Get Up and Fight

by alwaysbringbackup_03

Summary

Lena deals with the aftermath of Supergirl's fight with Reign, and grieves the loss of Kara.

This story is a continuation of my other story, If Only. I highly recommend that you guys check out that story before you read this one!

Notes

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See the end of the work for more notes
Press Restart

“Lena?” Alex sounds concerned as she suddenly notices that Lena is as pale as a ghost. Lena can't stop the shivering that takes over, as the rapidly cooling air begins to lick at the damp skin of her face, and neck. She feels cold without Kara's warmth to keep her warm. Her clothes are soaked, and Lena can feel her skin grow cold and wrinkly beneath it. But what's worse is knowing what that dampness is. In fact, it's pretty much the worst feeling in the world. Lena’s eyes glaze over, as she stares at the place where Kara had taken her last breaths with Lena. Lena is suddenly lost. She's stranded in the dark and the cold, without her sun to keep her warm. Kara. Kara is gone. “Lena, hey,” Alex's voice softens as she recognizes the haunted look in Lena's eyes. It's as if the younger woman is a thousand miles away. "Look at me," Alex orders Lena gently. But her words fall on deaf ears, and Lena doesn't comply.

Lena feels her remaining strength desert her, as she becomes overwhelmed by the grief and the pain that threatens to swallow her whole.

Alex’s last words from before suck away what little hope Lena had left.

Lena's eyes dart around frantically for several moments, taking in as much detail as she possibly can. She feels like she's seeing things for the first time, which is weird because they've been here for what seems like hours.

At first, Lena's eyes slide over the dark red pool staining the concrete, but then her gaze moves back to it, before becoming stuck there.

Lena drops to her knees as her gaze focuses on the deep pool of blood staining the concrete. She can't seem to help it. And unfortunately, no matter how much she tries to do so, Lena can't bring herself to look away. Lena starts doing rapid calculations in her head, trying to account for the large volume of blood that has been left behind in Kara’s wake. There’s just so much of it. Was it one liter of blood Lena was seeing? Two? More? Lena silently wracks her brain, struggling to recall how much blood loss a human was capable of surviving before inevitably succumbing to their injuries.

Because Kara had been human at the time of her injury. And that thought terrifies Lena more than anything.

Lena suddenly feels like she is going to be sick. The sight, the smell, and the feel of the sticky red substance coating her hands, is all too much for her to handle. She actually gags, as she feels her stomach turn. She’s never been one to be squeamish when it came to the sight of blood. After all, she’d seen the worst of the worst when it came to this kind of stuff. But the fact is, she’d never been prepared for this. She couldn’t bear the knowledge that it was Kara’s blood staining her hands, her knees, and her clothes.

Lena loses her battle, and starts retching violently. She feels every muscle in her stomach protest, as her nausea quickly runs away with her. Her esophagus and throat burn in a fiery hell, as her stomach’s contents push their way up and out. Lena tries to swallow them back down at the last moment, but it’s unfortunately too little too late. The acidic contents spray everywhere, splattering the concrete beneath her.

“Lena,” Alex’s voice is gentle, as she drops to her knees beside her. She carefully turns Lena’s gaze away from the scene, while quickly and methodically gathering the loose hair from around Lena’s face. She pulls it up and out of the way, and holds it in her hands as Lena’s stomach continues to turn itself inside out. Alex tries not to flinch as Lena vomits all over the concrete right in front of her.
Lena’s body starts shaking violently, as the nerves, and everything else that had been held off by the adrenaline, return with a vengeance.

Lena starts sobbing uncontrollably as she completely loses hold of her emotions again. She’s been trying to hold them back for so long, ever since she’d found Kara on the concrete minutes before. But she can’t do it anymore. The pain she feels in her chest is beyond any of her wildest imaginings. Her heart has been shattered into hundreds of tiny pieces. And Lena knows that she’s never going to be able to put it together again. At least not without Kara.

