The End of All Things

by DPKhor

Summary

Okay, so 3x18 left me feeling like shit between the Sam/Reign struggle and the Supercorp angst, so here's where I diverge from the canon storyline to dive into the depths of Kara's mind throughout the "Elevator Scene" and the events that followed.

I also head-canon Mon-El as a Cool Uncle™ and as the mature person he says he's become so none of that "I'm married but I'm still in love with my ex nonsense" but more of a "I'm here if you need someone to talk to and, trust me, being in the future is difficult but I hope I can help you out" kind of thing.

This will be a three-shot sort of thing because I have zero ability to write a one-shot angst fic.

Notes

I wrote this at midnight the day before my college's orientation week and the tone of the fic was heavily inspired by Panic! at the Disco's "The End of All Things", particularly the cover by AzirovMusic on YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4_9izDaZhKs) which I just put on loop while I typed the story out.

It originally set the tone for a different fic involving future events and kids, but the more I thought about 3x18, the more I had to write it, so enjoy or don't.

Whichever comes first
See the end of the work for more notes.
"Supergirl crossed a line," Lena scoffed, shaking her head slightly. "I can never trust her again."

Kara felt her heart clench, never truly realising how much she cherished her friendship with Lena until she heard Lena express nothing but disdain and disappointment in her. Kara thought back to their exchange in Lena's lab.

"I do trust you, Lena," Kara insisted, in a feeble attempt to mend the bridge she had burned with the younger woman. Lena didn't smile, as she did all the times before, expression staying neutral as she tilted her chin slightly. Her eyes expressed a degree of disbelief and anger.

"Good."

That was all she had to say, but Kara caught the underlying sarcasm. The reporter understood it. She had spend the entirety of the first year Lena moved to National City convincing her that she was good, that she was kind, that Kara trusted and believed in her and Supergirl ruined it all with one stupid comment.

"You really do have a god-complex."

Kara remembered the anger, the surprise that grasped her by the throat at Lena's comment. She remembered the barrage of insults barrelling forward from the back of her mind, festering just behind her tongue. She was ready to fire back, to hurt Lena and-

-suddenly, everything clicked. The reality washed over her like a bucket of iced water. Lena was right - as she was about a lot of things. Kara did have a god-complex. Supergirl didn't ruin her relationship with Lena, Kara did. Kara Zor-El.

Kara trusted Lena. No, she trusts her.

She blinked back the tears forming, taking a deep breath.

Not enough. She didn't trust her enough when she told her she did. All this time she professed her
undying faith in Lena when deep down, she knew she was just worried about another Lex. What a hypocrite.

Her argument about Kryptonite wasn't a product of her rage. It was personal. Back when the DEO kept Kryptonite, Clark was the one who insisted they handed it over to him, and they did because he feared it. So did Kara. Having Kryptonite lying around was one thing - it was limited. Pack it away or destroy it and it would be gone. Lena was different. She didn't just have Kryptonite - she could make it and she could supercharge it. It made Kara's fear fly through the roof and her fight instincts kicked it. The fear, the uncertainty about secrets Lena hid from her kicked in. If Lena could make Kryptonite, she wouldn't just be another Lex. She would be the person Lex wanted to be but never could be. Lena could be cold, ruthless and dangerous - everything Kara was afraid of. Her intellect could easily match Brainy's if she wasn't held back by moral codes or obligations. Where Lex failed, Kara knew Lena would succeed - and it was this fear that manifested itself lately.

It was a poor excuse. Kara thought about how James was able to look past the biases he so strongly held to the past years to the point where he lied to her, because he trusted Lena. How the tables have turned. Kara never could because that's who she was, she realised. Someone who struggled with coming to terms with realities - someone who wanted their theories and fears to be true because that is what they can expect and plan for.

She was a horrible friend.

"Kara!"

Lena looked ecstatic to see her in the elevator.

Glancing over to her side, she saw Lena's expression hardened in a glare, no doubt lost in her own mind. Memories of Patricia Arias resurfaced.

"I pushed her away when I should've helped her."

Lena's expression when she mentioned Supergirl the first time around. Discontempt, disgust, sorrow, hate.

If Lena were to turn evil, it would be her fault.
What had she done?

The elevator doors opened and Lena moved to step outside. Time slowed down and Kara reached out to grab her wrist.

"Lena, wait-

Lena stopped one foot out the elevator, surprise etched on her features.

"I need to tell you something," she continued, joining Lena outside. The doors slid shut, and they were left in the darkened hallway, lit only by lamp on the wall near the corner.

"Can't it wait?" Lena asked, a slight smile on her face. "The ice-cream's going to melt."

Lena doesn't smile at Supergirl, anymore. Kara breathed heavily, realising that her next action will crack open an abyss in their relationship. She took off her glasses, feeling her eyes burn as the tears formed.

