright eyed and giggling as they pick out one of the Star Wars ones to put together. Lena’s always like children, they were so open and honest – something that she never was allowed to be as a child and found that most adults weren’t once they reached a certain age. But the thought of being a mother is still daunting – would she be a good one? Would she love her child or would she be like Lillian, devoid of any warmth and affection? How would her child or children handle having to live under the Luthor mantle – she struggled as it was, would it be fair to pass on that type of pain and stress to an innocent child?

“I don’t know, I just kind of hoped that you’d thought about it some. I think about it too, that it would be nice to have a couple kids and a dog sometime in the future,” Kara tells her honestly, wondering where she’ll end up living and if they’d have a house with a big backyard and what type of dog they’d get too. Her mind runs wild at the thought of getting to do any number of those things with Lena, she’d be the luckiest woman in the world.

“It’s complicated,” Lena sighs wistfully, looking down at the book in her lap that she was reading quietly to herself – “Runaway Bunny.” The mother bunny is earnest and loving as she assures her child that no matter what happens or where he chooses to go she will always be with him – a fierce and loving protector. She wonders if she could be that type of mother and it breaks her heart that she’s not confident she could be the wife and mother Kara is looking for in a partner. Her eyes sting and she feels Kara wrap an arm around her shoulders and pull her up against her warm side.
“You’ll make a wonderful mother, Lena, if that’s what you want,” Kara tells her softly, a proud and confident smile on her face – she knows Lena probably has doubts, but she doesn’t.

“How can you be so sure?”

Kara presses a soft kiss to her temple as she assures tenderly, “Because I see you, and you always put others before yourself…sometimes to the point of neglecting yourself – which we’re going to have to work on.”

Lena can’t look at Kara right now, she’s not sure if she believes what she’s saying as she feels like what she does for others hasn’t even begun to cover the multitude of sins her family has caused and are yet to cause. She hasn’t even done enough to clear her own name, and she often wonders what it will take for the guilt and shame lodged painfully in her heart to ease up and fade away. She desires more than anything to be with Kara, to somehow make the fantasy of a house with children and even a fluffy dog become a reality. A couple tears slip down her cheeks and she hastily brushes them away on the back of her sleeve.

“But you are so kind and loving, Lena. And I don’t care how often I have to remind you, I’ll tell you a million times that you are a wonderful human being who deserves to be loved and happy, and then I’ll tell you a million times more. Whatever you need, because you deserve so much more than I can give you,” Kara tells her with such earnestness and conviction that Lena feels her heart soar and feels like maybe the more she hears it the more she’ll believe it. Kara rubs her girlfriend’s narrow shoulders as she presses another kiss to her temple as Winn comes over, beaming has he holds up the Lego X-Wing for Lena to inspect.

“Look Lena!” he exclaims happily, but despite his smile both of the teens can tell he’s starting to get tired. He flies the X-wing around making the sounds of the laser guns and the little R2D2 that’s riding on the back.

“Good work, Winn. It looks like I’m going to have to bring you some more complicated ones in the future,” Lena beams with a smile as Winn reaches for her with a pleading look and she can’t resist, lifting the small boy into her lap where he snuggles up to her – the toy forgotten as her wraps his arms around her neck. Lena carefully adjusts him in her arms so she can fix the oxygen mask to make sure it stays on his face even though he whines, telling him tenderly, “I know it’s annoying, but you have to keep breathing, buddy.”

“I know,” Winn whines uncomfortably as he lays his head against her shoulder, running his fingers over the writing on Lena’s cast as he blinks sleepily as he asks at a whisper, “Would you stay until my mom gets back from work?”

“Of course, Kara and I aren’t going anywhere for a while,” Lena assures easily, patting his back as he sighs contentedly and lets himself start drifting to sleep as she rocks him carefully. Mike has kicked one of the light plastic balls towards Kara, raising a cheeky eyebrow as he looks at her.

“You have a cast on your leg, Mike!” Kara exclaims, picking up the ball but when she sees him pout she sighs and bounces the ball back with a strict warning, “Your bottom better stay in that chair, I don’t want you to fall over and hurt something else.”

Mike beams as he sits back in the chair and holds onto it tightly with both hands as he watches Kara kick the ball lightly towards him. Lena shakes her head as she leans back while rocking Winn who has worn himself out so much he’s snoring away adorably. Kara and Mike are joined by other kids who she organizes in a circle so that everyone can have a turn kicking the ball around. Kara picks up a particularly small girl and holds her steady so she can kick the ball, grinning and laughing along with the children. After a while of playing most patients have to get back to their routines and Kara
takes a moment to watch Lena with Winn, the way she makes sure Winn keeps his oxygen on and rocks him when he fusses.

“She’s so good with Winn.”

The soft voice comes off from her right and Kara recognizes Winn’s mother immediately and offers her a warm smile as she affirms, “She really is.”

Kara introduces herself and explains that she was doing a story on volunteering for thanksgiving, she gets permission to snap a couple photos of Lena with Winn and promises to send a copy of the paper to Winn’s mother. Lena looks up to see the two of them for the first time and offers Winn’s mother a quick hello as she whispers to Winn to wake him and guides him to his mother. Lena talks with her a bit as she picks up her son and lets him fall back asleep on her shoulder, wishing them well on the upcoming holiday before leaving. In the absence of children Lena sets to cleaning up and sanitizing the playroom with Kara.

“So, we’re supposed to meet Ms. Willis at the café?”

“Yes, a block or two north of here,” Lena says as the finish putting the last of the books away on the shelf before picking up her coat and heading out with Kara. The two are talking about the children, Lena tells Kara that she’s so grateful that everyone in the reading group was improving even if Winn had had a setback with his recent asthma attack.

As they reach the café they see that Ms. Willis is clearly finished with whatever tasks had her agreeing to take them to their volunteering appointment as she was now sitting outside the café under a heater with a beautiful, blonde woman who was smiling at what she was saying. For a second Lena’s not sure what she’s seeing and does a double take before looking over at Kara to ask, “Is she on a date?!”

“Uh…”

“Very articulate, Kara.”

As they get closer Lena and Kara sheepishly look between Ms. Willis and the blonde woman that she’s sitting with just outside the coffee shop. Leslie just sighs as she waves the two over, handing them a twenty and telling them, “Go on, get something to drink and a snack.”

Lena and Kara both hesitate and are giving her quizzical looks from their confusion, the blonde woman laughs warmly as she lays a hand on Leslie’s arm gently and asks, “So are these two yours?”

Leslie’s frown she'd directed at the two teens quickly morphs into shock and then quickly switches to horror when she realizes what her date’s implying. Quickly, voice high as she stammers, “What?! Gayle! Absolutely not, they’re not mine. I swear.”

Kara looks horrified, but her impression of a gaping fish – mouth soundlessly moving in shock – means that she’s of no use in explaining this situation. Lena can’t help but chuckle, quickly taking her good hand and covering her mouth as she watches Ms. Willis blush a bit, she can’t help the but take advantage of the opportunity to tease the normally strict, unflappable instructor. Putting on her most charming smile and with a sweet tone she asks, “You said you were going to pick us up from the hospital an hour ago? Did you forget us?”

Now Kara and Ms. Willis are both gaping at her, Kara squeaks in an adorable manner but the professor just sighs in annoyance while rubbing her temple. Gayle is laughing merrily and is quick to assure Leslie, “You didn’t tell me you had children. I’m that’s fine with that, Leslie, these two seem
really sweet. I was just surprised is all.”

“Lena, and this is Kara,” Lena introduces herself before pointing to the girl doing a statue of David impression beside her, trying not to start laughing as she shakes hands with the other woman. Looking back at Ms. Willis she knows that as soon as she’s cleared for rowing the woman was going to make her muscles weep with regret, but that moment seems so far away she can’t help herself. With a slightly admonishing tone she tells Ms. Willis, “You didn’t tell her you have kids? Isn’t that like a deal breaker for most people?”

“I was getting there, you little shit,” Leslie grits out with a frustrated sigh, she has to admit it’s kind of funny – especially the look of terror on the littlest Danver’s face as she watches the current exchange. “You going to tell her about the 250 or so others?” Lena quips, taking pity on her poor instructor. She watches Gayle’s eyes widen in surprise and confusion so she quickly clarifies with mirthful laughter, “She’s an instructor at an all-girl’s school. We’re just a couple of her students, I promise.”

“Alright Luthor, you going to take this and get you and fish-face here some coffee or something?” Leslie says with a shake of her head, she can’t help but grin at getting played by the clever young woman. Lena takes the twenty with a smile as Kara points between her and Gayle, trying to stammer out something but she just cuts her off, “Yes, Danvers junior, believe it or not you and Luthor aren’t the only gay messes around here. Now go get some caffeine and clear your head, kiddo.”

Leslie watches them head into the café, Lena’s warm laughter ringing around them as she tugs Kara along with her. Soon enough the teens are eyeing the assortment of pastries behind the counter as Leslie turns back to her date and wonders how she’s going to get this date back on track as she apologizes, “Sorry about them.”

“They’re quite charming girls,” Gayle says with a smile, taking Leslie’s hand in hope they could chat for a little while longer.

“Charming my ass,” Leslie snarks making Gayle laugh which in turn makes her smirk a bit – she could get used to hearing such a lovely sound. She looks at their hands as she links fingers with the other woman as they get back to what they were talking about, grateful that the thought of her corralling teen girls and the possibility of kids of her own didn’t scare off her beautiful date.

Inside the café Lena is still chuckling as Kara shakes her head at her and states, “That was mean, did you see how shocked she looked.”

“It was great,” Lena disagrees as she hands Kara a plate with one of the café’s famous cinnamon rolls on it as she picks up a fork to take a bite of her own, “The look on your face was just as priceless.”

“Don’t come complaining to me when you can’t move after your first day back to rowing,” Kara teases as she groans happily at the buttery, sweet taste of the pastry.

“So you won’t help me get the knots out of my poor muscles?” Lena asks playfully with a sly little grin, knowing that Kara couldn’t really keep her hands off her on the best of days. Kara was always giving her back rubs after rowing left her aching and it usually turned into the full body massages with the happy ending people joke about.

Kara groans again, but she gives up rather easily, “You play dirty.”

“You like it,” she quips back easily, shooing Kara’s fork away with her own when her girlfriend goes after her own cinnamon roll since she’s already inhaled hers.
“So, you think they’re getting along well enough?” Kara asks, motioning to where Ms. Willis and Gayle are talking animatedly with each other. The stern faced woman looks rather relaxed and seems really interested in what her date has to say. Gayle has moved closer, sitting beside Leslie rather across from her and letting her drape an arm around the back of her chair.

“I’d say it’s going well,” Lena says with a wiry grin, glad that Gayle seemed to be just as interested in the grouchy rowing instructor as she was. “So, any plans for Thanksgiving, it’s only four days until Thanksgiving break begins. A whole week without uniforms, classes, and homework.”

Kara beams as Lena pushes the rest of her cinnamon roll towards her, also excited to tell Lena about the traditional things that the Danvers family does for her favorite holiday, “Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday! We have a few traditions that I just love.”

Lena listens intently as Kara explains all the really sweet and charming things that the Danvers family does for their thanksgiving holiday – the cooking together and stating what things they’re thankful for in the past year. Lena wonders what take out or hotel she’ll be eating at next week, hoping that Lillian would be too busy fussing over Lex to notice her. Kara beams as she talks about how Eliza always makes a chocolate pecan pie that she swears is worth dying over even if Alex isn’t that fond of it.

The two of them chat for a while, wondering if they were going to get back in time for dinner or not, when Ms. Willis stands up. Lena and Kara watch with rapt attention as Gayle welcomes the parting hug and does her one better, pressing a soft peck of a kiss to her lips before parting. Leslie watches her go before going in search of her wards only to find Kara giving her a double thumbs’ up and Lena grinning like a Cheshire cat. Ms. Willis just shakes her head, shooting a text to Cat as she wrangles the two girls and tells them, “Alright you little hellions, it would seem we’re late to dinner. So, what do you say we pick up pizza on the way back to campus.”

“So, I’m guessing from that kiss you’re going to get a second date?” Lena asks with a cheeky smile as Kara cheers for pizza beside her – she’s also a little relieved to avoid this evenings school dinner of some sort of goulash.

“It seems likely.”

“Does Ms. Grant know you went on a date?” Kara asks and Lena nearly facepalms herself, she was hoping Kara would avoid asking certain questions – and this was one of them.

“You tell Ms. Grant you’re going out with your dorm mate?” Leslie fires back, hoping to put some fear in the jovial blonde but when she sees Kara’s normally sunny disposition turn into a thunderstorm – and even Lena has a worried crease in her brow – she quickly amends, “Look, don’t get all sad and mopey on me, alright? It’ll be our little secret, okay?”

“Really?” Kara asks quietly as she clings tightly to Lena’s hand, worried that they would be separated – and not just as roommates but that Lena could potentially be moved to a different house altogether.

“Come on, I was a love sick school girl once. I didn’t have the perks of going to an all girl’s boarding school but trust me I was your age once,” Leslie tries to assure them both, garnering a couple smiles as she shakes her head. She doesn’t have the heart to tell them that Cat already suspects that they were together and was turning a blind eye – especially after the attack that put Lena in the hospital. But she doesn’t have to tell them that, “Now, let’s pick up a pizza and try not to give away too many of my secrets, okay?”

“So, was that kiss any good?”
“Kara!”

“Jesus Christ, Danvers…”

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading this chapter of absolute fluff where I’ve made just about all the characters gay!

Up next Thanksgiving! Hopefully my brain will be kind and not be distracted and trying to write three chapters ahead this go around.
Author’s Note: I’m pretty much like Maggie Sawyer, estranged from my family for being an out and proud lesbian – so I’m such a damn sucker for family and holiday sweet fluff even though I write a lot of angst (or smut, let’s be honest my brain is in the gutter often and it’s gotten comfy there). So, enjoy a Supercorp and Sanvers Thanksgiving chapter. Also, I made the Danvers a secular family and I kind of patterned a few of their traditions after the ones in my circle’s “Friendsgiving.”

Warnings: Description of off screen suicide. But other than that it's light stuff including abuse of a funnel cake, older siblings can be playful jerks, and cursing….if I’ve written it you can bet someone is probably going to be dropping F-bombs at least once a chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Lena returns to her dorm room the only thing standing between her and a week-long Thanksgiving break is a single night. She finds Kara’s placed a copy of the school newspaper on her desk so that she can read it. The title piece on the cover lists Kara’s name as the reporter and there in color is a photo of her holding Winn at the children’s hospital. She reads the article in its entirety, smiling at how wonderfully and informative Kara’s writing is as well as admiring the pictures she taken of the other groups’ projects – one of her favorites being of Jess having dinner with two elderly women at the assisted living community.

She tucks the paper away with her books so that she won’t misplace it before closing her laptop – instead of getting ahead in calculus or literature she decides she can take a night off and heads down to the game room where she knows she’ll find Kara. Sure enough Kara, Maggie, and Sam are sitting with Lucy and a deck of cards eyeing each other suspiciously, a pile of snack in the center of the table. Alex is pacing up and down the length of the common room, her seat at the table empty, as she talks on the phone with her arms crossed over her chest.

“Hey, Little Luthor,” Maggie calls out, pulling a chair from another table between herself and Kara as she urges the younger girl to join them. “Come on and play, you wanna see if you can win back some of the snacks Kara wagered?”

Lena moves to sit down but declines being dealt into the game as she watches Alex pace, “Everything okay with Alex?”

“She’s just talking with her parents,” Maggie tells her, offering Lena a snack that’s accepted while explaining, “My Aunt’s out of town for the holidays, one of her close friends is in the hospital and she’s gone to care for her. So, Alex is asking if I can spend the holiday with them…It’s either that or I’m having Thanksgiving at the school with Ms. Grant, I guess.”

Lena gives her a sympathetic look; she still has no idea what her plans are for the holiday but she’s not optimistic. Sam adds a package of Oreos to the pile and states with a little grin, “I call.”

“Fuck,” Lucy mutters, revealing that she only has a pair of tens with a king high.
“Ha!” Kara laughs as she shows her hand of three seven’s, giving Lucy a cheeky little grin that’s quickly wiped away when Maggie reveals her straight to a Jack. “Dammit.”

“Nice try, little Danvers,” Maggie says, eyeing the pile of snacks greedily and about to reach out for them.

“Not so fast, Sawyer. Cool your jets,” Sam says with a mischievous smile, laying her cards down as she announces, “Full-House!”

“Well, fuck me.”

“Hell no,” Sam chuckles, “That’s Danvers Senior’s job.”

“Sam, no!” Kara whines while covering her ears until Sam promises she won’t bring it up again even though Maggie looks like she wants to make some witty quip.

Alex is clearly in a serious discussion, or at least it looked serious judging by the pensive look on the red heads face as she paces about restlessly while talking. After a while she comes over the whisper to Maggie, giving her a thumbs up before she goes back to pacing. Maggie’s shuffling the cards as Sam clears off the snacks, popping open a package of gummy bears to snack on a few. Lena’s thinking about asking them to deal her in when her cell rings, she pulls it out of her pocket as she watches Kara pining after the Oreos in Sam’s monstrous pile of goodies. Checking the Caller ID she groans as she sees it’s her mother, most likely trying to inform her of what’s going on with the holiday break.

“Your mom?” Sam asks with a sympathetic wince.

Lena nods as she answers it professionally, “Lena Luthor speaking.”

Sam snickers at Lena’s cheeky greeting, knowing very well it was going to piss of Lillian and put her in a worse mood – if that was even possible. Maggie passes out the cards as Lena listens to Lillian reprimanding her for not greeting her properly – of course she knows she’s dialed her daughters phone so why wouldn’t she be speaking to her child. Her mother doesn’t even have the common curtesy to ask how she’s doing since this is the first time that they’ve spoken since Lena was hospitalized, she’s still stuck in the cast and sling for another week. Lena rolls her eyes as she watches Kara picks out three cards to turn in, looking at her cards like they betrayed her. Lillian pointedly asks if she’s paying attention and she answers casually, “Of course I’m listening, mother.”

Maggie can’t help but shake her head with a rueful smile at the way Lena say’s ‘mother’ like it’s a dirty word, rearranging her cards she tosses in a bag of Cheez-Its to start the betting off. Kara only puts in a granola bar as she looks at her cards somewhat angrily as Lucy matches Maggie’s bet with a bag of Skittles. Lena listens to Lillian talk about the business meetings she and Lex have been going to lately and that it was unlikely that they would be having a Thanksgiving at all. Before she can ask if Glen is still going to be picking her up tomorrow, Lillian tells her that it’s probably best if she stay at the school or find some other arrangements for the holiday.

“So, Glen isn’t coming to pick me up tomorrow?” Lena asks in confusion, trying to keep the anger out of her voice at only being told about this new change of plans the literal night before. Lillian scoffs at her about getting sentimental and sets into the lecture that she’s a big girl and should be able to find her own way by now – all things that Lena’s heard in numerous variations since she was barely waist high.

Lena stares at the grain of the table, feeling the eyes of her friends looking at her with concern as she listens to her mother tell her that she wouldn’t be going home for Thanksgiving. Lillian gives her a
few other stern miniature lectures about keeping up with her grades and keep her nose in her studies – a less than subtle scolding about having been the subject of abuse a few weeks ago. Before Lena can respond to anything the woman has said in the last five minutes Lillian hangs up on her and Lena sighs in frustration as she angrily smashes the off button her phone.

“That didn’t sound good, you alright?” Lucy asks with concern, bunching up her cards and tossing them in the discard pile with disgust, much more worried about the situation with the youngest Luthor.

“It’ll be fine,” Lena assures, considering her options but Kara reaches over and takes her hand.

“So, you’ve been abandoned for Thanksgiving too?” Maggie says softly, knowing too well the dejected look that Lena has as she’s worn it several times before. She loves her aunt and she’s elated to spend the holidays with Alex and her family, but it doesn’t replace the pain and torment she goes through knowing that she was abandoned by the people who were supposed to love and cherish her the most. It also doesn’t erase the hope that she has that any minute her Papa would be coming back for her because he realized his mistake and that he loved and missed her more than he could imagine.

“Yeah,” Lena answers softly, deep down she’d had a feeling that she wasn’t going to be visiting home for the holidays but it was an entirely different feeling to know it for a fact. Lillian would prefer to spend the holidays doing business planning with Lex who shouldn’t be home until the middle of next week. Maggie’s reached over taking her other hand still encumbered by the cast, squeezing it gently with a sad smile of understanding and Lena quickly hides her hurt and lets it turn to anger, “She could have at least told me this last week and not dropped on me the night before holiday break.”

“We’ll figure it out.” Sam is quick to assure, she is having to spend the holidays with her step-mother’s family this year and she would gladly have Lena’s company but she’s not so sure she wants to subject her friend to her unruly extended family.

“Sam’s right, we’re not just going to leave you here,” Maggie affirms gently, rubbing Lena’s shoulders as she watches Kara press a quick kiss to Lena’s temple before getting up and trying to catch Alex in her pacing.

“Hey, Alex,” Kara says trying to get her sister’s attention but Alex keeps out maneuvering her and shushing her. “Hey, I need to talk to mom and dad!”

“Kara!”

“Come on, it’s important.”

“Kara, we’re discussing college applications,” Alex tells her with annoyance, trying to hold her cellphone away from her sister’s grabby hands.

“You know you’re going to get into Harvard smarty pants, now let me talk to Eliza,” Kara tells her impatiently, still trying to wrestle the phone away from Alex who is skilled at getting away from defenders on the soccer field and is quickly shaking Kara’s grasp which annoys Kara to no end. So, using her superior strength she wraps her arms around Alex’s waist and picks her up to try and get her to hold still long enough to get at the cell phone.

“Kara, I swear to god, put me down,” Alex growls in frustration, she and Kara both can hear Eliza and Jeremiah laughing and talking over the phone but she’d been trying to talk to her mother about her nervousness about testing out of a few more classes in the spring to go in as a sophomore.
“Can you ask them if Lena can come home with us too?” Kara asks innocently with a sweet smile up at her sister who’s still struggling to get put down.

“It’s okay, Kara, they’ve already got their hands full with you, your sister, and Maggie,” Lena tells Kara quickly, not wanting to be rude and impose on the Danvers – especially when she feels like Maggie really needs their care and attention more at the moment. The older girl has been quiet and less playful in the week leading up to the holidays, instead she’d appeared rather upset and stressed – and not about general school activities either.

Alex rolls her eyes with a sigh, squirming to get her other hand free as she puts the phone back to her ear, “Hey mom? Do we have room for one more?”

Kara puts Alex down but still wraps her in a bone crushing hug that makes Alex yelp indignantly as she tries to listen to her mother laughingly assure her that there was plenty of room for Lena too. Jeremiah calls out in the background that the more the merrier, and also tells Alex to let Lena know that Streaky is anxiously awaiting his favorite companion. Alex rolls her eyes as she pulls the phone away to tell Kara and Lena, “Little Luthor you’re coming with us. My Dad would also like you to know that Streaky is pleased that you’re visiting.”

“Streaky?” Lucy mouths to Sam and Maggie with a quizzical look.

“The cat,” Maggie says with a wide grin as Alex says a few more quick things with her parents before hanging up.

Alex looks between Kara and Lena with confusion and asks, “Someone want to explain what’s going on?”

Maggie takes that as her cue to leave the game behind, going over to Alex and quietly whispering that she’d explain later in their room. Alex just looks between Kara and Lena but decides to let it go, wishing Kara goodnight. She notices that Lena’s quiet and has started that thing where she avoids making eye contact in hopes of not drawing attention to herself and Alex suspects it has something to do with why the younger girl is going to be joining them on holiday. Reaching over she cuffs Lena’s shoulder, warmly telling her, “Make sure you pack some warm clothes, okay Lena?”

“Sure, thank you,” Lena answers quickly, watching as Alex and Maggie head upstairs to start checking in on the younger girls who are studying in their rooms – giving Sam a break for the evening. Kara guides her back to the table, letting Lucy to deal them both in as Sam breaks open the package of Oreos to share with them as they play another few rounds before having to return to their rooms for lights out.

In the morning Lena’s gets dressed in casual clothes, requiring Kara’s help getting a sweater on over the cast before putting the sling on – she’ll be truly grateful when she gets it taken off. The two of them finish packing the last minute items they’ll need before joining Alex and Maggie who are already downstairs seeing off several of the younger girls and talking with their parents. The car ride to Midvale goes by easily as most of the girls end up falling asleep – absolutely exhausted from the fast pace of academics, sports and extracurricular clubs.

The Monday of Thanksgiving week finds all four girls catching up on sleep, all of them sleeping in until noon and then lazing about the house with a variety of board games and movies. Lena takes the time to peruse through Eliza and Jeremiah’s books before selecting one to curl up against Kara and read as a storm comes in off the ocean. Streaky finding his way into her lap and purring contently as she pets him while reading. Alex and Maggie let Kara pick the movies even though it’s mostly romantic comedies they’ve seen before as horror was not Lena nor Kara’s cup of tea. Eliza comes home to find all four girls in the kitchen trying to cook – Alex has been ordered to the dining room to
set the table since it was the task furthest from the stove. Kara was relegated to reading out and gathering the ingredients while Maggie and Lena did the bulk of the cooking. After dinner, Jeremiah sets up the telescope outside and lights a fire in the fire pit so they can have s’mores while they get a good look at Saturn’s rings.

On Tuesday they vowed to get up early enough to do something but none of them get out of bed until it’s 11 o’clock – and only then it was because Kara was getting hungry. They do venture out of the house and to the shops at the boardwalk – Kara demanding that they go to the confectioner’s shop to get saltwater taffy and Lena insists that they go by the bookshop to say hello and check out new books. In the afternoon Maggie begs Alex to teach her to surf, and much to Kara and Lena’s amusement they watch from shore as the two older girls try to weather the cold water even with wetsuits. Maggie and Alex try to outlast each other and not be the first to admit they’d have to wait for warmer weather – Alex’s lips turning a purplish hue as she shivers at one point and Maggie complains that she can’t feel her toes before they both agree it was a foolish idea. When Jeremiah brings home pot stickers and Chinese he suggests they make plans to go to the boardwalk fair way before it closes for the year and so they do.

Eliza peeks in before leaving for work on Wednesday to check up on them. Finding Kara sprawled halfway off her air mattress and onto the floor with blankets tangled around her. Beside her Alex is sleeping with one arm tucked under her head and the other hanging off the edge on top of Kara’s leg, Maggie’s tucked into Alex’s bed, head burrowed under the covers to hide from the sunlight coming in through the window. Lena is curled up in Kara’s bed, dark hair splayed out over the pillows, her good arm tucked around the big orange cat that’s curled up to her stomach which makes Eliza smile.

As a mother she couldn’t understand how parents could just leave their children in a stranger’s care so easily and have such little regard for their daughters’ feelings about being left on their own for such eventful holidays. She feels anger at Lillian Luthor and the Sawyers for leaving lasting emotional scars on Lena and Maggie and hopes that she can somehow lessen the pain she knows they must be struggling with.

“Mom?” Alex asks tiredly as she rolls onto her back with a yawn, looking over to see Lena rubbing her eyes with a soft whine.

“Just checking to make sure you were all doing okay before I left,” Eliza assures with a soft, reassuring smile as Alex sits up and looks over at Kara with a snort of laughter.

“Yes, just going to the boardwalk,” Alex says, rolling over and flopping back down against her pillow as she waves a hand in her mother’s directions, “Don’t worry, we’ll be safe and I’ll keep an eye on Kara and Lena.”

“And have fun, Alex.”

“Yeah,” Alex says as she stretches out, draping her arm over her eyes as she hears Maggie starting to stir. She could still use a few more hours of sleep since they were up most of the night talking and giggling. She waits for her mom to leave before she sits up and sighs softly before getting to her feet and deciding to take advantage of getting to the shower first this morning.

It takes everyone else another half hour to get out of bed and get dressed, Kara’s the last to get dressed as she had gone straight for the toaster pastries Jeremiah had gotten for them as a treat. Maggie and Lena however are prefect guests, making beds and cleaning up the dishes they mess up despite being told it was fine. By the time they get to the boardwalk a comfortably sparse showing of locals are at the boardwalk – most of them sticking to the shops and novelties instead of going for the amusement park pier. Lena side tracks them all when she sees the horseshoe crabs dotting the shoreline – the dark haired girl takes it upon herself to turn over the crabs that the tide washed up on
Kara and Maggie are quick to help her as she picks up a crab and takes it to the edge of the water watching it swim away. As she picks up more to deliver them to the water she tells them about the fact that horseshoe crabs have blue blood that contains properties that help medical professionals test for bacterial endotoxins helping to treat people who have infections. Alex knew about this but she can’t help but smile at how inquisitive Lena is – she’s even more endeared to her sister’s girlfriend for how she smiles and studies the rather ugly little creatures as she helps them return to the sea and avoid becoming a seagull’s meal. By the time they reach the fairway Kara’s hungry and begging for lunch even though they haven’t even ridden any of the rides yet.

All four split up to find whatever it is their stomachs desire to eat and agree to meet up at a table by the piers edge. Kara quickly runs to the beginning of the long line of food vendors with the hope of going down the line and getting a little bit of everything. Maggie sees a few rather interesting eats but decides she’ll avoid food poisoning from the more exotic things and go for something she knows she’ll enjoy. Alex decides now is as good a time as any to sate her craving for sweets as she watches Lena look around at the food options – most likely looking for something she considers edible. Procuring a couple corn dogs and a large, fluffy mass of cotton candy Alex goes to the rendezvous point and sits down to watch the other people milling about.

“That is just pure sugar, Danvers.”

“That’s exactly why I got it, Sawyer,” Alex states with a grin as she pulls off another piece of the fluffy pink sugar to pop into her mouth. Looking over she sees Maggie has opted to go with a carnival favorite – grilled corn on the cob- which makes Alex bite back a joke about Nebraska and the cornhuskers. She also has a giant caramel apple for after she finishes her main course, even though she’s eyeing it like she’s thinking about going with desert first. Seeing Maggie so relaxed and beaming as she sits down beside her now makes her so relieved – she’d only heard Maggie talk about her parents abandoning her because of her sexuality once but she knows it still bothers her that they treated her like they did.

Alex can’t help but wrap an arm around Maggie’s shoulders and pulls her close to kiss her on the cheek which makes the smaller girl’s adorably dimpled smile appear, “You having fun?”

“Yes, I still want to ride that big roller coaster so don’t eat too much,” Maggie warns with another open grin, but when Alex is still looking at her with concerned brown eyes she hugs her back – knowing Alex is just worried about her well-being and trying not to be pushy about it. She kisses her back and with a teasing smile she asks, “You going soft on me, Danvers?”

“No on your life.”

“Good,” Maggie tells her as she takes a bite of corn contemplating how she’s going to convince Lena and Kara that they need to ride the rollercoaster with them – just because she wants to see either of the younger girls scream in terror as the coaster drops over the highest peak. She has a feeling little Luthor would find it thrilling even if she’s never been to an amusement park before. “Twenty bucks says Kara cries on the giant roller coaster.”

“Oh you’re on! She loves roller coasters. Twenty bucks and you do prefect duty with Sam for a week says it’ll be Lena that hates it,” Alex says in a wiseass tone with a cheeky grin, accepting Maggie’s bet but raising the stakes.

The two of them start to eat, grinning about the bet they just made as Lena comes back from the concessions area. Alex starts laughing hysterically which makes Lena give her an offended look as she sits down across from them. Maggie sees the object of Alex’s ridicule, it would seem that Lena
had managed to find the one place on the boardwalk that sold something relatively healthy – if one
could call it that. Lena gives Alex a scathing look as she neatly cuts into her baked potato, refusing to
have her selection of food be shamed. Maggie can’t help a chuckle as she tries to explain, “Kiddo,
the fairway is meant for you to eat all kinds of junk food and sugary sweets until you end up barfing
on the rides.”

Lena looks horrified at what Maggie just described which only makes the two of them laugh even
more, but Alex quickly gets control over herself and elbows Maggie in the ribs, “You don’t have to
ride so many rides you throw up, that’s just excessive. And I’m sure Kara will share a bite of all the
exotic treats the boardwalk has to offer.

“Alex, dear, Kara doesn’t share her food.”

“Not with us,” Alex corrects as Kara comes lumbering towards the group with a ridiculous amount
of food stacked in her arms and a smile like a kid on Christmas. All three girls at the table are aware
of Kara’s little shadows, as more and more seagulls are gathering hungrily behind her.

“This is the best!” Kara announces as she starts to unload the assortment of foods she’s gotten, laying
out a huge container of chili cheese fries, two large corndogs, a funnel cake topped not just with
confectioner’s sugar but also blueberry compote and ice cream. She’s also gotten a couple slices of
pizza and a couple orders of deep fried Oreos – picking up one of the deep fried cookies she hands it
to Lena exclaiming, “You have to try these, they’re so good.”

Lena smirks as Alex shoots Maggie a look that clearly states ‘I told you so,’ accepting the treat she
tries it out with a hum of approval. She’s not sure if it’s the best thing ever, but she has to admit they
could very well be addicting. As Kara sits down with fork in hand she digs into the funnel cake as
one particularly brave gull perches on the end of the table and sticks his beaky face right in the
middle of the funnel cake. Kara squawks in outrage as the annoying bird pulls off a large chunk of
the fluffy cake and beats a hasty retreat.

Maggie and Alex are howling with laughter, clutching each other and their sides at they watch Kara
throw her fork at the offending bird, screeching at it while it eats her cake unfazed, “Shouldn’t you
have flown south already, you jerk?!”

Lena’s trying and failing not to laugh as she hands Kara a few napkins to help her clean up the mess
the bird made – there’s no point in trying to explain that most species of gulls don’t in fact fly south
for winter. Kara quickly rushes at the gathering gulls to shoo them away as she tosses the rest of the
soiled funnel cake in the trash. When she gets back to the table Kara blocks any further attempts to
get at her food by putting her arms around it and hoarding it as close to her chest as possible –
looking rather like a dragon protecting its horde of gold and precious stones. The image just makes
them laugh even more as Kara grumpily starts to eat her food.

Lena’s always impressed with how much food Kara can pack away with such ease – if she ate even
half of that she’d have a stomach ache and suffer the consequences of indigestion later on. But
Kara’s a regular beam of sunshine as they head up to the relatively short line for the roller coaster –
Maggie insists that they should ride in the very front even though Alex is looking a little queasy at
that idea. Lena agrees, assuring Maggie that if Alex chickens out that she’ll sit in the front with her –
Kara giving her small girlfriend an apprehensive look.

When they get up to the front of the queue Alex and Kara both are standing on the platform looking
a bit unsure as Maggie climbs into the front seat calling out, “Come on, little Luthor. Let’s show
those Danvers girls how to ride a roller coaster.”

“I’m game,” Lena says, climbing in beside Maggie as Alex grumbles with Kara as the two sisters
scuffle for a moment trying to decide who is going to sit where because neither of them is too enthusiastic about it. Lena chuckles a bit nervously as she clips the seatbelt around her waist and tightens it a bit tighter than necessary as Maggie ruffles her hair playfully, assuring her it’s perfectly safe. Lena looks back to check on Kara, seeing her and Alex cranking the straps down tightly makes her think she may not enjoy this as much as she expected.

“Are you sure about this?” Lena asks Maggie, not sure if she’s supposed to be feeling like they’re going on a potentially lethal ride.

“You’re asking that now?!” Alex asks with a touch of annoyance as she tugs at the belt around her waist, “It’s a little late now don’t ya think?”

“Cool it Danvers, it’s going to be fun.”

“Fun,” Kara tries to sound like she’s sure it will be fun but it comes out as more of a question than anything else.

“Fun, right,” Lena states as a staff member lowers the safety bars over her shoulders and locks it into place. She holds onto the hand guards tightly with her good hand, her casted arm tucked against her middle protectively, and waits for whatever happens next. She’s not sure what’s going to happen but she has a feeling it’s going to be interesting.

“Alex, you said this one didn’t go upside down,” Kara complains, anxiously fidgeting with the handles as she shoots her sister a betrayed little pout.

“It doesn’t, does it?!” Alex says trying to think back on which roller coaster Maggie led them to while they were talking. She wasn’t really paying attention while they were on their way over here, instead she had been staring at Maggie the whole time with some R-rated thoughts flitting through her mind. As she examines her surroundings and the yellow and green color of the coaster her heart drops a bit as she knows this one does go inverted – and more than once.

The conductor wishes them all a fun ride before hitting the button to send the cars careening forward on the track. Maggie’s practically bouncing in her seat as it climbs towards the top of the tracks as Lena takes in the amazing view around them The boardwalk starting to light up on one side – and the ocean dotted with sailboats and surfers on the other – is breathtaking. But it doesn’t last long as the train starts to tip over the peak and all Lena sees then is just how far down it is to the ground. Her stomach seems to drop and she’s yelling in terror at first, but soon she watches in fascination as they go through two loops that have her laughing wildly.

Behind her Alex is cursing rather loudly and Kara’s saying a prayer to some ancient god. Maggie has thrown her hands up, just letting the ride take her where it will and rolling with the movements. Lena can’t stop laughing as they rocket through a few more hills that leave her feeling light as a feather and breathless. By the time they get back to the station Maggie’s laughing along with Lena while the two sisters are heaving sighs of relief and looking forward to getting off the ride. Once the restraints are released Lena’s already thinking about the physics of the roller coaster and that she’s going to need to ride more of them – for science.

“Let’s do that again!” Lena beams while trying to straighten out her hair from the tangled mess it’s become while assessing which ride they should do next.

“That’s the spirit, little Luthor,” Maggie congratulates, clapping her on the shoulders.

“I never thought I would say this but I probably shouldn’t have eaten so much,” Kara complains, legs a little shaky as she stumbles over to Lena and Maggie with Alex in tow. She feels Lena’s arm
wrap around her waist, looking up at her with concern but she assures, “I’m okay, just not a big fan of roller coasters.”

“I thought you loved roller coasters!” Alex accuses

“What gave you that idea?!” Kara questions with shock written across her face as she throws up her hands and explains, “I only said I loved riding all the rides so that Eliza would make you take me with you and Nicki to the beach all the time.”

Alex sighs heavily as she drapes an arm around her sister’s shoulders while their girlfriends’ are laughing at them. She just ruffles Kara’s hair as she laughs while asking in an amused tone, “So you mean that all those summers where we rode rides every minute we weren’t at the beach was probably torture for you?!”

“Which is why I happily made excuses to get snacks and avoided riding without a buddy,” Kara tells her with a proud grin, but she nudges Alex’s shoulder with her own as she tells her, “You didn’t seem like such a fan either.”

“Yeah, I have regrets,” Alex admits reluctantly, shaking her head with a smile, “Mainly that I just lost a bet to Maggie.”

Maggie just pokes her tongue out at Alex, but when she gets an annoyed glare she takes her hand and tugs her towards the bumper cars. Lena has a wonderful time chasing after Kara although Alex seems to have the best grasp on driving as she maneuvers her car to slam into or spin around the others. Kara picks the next ride, choosing to go on the Merry-Go-Round that has various zoo animals and even mythical creatures on it. A few parents are there with their kids and Alex rolls her eyes but doesn’t say anything since she knows it’s Kara’s favorite.

She and her parents had brought Kara here on a quiet weekday like the one they’re enjoying today – it was just 3 years ago that Kara had come to them traumatized and barely speaking. The other rides were too big and terrifying at first, so Alex had actually suggested the charming, easy ride as a starting point. Of course, Kara had chosen a brightly colored seahorse like the one that appeared in the Little Mermaid movie and it had made her smile for the first time in a long while. Now at the merry go round Kara’s showing Lena the seahorse that’s still there but a little worn from use – likely explaining their history with this ride. Lena’s smiling warmly at her before climbing onto the dolphin beside the seahorse.

Kara’s smiling again and Alex can’t help pulling her little sister into a hug, glad to see that she has one more person in her life that can make her smile and feel loved. Maggie has climbed onto a shark, humming the theme to Jaws playfully as she reaches over and pats the orca next to her wooden stead, calling out, “Come on, Danvers.”

“Please tell me you aren’t saying I’m a whale,” Alex deadpans, but she can’t help laughing as she takes a seat next to her girlfriend and holding onto the pole as the ride starts.

As the sun starts to set Lena asks to go on the large Ferris wheel at the very end of the pier, linking hands with Kara as they head towards the short line. Alex and Maggie stay back enough to get their own carriage, hands twined together and grinning as they sit close to one another. As the ride starts Lena realizes that maybe she’s not so fond of heights as the capsule they’re in rocks a bit as the wheel slowly starts turning. Kara can tell from the way that Lena’s hands tremble and she starts when the carriage moves unexpectedly that the raven haired girl is anxious so she moves closer and wraps an arm around her shoulders and presses a kiss to her temple and assures, “It’s fine Lena, take a look out at the ocean.”
Lena snuggles further into Kara’s embrace that makes her feel brave enough to look out at the view as they reach the top of the ride. The scene before her steals the breath from her lungs – the sky stretches towards the horizon a plethora of reds, oranges, and purples as the sun has sunk just below the horizon. The white caps of the waves coming in with the rolling tide reflect the warm colors, a stark contrast to the deep, rolling waters that are dark as night. Sailboats with beautifully patterned sails are coming in for the day and look like small toys from so high up. Behind them the boardwalk is lit up with carnival lights and the sounds of upbeat music and the chatter and laughter of people.

Lena smiles softly as she looks back at Kara, watching blue eyes glittering from the lights and she caresses her cheek tenderly before drawing her in for a kiss. Kara hums happily as one hand tangles in Lena’s wind whipped hair and the other drifts down to rest at her waist. Lena nips playfully at Kara’s kiss reddened bottom lip before pressing in to deepen the kiss while she holds onto the front of Kara’s coat. Kara moans softly as she savors the gently touch of tongues and the achingly warm brush of kiss bruised lips. When they need to breath becomes unbearable the two break apart, cheeks rosy and panting briefly before going back for more. Kara presses hot, open mouthed kisses along Lena’s jaw and down the curve of her neck to her collar as her fingers slip under the hem of her girlfriend’s sweater finding the skin contact she’s been desiring.

The ride ends sooner than either girl would like – even though both of them would prefer to continue making out they’d prefer to do so in comfort. Kara and Lena are trying to straighten up their clothing, Lena straightening her sweater and Kara wiping her mouth on the back of her sleeve. It would seem Alex and Maggie had similar ideas as the two of them are just as breathless and laughing as Alex tries to straighten up her hair and pull her collar up to hide the red marks there. Maggie’s beaming a dimpled smile at the older Danvers girl, still holding onto her hand with their fingers linked together. Alex tries not to blush as she sees Kara grinning at her and giving her a wink, saying as calmly as possible, “We should probably head back home and see about dinner.”

“Absolutely,” Kara agrees with a bright smile, content to hold Lena’s hand as they head back towards the car.

When they return from the boardwalk Jeremiah and Eliza are sitting on the porch with a bottle of wine, the two of them greet the girls – letting them know that dinner would be ready soon and to pick out a few board games to play. Alex and Kara are quick to show their girlfriends’ the massive amount of board games that the family has accumulated over the years. Lena suggests Catan but Kara vetoes the choice as she complains about the last time no one would trade her for the damn sheep. Laughing Lena instead selects Risk with a sly little smile that makes Kara feel like she’s not going to have any players on the map for very long. Maggie is quick to pick Betrayal at House on the Hill, grinning as she’s picked out the creepy horror game that starts them all off exploring a haunted house and usually ends up with everyone being skeptical of each other and freaking themselves out trying to find out who’s going to betray the group.

As it turns out not one but two people betray the group and side with the ghost haunting the mansion – Lena was the first to do so. Kara had given her a legitimately hurt look but Lena just explained that the ghost made a really good business proposition she’d be foolish to refuse. By the end of the next turn of play Alex has also defected to the super natural, citing that it makes sense to be on the side that has zombies, werewolves, and dragons for teammates. The two betrayers manage to complete their victory goal before the rest of the group despite Maggie and Kara’s best efforts for the human team. Alex and Lena high five each other and even make an agreement to not attack each other until absolutely necessary in Risk which Kara objects to immediately.

After getting a few bowls of popcorn and some ice cream Maggie reigns victorious on the Risk board, her armies having quickly overtaken Kara who had spread out her troop too thin across Asia. The second to fall was Eliza, mainly due to having gotten unlucky in which countries she was
assigned at the beginning of the game – barely any sharing a border with each other. Alex goes down third, collecting another can of soda to finish watching as her father clears off the last of her troops in Australia because of her poor dice rolling – seriously how does she keep getting all 1’s when it’s statistically improbable. Lena, who lost an ally in Alex, crumbles next while trying to maintain her hold in North and South America – but Maggie and Jeremiah attacking from either side crush her armies. Jeremiah and Maggie battle it out strategically as the others are starting to get tired by the time Maggie clears off Jeremiah’s last soldier. He claps her on the shoulder while grinning and congratulating her, “Good game, Maggie! It’s about time someone else dominated the world.”

As they head to bed Lena watches as Eliza and Jeremiah check in with Alex and Kara – the two parents dote over the two girls and embrace them before heading off to bed. While brushing her teeth she thinks about the few happy memories she has of her family – she knows Lillian isn’t her mother but the only thing she remembers of her real mother is warm brown eyes and a few bars of a lullaby in a language she doesn’t understand. She does remember that when she was younger Lionel would sit with her in the parlor and read with her on evenings he wasn’t busy. As she grew older he was around less often but when he was Lillian was much tamer and he was never cross or cruel in his remarks to her. He loved her, even if he wasn’t around or didn’t know how to express it in a way she understood.

Settling into Kara’s bed she pulls the covers up to her chin and breathes in the scent of vanilla and tries to get relaxed enough to sleep. Alex and Kara are bickering with each other in a joking manner as they both settle down, tossing a pillow back and forth at each other. Maggie comes in with Streaky in her arms, petting the big orange cat and cooing to him before placing him on the bed next to Lena, “He was looking for you, Little Luthor.”

“Hey buddy,” Lena purrs softly as she looks into the cat’s big yellow eyes and reaches out a hand to ruffle the fur behind his elegantly pointed ears. Streaky starts to purr immediately and curls up beside her, letting his tail swish over the side of the bed. Maggie’s still looking at her in a way that reminds her of Lex – the way he used to give her a sympathetic, knowing look as if to say he understood the type of pain and sadness she was dealing with. Musteriing up a smile that doesn’t quite meet her eyes, she tells her, “Sleep well, Maggie.”

“Goodnight, Lena,” Maggie says with a sad smile of her own before bending down to kiss Alex goodnight before climbing into bed and switching off the lamp – casting them all into darkness.

Lena listens silently to Streaky’s loud but steady purring, she can also hear Kara’s strong even breathing having already slipped to sleep as soon as she’d laid down. Maggie’s gently, deep breathes and Alex’s soft huffs of breath against her pillow are completely new and Lena tries to let them help calm down her racing thoughts. She’d been trying to avoid thinking about this week being the one-year anniversary of her father’s death. She’s also been desperately trying to avoid the pain in her chest that comes from missing the loving older brother that Lex had been.

But now that it’s so quiet and peaceful her brain has nothing better to do but recall the events in vivid detail. They’d had a tense early dinner after a Black Friday of marketing and PR meetings to deal with the insider trading and Ponzi scheme trials going on. Lionel and Lilian hadn’t even fought that evening, instead they’d been surprisingly cordial and even affectionate with each other and towards her and Lex. There was quite a bit of drinking going on but as Lex and Lena had retired to their rooms to work on coursework Lionel had stopped by to speak with each of them – which was unheard of by that time. Lionel congratulated Lex on his soccer games and his work with the computer science and engineering clubs, clapping him on the back and assuring him of his pride and affections.

When Lionel came into her room Lena had been working on a literature review of Tolstoy’s Anna
Karenina, a book she still loves very much and reads when she has spare time. Lena’s restless movement irks Streaky enough that he moves to the foot of the bed, leaving Lena to recall that her father’s breath smelled of whiskey by herself. Lena struggles to get comfortable as she recalls that his glassy green eyes had still held love for her. If she’s really still and thinks about it hard enough she can still feel his fingers run through her hair tenderly as he told her that he loved her and that he knew she would grow up to do great things. He’d hugged her so tightly that it had made her ribs ache in protest but instead of complain she held onto him just as fiercely.

She’d gone to bed that night happy and so blissfully unaware that her world was about to continue in a downward spiral. She’d hugged Lex good night and snuggled into her bed, the comforter up to her chin just like it is presently. Her eyes had been heavy with weariness and she’d just closed them – letting herself slip off the edge into slumber when her body was jolted awake by the gunshot ringing from downstairs. At first she’d been afraid and frozen, but after hearing Lex’s door fly open and his hurried footsteps she’d gotten up and crept down the stairs. Lillian’s screams made the tiny hairs on her arms stand on end and her stomach fall to her feet. When she’d made it to the study she could smell the sulfur from the gunpowder and the tang of copper in the air – Lex was already embracing their mother, both of them crying.

All Lena sees as she peers into the dark room is wisps of smoke rising into the air and the outline of Lionel’s dress shoes, and then Alyosha – the family cook – is there, picking her up and taking her away from the scene. Lena doesn’t remember what he’s trying to say as he talks softly to her because of the sounds of screaming and wailing – sounds so full of anguish and pain she didn’t know a human was capable of making them. She doesn’t realize they are coming from her until her throat starts to ache and her tears wet the front of her nightgown.

Lena doesn’t realize that she has tears in her eyes now until she’s sitting up and feels them leaving hot trails on her cheeks. Soundlessly she gets up and pads towards the door before sneaking into the hallway and down the stairs. In the kitchen she finds a clean glass and fills it with water, standing by the counter staring out the window. With the night sky overcast makes the ocean look as black as a gaping void that beacons to Lena. She’s so absorbed in her thoughts that she doesn’t hear the soft, measured footsteps on the stairs.

“Lena?” Maggie calls softly, reaching out to lay a hand on Lena’s shoulder only to feel the other girl flinch violently before turning her tear stained face to look at her. Maggie quickly guides her to a chair while finding a box of Kleenex in the living room and setting it on the table as she sits in front of Lena, her warm brown eyes must share some of the sadness she sees reflected in Lena’s frightened green ones. Gently she lays a hand on Lena’s shoulder as she tries to soothe, “Hey Lena, what’s the matter? Should I go get Kara?”

“No,” Lena says quickly, almost jolting away from Maggie. She doesn’t want to wake Kara, she knows that the blonde wouldn’t mind at all but she already feels bad that Kara’s lost sleep over her nightmares and memories before.

“Okay, we won’t wake her up. But are you okay?” Maggie asks with concern that heightens when she watches Lena’s eyes flood with tears even though she nods silently. Softly with a sad smile she asks, “You wanna try again, kiddo?”

Lena sighs softly, dabbing at her eyes and nose with a tissue as she tells her weakly, voice breaking to try and keep back sobs, “I just miss my Dad.”

“You want to tell me about him?” Maggie asks even though she already knows who Lionel Luthor is even though she’s unaware of the details of his life and death. She moves closer to Lena and drapes an arm around her shoulders, trying to calm her down.
“There’s not much to say, Maggie. He wasn’t there often, but when he was he was much kinder and loving than Lillian. That’s not much of an epitaph,” Lena states darkly, her eyes downcast as she fidgets with some of the padding sticking out of the edge of her cast. Lena feels her eyes sting with more tears she’s too tired to stop from spilling down her cheeks as she tells Maggie honestly, feeling like the older girl would understand somehow, “I miss him but I shouldn’t, he didn’t protect me like he should have…he did things…I shouldn’t love him, he doesn’t deserve it but I still do.”

“I still love my Papa too, even though he doesn’t deserve it either,” Maggie tells her, feeling her throat tighten as she wraps Lena up in a tight hug as she snifflies quietly – desperately trying to stay quiet. Maggie’s thinking back to the cold, winter’s day that she’d come home to see a suitcase sitting on the front steps of her home. She’d been shaking with fear and worry during the whole silent drive to her aunt’s house, a dread that had settled into her bones that she’ll be grateful if she never feels again. “I told a girl that I liked her…that I like, liked her and she freaked. Her parents called my parents and when I came home from school my father was waiting for me – a suitcase sitting on the steps. We drove a couple hours to my aunt’s home and when I asked what I had done the only thing he could say was that I shamed him.”

“Oh, Maggie,” Lena whispers with such gentleness Maggie lets a few tears slip past her careful control.

“It’s okay to still love him, despite my dad abandoning me a part of me still loves him…still hopes that he’ll come back for me. We’re supposed to be able to love our families and they’re supposed to love us back. So don’t feel bad about that.”

“Do you think he’ll ever come back for you?” Lena asks softly, wondering how Maggie’s Dad could pack up his child’s things in a single suitcase and just abandon her without a second thought. At least she could explain Lillian’s abuse away as the two of them having a step-parent, step-child relationship at best – the relationship between a devoted wife and the bastard child at worse. She wonders if Maggie’s Dad ever thinks of her and misses her the way she clearly misses him.

“No, I don’t think he’ll ever come back for me,” Maggie tells her sadly, holding onto the smaller girl tighter as she feels more tears well up in her eyes. She appreciates Lena’s optimism but after a year and half of marking off days on a calendar hoping that the next day would be the day he came back to get her she’d learned that it was best to move on – to create her own family that would love her for who she is, not who she should be.

Lena’s voice is shaking as she whispers, “My dad left me too, and he can’t come back.”

Lena breaks into soft sobs as she holds onto Maggie, her heart breaks that she wasn’t enough of a reason for her father to stick around. She knows he was struggling but she wished that he could have seen how much she was hurting and needed him too. She cries too because her friend had been just as abandoned as she had been and was hurting just as much. The two of them are huddled together in their grief and barely register that the hall light switches on and gentle footsteps are approaching.

“Girls?” Eliza asks softly as she steps in the kitchen, two sets of tearful eyes looking back at her with sorrow and anxiety.