The violent sobs echo throughout the night, bouncing off of nearby buildings, and drowning out all other distant screams. Alex closes her eyes as she tries to shut out the sounds. Lena’s sounds almost sound like screams, they are so full of pain and anguish. It speaks to the pain that Alex feels in her own chest.

Alex starts rubbing gentle circles on Lena’s back between her shoulder-blades, as she tries to calm and comfort her. A second wave of nausea slams into her, and Lena vomits again. Alex desperately tries to ignore how Lena’s vomit splatters onto her pants and shoes. It’s gross, sure, but the grossness of it all is largely overshadowed by the level of Lena’s distress. Lena was beyond broken, and Alex has no idea how to put her back together again. There isn’t anything that Alex can do to ease this pain. Because she’s pretty sure that the only person that could help Lena through something like this is Kara. And Kara is gone.

Ever so slowly the pool of liquid in front of Lena starts sinking into the jagged, uneven cracks of the concrete. It finds the places where the concrete has been worn away, or has cracked apart during the rare freeze thaw cycles of winter. Once it finds these places, the discolored liquid slowly migrates towards the grate on the side of the street, before it finally, and mercifully disappears from sight.

“Shh,” Alex soothes her gently. “Shh, it’s okay. It’s okay, Lena. Just let it all out.”

“I’m sorry,” Lena cries weakly. “I’m so sorry.”

“Hey, it’s okay,” Alex tries to reassure her, “I know that it doesn’t seem like it right now, but it’s okay. I’m not even bothered by it, I promise.”

“It’s not,” Lena almost hates. “None of this is okay.”

“I know,” Alex agrees calmly. And Lena hates her just a little bit for being so calm about all of this. In fact, a small part of her resents Alex for being able to handle her emotions better than Lena can.

After all, Lena is supposed to be the one who is best at compartmentalizing them. But Lena can’t do it this time. She can’t handle these feelings, and this loss. “She’s gone, Alex. I loved her, and now she’s gone.” Lena sobs harder.

“I know-” Alex’s breath hitches as she struggles to hold it together herself, “I know it hurts.”

Alex abandons all pretenses and pulls Lena into her arms, knowing that the brunette needs her comfort now more than ever. Alex nearly loses it herself when she feels Lena’s gut wrenching sobs. In fact, Lena is sobbing so hard, that she isn’t even breathing properly anymore, and Alex has to periodically remind the younger woman to breathe.

“Breathe,” Alex whispers as Lena clings to her like Alex is her sole lifeline in a sea of uncertainty and devastation. “Come on, Lena,” Alex presses, “You have to breathe. It’s… it’s going to be okay. I know you’re hurting, but I’ve got you. You’re safe with me. I promise.”

“I miss her,” Lena sobs brokenly into Alex’s neck and shoulder. And Alex feels those words in her
soul. The truth is, she already misses Kara so much. And she knows exactly where Lena is coming from.

“T’ve miss her too,” Alex admits in a thick, broken sounding voice. Alex is hurting too. In fact, she feels like nothing short of an absolute mess of devastation and hurt inside. But she also knows that she has to be strong. She has to be incredibly brave for Lena, because she knows that Lena has just lost the love of her life (whether Lena was fully ready to admit that or not). And she’d promised Kara that she would take care of Lena, if something were to ever happen to her. Of course, Alex didn’t ever think that something would actually happen, or that she would actually lose her sister. But a promise was a promise. And Alex would honor that promise, just like Kara always honored hers.

For the last several months, Lena had been made an honorary member of the Danvers family, perhaps without ever really knowing so. But the second that Kara admitted to her feelings for Lena during their private conversation all of those weeks ago, Lena had become another sister to Alex.

She knew Kara cared for Lena like family. And so, therefore, Alex had come to care about Lena like a sister of her own. She was Alex’s family now, and family had to be cared for.

“It hurts,” Lena manages to get out between broken sobs. “God it hurts so much. I know she said I could do this, but I can’t. I can’t do this without her, Alex.”

“I know,” Alex tells her, honestly. “I know. The truth is, I don’t think I can do this either. But maybe we can get through this, if we lean on one another.” Then. “So lean on me, okay? And I’ll lean on you when I need it. You may not know it yet, but we’re...we’re family now, Lena. We’re family, and I’m not going to let you break.”