"My name is Kara Zor-El," she said, shakily. "On Earth, I took the name Kara Danvers and later on the mantel of..."

"...Supergirl."

Kara wasn't sure if it was relief, admiration or hidden fury in Lena's voice, but given the situation, she knew it was the third.

"I-"

"How could you say all those things to me?" Lena hissed quietly. "You, of all people. I trusted you, Kara, I-"

The heiress blinked rapidly, taking a few deep breaths as she straightened herself. "Do you expect me to forgive you now that you're telling the truth?"
"No," Kara responded, hating how her voice cracked. "I don't expect you to ever forgive me and you have every right-

"-oh, I don't need your permission to be furious with you," Lena growled. "You dared to call me a liar, imply that I was a villain with one persona while you were playing Two-Face with me?"

Kara swallowed thickly. She deserved every bit of Lena's unbridled rage.

"And James? Does he know?"

Kara nodded meekly.

"Of course he does. He would know-"

"It's not his fault he didn't tell you. I didn't-"

"You didn't want me to know?" Lena narrowed her eyes. "So, what? I'm the only one you didn't tell?"

Kara didn't dare meet her eyes, and it was confirmation enough for Lena.

"I'm sorry."

The words were barely a whisper, and Kara was shaking.

"Why?" Lena asked, staring at the stupid bulb to stop herself from crying.

"Brainy was right. I was afraid-I am afraid," the Kryptonian shook her head. "I've been afraid all this time but I just didn't want to come to terms with it."
"Afraid of me turning into Lex?" Lena scoffed. "What happened to all the talk of me being better than Lex and being better than Lillian?"

Kara didn't say anything, squeezing her eyes shut as a tear rolled down her cheek.

Lena stared at her, bewildered. "You really have nothing to say for yourself, do you?"

Kara wetted her lips, shaking her head.

"Figures."

The sound of her footsteps echoed down the hall. Kara stood there, frozen by the elevator. She heard Lena exhale shakily, fabric rustling as she sniffled a bit before she knocked against solid wood. The door opened and she heard Alex's voice greeting her quietly, Ruby's coming from further inside. Alex raised the question of Kara's whereabouts and Lena's response was dismissive.

The door shut and Kara's phone buzzed.

Alex [21:43]: Where are you? Lena's here with the ice cream.

Kara wiped at her eyes before sending back a quick reply.

Kara [21:44]: Sorry, I was distracted by a puppy outside. Just got out of the elevator.

Alex would know she was lying. The elevator only dinged once earlier, after all. But at this point, Kara didn't care anymore. She didn't even know who she was other than a liar and a hypocrite.

She reached Alex's door, sliding her glasses onto her face and plastering a smile on her face. When Alex opened the door, her expression was one of confusion. Before her sister could ask any questions, Kara made a beeline for Ruby, comforting the girl over the revelation that Sam was Reign. All the while, she tried (and failed) to ignore Lena's burning stare and Alex's quiet questions of concern.
Their ice-cream eating, Disney binge-watching activities came to an end near the stroke of midnight. Ruby was half-asleep on the couch, her head in Alex's lap. The redhead brushed her fingers through Ruby's hair, eyes shifting between Kara and Lena, who hadn't spoken a word to each other.

The credits began to roll and Kara stood up, brushing her hands on her pants.

"I should go," she shook her head. "Lots of things to do tomorrow."

Ruby sat up, hugging Kara tightly.

"Stay safe."

"You, too," Kara nodded, kissing the top of her head. She hugged Alex briefly before stepping back and picking up her bag.

"Goodnight," she bid them, turning to Lena. "...bye."

Lena didn't respond, tilting her head slightly instead. Kara clenched her jaw, turning on her heel to head out.

The superhero heard fabric rustle as Alex turned to Lena, when Ruby settled back down, dozing off. Her heartrate evened out, and she fell asleep.

"What's going on?" Alex asked softly.

"It's nothing," Lena responded. "Do you mind if I stay the night?"

"Knock yourself out," Alex shook her head. "Ruby will be glad to have you here."

Kara sighed quietly as the elevator doors slid open and she stepped inside. She wondered if there was ever anything she could do to mend her relationship with Lena.
As she stepped out into the night, she realised she wasn't afraid of who Lena was. She was afraid of who she could be.

Kara had to make this right somehow but she didn't know how to.

Looking back on everything, she didn't even know who she was anymore.
Kara tapped her foot restlessly as J'onn briefed another group of DEO agents about Reign's newly acquired powers and the proper procedures to take if Reign somehow escaped and began another round of terror attacks. She had been so lost in her thoughts, so worried about her predicament with Lena that she didn't realise the room had gone silent.

"Is there something else you'd like to add, Supergirl?" J'onn asked, concerned.

"Sorry, no, I was just--...I was just thinking, is all," Kara shook her head. "Please, continue."