“I’m sorry…” Lena tries to say as she and Maggie stand up, both of them are worried that Eliza would be less than thrilled about being woken up by her guests. But before Lena can finish the soft apology she feels Eliza pulling them both into a warm hug and she can’t help but melt into it – wrapping her arm around Eliza and letting the tears she’s been trying to reign in fall.

Eliza hums quietly as she holds onto both girls, she’d thought she’d heard quiet whispers coming from the kitchen. She’d originally assumed it was Kara going to get a midnight snack, but when the
whispers turn to quiet crying she’d gotten up and put on a robe to go investigate. Now she waits patiently, for their tears to ebb away, whispering softly to both Maggie and Lena. Maggie pulls away first still sniffling, Eliza rubs her arm tenderly motioning for her to sit down while she comforts and calms down Lena.

Maggie sits down, still teary eyed as she listens to Lena’s hiccupping sobs start to taper off, reaching over she clasps Lena’s hand in hers and holds it tightly. Soon enough Eliza is tucking errant hair behind Lena’s ears and brushing her tears away before guiding her to sit down. Eliza gets out a few mugs and a bag of marshmallows from the cabinet before making some hot chocolate – something she’s done for her own daughters when they were so upset or stressed they couldn’t sleep. She gives them each a mug and takes her own to sit across from them, sipping at the beverage instead of asking what’s wrong – she isn’t going to press them to talk about it if they aren’t ready.

Maggie finds her voice first, wanting Eliza to understand, “Sometimes the holidays are difficult for me… it’s complicated.”

A couple stray tears drip down Lena’s cheeks and she hastily brushes them away as she murmurs barely above a whisper, “I miss my Dad, this was… well, it’s usually a really bad week for me.”

Eliza knows from what Alex and Kara have told her and Jeremiah that both girls had rather difficult upbringings – that Maggie had been abandoned by her family. She suspects it was for her sexuality but she’s not going to pry because it doesn’t matter – she feels very strongly that if people couldn’t accept their gay child then they didn’t deserve to be parents. Eliza knows more about Lena, her father’s suicide had been widely publicized around the world. But, when she’d first met Lena, with her sad green eyes and nervous, unsure demeanor, she’d suspected that there was more than just her father’s death that tormented her.

Calmly she takes both of the girls’ hands in her own, squeezing them gently as she looks between both of them seriously, “You don’t owe me an explanation, if you aren’t comfortable talking about it that’s perfectly okay. I just want both of you to know that you always have a safe place here, and if you ever need help or just someone to talk with Jeremiah and I are always available.”

By the time they finish the sweet drinks Maggie’s trying to stifle her yawns and Lena’s blinking tiredly. Eliza guides them upstairs and smiles affectionately when Alex – always a light sleeper – wakes up at the movement and is quick to sit up and look around the room when she sees that her bed is devoid of Maggie. Alex yawns but relaxes when she sees Maggie and Lena coming back, reaching out she takes Maggie’s hand asking softly, “Mags?”

“So back to sleep Alex, everything’s okay now,” Maggie assures, making sure that Lena gets tucked back into bed before she ruffles Alex’s hair and gets under the covers.

“Goodnight, girls,” Eliza whispers before shutting the door, she goes downstairs and puts the mugs in the sink before heading back to bed.

The morning of Thanksgiving starts out with a trip to the local café to start off the morning with a nice meal so that Kara doesn’t eat everything in sight when they get down to the cooking. Eliza delegates tasks like a champion – putting Lena and Maggie in charge of desserts while keeping both Kara and Alex out of the kitchen. The only negotiation is that Kara gets to learn how to make the chocolate pecan pie that she loves so much – promising profusely that she wouldn’t eat too much of the ingredients in the process. Alex doesn’t try to bargain for anything, preferring to avoid the kitchen altogether.

Once back at the house Jeremiah checks on the turkey that he put in the oven before they left, basting it and checking the temperature. As soon as Eliza gets out the cutting boards and starts laying out the
ingredients the rule about keeping Kara and Alex out of the kitchen evaporates. Alex, having made quick work of setting the table with the nice dishes is quick to pick up a knife and start in on the vegetables. Maggie’s chopping pecans and teasing Alex, reminding the redhead to make sure she doesn’t chop off the ends of her fingers in a Thanksgiving Day mishap.

Lena’s a little baffled as to what she’s supposed to do, having never really cooked with anyone other than her family’s chef who taught her mostly Russian and French dishes. She notices that Kara is setting up pictures and little candles on a bookcase in the living room, almost as if she’s setting up a small shrine. Lena’s curious as to what she’s doing but doesn’t want to intrude, watching Kara as she places each picture frame and candle in its place carefully. The blonde looks up to meet Lena’s eyes, her somber expression breaks out into a smile as she motions her over.

“Hey,” Kara says a bit shyly, watching as Lena moves into her personal space and looks at the pictures, “We kind of have a few traditions and I uh…I got something for you so that you can be a part of it too.”

Lena looks a little confused as Kara quickly goes to retrieve a package wrapped carefully in golden wrapping paper that’s dotted with different colored fall leaves. Kara looks a little nervous as Lena starts to peel away the paper so she starts to explain rapidly, “You see this is…uh, we have a tradition…You see, the pictures on the shelves are the family that can’t be with us anymore. I know they aren’t really here, but it’s nice to see their faces during the holiday season.”

Lena pulls the paper away to see a framed picture of her Dad and immediately her eyes start to sting. Kara’s selected one of the few pictures of her father in which he’s smiling – not the cocky, prideful smile that was plastered on magazine and newspaper covers. This smile was genuine, the smile he used to give her when he listened to her talk to him about school – a warm, fond smile that made her feel like she was loved and had finally done something right. She looks at Kara and sees she’s also teary eyed even though she looks really nervous, pointing to the photo of a smiling couple – a tall, handsome man with bright, intelligent blue eyes and a woman with long hair that falls in loose curls and a warm, gentle expression that reminds her of Kara, “These are my parents, and that’s my Aunt. I miss them and think about them all the time, but it’s really hard around the holidays. So, we make sure we take the time to remember everyone who’s passed away. I didn’t want you to feel left out.”

Lena can’t find the words to thank Kara for such a precious gift – it’s not like other people had been okay with her expressing grief and sorrow about losing her father. But here’s Kara, who’s lost just as much as she has, willing to share in the bad parts of her life just as much as the good parts. Tears are trailing down her cheeks as she lets her fingers trace over the image of her father’s face as she softly utters, “Th-Thank you, Kara.”

Kara brushes away her own tears before moving the frames around so that Lena can put the photo of Lionel right beside the ones of her family members. Lena shakily sets the photo on the shelf, looking at the other smiling faces that will be keeping him company. She feels Kara behind her, wrapping her arms around her and resting her chin on her shoulder – just holding her warmly while she calms. After a while Eliza calls them into the kitchen, having put out two bags of chocolate chips so they could have a few sweet treats while working on making the pie.

Alex and Maggie have opted to make strawberry cupcakes instead of pumpkin pie, the taller girl has flour all down the front of her band tee shirt and a couple suspicious looking hand prints on her sides and shoulders. Judging by Maggie’s grin Lena knows they didn’t get there by accident. When Jeremiah next checks on the turkey, Streaky decides to have a go at him – weaving figure eights around the man’s ankles in hopes of causing him to drop a tasty reward. As the wonderful, mouth-watering aromas spread from the kitchen into the rest of the house Kara’s started folding origami turkeys and putting them on people’s plates and laying out markers of various colors in the center of
As they sit down at the table Lena looks at all the food they’ve made and feels somewhat accomplished that she’d helped – especially with the pie that Kara has been salivating over since they took it out of the oven. Alex and Maggie are finally cleaned up and laughing with each other as they play with the paper turkeys – Alex explaining something to Maggie who is watching her intently. Beside her Kara has already picked up a bright blue marker and is writing on one of the turkeys. Before she can ask what’s going on, Eliza explains, “We have a tradition that at every Thanksgiving dinner we write down a few things that we’re thankful for in the past year. Afterwards we go around the table and tell everyone at least one of those thing we’re thankful for.”

Lena’s never heard of this but she just nods and reaches for a green marker, looking at the three little turkey figures sitting on her plate. Picking up the orange one she neatly prints the name of the school on it – if she’d gone to a different school she’d never have meet Kara, or Alex and Maggie. As she’s writing down ‘NerdCorp’ on another one of the turkey’s she feels a pair of paws on her thigh. Looking over she watches as Streaky yowls at her, wide yellow eyes looking between her and the table. Lena shakes her head with a laugh as she moves over enough for Streaky to hop up beside her, peeking his little cat face up to stare at the food and other occupants of the table. Switching to a red marker she neatly writes ‘Kara’ on the last turkey before lining them up in front of her plate.

“How go first?!” Kara beams, huddling her origami figures into a little circle. When Eliza nods, Kara brightly announces, “Well, I mean there are like a million things that I’m thankful for this year – the water polo team, our great captain Maggie, and of course the best sister in the world – who while annoying and over protective – has such a good heart and tries her best to keep me out of trouble. But I’m really thankful that I was roomed with Lena Luthor. I’m incredibly thankful that you’re my friend, because you are the kindest, most loving person I’ve ever met and you make me so happy.”

Lena’s blushing bright red, but she can’t help but smile at Kara – wishing that she was able to just lean over and kiss her hard on the lips. Instead she settles for a tight hug that Kara returns with enthusiasm. When Maggie volunteers to go next and talks about how thankful she is for the Danvers family, and Alex especially, Kara’s hand comes to rest on her thigh. Lena smiles softly to herself as she lays her hand over Kara’s even though Streaky doesn’t seem pleased about sharing Lena’s lap with his owner. Lena and Alex share a look at each other – both of them giving the other girl a pleading look for them to go first. When neither of them budge Eliza announces that she’s thankful that both of her girls are healthy and happy as well as the new breakthrough in cancer research that she hopes will help people soon.

Jeremiah chuckles a bit as he goes next, starting by saying that he’s really happy that the semester isn’t over yet because he’s not thankful that he’s going to have to read a bunch of poorly written term papers. Alex reminds him that he didn’t have to assign it so Jeremiah announces that he’s thankful for his daughter’s wit and sarcasm. With a warm smile he tells them that he’s thankful that his family is flourishing and that he’s glad they get to share that with their friends. He pats Alex on the shoulder and urges her to go next which makes her scowl for a moment.

Alex very briefly, and awkwardly, states that she’s grateful for many things including her sister and her parents support as she applies to universities. She then turns about as crimson as her hair as she stammers through a statement about how grateful she is that she’s found such a compassionate, understanding friend in Maggie – even if she does make her eat vegan ice cream. Lena realizes that everyone is looking at her and she still hasn’t thought through everything she wants to say much less how she’s going to get it out while everyone is looking at her. Kara squeezes her hand gently and she tries to be more confident as she decides to just go with her heart on this one.

“I thought switching schools was going to just add onto the already crappy year I was having – no
Lena says softly, fingers linked with Kara’s tightly and eyes fixed on the little red turkey with Kara’s name written on it lest she lose her courage, “I’m incredibly thankful I had to switch schools because it has been my pleasure to meet so many genuinely caring people. Sam and Lucy who can’t help but tease everyone so the stress isn’t overwhelming and Maggie’s like everyone’s cool big sister – always willing to listen and offer non-judgmental advice. Alex, who keeps us all honest and on task but more importantly keeps us safe. Mr. and Mrs. Danvers, you both have been so welcoming even though I’m sure having two teenagers of your own is enough to deal with – I’m grateful you’ve allowed me to be a part of this. But what I’m most thankful for is Kara – you always see the good in people…in me, even when I can’t see it in myself. I have a lot to be thankful for.”

Lena doesn’t realize that everyone is floored by her declaration because her ray of sunshine girlfriend has wrapped her up in a hug – displacing her fork from the table and the cat from Lena’s lap. As Lena and Kara right themselves Eliza reaches over and lays a hand on Lena’s arm, and warmly reminds, “You’re always welcome here, Lena. You and Maggie both.”

The family tucks into the meal, even sparing a few bits of turkey for Streaky so the cat too could enjoy the holiday feast. Lena eats more than she expected to, giving up on trying to eat in moderation when everything tastes so rich and flavorful. As they eat Jeremiah shares a couple embarrassing stories about Alex and Kara – the one where they took little Alex to Disneyland and she freaked out and punched Mickey Mouse in the crotch made them all laugh until they were winded and red in the face. Alex just shrugged and said the damn mouse surprised her and what did he expect. Lena’s pretty sure the actor was expecting an excited 9-year-old to hug the famed mouse not a punch to the privates.

In the interlude between dinner and dessert Kara insists they play Mario Kart – handing out Wii controllers. Alex and Maggie immediately start trash talking one another and making a wager on which one of them will make it to the top of the podium – Alex choosing Dry Bones and Maggie picking Koopa Troopa. Kara just selects Princess Peach and tries to stay out of her sister and Maggie’s way. Lena opts for Bowser Jr. just picking the character because he looks like a little dragon – she didn’t even both to look at the stats or anything. Eliza and Jeremiah settle in to watch the massacre with a few beers.

After the carnage of several matches Lena surprisingly comes out on top followed by Kara, then Jeremiah who managed to race a few matches. Maggie and Alex, in their competitiveness ended up both alternating in last place for almost every match and come out dead even for least points. Any hostilities, playful or otherwise evaporate when the chocolate pecan pie and strawberry cupcakes are brought out with a couple cartons of ice cream. When the night comes to a close Lena takes the three origami turkeys upstairs and stows them away carefully in her backpack – intending to put them on her desk when she gets back to school.

The last couple days of holiday vacation are spent relaxing, save for the one shopping outing that they all decide to go on that ends with all of them just people watching the Black Friday shoppers before calling it quits and going for dinner at the Rockin’ Lobster. On Saturday evening they all go for a walk along the beach bundled up in coats, hats and scarves just to enjoy the setting sun – savoring the last few moments of peace and relaxation before they all have to get back into the normal swing of things. The last night there Lena can’t help but curl up next to Kara with Streaky tucked in the space behind her knees – having missed falling asleep to the safe feeling of the blonde’s arms wrapped around her.

The next morning, Lena’s sitting on the porch looking out at the ocean, she really isn’t ready to go back to school yet. The last week with the Danvers and Maggie had been full of fun, companionship, and all the things Lena thinks normal families have that she hopes to experience more of in the
future. She’s also not looking forward to all the comprehensive exams and academic rankings that come with the end of a term. Hearing the door open she watches as Kara comes out, they both hear Alex’s exasperated sigh all the way from the kitchen. Lena chuckles a bit as she asks curiously, “What’s up with Alex?”

“Oh, that?! Mom caught her and Maggie kissing, so I’m pretty sure she’s trying not to die of mortification after getting the gay version of the birds and the bees,” Kara hands Lena a mug of hot apple cider as she sits down beside her, a sly little grin on her face as she tells her in a conspiratorial tone, “Either that or she’s currently dying of embarrassment because Jeremiah high-fived Maggie. I’m not sure which is worse, but seriously that’s what they get for not being subtle.”

“Oh, and you two are the epitome of subtlety, Miss I-have-heart-eyes-every-time-I-see-Little-Luthor,” Maggie teases as she slips out of the house and onto the porch with a mug of coffee, savoring the cold air as she looks out at the waves wistfully. Maggie shares a little nervous look with Lena, the two of them knew that Jeremiah and Eliza had made passing comments that suggested they were okay with Alex or Kara being gay – but when push comes to shove some people change their minds. “So, Alex isn’t going to be in trouble is she? It was my fault, and I tried to explain that.”

“I think the only person who ever had issues with Alex being gay is Alex,” Kara assures softly, knowing how difficult and uncomfortable Alex had been when she had snuck into Kara’s room one summer to discuss how poorly a date with a local preppy guy had gone horribly wrong. She was also there for Alex when she realized that the feelings she had for her former friend Vicki were way less than platonic. “But it’s not a surprise by any means.”

The three of them sit close together to ward off the cold wind as they enjoy the last view of the ocean they’ll get for another three weeks. When the door opens they’re all quick to see a blushing Alex come out onto the patio, looking mortified but also amused she nudges Maggie to move over as she sits down and tells her sister, “You’re turn, Kara.”

“You told on me?”

“Yeah, no…You are a lot less subtle than you think,” Alex says with a grin as she leans into Maggie’s warm side.

Kara sighs but gets up and heads inside after patting Lena on the shoulder. Lena looks over to Alex and asks quickly, “So they don’t know about… about Kara and me?”

“Well, I’d say it’ll be a secret for two…maybe three…more minutes,” Alex says with a wiry grin, “Kara can’t lie worth a shit.”

Alex can’t help but chuckle, she definitely didn’t answer her mother when she asked if she knew anything about Kara and Lena. She was to focused on trying to downplay how serious and intimate her relationship with Maggie was – because the last thing she wanted to discuss with her mother was her very private love life. Maggie elbows her and subtly tilts her head towards the younger girl on her other side and Alex can’t help but snort with amusement, but when she sees Lena’s pensive look she tells her with a laugh, “Lena, it’s going to be fine. It’s not a big deal that Kara’s incapable of lying because she doesn’t need to – they’ve known she was gay before I came out. Although it’s going to be funny to see how red she turns after the sex ed refresher.”

Sure enough Kara’s is as read as her favorite hoodie, even her ears and neck are colored with a dark flush that Lena finds adorable. As they start to pack up the car Kara’s quick to do anything that allows her to avoid being around Eliza until she can forget the embarrassing lecture she just sat through. It was bad enough that after less than a minute of looking at her adoptive parents and stammering she blurted out that she was going out with Lena. They weren’t surprised in the least,
which was disappointing because she honestly thought she’d been doing a good job staying chill throughout the week. Apparently not because then she’d gotten a lecture on respecting the younger girl and an LGBT friendly lecture on safe and consensual sex – which made her whole body feel like it was going to implode with mortification.

By the time the sun starts to set all four girls are trying to get used to being back at school – missing the ability to sneak down to the kitchen for a snack and the sounds of the ocean. But when lights out comes around Lena sneaks out of her own bed and into Kara’s, letting the blonde’s hands roam over her freely as she sighs contently. The only way the last week could have been better is if she’d gotten more private time with Kara and could have slept in the same bed with her. Now as they’re curled up together in a tangle of limbs and wild locks of hair she smiles as she nuzzles up against Kara. Everything was so perfect - her relationship with Kara was so loving and safe and though she dreaded the upcoming exams she knew she’d do well. Lena thinks back to Lex’s odd, disturbing warning and wonders if it had just been paranoia.

Chapter End Notes

Author’s Note 2: Thanks for reading and I hope you enjoyed reading, give me a heads up and let me know what you think. Now, if you’ll excuse me, while I try to live vicariously through the Danver’s family.
When the Bough Breaks

Chapter Notes

Author’s Note: I’m sorry. It gets better, I promise, at least it’s not relationship drama/angst.

Warnings: Uh, well, there’s brief descriptions of past abuse and domestic violence, mentions of off-screen crime and suicide (Lionel’s). I blame the trifecta of evil Luthor’s.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Lena’s humming softly to herself as she brushes out her hair, she’s not entirely pleased about heading back to classes but the joy and peace of the last week is still with her. She hears Kara whining quietly to herself about how this week is kind of pointless because it’s going to be nothing but reviewing everything they’ve gone over for the entire term. Lena chuckles softly as she turns to see Kara handing her one of her sweaters and tells her, “So, review week before exams. Should be easy then.”

“Easy, but boring. We don’t even have sports practice or club meetings until next term,” Kara complains softly as she reaches for Lena, resting her hands on her waist as she smiles and reminds, “At least you get rid of this cast today.”

“Finally!”

Lena slips a couple books in her bag and slings it over her shoulder telling Kara she’ll meet her downstairs so they can walk to breakfast together. Lena smiles to herself as she looks outside and sees that it’s going to be a perfect day for studying and reading – overcast grey clouds that are threatening to drop rain on everyone below at any second. As Lena steps off the landing and into the common room her sense of hopefulness disappears as several girls look back at her from where they’re crowding around the television. Curious as to what could be so interesting she moves closer to get a view of the television as a few of the other girls look at her with sad, sympathetic eyes that makes her feel immediately uneasy.

Lena feels her heart sink as she sees a flash of Lex’s face on the television, and she feels herself moving closer to the television where it would seem a situation is being reported on live. She can’t hear the chatter of the girls crammed around all with high voices and terror written on their faces. Nor can she hear Kara calling her name, much less anything the news anchor is saying. She watches in horror as the view switches to that of a helicopter hovering just outside of Cadmus Labs – a synapsis fires and Lena recognizes the name from a few conversations that Lillian had over the phone with investors or board members. Armed police officers in riot gear with military style rifles are behind cars and barricades facing the labs – a couple bodies lie covered in the street and she feels her heart stop. Her eyes flick to the ticker at the bottom of the screen and she feels a little faint as her vision starts to narrow.

“Cadmus – a subsidiary of Luthor Corp’s pharmaceuticals division – conducted illegal and unethical human trials of various drugs to push forward with FDA approval. It’s unknown at this time how many were harmed or even killed by these illicit tests. Warrants for various Cadmus and Luthor Corp employees are being served – including ones for Lex Luthor and Lillian Luthor,” a male newscaster states with a stern face pinched into a frown states, “We go live to our reporter on the scene, Julie.”
The scene shifts to a woman in a ballistics vest who’s eyes shift about the scene around her a bit nervously, “It would seem that when police came to arrest Lex Luthor this morning a shootout between him and police occurred. He then retreated back into the labs and is currently locked inside with several hostages.”

Lena feels like she’s trying to breathe underwater – chest aching and tight like she’s holding in a deep breath and quickly starting to lose consciousness. The TV screen goes blank and the room is silent, in her mental shock Alex has shown up and turned off the television ordering the other girls to back up and give her some room. Kara quickly guides Lena to sit down, her whole body trembling violently as she struggles to get in a lung full of air. Alex tugs Kara’s sleeve telling her to back up a bit and give Lena some air as Lena wraps her arms around her stomach, feeling as if she’s going to throw up. She looks at her friends with glassy eyes, pupils blown wide as she mutters weakly, “I think I’m going to throw up.”

Lena tries to get up but she’s hit with a wave of dizziness as she feels gentle hands on either side of her pressing her back down on the sofa. Kara rushes to get a waste bin, passing by Mrs. Ellison ushering Cat Grant into the boarding house. Alex has kneeled down in front of Lena, taking Lena’s wrist in her hand to check her pulse – worried that the smaller girl could go into shock. Alex notices the tears in Lena’s eyes and that she’s still breathing rather rapidly so she takes Lena’s hand and puts it to her sternum as she tells her, “Lena, come on, Lena – I need you to breathe with me…”

Lena nods as a few tears trail down her cheeks, shaking as she feels Alex breathing slow and steady and tries to follow her gentle coaching, “That’s it, in through your nose… and out through your mouth.”

After a few more moments Lena calms, still feeling shaky as Alex tells Kara to take her to the bathroom and help her get cleaned up. Alex and Maggie clear the other girls out of the house, urging them to head to breakfast and to please be respectful of Lena’s privacy. Sam is quick to find her way to Alex and Maggie, having heard the chatter throughout the house and wanting to know how Lena was handling everything. Before the girls can rally around Lena their house mistress is ordering them to breakfast and classes – assuring them that Lena would be taken care of by Ms. Grant and herself. Lena softly assures her friends that everything will be okay as she goes with Cat towards the parking lot.

The drive back to the children’s hospital is quiet, Ms. Grant has switched her usually radio station onto the classical music one and doesn’t press Lena to talk. They both know that the messy fallout is on the way to their doorsteps and it didn’t need to be discussed at this exact moment. As they pass through the waiting room back to the offices a TV flashes an urgent news update – “Luthor Takes Hostages – 3 dead, 6 wounded” – across the screen and Lena flinches as her eyes sting again. Cat rests a firm, steady hand on her shoulders as they check-in and wait to be seen by the orthopedist – luckily the few occupants in the waiting room don’t pay them any attention.

Lena sits still and quiet beside Cat, the tension in her body is enough that she tries to keep from shaking – she knows that just like when her father had gotten caught for white collar offenses she was going to have to talk with the police. She knows it’s probably not going to go well, especially not since it would seem that her mother and brother were now murderers – mass murders. In her pocket her phone starts to buzz quietly again, she doesn’t even need to look at the caller ID to know that it’s a number she won’t recognize – most likely press or police on the other end ready to demand for answers that she doesn’t have.

Cat’s outstretched hand in front of her is at first perplexing, but as the phone continues to buzz Lena realizes what the woman is asking for. Quickly she fishes the phone out of her pocket and hands it to her, not caring if she ever sees the offending object again after today. A nurse calls her name – first
name only for which Lena’s eternally gratefully for – and Cat waves her off, “You let me handle these phone calls while you make sure your arm healed up correctly. I’ll be here when you’re finished.”

Lena does so without hesitation, following the nurse back and watching as the cast is sawed open and her arm carefully extracted. The nurse cleans off her arm and takes her for more x-rays, Lena wincing at how stiff her wrist and elbow are but still immensely grateful that the bulky cast is off. She waits to see the doctor who has both good news and bad news and Lena feels like crying – which must be apparent as the woman is quick to assure her that it wasn’t serious. Her bone was healing well but it wasn’t completely healed, instead of putting her in another cast she opts instead to let Lena wear a removable wrist brace for another week or two. Lena just nods, watching as the doctor affixes the wrist brace and hands her some paperwork for her records.

Lena finds Cat hanging up the phone with a look of frustration on her face, and Lena sighs softly knowing that this next conversation isn’t going to be easy, “Well, at the least the cast is off, hmm?”

“Yeah, just a week or two with a wrist brace will be much easier to manage,” Lena tells her, eyeing Cat warily as she waits for the bad news that she’s witnessed today to get worse.

“I’m afraid we’ll be making a stop at the police department again,” Cat tells her, a little concerned that Lena is looking at her with a sad sort of resignation on her face – her normally expressive green eyes are numbingly blank and glassy with tears that refuse to fall. “There are some agents from the FBI that have a few questions.”

“It’s okay,” Lena assures the older woman softly, “The same thing happened with my Dad.”

Cat, who is normally unflappable and has a rather thick skin, can’t help but feel a pang of sadness as she hears Lena explain that she’s used to the process of being interrogated. That a 16-year-old girl knew what was happening and what to expect when a parent commits a crime makes a chill run down her spine, a flare of anger sparking through her. But a stab of icy sadness lodges painful in her chest as she watches Lena look at the floor again, avoiding her gaze and the gaze of others in the room – she looks like a guilty child that was caught with their hand in the cookie jar.

Cat can’t stand Lena’s guilty, broken countenance so she reaches over and takes Lena’s chin gently between her thumb and forefinger, tipping her face up so she can look her in the eyes, “You keep your chin up and chest puffed out with pride, Lena. You have done nothing to be ashamed of, quite the opposite my dear.”

Lena bites her lip and blinks rapidly to keep the tears at bay, knowing Cat really doesn’t know how to deal with people crying. She just sets her jaw, gritting her teeth together so hard her jaw aches in protest, and with a look of determination she nods in agreement. As they head to the car Lena tries her best to keep her head up, even if she doesn’t feel like she should.

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The Christmas tree in the Police Department foyer as well as the Christmas music playing softly in the background is jarring. The rest of the world is preparing to celebrate what’s supposed to be the happiest time of the year and yet Lena feels like the decorations are so out of place – just a reminder that she must just be cursed to live a life devoid of joy and peace. Not a minute after Cat checks in with the front desk are a group of FBI agents and police detectives coming out to greet them. Lena feels her heart flutter nervously in her chest and a curl of nausea in her stomach as the officers guide them to one of the interrogation rooms.

A man introduces himself as Supervisory Special Agent Wright from the local field office in
National City tasked with investigating the Luthor’s and Luthor Corps enterprises in the region. Lena takes a seat when he motions to it rather crudely while flipping through pages in one of dozens of manila folders spread across the table top. As Lena carefully pulls out the chair and sits down she looking at the pages of print and the few photos that are littered across the table. A sense of dread and panic is starting to claw its way over her skin and twines tightly around her chest making her feel faint and sick for the second time this morning.

“Ms. Grant, you can wait outside,” Agent Wright dismisses gruffly, looking across the table at Lena with sharp, steely eyes that make Lena even more uncomfortable. The man is obviously not on Lena’s side – instead she feels like his questions are going to be cruel and cutting, that he’s going to leaving her emotionally and psychologically eviscerated. Laid bare for all the other agents and police officers to witness.

Lena feels a sob rising in her chest, she has no idea what Lex and Lillian have done – surely this man and his agents didn’t think that she had anything to do with the situation. She’s been at school for the past five months without reprieve, and even when she was at the family home during the summer it wasn’t like either of them had been around. She’s always been shuffled off to the side and left in the dark about everything – so she’s just as surprised as everyone else when Lex and Lillian do anything. Her head jerks over to look at Ms. Grant with pleading eyes that are welling with tears that she’s fighting to control – seconds away from begging the older woman to not leave her alone with all these agents and police officers.

Cat sees Lena’s look of quiet desperation and makes a decision, she wasn’t going to be bullied by this balding, middle aged man that was clearly compensating for something. Setting her purse firmly on the table she pulls out the chair beside Lena’s and takes a seat – crossing her legs primly and lacing her fingers together in her lap as she informs him with a polite smile, “I’m not going anywhere.”

“You really do need to wait outside, Ms. Grant.”

“Agent Wright, did you not hear me or are you just not listening? I’m not leaving,” Cat repeats a bit firmer this time, about to lose her patience with this agent as she calmly explains, “Lena is 16 years old and you’re interviewing her as a potential witness to a crime, she has the right to have a guardian present. And seeing as she’s in my care that means me. Now if you would kindly find another agent that has an ounce of compassion to conduct this interview that would be appreciated – and you have enough time to round one up because we also aren’t going to be starting until Lena’s attorney is present.”

Lena can see the way Agent Wright’s mouth tightens causing his jaw muscles to ripple and the vein at his temple to bulge and pulse violently. The man tries to stare down Ms. Grant and for a moment Lena’s worried that she’s going to lose, shifting uncomfortable in her chair until Ms. Grant drape an arm over the back of her chair and rests a calming hand on her shoulder. The agent sighs and gets up, motioning the rest of his men out of the room as Cat pulls out her cellphone, checking in with her law firm to send an attorney to represent Lena during these interviews. Lena’s mind wanders to the hostage situation and hopes that it’s been resolved without any further loss of life.

Cat hangs up and explains softly, “I’ve taken the liberty of getting a few attorney’s working on your case – it’s likely going to take some time and we’ll need to sign some papers. But they’ll assist in assigning a legal guardian, working out personal and business finances – so don’t worry about any of that right now. My personal attorney is going to be here momentarily to oversee the interview.”

“But I didn’t do anything wrong,” Lena says softly, confused and worried as her heart pounds in her chest rapidly and she has to wipe her palms on her skirt because they’d gotten clammy.
“Of course, not,” Cat assures quickly, almost offended that Lena though she was assuming she was guilty of anything in regards with the elder Luthor’s latest catastrophe. “But I’ll not have overzealous law enforcement agencies with their trigger happy agents bully my 16-year-old charge about things her family did.”

When the attorney arrives she’s quickly briefed on the situation and takes the time to talk with Cat and Lena about the ongoing investigation and the questions they’re likely going to ask. She assures Lena that the only thing she needs to do is tell the truth and if the attorney feels a question is inappropriate or out of line she’d call them on it. Lena just nods, taking a few breathes to still her trembling and put on a brave face as a female, plain clothes FBI comes in with some paperwork and files.

She starts off with questions about what Lena knows about the company and its subsidiaries – which isn’t much other than the basic structure of the company and the only details she knows about are from the technology R&D departments. The questions about Lex and Lillian’s whereabouts and plans are also easy to answer – she’d just assumed that Lex had been at Harvard for most of the last few months. As for Lillian she had no clue, but being a doctor in Metropolis Lena had just assumed she wouldn’t stray too far from her medical practice, or the Luthor Corp boardroom.

Lena gets the feeling from the agent’s body language and facial expressions that her assumptions are glaringly wrong. Lena isn’t surprised that she’s wrong about her mother and brother’s whereabouts, neither of them had ever told her what they were up to so why would they start now? As the interview continues Lena is getting more and more uncomfortable as the interview shifts to more personal questions. The questions about her family’s mental and emotional state after her father’s suicide are tough for her to fumble her way through – describing Lex’s emotional instability and violent outburst. When asked about the incident at Summerfield College the attorney interrupts and informs the agent that they have access to the police report and witness statements – that Lena’s under a gag order even for them.

“Lena?” the woman asks softly, she doesn’t speak again until Lena timidly makes eye contact with her instead of continuing to inspect the woodgrain of the table top, “I know this is difficult and these questions are invasive and bring up a lot of bad memories, but I need to ask them, okay?”

Lena’s heart drops again, wondering what’s coming down the pike if the woman feels like she has to warn her now – not before the prior questions that left a painful ache in the pit of her stomach and a tremble in her hands. She hopes that this isn’t going where she suspects its going. She suspects that questions of domestic violence, abuse, and neglect were going to be asked in the next few minutes. She nods in acquiescence before going back to examining the table top once again, not comfortable enough to look at Cat or the attorney present with them.

“Did you ever witness any arguments between your mother and father?”

Lena’s voice shakes but she’s grateful no one mentions it, “Yes…th–they used to drink a lot and get into arguments. Sometimes it was about business, other times it was …personal. Sometimes it seemed like they’d fight with each other because they were too drunk or had nothing better to do.”

“Did these arguments ever get violent?” the woman asks patiently, giving Lena look that she’s pretty sure is nothing but pity.

Lena looks at her hands as she wonders what type of field day the press is going to have when her statements are transferred to public record for court. A part of her wants to lie but she’d be screwed if Lex or Lillian told them the truth down the line – but the truth doesn’t look like it’s going to do her any good either. She wishes she could just sit her in silence until they decided to ask her something else, but she can feel all eyes in the room and behind the one-way mirror are watching her carefully.
Tears are stinging in her eyes and she bites her lip angrily to keep them from falling, she didn’t want their pity just as much as she didn’t want their ire and anger.

“Yes,” she mutters hoarsely, her throat dry and tight with nerves, “They threw things at each other a lot…wine glasses, empty bottles of alcohol…They would hit each other too…she’d slap him and punch him but he’d shake her and throw her around…a couple times, they uh…they shot at each other with a revolver when it got really bad….Most of the time, they were too drunk but a couple times she grazed him and one time she, she needed stitches from shrapnel.”

“Lena, did either of them ever get violent with you?”

Tears blur Lena’s eyes, she knew the question was coming eventually but the weight of it slams into her chest stealing the breath from her lungs. Her body is starting to tremble despite her carefully kempt composure as she’s flooded with memory after memory of the times she’d been the victim of Lillian’s wrath. The time Lillian had been angry and flung her down the stairs, drunk and angry that the six-year-old was being clingy after a nightmare. The time Lillian had dragged her so violently that her arm had dislocated and one of the house staff had to call for an ambulance. Lena’s forgotten how many times she’d been on the receiving end of a fierce backhand across the face – she just remembers that it’s worse when Lillian’s ring catches her lip or cheek and leaves a bleeding cut. Lena chances a look between the FBI agent and Ms. Grant, desperately looking for a way out of this situation without lying but also without having to talk about the abuse. She’s not sure if she’s going to be able to get the words out as a couple fat tears start to roll down her cheeks. She knows it’s ridiculous to try and pretend these things didn’t happen, that for some reason all of it goes away and none of it hurts as long as she doesn’t say it out loud. For some reason if she says it out loud, or another person knows, then it’s real and she has to face the repercussions that come along with it. Taking a quivering breath, she grits her teeth together to try and rally her resolve as she forces herself to utter, “Yes…”

But as quickly as it came her resolve retreats and she’s left panicking, feeling trapped in the small room with all these eyes on her. Shaking she gets up and stumbles, taking the other women in the room by surprise as she tries to explain, “I-I need some air…I c-can’t…I can’t.”

Lena pries the door open, ignoring them calling her name and the looks of the agents milling about the precinct. Instead she takes a few gulping breathes but still if feels like she’s never going to get enough air. She brushes hastily at the tears welling up in her eyes as she leans back against the wall, panting and trying to get herself to calm down. Across the bullpen she sees the familiar face of her rowing instructor talking angrily with one of the uniforms. It would seem that Leslie Willis sees her too and quickly brushes past the officer to reach Lena as Cat comes out of the interrogation room with the agent and attorney. Agent Wright has joined them and Lena flinches away from the group, turning away from them so she doesn’t have to hear or see them.

Leslie is quick to lay a hand on her shoulder and sends a biting comment towards the agent when he moves to come closer. Lena wants to ask if she can go home – but the irony of that statement is that she’s never felt at home anywhere. The homes her family had all around the world never felt like a home should – somewhere safe, where you’re loved and cared for. The only places that ever felt remotely close to that were the school and the trips where she’d stayed with the Danvers family. She really just wants to get away from the public and its prying eyes so that she can recover in private.

“Leslie? What are you doing here?” Cat asks with genuine concern before making a witty quip that has the other blonde smiling softly, “Shouldn’t you be helping proctor exams for those who aren’t fortunate enough to teach glorified PE?”

“I figured you might want to know that we’ve had to call in security for paparazzi at the school
gates,” Leslie tells them, giving Lena a sympathetic look. She wonders silently if she’s getting soft as she pats the girl’s back while she explains, “I also figured you might want a more discreet ride.”

“Of course, that was thoughtful,” Cat notes before looking to Lena who is still avoiding eye contact if at all possible, “They’ve postponed the rest of the interview until tomorrow, give you some time to decompress.”

Lena just nods silently, deciding that she can worry about how she’s going to handle disclosing the abuse later – if at all. She settles into the backseat of the car and lets her mind just float away from the situation into a blissful numbness. As they drive up to the school there’s a crowd of press and other people with cameras taking photos of the car as they enter the school grounds. Lena cowers in the backseat, turning her whole body away from the windows and covering her face with her hands even though she knows that the windows are tinted so darkly they couldn’t see her. Leslie is cursing at the press that’s crowded in around the car, calling them vultures for preying on a little girl while she’s at her most vulnerable. Cat has to remind her that running someone over was vehicular homicide and that it would also be inappropriate to flip them off as well, not that she hasn’t thought of doing it herself.

Lena sits through another meeting with various attorneys, accountants, and financial advisors who Cat’s called in to make sure that Lena is taken care of before the holiday break can begin. Leslie has brought Lena lunch and sits with her while she listens to the length’s Lex had gone to makes sure that Lena – and the majority of the Luthor assets he and their father had given to her – would be protected and taken care of. Presently the rest of the adults are locked in a disagreement about who they should petition the courts to appoint as Lena’s legal guardian.

One attorney was advising that Lex’s candidate should be considered while another was arguing that they should have a neutral party. She nibbles at a slice of pizza and sips on the chocolate milkshakes as Ms. Willis folds a paper airplane and launches it across the table towards Cat who shoots her an annoyed look and asks her point blank, “Do you have any suggestions, Leslie?”

“Actually, I do,” Leslie says with a charming grin, almost laughing at the surprised look on Lena’s face, “Why not just let Lena petition the court for emancipation?”

The room is silent, clearly this wasn’t an idea anyone had really considered before until now. Leslie snickers as she points out casually, “I’m pretty sure Little Luthor has been taking care of herself for a while now, as long as she has some administrative support – and a good security team – I’m sure she can manage all of this without needing a guardian. Besides, when she’s on campus you, me or any other faculty member are acting in loco parentis.”

Cat takes off her glasses and folds them neatly before setting them on the table, taking a sip of her coffee as she contemplates what’s going on. With a wiry smile she says a bit sarcastically, “I didn’t know you were versed in Family and Civil Law.”

“I read when I want to,” Leslie answers with a shrug, giving Lena a wink that makes the girl’s lips turn up in a tiny smile.

“We’ll consider it, in the meantime I’m sure you’d like to get back to your studies, Lena. I’ve already informed your instructors and Ms. Ellison that you won’t be in classes today and tomorrow,” Cat says softly, addressing the teen who looks like she’d rather be anywhere but here, “Leslie, escort Lena back to her dorm before making yourself useful.”

Leslie just laughs as she pats Lena on the back leads her out of Cat’s boardroom and towards the boarding houses. As they walk Lena asks softly, “Do you think a court would approve my petition to be emancipated?”
I’m sure they would,” Leslie tells her, then decides she may as well go a little bit softer since she’s already on a roll, “They approved my petition when I was a little bit younger than you.”

Lena can’t help but look at Leslie with surprise and curiosity – her mind wondering what made her teacher apply to become a legal adult around her age. She wonders if Leslie’s parents were just as neglectful and abusive as her own, she really hopes for the blonde woman’s sake that it wasn’t like that.

“Neither of my parents was ever going to win a parent of the year award,” Leslie snorts, feeling like Lena needs to hear that it’s okay to not be okay – that there’s no shame in talking about it. “Dad had a gambling and a drinking problem – rarely there unless it was the start of the month and the welfare check for my brother and I rolled in. Mom on the other hand was a narcissistic asshole who had better things to do with her boyfriend slash drug dealer of the week to care about her kids. Since CPS was useless I filed for emancipation the day after my 16th birthday, got a hardship license and a job a few days after that.”

“And your brother?” Lena asks, hoping that she’s not prying too much.

“At 18 I was able to get custody of him after a court battle with both of my parents,” Leslie tells her as guides Lena to take the path by the lake instead of the one that goes directly to the boarding house. If Lena was only going to be studying the rest of the day on her own Leslie feels it’s okay to take the scenic route to the dorm. As they reach the water’s edge she picks up a couple smooth stones and skips them, knowing that Lena’s thinking this over carefully.

“So, you had to face your parents in court?”

“I did, on more than one occasion,” Leslie tells her softly, recalling the day she’d had a supervised visit with her brother only to see his arms marked up with fresh cigarette burns and bruises, “My brother had to testify about how there was never any food in the house and that he couldn’t get any sleep because our mom would invite her friends over at night and they’d all do drugs until 2 or 3 in the morning. When child abuse charges were filed we both had to testify about the bruises, broken bones, and the cigarette burns.”

Lena’s lip trembles when Leslie unbuttons and rolls up the sleeve of her shirt – showing her the raised, darkened scars along her forearm. Leslie can see the turmoil on the girl’s face and for the first time she realizes just how young Lena really is – just how young she was when she had to take on the world by herself too. At 16 she felt like she knew enough and was strong enough to handle anything, that she was invincible. She tugs her sleeve over the scars against and reaches over to ruffle Lena’s hair, “I know it’s scary – to have to say that someone who is supposed to love you caused you so much pain. But keeping that to yourself has got to hurt just as much, kiddo.”

A few tears trace lines down Lena’s cheeks as she bites her lip to keep from sobbing as she admits brokenly, “I just don’t want anyone to know. What are they going to think? I was so weak that I didn’t fight back, and now? Just the thought of being in the same room as my mother makes me a nervous wreck.”

Leslie knows exactly the type of feelings Lena’s describing, reaching over she stops Lena’s pacing by resting her hands on the girl’s narrow shoulders as she tells her firmly, “Never be ashamed of surviving, never Lena. You didn’t do anything wrong and you didn’t do anything to deserve what happened to you. You have absolutely nothing to be ashamed of.”

More tears fall from green eyes as Lena whimpers, “Then why am I so afraid?”

“It’s always scary to face an abuser and call them out on what they’ve done. That’s always going to
“be scary,” Leslie tells her earnestly, feeling that Lena needs to know the truth on the matter. The fear doesn’t go away, but it does get easy with time and understanding, “You’re probably afraid that nothing will come of telling the truth or that she’ll try to get back at you for disclosing the abuse – but Cat isn’t going to let that happen and neither will I.”

Leslie sees Lena nod but she tugs the girl into a hug as well, wondering what Gayle’s going to think when she tells her about her day. Knowing her girlfriend of a month she’ll probably be gushing about how sweet and adorable Leslie is despite trying to make everyone think she’s a cold-hearted bitch. As Lena starts to calm down Leslie walks with her towards the dormitory, making sure she gets there safely.

“Maybe I should petition for a name change while I’m at it,” Lena muses a bit sourly as she brushes the tears from her cheeks a bit roughly.

“You could, or you could wait until you get married and take your wife’s last name,” Leslie tells her, grinning to herself as she knows the littlest Luthor is probably thinking about what her name would sound like with Danvers at the end of it. But she really doesn’t want Lena to change her name just as a way to escape so she tells her, “Or you could just keep Luthor – you know it’s just as much your name as it is your family’s.”

Lena seems to contemplate Leslie’s suggestion, wondering if it’s really possible for her to somehow change the way people think about the Luthor name. Shrugging to herself she figures she has time to think about it later as she asks quickly, “How’s Gayle? Did you ever get that second date?”

“Yes, and a third,” Leslie tells her while shaking her head ruefully, letting Lena change the subject if she wishes – having said everything she thought the young girl needed to hear. “You know, Gayle’s a child psychologist right?”

Lena shoots her a wary look and a raised eyebrow, clearly not fond of where Leslie’s going with this. Leslie holds up her hands, “Hey, I was just saying that she understands a thing or two about these type of things. I know the courts are probably going to recommend it and if they don’t I’m sure Cat will, just figured I could run it by Cat so you don’t have to sit with the crusty, old codger over at the infirmary.”

Lena counts herself lucky that she’s managed to avoid all attempts at getting her to see the psychologist, but she feels like her luck is going to run out soon. She figures that she may as well have a psychologist that’s both female and at least knows what she’s doing in this day and age. Sighing she looks up at her instructor and admits defeat, “Yeah, okay.”

Once in her dorm room Lena changes into sweats and checks her email – reading through a few messages from friends and faculty sending her notes and review sheets so that she won’t be caught with her pants down for exams. Dr. Morrow has cancelled the semester final exam, citing that he’s pleased with everyone’s coding progress and an exam isn’t needed. Lena marks the dates of her other classes exams – she’s not concerned about calculus, biology, and her European literature class has a paper due that she’s already written. She decides to work her way through the physics review packet while she waits for everyone to get back from classes – taking out a pencil, ruler, and her calculator.

After a few hours she hears chattering and footsteps in the hallway, soon after Kara bustles into the room. The blonde tosses her backpack on her bed and immediately reaches for the sweats she’s left there. She sees Lena and immediately moves towards her, carefully laying a hand on her shoulder to get her attention. Lena takes the headphones off and gives Kara a weak smile.

“When did you get back? We all got worried when we didn’t see you at lunch,” Kara tells her,
running her fingers through Lena’s hair tenderly.

“There was a lot more to do than just getting the cast removed,” Lena tells her a little sadly, hoping that Kara understands that she would prefer not to talk about it.

“Is everything okay?” Kara asks quickly, ready to jump into the fray if Lena needs her to. She notices the brace on Lena’s wrist, scrutinizing it as she brings it up so that she can plant a soft kiss on it.

“Just an uncomfortable interview with the FBI that’s going to causing me to miss classes again tomorrow. There were also some legal things to work out but Ms. Grant is taking care of most of that,” Lena explains, checking her watch she notices that soon they’ll be able to head to an early dinner before study hours are imposed.

“That’s not exactly what I meant, but you don’t have to talk about it if you don’t want to,” Kara assures but she can tell Lena’s still stuck in her thoughts for the most part. Even when the blonde insists that Lena has to eat something for dinner she knows her girlfriend would prefer to be left to her studies so she doesn’t have the time to think about Lex and Lillian’s crimes.

Lena remains withdrawn during dinner and despite Sam and Maggie urging her to avoid any news or media at the moment she looks up the latest headlines on CNN. Lex was sedated and in custody but it cost four police officers their lives and another eight were injured, 2 in critical care and hanging on by a thread. Her mother, who is cited as having authorized the illegal human subjects and urging Lex to eliminate the whistleblower at the lab, was arrested at a private airport in upstate New York – one of the family’s jets had flight plans ending in Andorra with a fuel stop in Trinidad and Tobago. Lena hates to admit it but her mother was a rather intelligent woman, selecting a flight plan that would have kept her in countries that didn’t extradition policies with the United States. Legal analysts predict that both Luthor’s would be denied bail at their first hearings, which lets Lena rest a bit easier.

Alex stops by to see how they’re doing during study time and Lena remembers that she’d agreed to go over the latest notes from calculus with her and quickly scrambles from her seat to find her book as she tells her a bit frantically, “Alex, I completely forgot about calculus. Just, let me grab my notes…”

Lena is grabbing up her book, notebook, and a couple pencils, nearly dropping her calculator in her rush as Alex comes into the room and picks it up telling her, “Hey, we don’t have to study. I just wanted to see how you were doing.”

“No, no, no, I’m good,” Lena tries to assure, desperate to have something to do other than sit here and look at her notes she’s already memorized and think about how Lex is unconscious in the hospital surrounded by armed guards and Lillian is in solitary confinement on the other side of the country.

Kara’s looking between her girlfriend and her sister with concern, she’s trying to work on her own paper for literature and she still has revising to do for chemistry that she’s been putting off. She makes eye contact with Alex and knows they’re both worried about Lena and how well she may or may not be coping with what’s happening.

“Lena, it’s fine. I’m sure the calculus exams will be fine,” Alex tries to assure, not wanting to push her friend when she seems to be in such a fragile state.

“Of course you’ll do fine, we’re going to go over everything on the review sheet. I know it’s a long way off but I can’t wait to call you Doctor Danvers,” Lena tells her earnestly, she’s not about to let Alex go into the calculus exam unprepared – not when they all know that Alex’s application to
Harvard was stellar. That and she needs to be doing something. If she stops – even for a second she knows it’s all going to come crashing down around her and she can’t handle that right now. Softly she pleads, “Please, Alex.”

“Okay, come on,” Alex breaks easily, realizing that she has a soft spot for Lena just like she does for Kara. Sighing softly, she pats her sister on the shoulder who gives her a grateful look. Alex in that moment realizes that she now has two kid sisters to look out for. Picking up Lena’s books she wraps an arm around her shoulders and tells her, “My room with be quieter, Maggie’s studying law with Sam and Lucy.”

Upstairs Lena pulls a chair over and opens her notes and sets out the review sheet that she’s mostly got filled in except for a couple of the longer problems. Alex gets out her notes and settles down to go over the things on the review that she had trouble with – grateful that Lena is a much better teacher than Kara ever was. If Alex didn’t know exactly what went down today she would be able to tell just from looking at Lena – she appeared to be so calm and collected. But Alex suspects that just like herself Lena preferred not to show anything less than perfection to her instructors and peers.

By the time they work their way through the review sheet and few extra problems Maggie’s come back upstairs with a couple cups of coffee – apparently having expected Alex to be alone. But the brunet just sets down a coffee in front of Alex who gives her a brief kiss before taking a drink, Maggie also passes up drinking her own coffee instead offering it to Lena. As Alex wraps up the last problem Maggie is chatting quietly with Lena and braiding a few strands of her impossibly dark hair – she listens as they discuss the legal cases Maggie was reviewing. When Alex finishes Lena looks it over and beams at her, reassuring her that she was going to do well on the calculus final. Maggie walks her back down stairs, letting Alex put away her things before she needed to check on the younger girls.

As they reach Lena’s room Maggie taps her on the shoulder, making sure that she has the younger girl’s attention before she tells her, “Hey kid, I know you had a rough day and you probably don’t want to talk about it, but if you ever want to I’m always here.”

Lena offers a wane smile and wraps her arms around Maggie when the older girl tugs her into an embrace, “Thanks, Maggie.”

“Anytime,” Maggie promises, “Get some rest, Lena.”

Lena nods as she goes in to see Kara’s fallen asleep at her desk, drooling slightly on the edge of her notes. With a tired smile she nudges the blonde on the shoulder and watches as Kara sits up abruptly, displacing a few papers as she looks around in confusion. She checks her phone for the time as Lena picks up her papers and puts them back on her desk.

“You ok?” Lena asks softly, brushing fingers through blonde hair as Kara sighs tiredly with her face in her hands.

“Shouldn’t I be asking you that?” Kara asks back, rubbing her eyes as she gets up and pulls Lena to her for a kiss.

“I don’t want to talk right now,” Lena whispers against her lips as she reaches between them and unties Kara’s sweatpants and tugs them down her perfectly toned legs, hand slipping into Kara’s panties to stroke over her clit softly. Kara groans softly as Lena backs her up to her bed and pushes her down onto it before getting down on her knees between her legs.

Kara grips the bedspread tightly as she watches Lena waste no time in licking a long strip between the apex of her legs making her shudder. Lena wasn’t a wallflower when it came to their relationship
but Kara wasn’t expecting her to be so brazen – much less this evening. But she’s not complaining when Lena sucks her clitoris into her mouth, hands coming up to hold onto Kara’s waist. Kara sighs and closes her eyes as she tangles her hand in Lena’s hair, scratching lightly.

Lena slips a finger between Kara’s legs and inside of her girlfriend, feeling Kara molded tight and hot around her finger. She thrusts into her at a steady pace, listening as Kara back moans and whimpering. Kara sucks her bottom lip between her teeth and bites down, trying desperately to be quiet despite wanting to call out Lena’s name as loud as she could as she comes. Kara pants softly as she grasps Lena’s waist and pulls her to her, kissing her gently and ready to return the favor.

Lena however isn’t really in the mood, and instead just kisses Kara’s shoulder and asks if they can cuddle instead. Kara nods quickly rucking up her sweats and moving over to give Lena room to curl up beside her. The blonde tucks her against her chest and rubs her shoulders as she starts to drift to sleep. She tries to stay awake but her body is warm and fuzzy feeling, with Lena in her arms after worrying about her all day it’s easy for her to slip into slumber.

As Lena listens to Kara breathing softly in her sleep she wonders what came over her just moment earlier. She wonders if a part of her was still worried that this new crisis with her family was going to be the final straw even though Kara’s been nothing but kind and considerate since the news broke. The part of her brain that keeps her anxious and awake at night murmurs softly to her that she’s really just worried about what Kara’s going to think about her when the newspapers start the same old dog and pony show with her personal life on display. If Kara would think less of her or be afraid of her when the stories of Lillian’s abuse are bound to surface. She’s afraid that this night may be the last night she’s allowed the privilege of kissing and touching, and just loving Kara.