“Is this what it feels like to lose someone you love?” Lena’s chest nearly rends itself apart with the force of her sobs.

“Yes,” Alex admits. “I think so. All I know is that losing Maggie felt like this. But god, even this feels worse somehow.”

“It hurts so badly, I...I feel like I want to die,” Lena confesses. “In fact, I’m pretty sure that death would be preferable, easier than this...this pain I feel.”

“Lena-” Alex’s heart breaks even more as Lena starts sobbing into her neck. She feels the wetness of the tears on her skin, and the warm puffs of hiccuping breaths that follow Lena’s broken sobs. She hears Lena sniffle loudly, as the brunette tries futilely to suck the snot back in that is threatening to escape her nose. Alex just holds her tightly, not caring that the shoulder of her shirt is covered in a thin sheen of snot and tears. After all, nothing else mattered apart from Lena right now.

She’s never seen Lena lose it like this before, and so she knows that Lena must be in agony. She must be hurting in a way that the younger Luthor had never hurt before. Which was shocking to Alex. Because if Alex knew one thing, it was that Lena had lost a lot in her lifetime. This depth of emotion...this degree of pain and suffering can only mean one thing. Lena had been in love with her sister too.

Alex suddenly feels herself pulled out of the moment, by the sirens that are growing ever closer. The realization strikes her like a blow to the face.

She knows then that they have to get out of there. They have to clear the scene before the Police, Fire, and EMS personnel can reach them, or they never will. They’ll be tied up endlessly under questioning, as they’re asked to recount exactly what had transpired on this spot.
And having to talk about what happened - about losing Kara – would not help with their healing process. They both needed time before they had to put themselves through this again.

“Shit,” Alex breathes.

“What?” Lena looks alarmed as she pulls her head from Alex’s shoulder. “What is it?”

“We… We have to get out of here,” Alex tells her in as even a voice as she can manage. “The Police are coming, and I’m afraid that we can’t be here when they arrive.” Alex’s breath hitches, as Lena shifts against her.

“I’m gonna try and pick you up, okay?” Alex tells her. “But I’m still pretty badly hurt, so I don’t know how this is going to go. Just...Just hold onto me, okay? And don’t let go. Not for anything.” She feels Lena nod against her, and Alex starts positioning herself appropriately. She manages to get her hands where she needs them, placing one one hand under Lena’s knees, and the other behind her back. Alex plants her legs where she feels most comfortable, and starts gingerly lifting Lena from the concrete, using the strength from her legs. Alex feels muscles and bones protest as a result, and cries out in pain.

“You okay?” Lena asks her. “Alex, you’re hurt. You need to put me back down. I don’t want you to make the injuries any worse.”

“It’s okay,” Alex tells her, before gritting her jaw. “I got this. Just hold onto me like I said, and everything will be okay.”

Lena nods and wraps her arms around Alex’s neck. She buries her face into Alex’s shoulder again as she continues to cry. Though the tears are mostly silent this time.

They seep from her eyes without the gut-wrenching sobs that had been accompanying them previously.

When they get to the nondescript black SUV, Alex carefully opens the back door of the utility vehicle and helps Lena into the back. She shuts the door with a dull thud, and rushes around the front of the vehicle, before wrenching open the Driver’s side door. She hops in, slams the door shut, turns over the key in the ignition, and waits for the SUV to roar to life, all in one fell swoop. Before Lena knows it, they’re speeding off into the night with a squeal of their tires, and the faint smell of burning rubber.

The next few minutes pass in a blur.

Alex speeds through the city, towards what remains of the DEO. She carefully avoids all of the debris, and wreckage left behind in the battle’s wake.

The roads are largely deserted, apart from the few emergency service personal that are still out and feebly trying to hold the city together at the seems. But it’s a futile effort. From what Lena can tell in her observations, over a third of the city has been destroyed.

It is nearly unfathomable.