"As I was saying," J'onn shook his head. "Our primary concern is keeping civilians out of harms way in the event of another Worldkiller attack. I have Agent Schott designing defensive gadgets to aid in the fights."

He looked around the room. "If there are no more questions, you are dismissed. Supergirl, a word."

The agents began to file out of the room, leaving Kara and J'onn alone.
"Is something wrong?" J'onn asked.

"It's nothing," Kara huffed, folding her arms.

"I might not be able to read your mind, but I can tell when something isn't right," he pointed out, gesturing for her to sit down.

She plopped down on the chair, sighing heavily. "It's the stupid crinkle, isn't it?"

"That and the fact that I've known you for quite some time," he said, offering her a small smile.

Kara sighed again. "It's...I told Lena about...who I am."

She gestured to her suit. "And now she hates me for it."

"You told her?" J'onn hummed. Kara groaned.

"I know I shouldn't have but she was really upset and..." Kara covered her head with her arms, pressing her forehead against the table.

After a few moments of silence, she looked at him. "Aren't you going to say anything?"

"What do you want me to say?" J'onn furrowed his brow. "I can't say you did the right thing but it was something you couldn't avoid. Eventually, whether you told her or not, she would find out. After all, she's not exactly the kind of person a pair of glasses and a ponytail can fool."

Kara frowned. "That's true."

"But you can't run from this, now that you've told her," J'onn said. "You can't take it back, you can't undo what you've done."
"...but..." he paused. "...you can do better than before. Learn from your mistakes - own up to them, and be better."

Kara turned her eyes to the ground, letting his words sink in.

"How do I do that when she hates me?"

J'onn chuckled quietly. "The funny thing about emotions is that they are the essence of our humanity, the very structure that holds our soul together - but you have to remember they aren't all the same. Happiness can come in the form of joy, ecstasy, euphoria. Sadness can be grievance, depression, disappointment. Emotions do not have one specific form in their entirety - it's a spectrum.

"Lena might seem that she hates you, but don't forget that you are her best friend," J'onn continued. "When someone close to you finally reveals a closely guarded secret, it...it is bound to hurt one way or another. I felt the same way when my father finally told me about his condition. It isn't the fact that he told me that it hurts, but rather it's the denial...that I had put myself in. It was difficult to accept that someone you knew...actually turned out to be someone you didn't know at all. I'm sure you know what that's like."

Kara remembered learning the truth about her parents, the heartbreak she felt and the disgust of being a survivor. It took her a long time but she finally stopped hating herself for it, knowing that she wasn't a mistake, and she wasn't going to be one. She had to relearn everything about her parents - and it hadn't been easy.

"Yeah," Kara finally nodded.

"Give her time to sort out her feelings, then talk to her," J'onn advised.

"What if she never forgives me?" Kara blurted out. "I...I don't know what I'd do if I lost her."

J'onn furrowed her brow.

"When...When Mon-El was gone, and I was stuck in the abyss of my mind...only two people managed to pull me out of it," Kara shook her head. "Only Alex and Lena got through my head and knocked some sense into me. Now, Alex is tangled up with Sam and Ruby and Lena isn't talking to
me - I just...it feels like I'm losing Krypton all over again."

J’onn scratched his chin, humming.

"I can't speak for Lena, and I can't predict what she'll do next, but she is a woman of reason," J’onn pointed out. "Give this some time to cool off and talk to her about it."

Kara's shoulders slumped forward and she nodded.

"Okay."

J’onn squeezed her shoulder. "I'm sure it'll turn out alright."

Kara sighed. "...I hope."

"Go home. Take some time off," J’onn told her. "This Reign business can wait a day."

"Are you sure? I-..."

"It won't do us any good if you go out there with this still weighing heavily on your mind," J’onn pointed out.

"Yeah, you're right," Kara frowned. "At least with Reign restrained, we'll have some time to gather our wits."

"Right," J’onn nodded. "I'll see you tomorrow."

"Thanks, J’onn," Kara murmured, pulling him into a hug, which he returned wholly.

"Of course."
She pulled away after a moment, trudging down the hall to head for the balcony.

"Kara, hey!"

She glanced to her side as Mon-El jogged over to catch up with her. "Hi, Mon-El."

He smiled widely at her. "Up for some training?"

Kara bit her lip, shaking her head. "Sorry, I just..."

His expression changed, growing worried. "Is everything okay?"

She exhaled slowly. "No, it's...it's the whole thing with Lena and me, I just...don't know what to do."

He furrowed his brow. "Is there anything I can do to help?"

"I told her about who I am," Kara shrugged. "She reacted badly, clearly, and I completely deserve it."

"Hey, don't say that," he chided, trailing after her as she moved to stand out on the balcony.

"But I do," she insisted. "I said all those awful things to her, and I can't justify that. She's my friend, my best friend, and I should've told her the truth from the very beginning and I should've been a better friend. Period."