The school, which has been oddly quiet the day before, was now abuzz with the news of the Luthor’s. The news headlines are talking about each and every new horror that’s unveiled about the family, the tabloids are splashed with images from Lex and Lillian’s arrests. News anchors are talking with their legal and human behavior experts talking about the trials that they’re likely facing and the new information coming out about their personal lives. All the major networks have already made requests via Cat Grant to try and speak with Lena Luthor on the record about the statements she made and that they’d be corroborated by staff employed by the Luthors.

The worst is when one of the Metropolis papers runs a feature that has interviews with people from inside the Luthor estate: the staff recalled the drunk brawls, calls to private doctors to avoid the emergency room trips, and a maid that recalls Lillian Luthor dragging a small Lena so violently she’d pulled the child’s arm out of socket. Lena knows the abuse was never her fault – she didn’t ask to be Lionel’s Luthor’s bastard and she sure as hell didn’t ask to have angry, wrathful Lillian Luthor as a mother – but a part of her still burns with shame as she thinks about how every documented account of her abuse and neglect is now available for just anyone to read about.

Instead of Ms. Grant taking her to the police station to finish the interview Ms. Willis turns up in her place, telling her that Cat’s taking care of the emancipation paperwork. Leslie stays with her as she grits her teeth and tells the truth – describing the details of the abuse that Lillian has heaped upon her for years and answers any further they have. She’s also informed that Lex was being evaluated by a psychiatrist but that he and Lillian were both denied bail. Leslie takes her out to lunch where they meet up with Gayle – neither try to press Lena to talk just offering their comfort.

Once back at the school Lena settles in to study in a private corner of the library since exams were starting first thing in the morning.

By evening she’s exhausted, return to her room and opting to curl up in her bed under the covers and try to get some rest. She falls asleep before any of the other girls can come back from classes or study
hall. When Kara tries to wake her and entice her to dinner Lena declines, citing a headache so the blonde leaves her be. Alex and Maggie both come by to check on her, Maggie bringing a snack and some tea for her. When it’s time for study hours Kara comes by and sits on the edge of her bed, causing her stir briefly.

“Hey sweetheart,” Kara whispers, tucking in the rumpled blankets around Lena’s small frame, “I’m going to go study downstairs to let you sleep, okay?”

Lena just nods tiredly, grateful that Kara is always so considerate but she’s so tired that she’s already slipping back to sleep as she feels Kara pressing a soft kiss to her temple. Lena falls asleep and it feels like she stays in a sleepy daze for the next few days as she sits through exam after exam – just endless pages of paper where she fills in the little bubbles or writes out her answers and calculations. It’s mind numbing but at the same time it keeps her from panicking or breaking into sobs. By the time the end of the week rolls around she’s been given pre-trial hearing dates and information that Luthor Corp and a majority of Lex and Lionel’s assets now fall to her.

Currently she’s thinking about when she’ll find out about the test scores, feeling pretty confident about the calculus and physics exams but not as satisfied with the biology exam. She reaches over and picks up Kara’s hoodie, tucking it into her duffle bag along with a pair of sweat pants figuring that she could be comfortable between meetings with lawyers, accountants, and new board members. Kara’s chattering with Alex and Maggie – who will be going with the Danvers for the Christmas holiday – about some of the things they’re going to get up to during the break.

“Ms. Luthor, your driver is downstairs,” Ms. Ellison says after a quick rap of knuckles against the door.

“Of course, thank you for letting me know. I’ll be down in a moment,” Lena says as she quickly closes her laptop and tucks it into her satchel before checking that she has packed everything that she needs. Specifically, she makes sure she has her portfolio with all the documents Ms. Grant had gotten for her from the depositions and her new lawyers. There was a lot of things to go over and sign off on in the next few days that it makes her heart race just thinking about all the new responsibilities she’s had dropped on her in the past week.

“Hey, you going to be okay?” Kara asks gently as Ms. Ellison moves down the hall amid the chaos of girls giddily getting ready to leave for the Christmas Holidays. She reaches out and takes Lena’s shoulders in her hands, guiding her into a tight hug.

“Yeah, it’s going to be fine. Ms. Grant made sure I had an entirely new security team,” Lena’s voice is raising with every word, her heart feeling like any second it was going to pound out of her chest. She tries to breathe but the words keep coming out in a rush that she can’t seem to stop, hands shaking just like the hoard of bees that buzzing through her brain, “I have a team of lawyers, accountants and financial advisors that are going to help me figure out what to do with Luthor Corp and its subsidiaries…”

“Lena?...Lena, take a breath for me,” Kara soothes, brushing dark hair from Lena’s face and tucking it behind her ear as she cups her face so that she can look into the frantic green eyes as she tells her, “Just breathe for me, baby.”

Lena grasps onto Kara’s arms taking in a shuddering breathe, but she can’t look at Kara’s earnest blue eyes – not if she was going to keep the tears at bay. She can’t break down now, not when everyone was still around to see it and definitely not when she had hundreds, possibly thousands of employees and staff to look after now that Lex and Lillian had abandoned all of them. Kara must sense her hesitation and struggle because she just sighs a little with both frustration and sadness as she draws Lena into her arms. She holds Lena close and rubs her back, worried that Lena is going to
have a tough time during the holidays. Everyone had tried to convince Lena that she didn’t have to go home and deal with all of this right away, but she was being stubborn.

Lena draws back, knowing that if Kara asks her to come with her for the break she wouldn’t have the heart to say no again. She picks up her bag as she tries to explain, “Glen is waiting for me.”

“I know, just be safe and call me, okay?”

“Okay.”

Chapter End Notes

I had to take out the Luthors somehow and this seemed like a good way to accomplish that – Lena does so much better when her family isn’t around or hounding her.
Pre-Christmas Meltdown

Chapter Notes

Warning: Uh...Lena's having a rough time but there are some bright moments and it's going to get a whole lot better soon.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Lena sighs softly as she watches the gates to the rather large, garish looking estate open and Glen smoothly swings the car around in front of the front doors. She can’t help but glance at the protestors that have lined up along the other side of the street and the security personnel by the gates. A few are screaming at the car as it pulls into the driveway, others are holding signs of which Lena gets a glimpse of a few with bold letters stating “People Hate You” and another that states in rainbow colors “God Hates Luthors.” Lena tries to shove the thoughts those signs and protestors bring up to the back of her mind as she nervously watches the house come into view.

She’s only been to this specific Luthor property a few times after Lionel brought her to live with them from the social services office after her real mother passed away. The time is really hazy and all she remembers is warm brown eyes and a calm voice that was so loving as it sang her to sleep – it’s one of the few memories she has where she felt safe. But now, as she looks at the gaudy house with all its ridiculously antiquated and expensive furnishings she feels anything but safe or loved. This home, like the dozens of other homes the Luthors - now her- owned around the country and abroad, only reminded her that while it looked lovely and picturesque on the outside it was shockingly devoid of love once you got a look on the inside.

Instead as she picks up her bag and exits the vehicle she can’t help but stare at the front door that Martin is holding open for her and feels nothing but dread. Lex and Lillian were both being held at Riker’s Island without bail, segregated away from the general population in 23-hour a day lock down with constant supervision. Despite the emancipation paperwork that legally made her an adult and capable of making her own decisions Cat Grant had insisted on personally screened the security personnel that were assigned to keep her protected during the holiday break. A few men in dark tactical gear and armed to the teeth had been posted at the perimeter of the property and at the gates. Something else she’d have to get used to along with being back here.

“Ms. Luthor, welcome home,” Martin beams, offering to take her bag as she steps hesitantly into the foyer. He watches the girl take in the scenery, clearly looking at the Christmas decorations that his wife and Alyosha the chef had insisted they needed to put up. He and the others had been informed about Lena’s recover after being attacked at school and the other issues with the older Luthors was all over national news nearly nightly. Resting a hand on her shoulder he assures, “You should see the living room.”

Lena numbly nods, trying not to be rude but words have escaped her at the moment as she walks towards the living room. She passes the parlor where the ivory and onyx chess set she and Lex used to practice on sits on its table, a painful remind of the past. She closes the door before continuing to the living room, thinking that if she’s the master of this home now she could get rid of that uncomfortable, garishly red leather sofa Lillian loved so much and have it replaced with the soft, comfortable blue sofa from the library. As she rounds the corner she sees the blue sofa in the living room, as well as the coffee table she’d used to study at in primary school with her nanny.
Inside Beth, Martin’s wife who’s a jovial, portly woman, is decorating a rather large fir tree that’s been installed in the living room. Lena stares at it in shock, eyebrows raised as she never remembers ever having decorations for the various holidays, including Christmas. But now there was a 10-foot tree in the room that was draped beautifully in white lights with round, cherry red ornaments and giving off a comforting evergreen scent. Beth is placing candy canes carefully on the tree branches when she sees Lena standing in the hallway looking in with wide, owlish green eyes. Quickly she smiles warmly at the girl and tells her, “We all figured that you would enjoy some festive decorations, Ms. Luthor. Alyosha insisted on the tree and Martin wanted to put a wreath on the door.”

Lena’s trying to fight back tears as she feels a little sick at being called Ms. Luthor, but she smiles warmly at Beth and assures, “It’s quite alright, Beth. The wreath and the tree look lovely.”

Beth seems to smile even more at that but she gets up and comes closer to Lena and inquires, “Do you need anything right now?”

“Oh, no, thank you,” Lena tells her quickly, desperately blinking back tears as she tells her, “I was just going to go up to my room for a while, I’m tired after traveling.”

“Of course, if you need anything just call.”

Lena tries to calmly walk up the stairs at an unhurried pace towards her room, the shock and pain that she’s been keeping carefully under wraps is threatening to surge forth and overwhelm her. As she’s making a beeline to her room she sees the door to Lex’s room is open. While his bed is made and his things are put away she can see his soccer cleats peeking out from under his bed, his favorite sweater laying over the back of his desk chair, and the stacks of books and papers on the desk with one of his pens laying on top. Tears are welling up as she reaches out and catches the door by the handle and closes it sharply, almost flinching at the loud noise as tears trail down her cheeks. Going to her room she softly closes the door behind her before she drops her bag onto her desk as the first sob breaks over her and her delicate features contort from calm and cool to absolute anguish.

The thought of her brother during the latest news reports, yelling and screaming nonsense laced with obscenities. His visage was so far removed from the older brother that taught her to play chess, that had tucked her in when Lionel was away and Lillian refused, the brother that had let her crawl into bed beside him and cry the night after their father’s funeral just over a year ago. As Lena lets the sobs take her she makes her way to her bed and lays down on it and curls up amongst the pillows and blankets. Her brother was gone and this monster was in his place, a horrid creation of her mother who had a hand in this disaster. Now not only had Lex hurt other people at her last school he and her mother – as well as other business associates – had injured and killed sick people just to try and push a new medication onto the market. And when it’d all gone south Lex, with assistance from Lillian, had tried murder as a means of covering up their crimes.

The gut wrenching sobs tear through her, months of pent up anger and grief are flowing from her in waves of tears she doesn’t know if she’ll ever be able to stop. She cries for the parents she never had and the real mother she lost, wondering if things could have been different if her birth mother hadn’t died. Would she have loved Lena – loved all of her like a mother should love their child? She weeps for all of the people that were killed by her mother and brother, angry tears mix with her pained cries as she wonders how they could be so callous as they caused this much suffering. She cries as she thinks about her broken body – the weeks of pain and anguish as her body healed from the savage beating she’d endured just because she shared a name with such beasts - the whole while being unable to look at herself in the mirror without tears or cringing.

She cries tears of regret at how distant she’d been with Kara for the past week – she knows the
genuinely kind and loving blonde had just wanted to help her but Lena didn’t know how to let her. Now she worries that Kara – in the face of the upcoming trials and having a girlfriend be related to some of the nation’s worst criminals – would be happier to plan a future with a woman that didn’t have these issues. An hour later and she’s cried herself to sleep – exhausted and still healing mentally and physically from the fallout that’s taken weeks to unfurl completely.

When she wakes again it’s to insistent knocking on her door, sitting up she rubs her raw nose on her sleeve as her eyes are aching. She quickly answers, “Yes? Come in.”

Beth is quick to poke her head in the room, the worry in her eyes and the way she’d been knocking on the door almost frantically tell Lena that she thought perhaps Lena had done what her father had done and taken her own life. The woman looks utterly relieved to see Lena and smiles at her warmly as she tells her, “It’s dinner time, Alyosha’s made your favorite.”

“Of course, I’ll be down in a minute,” Lena assures calmly, giving her polite nod as she tells her, “Thank you, Beth.”

As Beth leaves Lena rubs her throbbing temples, it’s not like she hadn’t thought about suicide. It was like a cat lurking in the shadows, quietly stalking its oblivious prey – pouncing when it was least expected and at the most inopportune times. Lena had always been more concerned about the anxiety as the panic attacks were more obvious and harder to control – the loneliness and feelings of worthlessness were harder to predict but easier to ignore while she was at school. There was always another class or another piece of homework that needed to be completed – her fear of failure and desire for perfection always drove her to keep going even when she couldn’t care less about anything at all. It was a tortured existence to care so much about meeting expectations but not having the energy or the motivation to try and keep up.

Her issues with Kara stemmed from this, she wanted very much to tell Kara everything and to hang out with her, Alex and Maggie. But while she didn’t want to be lonely she just couldn’t handle being around people at the same time – her mind craving peace and quiet. The thought of Kara makes her want to dissolve into tears again but she just takes a few calming breathes as she gets up and goes to the bathroom to wash her face. As she turns on the faucet she recalls the time she’d thought drowning would be a rather peaceful way to go, much less messy than using the same gun Lionel had put to his temple in the study at their Metropolis home. Lena splashes her face with the cold water before looking in the mirror, staring at the green eyes that look back at her.

“You can do this,” Lena tells herself softly, mentally reminding herself that none of this is her fault – she didn’t ask to be a part of this family, she didn’t hurt Clark Kent Lex did, and she most certainly did not have anything to do with the hundreds of people that Lillian and Lex left wounded or deceased in their wake. The panic attacks and the depressive episodes weren’t her fault either – she couldn’t be expected to be okay when her dysfunctional family had taught her that love and affection had to be earned through absolute obedience and perfection and that alcohol and violence were acceptable modes of communication. Lena can’t help a dark, self-deprecating laugh as she thinks that she’s turned out as well as she has in spite of the circumstances – even though it doesn’t make her heart ache any less.

Straightening her tie and sweater she heads out of the bathroom and towards the dining room where she hears Beth setting out dishes. As she enters the room she sees the single place setting at the head of the table – where her father used to sit and where she’s now supposed to take up the Luthor mantle. The formal dining room was always a room she’d avoided as much as possible, the dark expensive furniture and dining ware usually meant they were having company – and later there would be too much alcohol and yelling. Taking in a shaking breath she goes to sit down, smiling politely at Martin as he pours tea into the crystal glass at her right. Beth comes back in with a dish,
and true enough Alyosha had made his famous pelmeni – Russian dumplings that consisted of a meat and vegetable filling in a thin dough.

“Pelmeni was always your favorite,” Beth says fondly, setting the plate in front of Lena.

Before Beth can take her leave Lena calls out quickly, “Uh, Beth?”

“Yes, Miss Luthor?”

Lena winces at the use of her surname and quickly assures, “Please, call me Lena. Ms. Luthor is my mother and it feels…weird, for lack of a better word. But, what I was wondering was if you and Martin had already eaten?”

“Oh, we’ll eat later, dear. Alyosha’s promised he made enough for us too,” Martin assures with a little laugh, trying to make the anxious teen feel a little more relaxed and at home.

“Actually,” Lena says, having trouble maintaining eye contact as she knows that they’re probably going to decline her request, “I was wondering if you’d have dinner…with me? Alyosha too if he’s still here. I-I uh…I just don’t want to eat alone.”

There’s a moment of silence that seems to stretch on that makes Lena’s heartbeat faster before it dawns on Beth and Martin who are quick to agree. They leave momentarily, collecting a few more sets of dishware as well as coming back with Glen, Alyosha and Isaiah who Cat Grant had made sure was hired for security purposes. Lena can’t help but smile as she goes to hug Alyosha after he sets down a sachertort on the table – Lena’s favorite desert that consists of a soft chocolate cake with a layer of raspberry jam in the middle and covered with a rich chocolate icing and topped with whipped cream. Lena beams as she asks them about their families – happy to hear that Beth and Martin are going to be grandparents for the first time in a few months’ time, Glen’s son got a scholarship to a good school in New York to play hockey, and Alyosha’s grandkids are going to visiting for the holidays from across the country.

She’s known most of them for a while and often wondered how they were doing while she was away – she’s grateful that they stuck around so long after all the hell Lionel and Lillian must have put them through. She knows they were likely concerned about her and Lex and she’s grateful they’ve chosen to stay rather than leave like most of the staff had after the most recent news. Glen asks about the sports she’s doing at the school and Lena informs him that rowing is fun but she does more swimming because of the unstable boats. Beth and Martin both ask after her classes, praising her for the good grades but also warmly encouraging her when she talks about her computer program project with Jess and the 3D printed prosthetics. Alyosha, being the grandfather figure, inquires after if she’s found someone charming to date yet.

“All,” Lena says while laughing as she wonders how they would take the news that the last Luthor was a gay mess with a bubbly ray of sunshine for a girlfriend. She wonders if they shared Lillian’s opinions on the matter, or if they would be more accepting, either way she decides to play it safe for now and tells him, “You know Cabot House School isn’t co-ed like my last one, right?! It’s an all girl’s school.”

“So,” Alyosha says with a teasing yet genuine grin, “I’m sure that school has some lovely, intelligent girls that would make you a good wife. You are beautiful and brilliant, Lena, you will get a good one, I promise.”

Lena can’t help but grin as she blushes profusely, knowing now that Alyosha would absolutely adore Kara – even though she knows he has a bunch of embarrassing childhood stories he could tell her. Glen and Beth agree, assuring her that she has plenty of time and to not settle for someone who
doesn’t love her for who she is. During desert Lena let’s herself indulge in at least two pieces of the
sinfully delicious chocolate cake, very pleased to see that the little family she’d collected over the
years was doing well and would no doubt continue to so now that Lex and Lillian were out of the
picture.

As she heads to bed she checks her phone and sees a few texts – a few pics from Kara and inquiries
about her wellbeing, a couple texts from Alex and Maggie that are subtly trying to check up on her.
Sam has called her and left a voicemail wishing her well and that she hopes to hear from her soon.
Lena thinks about what she wants to say while she puts on her pajamas and brushes her teeth before
texting all of them that she’d made it to the estate a few hours from the school in one piece and
would be working on reviewing all the Luthor’s business and private assets. She sends Kara an
additional text that tells her about the caring staff that are looking after her to let her girlfriend know
that she’s safe and being looked after. After she sends the messages she switches the phone off and
slips into her bed and tries to sleep.

In the morning the attorneys she’d hired, and a few of their law clerks, come by with the paperwork
she’d asked for regarding Luthor Corp and her family’s estate. She reviews the documents with a
forensic accountant that comes by at 9am, going over everything for the past five years. Beth and
Martin keep an eye on Lena, making sure that her and the visitors are provided with beverages and
lunch while they go over the papers. By afternoon Lena’s sorted out most of the private assets of the
family and has agreed to keep the house in the Hamptons and another in the mountains in Colorado,
letting her attorney contact a realtor about selling the other homes with their furnishings. She’s set up
a trust to pay out for the care of the surviving victims of the illegal drugs studies and funeral costs for
those that didn’t – the lawyer advised that those costs would be coming from Lex and Lillian’s
estates but Lena still sets aside the money anyway.

She’s also listed the vehicles that aren’t needed for sale, keeping only a couple of Lionel’s cherished
classics out of sentiment and the Shelby Cobra she’d always loved since she was a girl. They agree
to convene again the next day to discuss the issues regarding Luthor Corp – including a rebranding,
selling or absorbing subsidiaries of the company, and potential acquisitions. After dinner Lena also
fires one of her mother’s many personal assistants after she found him screaming at Martin and
Alyosha about something trivial. She had Isaiah escort him off the property after firmly explaining
that she was not her mother and was not going to tolerate anyone with so little respect or regard for
people. She tries to settle down as she heads to the library as her cell phone starts to ring again,
picking up she answers in a professional tone, “Lena Luthor speaking.”

“Lena!” comes Kara’s sunny voice over the connection and Lena can’t help but smile wistfully. “It’s
been a few days and I know you texted me back yesterday, but it just seemed so…business like and I
was wondering how you’re doing?”

“It’s just been busy,” Lena answers with a tired sigh as she settles down in one of the wing-backed
chairs and explains, “I had a meeting with the new attorney, an accountant, and a financial advisor to
go over assets. Gotta make sure the bills get paid and there was a lot of wastefulness going on so I
had it cut down to something more manageable.”

“That sounds tiring, boring but still tiring,” Kara tells her, Lena can hear Alex laughing in the
background with the sounds of others that are less distinct.

“Surely you’ve been doing something more interesting, how are you and Alex?”

“We went shopping today with Eliza, finished putting the decorations on the tree and the lights in the
windows. It’s absolutely beautiful, they even expect snow this week and Maggie’s thrilled about it.
I’m not sure why, she’s from Nebraska so it’s not like she’s never seen snow before,” Kara tells her
with a laugh and Maggie’s protests from across the room that a white Christmas by the ocean would be wonderful comes over the receiver. “So, you have any plans for Christmas? It’s only five days away now.”

“If movies and take out count,” Lena remarks with a little laugh.

“What about Martin and Beth, you told me that they’ve been hanging out with you which is nice,” Kara tells her, worried that Lena’s going to be alone for Christmas.

Lena hesitates to tell her best friend and lover her plans because she doesn’t want her to be upset or worried during the holidays so she tries to explain calmly, “Martin and Beth as well as the others are going to be home with their families for the holidays, as they should be. I’m having some computer stuff delivered tomorrow so I’ll probably be doing some redecorating and turning the parlor into a lab so I can work on some ideas I had for the prosthetics project. So, I’ll be keeping a low profile this holiday.”

“You know you don’t have to, Lena,” Kara insists, her voice taking on that kicked puppy tone as she tries to comfort Lena, “You didn’t do anything wrong, love. I know you Lena, and you have such a good, kind heart, and that’s all despite the way people have treated you. I know you probably aren’t ready to talk about it, but I need you to know that you are a good person and that I love you, nothing your family does will change any of that.”

Lena feels the tears stinging in her eyes, letting them fall as she sniffles softly, “Thank you so much, Kara.”

As Lena gets up to pace the floor she sees that most of the protestors of the previous few days have gone as she listens to Kara telling her about how she and Alex had taken Maggie to the book store and that the owner had asked about her and given Kara book that she thought Lena would like. Lena turns to pace towards another shelf of books, reaching up to pick up one of the books to inspect when the glass window behind her explodes causing her to flinch and cry out as she drops to the floor. Another few window panes shatter as Lena realizes what’s happening as she watches glass explode from the window and rains down around her. The bullets lodging into the bookcase and wall on the other side of the room, breaking a mirror and the face of the grandfather clock.

Lena’s shaking so badly she’s dropped the phone, curling up under the window seal with her back against the bookshelf beside the window. She can hear her name being called, both the urgent screams from Isaiah and Martin as well as Kara’s cries over the phone. She knows she should answer them but her mouth is so dry and throat is so tight she’s can’t even cry despite wanting too. Her body is shaking as the doors to the library burst open and Alyosha is looking pale and worries as he spots her and Lena hoarsely cries out, “Don’t, they could still be out there!”

Alyosha looks at the window but moves towards the girl anyway urgently asking, “Are you injured, Lena?”

Lena sits up still shaking, looking herself over as Beth and Martin appear as well in front of her. Martin picks up the phone and starts to talk with whoever is on the other end. Lena looks back and sees the bullet holes that have gone through the windows, she counts five holes but one of the windows is broken out completely. As she’s sat down in the living room Beth checks her over for any injuries, relieved when she finds none as Alyosha quickly wraps Lena in a blanket as sirens wailing in the distance get closer.

Martin brings the phone back and hands it to her telling her softly, “You should talk to them before the police arrive.”
Lena takes the phone, and mutters softly, “Hello?”

“Lena, sweetheart, are you okay?” comes Eliza’s concerned voice over the phone.

Lena feels numb, her body tingling like the way a limb does when falls asleep and her brain seems to be blessedly blank for the first time in her life. Just blank, emptiness where she can’t seem to worry or panic or stress about anything, and her body feels so heavy and cold – like it isn’t hers and that no one and nothing around her is real. She’s trying to think of how to explain to the kind doctor and mother of her girlfriend that someone just tried to kill her, instead she just answers tonelessly, “I’m fine, they didn’t hurt me.”

“Are the police there yet?”

“Yes, it’s okay now. I need to give a statement and they’ll likely do an investigation, but it’s over now,” Lena assures blankly, watching as Isaiah brings in several uniformed officers into the home and leads them upstairs. She knows they’re going to be taking a look at the scene of the attempted murder. Attempted murder, Lena thinks to herself, her brain still struggling to comprehend that another human being had just aimed a gun at her and pulled the trigger – and not just once, but multiple times. A few tears slip down her pale cheeks as she misses what Eliza tells her but then Kara’s on the other end of the line and she can hear the tears in her voice as she talks to her. Lena tries to assure her that everything is fine and that she’ll see her soon, having to hang up with her as two plain clothes police approach after speaking with Alyosha.

She gives her statement to the police, and informs them that the home has an extensive security system with state of the art surveillance. Martin is quick to offer assistance and shows them to the security office to collect the security footage while Beth goes to collects a few things from her room and Alyosha guides her towards one of the rarely used guest rooms on the other side of the house. Lena remains awake and stoically watches as police come and go from the home – forensics teams processing the library and others doing a sweep with Isaiah and his security team. Lena decides that she’s not going to be sleeping anytime soon and goes back to the living room, requesting a cup of coffee with expresso as she settles down to read over more business documents.

When that no long holds her attention sometime around 4am, when the sky is turning purplish blue at the first stages of a new dawn – long after the police have left – Lena heads quietly into her father’s old study. She goes to the cabinet by the fireplace and flips over a tumbler before selecting an amber colored whiskey – pouring it like she remembers Lionel and Lillian doing on numerous occasions. She smells the alcohol and her nose crinkles at the sharp smell that burns a little, shrugging she takes a healthy swig of the drink. The sharp, bitter taste makes her swallow it quickly before coughing as it burns its way down to her stomach. Lena’s not sure if she likes this or what people get out of alcohol in general as she chokes down another mouthful of the bittern liquid.

After three glasses Lena thinks she’s figured out why most adults she knew were pretty much alcoholics – that burn has turned into a warmth that she would swear she could feel in her bones. She also feels so light, almost as if she was floating and it’s accompanied by the wonderful feeling of not giving a fuck about anything. After a while though she realizes this was probably a bad idea as her stomach churns uncomfortably and the room spins when she moves her head even just a fraction of an inch. She quickly goes to the bathroom, barely just managing to get there before vomiting up the whiskey that remained in her stomach. As she washes her mouth out in the sink she starts to feel drowsy and stumbles back to the living room falls into a fitful sleep on the sofa.

She wakes early enough to take care of a few personal things that she wants to surprise the staff with – even though her body feels like it’s stuck in molasses and her head feels like it was struck by something heavy. The attorney comes back with the other host of business associates at 8am sharp
and Lena is grateful to get this over with as quickly as possible. Lena tries not to be distracted even though they assure her that if she needs time she should take it – but she plows through and by lunchtime she’s set Luthor Corp on a six-month plan to be rebranded as L-Corp. A new board is going to be decided at a later date and all pharmaceutical based subsidiaries are halted immediately with their monetary investments being diverted elsewhere. After lunch Lena gathers the staff and hands out the cards she’d gotten them for Christmas, complete with a personal note and Christmas bonus check. She also dismisses them until after the New Year, declaring that they should enjoy the holidays with their families.

She offers Isaiah an apology as she knows that he and his security personnel can’t be dismissed but he’s quick to assure that he was well aware of what security work entails. Beth and Martin are quick to invite her to come over to their place for Christmas and to meet with their family, but they’re both understanding when Lena politely declines. Alyosha insists that he should stay, not only worried that Lena could be in danger still but also worried that the girl would be lonely, but he just tries to tease her as he tells her, “I can’t leave you to go hungry, Ms. Lena.”

Lena can’t help but laugh at the joking, relieved that no one has mentioned the shooting last night. She really would love to spend the holidays with all of them, but they have families and it would be cruel to keep them there just for herself. She teases back, looking between Alyosha and Glen, “I promise everything will be alright, believe or not I do have a driver’s license and a car. I’m also capable of cooking well enough to stay alive, I promise. Now please, go and enjoy the holiday season with your family.”

Alyosha reluctantly agrees but he says that he’ll only leave after he makes another batch of his famous Russian candies – Ptasie mleczko. Lena lets him, and is partially grateful as she thinks about all the take out she’s going to be ordering in the next few days. While Alyosha cooks through the afternoon Lena works on the logistics for a gift to the children’s hospital she volunteers at regularly – ensuring that any costs for a Santa and gifts that weren’t covered by the various charities would be covered by her trust. She also sets up an endowment to expand their recreational area to include an indoor, easy to clean playground that is disability friendly. She’d done her research, talking with administrators and the architect of the new wing that will hold the center – set to open to the children in just under six months. She celebrates by sharing the news and candies with Alyosha, wishing him well as he leaves.

As she’s head back to the living room the doorbell rings and makes Lena freeze up for a moment, recalling the sounds of the bullets breaking the glass and striking the wall. Lena takes a moment to think and breath, figuring that it was probably one of her business associates having forgotten something. She knows who ever it was had to be cleared by Isaiah to have gotten this far so she opens the door. Instead of seeing the attorney or her accountant she stares back at Kara who is bouncing on her toes nervously on the doorstep. Behind her are Alex, Maggie, and Eliza in various states of concern and relief as they lay eyes on her.

Lena can’t help the tears that well up in her eyes as she reaches for Kara, feeling herself being wrapped up in a tight hug. When Kara’s hand tangles in her hair and guides her to tuck her face against her collar in a way that always makes her feel so safe and loved she bursts into sobs, clinging to her tightly as if to make sure she doesn’t leave. Instead Kara just calmly holds her and whispers to her softly how she’s safe and they weren’t going to let anything happen to her. As Lena calms down she ushers them all into the foyer so that they can get out of the cold winter air, still not letting go of Kara’s hand that’s locked in a death grip. She’s not sure how they got here, why they came, and when they were leaving but she knows she’s probably going to beg not to be left behind.

Fresh tears are welling up and spilling over her cheeks as Eliza comes closer and wraps Lena up in a hug, sighing with relief at finding the girl alive and unharmed physically. Alex and Maggie tug Kara
into a hug as Lena starts to cry again, knowing that the youngest Luthor is overwhelmed and upset. Eliza calmly holds the distraught girl, talking softly to her to try and get her to calm down enough to talk with her. It takes a little while but when Lena’s sobs taper off into sniffles Eliza rubs her arms tenderly as she explains, “We came to take you back to Midvale, if that’s what you want.”

Lena nods vigorously as she sniffs again and tries to brush away the endless stream of tears, practically begging as she answers, “Please.”

“Of course, it’s okay now Lena. You’re safe and we aren’t going to let anything happen to you,” Eliza assures calmly, heartbroken as she realizes that Lena has yet to loosen her grip on her coat. She’d heard Kara start shouting into the phone before bursting into tears and the whole story came out. She’d spoken with Jeremiah and both of them agreed that Lena shouldn’t be alone, especially at a time like this. “Girls, why don’t you help Lena pack the things she’s going to need until school starts again. I’m going to go speak with the head of security.”

“Sure thing mom,” Alex tells her, posture rigidly tense and she’s looking around carefully – it’s clear she’s livid that someone had tried to harm Lena. She wonders if they would try to hurt her again while she was with them, but they’ve made Lena a part of their family so she knows they’ll do whatever it takes to keep her safe. Gently she rests a hand on Lena’s shoulder as she asks, “Hey, Lena, which way to your room?”

Lena leads them upstairs to her room, quiet and still shaking as she picks up a few things and puts them in her bag. Maggie knows she must still be out of it – still in shock and clearly traumatized by the shooting. She wraps the younger girl up in a tight hug and feels her hug back just as fiercely, she holds her a bit while Kara starts to pack some of Lena’s clothing along with Alex’s help. Maggie rubs Lena’s shoulders gently, talking to her softly, “Hey kiddo, we’ll be out of here soon.”

“Good,” Lena whispers tiredly, admitting, “I hate it here.”

As they finish up Lena looks down the hallway to the doors that lead to the library, both of them are open and police tape is tied across it. Glittering glass is visible on the carpet and it draws Lena’s gaze, making her shudder involuntarily as she recalls the cold and numbness from the night before. Alex stands in front of her, blocking her view as she tilts her head to see Lena’s green eyes welling with tears. She takes Lena’s hand and squeezes it, trying to make her feel better as she tells her, “They’ll get whoever did this, and we won’t let anyone hurt you. I promise.”

Lena just nods mutely, looking exhausted and moments away from breaking into tears again. Kara is quick to guide Lena downstairs after looking darkly at the crime scene at the end of the hall. Maggie is talking with Eliza and they’ve gone over security protocols and Isaiah’s already gotten a small detail prepared to follow them to ensure Lena’s protection even in small Midvale. Kara is already getting Lena settled into the middle of the backseat of the car while Alex puts her things in the trunk. Maggie’s already settled down beside Lena, helping her get buckled in and talking to her softly while brushing her tears away. Once everyone is in the car Lena curls up against Kara and feels Maggie rubbing her back, tears slipping down her cheeks as she sees the same line of protestors across the street. By the time Eliza gets on the freeway Lena’s already fallen asleep against Kara much to everyone’s relief.

Chapter End Notes
Thanks for reading! Let me know what you think so far, I'm already working on the next few chapters - if there's anything you really want to see drop me a note.
So, I owe you guys an apology for being so late on this update! I was in the hospital (auto-immune diseases suck!) and I ended up sleeping for three straight days and missed out on writing. But I'm home again and very happy to be writing again, especially since I have the whole thing plotted out!

Warning: I'm not responsible if you get diabetes, cavities, or both from all the softness, cuddles, and fluff. I really just wanted to write happy, cute fluff since I've been an absolute disaster this week.

The drive to Midvale is relatively quiet and uneventful until Lena startsles awake with a cry as they’re passing over the bridge into the little town, the ocean just coming into view. For a few moments Lena panics, not realizing where she is until she hears Maggie and Kara talking softly to her. She curls up to Kara, trying to get as close as humanly possible as more tears well up in her eyes still a little overwhelmed by everything. As they pull up to the Danvers resident Lena notices the police cars and suspects the worst – about to start crying as she wonders what horrible thing has befallen Alex and Kara’s dad because of her. Thankfully Jeremiah appears on the porch talking with a few officers and plainclothes security personnel and is quick to assure them all that nothing has happened and that they're just taking precautions.

“We can discuss this more in a moment, without scaring the girls,” Eliza tells him gently, smiling politely at the officers before she follows the girls into the house.

Kara guides Lena upstairs and shows her that since Thanksgiving her parents have furnished the guest bedroom – a second set of twin beds on either side of a reading nook that looks over the woods and out over the ocean.

“Kara,” Alex says quietly, having gathered up some of her clothes and personal items from their shared bedroom as she tells her sister, “Why don’t you take my bed so Lena can sleep in yours? I’m more than happy to stay in the guest room with Maggie.”

Kara offers her sister a bright smile as she takes Lena back to her room, noting that Maggie and Alex have already put Lena’s things next to her bed. She sees that Lena’s blinking tiredly, so she pulls back the covers on her bed and urges her to lay down, “You don’t look like you slept for a while, you can take a nap before dinner, okay?”

“I don’t want to sleep,” Lena admits softly, recalling that she’d had nothing but nightmares – both abstract ones and rather vivid flashbacks – whenever she slept. The only thing she omits is that she slept like the dead when she’d gotten drunk, but dealing with the hangover this morning had proved to not be worth it – she may have slept but it didn’t feel at all like it had been restful in the slightest.

Kara looks concerned, blue eyes watching Lena’s expressions carefully as she sits down beside her and takes her hand, “I could stay right here if it would help.”
Lena nods tiredly, her limbs feel like they’re filled with heavy, wet sand and her brain is so fuzzy and filled with cotton she knows she’s not going to be useful for games or conversation. She shrugs off her coat and toes off her shoes without bothering to change clothes into something more comfortable before she curls up to Kara’s pillow – breathing in her scent as she feels Kara gently drape the blankets over her before settling down at the end of the bed. As she drifts off to sleep she hears the tell-tale sound of Streaky’s deep, soothing purring.

Lena falls asleep and the sun is still slowly dipping towards the horizon, but the time she wakes up the sun is already gone and the darkness of night is starting to paint shadow across the horizon. Lena rubs her eyes and her hand is head-butted by the orange cat that’s curled up closer to her while she’s slept. She feels a weight at her feet and notices that Kara is still sitting with her, the blonde clearly engrossed in another novel. Kara manages to coax her into changing into a warm, comfortable pair of sweat pants and a long sleeved shirt. However, the blonde is unable to convince Lena to come down stairs for dinner – instead Alex brings up a plate for Lena and keeps her company while Kara eats. When Kara returns she picks up one of the Harry Potter books and cuddles close to Lena, reading to her and even voicing the characters when they speak to get her to snicker weakly. After an hour or so Kara notices that Lena has fallen asleep against her and curls around her – not wanting to wake her.

Lena keeps to bed the first day there, feeling exhausted and still a little frightened and anxious about the attempt on her life – she knows by now that the press has likely gotten a hold of the story and splashed it across the front pages of every mainstream media outlet. She can’t bear to go downstairs and see the newspaper headlines or the tickers at the bottom of the news programs. Instead she tugs the covers up to her shoulders and burrows deeper into Kara’s pillow and closes her eyes – almost trying to will herself to go back to sleep. After a while – and most likely due to the sheer exhaustion she’s worked herself into – she does fall back to sleep for a while. Kara and Maggie alternate sitting with her – both of them coax her to sit up and eat something for lunch even though she’s not really hungry.

After nibbling some bread and taking a few spoonful’s of soup Lena curls up in the blanket again, after a small plea Kara joins her for a nap. Lena sighs softly, finally starting to feel safe again with Kara’s arms wrapped securely around her and her lips pressing kisses along her shoulder. In these quiet moments, with the wind knocking rain softly against the window, Lena thinks that maybe her entire world hasn’t fallen down around her. When she wakes again she can hear Kara joking with Alex and Maggie down the hall, most likely playing a game. Before Lena can decided whether or not she wants to get up a soft knock at the door alerts her to Eliza.

“Hey sweetie,” Eliza tells her affectionately, entering the room with a tray of dinner in her hands.

“Oh, you didn’t have too,” Lena says with wide-eyes, feeling bad that Eliza is waiting on her when the woman has just gotten home to start her Christmas vacation.

“Nonsense, you need to eat and clearly you needed to rest some as well.” Eliza regards her with warm eyes, setting the tray in her lap. The doctor in her can’t help but press the back of her hand to Lena’s forehead, wanting to make sure that Lena wasn’t taking ill as she asks, “How are you feeling?”

“Okay, just tired,” Lena says softly, stirring her spoon through the mashed potatoes. She’s definitely not used to being cared for like this – and she’s especially not used to any sort of maternal attention that wasn’t for show and social niceties. But she doesn’t feel like she has to lie and keep up appearances with Eliza, not when the older woman has always been so kind and understanding.

Eliza takes a seat at the foot of the bed, regarding Lena gently as she tells her, “You know, it’s okay
to not be okay.”

Lena swallows down the bite of food she’d taken, feeling a lump rising in her throat that has nothing to do with the meal. The full weight of what Eliza’s told her and what it means hits her like a ton of bricks, making her drop the spoon from her shaking hand. Eliza’s hand covers hers and Lena can’t help but clasp it tightly in her own, like it’s the only lifeline she’s ever been thrown.

Eliza sets aside the tray and moves closer, taking Lena’s hands in hers before tipping the girl’s face up by the chin so she can look her in the eyes and assure her, “No one expects you to be okay after everything that’s happened in the past few weeks. Your family getting arresting, having to speak with police, and then going home and being attacked is enough to frighten a grown adult much less a teen.”

Lena bites her lip, so hard that she worries that she’s going to draw blood just to try and keep the inevitable tears from falling. The first hot tear streaks down her cheek and it unleashes a torrent as she sucks in a breath to try and keep from sobbing. Before she knows it she’s enveloped in a comforting embrace and all she can do is rest her head against Eliza’s shoulder as she weeps softly.

“I know you’ve been pressured your entire life to be perfect and to always present the image of a perfect daughter or the perfect student but it’s okay to be sad, angry, or scared. It’s also okay to not know what you’re feeling.” Eliza tells her as she rocks the teen gently, carding her fingers through Lena’s hair to try and soothe her. “The only thing you need to know is that none of this is your fault – you didn’t do anything wrong, Lena. You didn’t do anything to deserve this and there is nothing for you to apologize for.”

Lena’s calms after a moment, brushing away her tears on the cuff of Kara’s sweatshirt still feeling Eliza rubbing her shoulders tenderly. She feels like a weight has been lifted off her chest and she can finally breathe, that the cloying feeling of drowning while watching everyone else breathing is finally starting to lift. Eliza cups her cheeks, brushing tears away with her thumbs as she looks Lena in the eyes and tells her, “You aren’t alone either, Lena. Jeremiah and I will be there for depositions and court dates if that’s something you want. If not, we’ll be there for the rowing competitions and spring break.”

Lena can’t help but laugh a little at the thought of Eliza and Jeremiah watching and cheering for her as she shakily rows through a competition. She knows they’d cheer for her regardless of how poorly she places, but she also thinks that it would probably feel safe to have them with her when she has to go to court hearings next. Nodding she tells her gratefully, “I would appreciate that very much.”

Eliza embraces her again before setting the tray in her lap again, encouraging her to eat more as she goes to the door only to find Kara, Maggie, and Alex on the other side. All three girls are looking a little sheepish standing there holding their own dinner plates clearly having decided that if Lena didn’t come down for dinner they’d just come upstairs to join her. Eliza chuckles softly and nods, just giving them instructions to return the dishes to the kitchen when they’re finished.

The second day at the Danvers Lena ventures out to the living room after sleeping in longer than the others. Eliza calmly explains that Jeremiah’s taken Kara and Alex to pick up lunch and some things to help liven up the afternoon. Lena nods tiredly, rubbing her eyes as she finds Maggie in the living room reading with Streaky sitting on the arm of the sofa beside her.

“Hey little Luthor,” Maggie tells her affectionately, patting the sofa beside her before lifting up the soft blanket as Lena comes closer. She smiles when Lena snuggles up to her, leaning her head on her shoulder to see what book the older girl is reading. “How are you feeling?”

“Okay,” Lena says softly with a shrug, grateful that Maggie wraps and arm around her shoulders and
ruffles her bed head hair playfully.

“I think Alex and Kara are picking out a few surprises for this afternoon, they also really needed to get out of the house for a bit,” Maggie tells with a laugh as she recalls that Alex and Kara both had zero chill – especially when they’d been indoors for more than a day or two at a time. Maggie does enjoy being adventurous and getting out her energy via sports but she’s also just as happy to take it easy with a good book – especially when it’s gotten so cold outside without a single spec of snow in sight.

Lena snickers a bit, she knows that Kara was probably getting bored with just reading books and playing video games. Knowing the jovial blonde required at least a couple hours of exercise at the least before she started to get restless. Reaching over she turns Maggie’s book to where she can see the cover, smiling when she sees that it’s Jane Austen’s “Sense and Sensibility.” She didn’t think Maggie was a fan of romantic works much less the dramatic British neoclassic work, given her usual distaste and groaning whenever Kara suggested they watch a romantic drama or comedy.

“What?” Maggie asks incredulously, ruffling Lena’s hair so it falls in the younger girl’s face as she tells her, “I can enjoy a good angsty, romantic novel from time to time.”

Lena giggles as she assures, “Don’t worry, your secret love of sappy romantic books is safe with me. Although I would have guessed you would have gone for Pride and Prejudice, it seems like Elizabeth Bennett would have been your spirit animal.”

“Oh hush,” Maggie says even though she can’t help but chuckle, “You are a living, breathing Jane Austen heroine so I don’t know what you’re teasing me about. Besides, I’ve seen your collection of novels, sure you have some weird Russian literature but I’ve seen your copy of Emma and Persuasion.”

“Guilty as charged,” Lena admits, relieved that they’re talking about the sappy romantic literature and not the trashy lesbian romance paperbacks she has hidden under her mattress. She’d be absolutely mortified if Maggie teased her about that, all Kara would do was turn a very charming shade of red and start blubbering about how she shouldn’t have been snooping. Before she can continue to tease Maggie her ears perk up at the sound of a car door shutting and what sounds like Kara and Alex teasing one another.

“I don’t think they’ve stopped bickering since yesterday,” Maggie tells her with a small smile as the door opens and Kara and Alex are clearly in a heated debate over what they should do first. Both of the Danvers girls’ have their arms full of Christmas related things they’ve picked up from the store. Jeremiah comes in with a few boxes of pizza, shooting his wife an apologetic look when she scrutinizes the girls’ choice for lunch. But upon seeing Lena smile and easily join the others in the dining room she doesn’t say anything.

“We should start with Christmas cookies! Or the ginger bread house kits,” Kara exclaims as her smile grows wider when she sees that Lena feels well enough to come out of her room. She’s quick to hug Lena as she comes closer, feeling the smaller girl curl up to her and loop an arm around her waist.

“I still want to go ice skating, the weather is perfect,” Alex says as she points outside at the overcast day, the ocean’s puffed up with the wind and clouds are rolling in.

“It’s going to snow!”

“That’s perfect!”
“Why not do both?” Maggie suggests, a bit confused as to why the sisters are stuck with the thought that they’ll only have enough time for one activity when they have all afternoon.

“Alright, girls how about you eat lunch first before deciding what to do next,” Eliza tells them calmly, trying not to smirk at her daughters’ antics while setting out plates on the table. If they were going to have pizza the least they could do was eat it at the table with some semblance manners.

Alex flips open one of the boxes and pulls out a couple slices, taking a bite as Maggie hands her a can of soda – trying to say thank you with a full mouth that Kara scolds her for. Lena can’t help but chuckle at the sisters still bickering with each other through lunch, only quieting down a bit when Jeremiah breaks out the plethora of cooking making utensils including piping bags, cookie cutters, and a dozen different types of edible glitters and sprinkles. Kara brings out the gingerbread house kit and moves closer to Lena, the two of them deciding to put it together and decorate it so it looks like a charming little house in a winter painting.

“You’re the engineer so I’m relying on you being able to put this thing together,” Kara explains seriously as she looks at the pieces of house all laid out, “I’m mainly just in this for the icing and candy, and some of the decorating.”

Lena chuckles at her honesty as she looks briefly at the instructions before starting to cement the walls of the house together with the royal icing. Before she gets to the roof she can’t help but dab some of it on Kara’s nose playful, laughing as the blonde who had been paying more attention to the various types of candies and sprinkles available now gives her a confused look.

Across the way it would seem that Alex and Maggie are creating a gingerbread nightmare more respective of a Halloween horror film rather than the traditionally delightful Christmas motif. Instead they’ve taken a page out of Calvin and Hobbes book and have created a gingerbread house of horrors – complete with dismembered gingerbread people, ghoulish snowmen, snow sharks, and ghosts in the windows of the house. The two are currently mixing red food coloring into the remaining white icing to add finishing touches to their gory masterpiece.

“We should make one of the gingerbread guys a cannibal,” Alex suggests as she adds red icing to the gingerbread man being mauled by a snow shark – she was aiming for a Jaws looking scene and was quite pleased with the way it was turning out. Handing the icing bag to Maggie she watches as her girlfriend draws a bloody mouth on the only gingerbread cookie that isn’t missing limbs, or worse.

“A cannibal it is,” Maggie agrees, smiling when Jeremiah dots the massacre on their lawn with hot tamale candies to add to the effects. She also can’t help but laugh at Lena and Kara’s reactions – the littlest Luthor just shakes her head disapprovingly but Kara – bless her sweet heart – looked horrified and appalled.

Kara takes extra care when Lena asks her to help put the roof on, the two of them then lining the roof with red and green gum drops. She’s really pleased the Lena seems happy to keep with the Christmas theme by putting up a candy cane forest around the house before drawing scarves and warm clothing onto their normal looking gingerbread people. Kara makes icicles hanging from the roof and glues M&M’s under the windows. By the time they’re finished the gingerbread house – some of the icing lines a little wobbly and the colors a little clashing – looks quite like a regular Christmas scene. Especially when placed side by side with the little house of horrors the older girls created.

Outside the storm is in full effect with white flurries of snow blanketing all the level surfaces around. Lena can’t help but smile as she sees the snow falling, wondering if there would be enough snow that they could go sledding or at the very least make a snowman and have a snowball fight. Alex is already hyped up from the soda and is rummaging around in the garage returning with a triumphant
smile on her face and a couple pairs of hockey ice skates. She checks the sizes and holds out the smaller pair to Maggie, teasingly telling her, “These should work for you Mags, being tiny and all.”

“Har har, Alex,” Maggie says with a wide grin showing her dimples as she takes the skates, “Just because I’m tiny doesn’t mean I can’t beat you in a race. With your long legs you’re more likely to end up looking like Bambi on the ice.”

Kara’s manages to find some of her skates, hoping that they’ll fit her still as she heads back in to see Alex wrapping a scarf around Lena’s neck and tugging a beanie playfully over her eyes. Maggie’s already got her coat, gloves and scarf on, looking like she’s antsy to get to the rink. Jeremiah and Eliza finally get them to the ice, making she that everyone has skates that fit and no one is missing gloves, a hat or a scarf. Maggie’s already got her coat, gloves and scarf on, looking like she’s antsy to get to the rink. Jeremiah and Eliza finally get them to the ice, making she that everyone has skates that fit and no one is missing gloves, a hat or a scarf. The outdoor rink has a few families out braving the weather, skating around a rather large, decorated fur tree in the center. Lena looks up at the strings of large Christmas lights hanging over the rink and smiles, she can’t remember the last time she’d been skating but she knows it’s been years – probably the last time she was in Ireland.

Alex and Maggie are already on the ice, taking a few wobbly strides before quickly settling into it and goading each other on. Kara’s waiting patiently as Lena ties and reties her skates tighter, stepping onto the ice and offering Lena a hand. Since it’s outdoors, surrounding by snow dusted trees, there’s no railing which Lena’s a little wary about.

“Don’t blame me if we both end up with bruised bottoms,” Lena says with a small grin as she takes Kara’s hand and steps onto the ice.

“Don’t worry, I’ll kiss it and make it better,” Kara teases even though her cheeks are turning red – and not because of the cold.

Lena just laughs as she tells her, “Fine, I’ll hold you to that.”

After a bit of an uncoordinated start and a couple less than graceful falls Lena feels confident enough to skate on her own. Kara’s starting to show off just how coordinated and athletic she is, skating backwards while talking to Lena as if isn’t no big deal. Alex and Maggie zoom past them occasionally, the older girls are clearly very comfortable on the ice – perhaps too comfortable and over confident as they end up crashing against each other a few times and sliding into snow drifts that are gathering on the outside edge of the rink. Luckily despite their teasing and goading the two are quick to help each other up and laugh it off.

Kara gets creative and starts turning into wide arcs before doing a few graceful spins that Lena admires – knowing that the only thing she’d get for her efforts would be bruises. Kara smiles at the look of adoration on Lena’s face, grinning she holds out her hands encouraging her, “Come on, take my hands.”

Lena just shakes her head for a moment, not wanting to fall any more than necessary. But the sad puppy look Kara gives her has her taking her hands and skating with her, hoping that Kara won’t let her fall. Kara just beams and starts to skate backwards, checking behind her every so often as the get up to a steady pace Kara guides her to turn, “It’s just like dancing, trust me. I’m not gonna let you fall, babe.”

Lena makes a slow, unbalanced spin quickly grabbing for Kara’s shoulders so she doesn’t fall, giggling a little bit at the funny, almost dizzying sensation. A couple more tries and she gets it right just as they get to the giant Christmas tree. Kara guides them to a bench, pulling Lena into her lap and wrapping her arms around her waist the two of them snuggling as they watch the other people at the rink. Parents teaching their little ones how to skate and cushioning their falls when they lose their balance. Alex and Maggie come zipping by but get to close to one another and go crashing to the ice.
in a heap of limbs – luckily both of them are laughing so Lena guess they must not be hurt much.

Kara chuckles but then points out her parents, Eliza and Jeremiah are skating with each other holding hands and chatting easily. Jeremiah leans over and presses a kiss to Eliza’s cheek, tugging on her scarf teasingly. Lena thinks they’re adorable together – clearly the two love each other dearly, something she’s only every seen in holiday Hallmark movies. She knows her own parents were never like that with each other – if anything their marriage was one of convenience strictly for the social status. But seeing Kara and Alex’s parents together makes her think that this is what a happy marriage should look like. Smiling she hugs Kara closer and tells her, “I’m so happy I’m here with you.”

Kara brightens and smiles as she leans in to kiss Lena, when they break a part she tells her earnestly, “I’m so happy you’re here too. I love you, Lena.”

Lena leans her forehead against Kara’s and close her eyes, savoring the closeness as she professes, “I love you too, Kara.”