She can’t help but wonder. How could such a large, booming, and thriving city be shaken to its knees in such a small amount of time? The battle between Reign and the Worldkillers had lasted mere minutes, but its devastation would be felt for months, maybe even years to come. The thought is oddly discouraging, and Lena feels more defeated and dejected than ever before. She feels like she’s lost everything. She lost Kara, and she doesn’t even know if L Corp was still standing.
There’s an eerie orange glow being cast over the city. And Lena quickly realizes that its because many of its city’s tallest skyscrapers are on fire. It’s not just ones in the immediate vicinity, either. Buildings all over the city are burning. Hundreds of floors reduced to nothing more than hot, igneous flame. Smoke is quickly filling the air outside, turning the visibility in the city to almost nothing.

“Oh my god,” Lena breathes. “The city! It looks like the whole city is burning.”

“Here,” Alex says as she reaches back with something in her hand. “You’re probably going to need this.” Lena quickly recognizes the object in Alex’s hand as an N-95 mask. An N-95 mask is designed filter out fine particulates from the air. It could be used to protect it’s wearer from diseases like Tuberculosis, or from breathing in small toxic particles like smoke and ash. Lena quickly fastens the mask over her nose and mouth, pinching it so it fit tightly over her nostrils. She can feel her own breaths heat her face beneath it. But her breathing is easier now. And she doesn’t feel like she’s choking anymore.

Large embers flutter in gusts of wind, blowing to and fro between the tall buildings, before inevitably landing to the ground below. And unfortunately, some of these embers quickly catch the brittle trees and grass on fire. Some of these embers are also unlucky enough to fall onto the rooftops of shorter buildings, lying hundreds of feet below the towering and flaming behemoths, catching those on fire too. Lena can’t help but fear that all of National City will be burning before the morning. This was a disaster of unprecedented proportions. And Lena is half convinced that this will be the greatest disaster in all of earth’s recorded history, with hundreds of thousands of lives lost.

“I’d tell you not to look,” Alex says, “But I don’t think you’d be able to help it.”

“How did this happen?” Lena asks her. “I thought Kara kept the fighting largely contained.”

“Lena,” Alex swallows, “Even Kara couldn’t have prevented this from happening. They’re called Worldkillers for a reason. They were sent here to destroy and break the whole world.” Alex sighs. “Unfortunately, Kara was largely focused on Reign, which gave Pestilence and Purity plenty of time to wreak their own havoc on this city.”

“I… I still can’t believe-” Lena’s voice is thick as she tries to speak. “What are we going to do?” Lena asks her.

“I wish I knew the answer to that,” Alex admits.

“Is the DEO still standing?” Lena questions.

“Yes,” Lena sees Alex nod at her in the rearview mirror. “Mercifully, the DEO and L-Corp buildings are still largely intact. I’ve given orders to do whatever it takes to keep it that way.”

“And why is L-Corp important enough to deserve such protections?” Lena can’t help but question.

“Because someone has to lead the people of this city when it comes time to rebuild,” Alex answers her. “And I can’t think of anyone better to do that, than you. Especially with all of the technologies that you have at your disposal.”

“What?”

“Kara told me that if anyone in this city would be smart enough or tenacious enough to save this city from ruin, it would be you,” Alex admits. “She actually had a list of resources that you have at your disposal. And after seeing it, I’m inclined to agree.”

“You’re serious?” Lena nearly chokes on the air in her lungs. “But how would she-” Lena starts to
ask, before she realizes exactly how Kara had known. “Oh,” Lena gasps in realization. Work was something that had never been off-topic for the two of them. And if Kara was good at one thing, it was getting Lena to open up to her about anything. The fact is, Kara had always been so good at making Lena feel safe. And that trust she felt, made Lena feel like she could tell Kara everything in confidence without fearing it would be made public."

“I wouldn’t have thought she would turn over that information to anyone,” Lena says with a tinge of hurt in her voice.

“Well, let’s just say that I can be very persuasive,” Alex jokes. She offers Lena a crooked smile. “Look, she didn’t want to do it, okay? But it’s also a hell of a compliment that she nominated you for the role. She actually said that you were her hero. And if you could be hero to the one and only Supergirl, I’m sure that you could be a hero to the people of National City, too.”