He pursed his lips. "This is really bothering you, huh?"

She bowed her head, nodding dejectedly.
"Did you mean what you said?" he asked, after a moment.

"I was angry, and worried, and terrified-"

"That wasn't the question," he cut her off, raising an eyebrow.

"I-..." Kara bit the inside of her cheek, taking a deep breath. "I did and I shouldn't have-"

"Stop," Mon-El held out his hand. "Stop dwelling on regrets."

He turned his head back to face the city. "She means a lot to you, doesn't she?"

"Of course she does," Kara admitted. "She's...Words can't even begin to describe her. From the beginning, there's been this...familiarity between us and...and it's the reason we've been friends."

"And who is she friends with, exactly?" he drummed his fingers on the cement.

"Huh?" Kara furrowed her brow.

Mon-El glanced at her knowingly. "Kara Danvers or Supergirl?"

"I don't-...I don't know," Kara frowned. "Whenever I show up as either, at some point there's...there's this click and I forget that I'm supposed to be playing a role. I catch myself doing things and saying things I normally don't as either Kara Danvers or Supergirl. It's easy to be around her - I don't feel the need to maintain either persona. I just feel-"

"-safe?" he finished.

"Yeah," she agreed. "There's just...something about her...that makes me feel...safe, secure and...more confident."
"She made you feel that way," he pointed out. "So why were you afraid?"

Kara let out a pained laugh. "Because there's always a catch. My parents were the greatest parents I've ever had - but then they turned out to be some of the worst people ever. Kal-El survived the explosion - but then he abandoned me with a family I have never even met before. Alex has always been there for me - but she needs her own life, too. I found you, and then I lost you but you came back but...you're married.

"The world..." she exhaled shakily. "...doesn't revolve around me, and everyone I know seems to be leaving me one way or another. I've grown to expect it, and to fear it. I'm...I've lost people along the way - my parents, my old friends, Jeremiah, Maggie, you...and I don't think I can stand to lose any more people."

Mon-El looked down. "But you'll pull through."

She looked at him, brow furrowed. He smiled slightly.

"You may have lost so many people along the way, but you've gained so many more, too," he reminded her. "And, you know, despite being a thousand years in the future, the Legion will always have your back."

She forced a smile. "Thanks."

"If...I can put in my two cents, I...think it's a good thing that you told her," he said, quietly. "Even if she didn't react favourably, you told her the truth - something that you've been wanting to do for a while now, right?"

"Yeah," Kara nodded.

"That's good. The two of you might have...hit a metaphorical speed bump now, but you can consider this a clean slate of some kind," he continued. "You can't go back on your words, you can't take back what you said - but you can move forward.

"You can sort things out and come out better," he added. "That's who you are. You take these punches, you adapt, and you take your own swings."
Kara looked up towards the sky. "You're right. I don't give up."

He chuckled. "No, you don't."

She felt a little bit better after thinking about J'onn and Mon-El's words. This wasn't something irreparable. She'll throw as much metaphorical duct tape as she can to keep her relationship with Lena intact.

"There's something that...I need to tell you, too," Mon-El spoke up after a moment.

"What is it?" Kara furrowed her brow, a million possibilities running through her mind; Brainy contacting him to tell him that their odds have just dropped, another secret Worldkiller lurking on the other side of the Solar System, a seventy percent off on potstickers at her favourite Chinese place.

"It's...about us," he said slowly. "I...I still love you."

Kara clenched her jaw. "Mon-El, you're-"

"I know," he quickly added. "I just wanted to say I still love you - not as a significant other, no. I can't...I can't forget everything you've done for me while I was here, but the feelings I have for you...They're changed."

Kara felt another weight lift off her shoulders.

"I will always love you, Kara," he admitted. "But my heart belongs to Imra. I'm sorry."

"Don't apologise," she brushed him off. "You both...You deserve each other. I'm happy for you, really."

He grinned. "I'm a pretty lucky guy, aren't I?"
"You are," Kara nodded, laughing quietly. "Imra's an amazing woman."

"So is Lena."

Kara exhaled slowly, smiling faintly. "She is."

"Are you going to talk to her?" Mon-El asked, after a moment.

"Not yet," Kara shook her head. "J'onn told me to give her some time. I was thinking of heading back home - maybe binge watch a little bit of Brooklyn Nine-Nine and figure out what I'm going to say to Lena."

"Alright. I'll help J'onn hold down the fort," Mon-El mock-saluted her before she took off in the sky.

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Winn glanced at Lena as she studied a sample under the microscope. Sam, or Reign, was still unconscious, held in some sort of prototype suspended animation. He tinkered around with the core of Alex's gun, fine-tuning the relays so Alex wouldn't have to reload as often in battle.