By the time they’ve worn themselves out and are hungry for dinner Alex and Maggie are limping off the ice, clearly having been too rough and fallen into each other a few too many times. Kara’s nose and cheeks are reddened from the cold and Lena’s shivering a bit as they huddle together on the way home. By the time they’re settled into the living room Maggie has an ice pack resting on her shoulder, Alex has her legs in Maggie’s lap – a matching ice pack resting on her knee. Both of them are still ribbing each other about the ice skating rink while sipping hot chocolate. Kara has piled up a bunch of pillows in the floor and curls up with Lena under a heavy quilt, the two of them quietly enjoying The Miracle on 34th Street while stealing more marshmallows for their hot chocolate.

Chapter End Notes

It’s shorter than usual, but I’ll definitely be making up for it in the future. Love to hear from all you, make sure everyone’s doing well.

Next chapter will have more holiday fluff.
The next morning Kara and Maggie slip out of the house with Eliza, the two of the citing that they couldn’t have Alex and Lena tagging along and knowing their presents ahead of time. Alex just shrugs, having already gotten her holiday shopping out of the way with her father long before now – she made a personal promise to herself that she wouldn’t be caught dead at the mall two days before Christmas. Kara is chipper as always and is adamant that she hadn’t wait to the very last minute since it wasn’t Christmas Eve until tomorrow. As soon as Maggie and Kara are out the door with her mother Alex makes her way to the fridge and takes out some left over pizza and a couple sodas before switching on the Nintendo and picking up one of the controllers. She could handle a few hours to herself, but it would seem that Lena had actually wanted to go with them but didn’t say anything.

Alex takes a bite of pizza as she sees Lena sitting at the kitchen table with her laptop looking out the window with a sad little look – the red head thinks that for a second the littlest Luthor looks like a kicked puppy. Sighing softly she can’t help but smile as she grabs another soda and a carton of ice cream from the freezer and takes Lena by the wrist as she tells, “Come on, Lena. It’s going to take forever for them to get back if you sit their pining the whole time.”

Lena grabs up her laptop and joins Alex on the sofa, accepting the carton of ice cream and soda, “Are you sure this is okay? Your mom told us she’d be bringing back lunch.”

Alex just shrugs with a grin as she explains, “With Kara they’re going to be gone longer than they think – besides what mom doesn’t know won’t hurt her.”

Lena can’t help but grin a little as she pops the tab on the soda and decides she may as well join Alex in the junk food fest – especially if they were going to be left to their own devices for a while. Propping up her laptop on her lap she goes back to looking over the amazon list to make sure that the gifts she’d pre-ordered a few days ago were making it to the new location in time. She feels Alex trying to peek over her shoulder and she nudges her gently, “No peeking.”

“Aww, come on, you don’t have to show me mine. I just wanna see what you got Kara and Maggie,” Alex tells her as she grins again and tries to get a good look at Lena’s screen.

“No way, spoil sport,” Lena tells her with a laugh, closing the screen and then her laptop as she checks out what Alex is playing – she watches the little blonde character running around the screen with his sword and shield. It looks familiar but she’s not sure she’s ever played – or if she wants to play instead she just pulls over a couple pillows and tugs the blanket down from the back of the sofa. A roll of thunder in the distance makes her shiver a bit, hoping that it wouldn’t become a full blown storm as she’s starting to not like the loud sounds of rolling thunder.

Streaky joins them on the sofa, curling up in Lena’s lap and purring contently as she pets him while
watching Alex absolutely destroy a variety of enemies with such ease she’s a little jealous. Alex
offers to let her play but she declines, pleased to just rub the purring cat behind the ears while she
watches. After a few more minutes the room flashed bright white and snap of thunder rumbles loudly
-taking both girls and the cat by surprise. The lights go out and Lena feels herself tense up as Alex
gets up and unplugs the game system and television before retrieving a camping lantern – switching
it on as she sets it down on the coffee table.

Snow continues to fall and Alex is mesmerized for a while as she watches a random thunder snow
occurring, most of the time it would rain but it would seem that the thunderstorm rolled in and it
hadn’t warmed enough to be rain. Turning back to Lena she tells her, “It’s not often we get a thunder
snow, it’s really odd but it does happen sometimes.”

Lena just nods, holding streaky and petting the irritated cat she watches another flash of lightening
and she can’t help but flinch before the clap of thunder sounds. Alex joins her back on the sofa,
giving her a concerned look.

“Come’ere kiddo,” Alex tells her affectionately, she knows that Kara hates being alone in
thunderstorms – the loud booms of thunder that sometimes were so loud they shook the house and
set off car alarms made Kara shake. Lena lately had been unappreciative of loud sounds and Alex
figures it must remind her of the sound of the gunshots that were aimed at her less than a week ago.

“I’m like two years younger than you,” Lena teases with a small, forced smile as another booming

crack of thunder makes the house tremble slightly – causing her to startle violently again.

“So, as one of your many older sisters I reserve the right to call you all sorts of ridiculous and
occasionally adorable nicknames,” Alex says matter-of-factly as she tugs Lena over – pillows,
blankets, cat and all. Streaky yowls in protest but as Lena settles comfortably against Alex’s side the
cat resettles in her lap.

Lena’s blushing, feeling like a toddler that cries at the drop of a hat, she tells Alex, “This is
ridiculous, it’s just a storm.”

“So,” Alex tells her patiently as she reaches over to tap Streaky on the nose, earning a glare from the
cat, “It doesn’t mean you can’t be uncomfortable or even a little scared, they are ridiculously noisy
this close to the coast. Kara used to sneak into my bed on nights when lighting would light up our
room – I’m sure you’ve noticed.”

Lena nods, cuddling into Alex further as another round of thunder rattles the windows.

“I’ve gotcha,” Alex assures, she remembers how she was so confused as to how she’d gotten Kara
as a sister – just showing up home from school one day to find her sitting at the kitchen table. She’s
genuinely a little confused as to how she’d managed to adopt the little Luthor as well but she’s just
going to roll with it – she now has two little sisters to look out for which is fine by her.

Soon enough Jeremiah comes back from checking the circuit breaker with a few more flashlights in
case they need them. He must notice that Lena doesn’t like the thunder because he goes and gets his
stereo that Alex always makes fun of as being old even though he insists it’s just retro – putting on
some music that helps hide the sounds of the thunder. After the UPS guy delivers the packages Lena
unpacks the pre-wrapped gifts and places them under the Christmas tree while Alex suggests a board
game to pass the time without electronics.

When Kara, Maggie, and Eliza return they come carrying a bunch of parcels, rolls of wrapping
paper, and cartons of pasta for a rather late lunch. The lights have come back on and while the storm
has passed the snow continues to fall steadily outside. Maggie and Kara lock themselves up in the
bedrooms upstairs, claiming the presents are top secret and that no one can see them. Eliza also
squirrels away some parcels, giving Alex a look when she asks about what she got with a cheeky
smile. The rest of the day is everyone sneaking around gifts to wrap in private so as not to spoil the
surprise as a variety of family friendly Christmas films plays in the background.

For game night that evening, Kara insists that they play the Christmas version of Monopoly –
promising that this time she’s going to beat Lena. But halfway through the game Alex and Eliza are
bankrupt, Maggie’s in jail, and Kara just landed on a Poinsettia and has to payout to Lena –
complaining that she’s running a racket on the Christmas version of railroads. Everyone starts to
laugh even harder when Lena just shrugs and says, “It’s not a racket, Kara, it’s a monopoly – which
is kind of the point of the game.”

Kara just sighs and hands over the paper money, she literally just has two dollars to rub together now
and knows she’s going to be out if one of the other two remaining players doesn’t land on something
she owns. Soon enough it’s just Jeremiah paying out to Lena for landing on Sugar Plum lane and
Alex laughs as she says, “We should have a new rule where we never play any sort of Monopoly
game with Lena ever again, she’s just too good at this.”

As they head to bed everyone agrees that Lena is too good at Monopoly, even Lena agrees that she’d
rather play something else. Kara says they should play twister but everyone just groans and agrees
that they’d rather just go to bed after the busy day they’ve had.

On Christmas Eve everyone has slept in, Kara is the first up because she’s already raiding the kitchen
for some toaster pastries and a large glass of milk. She’d already checked on Lena – the younger girl
had been curled up with Streaky under her arm and sleeping soundly. The cat however had watched
her with half-lidded yellow eyes, a glare daring her to try and wake the girl who was currently
cuddling him close. As she snacks on her third pastry she checks in on Alex and Maggie – snorting
when she finds the two of them cuddle up in one of the beds. Alex’s sleeping face tucked against
Maggie’s neck, clearly having enjoyed falling asleep in the smaller girl’s strong embrace.

Snickering Kara can’t help but go back to find her phone and switch to the camera so she can snap a
few pictures. What she doesn’t realize is that the flash is on until she snaps a picture. Soon enough
Alex and Maggie are both waking up, the red head grumbles as Kara snaps a couple more pictures.
Maggie sees Kara first and can’t help but laugh a bit as she wraps Alex in a tight hug as she yells at
her sister.

“Aww, come on, give me a kiss. It’ll be cute,” Maggie tells her as Kara snaps another picture of a
red faced Alex who is scrambling out of bed – momentarily getting tangled in the sheets and
gracelessly rolling out of bed and onto the floor with a loud thump.

“I’m going to kill you, Kara!” Alex yells as she rips at the sheets, getting herself untangled as Kara
gets a head start down the hallway. She quickly leaves behind a laughing Maggie to chase after her
sister, tearing down the hallway as Lena peeks out into the hallway in confusion just in time to see
Alex streak by – following Kara downstairs.

“Not if you can’t catch me,” Kara calls over her shoulder as she rounds the kitchen table, Alex
rounding on her trying to decide how she’s going to part Kara from her phone.

Lena’s confused and concerned as she makes her way downstairs at the loud ruckus, she finds
Maggie sitting on the stairs. The brunette has tripped a bit because she’s laughing too hard so she just
sits on the stairs and watches as Alex vaults over the couch to try and catch Kara, barely reaching out
and tugging on her sweatshirt. Lena’s perplexed but figures if Maggie is laughing then it can’t be the
end of the world – instead she follows the older girl to watch the carnage.
Jeremiah and Eliza are in their pajamas and bathrobes still waking up as Alex and Kara continue chasing one another – Kara opting to take it outside pries the front door open. The blonde laughs as Alex takes the bait, waving her phone at her before taking off into the snow in her socks and slippers. Alex has no qualms about following her, getting closer and closer to Kara as the blonde leads her on a chase through a few snow drifts. Maggie’s still laughing as she watches through the window when Alex finally tackles Kara into the snow, the two wrestling for the phone. The two are laughing at this point as they wing snow at each other trying to distract each other from their goal.

Lena can’t help but laugh, her phone pings and she looks at the messages Kara’s sent, snickering when she sees the pictures and realizes now why the two sisters are rubbing snow in each other’s faces over a cell phone. Maggie leans over to see the pictures and grins, “You’d never know Alex could look so angelic, not when she’s like that.”

“Only when she’s sleeping apparently,” Lena agrees with a laugh as she forwards the images to Maggie, knowing that the other girl would prefer to have a copy since Alex is deleting them from Kara’s phone. Eliza calls both girls back into the house. Jeremiah’s chuckling as the two girls sheepishly come back into the house, snow badge their pajamas and in their hair. Kara’s chuckling still as she tries to brush snow from her hair, reaching over to brush snow from Alex’s collar.

“Alex, you don’t even have shoes on,” Eliza chastises gently as she grabs a blanket from the back of the couch and wraps it around her two daughters. “Judging by the laughter I’m guessing this squabble was not a big deal.”

“Not a big deal,” Alex agrees as she nudges Kara with a little smile, grateful that she’d deleted the pictures. Kara just grins back her and nudges her back, both of them starting to shiver as the snow stuck in their hair and clothing is starting to melt leaving the wet and cold.

“Go on upstairs and change before breakfast,” Eliza tells them, tugging them both into a hug so she can press a kiss to each of their temple’s. Shaking her head, she watches them nudging and shoving each other playfully as they head upstairs together. As she turns to see Lena and Maggie helping Jeremiah with ingredients for pancakes she tells them, “Sometimes I think we’re raising wild animals, do either of you know what started it?”

Lena just shrugs looking at Maggie desperately, the older girl just laughs, “Kara woke Alex up.”

“Alex always is a bit grumpy in the mornings,” Jeremiah laughs softly, “Both of them are really, I don’t see how the two of you deal with the amount of grumbling and angry glares they’re capable of giving before 9am.”

“Food, if you promise Kara a good breakfast everything is fine,” Lena laughs, grinning as Kara comes down in sweats to steal a piece of fruit as they finish with the pancakes.

“Caffeine for me and Alex,” Maggie agrees with a laugh, she knows Alex isn’t a morning person and while she does enjoy the sunrises and morning runs she does need coffee to be as cheerful as she usually is. Grateful when more of the caffeinated beverage is provided as they eat and get ready to go to the pier Christmas Market and parade of lights that takes place in the bay.

The Christmas market is overflowing with games, rides, and a plethora of sweet pastries that Kara insists they have to try all of them at least once. The girls decide to go on the sledding hill that’s been created from the snow plowed away from the roads and walkways. Alex and Maggie are quick to goad each other into racing each other, the two of them picking up sleds and starting their race to the top of the huge hill. Kara can tell that Lena’ a little hesitant, watching how quickly the other people sledding are moving so quickly – even a couple mishaps of people that weren’t watching where they were going.
“Come on, we can get a toboggan and go down the hill together,” Kara suggests, taking Lena’s hand and squeezing it.

“If you insist,” Lena says with a little smile as she watches Alex and Maggie at the top of the hill getting situated and counting down. Both girls take a running start and fly down the hill at such an alarming rate that she’s sure that if they collide they’ll be taking a trip to the hospital. But seeing the two of them shouting and laughing she knows that she’s going to give it a try as she admits, “It looks pretty fun but at the same time I’d rather not break my arm again, that really hurt.”

“We’ll be careful,” Kara assures, noticing that both her parents have picked up a toboggan and are climbing their way up the hill – she’s glad that she’s been lucky enough to be part of a family where the parents are still together and still very much in love with each other. Taking Lena’s hand she guides them up the hill, carrying most of the weight of the two person sled to give Lena a break. They both wave at Jeremiah who enthusiastically waves at them before sending the sled down the hill, making Eliza startle before starting to laugh.

Lena’s cheeks are rosy and her breath ghosts in the air as she helps Kara put the sled down. Kara motions for her to get in front and hold onto the rope before sitting down beside her and wrapping her arms around her waist. Lena can’t help but snuggle back into Kara, starting to become more comfortable with the idea of ride sleds as long as it means she can feel Kara’s strong arms around her.

Kara smiles as she leans in and whispers against Lena’s ear, “Starting to like sledding, huh?” Lena whimpers at getting found out, but nods a bit unsure as she looks down at just how steep the hill in front of them actually is. Kara just holds her tighter and tells her, “You ready?”

“As I’ll ever be,” Lena quips before suggesting, “Count of 3?”

“Okay,” Kara says, making sure Lena’s feet are up as she starts to count down, “3…2…1!”

Kara pushes the sled over the edge of the precipice and Lena cries out as they start to gain speed, the cold air biting a bit uncomfortably at their exposed skin as it whips around them. At first the drop in the pit of her stomach is uncomfortable but soon enough Lena can’t help but grin as they careen down the hillside. Before she can figure it out they’re coming to a stop on even ground with other riders all around then joyfully prepping to head back up the hill for another go.

“You okay?”

“Yeah, let’s do that again!” Lena exclaims, picking up the toboggan and starting towards the hill and Alex and Maggie coming flying down the hill again, this time Maggie wins by a long shot.

After sledding the family decides to try the markets pastries, letting Kara indulge herself to her heart content – but warning her not to ruin her dinner. Everyone decides to put off lunch and instead nibble on the various treats while sipping hot ciders. Jeremiah tells the girls to go ahead and roam about the markets and gives them some extra cash to pick up more treats as he picks up a couple hot mulled wines and takes Eliza by the arm – the two of them opting to go on a scenic sleigh ride together. Maggie and Alex immediately find their way to the games and rides while Lena and Kara opt to just walk around and peruse the shops to let their food settle.

By early evening they find themselves at the Rockin’ Lobster for a Christmas Eve dinner together – Maggie calling her Aunt to make sure everything is okay with her – her aunt is happy to know she’s having fun and that their family friend is recovering from surgery well, the two of them trying to manage a Christmas Eve dinner made up of hospital food. As the sun fades rather early, the
A procession of sailboats decked out in Christmas lights and decorations make their way down the waterway as music starts to play. Lena can’t help but laugh at all the ship captains are dressed in Santa outfits or as elves, a few of the boats have people on them singing traditional Christmas carols.

As they return to the Danvers home to cookies and milk – almost milk for Maggie – Eliza presents them all with packages wrapped in Christmas paper. Lena chuckles at the sharks with candy canes and Santa hats as she says, “It’s not Christmas yet.”

“No, but we always open one present on Christmas eve,” Kara explains with a smile, “It’s like a family Christmas tradition.”

“Awesome,” Maggie beams as she carefully tries to pry the tape away from the amusing wrapping paper, wondering if it was Alex who picked out the beachy Christmas themed paper that included sharks on it.

“Don’t get too excited it’s just…” Alex is cut off when Kara elbows her in the ribs so hard she squeaks a bit as her words are cut off. Kara just points to the looks of pure joy on Maggie and Lena’s face, trying to let Alex know that while this is nothing new for them, it was somehow new and special for their girlfriends.

Lena and Maggie are quickly looking at the cozy pajamas realizing now why Eliza suggested opening these presents the night before Christmas. She grins at the fleece pajama pants that has chubby orange cats doing various cat activities – reminding her of Streaky. Maggie’s laughing as she stuffs a cookie in her mouth and heads upstairs to change into her pajamas that have bulldogs in tops on them. Alex and Kara follow suits after wishing their parents good night, giving Eliza and Jeremiah time to watch one of the documentaries they record in relative peace and quiet.

The smell of warm cinnamon rolls is wafting through the air as Lena wakes up second before she feels another warm body pounce on top of her – disrupting Streaky from his sleep. Kara is vibrating with excitement as she bounces on the bed with laughter, jarring Lena awake who just peers up at her with sleepy green eyes. Kara can’t help but beam at her as she continues to bounce and crow at the top of her lungs, “Come on, get up, get up, get up! It’s time to open presents!”

Lena can’t help but smile at the other girl’s enthusiasm spying Maggie dragging a grumbling Alex down the hallway towards the stairs. Streaky had already hopped up on Kara’s abandoned bed and watches Kara with half lidded yellow eyes while swishing his tail in annoyance at being woken up so rudely. Lena finally gets up when Kara gets off of her and stops shaking the bed, tugging on a hoodie and slipping her feet into slippers before following Kara downstairs. Jeremiah and Eliza are already up but still in their pajamas – the coffee table in the living room is piled high with plates of cinnamon rolls, Christmas waffles with whipped cream and strawberries, and a variety of sweet treats including candy cane cupcakes. The lights around the living room and in the tree are lit up and it’s then that Lena notices that Kara has woken them all up before the sun even had a chance to rise yet – the windows still dark and the first slivers of golden light peaking above the horizon.

Kara, who had previously been chomping at the bit for present opening, has made a diversion to the table full of treats to dig into a waffle decorated to look like Santa Claus. Alex has returned from the kitchen, rubbing sleep from her eyes while sipping at what Lena suspects is a very strong cup of coffee. Maggie’s already next to Kara, sipping a glass of juice and digging into an astonishingly large cinnamon roll and calling out to Alex and Lena to come and join them. Eliza and Jeremiah look like they’ve been up for a while even though they take a seat on the sofa to sit and enjoy their own mugs of coffee – the two of them smiling at the girls.

Lena’s a little nervous when Eliza starts sorting through the mountain of neatly wrapped presents that have an assortment of ribbons and bows decorating them. She really hopes that her gifts were
thoughtful enough and would be enjoyed by the recipients. Lena is disrupted from any further brooding by Eliza handing her a box wrapped in paper that has little crabs wearing Santa hats printed on it and she can’t help but chuckle at the beach Christmas wrapping paper. Kara’s already shredded the paper on her own gift and is opening the box and squealing when she pulls out a new digital camera.

“Now you can take pictures to go with your articles without having to worry about checking out a school camera,” Eliza tells her warmly, brushing her fingers through Kara’s long blonde hair and braces herself for when she’s tackled into a hug. She can’t help but smile as she watches Kara taking it out of the box and turning it on – no doubt about to be taking pictures of everyone.

Alex has already unpacked her kindle and is already connecting it to the wi-fi so that she can check out which books she’s going to be adding. Jeremiah also tells her that it will be much easier for her to take her books everywhere with her in college since they can get her electronic copies of textbooks for the non pre-med courses. Beside her Maggie is overwhelmed as she strokes her fingers over the leather of her new coat, beside her are a couple cool weather flannels and new pair of hiking boots – the fact that the Danvers had taken notice of her lack of winter clothing and been so thoughtful in picking out clothing she likes brings tears to her eyes.

“Lena, aren’t you going to open your presents?!” Kara asks with a smile, setting the camera down after she finishes snapping a couple picks of Maggie putting on the leather jacket and Alex who is still enraptured with her kindle.

Lena does pry the paper away from the box in her lap and the other boxes that Eliza has stacked in front of her, a little star struck. Just like Maggie she wasn’t used to seeing a tree with presents stacked under it, Christmas morning was just another morning to the Luthors. Lionel had gotten them presents but the gifts were more things that he would have wanted to have, not a little girl or a growing teenage boy. Lillian only ever had enough love for Lex, but even then the crisp new suits and first editions of classic books like “Ulysses” and “War and Peace” weren’t want her brother had hoped for. So when she pulls the paper back to reveal some rather comfortable looking casual clothing that are to her tastes and in her size she too is speechless.

She still hasn’t found her voice when she unwraps a couple new sweaters, some jeans, and a pair of sneakers. Eliza explains that Kara had told her that all of her clothing was either formal or the standard school uniforms and that if they didn’t fit or weren’t her style Eliza would take her to change them out. When Lena does find her voice again she has hugged the older woman and tells her that it was perfect.

Kara is stuffing a whole cinnamon roll into her mouth while trying to help Jeremiah pass out another round of gifts. Alex is already shaking the box that has her name on it in Maggie’s messy scrawl – not bothering to wait any longer. As the pulls the paper back she starts to howl with laughter, revealing a flipbook entitled “Creative Cursing.” She opens the book and flips through the two options to make up a couple new curse words, showing Maggie who laughs as she made up the curse ‘fuck stick.’ The two of them lose sight of opening presents as they flip through the two sets or random words to make up new curses.

At Lena’s side it would seem that Kara is already enjoying Alex and Maggie’s gift to her – already opening a package of gummy bears as she looks through the rather large crate filled to overflowing with an assortments of snack foods and drinks.

“You’re supposed to save those for study breaks and midnight snacks while at school,” Alex scolds playfully while shaking her head as Kara stuffs her mouth with a handful of gummy bears.

“But I’m hungry now,” Kara states with a pout, looking every bit like a kicked puppy.
“You’re going to get a stomach ache from all that sugar,” Lena teases, but when Kara turns the pout
on her she knows she won’t be able to tell her not to indulge in anymore treats.

Alex is tearing through her presents at an alarming rate – clearly ready to be finished unwrapping
them so that she can do an inventory and play with them. She thanks Kara profusely when she sees
the new travel mug and various bags of pre-ground Death Wish coffee with a note that says for all
those long nights studying and going to labs. Kara apparently remembered that Alex was getting a
head start on pre-med this next semester by taking anatomy and physiology at the local university.

Lena finds her courage and tells Alex with a mischievous grin, “Open mine next!”

Alex nods, fishing around to find an elegant bag with her name on it in Lena’ neat print – still
impressed that Lena’s handwriting is so neat it’s almost like a computer font. She pulls out some of
the snowflake printed tissue paper she pulls out a plush item and stares at it if for a second before it
dawns on her what it is and she starts to laugh as she announces, “Look mom, I have MRSA!”

Alex toss the plush microbe to her mother who has a perplexed look but starts to laugh as well when
she gets the joke. Maggie picks up another of the little microbe plushies and starts to laugh as well,
“Looks like Lena gave you mad cow disease too!”

“Really?!” Alex asks, quickly checking over the new toy and grinning as she tells them, “Prion
diseases are scary as hell! Just one protein messes up coding and BAM! Fatal prion disease.”

Maggie tosses the multicolored stem cell plush at Alex as she says affectionately, “Nerd.”

“Those were just for fun,” Lena reminds, hoping that Alex is going to be just a pleased with the
actual present as she was the gag gift.

Alex curiously digs out a box from the bottom of the bag, seeing that her name is stenciled neatly on
the front. She opens the box and her eyes light up as she realizes it’s a medical grade dissection kit.
Lena sheepishly tries to explain, “I remembered you talking about being excited about anatomy and
physiology, I just figured you might appreciate having your own tools.”

Alex is beaming as she thanks Lena, slinging her arm around the smaller girl’s shoulders as she
announces, “Nerds unite!”

Maggie claims that she wants to go next, eyeing her package from Lena that she tears into like a girl
possessed when she gets the go ahead. Sure enough as she opens the package she starts laughing,
setting the miniature bullet proof vest – designed to go on cans or bottles of soda to keep them cold –
on the coffee table.

“Aww, it’s just your size,” Alex quips as she picks up the gag item and holds up to Maggie.

“Tiny or not I could still take you, Danvers,” Maggie says as she quickly tears through the rest of the
wrapping and tissue paper to show a brand new duffle bag with a variety of athletic clothing
including a very cozy looking pair of sweats. “So I’m guessing you were paying attention when I
was talking to Alex and Lucy about dual majoring in chemistry and criminology.”

“Nope, just the part about applying to the police academy when you turn 21,” Lena tells her, pulling
Maggie into a tight hug, the two of them ignoring a protesting Alex who’s trapped between them.

“Okay, okay, break it up before I can’t feel my toes,” Alex complains good naturedly, and when the
two part she takes a gift out of her pocket debating on whether or not she should give it to Maggie.

“That for me?” Maggie asks, noticing that Alex is a bit quiet.
“Yeah, but now I feel I should have gotten you a pocket knife, or something more useful, like handcuffs,” Alex says without thinking, but after a couple seconds the turns as crimson as the ribbons on the Christmas tree as she quickly stammers out, “That’s not what I meant…”

“Sure it wasn’t,” Kara quips as she snaps a couple pictures of a very red Alex with a less than innocent smirk on her face.

“Shut up, Kara,” Alex groans as she quickly presses the small package into Maggie’s hands, staring at it so hard that Maggie’s worried the gift might burst into flames.

Now Maggie is genuinely curious as to what Alex could have gotten her as she starts to tease the tape from the wrapping paper to reveal a small velvet lined box – it was too flat and too wide for it to be jewelry so Maggie’s a bit stumped as to what it could be. She pops the box open and can’t help the brilliant dimpled smile that spreads over her face, “Oh, wow.”

“What is it?!” Kara asks, both her and Lena are craning their necks to try and get a good look at what’s in Maggie’s palm.

“It’s a challenge coin,” Maggie says with a small smile as she pulls the coin out and runs her finger over it – admiring the engravings on the coin. One side has a gold plated police badge with the National City Police Department’s motto – ‘Honestas, Integritas, et Fidelitas’ meaning ‘Honor, Integrity, and Fidelity’ – around the edge. On the back is the image of the United States flag with the Eagle emblem and her full name, Maggie Ellen Sawyer around the rim of the coin. Maggie grins to herself, grateful that Alex didn’t put her full first name on there as she hates when people her call her that – just like Alex gives anyone who isn’t her mother a death glare if they call her ‘Alexandra.’ She flips it over a few times before putting it back in the case so that she can hand it over to Kara and Lena so they can see it.

“I-I did some reading… so I know how important the coins are to police and military personnel. That they’re mainly given to signify membership and to boost morale… and you’re probably going to be getting a lot of these coins starting with the police academy,” Alex stammers out, the blush still burning high on her cheeks as she finishes what she was trying to say, “But I wanted you to have one from me.”

Maggie shoots Kara and Lena a glare as they coo over Alex getting soft, instead she reaches over and pulls the sheepish red head into a fierce hug as she tells her sincerely, “Thank you, Alex. I’m going to keep that coin with me until I make it to NCPD, it’ll remind me of your nerdy self and keep me motivated to work harder.”

“Yeah, hope that keeps your moral boosted when you’re running suicides followed by a billion push-ups and pull ups,” Kara tells her, recalling how Maggie has added more running and weight lifting to her workout regimen after looking over the police fitness requirements. “Okay, me next!”

Kara beams as Lena shyly hands her a gift wrapped in bright blue wrapping paper dotted with snowflakes and sporting a large white bow with ribbons that have peaked Streaky’s interest. Kara reverently tries to tear the paper as little as possible as she reveals the gift inside – breaking into a grin as she takes out a wooden box that has “Writer’s Emergency Kit” stenciled on the front. Unlatching the hinge, she opens it and pulls out a leather bound notebook with her name on the cover, a set of nice ink pens, a book entitled “The Writer’s Toolbox,” and a small wooden block that has ‘writer’s block’ carved into it. Chuckling she turns the small wooden block over in her hand as she inspects the notebook, running her fingers over the smooth leather.

“It’s perfect, Lena. Thank you,” Kara tells her softly while she pulls Lena into a gentle hug, “Now come on, we’ve basically torn through our presents like savages and you’ve barely opened any of
“Yeah, little Luthor, open the one from the me and Alex,” Maggie encourages, smiling as Alex hands the package to her before settling down next to her – both eagerly watching in delight as Lena tears away the paper.

Lena sees that she’s gotten a wonderfully thought out care package from the older girls – a variety of soothing, tasty teas to try out, a set of colored pencils to go with the adult coloring book that has ‘Calm the Fuck Down’ in frilly cursive on the cover. She can’t help the laughter bubbling out of her as she flips through the coloring book to see pages with funny phrases punctuated by curse words surrounded by intricate patterns and designs. One particular page has ‘This is Bullshit’ written in cursive on top of a rather impressive mandala design that sets Lena off giggling again – she’s going to have fun coloring all of these wildly inappropriate phrases to destress.

“If you think that’s funny you should see the book Alex picked out,” Maggie quips, giggling along with Alex as the coloring book gets passed around. Eliza and Jeremiah have watched in amusement this whole time, snickering here and there – it would seem that Eliza wants to scold Alex for the crass book but she doesn’t have the heart to do it since Lena’s so amused. Jeremiah just flips through the pages, laughing at the contrast between the curse words and the neat, soothing patters.

“Dear Asshole, 101 Tear Out Letters to the Morons Who Muck Up Your Life,” Lena reads aloud, laughing as she wonders if the book has any good ideas she could use for writing letters to Lex and Lillian.

“Alex?!” Eliza tries to scold, but when she sees a couple of the letters – while probably a little bit on the mature side of things – she can’t help but just shake her head and laugh.

“What?! Lena could use a good laugh and some stress relief,” Alex says as innocently as possible.

“Yeah, uh huh, I’m sure it has nothing to do with you being able to curse the paint off a wall,” Kara comments with a wiry grin as Alex sends her a glare, luckily that just makes their parents laugh even more. She reaches over and picks up her gift to Lena, making sure the ribbons and bow are still in their correct places before setting it in Lena’s lap offering her a nervous little smile as she tells her, “I hope you like it.”

Lena’s pretty sure she’s going to like anything that Kara’s gotten for her, and sure enough as she carefully unties the ribbons, teasing the cat with them for a moment, and pulls away the paper she sees a familiar logo. Quickly she tears the rest of the paper off with a grin spreading across her lips, she tears into the packaging and pulls out the manual for the Raspberry Pi Retro Gaming kit. She’s going to have a blast putting together all the electronic components but she’s going to have even more fun programming all of the games onto the SD card.

“Kara, this is amazing,” Lena says as she pulls out the retro game controllers and looks at the computer chip about the size of a credit card, “How did you even find one of these?”

“I may have had some help,” Kara admits, a rosy blush on her cheeks, “I heard you and Jess talking about all the things you’ve been able to put together with the Arduino and Raspberry Pi boards – and you mentioned that you wanted to see if you could make a retro gaming system like the one you used to have. Jess kind of pointed me in the right direction since I have no idea what it’s supposed to do.”

“Well, when I put it together and get it programmed you’ll have to be my player 2,” Lena suggests with a bright smile that’s meeting her eyes, her fingers itching to start putting the little device together and then go upstairs to get her laptop so she can start programming.
By lunch time everyone is off doing their own thing, Alex curled up on the couch going through all
the books she plans on getting to read in her down time – including a few comics with strong female
characters. Maggie has settled down with Lena, the two of them have the coloring book open and are
giggling and chatting. Curled up next to Lena, Kara is writing in her journal with Streaky curled up
on her chest purring contently. Eliza and Jeremiah have exchanged gifts and are currently putting
together the new and improved telescope in hopes of having a clear sky in the evening from which to
view the heavenly bodies.

It doesn’t take long for the girls to get restless, donning coats, scarves and gloves and heading out
with shovels, buckets and sleds. Alex is the first to suggest a snowball fight, checking the watch that
Maggie had secretly given her the night before, “So, each side has 30 minutes to make their fort and
stockpile ammo.”

“We are so going to lose,” Lena tells Kara, she’s never been one to really rough house nor was she
good at sports that required a great amount of hand eye coordination.

“We’ll go easy on you, little Luthor,” Maggie calls over her shoulder as she follows after Alex to the
largest tree in the yard. The red head is already stacking up buckets of snow to make a fort wall so
she drops to her knees in the snow and starts shaping the perfect, spherical projectiles.

“Come on, you know how competitive Alex is,” Kara says with a laugh as she picks up the shovel
and guides lean to a sport between two smaller trees – starting to pile up snow between them to make
the basis for their fort. “Go ahead and start making snowballs while I put up the fort.”

“Okay,” Lena tells her, scooping up a handful of snow and starting to compress it enough to make a
little roughly shaped ball. “Just so you know I’ve never done this before, so apologies ahead of time
for sucking.”

“It’s fine, it’s just a game,” Kara reminds with an encouraging smile, using the bucket to shape
strong, cylindrical mounds of packed snow. She stacks each bucketful of snow in a precise place,
making sturdy walls that she knows will withstand Alex and Maggie’s assault on their keep.

“It’s starting to look like a castle,” Lena remarks with a smile, stacking more snow balls in two
separate caches before helping Kara press snow into the gaps in between the buckets of snow to make
the walls solid. Kara has even partially enclosed the fort, leaving only an entrance at the back –
the walls high enough that they could both sit comfortably without fear of getting pegged in the head
by a stray snow ball.

Having being resourceful Kara helps Lena make even more snowballs, making a couple new caches
before peeking over the top of the forts ramparts to spy on Alex and Maggie. The two older girls are
hidden from view behind a single wall of snow, every now and then a head pokes up to get a good
look at the other girls fort, Kara laughs as she says, “I like our chances, it looks like Alex just
shoveled some snow against the large oak tree and then just set to making snowballs.”

Lena laughs as she takes a peek, checking her phone so see that time for making tactical preparations
is almost at an end. The four girls meet out in the deadman’s zone in between the two forts that’s
largely devoid of snow at this point, leaving only the hard, frozen ground to crunch beneath their
feet. Alex and Maggie are surveying the veritable fort that Kara and Lena have made a little
enviously, Maggie nudging Alex in the side as she mutters with a smile, “I told you we need better
defenses.”

“Well, it’s too late now,” Alex states with a little, “Ride or die.”

“Ride or die, Danvers,” Maggie agrees with a grin.
“So, any ground rules?” Lena asks diplomatically, assuming that this parley was for discussing the terms of their little war.

“Well, it’s a crime against humanity to add rocks or sticks to snowballs, and soaking them in water so they freeze,” Alex announces.

“You needed a rule for that?!” Maggie asks, face twisted with surprise.

“You’ve never got into a snowball fight with the neighborhood kids,” Kara retorts, recalling the time Alex had punched out Zach after an icy snowball had left a bleeding cut just above her right eyebrow. They’d been winning against Zach and his brothers and Alex had warned him about cheating and being too aggressive – so Kara getting injured had been the last straw. “Alex knocked out the local star football player in junior school after he took a cheap shot at me with an ice ball.”

“Yeah, I don’t think that’s going to be an issue between us,” Alex assures, grinning as she recalls how much shit Zach had gotten from the other local kids after it came out that he’d gotten his ass kicked by little Alex Danvers. “Okay, so everyone has to remain in the backyard – anyone out of bounds has to sit in the penalty box. Also, if anyone gets dragged back to the enemy fort they’re considered a prisoner of war and have to be tagged back in by their teammate.”

“Sounds fair,” Lena surmises, holding out her hands, “Shake on it.”

All four of them exchange handshakes before scurrying back to their forts to take their posts before Alex announces that the war has begun. Both sides immediately start to launch their cold projectiles at the enemy – Alex is the first casualty, getting struck in the face by one of the snowballs Lena launched haphazardly. Kara’s aim is much more precise, catching Maggie in the side and Alex in the stomach. But sure enough Maggie and Alex formulate a plan, both of them moving into dead man’s land and arching shots to strike behind the Danvers-Luthor fort, both Kara and Lena having no choice but to hunker down and endure the onslaught.

After an hour of trading hits and Lena and Alex both getting captured and valiantly rescued, both sides are gearing up for a final hail Mary. Seeing as both sides have suffered similar amounts of casualties and fort damage they both go all out. Lena and Kara both arch shots to impact the enemy fort as both Maggie and Alex decide to take the fight to the middle ground and storm Lena and Kara. Hopefully catching them with their proverbial pants down.

“I’m going in, give me cover,” Kara calls, picking up an armful of snowballs and exiting the fort as Lena starts to pelt the field with snowballs to deter Alex and Maggie from aiming exclusively at Kara. The blonde rounds the side of the fort and rains down a volley of cold snow on them, laughing as she does so. Alex and Maggie are laughing and squawking indignant at having gotten caught off guard.

As Kara retreats Alex makes chase, trying to dodge the various snowballs that Lena is lobbing her way – a couple grazing her shoulder and her leg as launches her own attack. She hits Kara several times in the back, one catching her in the back of the thigh and another marking her shoulder. Kara’s laughing as she continues to try and evade Alex as her sister closes in on her. Alex finally catches up to Kara – tackling her into the snow before she can retreat to the safety of the fort.

“Crimes against humanity!” Kara cries out as Alex manages to stuff loose snow under the collar of her coat and sweater. She shudders as the wet, icy snow slips over her skin and starts to dampen her clothing as she tries to get Alex off her so she can get rid of the annoying intrusion.

“Yeah, Alex, that’s in violation of the Geneva convention on proper snowball fight etiquette,” Maggie teases with laughter, grabbing a handful of snow and slipping it down the back of Alex’s
coat watching as her girlfriend howls and let’s go of her sister to try and claw the snow out of her own clothing.

“Betrayal!” Alex exclaims trying to shake the snow out of clothes while shivering, when she realizes it’s a lost cause she flings snow at Maggie – picking up two hands full of snow and going after the shorter girl.

“Don’t you even think about it, Danvers,” Maggie howls as she jukes and dives around Alex, trying to avoid getting paid back.

Lena joins Kara in deadman’s land, the two of them laughing as they watch Alex finally tackle Maggie into the wall of their fort – snow flying everywhere as the two older girl’s wrestle with each other. Snow gets smashed in faces that have cheeks turned cherry red from the cold, more fists of loose snow is pushed past the hem of pants and under the edge of shirts against warm skin.

“So, I think we won,” Kara states with a jovial laugh, slinging an arm around Lena’s shoulders.

“Nothing like the other side’s in-fighting to get you a clean victory,” Lena agrees with a smile curving her lips, watching as Maggie and Alex finally tire out and lie in the snow panting and giggling.

As they head onto the porch Jeremiah has already provided mugs of hot chocolate and apple cider – he and Eliza are putting the finishing touches on their snow people in the front yard. Eliza’s snow woman is wearing one of her old lab coats and holding a beaker in its stick hands, beside it is Jeremiah’s garishly dressed snow man. He’s put a Hawaiian shirt on it’s with a ratty baseball cap that’s frayed around the brim, a fishing pole sticking up in the snow beside it. After a brief rest the girls decide to add their own snow visages to the display – knowing that the neighbors will get a kick out of the snowman show.

“Alex, any snow sharks or little house of horrors have to go in the backyard,” Eliza warns, ruffling Alex’s snow covered hair with a laugh.

After an hour or so of working on their snow women, the girls are putting the finishing touches on them. Alex has put one of her old soccer jersey’s on hers as well as one of the team beanies, making a snow soccer ball to go with it. Maggie’s made a tactical vest for hers, the sticks for hands looks like they’re doing shaky finger guns. Lena and Kara have worked together to make their snow women – the two figures have arms around each other’s shoulders and are wearing some of Kara’s old clothes with matching beanies and scarves.

By the time the girls are hungry and tired out they’re leaving a watermark on the floor in the foyer, their hair matted and slightly damp from all the snow. Jeremiah sends them off to take warm showers and get changed into clean, dry clothing while he prepares homemade pizza dough while Eliza mixes up a couple stronger – alcohol enhanced drinks for the two of them. Eliza calls up the stairs for all of them to keep everything PG between them and for Alex and Kara to let their guests shower up first and flip a coin on which one of them could go first. They both hear a mutter of curses when Alex calls heads and ended up with the coin face up on tails.

After a rather messy but tasty dinner – with everyone trying out the various flavors of pizza they’ve created – Alex and Kara have brought down pillows and blankets from upstairs. Clearly they have set up a rather large pillow fort in front of the television Kara announcing, “Time for more Christmas movies.”

“Not Miracle on 34th Street, we’ve already seen it,” Alex begs as she flops over the side of the sofa to settle down next to Maggie.
“What about ‘A Christmas Story’?!” Jeremiah suggests, knowing he’s going to get a rise out of his wife who can’t stand that movie.

“Uh, no, I can’t stand that movie,” Eliza states but then she teasingly suggests, “What about ‘A White Christmas’?”

“Eww, no, that one’s old and still has singing in it,” Alex exclaims with a grimace as she rummages through the movies.

“How about the Grinch?” Maggie suggests, thinking that with how much Alex has massacred cookies in a house of horrors and made snow sharks on the front lawn much to Eliza chagrin she’d appreciate the grouchy green character.

Everyone quickly agrees that it’s a good pick, Jeremiah and Eliza fitting in the pillow fort with the girls – bringing popcorn and cupcakes with them. Alex grins, throwing her arm around Maggie’s shoulder as she leans back against her dad – smiling to herself when he ruffles her hair. Kara – with a mouth full of cupcake and popcorn that Lena balks at and happy to share her mound of pillows with both Eliza and Lena – grinning as Lena curls up between her and Maggie.

Sighing contently Lena listens to Jeremiah and Maggie teasing Alex about being a miniature Grinch when she complains about the singing. Kara comments about how fun it would be to eat all the Christmas foods that the Who’s made. Lena grins when Streaky decides to join them, picking up the cat even though Kara scoffs at the prissy little beast. Cuddling the chubby orange cat and pressing a kiss to the soft fur on his head she leans against Kara, thinking to herself that this has been one the best holidays she’s ever had in her life. She also secretly wishes on whatever stars are available that she gets many more after this one.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading and I apologize for the delay - writer's block and PTSD (firework's are so pretty but really loud!) just sapped my ability to write fluff and sweetness for a while.
Lena sighs as she looks at the orange tabby that has made himself comfortable in the middle of her suitcase – curled up on Lena’s freshly cleaned clothing and nuzzling up against her sneakers. Lena ruffles his fur behind his ears as he purrs, telling him affectionately, “I would love to take you with me, Streaky, but you probably wouldn’t appreciate living in a dorm with dozens of teenage girls.”

Kara snorts as she sits on her suitcase, reaching down to try and get the clasps to lock in place, “Are you kidding, he would love it. There’s plenty of people he could trip.”

“He doesn’t trip me and Alex,” Lena remarks only for Kara to roll her eyes even though she reaches over and pets the cat.

“Oh har, har,” Kara huffs as she wrestles with her suitcase some more, “At least he tripped Maggie too.”

“He only trips you and Maggie because you tease him so much. Isn’t that right sweet boy, they just tease your mercilessly,” Lena coos at the cat who just purrs louder and rolls over to expose his belly. She’s not even upset that she’s going to spend weeks finding his fur all over her clothes and shoes. He’s been her constant companion over the holidays and she’s going to miss him – especially the way he curls up to her and nuzzles against her when she’s settling down to sleep. Picking up the cat she cuddles him close while apologizing softly with a kiss to his head, “Sorry buddy, but I have to finish packing or we’re going to be late heading back to school.”

Streaky grumbles when she sets him down and Kara starts to laugh, “Yeah buddy, trust me, we feel the same way about having to go back to school.”

“You like school,” Alex says, poking her head to see how the two younger girls are getting on.

“Yeah, but I always hate the first couple weeks back – I just keep thinking that I’d rather be sleeping in my own bed until noon and it’s just irritating to start over with a new term,” Kara remarks with an adorable little scowl, “There’s new classes – and I don’t even remember which electives of mine have changed. Just annoying.”

Lena can’t help a little smile, noticing the adorable little crinkle in Kara’s brow but at the same time she’s not going to argue – settling back into the swing of busy school life after a long holiday was difficult. Unlike Kara however does know which classes of hers are going to change, but it’s the rowing that’s likely going to pick back up that makes her want to curl up in her bed under the covers. As much as she likes rowing the thought of spring being the competition season does make her a little bit nauseous. She really hopes that Coach Willis doesn’t have any designs to put her on a team.
“Hey, Lena are you okay?”

Lena notices that Alex and Kara are giving her looks like she’s missed out on part of the conversation, she just smiles as she assures them both, “Yeah, I was just thinking about how I hope I don’t end up on one of the rowing teams for the competition season.”

“You’ll do great even if you do end up on a team,” Kara beams, reaching over to ruffle Lena’s hair playfully – something that she’s picked up from Maggie and Alex doing the same thing all the time.

“Hey, it’d be brilliant if you make a competition team. I mean it was just a few months ago that you could barely stay in the boat, so that’s a lot of progress,” Alex assures but then her reassuring smile turns mischievous, “That and it means you get to finally experience what it’s like to be embarrassed by a couple middle age adults cheering for you the whole time.”

Lena can’t help but smile at the thought, imagining that she would be more pleased to have the support than embarrassed if Eliza and Jeremiah were to cheer for her during any type of competition.

“You also have to put up with all of us obnoxiously cheering for you from the stands too,” Maggie chimes in as she stops lugging her suitcase down the hallway long enough to join the conversation.

After another hour of trying to get every left behind hat and glove Eliza and Jeremiah manage to get them into the vehicle and on the road in a somewhat timely manner. Eliza tries to keep them all on schedule since the girls are supposed to be checking in with their head of house before 5pm but Jeremiah can’t help but make a stop at the pizzeria and another stop at a water ice place on the way to the school. She can’t help but smile and go along with it, knowing it will be a few weeks of work and school before they meet again.

Once they finally arrive the girls greet their friends – Sam and Lucy had gotten to the school much earlier in the morning and were both playing the Xbox in the lounge. It’s just like the start of the year all over again, girls are running around talking and trying to catch up while their parents are desperately trying to get them to focus on settling back in and making sure everything was good before leaving. Lena’s laughing as Alex and Kara are bickering about something they were talking about in the car while trying to avoid unpacking and checking over school supplies.

Lena is excited to explore a couple new electives – eyeing the robotics books and biomedical engineering 101 notebook she’s already put together. Eliza is trying to convince Kara that it will be easier to find the clothing that she wants if she folds it and puts it away correctly when there’s a knock at the door. Lena looks up from her sock and underwear drawer to see two uniformed police officers and her heart drops. She just drops the last of her things in the drawer and shuts it, trying to ignore them as she gets up. Luckily Eliza gets to them first, “Gentlemen, can I help you?”

“We were told this is where to find Lena Kieran Luthor,” the older office states calmly, clearly treating Eliza like she’s Lena’s guardian as he explains as succinctly as possible, “There’s been some recent developments in her case from just before Christmas that we’d like to discuss with her. The uh, the woman downstairs said we could use her office, but if now is a bad time we can come back later.”

“Lena?” Eliza asks gently, watching as the teen pulls on her uniform blazer – clearly getting ready to go downstairs with the police officers.

“Now is okay,” Lena answers, trying to will her voice to not shake as she looks over at Eliza and she tries to ask for the older woman to accompany her. But a part of her doesn’t want to involve Alex and Kara’s mom in this, even though she makes her feel safe.
“Lena, would be okay if I went with you?” Eliza asks gently, seeing the turmoil in Lena’s stormy green eyes and decides to make herself available should Lena want some company.

“Please,” Lena says softly, hating that her voice sounds weak but she’s more than grateful that Eliza will be with her as she starts to head downstairs – wondering what new horrors the police have uncovered. She numbly follows the police officers to Ms. Ellison’s office where the house matron usually has parent-teacher meetings or the occasional teacher-student meeting she’s managed to avoid thus far. Taking a seat next to Eliza she watches as the officers pull out a thick file and an audio recorder which makes Lena a bit nervous.

As the police sort through the files Lena sees the pictures they took from the crime scene the holes and fractured glass of the window she’d been standing by. An unfamiliar image shows the shell casings littering the sidewalk just outside of the Luthor estate, showing just how close the mystery gun had gotten before taking his shots. The senior officer calmly starts speaking, “I’d first of all like to inform you that we’ve made an arrest in your case, his name is John Corben.”

The office slides a picture across to her and Lena picks it up, starring back at a still image of an angry man with wild looking eyes and unkempt hair. She thinks he looks familiar but can’t really place him, but she studies his face a bit more and hopes she never had to see it again.

“Do you recognize this man?”

Lena shakes her head, feeling Eliza’s hand coming to rest over hers and she clasps it tightly as she says, “No, he looks familiar but I’ve never met him.”

“He was taken into custody after a drunk confession made to one of the undercover FBI agents who was following up on the crimes committed by your mother and brother,” the officer informs her and pulls out a few more pieces of paper and the audio recorder, “We interviewed Corben for several hours and he provided us with new avenues of inquiry in exchange for a reduced sentence of 25 years.”

“Only 25 years for attempted murder?” Eliza asks, her voice taking on a protective edge showing just how displeased she is with the possibility of Lena’s attacker getting parole.

“He’s also being indicted and confessed to being a part of the illicit human testing that was going on with Cadmus and providing weapons to both Lillian and Lex Luthor,” the office patiently explains, his sympathetic look expressing that he understands Eliza’s outrage, “He’s looking at consecutive life sentences without the possibility of parole.”

“So, he was part of Cadmus and worked with my mother,” Lena surmises, a sick feeling twisting in her gut as she realizes that her mother’s colleague had taken it upon himself to try and eliminate her from the equation – as if that would have helped any of them with their legal troubles.

“More like he worked for your mother,” the office explains looking a bit uneasy as he continues to speak, “I know this is going to be hard to hear, but given the circumstances and the evidence it looks like your mother, Lillian Luthor, hired Corben to murder you.”

Lena feels like the blood in her veins has turned to ice water, her whole body shivering with a chill at the detective’s revelation. For a few seconds her brain seems to short circuit, she knows her mother didn’t love her – but to want her dead didn’t make sense. Lena didn’t know anything about Cadmus and the abuse she disclosed to the police is the least of Lillian’s legal problems – barely even a blip on her rap sheet that’s steadily getting longer and longer. But in her heart she can’t say she’s entirely surprised either, but she needs to see the proof to know beyond a shadow of a doubt that what he’s told her is true.
“Are you sure?” she asks unsteadily as she holds tight to Eliza’s hand.

The police officer pushes the audio recorder to the middle of the table and presses the play button, for a few seconds all they hear is static and the background noise of someone flipping through papers and writing something down.

“So, you’re saying that you did attempt to murder Lena Luthor?”

“What are you deaf? I’ve said it a dozen times now, I took a few shots at the youngest Luthor a few days before Christmas. The kids obviously lucky or something, because I unloaded a whole clip at her and she’s still alive and well,” Corben’s voice is rough but his tone casual – as if he’s talking about the weather instead of the fact that he’s speaking candidly about attempted murder.

“You just decided to take a few shots at a 16-year-old girl for no good reason?”

“Oh I had reasons, as I already explained I worked for Cadmus – security, or a people wrangler or enforcer – whatever you want to call it. Lillian could be a slave driver sometimes, but if you played by her rules it could be quite lucrative.”

“How lucrative?”

“A few million in untraceable currency in off shore accounts and a one-way ticket out of here,” the man states plainly, “That’s more than enough for me to take a crack at it.”

“What motive would Lillian have for murdering Lena? She’s a child and doesn’t know anything about you, her and Lex, or Cadmus.”

“No idea, she used to complain about the needy little whelp of a girl but it’s not like killing her was going to make these other affairs just disappear. It was no secret she emotionally and physically abused the little thing, I guess she just can’t stand that the kid had a chance at a life without her – or she could just be trying to pay her back for talking about the abuse. I mean, Lillian always did have a thing for loyalty and respect – I mean, didn’t you ever wonder who tipped you off about a hitman drunk at a bar?”

The office turns off the recording and Lena’s shaking as he shuffles through some papers and hands her a few of them to look over. Lena’s eyes scan numbly over the documents, knowing that it’s plane tickets and off shore accounts that have been verified.

“When we ran down the information he provided for us we found that money had been wired to him from accounts owned by Lillian Luthor – she’d set up off shore accounts and plane ticked for Corben just days before the attempt on your life,” the officer explains unnecessarily before also informing them, “He’s being arraigned tomorrow where he’s going to put a guilty plea – sentencing won’t have a date yet, but since the deal is agreed to by the DA’s office it shouldn’t be too long. I’m afraid we can’t keep this information from the media once it goes to court, so you should be prepared for that.”

“Of course,” Lena says absent mindedly, already mental disengaged from the conversation as she turns to look at Eliza, “We’re finished here, right?”

“Of course, if you have any questions or would like to contact your victims advocate,” the office says pressing a business card into Lena’s hand.