“She really did believe in me, didn’t she?” Lena feels her heart shatter, as she realizes how wrong about everything she had been these last few weeks. “She never stopped trusting me, even though I convinced myself she—”

“Lena,” Alex sighs, “As I’ve said before, my sister was not above human emotions. She may have suffered through a period of doubt. But I can promise you… she never stopped believing in you. She just… She let her fears get the better of her. I don’t think you realize. There was nothing that scared my sister more than Kryptonite. Nothing. And I think that after tonight, you can probably see why.”

“I—” Lena feels the tears begin anew. “Alex, I know that it’s not enough to say this, but I’m so sorry. It’s… It’s my fault that all of this is happening.”

“I know,” Alex nods, “I know you are, Lena. But it’s not your fault. None of what happened is your fault.”

“I—” Lena begins, but Alex doesn’t let her protest.

“Lena,” Alex lets out a levied breath before she says, “Look, I say this out of love, okay? But you have to stop blaming yourself for everything. Because it’s driving me insane. This... This isn’t your fault. The Daxamite invasion wasn’t your fault. Sure, you may have played a role in both. But the fact is, we all played a role in it. Even Kara’s family played a role in it. Why do you think she was willing to give so much? Her parents were responsible for a lot of this. What Kara did? It was just as much about her clearing her conscience as it was about saving yours.”

Lena feels herself jolted forward in the seat as Alex has to break suddenly in order to avoid slamming into a car that’s only just come into view. The visibility outside is practically nil, now. Lena’s jaw drops as she realizes the car is upside down in the middle of the street.

Lena notices with another pang of surprise, that there is are an extremely large number of cars that are littering the middle of the street. And most of them are either upside down, or turned on their sides.

Many fire hydrants have also been destroyed, and are spraying geysers into the air, spilling thousands of gallons of water onto the street, and flooding the sidewalks with water. It’s heartbreaking to see. Because Lena knows that the water will be desperately needed when it comes time to fight the fires quickly taking over the city.

Lena watches in dazed fascination as Alex is forced to drive through a deep puddle on the side of the street, and water sprays out in all directions.
Lena tears her eyes away from the edge of the street then, and looks around some more.

Some of the side streets they pass are riddled with craters, like the one where Kara had been lost.

There are also boulders the size of small refrigerators, littering some of the streets, thus making them impassable.

There is complete and utter destruction in every direction, and Lena doesn’t know how she, or anyone else for that matter, will be able to save this city. This was like something out of a post-apocalyptic movie. And Lena would know plenty about post-apocalyptic movies. After all, Kara made her watch enough of them at Kara’s behest.

Lena swallows hard, as she realizes that countless people are out in the smoke, ash, and dust, looting stores that have been destroyed in the fight. She silently wonders why they would risk their lives and safety for a few piddly electronics and cans of food. But she also fears that in the days and weeks to come, those cans of food, and bottles of water will be a precious commodity. In fact, when she has a chance to think about it. Those small items might very well be the difference between life and death.

No, Lena thinks, and silently resolves. I won’t let that happen. I’m not going to let people of this city suffer like that. Not if I can help it. Kara’s trust in me won’t be wasted.

Many of the storefronts on street level have been utterly destroyed or broken.

Glass litters the sidewalks for blocks, twinkling in the waning light, and Lena reckons that most of the windows have been blown out from the various gas explosions that have riddled the city.

And perhaps, some had been blown out in areas where Reign and Supergirl flew by at low altitude.

Some electronics and other objects lay forgotten where they’d been dropped in people’s haste to get away with as much stuff as possible. Large TV screens bore cracks from where they’d been shattered upon their impact with the ground. It was an absolute mess. And Lena knew that it would be weeks or months before the city could clean up the devastation.

The fact is, Lena was starting to think that the city would never be able to fully recover.