Lena let out another sigh in frustration and Winn heard a crack, followed by a soft-

"Fuck."

He pursed his lips, setting down the screwdriver.

"Is...everything okay?" he asked.

Lena's attention snapped to him and a chill went down his spine at the intensity of her glare.
"Not that it's my business or anything," he quickly added.

Lena's expression softened and she pinched her brow. "I'm fine."

"Okay," Winn backed off, not wanting to overstress her.

"I can trust you, right?"

He looked at her, taken aback.

"Uh, yeah, sure," he said. "But I'm...pretty bad at keeping secrets. I mean, all Alex had to do was threaten me with a finger and I told her who Guardian was."

Lena stared at him, in amusement or concern, he couldn't tell.

"So, you know, then?" she asked. "Who am I kidding? Of course you do."

"Uh, know...know what?" Winn furrowed his brow.

"Supergirl's real identity," Lena sighed.

"Oh, uh...yeah," he nodded, sheepishly. "I was actually the third person she told, after Alex and James. Well, fourth if you add J'onn. Fifth if you count her mom. Six if you count her cousin."

He stopped himself from rambling. "I take it she finally told you?"

"She has really bad timing," Lena shook her head, picking up a screw and studying it meticulously.

"Well, any time after the second week of being best friends was pretty much too late," Winn pointed out. "I think."
Lena's shoulders slumped forward. "Why didn't she just tell me then? She just...kept toying with me."

"As the son of a serial killer notorious for toys, 'toying' is a little bit of a sensitive word," Winn tried to joke. "But...in all seriousness, you would not believe how torn up over this she was. She wouldn't stop rambling about it."

Lena furrowed her brow. "She told you?"

"Not exactly. She was punching out steel dummies and I was in my little corner in the training room - and she just didn't see me," he shrugged. "She wanted to tell you but she mentioned something about already having twenty targets on your back - and she didn't want to add on to that."

"So she didn't want to get me hurt so she decided to say all those things?" Lena frowned.

"Well, you know how she can be," Winn turned his attention to the parts on his table. "Rash, a little self-righteous, proud...but she's also kind, gentle..."

He pressed his lips together in a thin line. "That's what makes Kara authentically Kara. I don't think she meant what she said to you."

"The fact that the thoughts even crossed her mind says that she meant it," Lena huffed.

"Not-...I mean," he groaned. "I am terrible at this."

"You are," Lena agreed.

He pouted, before clutching a broken fragment left behind from the Worldkillers' attack on the lab. "Have you heard about Red Kryptonite?"

Lena vaguely remembered the headlines in National City over two years ago.
"It alters a Kryptonian's mind, correct?"

Winn nodded. "Kind of. It actually removes their inhibitions. Guilt, moral obligations, social constructs, they say what they want to say when they want to say it. When Kara was affected by it, she went off on everyone. Cat, James, Alex, J'onn, me.

"What I'm trying to say is that everyone has these thoughts. These biases against everyone, even people we know and love," he continued. "She scared a lot of people when she was affected."

"She nearly killed Cat Grant."

"But she didn't," Winn said. "She nearly killed Alex too, but the thing is she didn't. She could've killed them both easily to make her statement. To show people she was unstoppable. She didn't have to save Cat - but she did and I think it's because deep down she might be capable of hurt but not murder."

Lena clenched her jaw, turning her gaze away from the technician. She stared at the glowing forcefield containing Reign.

"But she wasn't affected by Red Kryptonite then, was she?"

"Listen," Winn groaned. "Red Kryptonite was the product of Max Lord's attempt to recreate Kryptonite. When you said you learnt to make it, you couldn't be one hundred percent sure it would do what you wanted it to do, could you?"

"Well, no-"

"Exactly. Kara's fears originate from rational places," Winn crossed his arms. "You can't blame her for being afraid. What she said wasn't right - and it wasn't justified either, but you can't ignore the fact that she does care about you."
"Take me instead," Kara pleaded when Reign had her hand around Lena's throat, every twitch of muscle cutting off the airflow to her lungs.

"Some times...when you're too close, you just can't help hurting someone else," Winn shook his head. "Despite what you try to do, the closer you get, the further you grow apart - but the hurt is good. The-The words you threw at each other - they're good."

Lena frowned. "They are?"

"Because now you have no choice but to accept them and move on," he said, shrugging. "I get a bit of what you're going through. When my mom left and showed up again, I wanted nothing to do with her - but where did that leave me? Miserable. The anger will fester, grow into something deeper, darker, and it will gnaw at you until you face the facts.

"You can't run from it, and maybe you don't want to talk about it - but...I'll be here if you do," he said, grinning slightly. "And who knows, I might build you a suit one day."

"Do you do that often?"

"I designed Kara's suit, James's suit, Alex's. J'onn won't let me touch his, but I also fixed Mon-El's suit," he shrugged.