Lena just pockets the card, still too numb to really think about the fact that her mother tried to have her murdered – out of some deluded sense of respect that Lena must have violated, or just her sheer controlling nature.
Eliza rests a hand on her shoulder and suggests, “Let’s get you back upstairs, okay?”

“Yes.”

Lena allows Eliza to lead her back to her room, grateful to find Alex, Maggie, and Kara are sitting with Jeremiah in her room. Lena reaches for Kara and is quickly enveloped in a tight hug, Maggie and Alex joining to as they all inquire about what happened. Eliza explains as delicately as possible the news from the police and then informs Jeremiah that he should go with the girls to dinner while she goes to Cat to discuss safety measures and other details on Lena’s behalf. Jeremiah goes with them to dinner and Alex and Kara don’t even complain embarrassedly – other parents have stuck around and their father’s presence and constant Dad jokes seem to get Lena to calm down and even smile a bit.

Eliza has worked out the details with Cat – security has already been increased and would be in place until further notice. The two women also agree that it would be beneficial for Lena to speak with a therapist about what’s going on and with the trials coming up. After a long and bittersweet goodbye until the next long leave Lena finds herself back in Kara’s bed, curled up to Kara who presses tender kisses to her temple and assures her that she’s loved and that she’s safe.

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Sure enough, Corben’s arrest and the fact Lillian hired him as a hitman is splashed on every front page and news outlet by the next afternoon. Lena isn’t surprised about that, but what does surprise her is the overwhelming amount of support and kindness she receives from her friends and classmates. In the days that follow Lena’s just in awe of everyone – so grateful that Jess sticks by her side in the computer science and robotics classes and Megan who helps her stay busy in rowing – showing her how to weight train and explain the dynamics or rowing with a team. Lucy and Sam, who have been hanging out together more and more make sure to drag Lena to movie nights and check in with her regularly.

Kara is by her side constantly, not the least ashamed to walk with her in public and make sure she gets to her classes and practice alright. She’s also made sure to tell Lena at every available opportunity how much of a wonderful person she is and remind her that she’s loved. Alex, who has taken on her new role of big sister with seriousness checks in on her during study hours and sneaks in some treats that she makes Lena promise she’ll keep for herself instead of giving to Kara. Lena’s gotten close with Maggie, talking to her about bits and pieces of the things that are bothering her and grateful that Maggie is so patient and gentle. She goes to Maggie when Ms. Grant informs her that she’s been court ordered to see a child psychologist not just for her own mental health but also to provide feedback to the courts.

Lena keeps staring at the referral in her hands, desperately wishing that she didn’t have to go to therapy – she’s not sure what she’s going to say or even if would be safe to talk about these things. She just remembers the last visit she had with Lillian’s old, asshole of a psych she’d just felt worse. She also tries not to think about how she’s started calling Lillian by her name instead of mother like she used to do just days ago as she complains, “I don’t want to go.”

“Why not?” Maggie asks softly, giving Lena a gentle look.

Lena groans, she knows that tone of voice and Maggie’s always asking questions that make you really look at yourself and think things out. So she takes a stab at it since she’s going to be doing a whole lot more introspection and the like when she has to actually see the therapist, “I don’t know, I mean all I can think about it the old, Freudian looking asshole that Lillian hired.”

“Isn’t this Dr. Marsh person a woman for one, and two, going out with Ms. Willis?” Maggie
questions with a little smile as she grabs Lena by the wrist and pulls her down to sit next to her so that she stops pacing, “Kinda hard to be a Freudian looking dickhead as a woman, and she can’t be that bad if Ms. Willis tolerates her. So, what else is it that’s gotten you all worked up?”

Lena shrugs as she mutters, “You’re going to make a great cop, you know that?”

“You’re deflecting,” Maggie scolds gently, draping an arm over Lena’s shoulders.

“A little, but it’s still true,” Lena remarks as she tries to really define what it is that bother her – she knows she not the best at talking about emotions or her inner thoughts. But most people play things pretty close to the vest, right? “I guess I just hate being vulnerable for one – it’s difficult to talk about these type of things.”

“It’s also difficult to admit you can’t do everything by yourself and need some help sometimes,” Maggie tells her, knowing that she hit the nail on the head when Lena stiffens a bit. Quickly she rubs her shoulders gentle as she tells her, “Everyone needs help sometimes, Little Luthor, there’s no shame in that. I know it takes some time to unlearn all the shitty things parents teach you, but just know we all need a little help sometimes.”

Lena just nods, curling into Maggie as the older girl flips through the channels on the television trying to enjoy the little down they get before it all gets so busy again. Lena finally gets comfortable, head resting on Maggie’s shoulder as the older girl finally settles on a show about shark attacks. After a while they both know they should be heading to sports but neither of them moves and soon enough Lena falls asleep. Alex and Kara find them an hour later, the two sisters still in their practice gear coo and snap pictures as Maggie flips them off even though she can’t help but smile.

The next afternoon, between practice and dinner, Lena gets cleaned up from rowing practice and heads back out to the front of the boarding house. She has the referral in hand as Ms. Willis meets her at the door, car keys in hand as they walk to the parking lot. Lena knows that with her current mood it must be very obvious that she’s not looking forward to this appointment.

“Come on, kid,” Leslie says as gently as possible – she knows she’s not exactly a paragon of comfort, or even kindness really – but she’s trying to be less of a crass, cranky asshole. Cat got her this sweet teaching gig and out of the rough inner city school where the PE coach before her had gotten knifed in the parking lot – she missed being able to tell kids like it is and give them a little taste of what the real world is going to be like. But she definitely did not miss the violence and near constant fighting, “Gayle’s waiting, and I promise she doesn’t bite.”

Lena wants to make a witty quip about Willis doing the biting but she keeps it to herself, knowing that she’s just trying to help not feel so anxious. But in all honesty she would sadly feel better if Gayle was a bit mean or distant – that she knew how to deal with, but dealing with her problems by talking about them with someone who understood and genuinely cared and wanted to help her was still rather new. As they make their way to the appointment Lena lets out a little breath that she didn’t realize she’d been holding in when the pull up to a quiet, little private practice in an antique looking house – at least it wasn’t the hospital or some antiseptic smelling doctor’s office.

“Hey Lena, are you ready?” Gayle asks in a soft, gentle tone, clearly aware of how uncomfortable the girl is with being here.

The office isn’t quite what Lena was expecting as she follows Gayle towards an office, the first door on the left. The room is brightly light by the window that looks out towards the woods with a couple potted plants enjoying the sunlight. There are happy, colorful drawings on the walls most likely from previous patients. There’s a variety of toys on the coffee table in front of a comfortable looking sofa – she notices a few action figures, some puzzles, and other interesting knickknacks. It reminds her
more of the children’s playroom at the hospital than it does of a psychiatrist’s office.

“So, are we going to be coloring things or doing inkblots?” Lena quips a bit defensively, unconsciously crossing her arms over her chest as she glares a little at the table with paper and various assortments of crayons and markers. Her attempt at a joke falls short even to her ears.

Gayle however laughs with a warm smile as she tells her, “Nothing wrong with coloring, but I think the inkblots are little out dated.”

Lena snorts at that, smirking a bit as she realizes now that Gayle might be someone that she could talk to about some of the serious things going on in her life. Gayle is waiting for Lena to pick where she’d prefer to sit, but the woman encourages gently, “You know, coloring can help you feel less anxious talking – I know there are likely some things you don’t feel comfortable with and having a distraction could help.”

Lena looks back at the table, feeling a little childish that she’d prefer to have something to keep her hands occupied if she’s really going to talk to Gayle. She moves towards the table, pulling out one of the chairs and sitting down, trying to mentally psyche herself up and put her defenses in place. Reaching over she picks up a piece of paper and a blue map pencil.

Gayle’s sat down across from her, following suit by picking out a red marker and some paper – she can see Lena’s put up defenses, the guarded expression she knows the girl must have learned to have when dealing with the police. Her body posture looks like it’s at ease, but upon closer examination her movements are jerky from how tense she must be. Calmly she tries to assure Lena, “Lena, could you look at me for a second?”

Lena grits her teeth together, the fluttering in her chest and stomach makes her feel like she’s going to be sick. She doesn’t say anything as she looks up to meet Gayle’s calm blue eyes and waits for the questions to start.

“Lena, we aren’t going to discuss something that makes you too uncomfortable, okay?” Gayle tells her, seeing confusion flash across Lena’s eyes she knows she’s going to have to explain, “I’m not saying these things won’t come up – you should talk about them eventually – but on your own time. If you don’t feel ready to talk about something you just let me know and we’ll move onto something else.”

Lena’s stunned, her head tilting a bit as she thinks about what Gayle just told her. She knows she should be grateful that Gayle just didn’t jump right in on the abuse or Lex and Lillian, but at the same time she’s a little angry and upset that she’s been taken so off guard. She looks up from where she’d been scratching out a drawing of Krypto the robot, squaring her shoulders and setting her jaw she tells Gayle resolutely, “I don’t know what you expect me to say… I mean, if you’ve seen any of the news lately you know almost everything about my family and me. What’s the harm in talking about it since it’s already out in the open?”

“I know what the news has said, and some of the concerns the police have, but I wouldn’t say that I know your family or you. And if you aren’t ready to talk about something, pushing you to isn’t going to help you – if anything it would make it worse because then I’d break your trust in me and you’d still have to find a way to deal with all of these issues.” Gayle informs her patiently, keeping her tone even and calm even though she’s actually rather upset that Lena’s privacy had been violated so egregiously, “You didn’t really get a choice about whether or not you wanted to disclose the abuse, did you?”

Lena looks back at the paper, scribbling over the little figure of the robot – as she states a bit sourly, “No, I didn’t. They just asked it like it was normal – like it’s something that you can talk about like
it’s not a big deal. I was lucky that Ms. Grant was there, I’m pretty sure I was about to get railroaded by the first FBI agent. At least the female detective at least had the curtesy to give a few seconds warning before dropping the abuse bomb in the middle of the interrogation.”

“I’m glad Ms. Grant was with you too,” Gayle tells her genuinely, listening to the words Lena’s saying and how she’s saying them. “What were you thinking about when they asked about the abuse?”

Lena shrugs a bit as she draws a few more robot figures as she tells her, “They were asking about Lionel and Lillian, about their fights – they used to fight constantly, it wasn’t a secret it. Everyone knew but you just didn’t say anything about it, so I didn’t think much of it. But it was different when they asked about me.”

“How so?”

Lena shrugs for a second, feeling tears burning in her eyes as she crosses out another robot angrily and so harshly the point of the pencil snaps off, “I don’t know…it’s not like that was much of a secret either. It just felt like it was – like if no one knew then it wasn’t real or I was just misremembering something and it didn’t really happen like it did.”

“That you’d be safe if no one knew?”

“Something like that, it’s ridiculous when I say it out loud,” Lena says, as if chastising herself for not speaking up sooner even though she knows it likely wouldn’t have changed anything. “I think I was more worried about what people would say about me, what they’d think? That I was lying or did something to deserve it because I made them mad or something. Maybe they’d tell me that it wasn’t a big deal – everyone’s parents are bad sometimes. I just didn’t want to deal with all of that, but now that it’s public record I guess I’ll just have to deal with it.”

“That’s a lot to deal with, Lena. I’m sure you’ve heard it before from other people but I believe you when you tell me that your parents hurt each other and that they hurt you. I also want to be clear that you did nothing to deserve anything that happened – adults are responsible for staying in control even if they are angry or upset. There is never a good reason for hurting a defenseless person,” Gayle informs her a bit firmly, feeling like Lena needs to know just where she – and any decent human being – stands on the issue of child abuse and domestic violence.

Lena didn’t realize that having her thoughts and feelings on the matters validated would feel like this – like a weight had been lifted and that maybe talking about it wouldn’t be the worst thing in the world. She’s not sure she’s ready to unleash all of the crazy – her mother did just try to have her violently murdered days before Christmas and that was after she and her brother had gone on a mass killing spree to cover up illegal medical testing on human subjects. Lena sighs softly, hoping that she doesn’t scar Ms. Willis’ girlfriend for life with her fucked up family – but if she’s honest with herself she really can’t keep doing this by herself.

“Do you think it’s normal for parents to neglect or abuse their children?”

Lena lets the question roll around in her head for a minute or two, for a while she thought that her family was the normal one and that the ones she saw on TV were the outliers. Now she’s pretty sure that can’t be correct – especially not now she’s basically been adopted into the Danvers family. Sure every family had their ups and downs, Kara and Alex get into arguments and won’t talk to each other for a couple days and both of them got into spats with Eliza or Jeremiah on occasion. But nothing ever got thrown or broken and absolutely no one attacked anyone else in a malicious manner – sure Alex and Kara scuffled but they weren’t actually trying to inflict pain or harm.
“I don’t think so,” Lena says as she picks up a new colored pencil and starts to draw a caricature of Streaky as she explains, “I used to think that my family was normal and that everyone’s family was like mine – a bit naïve but I was young and figured out pretty quickly that my experiences were a lot different from my peers. For a while I thought maybe they were lying about how good they had it, just like I did.”

“What changed your mind?”

Lena can’t help but smile a little as she thinks about Kara as she tells her, “I actually made friends at this new school, and I’ve stayed with them a few times now and it’s honestly a lot different. Kara and her sister Alex are happy to see their parents, they seem to really love each other – and it shows in how they treat each other. They don’t say things to intentionally hurt each other, no one throws things, and they only play fight or rough house with each other. They don’t hurt each other, it’s the exact opposite – they like to make each other laugh, they enjoy spending time with each other, and they hug a lot – it took me a while to get used to that and I’m still trying to get used to it, but it’s nice.”

Gayle listens intently as Lena continues to talk without prompting, clearly becoming more comfortable with her and this setting. She’s heard about the Danvers from Leslie and can’t help but smile at the thought of such a wonderful family that’s opened their home to Lena. Gayle notices that Lena’s drawing a rather grumpy looking cat, fondly coloring in the strip on its side as she continues to speak, “I sometimes think about whether or not my parents actually loved me or my brother – I don’t think they actually loved us, maybe just the idea of us. If anything we weren’t children to them… it’s like we were assets or little dolls they could take out to show their friends and boast about. I don’t think they actually considered that we were people – that we have thoughts, and feelings, and wants because anytime we showed that we were human it was punished like it was a weakness.”

Lena looks at the image of streaky that she’s drawn and really wishes she could curl up with the grouchy cat that seemed to like her. She thinks about her family and feels her heart break for what must be the millionth time thinking about how she wishes things could be. She only ever wanted to be enough for Lillian to love and it angers her that the standard was set so high she would never reach it. Lena stammers out as tears well up in her eyes and threaten to fall, “If my mother loved me, then I would have been enough for her but I never was. If she actually loved me and not the image of me she had in her head she wouldn’t have hurt me like she did and she definitely wouldn’t have… she wouldn’t have…”

Gayle can see the start of a panic attack for what it is, quickly she moves closer as Lena bravely tries to stammer through the rising panic and hurt, “She wouldn’t have hired that man to shoot at me… to…to kill me. If she loved me she wouldn’t have done that.”

Lena lets the tears fall, sniffing a bit as she feels Gayle rubbing her arm tenderly and offering her a tissue that she accepts. Gayle assures her, “No, if she loved you she wouldn’t have done that.”

“But I still want her to love me, and I shouldn’t and it’s even more confusing because I don’t think I can forgive her for what she’s done,” Lena stammers out, trying not to hyperventilate as she brushes away more tears while reaching for another tissue.

“Take a deep breath for me, Lena,” Gayle coaches, making sure that Lena starts to calm down and gives her a few minutes. She doesn’t start to speak again until Lena looks at her again, “You don’t have to have it all figured out right now, talking about your mom sending someone to attack you is still fresh and upsetting so we don’t have to talk about that until you’re ready, okay?”

Lena nods, grateful that Gayle’s giving her a free pass on this one since she didn’t realize that the
memories of the gunshots and finding out her mother was responsible was still so upsetting. What she wasn’t expecting was what Gayle tells her next.

“I also want you to know that you don’t have to forgive her to let yourself heal. Forgiveness isn’t something an abuser deserves or is owed, even if they are truly remorseful and trying to make amends,” Gayle tells her, smiling a little sadly at the look of shock on Lena’s face – she can tell that any time Lena’s brought this up before with other professionals, they encouraged the girl to get over the abuse and tried to force forgiveness and reconciliation.

“I don’t think Lillian would ever be remorseful, maybe remorseful she got caught,” Lena retorts a bit angrily, “And even if she was I still don’t think I could ever really forgive her, and definitely not forget.”

“Sometimes people do things to us and they don’t deserve our forgiveness – it doesn’t mean you hate them or want revenge, it just means they’ve hurt you too badly to ever truly be forgiven. And that’s perfectly okay,” Gayle assures, wondering what type of psychopath could harm someone as precocious and gentle natured as Lena. She’s grateful that the elder Luthors are in custody and really hopes that they don’t get the chance to hurt Lena or anyone else ever again. “Of course, forgiveness means a lot of things to a lot of people, and if you change your mind later just remember that forgiveness doesn’t mean you can’t still talk about the abuse. It doesn’t mean you have to try and protect your abuser from the consequences of their actions.”

“Thank you,” Lena mutters as she brushes that last of her tears on her sleeve, feeling a bit better now that she knows that she’s not going to be guilt tripped or expected to have Lillian or Lex as part of her healing process, “I really needed to hear that.”

Gayle gives her a few minutes, getting her a bottle of water and letting her draw a bit more to let her settle down a bit more before she heads back to the waiting room. Leslie just offers her an encouraging little smile as she tells Gayle she’ll see her later, as they get into the car she grins at Lena and asks, “So, how jealous do you think Little Danvers would be if we go get some snow cones?”

Lena can’t help but chuckle as she answers with a wiry smile, “With how much she loves food, a lot.”

“Good, ‘cause I know a great snow cone stand on the way back to the school,” Leslie says, reaching over to ruffle Lena’s hair just to get her laugh and protest.

“I think Ms. Grant and J’onn might be rubbing off on you,” Lena remarks, feeling so much lighter since she spoke with Gayle even though it was mentally taxing.

“Just for that I putting you on one of the competitive rowing teams,” Leslie quips with a wicked smile, she knows she’d already planned on putting Lena on a team – the girl had improved quite well and wasn’t half bad at rowing despite what Lena thought – but that doesn’t mean she can’t tease. “So, get ready to get dunked a few dozen times while rowing suicides and doing weight training.”

Lena just grins even more as she responds confidently, “Fine by me, but if it’s doubles I want to be paired with Megan because she’s awesome and hasn’t let me drown yet.”

Leslie is taken aback for a moment, she hadn’t expected Lena to have a comeback ready – sure little Luthor had witty quips on occasion, but the confidence and the grin was new. She can’t help but smile with pride at Lena starting to finally come out of her shell now that it’s safe for her to do so. She has a long road ahead of her but like always she’s off to a good start and Leslie can’t help but laugh, “You are full of surprises, Little Luthor.”
Thanks for reading and sticking with me even when I take a while, I love knowing that you all are enjoying the story!

Next up will have more Kara/Lena and Maggie/Alex for the school valentines dance!
Valentines

Chapter Notes

So, the valentines dance chapter I promised has arrived and just a reminder that the diabetes warning is in effect - there's some teen drama but mostly a lot of fucking fluff!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Maggie groans as she steps into the hallway, still brushing her teeth but needing to be away from the swarm of girls cramming into the bathroom. She glares at the decorations that the glee club has put up throughout the dorm hallways – red and pink hearts are hanging from the ceiling and everyone has gotten their own personalized heart stuck on their door. Maggie rolls her eyes at the annoying decorations, thinking this is probably what a Hallmark store and the Lifetime Movies channel having a love child would look like. Finishing brushing her teeth she heads back to her and Alex’s dorm room and looks around for onlookers before snatching the pink heart with her name on it off the door and crumpling it up in her fist.

Alex is sitting at her desk, hair drying from her shower as she goes through the mail she had gotten today. Maggie can tell by the stressed look on the red heads face that none of the letters were from Harvard or Stanford – it was still early and Alex likely wouldn’t know one way or another until after spring break at the earliest. Maggie notices that Alex perks up at the package at the bottom of the stack, setting aside the automated letters concerning her paperwork from the SATs and ACTs. Another package was her MCAT test prep books and Maggie can’t help but shake her head with a small smile – Alex wouldn’t need those for a few years yet but wanted to get a head start all the same.

“What’s put that goofy smile on your face, Danvers?”

“Oh,” Alex answers, blushing profusely as she opens the care package from her parents that’s covered in heart stickers, “Every year my parents send Kara and me Valentines care packages – usually a few notes from them about how proud they are of us and love us, usually some cheesy valentines they find amusing, and a lot of candy that you’ll probably have to help me eat.”

Maggie looks at the little package and accepts a heart shaped candy from Alex. All she can think about is Eliza Wilke, the dance she’d hoped to go to with the other girl only to end up out on her ass with her aunt’s house – a woman who loved her dearly but wasn’t quite equipped to handle raising a broken teenage girl. Maggie wonders for a moment what it would be life if her parents had been more like Alex’s, that she’d likely share the red heads enthusiasm. She smiles encouragingly to Alex and tells her as sincerely as possible, “That’s really sweet.”

“I’m think you and Lena have care packages downstairs too,” Alex remarks as she gets up and comes around to Maggie, wrapping her up in a hug and pressing a kiss to her temple, “You’ll just have to hide your candy from Kara and not fall victim to the puppy dog eyes.”

Maggie snickers a bit, “Surely she’ll get a stomach after she goes through her candy and Lena’s.”

“One would hope so,” Alex says as she sits on the edge of the desk, tugging Maggie to stand between her legs as she grins, “So, you looking forward to the dance this coming week? I mean, thankfully we don’t have to deal with all the drama surrounding the boys school that will be
Maggie smirks at the way Alex wrinkles her nose adorable as she talks about the boys at the neighboring all-boys boarding prep school. Not that she doesn’t agree – most of them were wealthy, entitled frat boy types that she would cringe at thinking about going out with even if she wasn’t completely sold on women. She’d honestly forgotten about the dance even though Ms. Grant had announced that it was their school’s turn to host the dance – she never really thought that it would be something that Alex would really want to do – but now that she does Maggie’s at an impasse.

It would seem Lena and Kara aren’t on the same wave length about the dance either. Lena’s working on the robotic prosthetics project, the private messaging system on laptop shows her Jess’s latest PM about what’s she been doing to improvise on some of the joint mechanisms. Lena sets down her set of tool and looks at the finished product, snapping a few pics and sending them to Jess with a quick note about changes they should talk about making with their other lab partner. Across from her Kara is finishing up work for her Latin course – all of the multiple ways to conjugate verbs making her complain at the paper about the headache it’s giving her.

Kara throws down her pencil, wondering out loud, “Why did I think learning a dead language would be interesting?! Or that it would make me look distinguished on college applications?!”

“I have no idea, I wasn’t around when you were making your elective selections,” Lena tells her with a small smile, she’s not sure when she should tell Kara that her grade school in Ireland started students on languages early – sure she butchers Gaelic and her Latin is passable, but her French and Italian are almost as flawless as her English. “Although given how impatient you are I would have suggested something much different.”

“Yeah, I have regrets,” Kara says with a small laugh as she draws a little cat face in the corner of her notes as she tries to ask as smoothly as possible, “So, have you been thinking about the upcoming dance? I know it’s next week and the long weekend is probably what you’re looking forward to more than anything else…”

“You want to go to the dance? With me?” Lena asks, wide eyed and looking a little consternated as she lets the idea of going to the school wide dance with Kara sink in. Not that the idea isn’t appealing, she knows how to dance and thinks that she’d probably have a wonderful evening with Kara. But at the same time the dressing up and social niceties remind her of all of Lionel and Lillian’s galas and house parties which makes her shudder. She also can’t help but think about wanting to protect Kara’s reputation and her privacy – there’s no telling what could end up on social media and she doesn’t think she could stand to see Kara or her family dragged through the mud just because they associated with her.

Kara doesn’t seem to understand the seriousness as she takes one look at Lena’s face and burst into peel of laughter as she reiterates, “Of course I want to go to the dance with you. Who else would I be going to the dance with, silly? You’re my girlfriend.”

Lena can’t help but smirk at that as she says, “That’s not what I mean, Kara.”

“Then what did you mean?” Kara asks, head tilting in confusion so much so it reminds Lena of the adorable dog memes she sees on tumblr, “Do you not want to go to the dance?”

“I haven’t really thought about it, if I’m honest,” Lena tells her honestly, but she immediately regrets it when she sees the disappointment in Kara’s eyes. Kicking herself she tries to reason with Kara, explaining, “I’ve mainly been focused on classes and trying to keep up with all the depositions – the trial date is soon and I’m not sure I really want to risk being in the limelight. Especially not when we haven’t really been completely open about our relationship.”
“We don’t have to come out as a couple at the dance, if you don’t want to,” Kara tries to tell her, a little miffed that Lena doesn’t seem too keen on the dance at all.

“How else is going to look if we’re together at the dance, Kara. It’s not exactly a private venue and we’d also run the risk of Ms. Ellison or Ms. Grant potentially separating us into different rooms – or worse different houses,” Lena tells her a bit impatiently, her fear of being parted from Kara for any reason at this time quickly turns to misplaced anger and frustration. “How many people are you out to Kara?”

“I don’t know, I haven’t really thought about it much – I mean I’m out to my family and friends. I’m also pretty sure most of the girls in our house and that I have classes with are aware – or at the least – suspect we’re going out,” Kara states plainly, she’d never thought about the dance being a huge coming out thing, “If it’s bigots you’re worried about this school is pretty liberal and open minded, but if this isn’t something you want to do then I’ll drop it. We don’t have to go to the dance together.”

“I’m just worried, Kara,” Lena tries to reason as Kara gets up to put her books away and pack her sports bag for tomorrow practices. “We can go to the dance I just want to talk everything out first.”

“There’s nothing to talk about,” Kara tells her softly as she crams a clean pair of sweats into her duffle bag, “If going to the dance together makes you uncomfortable then we won’t go.”

Lena doesn’t try to push the subject any further – she wanted to explain to Kara that she’s just doing this to try and protect her. Lately the Luthor name was like poison – weakening or destroying anything it touched – and she didn’t want that for Kara. She was fine with the world thinking ill of her – comparing her to her family, taking digs at her sexuality, or her character was like water off a ducks back now. But she’s not sure Kara, with her gentle and loving nature, could withstand the same type of bloody character assassination Lena learned to tolerate long ago. She’s also not sure she’d be able to witness the abuse either, much less live with the fact that she would be the cause of it. As the bell for bedtime sounds Lena curls up in her own bed and wonders what this could mean for her and Kara’s relationship.

Three days from the dance and it’s all anyone can talk about but it would seem that as the date approaches girls are either ecstatic or grumpy about their prospects. For both Alex and Maggie as well as Lena and Kara the impending dance has continued to be a sour subject in their relationships – something that doesn’t go amiss with the rest of the crew. Lucy and Sam can tell that something’s off and the two of them, both having decided to enjoy watching from the sidelines at the dance, pick a couple to figure out what’s going on. Sam clearly decides to deal with Lena and Kara and Lucy readily agrees to take on Alex and Maggie.

At the pool Kara ruffles her hair in the towel before tossing it into her duffle bag as she sits down to slip on her socks and shoes as she spots Alex coming into the pool area. The red head is already in sweats and carrying her own duffle bag, hood pulled up over her damp hair. Kara watches as Alex and Maggie exchange a few words but Maggie quickly parts ways and Alex is heading in her direction – judging by their posture and the way the two don’t even hug Kara’s worried that something has gone wrong. As Alex gets closer her furrowed brow and her teeth are worrying her lip, the more telling sign that something isn’t right are the tears shining in her normally warm brown eyes.

“Alex, what’s wrong?” Kara asks quickly, dropping her shoe and standing up – ignoring the fact that her sock is soaking up pool water as she reaches for her sister. “Hey, you can tell me anything, you know that right?”

Alex clings to Kara, letting a few tears slip past her careful control as she tells her honestly, “Maggie
and I got into an argument, she hates Valentine’s and turned me down when I asked her to the dance.”

Kara’s floored, she saw how Alex and Maggie were together – she’d never seen Alex so happy to be close with anyone else, especially not any of the guys she’d tried dating during the summer breaks. Alex had the same soft spot for Maggie that she has for Kara, and they both were so open and vulnerable with each other. She’s also never seen two people look at each other with so much tenderness and affection other than the Danvers and the distant memories of her own parents – she wonders what happened to cause the argument. She hugs her sister tightly and presses a kiss to her temple, asking softly, “Did she say why the dance was such a big deal? Any idea at all of why she wouldn’t go with you?”

“No really, she just freaked out and then I got upset – now I just can’t stop thinking that maybe she thinks that we were a bad idea,” Alex says, her voice high and wavering with panic as she thinks about her and Maggie potentially breaking up over something that seems so trivial at first glance.

“Maybe you should ask her about it,” Kara suggests feeling like she’s being kind of hypocritical since she and Lena hadn’t exactly finished their conversation on the matter of the dance either. “You know maybe she has a good reason for not wanting to go to the dance, maybe she’s stressed, or doesn’t have anything to wear. I mean she may be nervous, I mean you won’t be the only gay couple at the dance but that can be pretty nerve wracking, right?!"

“Kara?” Alex softly, seeing worry in Kara’s blue eyes and she immediately wants to make it better even though she is filing away the points Kara’s bringing up to talk over with Maggie later. She’s going to get to the bottom of this dance and valentines issue one way or another, but now she needs to know what’s gotten her sister so worked up that she’s stammering.

“I mean, if you and Maggie go to the dance you’d basically be coming out to the whole school that you’re gay. You know maybe that makes her nervous, not that I think the school is completely bigot free – but it is rather liberal…”

“Maggie’s showed up to this school openly gay Kara, she’s pretty much already out to everyone. If anyone was going to be coming out to the whole school in this situation it would be me,” Alex calmly explains, giving Kara a wary look.

“Have you thought about that, are you okay with coming out to the whole school?” Kara asks quickly, giving Alex a critical look and realizing that she’s still standing next to the pool wearing only one shoe and confusing her situation with Alex and Maggie’s.

“I mean, I guess it’s time and I’m happy with Maggie – so happy I would announce it to the world if I could. So, I’m pretty sure that’s not the issue,” Alex tells her sister, rubbing Kara’s arms as she encourages her, “So what’s got you all flustered and upset?”

“It’s nothing,” Kara says a bit dejectedly, she really wants to talk to Alex about this whole problem but the other part of her wants to be the support she knows Alex needs right now – even if they’re both looking for similar answers.

“Why do you have the crinkle?” Alex asks, pressing her finger into the little crease in Kara’s forehead, wondering why the topic of the dance and Kara’s rambling has put it there. “Kara is everything okay with you and Lena?”

Kara sighs as she parts from Alex and sits down to finally put on her remaining shoe as she admits a bit sourly, “You aren’t the only one having girl trouble. Seriously, what it is about this stupid dance, it’s supposed to be fun.”
“Lena doesn’t want to go to the dance either?”

“Nope.”

“You know why?”

“Nope.”

“You wanna go sneak out an early dinner from the dining hall and hide out in the old biology lab?” Alex suggests, not exactly wanting to hang out with the regular crowd for dinner. It’s also been a while since it was just her and Kara and she’d readily admit to missing their sister time together.

“You, sounds good,” Kara says with a smile, hugging Alex tightly again as she tells her, “I’ve missed hanging out just the two of us and I really don’t want to see everyone else right now.”

Alex chuckles as she lets Kara hang an arm over her shoulder, the two of them heading to the dining hall. They both thank the staff profusely as they’re loaded up with pizza, pasta, and brownies before sneaking out a few sodas before quickly making a break for the now empty classroom blocks. Once in the abandoned classroom Alex quickly slips into the lab to check on her latest project before coming back into the classroom and booting the computer and projector. Alex puts on one of her Kara’s favorite silly animal YouTube channels before sitting down with Kara and tucking into the food. The two of them eat while chuckling at the adorable animals while catching up on other topics.

Maggie and Lena both aren’t surprised when neither of the Danvers sisters show up to dinner but what’s surprising is Sam and Lucy aren’t there either. Maggie looks at the meal she’d selected and back to the empty table she’s not sure she wants to sit at by herself, she sees Lena is think that she’d rather be anywhere but here as well.

“Hey, Lena,” Maggie tells her warmly, nudging her gently with her elbow, “What do you say we get out of here.”

“Okay,” Lena agrees, following Maggie’s lead in boxing up her food and following the older girl out. She’s not sure where they’re going but she realizes after a while that Maggie’s leading them to one of the science buildings and towards one of the physics classrooms. Maggie quickly turns on the radio in the corner before sitting down beside Lena, the two pick at their food as the listen to the music quietly for a little while.

“So, you and little Danvers got into an argument too?”

“Yes,” Lena states plainly as she spears a piece of lettuce rather viciously, “You and Alex?”

“Yep.”

“Was it about this stupid dance?”

“Yeah, seems the Danvers are all over this fucking dance, huh?”

“Yep,” Lena hums in agreement, “Kara gave me the kicked puppy look when I said I wasn’t exactly fond of the idea of going to the dance.”

“Ax gave me the same look too,” Maggie admits with a frown. “She didn’t exactly listen when I tried to explain I’m not exactly fond of valentines. You?”

“The crowds mostly.” Lena agrees as she nibbles a piece of kale, a little bummed that her favorite food really isn’t cheering her up much.
Maggie seems to understand, popping open the container with brownies, “You may as well.”

Lena thinks about it a second before reaching for one as she curses, “Fuck it, you’re right.”

The two settle for listening to music and eating dessert first, neither one of them really ready to discuss the freshest problems they’ve had in their personal lives. They’re oblivious to their friends Sam and Lucy that are searching for them – the two older girls have been scouring the campus looking for even just one of the party members but have come up empty. Sam’s sipping a soda as she sees Lucy trudging up the steps to the dining hall, holding out a quick snack and drink for her to take.

“Well, fuck me,” Lucy mutters as she tries to mentally go over the list of places that Maggie or Alex would most likely hide out for dinner. Cracking open the soda she takes a swig and savors the sweetness and the eventual rush of caffeine she knows she’s going to need.

“No offence, Luce, but you aren’t exactly my type,” Sam remarks as she checks her phone, noting that Lena’s phone must be off and she’s honestly not surprised by that.

“I’m everyone’s type, Arias” Lucy shoots back with a tired grin, “But seriously, where the hell could they have gone off too? I’ve already checked the recreation center, the library, and the pool. Eve says none of them have gotten back to the dorm either.”

“No one is as the auditorium or the boat house,” Sam says with a little irritation, as she mentally goes over the areas she’d checked as well hoping to find either Kara or Lena. “That leaves the classrooms, and since no one has seen any of them since sport I suspect that Alex and Kara are having some sister bonding in one of the labs and Maggie and Lena are off sulking together somewhere else.”

“No doubt, you’d make a good detective Sam,” Lucy teases with a smile as she looks over the school map on her phone and wonders where Maggie or Alex would hide out.

“Hardly,” Sam scoffs as she looks over the academic buildings and notes a few that have lights on well past study hours – sure some were instructors staying late but she suspects others would likely be students that had sought out some peace and quiet. “If I had to chase people around this much I’d be so annoyed I’d be violating people constitutional rights all over the place.”

Lucy barks out a laugh, not doubting Sam in the slightest, “Yeah, trust me I’m really going to have to restrain myself from reading all of them the riot act and then try to explain how two people in a relationship should really learn to communicate better.”

“We’ll read them riot act together then,” Sam agrees as she suggests, stealing a couple of the fries that Lucy is quickly scarfing down, “We should probably check some of the classrooms that have the lights on. That’s the only place they could sneak off to without getting into trouble at this point.”

“I’ll take the west academic buildings including the physics labs, you get the east.” Lucy orders easily, as she formulates the most efficient way to clear the buildings as her and Sam part ways. She watches as the taller girl curses at her phone before heading in the direction of the east side of campus. She makes her way to the history building, checking to see if any of the lights are on, when they aren’t she moves on to the next building. After a quick jaunt through the English building she heads over towards the physics building, seeing the lights on she heads in and sneaks past one of the instructor’s offices before rounding the corner to hear soft music playing.

Lucy figures she’s found at least one of the pairs when she hears quiet talking over the classical music that’s playing. Without much pause she pushes the door open to see Maggie and Lena have occupied one of the tables by the windows and are picking at the remains of a bag of Skittles as the
chat. The two look up to see Lucy in the doorway, both a little surprised to see the stoic girl has interrupted their quiet dinner away from prying eyes. Lena doesn’t look at Lucy long, avoiding her gaze and hoping that she’s not going to be at the end of one of Lucy’s famous lectures – she’s heard from some of the others it’s quite a harrowing experience and she’d rather avoid it if at all possible.

Maggie however isn’t cowed at all and just pops another candy into her mouth as she gives Lucy a once over, a little confused as to why she sought them out. But she is rather annoyed that Lucy’s presence seems to make the young Luthor nervous so she just cuts right to quick of it, “Lane.”

“Sawyer.”

“Would you give a moment alone, Lena?” Lucy asks politely, wanting to make sure she could speak to Maggie privately but not freak Lena out too much.

Lena looks warily between Lucy and Maggie, but Maggie just pats her on the shoulder when Lena tries to clean up the remains of her dinner to try and vacate the premises as quickly as possible. Maggie rests a hand over Lena’s to calm her down and assures, “I got it, I’ll see you back at the dorm in a bit.”

Lena shrugs on her jacket and leaves without a second glance backwards and makes her way towards the dorm. Maggie ignores Lucy, waiting for her to say whatever it is she has to say while she cleans up the mess. Lucy waits patiently for Maggie to finish before sitting down across from her and levels with her, “You want to talk about what’s gotten you and Alex so annoyed with each other?”

“It’s pretty settled,” Maggie retorts with a slowly building scowl, “I’m not going.”

Lucy takes a deep breath and sighs a bit heavily to try and keep her temper in check, “What is so wrong with going to a damn dance for the girl who would literally do anything for you? And don’t you argue with me Maggie Sawyer, Alex is head over heels for you and I would be worried about you breaking her heart if I didn’t know that you felt the same way for her.”

“I really care for Alex, and I mean that in a serious way – as in I could see us having a future together. I would do just about anything for Alex, but you can’t ask me to do this. I can’t,” Maggie tells Lucy, feeling her throat constricting as she thinks about the way her old school has been decorate with hearts and streamers, the way Eliza Wilke’s face fell when she saw the valentines, and the entire uprooting of her life and loss of her family that happened shortly thereafter. As much as she wanted to have the stereotypical sappy, romantic valentines with Alex this time of year always put her in an angry funk.

Lucy’s anger immediately evaporates as she sees the conflict in Maggie’s eyes and realizes that this spat was more than it seemed, “Maggie?”

“What?” Maggie asks softly, avoiding looking at Lucy.

“Did you tell Alex about what’s bothering you so much about Valentines? Clearly it’s more than just a dance,” Lucy explains softly, a little concerned about Maggie – the normally happy go lucky girl with a warm smile was clearly deeply troubled by something. She watches as Maggie’s tough,
defensive demeanor crumbles as she hides her face in her hands.

Maggie clenches her teeth together and squeezes her eyes shut trying to fight back the tears as she covers her face with her hands. She didn’t expect to be having the conversation with anyone, she hears the chair scrape against the ground and feels a warm hand rest on her shoulder. Lucy is talking softly to her and assuring her that she’s safe and okay at the school. After a while Maggie feels like she’s gotten herself under control she backs away, roughly rubbing a sleeve over her eyes in irritation.

“Hey, whatever it is that’s so upsetting you don’t have to tell me,” Lucy tells her quickly, rubbing her back, “I know whatever it is must be terrible, but I’m sure Alex would understand.”

“Maybe,” Maggie says, voice rough with unshed tears as she gets up and pushes in her chair, “We should probably get back to the dorm before curfew.”

Once back at the dorm Maggie finds Alex has gone to bed early, already tucked into her own bed and covers up to her chin. She doesn’t bother to wake her up, instead she picks up her physics book and notebooks before heading downstairs to one of the study rooms – deciding to let Alex rest. Sighing she picks up her headphones before head out, switching to some of the classical music she’d been enjoying earlier and hopes that the homework will help clear her mind.

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Further down the hallway Kara’s returning from her second run to the dining hall – still hungry after her meal with Alex in the classroom. She’s carrying a couple brownies while munching on a left over cupcake, wondering if Lena’s made it back to their room already. As she enters the boarding house she sees Sam is a few paces behind her and has set a course to intercept. Kara flinches a bit when the taller girl comes closer and she almost whimpers as she asks, “I know you said you’d kick my ass if something happened to Lena, but please don’t beat me up.”

“I’m not going to beat you up,” Sam deadpans while shaking her head with a growing smile.

“You’re not?!”

“No, it’d be like kicking a sad, moody puppy,” Sam chuckles a bit even as Kara frowns a bit more – looking even more like a puppy that’s been down in the dumps, “I was actually hoping to find Lena, all of you skipped out on dinner and went into hiding.”

Kara chuckles a bit sheepishly as she rubs the back of her neck, “Was it that obvious?”

“Glaringly so,” Sam remarks as she claps Kara on the shoulder, “I’m sure this time, just like last time, it’s just a misunderstanding between you two. Sometimes Lena has a difficult time expressing what’s on her mind, and I imagine the situation with her mother and brother hasn’t helped that much.”

“Probably not,” Kara admits, as she wonders how she can work this out with Lena.

“Don’t worry, I was just about to go talk some sense into her,” Sam assures with a smile, “All you need to do is be your usual charming self while you think up a sickly adorable way of asking Lena to the dance once you two work this out.”

Sam leaves Kara in the game room and heads upstairs, suspecting that Lena has found her way back to her room by now. Sure enough Sam finds Lena working out math problems and sketching diagrams for her physics course – earbuds in and humming quietly to herself while she works. It takes a few seconds for Lena to realize Sam is in the doorway but when she does her eyes widen and she’s quick to hold up her hands in protest, “Oh no, Sam. I don’t have time to discuss this now.”
“You have plenty of time,” Sam disagrees with a smile as she pulls over Kara’s desk chair and makes herself comfortable.

Lena groans loudly, she knows Sam means well and that she should deal with the situation with Kara sooner rather than later but sometimes she’s just too stubborn to do what she should. She also knows that unlike Kara and the others, Sam has known her for much longer and likely suspects that the issue goes much deeper than just some potential social media scandal about her sexuality — which if she’s honest hasn’t been much of a secret to begin with.

“So, you wanna tell me what’s gotten you so worked up over the dance or you want me to take a guess?” Sam asks softly, giving Lena a few options on how she wants to handle the conversation. Sure Sam was ready for everyone to stop being so stubborn and just talk to each other, but she’s not about to make Lena feel like she’s backed into a corner.

Lena sighs and drops her pencil and ruler down on her desk, pushing them away from her as she turns to face Sam – thinking for a moment about how she’s going to word this. Sam seems to sense her hesitating and feels it might be easier to ask questions to start off with, “Do you want to go to the dance?”

Lena thinks about it a moment and nods, “Yeah, I do. I know Kara’s excited about it and I have to admit that I’ve thought about it too.”

“Are you worried about homophobic pricks?” Sam asks bluntly, she knew that the last school year Alex had struggled with worries about bigots and potential discrimination – the red head was very observant and aware of what was going on outside the walls of the school. Sam knew Lena was just as astute but didn’t think it would bother her as much given her social history.

“Yes and no, it’s not that,” Lena hedges, worrying the hem of her shirt with a fingernail as she clarifies, “I don’t like my privacy being splashed all over the news when they have a slow day, but it’s not like I haven’t heard all the homophobic stuff before. It’s not like Lillian kept her thoughts about the LGBT community to herself.”

“Well, you don’t have to worry about it at the dance. Lucy and I will be there, and from what I hear Ms. Willis got stuck chaperoning — so you don’t have to worry about that,” Sam assures gently, she knows Lena’s put up with a lot and nothing she says is going to heal those old wounds. “So, what’s got you so spooked?”

Lena shrugs her shoulders making a non-committal sound in the back of her throat as she tries not to cry. Sam reaches over and stills her nervous fidgeting and holds her hand tightly and that’s all she needs to come out with the matter, “You don’t think Kara or Alex will get hurt do you?”

“What? Why would they get hurt?”

“If anyone finds out that Kara and I are together, it could get back to Lex or my mother,” Lena says as her mind runs through all her anxiety driven nightmares about anyone of the Danvers family members getting injured just because they happened to be connected with her. “Sam, my mother hired a hitman — my own mother tried to have me murdered. If she’d try to kill her own daughter she would have no problem killing someone else’s.”

“Oh Lena,” Sam mutters softly, pulling the dark haired girl into a tight hug – she wonders now what Lillian Luthor really is capable of if she’d sent a gunman after her child. Sam hears the door open, and if Lena weren’t so upset she’d have to chuckle at the fact that Kara had been eavesdropping worriedly the whole time.
“Hey, that’s not going to happen,” Kara assures, quickly coming around to Lena’s other side to take her hand and press their foreheads together. “It takes a lot more than that to scare me off. Alex and I will be fine and we definitely won’t let anything happen to you either. But if going to the dance makes you anxious then we’ll stay in and have a movie night or something – I just want you to feel safe and loved. Okay?”

Lena just nods as she holds onto Kara, the blonde smiling a bit sadly as she presses a kiss to Lena’s temple. Sam can’t help but smile at the two – reaching over the ruffles Lena’s hair and assures them both, “I’ll let you two make up. I don’t need to be here for that.”

Kara blushes and chuckles a bit nervously, but Lena just shoos Sam away while sticking out her tongue at her. Once Sam leaves, shutting the door behind her, Lena pulls Kara closer to press a soft kiss to her lips before resting her head on Kara’s shoulder. Kara smiles as she lifts Lena into her arms so she can sit down and set the smaller girl in her lap, neither one of them are really invested in getting back to homework. Kara can’t help but look at the work Lena was doing and asks incredulously, “How did you get all the way to chapter 23 already – we’re only on chapter 19 now?!”

Lena chuckles softly, “I have my ways, although I suspect that you have less time to work ahead since you decided to take Latin for some odd reason.”

“Yeah, don’t remind me,” Kara huffs out even though she can’t help but grin, “At least physics is easy because it makes sense.”

When the two of them decide to head to bed early, both changed into pajamas or sweats curl up in Lena bed. Lena presses a soft kiss to Kara’s lips, letting her fingers tangle in soft, blonde locks. Kara kisses back but keeps the tone easy, both of the enjoying the languid press of soft lips and tender nips. Lena relaxes and feels much more at ease as she and Kara share this sweet, intimate moment – grateful that they’d worked things out. As Lena rests her head on Kara’s shoulder, pressing a last kiss to Kara’s jaw she wonders just how she’s going to ask the beautiful, brave girl to the dance. Despite her reservation she’s not going to miss this opportunity.

The next morning Lena sets her plan into action – thanks to some help from her credit card, Amazon, and a quick phone call with Alyosha. Lucy and Sam even agree to keep Kara busy that afternoon when Lena asks them in between classes. Lena practically giddy with her plan – as nerdy as it is she knows Kara will be thrilled. At lunch the express package she’d order comes in and she manages to sneak back into their room to set everything up while Kara’s preoccupied after water polo practice.

True to form Sam asks Kara to help her with a task for Ms. Ellison, keeping her away from the dorms.

Kara’s starting to notice something is up because as soon as she finishes helping Sam take some books back to the library they run into Lucy – who still happens to be in her uniform fatigue. Sam takes the last of the large stack of law books and deposits them in the return just as Lucy asks curiously, “Are you two free until dinner?”

“Well, one of my senior officers is out sick and another sprained her ankle during drills today and I kind of need some help marking the last of the coordinates for the land navigation course for this weekend,” Lucy tells them, she’s not entirely lying either – her second in command had taken a bad
fall on the obstacle course that afternoon and a few others were still getting over colds. She’s not sure if Sam or Kara are directionally challenged or how much help they’re going to be but at least it would be amusing. “You don’t mind do you?”

“Of course not,” Kara agrees easily, knowing that both Lucy and Sam were working hard even though graduation was approaching quickly – in a few months anyway. Kara knows she probably wouldn’t be able to stay as chill and on top of things when next year comes and she’ll be looking forward to graduation. Looking over at Sam she notices that the older girl doesn’t seem too fond of the idea of marking spots in the woods but Kara just grins as she adds, “So, where do we start? We’ll make quick work of it, won’t we Sam?”

Sam can see the twinkle in Lucy’s eyes as she tries not to laugh, and just shrugs and snarks a bit, “Of course, where do we start, Captain?”

Lucy takes the lead easily enough as she looks back over her shoulder and smirks as she tells Sam, “Actually it’s cadet Major, and we’ll start by picking up the GPS tags.”

So begins an hour and half of Sam and Kara traipsing through the woods and bickering over which way the map goes as they try and follow the map and GPS to mark the last half dozen checkpoints. Kara trips a half dozen times and Sam complains that it’s too wet and muddy to find nature enjoyable – both of them agreeing that they don’t understand what Lucy finds so appealing about land navigation. They manage to mark a few locations before getting lost and Sam slips and falls into the creek they both decide they’ve had enough of the great outdoors for today. As they find their way back to the marked trail it starts to rain and even Kara lets a couple curses slip. Lucy isn’t too far behind them, having heard their bickering, confused conversations and screeching all while she was placing her own markers down.

Eventually all three of them turn up a little late to dinner, Sam and Kara both are mud streaked and leaving a water mark on the floor. Kara and Sam don’t care at all about the looks they quickly get into the serving line for dinner – Alex and Maggie are hooting with laughter from their regular table. Kara wants to cry tears of joy when she notices the pot stickers as she starts to pile as many as she can fit onto her plate, “I’m so freaking hungry!”

“Me too,” Sam agrees as she loads up her plate as well, “I don’t see how Lucy isn’t ravenous all the time – marching, drilling, and all the fitness training. I’d die.”

“Don’t forget all the yelling,” Kara reminds as she stuffs a pot sticker in her mouth before picking up two cupcakes to put on her tray.

“How could I forget, she was yelling at us all evening,” Sam huffs out, taking a bite of one of the cupcakes and groaning with delight, “At least Lucy had fun.”

Kara hums in agreement as they reach the table that is still laughing at the two of them. Lena looks a little guilty as she sees Kara and Sam in such a state, chuckling a bit as she looks over at Lucy who looks like she’s enjoying every minute of this. Alex and Maggie start laughing again upon getting a closer look at the disaster before Alex looks over at Lucy and asks mirthfully, “What the hell did you do to them, Lane?”

Lucy looking as neat and put together as she did that morning – the only telltale sign she’d been with them is the watermarks drying on her boots – just shrugs as she cuts up her meal, “I asked if they could help me mark the land nav course, I didn’t know they were both hopeless cases when it comes to reading a map or surviving a couple hours in the woods.”

“It was muddy already and then it started raining!” Kara states incredulously, draining half of her
glass of lemonade before going back to cramming away pot stickers.

“I’m sure reading a map is easy for someone who’s had classes,” Sam deadpans, brushing her still damp hair that starts to curl behind her ear.

“I even gave you two the GPS,” Lucy reminds patiently with a shit-eating grin that has Alex and Maggie roaring with laughter again.

“Yeah well next time, take Alex and Maggie,” Kara volunteers, “Those two like the great outdoors and Alex is the map reader when our family goes camping.”

“Yelling at her isn’t as fun,” Lucy states, wrinkling her nose.

As dinner winds down Kara is chomping at the bit to get back to the dorm and take a warm shower and get changed into clean, dry clothing. As they head out Lena takes her hand, apparently not put off in the slightest that she’s covered in mud and leaves. Back at the dorm Lena tells her that she has to talk with Ms. Ellison about something and would meet her upstairs. Kara agrees easily and quickly takes the stair two at a time only to see that girls are milling about in the hallway and murmuring. As she approaches her room she notices that her and Lena’s door has been completely redecorated in a Harry Potter theme – her name in the elegant script above a Hufflepuff house crest.

A wide grin breaks out on Kara face as she traces her name with her finger, looking over to see Lena’s is neatly written over a Slytherin house crest. The door is scattered with golden snitches and the outlines of owls and dragons, and Kara can’t help but wonder what she’s going to find when she opens the door as she hears the other girls around her giggling and fawning over it happily. As she opens the door and goes in most of them are crowding around to get a good look.

On her desk are a couple wands, a golden snitch and a fluffy, stuffed snowy owl that has a scroll of parchment curled up in its talons. Kara is smiling so hard she thinks her face is going to start hurting as she reaches for the piece of parchment to unroll it, chuckling when she sees the Hogwarts crest at the top of the letter.

“What’s it say?” Alex asks from the doorway with a bright smile, crammed together with Maggie, Sam, Lucy and the other girls who are waiting anxiously to see this unfold.

Kara unrolls the parchment, chuckling as happy tears start to well up in her eyes as she reads aloud, “Gryffindor is red, Ravenclaw is blue, it would be magical, to go to the dance with you.”

Lena’s managed to make her way through the crowd and when Kara sees her she’s immediately scooped up into a tight hug. Alex cheers and beside her Maggie wolf whistles at them, the other girls are ohh-ing and awing at them. Lena doesn’t care that Kara’s still muddy and half soaked through with rain, she laughs as she plucks a couple leaves from Kara’s hair and asks with a coy little smile, “So, is that a yes?”

“That is the most emphatic yes ever,” Kara exclaims with the brightest smile as she sets Lena down and looks over at her closet, “I have no idea what I’m going to wear though.”

“Me either,” Lena admits with a grin, “But it doesn’t matter to me.”

“Alright, let’s give’em some privacy, don’t you guys have enough homework to keep you busy,” Sam states as she shoos away the others, giving Lena a wink before nudging Lucy to get going as well.

“You should probably get changed before you catch your death,” Lucy remarks as she hands Sam a towel as they head for the stairs. Sam accepts gratefully, ruffling her hair to try and dry it a bit more
as they watch as Alex and Maggie seem to be locked in a serious conversation. Lucy just shakes her head as she heads back to her room with Sam.