Some buildings were barely left standing, and Lena feared that the smallest breeze would knock them down. Visions of 9/11 flash through Lena’s mind, and as a result as Lena can’t help the fear that goes surging through her as a result. All the hair on her arms stands on end, as she has visions of buildings collapsing onto the streets below. What happened on 9/11 had been nightmarish enough, but this? This had the potential to be even worse. Because from what Lena has seen of the city so far, there is going to be no way to get help or resources to the areas where they are needed. At least on 9/11 they could get equipment and personnel to the site in order to start the search and recover process. But in this instance, that was looking like an impossibility.

In a fit of curiosity, Lena decides to roll down the back window of the SUV. She hastily stiffens as she realizes she can hear countless screams over the sirens in the distance. How had she not noticed them before? After all, now that she was aware of them, she couldn’t stop hearing them. And God. When she thinks of how all of those screams were attached to people – people all in desperate need of help - she can’t help but shut down as a result. There had to be thousands people out there screaming for somebody to hell them. And at a time where the city needed her the most, Kara was gone.

People are trapped, and without Kara there to save them, Lena doesn’t know how many lives will be lost.
“Maybe it’s a good thing she’s not here to hear them,” Lena breathes aloud.

“It would have destroyed her,” Alex answers her, causing Lena to jump. Lena had clearly forgotten she wasn’t alone.

Alex meets Lena’s misting eyes in the rearview mirror, as she continues. “It always killed her when someone was in need and she couldn’t help them. Honestly, if she were here, she wouldn’t stop...she wouldn’t rest until everyone in this city had been saved. And I, nor anyone else, would have been able to get her to stop.”

“That doesn’t sound healthy,” Lena whispers.

“It isn’t,” Alex swallows thickly. “In fact, it’s one of the things that I’ve tried to change about her in the last couple of years. But...But I finally realized that...that’s just the kind of person she is.” Then. “You could have taken it all away. You could have stripped Kara of her Superpowers, and even then she would still be a hero. You want to know why? It’s because she cares. She cares, Lena. Just like you, and me, and James, and everyone else out there that gets up every day to fight the good fight. The fact is, she couldn’t not go out there and do what she did.” Alex laughs as she remembers the beginning. The beginning of it all. “And believe me, I actually begged her not to. That day after she saved my plane from crashing? I screamed at her. I begged her not to follow in Superman’s footsteps. But it... it was her calling. She had this innate need to help people. And it would have been impossible for Kara to be happy, if she couldn’t do it.” Alex sighs. “The fact is, she would sooner collapse from exhaustion, than give up on anybody. And even then, she would be back out there on the streets again before long.”

“She should be here,” Lena whispers. “She should be here to help them. Not me.”

“I know you feel that way,” Alex agrees, “But I have to think that Kara knew what she was doing. The truth is, you’re far better than you ever give yourself credit for, Lena. And in order for my sister to have loved you the way that she loved you, you have to be.”

“You’re putting a lot of expectations and a lot of responsibility on my shoulders,” Lena says calmly as she shoulders hunch a little in defeat. She feels the weight of that responsibility, now.

Finally, after what seems like an eternity, they arrive at the parking garage below the DEO. Alex speeds to a stop inside of the parking garage, and turns off the engine. She throws open the door, hops out, slams the door shut, and rushes around the back of the vehicle, in order to pull open the back door, where Lena is waiting.

“Can you walk?” Alex asks her, and Lena thinks about it for a moment before she nods. She doesn’t quite trust her voice at the moment. After all, it was still raw from her sobs. But she thinks she can do it, with some help.

“Come on,” Alex encourages her, as she carefully helps Lena from the back of the SUV and wraps an arm around Lena’s middle. “I’ve got to get inside. J’onn left me in charge of DEO, and I’ve gotta try and contain this situation before it gets any worse. Are you going to be okay on your own for a little bit while I do that?”

Chapter Summary

(J’onn/Kara’s POV)

In the aftermath of what happened with Reign, J’onn feels lost.

Kara fights for life.

Do not go gentle into that good night,

Old age should burn and rave at close of day;

Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,

Because their words had forked no lightning they

Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright

Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,

Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,

And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,

Do not go gentle into that good night.