Lena blinked, pursing her lips. "I'll think about it. On another note...you're right."

"I am?" Winn looked astonished.

"There's nowhere for me and Kara to go but forward. Especially with the threat of Reign and that demon about...whether we like it or not, we'll have to work this out."

"I...think it's a little bit more complicated than that," James spoke up. Lena looked at him, surprised that he was there.

"James, what are you doing here?"
He shrugged, smiling sheepishly. "I came to check on you."

"Uh...should I...give you two—yeah, yeah, I should," Winn shook his head, backing away. "Don't touch my stuff."

And he left the lab.

James put his hands into his pocket, exhaling slowly. "I heard that Kara told you the truth."

Lena nodded, not too keen on discussing the topic of Kara and Supergirl at this point.

"She did."

He leaned against the table. "How are you doing?"

"Honestly?" Lena raised an eyebrow. "Terrible. I don't understand why she didn't just tell me. Logically, the longer you put something off, the worse someone will react."

"You didn't seem too phased when I told you I was Guardian," he furrowed his brow.

"Because you told me before I found out," Lena shook her head.

James blinked. "Wait, you knew?"

"That my best friend was a superhero? Of course," Lena rolled her eyes. "Anyone with eyes could see that. Glasses and a clumsy attitude don't do much, anyway."

James stared at her in amazement. "When did you know?"
"Since she walked into my office with Clark Kent," Lena shook her head. "Oh, come on, James, don't act so surprised. I figured out Alex worked for a shadow government organisation, did you really think I wouldn't know about Kara's alter ego?"

"No-no," James shook his head. "I just...you didn't know who Guardian was before I told you."

"Guardian was a vigilante who did good things under the radar. I never interacted much with Guardian anyway, but I'll admit I had a few suspicions about his identity," Lena shook her head. "Nothing conclusive, however, and I'm glad you trust me enough to tell me the truth."

He gave her a small smile. "Of course."

Lena folded her arms. "I just...She knows basically everything about me. I...get that she wanted to protect me - but to say all those things and pretend she didn't know? It's like she's a completely different person as Supergirl."

"Maybe she is," James agreed. "...You know how old I was the first time cops put cuffs on me?"

"I didn't think you were the kind to get arrested."

He laughed, uneasily. "You'd be surprised how often it happens to people like me."

Lena faltered a little. "How old were you?"

"Seven," he answered. "I was seven years old."

My family and I were taking a vacation. We were staying at this nice hotel and, uh, my cousins and I decided to go out to the grounds and play hide and go seek."

He rubbed his chin. "One minute I was trying my damndest not to be found and the next I'm shielding my eyes from police lights...and these four huge cops they came and they pulled us out of our hiding places and the whole time we're saying, 'Wait, wait, what are you doing? We're-we're staying here'."
"But none of believed that we were supposed to be there. None of them believed that we belonged," James shook his head, eyes glossed over. "So my oldest cousin must've been about eleven and I was...I was the smallest but they slapped cuffs on all of us anyway - and my arms were so little they had to put them on my forearms.

Lena clenched her jaw, in disbelief that he had to go through this when he was only seven years old.

"...and then they marched us into the hotel lobby like a bunch of criminals," he continued. "My mom was there and then they believed us. She kept yelling, 'Get those cuffs off my boys! those cuffs-'...

He turned his head, wiping his tears away. Lena grasped his hands, running her thumbs over the back of them.

"James...What happened to you was...horrible," Lena shook her head, unable to find another word to describe it.

James sighed. "Racism is the oldest form of bullying but when I became Guardian, I put that mask on...it was strangely liberating. It was the first time in my life that I had the opportunity to be judged on my actions and my heart not how I looked."

"It shouldn't have to be this way."

"But it is. If I was out there, and I took off my mask, I guarantee you people won't be too happy about Guardian's presence," James frowned. "It's a similar thing for Kara, too. The world might be accepting of aliens, but there are, and there always will be, people who hate them."

Lena turned her head away, silent.

"I'm not saying what she did was right," James shook his head. "I understand how you feel - and if I were in your position, I'd probably feel the same way. When...When I met Kara, she was already Supergirl, you know, so I never knew what she was like before that.

"But Kara Danvers and Supergirl have always been two separate personas of who Kara really is," James said. "There are some situations when Supergirl can't save the day, and only Kara Danvers
can and vice versa. She's learnt to switch so seamlessly between these two personas that...

He furrowed his brow. "I...I guess some times it's difficult for her to even...know who she is - which role she's supposed to play."

"How about none?" Lena asked.

"Well, she doesn't know that. No one has ever needed 'Kara Zor-El'. Only either Kara Danvers or Supergirl. If you want her to be completely honest with you, tell her you want that."

Lena sighed. "And how exactly do I do that?"

James shrugged, slightly. "She's pretty torn up about this, too."