The taller girl remarks, “Two down and two to go, even though I have feeling Alex and Maggie aren’t going to make it easy.”

“Nothing is easy with Alex,” Lucy remarks with a laugh as she unties her boots and takes off her damp socks, “But here’s hoping they’ll work it out, not that I’m complaining that they’ve been a lot quieter this week.”

Sam barks out a laugh as she collects some clean clothes, “I swear if that starts to be a nightly occurrence again we should prank the hell out of them.”

Lucy hums in agreement as she pulls out her calculus book and calculator, hoping that the two girls next door could really have the heart to heart they clearly need to get out of the way.

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Next door Alex is smiling, glad that her sister and Lena had worked out their issues over the dance, she can’t help but laugh as she tells Maggie, “That was a really sweet – if nerdy – way for Lena to ask Kara to the dance. Those two are too adorable sometimes.”

“Yeah, they’re both really good for each other,” Maggie agrees mildly.

“I think we should talk about this – us and this ridiculous dance,” Alex says softly and immediately she sees the defensiveness in Maggie’s eyes but she presses on and calmly clarifies, “I can tell this is a much bigger deal than just a goofy, romantic holiday and just want you to talk to me. You’ve been such a great listener when I needed it – whether it was on coming out or dealing with Kara or my parents – and I want to be that person that’s always in your corner. Who you come to when you need someone to talk to and be heard.”

Maggie’s expression softens instantly as she moves to sit next Alex on her bed as she admits, “I know it’s not a secret that I was thrown out for being gay – but that’s not the whole story.”

Alex looks at her with such soft, caring brown eyes Maggie has to grit her teeth to not immediately burst into tears, taking Alex’s hand in hers she explains, “I used to have a friend that I was close to back in Nebraska – Eliza Wilke – and we did everything together. She was my person, at least I thought she was which is why I decided to write her a note asking her to the valentine’s dance and slip it into her locker.”

Alex’s eyes widen, she has a feeling that she knows where this is going and can’t help but feel so badly for Maggie. She moves closer to Maggie, wrapping an arm around her shoulders and holding onto her tightly as she listens.

“She freaked…and then when she showed her parents they freaked out too and told my parents,” Maggie says, gritting her teeth against the tears that are burning her eyes. Her lip trembles as she tries to rally the last of her control and keep her voice from shaking, “And that’s how I ended up being driven halfway across the state to stay with an aunt I’d barely even met – that was the last time I saw either of my parents and all because of a girl and some stupid valentines dance.”

When Maggie bites back a sob Alex presses a kiss to her temple and tugs her into a tighter embrace as she feels her own hot tears trail down her cheeks. She feels a twinge of anger at this unknown girl that had betrayed Maggie in such a wounding way, she can’t even scratch the surface of her anger at Maggie’s parents for abandoning her when she needed them most. But overwhelmingly Alex feels
so much love for Maggie, and that she’s proud of her for still being so brave and honest about herself despite all the adversity she faced.

“Oh Maggie, you deserve so much better than that,” Alex tells her earnestly, rocking Maggie as she starts to calm down. Rubbing her hand along Maggie’s rather tense shoulders Alex softly hums to her before telling her gratefully, “Thank you for telling me – I know it wasn’t easy but I promise nothing you tell me is going to scare me away…Makes me wanna kick peoples asses, but never scare me away.”

Maggie huffs out a tired little laugh as she snuggles up to Alex further, she knows Alex would be the first one to fight for her honor and she can’t help but find it pretty amusing. Alex moves so that they can lay down, guiding Maggie to rest her head on her shoulder and smiling when she feels her calm breathes ghosting over her collar. Linking her fingers with Maggie’s and pressing a kiss to her messy brown hair Alex tells her resolutely, “Valentines isn’t that big of a deal, we’ll find something that’s our own thing some other time. But we’re going to have to find some way to get out of chaperoning the younger girls that can’t go to the dance.”

“Yeah, no babysitting duty, please,” Maggie agrees with a small smile, closing her eyes and listening for Alex’s breathing to even out. She figures that they can catch up on their studies tomorrow or on the weekend since they both haven’t slept well this week. As she listens to Alex’s soft breathing and the occasional little snore Maggie wonders what valentines would be like if instead of Eliza Wilke she’d been friends with Alex Danvers at the time. She wonders what Alex would have worn and the flowers she would have liked, how bright she’d smile as Maggie led her to the dance floor.

The next afternoon Maggie finally makes up her mind – she’s going to ask Alex to the dance come hell or high water – she just wonders if it’s too late. She notices that Kara and Lena are nowhere to be found and are likely getting ready with the other girls – knowing the two of them they’re going to be jittery and having to be talked into calming down by everyone around them. Maggie passes the bathroom and sees groups of girls doing their hair and make-up while giggling and talking – a few of them helping each other with things. Maggie can’t help but cringe a little, never one to be hyped up by stereotypically feminine things. Seeing Sam helping Kara put her hair up she calls out, “Hey, Kara. Sam. Have either of you seen Alex?”

“I haven’t seen Alex since the prefect meeting after lunch,” Sam answers while using a bobby pin to keep errant strands of Kara’s hair in place, but she does stop long enough to give Maggie a rather pointed look.

Kara looks like a kicked puppy for a moment as she gives Maggie a disappointed look that hurts more than it should – even if it’s a little bit deserved. The blonde bites her lip a bit as she tells her, “I saw her heading to the library about a half hour ago with her headphones and some books.”

“Thanks,” Maggie answers with a determined look, “So, uh…”

“Lucy is upstairs,” Sam tells her as she tries to use the appropriate amount of hairspray as she’s already feeling a little high with all the aerosols that have been used in such a closed space. “Don’t fuck this up, Mags, and could you open a window on your way out.”

Maggie laughs but does as asked before taking the stairs two at a time, bursting into Lucy and Sam’s room hoping that she can catch Lucy before she starts to get ready as well. She finds Lucy sitting at her desk with several books open, already dressed and ready to go but brushing up on some of her reading. She doesn’t even seem phased by Maggie bursting into her room, just calmly, silently waiting for her to explain what the emergency is.

“Oh, so I need your help. I’ve been a huge idiot,” Maggie gushes out in rush, a little bit on the
verge of panic realizing that she only has about half of a plan on how to fix things with Alex completely.

“Just now realizing that?” Lucy asks without even looking up from the case brief she’s been preparing, underlining part of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg’s dissent before looking up, “So, you’ve decided to pull your head out of your ass and you need a plan.”

“Something like that,” Maggie admits a bit sheepishly, rubbing the back of her neck as she tries to withstand Lucy’s rather judgmental glare.

“Alright, what are you thinking?”

“Well, first I need to figure out something to wear,” Maggie admits but quickly she scowls and points a finger in Lucy’s face, “But I swear to god, I will strangle you if you suggest a dress!”

Lucy genuinely laughs at the thought of Maggie in a dress as she gets up and heads to her closet, “Don’t worry, we’ll get this figured out but we don’t have much time.”

“Thanks, I owe you.”

Across campus, Alex is comfortably tucked away into the quietest corner of the library in her sweatpants, studying up for anatomy and physiology – she’s respecting Maggie not wanting to go but at the same time she’d hoped that this would be her year. She’d had a rough couple of years, looking after Kara when she’d joined their family and figuring out her sexuality she was hoping for just one school year where she could do some of the normal things other girls her age would be doing. Sighing she scratches out a few more notes in the margins of her textbook on differentiating between the different muscles, tendons, and ligaments in the hand and forearm – preparing for the dissection portion of the course that’s coming up.

After going through the diagrams and photos in the book she’s pretty sure that she has it down perfectly but just for peace of mind she checks the time – it’s about an hour before the dance – and switches her music to studying playlist as she goes over the charts again. After her second and third flawless review of the soft tissues she switches to the upper arm and shoulder when she sees movement out of the corner of her eyes. Looking up she sees a sight that takes her breath away – Maggie dressed in a slim fit suit looking a little nervous is coming towards her with a bouquet of flowers.

Alex drops her pencil as she feels her eyes starting to sting a little bit as she asks softly, “Maggie?”

“Hey,” Maggie says a bit sheepishly, watching as Alex gets up and leans against the table and tries not to cross her arms across her chest nervously. Smiling softly, she moves into Alex’s personal space carefully, reaching out to take one of Alex’s fidgeting hands in her own, biting her lip nervously for a second before just diving right in, “Look, I’ve been an idiot. You aren’t the girl that broke my heart and you deserve to be taken on nice dates and all the romantic gestures that go along with that. So, what I’m rather inelegantly trying to ask is would you go with me to the valentine’s dance?”

Alex is a bit floored as Maggie offers her the flowers – wondering briefly where the other girl got them but she brushes away a few stray tears as she feels Maggie steady her with warm hands at her waist. She just nods and can’t help but smile when she sees Maggie break into a bright, dimpled smile before she leans in to capture Alex’s lips in a searing kiss.

“Are you sure you’re okay with this?” Alex asks softly as she tucks strands of dark hair behind Maggie’s ears, tenderly cupping Maggie’s dimpled cheeks in her palms.
“Absolutely,” Maggie assures with a charming smile, hands finding Alex’s hands as she tells her, “I think it’s time I start making new, happy memories, and I can’t think of a more perfect girl to do that with than you, Alex Danvers.”

Alex looks over at her books and down at her tee shirt and sweatpants as she chuckles a bit, “Well, I suppose I should go find something to change into.”

Maggie chuckles as she helps Alex get her books together, throwing her bag over her shoulder and linking their hands together, “Come on, I’m sure we can find something. But on the plus side, if we can’t you still look amazing in sweats.”

After they get back to the dorm, and Alex pushes Maggie out to wait in the hallway while she rummages around in her closet for a bit to find the dress she had argued with her mother that she wouldn’t need. After half an hour of fussing she peeks her head out of her room to see Maggie waiting patiently, with a blush she steps into the hallway and watches as Maggie’s eyes light up.

“You look amazing,” Maggie beams as she takes Alex’s hand and twirls her around to see just how perfectly the red lace patterned dress fits Alex. Taking Alex’s hand she tells her, “Looks like we’re going to be fashionably late, but at least that gives little Luthor and Kara time to get past their jitters.”

As the two older girls take their time making their way to the speech room wondering how the night is going to go. Kara is already at the dance and waiting a bit anxiously, nervously taking in the girls and boys talking with each other and a few already getting into the punch and desserts. Looking herself over again she smooths out non-existent wrinkle from the yellow dress she’d picked out with Eliza before the school year started – she remembers it had been a pain trying to get Alex to find a dress that she could tolerate wearing longer than five minutes in the dressing room. She’d loved the dress but now she had an occasion to wear it – something she hadn’t really thought much about when she’d picked it out.

Looking around at the hundreds, possibly thousands of white Christmas lights hanging over head and the rather tasteful red and white valentines themed decorations. But knowing Cat’s flare for fashion and décor Kara’s not surprised by how elegant it looks. The music has started playing and a few people are out on the dance floor but mostly everyone is just clumped together talking and shyly trying to figure out how to ask their partner to dance.

Kara waves nervously when she sees Sam and Lucy who seem to be taking in the dance prospects but more interested in chatting with each other – although a few of the rather handsome guys from the boys’ school are giving them less than subtle looks. Chuckling to herself she wonders how many guys the two older girls are going to have to fight off – knowing Lucy it would take one guy stepping out of line and she’d probably put him in a headlock.

“Deep breathes, Kara,” Lucy teases with a smile, “You look good and you and Lena will have a great time, just trust me on this.”

“Right.” Kara says breathing out a little laugh, she’s about to say something else to but she sees Lena finally stepping into the dance – the younger girl is looking around a bit nervously. Lena’s opted to go with a sundress similar to Kara’s but in a warm red that looks amazing with her hair down and falling in loose curls. When Lena lays eyes on Kara a smile breaks out over her face. Kara’s already walking towards Lena without ever thinking about what she’s doing, and before she knows it she’s taking Lena’s hands in her own and complimenting her, “You’re so beautiful, Lena.”

Lena looks a bit bashful as she smiles up at Kara, “I wasn’t sure what would be appropriate for a dance since I’ve never actually been to one with people my own age before.”
“It’s lovely,” Kara assures, as the two of them head over to get some punch – she’s waiting for the rather fast pace song currently on to end before asking Lena if she’d like to dance.

“Your dress suits you,” Lena comments with a smile, running her fingers over the fabric, “It’s as bright and happy as you are, you’re gorgeous.”

As the music changes Kara bites her lip as she looks at Lena, after a second she asks with a hopeful grin, “Would you like to dance? I mean I have no idea how to dance, but I’d like to figure it out with you.”

“Of course,” Lena answers with a grin, letting Kara lead her to the dance floor. She can see a few other couples joining them as she takes Kara’s hand and guides it to her waist and before taking the other. Kara looks like she’s trying to concentrate as she looks around at a few of the other couples on the dance floor, and Lena chuckles as she assures her nervous girlfriend, “Don’t worry, just let me lead for a minute and you’ll figure it out.”

After a couple songs Kara feels confident enough to lead, guiding Lena just a little bit closer to her as she rocks them to the music. After a little while Kara spots a familiar face and nearly cheers, and Lena can’t help but follow her line of sight to see Maggie guiding Alex onto the dance floor. Lena can’t help but smile and hug Kara closer – glad that the two older girls were getting to enjoy the evening with each other. Alex shoots them both a brilliant but goofy smile, giving away just how happy she is at the moment as Maggie easily sets them swaying to the music.

On the sidelines Lucy sits watching the two couples dancing together, smiling as Sam approaches and holds out a glass of punch to her while telling her, “You know they’re all going to be insufferably love struck for the next few days right?”

“Oh, absolutely,” Lucy agrees with a laugh, sipping at the punch and wondering if it’s going to be like last year when one of the wealthy yacht boys had spiked the punch. She watches as Lena giggles – actually giggles – at something Kara says and she can’t help but grin as she nudges Sam with her elbow, “Totally worth it.”

“I don’t know. I had to wander around the woods for an entire afternoon,” Sam quips with a teasing grin, she can’t help but laugh at the way Alex nearly trips – clearly high heels aren’t exactly her forte, but it looks like Maggie doesn’t mind at all just smiling even brighter as she steadies the taller girl.

“Oh quit complaining, you had fun,” Lucy insists as she continues watching the two couples as well as looking around to keep an eye on some of the other girls dancing with their partners. She’d promised to keep an eye on the younger participants, “It was totally worth, Arias.”

Sam sips the punch, pouting a bit when it doesn’t have the same bite it had last year, as she looks over at Lucy and goads, “Tell me that again when none of them hear anything we’re discussing because they’re too busy making lovey dove eyes at each other over breakfast, lunch, and dinner this weekend.”

“Yeah, I hate to admit it, but you have a point there.”

Chapter End Notes

There you have it, Sam and Lucy being the real MVPs of this chapter. D
rop me a note if you want - I love hearing from all of you and thanks for reading!
Cold Comfort and Closure

Chapter Notes

Yeah, I’m shamefully late on this one – but my laptop decided to do weird tricks and hospital WiFi sucks! So I’m behind on all my writing and several art pieces – but I was very happy to write another chapter for this story (it’s kind of my favorite to write even though I probably shouldn’t play favorites).

Warnings: Lex is in this chapter and it deals with testimony, prison, and court things – so FYI if that’s a trigger or something that makes you uncomfortable.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Lena’s untangling her tie – pulling out the knot before straightening the material before starting to tie it again as neatly as she can. Her fingers are trembling as she loops the tie over on itself a couple times before straightening it out – the tie looks just as meticulously tied as the one she just untied moments before. Sighing she makes sure that her clothing is neatly pressed without wrinkles and her hair is pleated back in a half-braid out of her face. Picking up her blazer she pulls it on and picks up her suitcase with the things she may need before heading downstairs. The other girls have already rushed out to breakfast and the first class of the morning – but today she wasn’t able to join them.

Today she was having to travel to see Lex – his attorney and the various federal prosecutors had insisted that this was the best course of action. They hadn’t been very candid about what was going on or why the visit was necessary – just that it would save everyone a lot of heartache in the end. But that didn’t mean Lena felt any better about it, Eliza and Cat weren’t too keen on the idea either. Cat’s made a few calls to make sure that Lena has an attorney present with her when she gets to New York in case she needs it. Eliza has agreed to accompany her on the trip – not comfortable letting the teen travel on her own, especially not after the news that Lillian had send a contract killer after her.

Taking in a shuddering breath Lena leaves her room – already missing the encouragement and many hugs she’d gotten from the other girl’s earlier in the morning. As she gets down stairs she finds Eliza has already arrived and is talking with Ms. Ellison and Ms. Willis – the blonde doctor immediately embraces her and assures her that everything is in order and they can get coffee and breakfast at the airport. Lena just nods, following her out to the car and putting her suitcase in the trunk beside Eliza’s. They start their drive to the airport with the only sound being the soft classical music Eliza has playing – as they reach the freeway the older woman speaks softly, “I know this seems overwhelming, and you don’t have to talk about it if you don’t want to. I just want you to know that when we get there and after we speak with the prosecution team if you don’t want to do this you don’t have to.”

Lena thinks about that for a second, feeling incredibly guilty that she really doesn’t want to see her brother – not even if it could mean a positive resolution of the cases without dragging more people through this hell. She swallows nervously before answering, “But, they said it would be best for everyone – they weren’t clear about how or why – but it probably has something to do with a plea deal.”

“That may be true, but that doesn’t have to be at your expense and no court officials should expect
that from you,” Eliza tells her patiently as the airport comes into view, a plane taking off in the distance, “If seeing your brother up close like this is going to be upsetting or frightening you don’t have to do this – you don’t owe it to anyone, Lena.”

Lena thinks about what Eliza’s saying – still torn about whether or not she wants to see her brother. Still at the back of her mind she wonders if Lex is going to take a plea deal and if that would save his victims and the victim’s family the pain of having to endure testifying during a long, drawn out trial. At least with a plea deal, the best he’d likely get would be life without the possibility of parole – and it would be more certain of an outcome than leaving it up to a jury.

As she collects her suitcase from the trunk and follows Eliza onto the tram that will take them to the terminal she thinks about how she’ll feel about her decision in ten or twenty years’ time. Would she feel ashamed if she doesn’t pluck up the courage to see Lex? Guilty that she had the opportunity to shorten hers and the other victims suffering? Lex has never tried to hurt her, even when he knew things were out of control and still struggling to hold onto the last pieces of himself he still came to warn her, to assure her that no matter what came out that he was sorry and that he loved her. As they step into the terminal Lena makes a decision, reaching out she grasps Eliza’s hand earning the woman’s gentle but worried gaze as she answers, “I want to talk to Lex…I know it’s not going to be easy, but I don’t want to regret not seeing him even though it’s probably going to be frightening. But if you’re going to be there I can do it.”

Eliza smiles a somber smile as she squeezes Lena’s hand comfortingly as she promises, “I’m not going anywhere.”

After getting through the TSA checkpoint the two are very pleased to order coffee and pick out a few books and magazines for the flight. At the gate Eliza takes out one of the more recent academic journals, her and her colleagues article on using CRISPR for replacing defective CFTR genes with working copies as a gene therapy for cystic fibrosis is printed in. Her main interest is in the journal’s special issue involving various other doctors and scientists uses for CRISPR. Beside her Lena’s reading a new article in Popular Mechanics about the cost effectiveness of 3D printed myoelectric prosthetics whereas the carbon fiber and other traditionally manufactured one’s cost in the tens of thousands.

By the time they board their express flight to New York – both a bit surprised that Cat had insisted on First Class tickets – the two are deep in conversation about the biomedical developments. Eliza promises to show Lena the laboratory at the hospital sometime and Lena insists that Alex is going to want to come along even though Kara and Maggie would likely both decline. Midway into the flight Lena falls asleep looking out the window, lulled to sleep by the endless blue skies dotted with perfect, fluffy white clouds. When she wakes as the flight is just zeroing in on landing she notices that Eliza had draped a blanket over her – the older woman taking notes on yet another medical journal.

Outside the baggage claim they’re met by two plain clothes police officers who quickly bundle them up into the car and head towards the city. New York is just as busy as Lena last remembers, people walking like they’re about ready to start running to their next destination and hordes of buses and taxis jostling for right of way on the roads. A cacophony of people yelling, arguing drown out by the screech of tires and honking horns – Lena hates New York almost as much as she hates Metropolis. She hates it even more when they pass through the rather nice district where she remembers Lillian had her private practice and the latest of the Luthor homes she’d been happy to have gotten rid of.

Eliza calmly takes her hand and it’s then that Lena realizes that she’d gotten quiet and was starting to fidget anxiously. She’s even more anxious when she sees the familiar façade of the Manhattan’s
District Attorney’s Office – 1 Hogan Place – come into view. The last time she’d been here she’d come with Lex and their nanny during their Father’s white collar crimes investigations. Just down a few blocks the Luthor Corp – New York division – is clearly in the middle of rebranding with all the scaffolding and half-finished redesign.

As they get dropped off the detective explains that they will be checking their things in at the hotel they’ll be staying at and managing the security with the US Marshall’s that will be accompanying them for the duration of their trip. It’s a whirlwind of handshakes and introductions and Lena’s not sure she’s going to be able to keep all of their names and faces straight. So far she remembers that the female US Marshall – Victoria Arroyo will be with them all the time, the attorney Cat Grant had at her last police questioning is present, and the federal attorney heading up the prosecution team is rather tall, imposing man named Mr. Vance.

“Right this way, I know this is likely a rather unsettling inconvenience, but we’d like to resolve this situation with Mr. Luthor as quickly as possible,” Vance explains rather diplomatically, leading them to rather spacious conference room that overlooks a good portion of the city. His secretary is quick to bring water and coffee for him and his guests as he takes out the most pertinent papers from the casefiles as he sits down across from Lena.

“Are you agreeing to a plea deal with Lex?” Lena asks softly, she’ll do whatever it is they ask of her but first she’s going to need to know the details.

“It’s not exactly a plea deal that your brother proposed,” Vance explains, handing a letter sealed in a plastic bag across the table to Lena, “Lex has agreed to plead guilty to all charges as well as to testify against your mother without immunities, the only thing he asks in exchange for these terms is that he can speak with you.”

Lena looks at the letter that clearly marked prison stationary and sees Lex’s familiar, neat writing – expressing exactly what Vance had just told her. Lex wishes to plead guilty – not a plea of no contest, but a flat out guilty plea – and avoid a rather long trial that would be arduous and upsetting for everyone involved. He also explicitly states that he would provide them with all the dirty dealings of his mother – more than what they think they know about her involvement with the crimes they’ve been charged with. Lena’s stomach drops, wondering if Lex is also going to corroborate the abuse that happened in their home.

“You’re under no obligation to see your brother – we’re fully prepared to take this case to federal court with or without his guilty plea.”

“And if I did choose to speak with him?” Lena asks a bit hesitantly, wanting to know what type of security would be in place. Even though she doesn’t think Lex would try to hurt her, she can’t take the chance that this could be another one of Lillian’s schemes to get to her through her brother.

“Lex is being held in a federal facility in the city, you’d be visiting him in a secure interrogation room within the prison. Guards would be present as well as the US Marshall’s assigned to you and Mrs. Danvers – Lex would be cuffed at the wrists and the ankles the whole time,” Vance tells her seriously, knowing that they’ll be taking the utmost pre-cautions with the mass murderer – especially when his motives for this aren’t entirely clear. “Mrs. Danvers can go with you if you wish and your attorney will be with me in the viewing room with other attorneys and investigators. You will never be left alone with him and we aren’t going to let him hurt you, Ms. Luthor.”

Lena thinks about it as she inspects the woodgrain on the table for a moment – she’s never had a more difficult decision to make before now. Although everyone has been really polite and accommodating she knows they really want her to go and see Lex, she knows that most of the victims would probably prefer not having to see their attackers face again either. As she wonders
what Lex could possibly want to talk about she asks, “Did he say what he wanted to talk about?”

“He wasn’t clear on that, just that he wanted to try and make amends,” Vance tells her, as a father and brother he couldn’t imagine any of his siblings or children having to be put in this situation. He tries to be as clear as possible that Lena’s going to be safe and that this is completely voluntary, “We’re not sure if we believe his motives but if he’s at all belligerent or looks like he’s going to be a problem we’ll put a stop to it immediately. Even if he isn’t troublesome you can stop the meeting at any point – you just say that you’re finished or you want to leave and we’ll stop everything.”

“Okay,” Lena says quickly before she can lose her nerve, she pushes the letter back across the table as she explains, “If talking to me is his only request to keep him from dragging everyone through a long trial then I’ll talk to him.”

“Are you sure?” Eliza asks softly, wanting to make absolutely sure that Lena’s making this choice freely – or as freely as she can in this situation. A part of her is concerned that Lex may say more hurtful or damaging things to the girl and she won’t be able to tolerate that.

Lena nods softly, “Yeah, as long as you and the Marshall are with me it’ll be fine. Like Mr. Vance said, if it gets out of hand we’ll stop.”

“Okay,” Eliza agrees, rubbing Lena’s tense shoulders as the attorneys and federal Marshall’s speak with each other and make a couple phone calls.

After a couple phone calls Vance explains a few procedures they all have to follow for the visit to the federal prison they’ll be meeting at. First is that Lena will have to change into more casual clothing as visitors are not allowed to wear skirts or dresses in federal prisons. Everyone will need to bring identification and go through a screening process, once inside they’ll be escorted to a private room.

Lena just nods along, already trying to mentally prepare herself for the visit that they’ve scheduled for 2 o’clock that afternoon to give them all time to prepare and make the drive over.

Marshall Arroyo and her partner, Marshall Tate calmly drive them to the hotel and escort them up to their room – waiting outside the door. Eliza quickly checks her messages and calls Jeremiah to explain the situation and let him know that they’re safe as everyone is taking every precaution imaginable. Lena digs through her suitcase – trying to figure out which clothes are going to be tainted by the memory of visiting her brother in federal prison. As she finds a pair of pink socks and her sneakers a card falls out of the suitcase. Picking it up she sees that the cover is decorated with hand drawn daisies and a golden retriever puppy that makes her smile.

Flipping it open she sees Kara’s heartfelt message – encouraging her and reminding her that she and everyone else love her very much. Kara’s name is surrounded by hearts and followed by an obscenely long line of x’s and o’s that makes Lena chuckle softly even though her eyes are starting to sting. Alex and Maggie have both written her messages calling her “little sis” and assuring her that everything was going to work out. Lucy and Sam even write a couple smart ass messages and drew out a couple funny faced emoji’s just to make her laugh.

Lena doesn’t notice that Eliza’s gotten off the phone until she feels a warm hand on her shoulder, brushing a few tears away she shows her the card, “They must have snuck it in while I wasn’t looking.”

Eliza smiles, shaking her head, “At least their penmanship is legible.”

“Barely,” Lena chuckles, as she brushes away more tears, “Most kids would be happy to miss a few boring classes and see New York – even for something like this. But all I can think about is how much I want to get back to school.”
Eliza embraces her, ruffling her hair gently as she assures her, “We’ll get you back to school soon enough, and just two weeks from now we’ll be sure to do something fun for spring break.”

Lena hugs her back tightly, grateful that Eliza has already planned to let her come with her family in the future. Pulling away she picks out the jeans, a t-shirt and the grey water polo hoodie of Kara’s that must have also been snuck into her luggage with the thoughtful card. After getting changed they allow the Marshall’s to shuffle them into the car and Lena tries to enjoy watching the world pass by the car window – looking up at the skyscrapers that stand so impossibly high and the thousands of people going about their daily lives. She wonders what types of worries and struggles they’re going through under their masks of being okay.

As the prison comes into view Lena shivers at the tall chain link fences topped with thick spirals of razor wire and the heavily armed prison guards that are moving about their duties on the perimeter. At the gate the US Marshall’s show their credentials as well as Eliza and Lena’s ID’s, getting confirmation to head towards the front gate. Lena is starting to feel trapped and more than a little frightened as the vehicle passes through not one but two gated checkpoints before pulling up to the main building. Looking up at the skies she sees that there are wires overhead as well, meaning that air traffic such as helicopters would be violently grounded if they tried to land here.

“Vance and the others have already checked in and their processing some of the paperwork, we’ll get you two checked in and screened,” Arroyo assures gently.

Lena signs into the prison with an overwhelming sense of dread, feeling like the walls are closing in around her for a second. She and Eliza fill out the paperwork with the information that the woman instructs her to – getting Lex’s inmate number and other required information from the Marshall’s. When they’re finished they get their ID’s checked again and are given paper wristbands before being ushered to the security checkpoint. By this time Lena’s shaking and she’s slowing down as she tries to force one step in front of the other – Eliza and Arroyo coaching her through it.

They take off their jackets, belts, shoes, and empty their pockets into bins that get x-rayed before going through a scanner and getting wanded by one of the female guards who notes that they’ve passed the check point. It’s clear that Lena’s uncomfortable and seconds away from panicking, crying out of fright and stress, or both at the same time. The guards are calm and soft spoken as they walk her and Eliza through the process. Lena’s grateful that everyone has been so kind and gentle with her, as no matter how much she’s been putting on a brave face if someone had been cross or short with her she’d likely have ended up in tears.

One rather burly but kind faced guard leads them towards an interview room, “This way, they’re bring down Mr. Luthor right now while Mr. Vance and the others finish up some last minute stuff. You two can go ahead and sit down.”

The room is cold and grey; it seems dark even though there are lights over head – Lena thinks it looks worse since the only window in the room goes to a viewing room. She looks around at the officers in place and at the three chairs at this steel table that’s bolted to the floor – a place for chains or cuffs to be locked in place to prevent the inmate from moving. Vance has come in and tells them, “Mr. Luthor’s on his way here from solitary, we’ll try and get this done as quickly as possible.”

She just nods as she sits in the cold metal chair, shifting uncomfortably and with nerves as she watches Mr. Vance put an open folder on the table in the place where Lex will be sitting moments from now. Eliza is beside her, hand clasping Lena’s gently to remind her that she’s here with her and doesn’t have to be afraid. Officers are stationed in each corner of the room and the two Marshall’s are behind her, all of them look a little tense and ready to have to jump into action at any moment even though Lex hasn’t even been brought in yet.
“Just breath,” Eliza coaches softly, and Lena’s glad for the reminder – a little lightheaded from holding her breath in longer than she should.

The door opens, the sound of chains jingling and clinking together reaches her ears long before Lex appears in the doorway. Lena freezes for a second when their eyes met – both sets of green eyes are wide and staring with surprise for a few moments. Prison seems to have done her brother some good – he’s not quite as thin and sickly looking as when she’d seen him at the RoboCup. Instead he’s clean shaven, his eyes are much more lucid and he’s not as gaunt looking even though the bright orange scrubs and black rubber sandals aren’t doing him any favors.

Officers shuffle Lex into the room, locking his ankles to a cleat bolted to the floor and to a ring on the steel table where he rests his hands on the folder and paperwork. Vance is quick to step in and explain, “Your sister has agreed to speak with you – but we have conditions. This is the agreement you proposed typed out and already signed by my office, with your signature we can begin this meeting. The only stipulations are that if you become belligerent or abusive this meeting will be terminated and your guilty plea will still be entered. If Lena would like to stop at any time the meeting will be concluded and the guilty plea will still be entered. Do you understand and agree to these terms Mr. Luthor?”

Lex doesn’t bother stating anything, he simply maneuvers his shackled hands to sign the paperwork at the bottom – neatly printing his name and dating it as well. Putting the pen down he waits for Vance to take the pen and paperwork away – the attorney leaves them to their meeting to join the other in the listening room with the rest of his team. Lena’s looked away from his rather intense gaze, not sure if she should just go ahead and break the silence or wait for him to do so. If she does she could set the tone and the control of the topics in her favor but she’s still not sure what would be an appropriate way to set that ball rolling. She just holds tight to Eliza’s hand and waits even though the silence is more deafening than mid-day New York.

“Lena?”

Lena clenches her teeth together as she looks up to met Lex’s eyes surprised again to find some of the gentleness and mirth that was typical of the brother she knew from a few years earlier. She still hasn’t found her voice yet and she’s not sure if it’s going to happen anytime soon.

“How are you doing?” Lex asks softly, his tone is even and controlled as if they were having this conversation in his old bedroom during a holiday break from school, “I was worried that with mother and I in jail that you would be left alone, but I see that isn’t the case. I’m Lex Luthor, Lena’s older brother.”

Lena looks between Lex and Eliza, wondering how Lex can act like this is the most normal thing in the world – putting on a charming smile and introducing himself to her guardian as if he weren’t in prison for murdering dozens of people. Eliza just smiles politely, squeezing Lena’s hand reassuringly as she introduces herself, “Dr. Eliza Danvers, Lena goes to school with my daughters and she’s been a very welcome guest over the holidays.”

Lex smiles at the new bit of information looking over at Lena to confirm as he asks, “I’m guessing the very protective red head and the blonde ray of sunshine are your children? If I recall correctly, the blonde is your roommate at school?”

Lena bristles feeling a surge of anger burning in her chest at the threat, before Eliza can say anything Lena commands even though her body is trembling, “Leave them out of this Lex, whatever you want is between me and you.”

Lex tries to hold up his hands, the chains rattling as he shows his palms to both of them stating, “I
just wanted to know that you’re being taken care of in my absence.”

“Why do you care, Lex?” Lena asks before she can stop herself, trying not to let the tears stinging at the back of her eyes come to fruition, “When did you decide to start caring about what happens to me again? I mean it’s a little late now isn’t it?!”

Lex frowns but he admits honestly, “It is a bit late, I know that. I sulked after father’s death and I left you to put up with Lillian’s constant belittling and worse…I failed to step in and stop her when she went too far.”

Lena stiffens at what he’s saying and quickly looks anywhere but at her brother or Eliza – not sure she could handle seeing the expressions on everyone’s faces right at the moment. She’s also not sure she can come up with a witty rebuttal to deflect the attention from her but it would seem Lex isn’t giving her the chance to in the first place.

“I selfishly wallowed in grief and used it as an excuse to do what I wanted – to behave poorly and get expelled from our first school. I didn’t even give a thought to how such an outburst would affect you,” Lex continues calmly, watching his sister carefully as her mind works to try and figure out what’s going on and why he’s owning up to his past mistakes. “I also disregarded what would happen to you when mother and I started our pharmaceutical testing project – or when I killed those people. That you’d be left alone to pick up the pieces, that people would blame you too even though the only guilt you share with us is your last name.”

Lena feels the tears welling up in her eyes without her permission, sees the turmoil and pain in Lex’s similar eyes when he sees the tears. The two of them looking at each other quietly for a few moments as Lena sobs out heartbreakingly, “Why did you do those things Lex? You knew it was wrong and Lillian always listened to you, so why didn’t you just say no?”

She can see the way Lex’s jaw flexes as he clenches his teeth together, clearly trying not to get upset at the sight of his little sister so emotionally destroyed. He breathes carefully through his mouth to remain calm – but his heart aches at how Lena’s first thought if for other people. She’s not demanding to know why he didn’t come to her rescue, why he never reported the domestic violence or the child abuse. Instead she’s demanding to know why he didn’t protect others – and her selflessness makes his heart ache even more with regret that he didn’t do both.

When he finds his voice he gives her best answer possible, “I don’t know why I didn’t, I knew what we were going to do was wrong – that people could get hurt or killed. But I still went along with it, and nothing is ever going to excuse that.”

The first hot tears spill over and track down her cheeks, but Lena doesn’t bother to wipe them away just holding tight to Eliza’s hand and forging ahead despite the pain, “So, what now? You’re sorry, but why? What happened that made you decide to be remorseful now?”

Lex knows that his motives in pleading guilty weren’t as pure as they may seem – he did feel guilty that people were harmed and he knew that everything that he’d done was criminal and even moreso – morally reprehensible. But he drew the line at Lena – his mother had always assured him that Lena would never know and that she would not be in harm’s way despite her loathing for the girl. It was promised, but he should have gotten more assurances on – but even in his wildest dreams and with all they’d done he still never thought Lillian would cross that line in the sand.

But she did – she and Corben has plotted Lena’s death even though it would serve no purpose in hurrying along their release or in tying up loose ends. It was simply a power move on Lillian’s part – almost as if it were a parting shot at her long dead husband to ensure that his precious daughter would be joining him in death rather than be the last living and free Luthor. All it did was make her
the target of Lex’s deep, unbridled rage – which coupled with his ever scheming intellect – meant that he would put Lillian in the grave before she could try to harm Lena again. Even if it meant he was going to be settled into the grave right beside her.

“I still get the news in prison, Lena, I know what mother tried to do to you – that she hired Corben to kill you. That that man shot at you no less than eight times just days before Christmas,” Lex states, his tone deeper and filled with white, hot rage – he can’t help but make fists of his cuffed hands and jerk against the chains holding his ankles in place. The officers are exchanging glances but he’s still so terrified and angry – the days after the attack on Lena he couldn’t sleep without images of Corben’s success dancing through his dreams. Lena alone and terrified succumbing to bullet wounds she would never deserve – her hand desperately trying to stop the bleeding while she cries helplessly in pain.

Lex growls in anguish and an officer warns him to calm down which he does immediately not wanting to frighten Lena and definitely not have the meeting cut short before he can explain. Tears are trailing down his cheeks as he looks at his sister – seeing that the timid, frightened 4-year-old has grown into a 16-year-old that’s already making her way in an adult world. Thanks in no part to him. Sighing heavily Lex explains calmly once again, “I am a monster – I destroyed so many people’s lives – I was neglectful and distant with you the past few years. No amount of penance or apologies is going to change that, but I would never, ever harm you, Lena.”

Lena sobs quietly, grateful when Eliza wraps an arm around her shoulders and pulls her closer – fingers in her hair and soft, calming words spoken in her ear. Lex waits patiently for Lena to calm, watching the blonde doctor talking his sister down from the brief panic and making sure she was calm enough to proceed if that’s what she wished. Lena insists that she’s okay to continue, that it’s just difficult to talk about and recalling it is rather upsetting – further shattering what remains of Lex’s scarred heart.

“I won’t bring it up again, sis,” he says softly, barely speaking above a whisper, “Just know that once we’re finished here I’ll cooperate with the DA’s office and the federal agents as much as they require. I’m going to tell them about mother and father’s arguing and fighting, how mother abused you – physically and emotionally – as well as everything that led up to the murders. Whatever they want to know – no matter how damning – I’ll tell them.”

Lena isn’t sure how to respond to that – on the one hand she’s incredibly grateful that Lex is going to validating her testimony but at the same time it’s nothing special to tell the truth. It’s what someone is supposed to do anyway. She’s also relieved that with Lex testifying against Lillian – it’s unlikely that she’ll ever have to deal with her again. She’s just sad it took this for Lex to stand up to Lillian – that he had to go down too just to take her with him.

“I don’t expect you to forgive me – I would never expect that or even ask it of you,” Lex states as she reaches out an open hand on the table in front of Lena – his wrist getting scuffed and reddened from straining against the metal holding him back.

Lena thinks about it for a second, tears still trailing down her cheeks silently as she thinks back to first meeting Lex – the first argument that Lionel and Lillian had gotten into just moments after she’d been brought to the Luthor residence. Lex had offered her his hand and introduced himself as her new brother and took her to play a game – shielding her from the arguing and yelling. Timidly she reaches out with a shaking hand, Lex holding completely still with wide eyes as Lena’s fingers skate over his palm until she clasps his hand lightly.

Carefully he links his fingers with hers, worn and weary green eyes welling with tears, “I’m sorry I failed you as a brother – and if the only way I can try to make what meager amends I can, it will be
to make sure that Lillian will never threaten or hurt you again.”

“I don’t know what you want me to say, Lex,” Lena says weakly, brushing way her tears on the sleeve of the hoodie as she sniffs brokenly.

“You don’t have to say anything, kiddo,” Lex tells her affectionately, “Just know that I love you, so much Lena. I’m truly sorry.”

“I love you too, Lex – and I’m going to miss you,” Lena whimpers when Lex unclasps their hands and pulls away – it feels like her world is shattering all over again. The broken, jagged pieces poking and cutting at her as she desperately tries to hold it all together.

“I have to live with the consequences of my actions and I’ll do so willingly now that I know you’ll be able to thrive in safety with people who love and care for you,” Lex says softly, looking at Eliza with a soft, grateful look – knowing that Lena was in much better hands than she’d ever been. Through the sharp ache in his tightening chest he wills away the tears as he tells his little sister sadly, “You should probably get going, and since we won’t see each other again – goodbye.”

After a stunned moment, Lena shakily gets up, grateful that Eliza and the female Marshall help her stumble out of the room. As soon as the door shuts behind them Eliza is wrapping Lena up in her arms – letting Lena tuck her face against her neck as she sobbs completely overwhelmed. Lena’s still sobbing as Vance and the other attorneys come by, all of them praising and commending her on being so brave and keeping her composure long enough to complete the meeting. Vance assures her that he and others would be working with Lex on testimony and gathering more evidence for Lillian’s already iron clad case – telling Lena that he will keep her apprised of court dates and such.

Once back at the hotel Arroyo and Tate offer to take them somewhere nice and secure for dinner – hoping to cheer up the girl who cried the whole car ride back from Brooklyn. Eliza suggests that maybe they should just order in as Lena heads into the bathroom – shutting the door and starting the shower. Arroyo promises to bring back New York fare that will cheer up the teen – warning Eliza that it’s going to be pizza and sweet treats to which the doctor agrees with a smile.

Lena takes her time in the shower, washing her hair twice before putting in conditioner. Washing the rest of her body, she roughly tries to scrub away the stifling feelings of the prison and the guilt and shame she has from realizing that she still loves her brother – even if he doesn’t deserve it. With her skin a little raw and reddened she sits in the shower as the warm water beats down on her tired body numbly thinking that its amazing she actually made it through this day. She feels awful for sure, but she didn’t completely fall apart or freeze up like she was worried about. She made it and the prosecution team got their deal.

Once she’s dressed in sweatpants and Kara’s hoodie again she pads into the room to see that the Marshall’s have brought dinner. Arroyo’s sat a pizza at the table by the windows overlooking New York from the 15th floor, Eliza’s already gotten changed as well. Taking a seat, she looks at the pizza hungrily as the Marshall explains, “The best pepperoni pizza from Prince Street Pizza, and we’ve got ice cream afterwards too.”

Lena looks over to see a few pints of ice cream waiting and she can’t help but chuckle at the rainbow unicorn mascot on the pints. Reaching over to see what flavors there are and starts laughing as she reads the name of the ice cream company – Big Gay Ice Cream – and the two flavors are Salty Pimp and Rocky Roadhouse that she recognizes from a few more crass jokes of Maggie’s. She can’t stop giggling even when Eliza asks what’s so funny, so Lena shows her before taking a couple pictures to send to Kara and the girls.

“Well, that’s something,” Eliza admits, eyeing the uniquely flavored ice creams a bit longingly.
“Alex and Maggie will get a kick out of these won’t they.”

“Absolutely!” Lena giggle as she takes a bite of pizza, humming appreciatively as she savors the real New York pizza – she may hate how busy and loud New York is but she has to admit the smorgasbord of food is always on point. As soon as dinner is finished Arroyo tells them to have a good evening, assuring them that her and Tate would be watching over them. Lena settles on the bed, contently spooning bite after bite of the rich chocolate ice cream that’s dotted with pieces of chocolate and marshmallow – texting back and forth with Kara and Maggie sparsely since the four hour times difference means their schedules are completely out of sync.

Eliza has put on the National Geographic channel as she eats her ice cream – knowing that if Lena wanted to talk she would. Soon enough Lena ask if she can sit beside her watch the show with her, looking a little sheepish. Eliza easily agrees, patting a space beside her and making sure Lena has enough pillows to settle down comfortably. Lena grins as she curls up next to Eliza and inquiries about the show that seems to follow a lion pride’s life in the Serengeti. The two chat about animals, medicine, and technology until they’re both yawning and Lena’s nodding off tiredly – both noting that it’s still rather early on west coast time.

Lena curls up in her bed, feeling safe with the Marshall’s just outside the door and Eliza in the bed next to hers. She falls sleep looking at the lights of New York City starting to dim a bit but never quiet go out. The next morning it’s hard to get up, Eliza promises more coffee and bagels at the airport – the doctor seems like she’s not much of a morning person either. Both of them drowsily packing up their meager travel luggage and heading to the airport, bidding their escorts good bye once they make it through security. Once boarded both of them promptly fall asleep for a majority of the flight. Lena wakes a little bit before landing, listening to the music on her phone as she looks out the window at how tiny and fragile everything looks from several thousand feet up.

The drive back is uneventful as the she and Eliza chat amicably about the doctor’s research and how she deals with the emotional labor involved with treating patients. Lena’s toyed with idea of medicine and but she’s still not sure she’d be a good one, “I’ve thought about medical school but I’m not as sure as Alex seems to be. The research is appealing but I’m not sure if that’s the best way I could help people.”

“You don’t need to go to medical school to help people, Lena, especially if that’s not something you really want to do,” Eliza tells her with a smile. “I know that you want to help people, but you should choose something that you’ll enjoy no matter how stressful or difficult it can be. If it’s going to present you with problems that are going to result in feeling overwhelmed rather than being challenged in a heathy way then try something else.”

“Yeah, I don’t think medicine is for me – no matter how interesting it is.”

“You could always pick something related – biomedical engineering sounds like something that you’d really like,” Eliza comments before adding with a smile, “I’d also like to see the 3D printed myoelectric prostheses you and your team have been working on.”

“I’ll have to show you the computer science and engineering lab sometime,” Lena agrees with a bright smile as the school comes into view, feeling her spirits lifting more and more as they approach the school. It seems to be about time for sports when they finally pull up, Lena’s been texting Kara so she’s not surprised when Kara, Maggie and Alex are already waiting the courtyard. Kara and Maggie in swimsuits and tossing a ball around, Alex is having a snack as she slips her shin guards into her socks.

Kara is quick to toss the ball to Maggie and nearly knocks Alex over as she sprints over to Lena, picking her up in a crushing hug. Lena hugs her back just as fiercely as Alex and Maggie pile in as
well – all them asking her if she’s okay, if the trip went as well as it could have. Eliza has to tell them to ask one at a time, chuckling as she manages to check in with the other girls – embracing them all before checking on Lena, “Hey, I’m going to check you back in, are you going to be okay on your own?”

Lena smiles and nods, “Yeah, I should probably get to rowing.”

“Yeah, I don’t know if Lena’s told you but she’s going to be in a school race the Friday before spring break kicks off,” Alex announces with a bright grin, ruffling Lena’s hair teasingly.

“Jeremiah and I won’t miss it.” Eliza grins, shooing Alex and Kara off with hugs and kisses before wishing Lena well – drawing her into a hug, “I’ll see you again in two more weeks, okay?”

“Okay. Thank you for going with me, and I’ll see you in a couple weeks,” Lena says with a small smile. As she watches Eliza leave she doesn’t feel that lingering sense of worry and dread come rushing back. For the first time saying goodbye isn’t as scary as it used to be.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading and commenting everyone, I love you guys and you’re the best readers ever! Next chapter is about spring break and involves camping!

Also, Big Gay Ice Cream is wonderfully real chain started by a gay couple with an ice cream food truck. If you live in the US Northeast the hilariously named ice creams are pretty damn tasty – the Salty Pimp is the best!
So, I'm reworking the camping chapters - I'm picky but I want it to be perfect - so please accept this chapter on Lena's rowing competition instead.

Warnings: Uh, rowing and a tiny bit of sports medicine so nothing murdery or scary.

Lena looks in the bathroom mirror, wincing as she thinks that she was completely wrong when she thought that the rowing uniforms for competition would be less revealing than Kara’s water polo one. But she admires her leanly muscled body in the mirror – eyes raking over her thighs, hips, and breasts – the tight spandex of the unisuit leaves very little to the imagination. Part of her is a little embarrassed and feeling really exposed, but another part of her appreciates it and knows that Kara will too. Tugging on her gym shorts and hoodie over the uniform she goes back to her room, throwing the rowing shoes she’d been breaking in along with a bottle of water into the bag.

“Should I bring a towel, just in case?” Kara asks as she finishes packing up her bag for spring break and slips on her sneakers.

“Even if I somehow stay in the boat the whole time, I’m still probably going to need a towel – with how hot it gets I may just jump in the lake at the end of it,” Lena admits with a grin as she slings the bag over her shoulder, accepting the towel from Kara as she tells her, “I’ve got to get to the docks and meet up with Megan – get warmed up before the races.”

“Kick butt and take names,” Kara says with a smile, tugging her smaller girlfriend into a tight hug and presses a kiss to her temple, “When my parents get here Alex and I will make sure they get a good view near the finish line so we can cheer for you.”

Lena blushes a bit, she hadn’t expected Eliza and Jeremiah to actually show up for the rowing competition but she’s undeniably happy that they are. A part of her is nervous because she wants to do well and not disappoint, but another part of her is incredibly touched by them coming because she knows that no matter how she and Megan do at their races they’re going to cheer for her. She wonders if she would ever have been this happy and excited to have her mother or father at a match, but she quickly lets that thought evaporate – figuring that it doesn’t matter anymore.

In the hallway she sees Maggie and Alex are already dressed in festive school spirit – hoodies and sweatpants with a couple posters and a school flag. Both of them hug Lena and wish her well, Maggie ruffling her hair and Alex assuring her that they’d all be there for her at the finish line. On the stairs she sees Sam and Lucy coming back from an early morning study session, both of them wish her well also and tell her that Megan just got there and is waiting downstairs for her. Skipping down the steps she rushes out the door to see the other girl in her rowing uniform with a jacket unzipped and hanging off her shoulder with her shoes in hand.

“You ready for the races?” Megan asks with a grin, she notices that Lena has also decided to forgo shoes – both of them opting to walk to the docks barefoot. A lot of the students are milling about towards the dining hall or the sports fields, a few cars are passing through to pick up the lucky few girls that are already getting a head start on spring break.
“Yeah, I’ve got everything I think,” Lena tells her and then jokes, “I’ve even got an extra towel in case we need it, but I think we’ll do well.”

“We’re going to kick ass,” Megan agrees as they see the few other teams from their rival schools setting up and getting out their racing sculls. They meet their other teammates on the docks, everyone’s already getting their own racing sculls out and cleaning and checking the equipment. Ms. Willis is already overseeing the different teams and making sure that their guests are able to set up at the docks as well which the racing officials are in motor boats on the large, lake checking the lane buoys and water conditions.

Lena can’t help the grin that stays on her features, she helps Megan get their boat out and then the oars. The two of them doing their checklist to make sure everything is in working condition and the boat is clean and lacquered, doing the same for the oars. Beside them their teammates are doing the same for their seven-person boat, all of them giddy and anxious as they look over at their competition that’s doing the same thing with their equipment.

Leslie smirks at the girls, recalling how she used to get competition day jitters while trying to size up the other teams. Patting Lena and Megan on the shoulders she tells them, “Best get to stretching and doing a couple sets on the rowing machine to get warmed up, and keep drinking water – even if you aren’t thirsty. It’s going to be a long day of rowing – for the doubles divisions there’s going to be run off heats just to see who makes it to the quarter final races.”

“How many qualifying heats?” Lena asks, knowing that since they only race five teams at a time they could have to race a few times before making it to the final race. Especially since the pairs rowing was quite popular, Lena counted that most of the other schools has one and sometimes two pairs teams getting prepped for the races.

“Most likely two, then a quarter finale, a semi-final, and then the final,” Leslie tells them, she knows some of the other schools are known for their rowing but she’d still place money on her teams to at least place on the podium – that was if Cat hadn’t threatened her, J’onn and the other coaches, reminding them that gambling was illegal in California. She’d still took a bet with one of the rival coaches over a case of beer at the end of the day – having a feeling that she’s going to enjoy her Shiner Black with Gayle at the end of the day.

“That’s a lot of racing,” Lena remarks, adding up the meters for all the races and coming up with a whopping 5,000 meters of fast paced rowing. She recalls looking up the other schools racing stats from their webpages that boasted the latest school sports news – the times were fast, a little faster than the pace she and Megan had been reaching during their practices. If they pushed themselves – and maybe if a few of the better teams had a rough day – they would place on the podium.

“I think you two are up for it, you guys first heat kicks off the meet – only two out of the five racing will move on to the next match. So you’d both better warm up and hydrate,” Leslie tells them, ushering them off to the rowing machines as she turns back to make sure the two teams are settling in smoothly.

Megan takes off her jacket and tosses it into her cubby with her bag, shaking out her well-muscled shoulders and stretching her arms. Lena notices nearby another doubles pair are helping each other stretch and get prepped for the match – checking their uniform colors and markings Lena surmises that they’re from Philips Andover school. The brunet has an almost cocky grin but her eyes are warm and she smiles when she catches Lena looking at them – Lena smiles back while sitting down beside Megan to continue stretching.

“I’m Imra Ardeen,” Imra pipes up with a wiry grin, leaning over and offering her hand to Megan and then Lena who both shakes it politely. She’s not seen these two on the rowing regatta circuit, but she
has a feeling they’ll be fierce competition despite their rather calm, sweet demeanors.

“Megan M’orrz,” Megan answers as she pulls her arm across her chest, trying to stretch out her shoulders while she sits comfortably on the ground. It was a little odd to be talking with the competition – not that it didn’t happen it just wasn’t very common.

“Lena Luthor,” she answers while reaching to grab her toes, feeling her muscles protest before they start to warm up and relax into the stretch. Leaning forward she feels her hamstrings sting a bit at the first stretch of the morning but she takes it easy.

“Wait, Lena Luthor??!” the blonde pipes up quickly, the look on her face isn’t what Lena nor Megan expected. Lena looked a little shocked and Megan seemed to already bristle protectively, but the little blonde is beaming as she reaches out her hand to Lena while chirping pleasantly, “You were at the RoboCup, beat our team senseless in the semi-finals at National City – our teacher told us that Dr. Morrow has you guys working on biomedical engineering projects. So, we’ll probably meet again at the Science Fair in a couple weeks.”