For some reason, those very words keep echoing through J’onn’s mind as he flies North as quickly as he can possibly manage.

Shortly after landing on Earth, J’onn had become fascinated with this poem. In fact, he’d once picked it apart line by line, in an effort to fully understand it. His English back then hadn’t been very good, but as he’d learned more and more about the English language and its many nuances during his time on Earth, he kept coming back to this one particular poem. He’d learned a great deal about humanity this way, and had come to admire its fighting spirit.

He could relate to it in a way that most people could never fully understand. He had seen death come for his family. He’d watched it take them from him one by one, and it had taken them far too easily, as if it hadn’t really been a fight at all. For much of his life, death had been a villainous thing. It had taken J’onn a long time to overcome the guilt that he felt at being left alive, when Death had taken all he’d ever known.
Someone very special to J'onn once told him that there was no shame in surviving. J'onn tried to remember this whenever the guilt threatened to run away with him.

But now, with so much riding on his shoulders, J'onn rebels. He refuses to accept the fact that death conquers all. He refuses to let it take one of the strongest women that he has ever known, a woman he loves like a daughter.

Kara is a woman he admires so very much. After all, she and Alex had been the ones to pull him out of the depths of his despair, when he’d thought it all but impossible. They had been the family that he never thought he would have. And he refuses to give it up for lost.

One thing that J’onn had learned over the last couple of years is that he couldn’t fly as fast or as far as Supergirl or Superman can at the height of their strength, but he could still go pretty damned fast when he put his mind to it. And J’onn was currently giving this flight his everything. If he never flew again, he could accept it. So long as it meant that he got there a little faster this time.

J’onn constantly fought for more speed, resolving to go faster, fly faster than he ever had before. Because he knew that everything was riding on his success. Kara’s life was literally in his hands, and he wouldn’t fail her. He would not lose her. Not now, not ever. He flat out refused to lose another that he loved. Death had taken enough.

J’onn closes his eyes and thinks briefly of his little girls. He thinks of the family he had before on Mars. It was a period of his life that seems so utterly lost to him now. He was a different person now. And that life? That life, though however wonderful, could not be his anymore. It hurt. The truth is, he usually made every effort not to think about it, because it still tortured him endlessly with guilt. But he can’t help but think of them now. For a moment, he remembers how powerless he had been to save them. And he can suddenly feel the pain of it all over again. J’onn J’onnz had not been a strong man, a hard man. He was not like the man that J’onn was now. He was not cynical. He was not tough. And J’onn can’t help but wonder how different his life might have been, if he had been. Maybe his family would still be alive. Maybe he would still have his wife, and his two little girls.

Their faces flash through his mind, and J’onn nearly screams out in anguish.

He prays that they will give him the strength that he needs. Because he is getting so very tired now, and he doesn’t know how much longer he can hold on.

He feels powerless. He hadn’t been able to protect them, just like he’d been unable to protect Kara.

Kara was dying, and he couldn’t help but feel like it was his fault.

No, it would not do. After all, what good did dwelling on the past do? He could not change it. All he could do now, was learn from it. He could only resolve to do better this time.

“No,” J’onn says determinedly. “She won’t die. Not today. Not today.”

He would not fail. Not again. J’onn swallows and closes his eyes. A newfound sense of determination spreads across his expression like a mask. He wears it like a coat of arms.

He lets out a weighted breath, as his eyes open once more.

This is for you. I'm sorry. I'm so sorry that I couldn’t save you, but please - Please let me be strong enough to save her now.

J’onn cradles Kara’s lifeless body tightly against his own, as he flies into the looming and ever-growing darkness in front of him. Behind him, the skies glow orange and red, as flames raze what
remains of National City to the ground.

J’onn refuses to look back. The truth is, he can’t. He can’t bear to see his home burning. It’s bad. That’s all he needs to know. In fact, it looks as if the sun has set fire to the only world he knows, the only world he has left.

It has happened to him twice now. And just like on Mars, he’d been utterly powerless to stop it.

Fire had always been his greatest weakness. And the humans would not fair any better than he. Which means that they stood no chance at all.