Lena realised he was right when he said the situation was a lot more complicated than she initially thought. She rested her palms on the edge of the table.

"I'll...I'll talk to her," she shook her head.

"Good," James squeezed her shoulder comfortingly. "If you need anything-"

"-I know where to find you," she smiled slightly, shaking her head. He nodded, chuckling.

"Lena?"

Lena turned at her name, watching as Kara walked in, in her Supergirl regalia.

James looked at Lena, ready to step in if she wasn't ready to talk.

"Kara," Lena tilted her chin slightly. "...Let's talk."
"Winn and I will stay here, and let you know if anything happens," James offered.

"Thank you," Lena smiled gratefully, squeezing his hand slightly before she brushed past Kara, heading out of the lab.

Chapter End Notes

Next chapter will be The Talk.
The elevator ride was silent, and painfully awkward. Kara didn't want to ruin their already ruined relationship any further. She wanted to say a million things, but she didn't know how to. She could hear Lena's rapid heartbeat, the blood rushing through her veins. If she focused hard enough, she could hear Lena's muscles stretching and contracting with every breath, the flutter of her eyelids and-

*DING!*

Kara's eyes snapped shut, wincing at the sudden overload as she readjusted her hearing.

"Come on."

Lena's voice sounded cold and angry, but Kara picked up what she hoped was...well, *hope*. She hurried after Lena, following her into the office.

"Do you want anything to drink?"

Kara watched as she poured herself a glass of scotch. Or was that whiskey? Or bourbon, she honestly didn't know.

"Um...water's fine."

Lena set down her glass on the coffee table, and Kara's on the adjacent side.
"So, we need to talk, huh?"

Kara smiled weakly in reply.

Lena downed her drink in one gulp, pouring herself another one.

"Why didn't you just tell me?"

Kara swallowed thickly, wringing her hands. "I don't know. In the beginning, it was because I was worried."

"About me being another Lex?" Lena scoffed.

"Yes," Kara answered earnestly. "But you proved me wrong. Time and time again, you...you rose up and proved me wrong. That's why I...that's why I became your friend."

"And you still didn't tell me," Lena looked at her icily.

"No," Kara nodded, ashamed. "I didn't. I didn't know how you would react and I didn't want to lose you. I...You mean a lot to me, Lena, and...and I didn't want to lose what we had."

"So you decided to keep lying to me," Lena folded her arms, downing her drink again.

"I didn't want things to change."

"And how was that supposed to keep things the same way?" Lena demanded.

Kara shrinked a little, and Lena felt terrible.

"I'm...sorry," Lena shook her head.
"No, you have nothing to be sorry about. This is my fault - I...I made the decision not to tell you, so it's on me," Kara quickly said. "I...I don't know how to justify my actions - because they were wrong. I should've trusted you and I shouldn't have been afraid."

"You had good reason to be," Lena interjected softly.

"There's no point regretting things now," Kara sighed. "I know I...I have changed things completely between us - but I just want you to know that...that, if you still want me, then I'll be better."

Lena turned her head away, so Kara wouldn't see the tears in her eyes.

"I visited Lex recently. I was still owed one last visit," Lena said. "He tried to convince me to help him - so that he could help me defeat Reign. He said the same thing - 'I'll be better'."

It was a cruel move to compare Kara's apology to Lex's attempt to gain Lena's help.

"I didn't believe him, of course," Lena stared at her empty glass. "...but I...I believe you."

Kara looked at her, eyes wide.

"I...Somewhat, I understand the explanation for your actions," Lena exhaled slowly. "I can't say I forgive you - not yet. I still...You've been a friend to me from the beginning - as both your personas."

"I don't expect you to forgive me," Kara spoke softly.

"I...I just want to ask you one thing," Lena drummed her fingers against the glass. "...you said that I meant a lot to you. What do you mean by that?"

Kara swallowed, staying silent. For a moment, Lena expected her to come up with a huge lie.
"My father was a scientist - his name was Zor-El. Kryptonian females take their father's name as their last, while the male carries their family name. My mother was a judge on Krypton, her name was Alura In-Ze. She had a twin sister, my aunt, Astra, who was married to Non. My aunt was a general in the Kryptonian army, and Non was a lieutenant," Kara started. "I was born on the 13th Sun of Rao's Grace in the 174th Year of Peace. Growing up, I tagged along with my father to his workshop where he'd come up with some new revolutionary idea he would have to propose to the Science Guild.

"Watching him work was always interesting - it was like he knew everything there was to know about the entire universe. I remember whenever he would hit a tough spot, he'd talk to me - and I would try to come up with a crazy solution. He made me feel like I was the most important person in the world," Kara laughed softly. "He...He made me love science, and I worked hard, studying and acing every test I was thrown - all to join the Science Guild and become a great scientist, just like him.