“You forgot to introduce yourself,” Imra teases with a grin, shaking her head at the other girl’s enthusiasm over anything at all related to science.

“Oh, right! I’m Eve Teschmacher,” Eve beams a warm smile that Lena can’t help but return, the blonde’s enthusiasm for everything was infectious, “Are you working on your Science Fair project?”

“Eve, you remember what I told you? That it’s not a great idea to ask people about their science fair projects – for the same reason I remind you to not tell everyone your brilliant ideas?” Imra scolds, knowing that Eve wasn’t going to steal any of Lena’s ideas but that the other girl must be wary of some oddball girl from another school asking about the details of her project.

“Oh,” Eve thinks about it for a second but looks to Lena and tells her, “Sorry, I get carried away – there’s a lot of girls into science at our school but most are pre-med so I get a little excited when I meet another STEM nerd.”

“No worries, and yeah I have been working on a biomedical project with my partner Jess – we’ve been testing new carbon fiber composites among other things,” Lena tells her with a small smile, feeling that Eve’s just curious and happy to meet another engineering nerd.

“So I’m guessing you’re going to be using carbon fiber in a non-traditional fashion if you’re looking into new composites,” Eve deduces within seconds, but she quickly offers a little insight on her own project just a little tit-for-tat with the other future scientist, “My project is more chemistry and energy – working on developing more efficient batteries from renewable resources like biomass.”

Before Lena can launch into questions Imra’s getting up and tapping Eve on the shoulder as she lectures Eve and her new friend Lena diplomatically, “Okay, I can’t take anymore science talk right now, time to focus on rowing – the two of you need to shift gears and keep warming up. We’ve got twenty minutes before the first heats start, you guys are in that one and we’re right after you.”

Megan’s laughing as how Eve and Lena both look like children who just got scolded for misbehaving – the blonde girl is pouting but she perks up when Lena promises to exchange phone numbers and emails with her later. Lena gets up and stretches her back a bit as she heads to the rowers, Megan right beside her on the other one can’t help but tease, “Seems like you made a new friend – and at a competition of all places.”

“Eve seems really nice – and now I’m very curious about her work with energy and biomass conversion,” Lena remarks with a laugh as she sets to doing a few pulls on the rowing machine –
getting into a familiar cadence and focusing on her muscles working in sync with each other. After a few minutes she stops and stretches a bit more before slipping her hoodie back on – stuffing her shorts in her bag and taking a drink of the cool water that Kara had packed for her.

Megan does a few more reps before following suit – tugging her jacket back on as she pads over to where Lena is watching the judges issuing the lane numbers to be affixed to the front of the boats. Lena sees Ms. Willis placing a 3 on the front of their boat and Lena remarks, “Well, looks like lane 3 for this first race which is the best placement we could draw – we’ll be able to see the other teams as long as we stay in front.”

“Yep, but after that lane placement is all about how well we place time wise,” Megan agrees easily as she sees J’onn talking with Ms. Willis by the docks – he’s apparently been helping her out with getting one of the boats in working order. When he sees her he comes over and cuffs her on the shoulder as she tells him, “I can’t believe you came up here on a Saturday.”

“Well, I’m not going to miss my nieces rowing competition,” J’onn tells her gruffly, but Megan just smiles since she hears the affection in his tone. “Looks like you’ve got some stiff competition but I’m sure you two have enough heart and determination to put up a good fight.”

Megan grins as she agrees, “Lena and I are going to crush it. There’s going to be a few run-off heats before we can even get in a position to think about a podium position.”

“Well, good luck and to you as well Ms. Luthor,” J’onn tells them before going back to help their sister team who seem to be having an issue with one of their oars.

Lena’s putting on her shoes as she sees a couple teams already setting down in the water, Ms. Willis has come over to make sure they know what to do. The three of them get the boat settled into the water with one oar on the deck for balance, Megan climbs into the seat near the bow of the boat – checking the seat’s slide runner for easy seat movement before strapping her feet to the foot plate.

“Alright Lena, come on in,” Megan tells her as she keeps the boat balanced enough for Lena to take her place in front of her.

Lena gets settled in, strapping her shoes on tighter before affixing the straps to keep them comfortably in place on the foot plate. She accepts the oar from Ms. Willis, slipping it into the collar and swivel, dipping it lightly into the water and getting ready to get a push off from the dock so Megan can get her oar into the water. The two settle into the water, as Leslie waves and calls after them, “Lane 3, the judges will tow you into position – you know what to do.”

“I hope so,” Lena huffs a bit as she admits, “I’m starting to get a little nervous.”

“We’ll be fine, with how much rowing we’ve been doing just trust your muscles remember what to do,” Megan coaches gently as they make to the line-up, looking over to see their competition that’s lining up next to them. The other girls look just as jittery and anxious, but past them she sees the crowds on the banks of the lake – a group of girls holding a rather large banner that reads “Learn to take the heat, You’re about to get beat! Go Cabot House Cougars!”

Megan nudges Lena and points to the banners going up, and Lena barks out a laugh, “We have a mascot?!”

“Yeah, I thought the same thing when I figured it out – took me the better part of a semester to finally learn that it was a cougar,” Megan giggles as she sees the outline of familiar figures – she suspects it’s Alex and Maggie. Her suspicions are confirmed when she finally reads what they’d painted on their banner – “Go Lena and Megan - Kick Some Honey Buns!”
“Well, we found Alex and Maggie,” Lena remarks fondly, smiling to herself as she sees them cheering – beside her waving a set of pompoms is Kara. Eliza and Jeremiah are there with them, waving and involved in the festivities of the competition too. Lena feels her eyes wanting to get misty but she just bites her lip and adjusts her grip on the handle of the oar, feeling much more confident as she sees the judges finishing up the last minute checks and calling out for them to take their starting positions, “We’ve got this.”

“Yep,” Megan agrees, gripping the oar tightly and getting into her crouched starting position as she listens intently for the gunshot.

When the gunshot cracks across the lake they jolt into action immediately, Lena pushes off the footplate with all her strength and pulls on the oar jetting the boat down the lane. Megan calls out a quick cadence to keep her and Lena’s movements in sync with each other, the two of them settling into a fast pace like a well-oiled machine. Lena doesn’t let herself overthink what she’s doing, just focusing on keeping her rhythm as her muscles do what they’ve been training to do for weeks.

The cries of the crowd are a dull echo on the water as Lena starts to pant a bit, feeling her shoulders and thighs starting to burn – but at this point it’s tolerable and she knows to just work through it. She looks to see where their competition is placed, the green boat from Grier is trying to close the small gap between them in lane 2. In the first lane the yellow boat for Philips Andover’s second team is neck and neck with them along with the Country Day red boat in lane 4. Lena feels a bit sorry for the orange and white boat in Lane 5 that’s lagging behind all of them, but at the same time she increases her pace and calls back for Megan to follow suit, “We’ve got to speed up our pace.”

She knows she’s going to be huffing and puffing at the end of the race, but the red buoy marking halfway in the 1,000-meter race starts to disappear in the distance rather quickly. She hears Megan growl out in agreement before kicking her pace up a notch, the two of them checking to make sure they’re pulling almost half a boat length ahead of their nearest competitor. It seems like quite a long time before the three-quarters buoy comes into view – muscles and lungs both burning from how quickly their bodies are burning through oxygen.

The other teams are desperately trying to keep up – the Country Day team is falling behind, their two rowers falling out of sync and slowing. In lane 1 the girls from Philips are kicking it into high gear and make it past the girls from Grier in lane 2 – so Lena suspects it’s going to be a close finish and an even closer race for the second spot to move onto the next round of qualifiers. Before she realizes it they’ve passed the finish line and she quickly looks up to the board set up by the docks, squinting to see that their name and numbers are at the top of the leader board.

Megan cries out happily, rocking the already unstable boat dangerously as she grasps Lena’s shoulder and points, “Holy hell, that’s our best time ever – 3:08!”

Lena does a double take on the leaderboard and sees that they have indeed smashed their last record of 3:11 by a solid 3 seconds as she smiles as they get a tow back to the docks. The two are sitting there a little high on the adrenaline from the race and setting a personal best time – at the docks they get the boat out of the water before being crushed by their teammates that are still waiting for their turn to race – all of them clapping them on the back and congratulating them on their time. Willis pulls them aside and tells them to get something to drink and a snack while they watch the next couple rounds of racing.

The two of them snack on some oranges while watching Imra and Eve’s heat race – the two from Philips easily setting a brutal pace and beating out their opponents with a blistering fast time of 3:06. The second doubles team from their school is knocked out of the races, having come in third. Their team of 7 makes it to their next round by the skin of their teeth but every is cheering for them and
wishing them well for their next heat. By the time they’re on the water a second time Lena and Megan have both agreed to up their game again – pleased that they’re in the center lane again for its smooth water and visual vantage. Much like the first race they secure a decent time – 3:10 that sets them up for a good position in the quarterfinals round.

The quarter final round goes okay – a little bobble about halfway means that they had to make up time to try and catch the first place team from Hollins in their flashy neon yellow boat. They don’t catch them, instead they’re a half a second behind and finish in second place – they’re both a little miffed but still grateful that they get the chance to move on.

“We’re still moving on to the semifinals,” Megan reminds, choosing to focus on the positive of the situation even though they’re going to have to face the girls from Hollins again as the competition gets even more heated.

“Yeah, but I don’t think we’re going to get great lane placement – not with our time,” Lena analyzes as they make it to the docks.

“No, but we still have a chance.”

As they break for lunch Lena shrugs on her sweatshirt and invites Megan to come with her – both of them are greeted warmly by Alex, Maggie, and Kara who are gushing about how fast they’ve been and that the races have been very entertaining. Eliza and Jeremiah walk with them to lunch congratulating them on their success at staying in the hunt for a podium position – praising their dedication and teamwork. Lena is grateful to eat a peanut butter and jelly sandwich knowing that Alex suggested some protein would be helpful for muscle recovery and energy. Her and Megan also discuss tactics for the next race – knowing that it’s going to only get tougher to stay at the top of the pack in the next race.

After lunch has settled they’re back at the docks, stripping off sweatshirts and shorts before setting to prepping their boat again. From the shoreline Maggie, Alex, and Kara are enjoying dessert as they watch the race before their friends – nearby Eliza and Jeremiah are reminiscing about their school sports days. Jeremiah sheepishly admitting to the girls that the only teams he’d been a part of where chess club and mathletes – grinning when Eliza laughs affectionately. Eliza confesses that she played tennis because she didn’t like running and was competitive well into college.

Kara’s watching Lena, and even from this distance she can tell that the rowing unisuit doesn’t leave much to the imagination. She’d seen Lena in less but somehow the sight of her girlfriend getting ready for a race in a skin tight outfit designed for aerodynamics is hot as hell. She can see the clear curve of Lena’s hips and breasts that make her want to run her fingers over them reverently – and although she doesn’t want Lena to fall in the water she does wonder if the suit will cling further when wet.

“You are looking at Little Luthor like a snack,” Maggie whispers teasingly while nudging the blonde with her elbow – making sure the Danvers and Alex aren’t overhearing them.

“I have no idea what you’re talking about,” Kara stammers out, but she can feel her cheeks and the tips of her ears burning. She can’t help but let her eyes rake over Lena’s body once again as she’s helping Megan put the boat back in the water.

“Don’t feel bad, the suits make all the rows look majestic as fuck,” Maggie tells her with a grin, looking over at Alex – winking at her when the red head catches her gaze while chatting with her father. She can’t help but admit, “Makes me kind of wish Alex has preferred rowing to soccer.”

Kara, who had been taking a sip of her lemonade at that moment inhales it and starts coughing
violently, she doesn’t want to hear about how Maggie’s going to fantasize about Alex in spandex. Maggie pats her on the back while chuckling and behind them her mother warns gently, “Take it easy Kara, no need to eat and drink so quickly.”

“Yeah, we don’t want to have to do the Heimlich maneuver or CPR on you, that wouldn’t be a great way to start off our holiday,” Alex snarks as she toss a package of cookies at Kara, she just grins and winks at Maggie – wondering what Maggie would like in those racing outfits if she’d chosen rowing instead of playing for the waterpolo team.

Kara picks up the package of cookies, beaming as she realizes she’s going to have another treat while watching the next race. Looking between her parents, sister and Maggie she asks, “Do you think they can make it through to the finals with the pace they’ve been setting in the earlier races?”

Jeremiah smiles warmly at Kara and tells her, “Sure, they’ve posted competitive times – only a second or two behind the teams running in the other heats. Now that they’re rested they should be able to go full throttle again.”

“I’m sure they’ll make it, they’ll have to pull out all the stops and they’ll probably be gassed by the end of it – but there’s always a chance,” Lucy states as she and Sam show up, the two of them have brought more cold drinks with them and are settling down on the blanket with their friends. The Danvers greet them and get back to their game of gin rummy they’ve been playing with the girls to pass the time between races.

“Thought you would have been packed up and gone to the ROTC training camp,” Maggie tells Lucy, teasing the other short young woman, “You should tell Mr. and Ms. Danvers about the time you took Sam and Kara traipsing through woods to place orienteering markers.”

“Just Jeremiah is fine,” the older man says with a grin, greeting the two new teens, ruffling Kara’s hair he encourages, “You should have told me you liked orienteering – good thing I’m bringing a map and compass on our camping trip. We could do a few off-the-trail routes the old fashioned way.”

Kara looks like a deer caught in the head lights as Lucy snickers and nudges Sam who is shaking her head – Lucy would love to do an orienteering route with the Danvers family. Sam and Kara both look equally appalled at the idea – but Kara’s not about to mention that she was terrible at it, not when Jeremiah seemed so thrilled. Eliza is just smiling beside him, but the look she shares with Kara tells her that her adoptive mother knows that she’s likely not going to enjoy but it going to let her decided how to handle it.

“Oh, Kara was absolutely miserable the whole time – like got lost in the woods, fell in a creek and showed up to dinner caked in mud and leaves type of bad,” Alex tells him, chuckling as she recalls how both Kara and Sam had looked like dirty, half-drowned kittens with big, pleading eyes when they’d come to dinner that day.

“In her defense it was raining and kind of miserable outside,” Lucy says, trying to make sure the sunny blonde girl wasn’t going to get ragged on too hard by her sister and parents. She knows Lois would tease her mercilessly and her father told her she shouldn’t take it to heart – that she needed to toughen up. But she didn’t want to see that happen to Kara, the bright, optimistic girl was perfectly fine to not like orienteering. If Lucy’s honest she doesn’t like it all that much either.

“Kind of miserable?! Kind of?!” Sam exclaims as she leans over Lucy to grab one of the drinks, draping an arm around the smaller girl’s shoulders as she shakes her head, “That’s an understatement if I’ve ever heard one.”
Lucy nudges her with her elbow as everyone laughs good naturedly, teasing the taller girl, “Well, I have to admit that you two weren’t exactly prepared – sweats and tennis shoes just don’t cut it for hiking in bad weather conditions.”

Knowing that Kara would much rather do anything else but get stuck wandering in the woods she steps in, willing to protect Kara even if it’s just from some rocky trails and an afternoon of carefully plotting on a map, “I’d love to hike the trails and do the orienteering thing but for Kara’s sake you should probably just stick to the star gazing.”

Jeremiah smiles as he ruffles Kara’s hair again, patting her shoulder as he tells her, “Then stargazing it is, we’ve got a couple new lenses and filters we can try out and get some good photographs.”

Kara beams, grateful that Alex had come to the rescue and Jeremiah was happy to change up their plans a bit to do something she finds much more enjoyable, wondering out loud, “I wonder if Lena’s ever been stargazing?”

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At the docks Lena’s putting on her shoes again and finishing stretching out before taking off her hoodie and tossing it onto the dock. Lena and Megan are placing their boat in the water again and making sure that everything’s falling together, on the dock beside their Imra and Eve are waiting patiently sitting with their feet in the water and finishing up their snacks both of them see their competitors getting ready for the first of the semi-final.

“Hey, good luck out there,” Eve tells them with an earnest smile, “You guys have been doing really well, already set two personal bests, right?”

“Yeah, hopefully we’ll get another in this round too,” Lena answers hopefully with a grin, shrugging she admits, “We’re going to need to pull out all the stops now.”

“You better, I’d rather beat you guys in the finals than those girls from Hollins,” Imra remarks with a smile as she kicks her feet through the water happily.

“They could still make it, remember two spots go to the final,” Megan reminds as she wipes down one of the oars grips making sure her hands won’t slip so much even if they get wet or sweaty.

“Nah, my money is on you guys and the girls from Chatham Hall School – they’re pretty fast. It’s going to be a tight race between the three of you,” Imra tells them, giving them a brief run down on who to watch for on the water – she’s really going to keep her fingers crossed that their newfound friends will come through to the finals.

“Time to get going,” Lena says checking the time as she holds the boat steady for Megan to get in – the two of them going through their routine, before they can get too far away from the docks she calls back, “Oh, and I hope you know we’re going to beat you in the finals.”

Imra just waves them off but Eve doesn’t seem to mind the competitive edge as she just smiles back and waves. At the starting line Lena goes over what they’ve already done, agreeing when Megan suggests they keep a fast but even pace early from the start and then switch to a sprint just after the halfway marker – Lena agrees, rubbing her thighs a bit as she surveys their competition from lane 5. Beside them are the girls from Chatham Hall School, the two look like they’re focused and mentally running through the motions.

Over in the ideal lane 3 sits Hollins garish yellow boat, the two girls there are chatting quietly with each other as the wait for the judges to tell them to get into starting positions. In lane 1 and 2 are two
schools that Lena’s never heard of, but is surprised to see have weathered the qualifying heats. As the judges boat heads out Lena quickly wipes her hands off on her shorts before adjusting her grip on the oars and sliding forward to get the most possible leverage from her first stroke.

“Just one more after this one,” Megan reminds as she follows suit as the announcer calls for the rowers to take their positions. She tries to keep herself calm, but she’s also giddy at the thought of potentially making it to the final race for the first time. Shaking herself a bit she rolls her shoulders to lose some of the tension and get back focused on what she should be doing now.

The shot fires and all five boats seem to move as one, lurching forwards in the water as the girls row their hearts out as quickly and efficiently as possible. Lena follows along as Megan calls the cadence to her, allowing herself to get lost in the motions – lift the oar and turn it horizontal to the water, pull forwards, turn the oar and dip it into the water, push back to keep gliding. The boat seems to cut through the water quicker than it did before and the burning doesn’t start until they’ve reached 300 meters.

By 500 meters Lena’s starting to get a pain in her calf that’s nagging her as she continues to push. When Megan calls out to increase the cadence – her voice strained and words spaced out between pants for air – Lena wonders how she’s going to make this work. Gritting her teeth she just continues to match pace with Megan, she can feel her muscles aching and knows that the lactic acid build up is going to be excruciatingly painful for the rest of the evening. Her mind flicks to the thought of what happens if they make to the final and she needs to race again.

“Keep going,” Megan coaches pulling hard as she sees the two boats in the lane beside them are at least a quarter of a boat length ahead of them. A third is likely neck and neck with them.

Lena redoubles her efforts even though her calf feels like it’s second from cramping – the tearing straining pain getting worse. Lena gasps and pants for breath as she continues to push hard with her legs, driving the oar through the water with as much strength as she can muster. They start making headway to the lead, the two of them fighting through the pain past the buoy marking 750 meters. In the far lane one of the girls is jettisoned from the boat and effectively ends their race.

As the seconds tick by their boat edges closer and closer to the leaders, getting about nose and nose with them. Blood is roaring through Lena’s ears as she forces her body to keep up the ruthless pace, she focuses no long on their rivals and just does her best to keep her head down and focused on getting through the next few seconds that feel like eons passing. She almost doesn’t realize that they’ve made it past the finish line until Megan lets out a celebratory cheer.

Lena’s shaking and her left calf immediately start to cramp severely as she looks up to see that they’ve inched into a place for the final. But she can’t be all that excited at the moment as she quickly unstraps her left leg from the footplate, panting out a whine as she strips off her shoe and stretches to try and get rid of the Charlie horse cramp that’s locked up her calf and ankle. Megan’s hand on her shoulder and concerned question snap her to attention, “Hey, what’s wrong?”

“My leg is cramping really bad,” Lena grimaces as she maneuvers the oar so they can get back to the docks.

Megan is quick to get the boat stabilized with an oar on the dock as she calls out to Ms. Willis – the blonde woman comes over as Lena manages to get out of the boat. Her leg is still incredibly stiff and sore so she doesn’t object when Megan and Ms. Willis help her to her feet and guide her to the sports medicine tent they have set up near the docks for today’s meet. Leslie sees the problem immediately and thinks back to the sports medicine courses she had, “Are any of your other muscles cramping?”

“No, just my leg but I wouldn’t put it past the others to try and lock up,” Lena grumbles as she’s set
down on a table, looking at the ice bath Leslie pushes towards her with dread.

“Alright, in you go – you’ve probably strained your calf,” Leslie tells her, giving Lena look to get with the program and put the injured limb in the cold water.

“Ah, fuck!” Lena exclaims as she submerges her burning calf muscles into the ice bath at Ms. Willis instructions – not exactly listening to the sports medicine and kinesiology advise her coach is rattling off. All she can think about it the stinging, burning pain in her leg that’s starting because of how cold the water is – but she also realizes that the muscle has stopped it’s painful cramping.

“Here, drink this,” Leslie tells her, handing the girl a small paper cup, “I’m always telling you guys to drink water even though you’re not thirsty – you’re dehydrated.”

Lena downs the contents of the cup without thinking about but scrunches up her nose at the taste, sputtering, “Pickle juice?”

Megan giggles but when Leslie hands her a paper cup she cringes but downs it anyway, she figures it would be way better to just deal with the sour liquid than to end up getting painful muscle cramps like Lena’s gotten.

“You won’t be complaining about muscle cramps in a bit,” Leslie tells her with a smirk, tossing a bottle of Gatorade at the girl, “Sip at it and try to rest, in a few minutes we’ll check it out.”

“How long until the final race?” Lena quickly asks, she doesn’t ask the other question on her mind about whether or not she’ll be capable of racing in that final match.

Leslie pats her student on the shoulder assuring easily, “You’ve got time, there’s five more races before yours and by then we’ll have you taped up and back out there. Now keep drinking.”

Leslie digs around in one of her kits for something – finding the kinesiology tape and a jar of tiger balm. Collecting a towel, she motions for Lena to take her leg out of the ice bath and rest it on the towel, checking her reflexes and prodding at the muscle she watches the girl wince. Taking a good amount of tiger balm, she rubs it over the calf muscles, kneading out the remaining knots and tightness. Lena grimaces as the ointment starts to heat up and sting a bit but she holds still while sipping greedily at the Gatorade – not wanting to impede their chances in the finals.

“Alright, time for some tape,” Leslie states, positioning Lena’s foot and calf correctly before taping for a calf strain – a long strip of tape up the back of the Achilles to almost to the back of the knee and then two making an X at the base of the calf muscles and around to the sides of the knee. She explains, “This will hold for the race, after that and you get cleaned up will get an ace bandage for it so you can rest and heal completely. You’ve been pushing yourself today.”

“I didn’t think we had a chance to make it this far, but I wanted to know that even if we didn’t I did everything I could,” Lena tells her and with a grin she adds, “I think we have one more personal best time in us today.”

Leslie just shakes her head as she claps her on the shoulder gently, “You are full of surprises, Luthor.”

“I try.”

“Lena!” Kara calls out from outside the tent.

Megan starts to chuckle and calls out for Kara that they’re in the tent, sharing a smirk with Ms. Willis who just shrugs and shakes her head as the blonde rushes in. Kara looks at Lena with concern,
eyeing the tape warily as she reaches out and takes Lena’s hand, “We saw you come in here and I got worried.”

“It’s not a big deal, just cramped up and hurt my calf – but it’s fine. Kind of serves me right for forgetting to hydrate,” Lena jokes, squeezing Kara’s hand as she tells her, “One more race.”

“You two are doing great,” Kara praises warmly, smiling at Lena and Mega as she tells them, “Everyone is cheering for you two and the races are really nail biting close now.”

“I thought we almost weren’t going to make it to the final on that last one,” Megan admits, rubbing a bit of the tiger balm on her shoulder as she says, “Those girls from Chatham hall are something else and we’ve still got our friends from Philips Andover that are going to be giving us a run for our money.”

“All we need is one more personal best,” Lena says hopefully, but she breaks into a smile as she admits, “I really hope we can get pizza on the way to the campsites, this may be the one and only time I’ll be able to eat more than you, Kara.”

“I bet you can’t,” Kara teases as she walks with them back to the docks, giving Lena a hug she assures her, “Kick some butt okay?”

“Yes, once more unto the breach,” Lena says with a bemused smile, knowing that Kara finally gets the Shakespeare quote when she breaks out into a smile before waving and heading back to the group to give them an update.

On the docks Lena watches as Imra and Eve are setting up at the starting line, she takes a seat next to Megan and watches the race. She’s amazed at how effortlessly the two of them fall into sync with each other. They easily take the lead and don’t give it up for the entirety of the race even though the second place finisher is nipping at their heels the whole time. Lena is trying to keep her legs warm, hoping that it will help her muscles ache less and function better.

When Imra and Eve get back they sit next to Lena and Megan, the four of them watching the races for the 7 person teams. The semi’s go well enough but in the final Cabot House places fourth and Philips Andover’s team places third – all four girls grimace and scowl as it’s announced that Chatham Hall will get second place and Hollins will get first.

“Well,” Imra says with a groan as she gets up, rubbing her aching muscles as she helps Eve to her feet and claps her on the back, “We’ve got our chance to try and rectify this situation.”

“I hope so,” Lena remarks, Imra and Eve both notice the injured calf and know that it’s going to be an uphill battle.

Lena takes her time getting into the boat, rubbing her leg and fretting a bit over how her body is going to perform in this rather important race. Megan pats her shoulder comfortingly telling her, “Just one last race and then we can get you bandaged with a bag of ice – and no matter what happens I’m glad we’re a team.”

Lena smiles as she straps her feet in as they ferry out to lane 2, to their left are Imra and Eve – the brunet looks rather serious but when Eve catches Lena checking out the other teams she waves with a bright smile. Lena waves back with a soft grin before retaking her position and gripping the oars tightly, feeling her heart thumping wildly in her chest waiting for the call to get made and followed by the starting shot. The time passes as a blur until she hears the announcer, “Rowers takes your marks.”
Sliding forwards she gets ready and the anticipation is about to kill her when the shot rings out over the crowd and their audience erupts into cheers. Lena and Megan launch into their fastest pace yet and aim to keep it for the entire race – three minutes of break neck speeds and straining muscles. A quick check of the rival boats has them all so close it would be a photo finish if they didn’t make any headway.

Lena’s leg is aching again but she ignores it, pushing hard as she calls to Megan to increase their pace when she sees the other boats starting to edge ahead of theirs. The two work in tandem to try and gain back the lead as they pass the halfway marker, chasing down Chatham Hall as well as Imra and Eve. Lena’s panting, not caring that her mouth is open as she takes in as much air as possible to try and keep moving at such a strenuous pace.

Her leg is burning painfully but right now that the last thing Lena’s focused on as she and Megan continue to work together to propel the boat through the water. As they assess the situation for the last 250 meters they know it’s going to be a matter of inches and a photo finish to see just who is going to place where. Beside them Imra and Eve are starting to edge ahead, the edge of their boat stretching out for the finish line. Lena calls to up the pace again, hell bent on making sure that she leaves all she has on the raceway. The finish line is in sight and they surge for it with renewed energy, making sure that not matter who gets on the podium that they worked for it.

As the finish line zips by both Lena and Megan are quick to look at the score board to see the times, both are panting and cramping up waiting as the seconds tick by. After what seems like a long time the results are posted and Lena scans the board almost in disbelief, Megan’s hugging her from behind and nearly tipping them both into the water.

“Second, we made it on the podium!” Megan grins and laughs, hugging Lena tighter and unbalancing the both of them and dipping them into the water.

Lena comes up sputtering, her body a little shocked at how cold the water is but realizes after a second that it feels rather good. Megan splashes her before swimming over and hugging her again as they hold onto the boat.

“We did it,” Lena says happily, it’s finally sinking in that they secured a podium place.

“Hey, Cabot House, you two wanna get to shore anytime soon?!” Imra calls after them teasingly from where she sits on her and Eve’s both, both of them having dipped their legs over the side of the boat to enjoy the cool water.

“Come on, we just beat Chatham Hall’s rowing team and Hollins team didn’t even place,” Megan calls back, splashing their rivals playfully before maneuvering back into the boat as the motor boats come to give them a tow back to the docks. Reaching down she helps Lena back into the boat, the two of them check the boards again. “Looks like Imra and Eve won the day, but we made them work for it. We got a new personal best, 3:03 and they had to set a new one too.”

At the docks their teammates and coach are quick to mob them with hugs and cheers that would make an outsider think that they’d just won the whole thing. Leslie assures them they have time to get showered, changed and get medical treatment before the awards are given out. After putting the rowing equipment away Lena’s quick to shower and change into her shorts and school hoodie, and by then her calf is starting to cramp again.

“Alright champ, ice and elevate,” Leslie tells her, bandaging Lena’s calf and taping a large back of ice to it.

Lena’s drinking greedily from a bottle of water as she watches the other races getting awarded their
medals, still a little in disbelief that she’s going to be getting a medal for something other than academics or volunteer work.

“You did good, think you’re ready for another meet in the future,” Leslie asks with a wiry grin, patting Lena on the shoulder.

“Probably,” Lena says with a smile, she sees Megan coming back with a bag of treats and her stomach growls, “Please tell me that bag has all the junk food ever.”

Megan chuckles, digging through the bag to pull out a couple candy bars, bags of cheese crackers, and several things of Oreos which she suspects came from Kara or Sam, “All the junk food.”

Lena catches one of the candy bars and opens it, take a bite and humming contently as she watches the seven person teams getting their medals. Imra and Eve have returned from the showers in matching sweats with their school logo emblazoned on the front – Megan offers some of their treats to them. All four of them quietly eat and hydrate, exhausted but happy with the results. Eve and Lena exchange phone numbers and promise to meet up at the Science Fair even though they know they’ll be going up against each other for best of show.

After a candy bar, a bag of chips, and a package of cookies Lena is climbing up on the podium with Megan getting a silver medal placed around her neck. She looks at the round metal with rowing oars on the front, 1,000m doubles printed on the back – even with the solid weight around her neck she’s still surprised that this is real.

Lena’s even more happy to get down from the podium and go over to Kara who lifts her up easily, yelping when the ice on Lena’s leg touches hers. The rest of her friends’ crowd around congratulating her and commenting about how well she’s done during the races, hugging her and clapping her on the back. As people start to disperse she sees Eliza and Jeremiah waiting for them and she rushes over to embrace Eliza.

“Congratulations, Lena,” Eliza tells her affectionately, rubbing her shoulders as Jeremiah reaches over to ruffle the girl’s drying hair like he would their daughters.

“You did great, kiddo,” Jeremiah tells her with a bright grin, “Two personal best times in one day and still coming through after having to race so many times, that was hard work.”

“I didn’t think we were going to make it through a couple times,” Lena admits but with a smile she tells them, “But we did, I mean I’m going to be so sore for a day or two but it was absolutely worth it! I’m also starting to figure out how Kara’s so hungry all the time!”

Everyone starts to laugh, Eliza and Jeremiah walk with them back to the dormitory so they can pack up their bags for spring break. Kara’s quick to tell Lena to rest her leg while she goes up stairs and get their things. Alex and Maggie are goofing around with each other, both of them trying to convince Lena sneak them one of the rowing suits so that whichever one of them loses their next bet has to wear it.

“Danvers, if you place that bet and you lose, it’ll cost you vegan ice cream, taking my early morning prefect duties, and having to wear a rowing suit,” Maggie tells her in a sing-song teasing voice, hoping that Alex will get fired up enough that she’ll take that bet.

“Why would you want to wear one of those?” Lena asks, scrunching up her nose at having to wear the form fitting suit outside of a competition.

“That’s the point, Maggie is going to have wear that when she loses the bet to me,” Alex states
confidently, pretty damn sure that the water polo team will lose a match before her soccer team does.

“Come on, girls let’s get going we have quite a drive ahead of us,” Jeremiah reminds, putting Alex’s bag in the back of the SUV and taking Maggie’s from her and trying to pack it in there with all the camping gear and things he and Eliza have brought. He’s glad they rented a vehicle with more space since the four teenage girls packed like teenagers. Kara’s come down stairs with all of hers and Lena’s things with her and Jeremiah just chuckles as he assures, “There will be pizza and milkshakes on the way!”

Lena doesn’t think she’s ever been so happy in her life to have pizza and milkshakes for dinner – but even after all the things she’s eaten today her stomach is already complaining that she still has compensated for all the energy she’s expended. True to her word early Lena gives Kara a run for her money at the pizzeria, much to Maggie and Alex’s amusement. Eliza worries that the two girls are going to regret eating so much since they have a few hours of drive before they reach their destination. An hour into the drive Alex and Maggie are chatting with her parents, but in the back seat Kara and Lena have fallen asleep – the little Luthor thoroughly exhausted.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading, I'm working out the camping debacle presently.
Spring Break pt. 2

Chapter Notes

Been a while but I've been busy which makes me a little sad because I love writing this story - already working on the next chapter and an epilogue (but let's be honest I'll probably be adding a lot of little epilogues).

Warning: Camping sex (one scene for SuperCorp and one for Sanvers) so uh...yeah graphic lesbian sex. Curse words.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

After a night on the road with Eliza and Jeremiah driving in shifts they arrive at Olympic National Park just as the sun is starting to rise. A stop at the park visitor center has all four girls a little cranky as they wake up but as soon as they see they’ve arrived at the park all of them are quick to scramble out of the car to stretch their legs and explore a bit while Eliza and Jeremiah check in. Kara’s marveling at the tall evergreen trees as Alex seeks out the nearest park map to see about the size of the park and what it offers – sure her parents told them they’d be coming here but she hadn’t had time to look over everything.

“Stay aware of your surroundings girls,” Jeremiah reminds, he doubts they’ll see any bears but he just wants them to be prepared and stay alert to world around them. Chuckling he sees Maggie’s already climbs up a little way up one of the rather large evergreens and is sitting on one of the lower hanging branches.

Lena’s looking around completely gob smacked by all the nature around her and awed by everything, seeing the bear symbol on the map that Alex is looking at she calls after Jeremiah, “There are bears here?”

Jeremiah chuckles as he motions for her to come over to the visitor center, “Yeah, there are black bears mostly but it’s not uncommon to see a brown bear in the area too, we’ve got to get bear containers to keep the food in for this week.”

“Grizzly bears?!” Lena exclaims, her brow furrowed with worry and poorly veiled fear.

“Yeah, land sharks,” Alex teases, slinging an arm around Lena’s shoulder and shakes her a bit jokingly.

“Alex,” Jeremiah scolds a bit with a rueful smile, as he heads into the visitor center as a few other campers come out with large, black rubber containers that he points out, “We’ve got to get a few of those so the bears and other wild life don’t come into our camp because they smell our food. It’s very unlikely we’ll see any bears at all, especially since we’ll be visiting the rainforest and ocean parts of the National Park as well.”

“This is going to be amazing,” Kara calls out from where she’s climbed up the tree with Maggie, the two of them are snapping pictures.
“Be careful, please,” Jeremiah calls back, “Alex would you make sure your sister and your girlfriend don’t fall out of the tree and break something, Lena can help me get the bear containers.”

Lena is quick to help, picking up a few maps of the various sections of the park and a couple of the safety sheets that are available. She watches a couple of the videos on the TV’s in the center while waiting with Eliza and Jeremiah to check in, not surprised to see that a lot of people had the same idea to go camping on the long break. Lena curiously examines the bear proof food containers they receive and helps Eliza put the bags of chips, cookies and other food items into them when they get back to the vehicle. As they all convene at the vehicle Alex is already pulling out maps as Jeremiah suggests, “We should pick a good place to camp, we can drive to which ever destination in the park that may be further away.”

“So, near the water?” Lena asks hopefully.

“Near bathrooms,” Maggie suggests as she ruffles Lena’s hair playful just to tease the younger girl.

Looking over the maps the group decides to set up camp for the week at Willaby Campgrounds just off Lake Quinault as it’s closer to the shoreline and a bit further out from the more popular campgrounds. The camping sites are also near a lake of its own with bathrooms and showers within walking distance – so everyone is rather thrilled to drive over and check out the campsites.

Once they’ve picked out a perfect site Jeremiah sets them loose with the tents, taking his and Eliza’s towards a quiet area and to give the teenagers some space. He’s sure Eliza doesn’t want to hear the teens up all night chattering and teasing each other either, giving his wife a grin as he points out a quiet nook to place their tent – further back from the hearth for the fire and in between two large trees that will block the wind. Across the way, Alex has scouted out a place that overlooks the valley and is starting to unroll her and Maggie’s tent – bickering with her girlfriend about whether or not they’re going to need the rain fly.

“.Come on, we’ll pick a good spot too,” Kara tells Lena, looking around the forest floor for a rather level spot that’s near enough to her parents and Alex should then need to call out to them in the middle of the night. Seeing a small outcrop between a triad of trees with a perfect little window to look out at the lake Kara points and suggests, “What do you think?”

Lena shrugs with a depreciating laugh, “I have no idea, Kara. I’ve never been camping so I wouldn’t know a good camping spot from a bad one.”

“Well, we’re not in a flood zone or a wash for starters,” Maggie calls out as she clears away some rocks and sticks away from the site before helping Alex put down the tarp before unrolling the tent.

“It’ll be fine Lena, now help me clear away the sticks and put out the tarp in case it rains,” Kara suggests, helping Lena pick up any debris that would make sleeping in the tent uncomfortable such as a few rocks and rather large sticks. Kara also keeps an eye out for ants or bugs that may have made mounds in the area. “You want to go ahead and look at the instructions on how to put the tent together? You’re the budding engineer after all – and we don’t want to end up like that.”

Lena looks at where Kara’s pointing at Alex and Maggie struggling and bickering over what the instructions are saying. The half collapsed tent looking like it’s seen better days, Lena figures that the two girls are using the bickering over the tent as an excuse to scuffle and roll around with each other. She doesn’t blame them but at the same time she would rather get the tent put together correctly because she’s rather excited to see how it’s going to look.

“Yeah, we’ll have our tent finished long before they do,” Lena agrees as she starts to snap together the rods that are going to hold the tent up, handing them to Kara as they start to put the skeleton in
place. After a few minutes of working they quickly get the tent erected and the two of them are hammering the stakes into the ground before putting on the rain fly. They even get their bags into the tent and start to unroll the sleeping bags and putting the lantern up before Alex and Maggie quit horsing around and get their tent’s bare bones up.

Eliza has already gotten a fire going so they can make a quick lunch as soon as they get everything settled in. She can’t help but snap a few pictures of Alex and Maggie tussling in the grass, the two of them laughing and goading each other on rather than finishing their camp site. Kara and Lena are sitting in their tent, unpacking some of their things so that they can have them at the ready – Lena’s checking the flashlight batteries and Kara’s watching her with that happy, daze look she gets around the younger girl.

“Alex, you and Maggie need to get your tent set up with the rain fly in case it rains,” Jeremiah says with a good belly laugh at his daughter who’s looking up from wrestling with her girlfriend over the instruction booklet – twigs and leaves tangled in her short hair. His heart twinges painfully as he thinks about how it wasn’t too long ago he was taking Alex out on her first camping trip as a child – wistfully thinking that they grow up so quickly.

“We’re on it, Mr. Danvers. I promise,” Maggie assures, laughing as she finally pries the instructions from Alex’s hands long enough to get a good look at how to secure the rain fly.

“They’re a handful still,” Eliza tells him with a smile, grasping his arms when he wraps her up in a hug from behind – she knows he’s thinking about how quickly their girls’ have grown up.

“Of course, but they’ve grown up so quickly,” he tells her, pressing a kiss to her temple as he laughs at Kara coughing as Lena applies bug spray to the both of them, “It’s like we blinked and now they’re both such mature, young women.”

“Happens quickly doesn’t it,” Eliza agrees, a part of her misses little Alex and Kara with their bright eyes and inquisitive questions about the world around them. But a part of her is also interested to see what life has in store for them since they’re still inquisitive but much more confident and determined young women. She’s also very happy to see that Maggie and Lena have been added to their lives – knowing that she’ll still keep in contact with them both even if things don’t work out.

After a quick lunch Eliza instructs the girls to put on their hiking boots and grab some water bottles since they were going to do some hiking – promising that they won’t be disappointed by the views. Alex groans at having to get back in the car but the drive up towards Hurricane Ridge stops any complaining as they can see nearly the whole of the park on the steep but careful car ride to the hiking trails. Lena’s leaning over Kara’s lap to look up at the sheer mountain faces with the impossibly tall trees perched precariously along the sides in a rather careful looking balancing act.

The girls are quick to take pictures on their phones, and the four teens are also much obliged to group up and let Eliza and Jeremiah take photos. Lena beams when a stranger offers to take a pictures of all six of them together at the start of the trail markers – snuggled between Kara and Alex she grins when Eliza and Jeremiah wrap the girls up in hugs and all of them are smiling brightly. As soon as Eliza sends the pictures to them Lena puts it on the lock screen of her phone.

“So, who wants to go to the peak of Hurricane Ridge?” Alex asks as she checks the map and points to the trail marker for a paved trail that goes all the way to the top of the ridge – no climbing gear necessary.

“I’m in,” Maggie tells her with a grin, taking Alex’s hand and going along with her up the trail.

“Come on, it’ll be fun,” Kara assures when she sees Lena hesitate at how high up it is – the little
ranger station marked it as over 5,000 feet in elevation.

Lena thinks about it a moment then nods, reaching out to clasp Kara’s hand in her own as she tells her determinedly, “Yep, we can take pictures at the top.”

After a half hour of relentlessly climbing up hill and waiting through a few crowds of tourists from all around the country, and even a few groups of international tourists they finally reach the end of the trail at the top of the ridge. The view is stunning, the mountains all around them, including snowcapped Mount Olympus have them all silently taking in the view as the almost cold wind breezes past them.

“Wow, this is amazing!” Lena says finally breaking the silence as she looks around at the sprawling national park, from here the mountains don’t look as large as they really are. It takes her a few minutes to take in the whole view and a little longer to take out her phone and take pictures of the view even as she admits, “These pictures just aren’t going to do this view any justice.”

“It hardly ever does,” Jeremiah tells her, as he motions for the girls to group up, “Alright, say ‘Elevation.’”

Alex is laughing as she puts bunny ears over Maggie’s head, not even realizing that Kara’s doing the same thing to her. After a while of pictures and of pointing out other geological features in the area the group carefully descends the trail and explores the other trails, snapping pictures of the flowers and a few deer that wander around completely ignoring the tourists that are so enamored with them. The molting marmot in the fields are a little bit more shy and cautious about keeping their distance, the girls cooing over how cute they look – Maggie dubs them land otters much to the other’s amusement.

As the sun starts to set the group heads back down the mountain, stopping frequently on the pull offs to take pictures of the ever changing view. Jeremiah and Eliza point out that they can see the ocean in the distance between the mountains, explaining that in a day or two they’d take them over to the ocean side of the park to go kayaking and camp along the beach. Once back at their campsite Maggie breaks out the board games to occupy their time, even though Alex groans at the mention of Monopoly.

“No thanks, I’ve already gotten my ass handed to me by Lena enough,” Alex says as she begs off not having to play the games.

“Why don’t you get out the telescope and find a good spot for a little star gazing?” Jeremiah suggests, ruffling his almost adult daughter’s hair wondering how much long she’ll allow him to do that. He can’t help but smile when Alex looks up at him with a bright grin that reminds him so much of Eliza that he smiles back, watching as she gets up to go get the telescope in its case.

But before she goes Alex wraps her arms around her father and hugs him tightly, “Thanks for this trip, Dad. I love you.”

Jeremiah smiles as he presses a kiss to the crown of her head, “Love you too kiddo.”

Lena and Maggie settle for a game of Scrabble since Eliza offers to show Kara how to make caramel pecan campfire brownies if she helps her get the evening meal ready. Jeremiah is happy to help prepare the hamburgers and slices up potatoes as Kara chatters away with Eliza, the two of them discussing the merits and troubles of cooking over an open fire. Halfway through the cooking Lena’s fallen asleep and Maggie’s covered her with her jacket before helping get out the dishes and camping silverware, impressed that the Danvers took their outdoor excursions so seriously.
Everyone makes quick work of tucking into the meal, all are a little famish after their day of setting up camp and hiking. They wait until it’s sufficiently dark and the fire’s died down to glowing embers with most of the other campers in the area having already settled down to sleep before doing a little star gazing. Jeremiah checks his compass and a few maps, telling Alex what adjustments to make before telling her, “Well, check it out. Did we do it right?”

“Oh, wow, yeah we got it!” Alex tells him excitedly, as she moves to let him take a look.

“Great job, Alex, you want to tell them what we’ve got lined up in our sights?”

“Saturn, you can even see the rings,” Alex tells them, pushing Maggie’s shoulder to encourage her to check out the telescope. Laughing when Maggie makes a sound of awe as she looks up at the plant and its moons that are currently hurling around the sun and over 1 billion kilometers from Earth – where she’s currently standing and gaping awestruck.

“You should be able to see a few of Saturn’s moons too,” Kara says she takes a gander at the heavenly bodies, “The one on the bottom left is Titan, the big one at the top right is Rhea and the two small ones in between them are Dion and Tethys.”

Lena peeks through the lens and sees the plant that must be so massive if they’d been much closer, it almost looks like it’s glowing with its ethereal rings looping around it. And just like Kara explained she sees the four glowing figures around Saturn and takes the time to identify them, amazed and a little sad that the universe is so large and space travel so limited that she would most likely never get the chance to know more about what lies beyond the Milky Way and Sol system.

“Wouldn’t it be cool if there were other sentient species out there looking through telescopes back at us,” Maggie remarks, a part of her things that the universe is so vast that there had to be other species out there that were just as advanced as humanity, or even more so.

“If only star trek were real,” Alex says wistful, “I would sign up for Starfleet in a heartbeat – as a medic, a security officer, or even just the janitor just so I could see what’s out there.”

“Astrometrics all the way,” Jeremiah agrees, high fiving his daughter as he checks the astronomy charts he’s brought with him before pointing out a few other things of note.

Lena is enamored with seeing the moon, fascinated by all the craters and crevices that mar it’s rather foreign, bare surface. Even when they’ve exhausted what the telescope can do they settle down in the dark and point out the various constellations – Lena’s not sure she’s going to keep from getting them all mixed up but she listens as Jeremiah, Kara and Alex both point out their favorite constellations and explain how they got their names. As they’re about the head back Jeremiah points out that the moving ‘star’ in the sky is the International Space Station – where astronauts are currently going about their work in space.

As Lena gets ready for bed and settles into her sleeping bag she tells Kara, “This is such a wonderful trip, Kara.”

Kara grins at her before switching off the lantern and snuggling up to Lena in her own sleeping bag – draping an arm over Lena’s middle as she agrees, “The best, and it’s only the first day.”

Sometime in the night a rainstorm comes in off the ocean, as it turns out Alex and Maggie did not put their rain fly on correctly the two of them shrieking and laughing as they clamor out of the tent to try and put it on right. Lena and Kara wake up and realize what’s happen and start to howl with laughter even though they both offer to come out of their own warm, dry tent and help them – even if only to hold flashlights and laugh at them in person. They all know that the Danvers are likely getting as
much of a laugh out of this too but were going to let the teens get themselves sorted out.

Come morning Alex and Maggie are a little cranky as they get up, both looking a little worse for wear than usual but still ready to get on with the days’ plans. They told to wear cooler clothing as today they’d be exploring the rainforest area of the park where the trees are so over saturated with rain their leaves are so dark green they’re almost black looking. The air will be humid so they’ll also need to bring along their hydration packs and snacks even though they’re be picnicking at the nearby lake. After quick jaunt in the car to the lake the family starts to explore the trails, looking at the moss covered trees and the local flora and fauna that make them think of the eras of the dinosaurs.

“It looks like it’s straight out of Jurassic Park,” Lena exclaims happily as she wanders around a rather large fern to get a better look at the moss covered trees and things that look like globular monsters. She touches the leaves and the moss, feeling it under her fingers.

As they head onto the trail, Maggie leading the way and nodding to the other hikers. As they round a bend near some large trees with massive amounts of ferns and moss Alex darts out of the foliage and tackles Maggie causing her to shriek.

“Gotcha!” Alex tells her with a grin, laughing when Maggie shoves her a bit roughly, “If I were a velociraptor I would have gotten you.”

“Clever girl, huh?” Maggie jests as shakes her head, smiling at how goofy and adorable her girlfriend is at the moment.

Maggie gets her revenge when they get to a log bridge stretching over water, Alex had gone first and when Maggie steps on she jumps – making it rock a bit. Alex startles and clings to the sides, shooting Maggie a glare as she continues on her way even though she can’t help but find Maggie’s ‘payback’s a bitch’ grin absolutely sexy and endearing.

“Alright you got her back, now go on and let the rest of us hike in peace,” Kara admonishes as she climbs up on the bridge while reaching a hand back for Lena who’s stepping on after her looking a little worriedly at the water rushing beneath them. They make it over the bridge and face a rugged trail of switch backs with railings to keep people from falling, Lena’s tripped up a couple times – cursing her wobbly footing as she nearly falls but Kara catches her around the waist before she can fall, “I got you.”

“Thankfully, I would hate to see the bruises that would have happened if you didn’t,” Lena tells her jokingly as she regains her footing and heads to the end of the trail to see water pouring down – the promised waterfall at the end has finally appeared. The mist from the water is cool and soothing their flushed cheeks and sweaty faces, all four of them crowding into a picture together.

Ironically the hike back goes so much easier, all of them liking the downhill paths so much more than the uphill climb they’d just accomplished. Near the lake they eat lunch, afterwards Jeremiah and Maggie getting into a rock skipping rocks across the top of the water. Alex is nearby, ankle deep in the water looking at the small biological specimens with Eliza – the two of them are chatting about how it would be cool to look at the little things under a microscope. Lena and Kara are on the docks looking at the fish, even though they know the water is deep you wouldn’t be able to tell just by looks. The water is so clear Lena can make out the lines of the bark on the submerged branches and the movement of the moss with the gentle rhythm of the lake water.

After what must have been an hour or so of exploring Lena’s drawing from her thoughts by yelling and screaming followed by loud splashes. Lena turns around just in time to see Kara burst into laughter at the sight of Alex come flailing out of the water, Maggie’s sputtering beside her – clearly having tackled her into the water. Lena watches in awe as Jeremiah takes Maggie’s cue and chases
after Eliza, Kara and Lena are laughing as the older woman comes onto the dock for refuge. But seeing as there are no railings it just makes it easier for Jeremiah to pick her up and toss them both into the water.

Lena looks mischievously at Kara and holds her hand out to her as she shrugs and says, “Well?”

Kara nods with a grin, “What are we waiting for?”

The two take a plunge off the dock into the water, both coming up laughing and complaining about how cold the water is despite the sun beating down on them. Swimming to where they can stand Alex is splashing Maggie, complaining, “You scared all the fish away.”

Maggie just wraps her in a wet hug as she tells her affectionately, “Nerd.”

Kara encourages Lena to sit on her shoulders as she splashes Alex and Maggie to get their attention while calling out in a challenge, “Come on, you chicken?”

“Oh you are so on! Come on Danvers,” Maggie says competitively, nudging her girlfriend and motioning for her to get on her shoulders. Instead Alex just laughs.

“Yeah no, you’re so short that if you’re on bottom for a game of chicken I’ll fall off your shoulders onto rocks,” Alex laughs good-naturedly as she pats Maggie on the hip as she kneels down enough for her to climb on.

“I’m going to ignore the short comments until we’ve beat the little sisters,” Maggie tells her as she balances enough for Alex to walk towards Maggie, she almost falls off laughing at the look of horror on Lena’s face as Kara explains the game.

“But I don’t want to accidently drown you,” Lena protests innocently, confused as to how anyone would find this four person, water wrestling game fun.

“You won’t drown her, that’s why you’re on Kara’s shoulders and not the other way around,” Alex assures, grasping Maggie’s legs and getting ready to go head to head with her sister and Lena.

“Okay, you better get ready Maggie,” Lena says as she raises her hands up to try and defend against Maggie and Alex’s onslaught.

The two grapple and laugh as Alex and Kara are trash talking each other jokingly, Maggie’s finding that Lena’s a lot stronger than she expected putting a fight as she tries to push her from Kara’s shoulders. Lena’s laughing as she pushes and pulls back, she knows she’s probably going to lose but the whole experience is much more fun than she expected. Even when Alex and Maggie work in such unison that Maggie grips her arms as Alex moves back quick enough to topple both her and Kara into the water. After a few more rounds, where Lena and Kara only win one bought, mostly likely because Alex is the only one not wearing shoes and stepped on a branch they trapse back to shore.

Eliza and Jeremiah have been trying to dry off, the girls are also just now realizing that their clothes, socks and shoes are completely waterlogged. Eliza just laughs as she tells them, “We can all shower up before dinner, and tomorrow we can have a rest day and let things dry.”

It would seem that everyone is amenable to a nap after showering, all of them returning to their tents and sprawling out with the door flaps open to enjoy the breeze. As the sun sets Alex helps Jeremiah prep dinner and get the fire going to let the other’s sleep a bit longer. After dinner, before games Lena realizes she’s drank too much soda and doesn’t want to bother Kara about going with her to the restrooms they showered at hours earlier.
Instead she picks up the one of the flashlights, switching it on as she excuses herself to go to the restroom. She follows the trail towards the bathrooms, seeing a few lights on and fires at other campsites as well as the light on the bathroom building. After quickly doing her business and washing her hands, she heads back out sweeping the trails with the flashlight lest she trip and fall over the ragged tree roots and rocks. On one particular pass something glinting just off the trail catches her eyes, a second pass and Lena realizes with a dawning horror that it’s a pair of reflective eyes.