"Then...I was thirteen when I received the notice from the Science Guild - that I had passed the entrance exams and I would have to take the pledge to become a full-fledged member of the guild. It was the best day of my life," Kara continued. "Then...the tremors started. Everything blurred together. They sent me in a pod with my cousin - on a course to Earth. The only problem was that Krypton exploded as I left and my pod was knocked off course into the Phantom Zone."

"A place where time doesn't pass," Lena realised.

Kara nodded. "I spent...twenty four Earth years trapped in the Phantom Zone before my pod got loose and not long after, I crash landed on Earth. It was...difficult adjusting."

"Did your cousin find you?"

"He did," Kara nodded. "He...left me in the care of the Danvers. He visited a lot in the beginning, mediating our conversations but as time passed, the visits grew shorter until they stopped altogether. I hated what he did to me - abandoning me with a bunch of strangers in a world that was too bright and too loud. You know? We were...we were family. We were supposed to stick together."

She exhaled shakily, wiping at the tears that formed in her eyes.

"He had made his own life - one where I didn't even exist until I crashed into Earth," Kara continued.
"You two seemed close enough when we met," Lena pointed out, pouring herself another glass.

"You...you knew?"

"I knew from the start," Lena nodded.

"Why didn't you say anything?" Kara asked, guiltily.

"It wasn't my secret," Lena shrugged.

Kara was silent for a moment. Thunder boomed outside, followed by the gentle patter of rain.

"I hated what he did to me - but I do still love him. I always have," Kara sighed. "Kryptonians hold their families at the highest level, after all. Growing up, I never felt like Earth was my home. It never felt...right. Having Alex around made things easier, she made things easier to handle. Earth...might not have been my home, but Alex...Alex made it seem close enough.

Kara inhaled deeply. "...rurrelahs."

Lena furrowed her brow.

"It's Kryptonian for 'home'. That's..." Kara blinked. "...that's what you mean to me."

Lena waited for her to elaborate.

"It wasn't...immediate. When we first met, you were just another person on this planet - but when we became friends...we..." Kara paused. "...things turned out to be different when we were friends. You started sharing all these new inventions with me - and you would always get so excited, it-..."

Kara was breathless. "...it was just like when I was a kid again. You...you reminded me of the love that I had for science back then - and...still do. In a way...you were the home that I never got to
Lena stared at her hands. "...you were the family that I always wanted. One that was constantly supportive, but ready to step in whenever I was in over my head. One that looked at flaws and called them good."

An uncomfortable silence passed over them once again.

"I don't want to lose you, Lena."

Lena felt panic swell inside her and she stood up, taking quick strides over to the balcony door. She stared out at the city, swallowing thickly.

'I don't want to lose you either,' she wanted to say but all that left her lips were-

"You should go."

Lena heard a quiet sigh, and the fabric of the cape swishing as Kara stood up. Lena heard the sound of her boots on the carpeted floor as the Girl of Steel crosses the room to the door.

"...Okay."

The handle turned and another swell of emotion rose within Lena.

'Stay,' Lena thought, curling her hand over her chest.

"I'll...get out of your hair."

The door swung open.

'Don't go,' Lena wanted to plead. 'Don't leave me again.'
She didn't understand why she couldn't just say those words to Kara; why she couldn't just forgive her. Was it pride? Arrogance?

She didn't feel differently for Kara; a lot of her feelings remained the same, though they were all tinged with hurt. So, why can't she just own what Kara had told her - the truth about her past, everything that Lena wanted to know about her.

Time had slowed down, Kara's feet stepping over the threshold.

It was the broken trust. It was biased of her to even think that Kara was the only one at fault. Lena goaded her into the arguments, adding fuel to the fire. Lena told her own lies, she had her own secrets - she had no right, and at the same time, she had every right to be angry about Kara's actions. Kara was willing to do anything to be apart of Lena's life, if proven by her earlier confession, but Lena wasn't ready for the same commitment. Her life had been filled with disappointments - her family turning out to be a whole bunch of sociopathic psychopaths who lied to her for years, her best friend turning out to be a superhero who also insulted her to her face, her close friend turning out to be an alter ego to the world's most dangerous villain.

Lena wasn't ready to walk to tightrope of her relationship with Kara again, not when she couldn't be certain that anyone would catch her when she fell. Not if, but when.

The door clicked shut, the mechanism seeming to echo endlessly in her ears. Her window had passed.

Lena bit her bottom lip, and finally let the tears fall.

'T'm sorry.'

- 

Lay us down,

We're in love
ANGST IS THE ONLY THING I'M CAPABLE OF WRITING NOW. I'M SO SORRY.

End Notes

Chapter 2 will be Kara reaching out for advice and it will be Platonic!Karamel heavy because they need to sort out their feelings, man.

If you dislike Platonic!Karamel or just Mon-El in general, feel free to skip ahead to chapter 3 when it's out.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!