Rather large eyes that aren’t exactly low to the ground – quickly Lena shouts in fright as the light rakes over the lithe form of a rather young looking mountain lion. The cat doesn’t seem like it’s poised to strike, but it doesn’t seem that quick to be taking its leave either – the sound of rushed footsteps has Lena trying to turn around but hands on her shoulders keep her facing the large, wild cat that’s paused its casual stroll across the path.

“Don’t turn your back to him,” Jeremiah tells her calmly, looking behind him he sees Eliza on the trail behind him with the other girls crowding around behind her, “Honey, stay there with the kids. It’s just a mountain lion.”

Eliza answers in the affirmative and keeps the other teens back, knowing that a mountain lion usually isn’t hunting if it was allowing itself to be seen. Jeremiah has his hands on Lena’s shoulders, he can feel her trembling and tries to comfort her, “Just stay calm okay?”

“Okay,” Lena croaks out, swallowing the rising lump in her throat nervously. She can’t help but admire how beautiful the animal is – momentarily thankful that it wasn’t a bear – but the terror is still there and unlike she was expecting instead fighting or taking flight it would seem her response to wild animals was freeze.

“Just don’t make any sudden movements, and don’t bend down or try to run – then it will think your prey,” Jeremiah explains calmly as they both watch the mountain lion continue on its way – slinking into the shadows it’s clear that the lion was not really all that concerned with them as either potential prey or predators. “The best thing you can do is try and make yourself look bigger and more intimidating.”

“So it will want to think twice about whether or not it can win in a fight, right?” Lena asks as she watches the sand colored cats swishing tail disappear into the brush.

“Exactly right, and I don’t even think this guy was looking for a fight at all,” Jeremiah assures as he guides her to back away towards the campsite without turning her back to the retreating animal. Jeremiah smiles as they finally make it back to the group, hug Lena tightly and rubbing her shoulders as he tells her with a little chuckle, “You probably scared him just as much he scared you.”

“I doubt that very much,” Lena says with a little laugh, “He was beautiful but I don’t need any more close calls to know that.”

Jeremiah chuckles as Lena sits back down by the fire in between Kara and Alex, happy when she’s embraced by both as the red head tells her, “You got back just in time for S’mores! Trust me, you’re going to love this – and Kara may or may not have already eaten two while you were gone.”

“I’m hungry,” Kara mumbles with a full mouth, looking a bit sheepish as she hands Lena the box of gram crackers and snapping apart a bar of chocolate. Lena watches Alex and Maggie getting their sweet treats set up, setting out the crackers with the chocolate on top – plates near enough to the fire that the chocolate is already starting to melt.

Maggie hands her a stick with two marshmallows on the end of it – ready to be browned over the
fire, “You may want to do this yourself, Alex literally sets her on fire until they’re blackened lumps of molten sugar.”

“Which is the best thing ever.” Alex says matter-of-factly as she gleams with satisfaction as her two marshmallows catch fire and start to blacken all around.

“That’s disgusting,” Maggie says with a laugh, bumping shoulders with Alex playfully as she turns her sweet treat over the fire, careful to only brown the sides before sandwiching it between the chocolate coated crackers. She takes a bite and grins, clearly happy with the results, “Perfect, go on little Luthor. You’ll love it.”

Lena agrees and carefully emulates what she saw Maggie do, setting up the crackers and chocolate before carefully roasting the marshmallow – wondering what the fluffy white blob is going to taste like. She can tell everyone is trying not to watch her as she puts it together and chomps down a bit excitedly. She’s a little surprised by the marshmallow, realizing that her hands and face are going to be sticky – and for the first time she doesn’t care – she just hums in pleasure with a nod that has the others chuckling and agreeing with her assessment.

“So, messy,” Lena says between bites, licking the tips of her fingers as she smiles, “But so worth it.”

After a while of chatting and playing a few games around the campfire, Jeremiah and Eliza agree to turn in early after helping them all clear away the food into the bear containers and walk the trash to bear proof dumpsters. Alex and Maggie pick out a couple games and head back to their tent, Lena figures that she and Kara can do some reading together and discuss the latest book they’d gotten from the book store at the pier. She stacks her pillows and lays on her stomach, flipping to the last page they were on as Kara comes in and zips up the tent.

Kara grins as she cuddles up next to her, but just a few pages in Lena stammers over a couple words while reading quietly to them both when she feels Kara’s fingers reach under the hem of her sweatshirt and tickle along her spine. Lena tries to ignore it, just to see if Kara’s going to keep going and sure enough a couple sentences later Kara’s turning on her side and continuing to stroke along her back before leaning in and pressing a kiss behind Lena’s ear and down her neck. Lena huffs out a laugh as she closes the book and turns to face Kara, pressing their lips together and letting Kara deepen the kiss immediately.

It doesn’t take long for the lamp to get switched off and for both of them to lazily strip out of their clothing and intertwine nude on top of the sleeping bags. Kara presses hot, open mouthed kisses from Lena’s lips, over her neck and onto her chest as her hands try to be patient as she explores the younger woman’s soft skin. Lena’s hands find Kara’s breasts, squeezing and teasing gently as she lets her fingers trace along flexing abs.

Kara breaks away from her trail of kisses to grin and tease, “Good to know you still like the abs.”

Lena knows she’d be blushing vivid red if Kara could see her but she just tells her lover matter-of-factly, “I like all of you, Kara.”

“Even when I steal all the M&M’s out of the trial mix?” Kara teasingly asks as her hand playful skims up the inside of Lena’s thigh.

“Even then,” Lena agrees with a soft, pleased sigh at the first brush of Kara’s fingers where she desires her most. Snuggling closer she presses her cheek to Kara’s collar, kissing her neck as she settles in to feel everything that Kara’s doing to her.

Kara smiles contently as she languidly rubs her fingers over Lena’s clit, savoring holding her
girlfriend in her arms and enjoying the closeness and intimacy of the moment. After a few moments Lena nods shyly as Kara adjusts her in her arms, giving herself better access to the area between the smaller woman’s legs as her fingers slip under the waistband of the panties. A small whimper escapes the girl as she tenses and squirms at the first brush of fingers over her hardened clitoris. Her leg trembles and her breath catches in her throat as Kara’s fingers circle around her opening, Kara chuckles softly, “You’re so ready for me, aren’t you?”

“Yes,” Lena whimpers as Kara dips a finger inside her, slowly starting to fuck her. After a few strokes Kara carefully works a second finger inside of the smaller woman in her arms, thumb brushing her clitoris as she starts to pick up the pace.

Soon enough she has Lena arching onto her fingers and breathing her name in rapture like a prayer while clinging to her. With a few moments to catch her breath Lena’s flipped Kara onto her back and has climbed between her legs to kiss up her sensitive inner thighs. Just the sight of Lena in the moonlight and shadows about to go down her makes Kara’s heart skip a beat before hammering quickly in her chest. The first touch of Lena’s tongue against her makes her groan before she bites the back of her hand to keep quiet.

After a few moments of preparation, Kara tugging gently at her hair, Lena reaches up and slips a finger inside of Kara. It doesn’t take long for Kara to adjust and roll her hips as she pleads softly, “More.”

Lena just hums as she keeps up her licking and sucking while adding a second finger to join her first as she sets a steady, even pace. She can feel Kara shaking, particularly the tremor in her legs that are careful not to tighten against her head and the quaking of the abs under the palm of her free hand. Kara clenches desperately around Lena’s fingers as she comes, softly gasping, “Lena.”

Lena presses a kiss to Kara’s lips, settling down against her. After a few minutes of post-coital naked cuddles, she can tell that Kara’s about to fall asleep and suggests mildly, “We should probably get dressed again before we fall asleep.”

Kara groans in protest even though she knows that they probably should – as sex positive as her family is she still has some sense of decorum. It would be embarrassing to be caught in the nude by anyone other than Lena – that and her sister would tease her mercilessly. Half-heartedly the two tug on underwear and a couple tee-shirts before settling down with each other again, easily drifting into a restful sleep.

The next day is moving day, Lena’s happy to pack up camp and then set up at their new spot at the tree line near the beach. Lena’s happy to just relax and enjoy the sunshine, ever since she’d gone to Midvale she’d fall in love with the beach. And Washington really did have the best of both worlds, the mountains and the beach in such close proximity and blended together into a beautiful and unique landscape. After lunch everyone goes in their own separate directions, Alex takes Maggie surfing on the small waves – showing her how to balance, paddle out, and duck under the incoming waves. Kara’s skim boards a bit but mostly just walks along the beach with Lena, picking up seashells and wading in the rather frigid water.

The day after that one everyone agrees to explore the rest of the scenery on the water with kayaks, all of them asking Lena if she’ll show them how to work the paddle. Lena laughingly explains that she honestly has no clue how to kayak and that being forward facing on the water is a bit odd. She is however grateful that her legs won’t be getting punished during this exercise. Alex takes to the water as easily as she does every other sport she tries, after a wobbly start to keep her balance she’s dipping the paddle into the water quickly to pick up speed.

“Come on, it’ll be fine. You’ll figure out your balance pretty quickly,” Alex yells encouragingly
back to shore where Kara and Maggie are putting on their life vests and looking at the little water craft dubiously.

Lena’s giggling as she tells them, “It’s okay if you get dunked a few times.”

Alex chuckles, paddling over to Lena and high fiving her, the two of them bobbing on the mostly smooth sea as they watch Kara help Maggie onto the kayak, giving her a little nudge to get her started. Maggie crows triumphantly as she starts to paddle towards them, getting a little ahead of herself she nearly tips over and is quick to grab the sides of the boat to try and stabilize herself.

“He holy hell, little Luthor! How did you not fall in more than you did while rowing?!” Maggie cries out as she careful starts to paddle out a little less vigorously than before.

“Pure luck,” Lena tells her with a giggle as Kara’s gotten started paddling out, a little uncoordinated with the paddle and wobbly as she tries to keep her balance. The blonde looks like she’s concentrating but not long into her attempt to move out to deeper waters she catches her paddle on the water unexpectedly and loses her balance tipping into the water. Lena is quick to go to her, watching as Kara gets back on the kayak, “You okay?”

Kara’s grinning as she nods, “Yeah, it’s fine. I’ll get the hang of this in a little bit, then we’re going to have to race.”

Lena starts laughing, “Well, you have a couple dozen more good dunking in the water before you catch up with my record.”

Kara just laughs good-naturedly, “That’s not what I meant, but I’ll be doing okay if I don’t break that record of yours.”

For the next two hours the girls paddle along the coastline, chasing each other and racing each other until some inevitably spins out or tips over. Eliza and Jeremiah are content to watch from the more stable canoe they’d rented, leisurely exploring at their own pace. By evening everyone’s exhausted and instead of cooking they drive out to eat at one of the local establishments – complete with pizza and milkshakes. By the time they get back to the campsite everyone’s worn out and few are a little sunburned – Alex and Lena both have reddened cheeks and shoulders that required sunburn cream.

As night darkens the campgrounds Lena’s content to curl up against Kara, listening to her read some of the poetry from one of the books they brought. Kara hums softly as she flips the page, carding her fingers through Lena’s long hair as she continues to read to her. Before long she feels Lena’s breath against her chest even out and she reaches for the lamp, switching it off as she carefully settles down trying not to disturb her sleeping girlfriend. Pressing a kiss to her forehead she whispers, “Sweet dreams, Lena.”

In Alex and Maggie’s tent the two older teens are sprawled out exhaustedly, Alex has curled up in her sleeping bag and is trying to fall asleep even though it’s gotten a little too humid to be completely comfortable. Just as she’s about to drift off she feels Maggie’s wandering hands over her sleeping bag and hears the zipper of sleeping bag being tugged down as stealthily as possible. A smile tugs at the corner of her mouth as she opens her eyes to find Maggie sitting up and clearly with activities other than sleeping in mind.

Alex feels a bit guilty as she sits up and draws Maggie in for a kiss – her parents are at most twenty or thirty feet away. But as Maggie’s tongue slips between her lips she stops caring – after all her parents had always been sex positive and didn’t really care as long as everything was safe, sane and consensual. But before she can reach for the hem of Maggie’s shirt the other girl has pulled away with a mischievous grin and is pressing a lantern into the red-head’s hands.
“Uh, that’s not what I had in mind,” Alex states with a perplexed look to her girlfriend.

“Come on,” Maggie tells her, tugging on her hand after she’s carefully unzipped the tent fly and checked that the coast is clear. She makes sure she has her lantern and her back pack with all the things they may need before stepping into her shoes and pulling Alex along.

“Where are we going?” Alex whispers, an adorably scowling at her girlfriend as she seems confused about what’s going on.

“Just come on, I’ll show you,” Maggie says with a grin, “Trust me, Alex.”

Alex just grumbles quietly as she quickly pulls on her shoes and zips the tent back up, figuring if they get caught on the way to wherever she’ll just say that she has to go to the restroom. But no one seems to stir so Alex just picks up her lantern and follows after Maggie – as soon as they clear the camp they switch on the lanterns and walk down the trail hand in hand. The sound of the ocean waves crashing is soothing and makes Alex smile, she hopes that later in life she’ll eventually settle down and live by a beach like her parents have done.

After going off onto one of the smaller trails for several feet Alex sees the small little cove, Maggie nudges Alex in the side as she drops her backpack and toes out of her shoes so that she can feel the sand in between her toes, “I figured we couldn’t graduate high school without going for a little skinny dipping.”

“You’ve got to be kidding me,” Alex whispers as her eyes are as wide as saucers as she looks between her grinning girlfriend and tucked away cove they’d spotted earlier while hiking with everyone. The cove doesn’t appear to be very deep or feel the effects of the tides but she suspects the water is going to be ridiculously cold, even if being naked with her girlfriend was her the end goal. She looks further into the distance to make sure that the camp that they haven’t been followed, finding no signs of flashlights or lanterns on.

“Not kidding at all Danvers,” Maggie says as she unfurls two towels on the beach and sets down her lantern on the corner as she starts to slip her shoes off. She knows that even though the only light they’re getting is from the half-moon that’s out and Alex is mostly shrouded in shadows, that she’s most likely blushing brighter than her hair.

“It’s freezing.”

“You could always just wear your panties if you don’t want to go completely nude.”

“I guess,” Alex says biting her lip a bit nervously, she kind of wants to let go and be a somewhat wild teenager but at the same time she knows if they get caught by anyone she’s going to die of humiliation.

“We don’t have to if you don’t want to,” Maggie assures, leaning into Alex’s side to try and let the more serious girl know that she wasn’t going to pressure her at all – that even though Maggie thought it would be fun doesn’t mean that Alex has to feel the same way about it.

“No, I want to try this, but – but what if we get caught?” Alex asks a bit anxiously.

“We tell them we got lost on the way to the bathroom,” Maggie says with a shrug, pressing a kiss to
Alex’s pale throat just below her ear.

Alex groans but can’t help but chuckle, “No one is going to believe that.”

“So, I’m sure we wouldn’t be the first and we definitely won’t be the last to try this at a national park. Could be worse, I’m sure park rangers have had to deal with crime scenes and shit – at least our escapades would be the funny type of memorable,” Maggie teases, sliding her fingers under Alex’s shirt just under the waistband of her pajama shorts, rubbing tenderly over the curve of the other girl’s hip.

“Okay, but if we get arrested I’m blaming you,” Alex relents with a chuckle, pressing a quick kiss to

“I wouldn’t have it any other way, babe,” Maggie tells her with a wicked smile she starts to strip off her pajamas top, tossing it onto the towel and shucking her sweatpants and underwear down her legs. She’s never gone skinny dipping before but she’s never been overtly modest about her body – she looks good and she knows it. She looks over to see Alex has stripped off everything but her panties, looking a bit sheepish as they step into the water. “Oh fuck, it is pretty cold.”

“The waters come down from the Bering Sea, by Alaska, of course it’s fucking cold,” Alex scoffs as she shivers a bit, huddling closer to Maggie and grateful when the older girl wraps her up in a hug, “Luckily the cove waters will always be a bit warmer because of the warmth it can absorb during the day. We just need to move around and acclimate a bit more.”

“I feel like this is something we may have to do at a tropical resort some place warm – like Mexico or Belize,” Maggie remarks as she starts to feel more acclimate to the water, she swims a bit closer to Alex, tugging her more into the water and savoring the feel of Alex’s skin against hers in the water.

“Or we could just get a place with a pool so we can do whatever we want – plus the privacy,” Alex teases as she wraps her arms around Maggie’s neck and kissing her tenderly, sighing softly when Maggie’s fingers start to tease along her sides. A thumb flicking over her taunt nipple that makes her squirm a bit against the older girl. Leaning in she captures Maggie’s lips with her one, kissing her insistently as the shine of the water mirrors the moon and millions of stars glittering in the sky.

“Giving in already?” Maggie asks as she hugs Alex close, letting their breasts press together and the red-head’s legs wrap around her waist. She nips playfully along Alex’s neck and over her collar just to hear her gasp and whine softly, trying to be quite even though they’re quite a way away from anyone.

“You did say you were going to warm me up,” Alex tells her with a salacious little grin, pressing gentle kisses against Maggie’s lips before deepening the kiss.

Maggie figures this is the whole point of skinny dipping, ditching the water she carries Alex over to the towels she’d laid out. Laying her down reverently she wastes no time in settling between her girlfriend’s legs, starting to kiss a trail between Alex’s breasts and down over her abs. Alex is squirming adorably, and even in the low light of the moon Maggie can see the familiar blush on the tops of her cheeks as she bites her lip to stay quiet. Maggie makes quick work of the wet panties that are clinging to Alex in all the right ways that have her licking her lips.

“So beautiful,” Maggie encourages as she spreads Alex’s legs further, pulling one of her legs to rest over her shoulder. Leaning in she wastes no time in lapping at Alex’s clt, and just from the way Alex shivers and whimpers she knows it’s going to be a quick and rather unquiet affair.

Alex’s knuckles are white as she clasps the towels tightly in her fists, eyes pressed closed as she lets Maggie have her way with her. The soft teasing touches that are slowly building her up, higher and
higher until she feels the brush of Maggie’s finger tips against her most intimately. She relaxes into the penetration, calling softly for her girlfriend, “M-Maggie…”

“Hey, I’ve got you, Al,” Maggie assures, continuing to build up a steady rhythm as she moves up to cradle Alex in her arms – kissing along her collar as she feels the red-head’s body growing at taunt as a bow string beneath her own. When her thumb brushes teasingly over her clit, Alex tumbles over the edge crying out and grasping her shoulders so hard her nails dig in a little. Carefully, she withdraws her fingers and peppers the taller girl’s cheeks with light kisses while she comes down from the high.

After catching her breath Alex grins up at Maggie seconds before she flips them over on their sides, taking Maggie by surprise for a moment. Maggie just shakes her head as she kisses Alex and lets the tenacious young woman do what she wants – remembering how shy and hesitant they both were at the start of the year. That and Alex had always been so easily flustered, wanting to do things right from the very beginning. Now it would seem Alex is much more comfortable taking the initiative as she no longer hesitates to touch and kiss Maggie during moments like these – nimble fingers stroking over her clit firmly and insistently before dipping lower to find her ready and desiring more.

Alex loves with her whole being and so completely it’s almost overwhelming, Maggie feels like she’s the most precious thing in the world when Alex gives her her complete attention. Maggie leans up to capture Alex’s mouth in a kiss, rolling her hips to encourage Alex to keep making love to her, clenching greedily around Alex’s fingers and whimpering at Alex’s praise and encouragement until it’s almost too much. Maggie comes undone, bucking against Alex’s fingers as she pulls her down for a hot kiss, at little so enthusiastic that their teeth almost click together.

After a while of laying in the sand catching their breath the two start to reluctantly gather their clothing strewn about the cove. It would be fun to stay there a little longer but neither one of them wants to push their luck any further. Alex grimaces as she finds her underwear soaked with ocean water and her pants she took off too close to the shore are also mostly wet through. Chuckling a bit it would seem that Maggie’s in the same predicament, “We could always just cover up with the towels, our campsite is the closest.”

Alex thinks about it and the thought of putting on wet panties and jeans is unappealing and she scrunches up her nose, “Yeah, I’m not putting these back on.”

Maggie snickers as she wraps a towel around herself, Alex following suit, as she stuffs the things in the backpack before following the red head back up the trail. It seems like they’d been completely lucky that no one else was up and about – at least not until they step into the camp and head towards their tent. Alex and Maggie both freeze.

Kara, who had been rummaging through one of the bear proof containers and found a package of cookies looks up – clearly startled by the noise. It takes a second to register what she’s seeing but then it clicks that she’s accidentally caught her sister and Maggie returning from the beach – and judging by Alex’s nakedness is only covered by the beach towel it had been more than just a midnight swim. She looks over to Maggie who looks to be in a similar state of undress. Dropping the cookies, she quickly covers her face with her hands as she whisper-yells indignantly, “Oh my god, Alex!”

“Jesus Christ, Kara. I’m covered up in a towel,” Alex groans lowly, elbowing Maggie who is finding this whole thing amusing – especially that Kara’s blindly closing up the container and looks like she’s about to trip herself up on her midnight snack.

“Could you, like go to your tent?” Kara practically begs with her eyes squeezed closed tightly.
“That’s what I was doing,” Alex deadpans.

“What happened to your clothes anyway?!” Kara asks in confusion, hoping that Alex and Maggie hadn’t both wandered down to the beach in the nude.

“Do you really want to know the answer to that, little Danvers?”

“Yeah, no, you’re right. Please don’t answer that,” Kara squeaks sheepishly, with one hand over her eyes she reaches down to feel around for the bag of cookies as she pleads, “Can we pretend this didn’t happen?”

“Good idea,” Alex states already in their tent and trying to get Maggie to hurry up so she can close it. Maggie’s laughing so hard there are tears rolling down her cheeks, Alex elbows her a bit roughly, “I told you someone would find out.”

“At least it was Kara and not some random Park Ranger,” Maggie tells her with a dimpled grin before breaking into peals of laughter as she tugs on a pair of sweatpants and light tee shirt. Fluffing her pillows, she drops back against them and opens her arms, “Come on, cuddle time. I know you want cuddles, Alex, now come on. You can’t stay mad forever.”

Alex shakes her head but then relents snickering a bit, cuddling up to Maggie she admits, “It is kind of funny I guess. Did you see how mortified Kara looked?”

“Yeah, and we were the one’s naked under out towels,” Maggie agrees, tucking hair behind Alex’s ear as she kisses her sweetly. Leaning her head against Alex’s she closes her eyes as she tells her, “We’ll have to tease her mercilessly about this you know.”

“Maybe,” Alex concedes as she sighs contently.

The last couple of days involve going on more hikes so some more notable spots, a few dinners out of the park in the surrounding areas. One day is spent going out on the ocean, once early in the morning to go whale watching and seeing that large mammals that leaves them all in awe at how small there are on the open ocean by comparison. In the afternoon everyone is piled onto a sailing boat that cruises along the coast to get a good view of the coastline that rises quickly into the jagged peaks of mountains. Lena thinks she’s finally found home, settled in Kara’s arms she enjoys the warmth of the sunlight on her skin and the breeze ruffling her hair. This is what contentment and happiness is like she concludes.

By the time the week has passed everyone is a little sad to leave – especially since it means returning to the grind of school and work – but they’re all a little grateful that they’ll be sleeping in their own beds soon enough. After they’ve packed up the camp, the group heads down for one last look at the ocean and mountains before heading out to start their long journey back to the school in California.

Despite everyone being completely exhausted and wishing they had another week of vacation to recover from their vacation, they’re all content that they’re tired and worn out for a good reason. Lena’s no longer sad when they get checked back in at the boarding house on a Sunday evening, she hugs Eliza and Jeremiah goodbye with the other girls. Thanking them for the wonderful trip before joining the others in trying to get settled back in, hoping that she can beat Kara to the showers before all the hot water is gone.
If you're ever in Washington State the Olympic National Park (and Mount Rainier National Park) are amazing places to explore and camp - I went last summer and I'm planning to just pick up and move to Washington in the next couple of years it was so awe inspiring.

Anyway, thanks for reading!
Science Fairs and the End of a School Year

Chapter Notes

Yikes, so I just realized this week that I never finished this story even though I already wrote the chapters... So I'm very sorry about that but here's the much belated chapter and as soon as I'm finished editing the epilogue.

Warnings: Uh...language I guess.

In the days leading up to the science fair Lena’s spent a fair amount of time with Jess and Dr. Morrow to put the finishing touches on their model for the exhibits. Currently she's standing over the 3-D printer with Jess beside her, the two of them watching as their carbon fiber composite filament feeds into the machine and follows the schematics they’d programed into the printer beforehand. Lena takes a sip of the coffee she smuggled out of the dining hall, smiling as Jess pops the tab on another can of soda – the two of them have spent most of their weekend on finishing up the writing and posters for their presentation.

“It’s looking good,” Jess tells her with a tired smile as she checks on where they are in the printing, “The other 3-D printed parts have finished the stress tests and I’ve already wired up the myoelectric components so it’ll be working when we do the demonstrations.”

Lena looks at the components and reads over the stress test results with a smile – the 3-D printed carbon fiber prosthetic arms were much lighter, easier to use, and less breakable than the regular plastic polymer that seemed to chip or wear down with the wires from continuous use – particularly in children that were typically rather rough on their medical equipment. Lena’s hopeful that going to the science fair will not only get her recognition but more importantly bring even more recognition to possible advancements in biomedical engineering that would make people’s lives easier.

“Hopefully, this will start getting people thinking about cheaper but reliable alternative materials for biomedical engineering projects – I wonder what other things could be made easier with 3-D printing. There’s even options that use cells and tissue to 3D print organs and structures, but that’s not exactly affordable yet,” Lena laments as she starts to sand down the edges on the previously printed parts, knowing that she’s going to suffer having to get up early for classes tomorrow if they stay up much later – but the state science fair is only a week away.

Dr. Morrow taps them both on the shoulder, “I think you’re both going to do well at the science fair, but you both should probably call it a night – we’ve got class time you can devote to putting on the finishing touches.”

“Yeah, but this is much more fun than literature,” Jess jokes as she sets the printer to work on forming the last two parts overnight.

“Of course, but you both still need to keep up your grades in those boring classes for sake of university applications,” Dr. Morrow jokes with a laugh as she shoos them out of the computer science lab so he can lock up and get home to his own family and projects.

Lena packs up her bag and checks on the printer one last time before follow Jess into the hallway, hesitantly she asks, “Do you think we have a chance at the science fair?”
“I’m pretty confident about it,” Jess assures easily as they pass by a few of the other labs, pointing out a few of their fellow classmates in similar predicaments this weekend, “Looks like one of your housemates is busy doing science this weekend too.”

Lena looks over to see Alex caring for the last of her lab rats, the little rodent from her control group is sitting contently on her shoulder as she takes a few notes on a couple of the last slides – double checking that everything she’s put on her poster is accurate. Patting Jess on the shoulder she asks, “You want to meet up after breakfast tomorrow? I’m going to make sure Alex gets back to the dorm and sleeps some.”

“Absolutely, I’ll bring the coffee!”

Lena watches Jess go for a moment before tapping on the window – startling Alex who just waves her in with a tired smile. The red heads shutting down the computer and turning off the light on the microscope even though she’s cooing and petting the little rat as she shuffles her notes into her backpack. Lena looks at the white rat with beady eyes and twitching nose a bit reluctantly, she’s never had a conventional pet much less one that most people considered cute or fluffy.

“He’s totally safe, this little guy was in the control group and was one of the mildest mannered ones,” Alex assures as she taps the little guy on the nose, smiling at how he’s just content to stay curled up in the folds of her hoodie hood.

Lena reaches out a strokes a couple fingers over the rats back, feeling how soft his fur is as he curls up even tighter and starts to fall asleep against Alex. The red head is shutting down the computer and instead of putting the rat back in his cage she just closes it up and packs her notes away. Lena’s a bit baffled as she asks, “Doesn’t he have to go back in the cage.”

Alex gives a look before checking that the coast is clear before picking up the rat’s cage and putting in a cardboard box as she tells her quietly, “I’m jail breaking Algernon – the rest of the mice are going to be put back into the breeding program but…”

“So, we’re busting him out of here?” Lena cuts her off with a smile, she can tell that the red head didn’t want to have Algernon being put down or rotated back into the breeding program. Lena picks up Alex’s notes and books that won’t fit in her backpack as they both head back towards the dorms. The two of them are giggling whenever they make eye contact – both of them laughing at the fact that they’re breaking the rules together.

Once back at the dorm Alex is quick to take the stairs two at a time, checking her hood to see that Algernon is still sleeping soundly. Lena walks her to her dorm room, Maggie is already sprawled out on her bed in sweats reading one of the books she’d gotten on a trip into town. Alex sets the cardboard box on her desk, looking a bit sheepish as her eyes dart over to make eye contact with Lena. The two of them are giggling whenever they make eye contact – both of them laughing at the fact that they’re breaking the rules together.

“Okay, what did you two do?” Maggie states, eyes wide with excitement as she gets up to join the other two girls. She reaches out as if to pet him before asking, “Is it okay if I pet him?”

“We have a new roommate,” Alex tells her, hoping that Maggie won’t be grossed out and upset that she’s brought home their first pet. She sets the cage on her desk by the window before fishing the sleeping rat out of her hoodie, cooing at him as he sleepily tries to curl back up against her for warmth.

“No way!” Maggie states, eyes wide with excitement as she gets up to join the other two girls. She reaches out as if to pet him before asking, “Is it okay if I pet him?”

“Yep, Algernon was in the control group and he was always just a sweetheart,” Alex states with a smile, watching as the sleepy rat preens at all the loving attention he’s getting.
“Awesome! We have a room pet,” Maggie says with a grin before nudging Alex in the ribs, “You named him Algernon? You’re such a nerd.”

“You’re a nerd too,” Alex reminds as she puts Algernon back in his cage before thanking Lena for carrying her books and shooing her off to bed, “You should get some rest, we have to travel tomorrow and the day after that it’s going to be the hustle and bustle of the fair.”

“Yeah, hoping everything goes well,” Lena agrees, happy to hug Alex and Maggie who assure her that things are going to work out well. Heading back to her room she finds that she’s going to have to sleep by herself in her own bed because Kara’s already sprawled out asleep on her bed. She’s sprawled to the four corners and lightly snoring, the covers are half on the floor and Lena takes a moment to tuck the blanket back over Kara as best she can before dropping onto her own bed. It doesn’t take long for her to fall asleep.

The next morning, despite going over the last minute things with Jess and packing up the printer for travel along with the prototypes is followed by a rushed ride to the airport. She sticks close with Alex and Jess the whole time, all of them going over the exhibits that they want to see when they get set up and can mingle amongst the projects.

“I can’t wait to see the ALS biomarkers project and the mass spectrometry work behind it,” Alex tells them earnestly, bright eyed and grinning as she reads through the abstract of the project. She’s really hoping to do well as it would look really good for further funding and scholarships for the school’s she’s applied to. But she worries that maybe she hasn’t done enough to even be competing with all these other young, brilliant minds. Wistfully she remarks, “These other competitors are really remarkable – they make me feel like I’m a kid playing with that chemistry set my dad got me when I was 9 years old.”

“Your project is brilliant, Alex – you’ll get the recognition you deserve, I’m sure of it,” Lena tells her, knowing that she and Alex seem to have low self-esteem issues surrounding academic performance. Perfectionism was a cruel master – exacting, impossible standards that suck the life and joy from its victim in exchange of the promise of being better. Lena puts away her carry on and sits down in her seat and clipping the buckle around her waist as she tells her honestly, “I know it’s nerve wracking to try and be the best and that it’s scary to see how talented other people are. I mean, I’m really glad that Eve and Imra’s project is being judged under the energy category.”

“They’re going to win that for sure,” Jess agrees easily as she briefly explains, “I mean they figured out a way to make paper mill waste into lithium-sulfur biofuel batteries – that’s going to be right up there in the top three at least.”

As the plane starts to taxi towards the runway Lena stifles a whimper, looking at the window next to Jess in dread – knowing that at any moment she’s going to watch as she and the plane leave the surface of the earth and get higher and higher in the sky. Jess quickly shuts the blind over the window and takes Lena’s hand and reminds her, “Everything is going to be fine, Lena – it’s just a couple hours and then we’ll be there.”

“Don’t you have your own planes?” Alex asks a bit dumbfounded.

“Yeah, but that doesn’t make me hate flying any less,” Lena grumbles as she hears the engines roar to life – dreading the next few minutes of take off.

“Like Jess said, everything’s going to be fine,” Alex says while giving the younger girl’s hand a squeeze, she figures she may as while to try to distract her like she used to do for Kara when the family flew anywhere, “Do you think Kara’s gotten out of bed yet?”
Lena can’t help but let out a chuckle despite her stomach dropping as the plane lifts into the air, “Surely she must have gotten hungry by now.”

The three of them agree and start to chuckle with each other as they take bets on what Kara’s had for breakfast already. The three of them get out a deck of cards to play some games while they wait for the plane to take them up to Seattle for the National Science Fair. Even though Lena starts every time the plane turns or hits a minor bout of turbulence she keeps up with the distraction, laughing when Alex begs that they play gin once Lena’s beat them three times at poker already.

As it would turn out all three of them will lose the bet as Kara is still in bed snoozing away – the blanket having found its way on the floor once again. The blonde stretched out on her tummy and basking in the warm morning sunlight, she’d woken briefly to help Lena pack up and wished her and Alex well but has quickly gotten back to bed to enjoy a much deserved rest. There was nothing planned for the weekend, no makeup classes or extra lab hours to do even though finals are right around the corner. So she’s content to just enjoy the peace and quiet along with the warmth of her bed and pillows.

But life has other plans and her contentment was soon interrupted by a thumping at her door, and Maggie calling after her, “Come on little Danvers, get up! It’s almost noon and our girls will be landing before you’ve even gotten out of bed.”

“Go away Maggie, I’m still sleepy!”

“Come on,” Maggie tells her in a sing song voice, “We can go sneak into the kitchens and get some snacks before heading over to the pool.”

Kara perks up at the mention of food, her stomach rumbling in agreement so Kara pokes it while muttering, “Traitor.”

Getting off the bed she slouches over to the door, opening it while she reaches for her shoes – not bothering to change into a pair of clean sweats since they’re just going to go to the pool. Sure enough the dining hall worker lets them in but just shakes her head at their antics, helping them pack up the left over muffins and cinnamon buns for them to take with them to the indoor pool. Kara’s content to sit on the bleachers, popping a tab on a soda and savoring the burn of the first sip as she watches Maggie set out towels and toe out of her sweat pants.

“It may be indoors but that water is going to be cold,” Kara warms as she tucks into her second cinnamon bun, while rummaging through the cooler Maggie’s brought down from her dorm room “You’re going to have to swim a few laps to warm up.”

“What are you complaining about, you don’t get cold,” Maggie teases as she drags over her duffle bag, “And who says anything about swimming?”

“We’re at the pool,” Kara tells her incredulously, popping another cinnamon roll into her mouth.

“But that’s why I ordered these!” Maggie announces as she pulls out a couple boxes and tosses one to Kara – already ripping into the box to pull out a pool toy. More specifically an inflatable unicorn with a rainbow horn that has Maggie giddy to blow it up and float on it to her hearts content.

Kara squeals in excitement as she quickly opens the box that has a pink flamingo on the front of it, “No way, I can’t believe you ordered these to be delivered to your school mail box!”

“Yup, and we’re going to spend the rest of the day – that you partially slept away already – floating here in this temperature controlled gym just chilling,” Maggie announces between blowing into the
slowly inflating uniform floaty, “And when Alex and Lena get back we’ll get them in here as well as Sam and Lucy – we all deserve to destress before final exams.”

“Here, Here!”

The day goes by rather lazily for the girls at the school, Maggie and Kara follow their float in the pool with a late dinner of pizza and movies with Lucy and Sam. But for the rest of the day Lena, Alex, and Jess are pleased to roam around the science fair chatting up all the other kids who are just as excited to discuss their similar research interests. Imra and Eve join them at the kick-off dinner and they spend most of the evening catching up and discussing every nerdy topic that crosses their minds – almost no one pays any attention to the speeches from the administrators or even the guest speaker. They’re all too excited to get the fair rolling.

The next morning, after spending most of the night in their hotel room nervously chattering with each other, the girls head down to the exhibition hall. The atmosphere has changed, while it’s still charged with excitement and hopefulness there’s a hint of nervous energy as well. The nervous energy of hundreds of over achievers anxiously hoping for success they’ve worked so hard for the past few months. But in spite of all the nervousness the kids are all encouraging each other and asking about each other’s projects as they take their places at their stations. Alex pats both younger girls on the shoulder, “Good luck you two, just stay calm and follow the notes you wrote and it’ll go great.”

“Good luck, Alex,” Lena says as she and Jess head off with their containers towards the engineering divisions.

After a few hours of talking with judges, panelists that are going to be hosting the afternoon science talks keep the girls on their toes. Another thing that threatens the students calm are the college faculty, government and private corporations that are visiting to scout out future scientists and projects. Alex sees a couple faculty members from the college’s she’s applied for but hadn’t heard back from yet – one whose research in DNA and epigenetics that has sparked the idea for her project. Nervously she starts to fidget, trying to stay calm as she rubs her sweaty palms against her slacks.

“You okay?” a curly haired girl beside her asks, offering Alex a nervous smile.

Alex just shrugs, smiling sheepishly as she admits, “Yeah, just nervous – doesn’t help that the professor whose research I was inspired by is right over there looking at the project on ALS biomarkers.”

“They have a good project, but if you read up on the biomarkers they found were somewhat inconclusive – it’ll promising but I think yours will do better,” the girl tells her matter-of-factly, looking over she notices the groups of judges with clipboards have gotten to their row, “Look sharp, the judges are heading your way.”

Alex takes a breath as she sees them coming, putting a smile on and mentally going over her notes. Greeting them all she gives them the run down on the project – going over her research question and the methods she devised briefly before going over the results of her project and the implications it has for future research.

Similarly, Lena and Jess are being grilled over the how they produce cost effective carbon fiber prosthetic components. Jess turns on the printer and pulls up the schematics before showing off complete components as well as the printer they’d constructed to better handle printing larger components.

“So, the way we 3-D print the carbon fiber is in conjunction with regular plastic filament. What
happens is we start with a base layer of 100 microns of honey comb patterned plastic filament, nylon is layed down on top of that to bind with the carbon fiber. Then lay down three layers of carbon fiber to add a flexible yet durable core followed again by nylon and the top layer of 100 microns of plastic again,” Lena explains, showing each of the stripped down components for a prosthetic hand, “This makes the prosthetic parts that are going to be moving more durable than just using the plastic alone and since the carbon fiber is only used as a strengthening agent it’s still light and less expensive to product.”

Jess then explains how they came up with the idea and the ways the plan to improve upon the designs including ideas to move towards lightweight, breathable sockets for lower limb prosthetics as well. They’re quite the popular pair in the engineering department at the moment, answering questions and talking about how they constructed their own 3-D printer with software specifically for what they wanted it to do. Jess is quick to get drawn into a conversation with a recruiter from Cal Tech, the girls first choice of university that she’s still waiting to hear back from.

Once they get time to breath around lunch Lena goes in search of Alex, finding her in the middle of a group of teenagers as well as some of the teachers chaperoning the kids. It would seem that Alex hasn’t had the time or the space to leave her poster because of how much interest she’s generated.

Smiling Lena waits and watches patiently, glad to see that Alex is getting some of the attention she deserves. She knows that Alex works hard and often does a lot of thankless work in the background and always putting others before herself. So seeing Alex being the center of attention for once makes her happy – also she’s really glad that she’s not being the focus of all the attention at the moment. As much as she loves talking about her research she’s pretty close to being all people’d out for the day.

“It all boils down to certain environmental factors causes DNA methylation – which are highly susceptible to change - to switch off or switch on other sequences that can lead to cancer,” Alex tells them matter-of-factly, like what’s she said is rather common knowledge – and perhaps in the medical community it might be but Lena’s pretty sure that everyone else at the table is just as awed by Alex’s findings as she is. Alex then quickly adds, “That’s the really dumbed down version, and there are a lot of factors we still don’t quite understand, so I don’t mean to be so flippant.”

Another couple of students are quick to engage Alex in discussion, the mention of certain gene sequences and DNA components makes Lena zone out a little bit. She’s happy that Alex seems to be getting a good amount of attention for the work she’s been doing – the red head has been busy at all hours of the day and night writing and checking progress on her study. Lena’s not sure she knows how Alex manages to keep up with her team’s record breaking year on the soccer field, her rather rigorous coursework, and on top of all of that keep the numerous girls of Alcott house relatively in line. Lena is secretly hoping that she doesn’t get made a prefect for the upcoming year.

The next day is more of the same but the air around them has changed, everyone knows that the winners have likely already been decided. By mid-afternoon as everyone is gathering there’s already a few tears from stress and panic – mostly kids who are worried that they just haven’t done enough. Lena can feel the knots in her shoulders and the back of her neck that are likely going to be there for days, she’s got her best suit on like all the other youth around her. Their teachers had made sure they at least tried to eat lunch even though none of the girls weren’t too keen on eating.

But now they’ve filed into the auditorium to sit in their sections, everyone wishing each other luck and discussing how long it’s going to take to get to their groups. Lena’s sitting next to Jess, both of them looking at the pictures Kara and Maggie have sent her from the pool with Sam, Lucy and a few others. Lena feels a tap on her shoulder and turns around to see Eve beaming at her, “Hey, Lena! Are you ready for the announcement of the winners?!”
“Easy on the enthusiasm, Eve,” Imra teases with a chuckle, she knows that Eve doesn’t really care one way or another about winning. To her the science was the only thing that mattered and she would be just happy getting back to the lab to try and devise even more wild research experiments. Imra doesn’t mind the recognition and has a feeling that her partner is going to be surprised when they actually get an award for their work.

Lena can’t help but smile at Eve’s enthusiasm – her love and passion for science are at the forefront and it’s infectious. Lena wonders if she could persuade Eve and Imra both to work for L-Corp once they’ve finished college, no telling what the three of them could get up to in the labs. Grinning for what seems like the first time all day she tells her honestly, “Yeah, I’m just ready for all the suspense to be over with.”

“Come on Luthor, you and Jess are going to be in the top three – at the least,” Imra says while rolling her eyes and kicking her feet up, stretching a bit and wondering how long it will take for them to get back to the school so she can hit the gym. She’d been missing the stress relief that came from rowing, and when she wasn’t rowing the running was pleasant too. As much as she loves nerding out with Eve, she’s reached her capacity for research talk for a while.

“Hopefully,” Lena says with a gracious smile as they hear someone tap on a mic. Turning around she listens to the opening statements and checks the program to see how many categories are going to be announced before hers and Alex’s. She tries to listen patiently, watching as young men and women in the other groups start to cheer as they get up after their names are called for awards. She also can’t help but notice the few crushed looks and tears of those that clap and shake hands with the winners.

“Now for the topics in biology,” the announcer states and the room goes still once again. Lena looks over to the other section to see Alex – the red head is gripping her program tight while her leg bounces nervously. Alex looks over briefly and makes eye contact with Lena who nods and smiles encouragingly. Lena can’t help but cross her fingers as the third place winner is called, and then the second – she can see Alex’s face fall and knows the other girl didn’t expect to get first place at all.

“The first place award in the biology division goes to … Alexandra Danvers for her research project – DNA methylation resulting in acute lymphoblastic leukemia – A study of epigenetic changes due to environmental factors in rats,” the man announces with a bright smile.

Alex is stunned initially to hear her name and the title of her project, but as soon as the news settles in she breaks into a bright grin. Getting up to go to the stage, shaking hands and accepting congratulations from her peers as she walks up to the stage. She almost feels like tears of joy are going to spring up as she walks across the stage and tips her head so the man can put a medal around her neck. She shakes his hand and heads back to her seat – looking down at the medal around her neck and the certificate in hand that certifies her win. As she sits down she immediately gets out her phone to text Kara, Maggie and her parents who she knows are anxiously awaiting the news.

“Alex stressed this whole time over nothing,” Jess comments with a smile.

“Now for the winners in the biomedical engineering category,” the announcer says while opening the sheet.

“Hopefully, we’ll be out our misery soon – my heart feels like it’s about beat right out of my chest,” Lena says as she reaches over to claps the other girls hand. With her other she crosses her fingers even though she really doesn’t believe in luck, nor has she been the luckiest of people anyway. But she does it all the same as they listen to the first two names go by, her heart starting to ache at the loss. But sure enough the announce reads off the card, “First place for biomedical engineer goes to Jessica Choi and Lena Luthor for their work ‘The use of carbon fiber filament to reinforce light-
weight, 3-D printed prosthetic components,”

Lena feels like she’s floating all the way to the stage, the weight of the medal placed around her neck seems surreal. It would seem that Jess seems to be having the same reaction – both of them grinning like they’d just won a Nobel Prize. The euphoric feeling continues for the rest of the evening, through a celebratory dinner that Cat Grant attends as well as the flight home. The feeling final starts to solidify into reality when Kara picks up the medal to look at it before laying back against her chest, beaming at her as she tells her, “I told you that you were worrying for nothing.”

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A week later in the lounge, Alex, Lucy, and Sam are sitting at their usual table in the corner working through the last papers and notes of their secondary school lives. Snack wrappers, and an assortment of soft drink bottles and coffee mugs are littered among the stacks of books, papers and open notebooks sprawled out over the table. Alex has currently finished the last of her essays and has fallen asleep on her stack of textbooks, a small pool of drool accumulating on the table. Sam’s fallen asleep as well leaning back in her chair with her arms crosses over her chest, case studies and other legal documents abandoned all around. Lucy is still typing away on the finishing touches for her essay looking rather focused yet annoyed that her essay isn’t quite up to her standards yet.

Lena and Kara are sitting near them, the two juniors are also stressing over the end of term exam periods and scrambling to finish the last of the academic things they’ve procrastinated on. Maggie, who finished ahead of time - surprising everyone - didn’t seem too concerned about exams, comes flouncing into the lounge and quickly raps on the table to wake them all up. Alex is grumbling as she shots her girlfriend a sour look but Maggie just teases, “Hey, wake up. You’re making a spectacle of yourself with all that drool, Danvers.”

“Fuck,” Alex huffs in exhaustion as she wipes away the drool with her hoodie sleeve only to look up and see that Maggie’s waving a stack of letters in her face. Immediately she goes from mostly asleep to wide awake and asks quickly, “Are those what I think they are?”

“Letters from universities?” Maggie asks with a wiry little grin, “Yep, Ms. Ellison asked me to deliver them post haste. We’ve got two for me, four for Sam, two for Lucy, and a whooping six for you. And judging by the fact it felt like I was carrying around a bunch of Sam’s law books I’m going to go ahead and say congratulations to the lot of us.”

Lucy is so nervous as she looks at the two letters, one from West Point and another from Annapolis, that she thinks she might throw up. Beside her Sam has taken the ripping a band aid off approach and is already tossing aside an envelope and unfolding a letter. Sam finishes opening all four of hers before Lucy has even contemplated opening her first – looking over Maggie’s beaming at her letters and Alex seems to be in the same boat as she just stares are hers like they’re a bomb about to explode in her face.

“You going to open that?” Sam asks dryly, looking over at Lucy who is still staring blankly at the front of the letters.

“Eventually, you going to tells us what yours said,” Lucy retorts as she tears off the corner of the first envelop and decides to just get on with it.

“Got into three out of the four, and two are offering scholarships,” Sam tells her, summarizing her letters quite quickly as she thinks about which college she would like to go to the most, “I’m leaning towards taking UCLA up on their offer, finance and accounting for pre-law sounds wonderful.”

“It sounds boring as hell, Arias,” Maggie teases with a grin as she adds, “But congrats anyway! I’m
heading to National City University, criminology major and chemistry minor. They’re going to give me a full ride and part of the program is doing a first responder internship.”

Lucy flips open the letter and reads the first line, a breath of relief escaping her as she breaks out into a bright grin. She doesn’t even need to open the second letter now, her first decision has accepted her and she’s not going to change her mind now, “Looks like I’m shipping out in July and heading to West Point in New York state.”

“Congratulations, Plebe,” Sam tells her with a grin, bumping Lucy’s shoulder with her own – she worries about Lucy’s safety and her future with the military but she’s glad that Lucy’s happy about her acceptance into the academy. “Danvers, you’re up.”

Kara and Lena have come closer, sharing in the joy and congratulations for their friends and knowing that next year it will be their turn to be fretting over letters and university placements. Kara hugs her sister, leaning her chin on her shoulder to see what letter she’s looking at and finds that there are two letter in particular that Alex is nervous about – one has the Harvard emblem and the other has the Stanford one. Kara knows how much time and effort Alex has put into her studies and that for Alex being the model student was part of her identity – it would really hurt her to get rejected.

“Come on, Alex,” Kara encourages softly, rubbing her sisters tightly knotted shoulders as she reminds her, “They’re just letters, whatever they say – good or bad – isn’t a reflection on you as a person. No matter what they say you’re still incredibly smart, talented, and if they don’t accept you it’s their loss.”

Alex can feel tears stinging in her eyes and her throat feels tight – she’s dealt with the anxiety and perfectionism for forever but in this moment it seems impossible to overcome. Gritting her teeth, she picks up the first letter – the one from Harvard – and tears the side off and fishes out the papers. She reads the first line and feels a bit of the tension ease, setting it aside before picking up the one for Stanford and tearing into it. Soon enough she’s ripped through the envelops for Penn, Duke, Emory, and Vanderbilt as well and sits there stunned. Out of all six she’d gotten into her top four and all of them were offering some type of funding. She can’t help the tears that trail down her cheeks as her friends gather around her and wrap her up in a group hug.

“Is this an ‘I’m-sorry-you-didn’t-get-into-the-school-you-wanted’ type of hug or is this more of the ‘Congrats-I-know-it’s-been-really-fucking-stressful’ type of hug?” Sam asks carefully, but when Alex starts to chuckle through the tears she figures it’s most likely the later.

“That last one,” Alex confirms as she brushes away tears as they break apart, the stress and the worry of the last few weeks of watching the heartbreak and happiness of her fellow seniors has finally lifted. Taking a breath Alex feels lighter and more relaxed than she has in a long time, as she reviews the letters and tells them, “I honestly think I’m probably going to go with my second choice of school – Stanford – because they made a better offer. They’re also in California so I won’t to be too far away from Kara.”

“You don’t have to worry about me,” Kara assures, but she smiles and hugs her sister even tighter, grateful that Alex is getting her moment to relax and just enjoy her successes thus far.

“Since I nominated you for a prefect position, and you’re my only sibling, I’m going to worry about you,” Alex says as she tugs Kara in and ruffles her hair playfully, hearing her sister grumble at the nomination as she tries to get Alex back.

“Oh, okay, you should call mom and dad, they’re going to be so happy for you and Maggie,” Kara tells her, finally brushing her off as she gets to sit back down and stare at the foreign language
notes she has yet to review, “Now go on, I’ve got to study.”

“For like the first time this week?” Lena teases, as she closes her engineering notes and leans back to rest her eyes for a moment. She knows it’s dangerous to close her eyes at this point, since she’s likely to take an impromptu nap but she doesn’t care at this point.

“Maybe,” Kara says with a pout, “I still have so much to do before exams, and they start tomorrow…”

When Kara finally finishes studying, well past lights out, she finally curls up next to Lena – smiling when the grumpy girl grumbles in her sleep but curls up against her nonetheless. Alex redoubles her efforts on revising for her biology and biochemistry exams, wanting to make sure that Stanford would be happy with her final scores. Lucy and Sam seem to be more at ease, taking a break with Maggie to get some more snacks and stretch their legs.

The next few days are nothing but exams and downtime for studying for even more exams – luckily the school is really polite about the whole process, extending study hours and making sure the girls have comfort food and fun snacks in the dining hall. The last couple days of exams Ms. Grant even lets them get away with not wearing uniforms since everyone is already getting anxious for graduation and summer break. The house awards banquet has rolled around and everyone is involved, much to Lena surprise she too is including as an award recipient for representing the house and school well.

At the house awards banquet Kara’s announced as Head Girl for the next school year and will inherit Alex’s responsibility of wrangling the house full of girls. The jovial blonde seems surprised that her fellow peers had suggested her for this position and Lena finds it amusing since Kara’s sweet and gentle nature is what endears her to everyone. The blonde has the crinkle as she tilts her head in confusion while staring at the pin Ms. Ellison has given her, “What?!”

Lena can’t stop laughing, grateful enough that that job doesn’t fall to her even though she knows she’s going to get roped into helping her girlfriend out. All the other girls seem pleased with the selection, quick to congratulate Kara and already making pleas to go easy on them at the start of the new term after summer’s over. Maggie hooks her arm around Kara’s neck and ruffles her hair as she tells her, “Karma’s a bitch!”

“Maggie,” Alex huffs out a laugh as she hugs her sister and tells her, “I can’t say I’m not sad you’re getting pay back. But no, seriously everyone loves you Kara and no one can say no to your puppy dog eyes – you’ll just have to learn to be a little firmer to keep the newbie in line.”

“I’m so glad it was you and not me,” Lena utters with relief, nudging Kara with her elbow as they sit down to wait for the prefects to be announced.

Ms. Ellison is handing out prefect pins Lena’s surprised to find out that she’s first on the list – a little dumbfounded when the woman places the pin in her hand and congratulates her. Lena stares at the pin and wonders how much trouble she’s in for when they’re senior year gets rolling in a few months’ time.

“At least I’m not in this alone,” Kara quips with a grin as she helps Lena put the pin on her uniform jacket – making sure that it’s straight and neat so it meets the younger girl’s standards.

“I’m not sure how much help I’m going to be,” Lena tells her with a wiry smile as she clasps Kara’s hand in her own, “But it’s definitely going to be interesting.”

“That it will be.”
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