May god have mercy on their souls.

It was hard for him to turn his back on the city that meant so very much to him, but he had no choice now. There was no going back. After all, to go back, was to risk the deaths of countless civilians.

He has to protect humanity in the only way that he knows how. And that means getting Kara off of the planet.

The sun had set now, and he can feel the air grow ever cooler as he flies high over the clouds.

He tightens his form, quickly gaining speed as he soars into the Canadian wilderness, and as far away from civilization as he can possibly go. The wind whips around them, snapping Kara’s hair against the skin of his face, neck, and shoulder in a way that should be painful, but for some reason J’onn finds soothing. Her skin is cold to him now, growing colder and colder against him with each passing second. J’onn adjusts his grip, and Kara’s head tips back over his arm. It drops slightly, so that her chin points upwards into the sky, and her hair spills down, tickling the flesh of his forearm.

J’onn startles, losing precious momentum, as he notices the orange glow beneath her skin begin to flicker. It could only mean one thing. Kara was getting closer to death. She is freezing cold now, her body violently shaking under the smallest of breezes.

J’onn quickly starts winding Kara’s cape around her body in a feeble attempt to hold in what little warmth remains.

She has no muscle tone, and J’onn can feel her slipping away in his arms. Her pulse is fast and weak, and is growing weaker by the second. Even trying to see into her mind, warranted no results. She was lost to him now. No thoughts, no emotions. Just nothing. She was fighting for life. He could sense that she was still fighting. But all her energy was being put forth towards the simplest of life functions, like breathing.

Soon enough, Kara’s heart would stop completely.

And J’onn can only hope that Superman will be there for them when they land. Otherwise, Kara stood no chance at all.

Kara glows faintly in his arms, giving off hues of orange and white in the waning light, and growing darkness. From someone on the ground, he imagines that Kara will look like nothing more than a shooting star streaking across the sky.

Kara’s breaths are growing weak now, as she struggles to hang on. It sucks away what little hope he has left. Even with the injection of the isotope, Kara was still dying.

“Stay with me,” J’onn tells her with a thick voice. His voice quavers just a little as he says, “Stay with me, Kara. Come on. We’re almost there. Please, just hold on a little longer! I can’t lose you. I
won’t… You and Alex, you’re my daughters. Don’t make me have to say goodbye to you too.” J’onn takes a deep breath, and begins reciting his poem from memory. He says the words out loud, so that Kara can hear him. He says the words to her like a prayer.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.
And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

When they finally grow close to his destination, J’onn graciously abandons his altitude, swooping down through the clouds and soaring over the forest below. He can see the tops of the trees sway below him, as wind gusts from his flight bend them slightly. They wiggle back and forth in his wake, before standing tall once more.

He flies out over a nearby lake, and drops down onto a dock on the far side. He immediately starts rushing for the bay doors, but turns back and looks as he detects movement behind him.

He turns just in time to see Superman land with a ground-shaking thud right behind him.

“I’m here! I’m here! And I’ve got it!” Superman announces as he holds up something for inspection. J’onn quickly notices that Superman is holding up a small cooler for inspection.

It is a cooler that J’onn knows to be full of blood – precious, Kryptonian blood.

It was one of the rarest resources on Earth, and it is finally where J’onn needs it to be. Thank god.

Kara had a chance now.

Superman quickly falls into step beside J’onn, and together, they rush for the bay doors of the top-secret DEO facility.

“Good,” J’onn breathes to himself in relief.

“I’m sorry,” Kal apologizes, “I came as soon as I possibly could. But it wasn’t easy to get away. I
don’t think I have to tell you, but it’s total chaos out there. The world is falling apart, J’onn.”

“It’s okay,” J’onn tells him, his voice thick with emotion, “As far as I’m concerned, you’re right on time. Thank you. I… I can’t even begin to tell you how much I—”

“Hey-” Kal’s voice softens. Where Superman’s voice had been all business before, his voice was gentle and heartfelt now. “Hey,” J’onn can feel his throat grow tight as Superman places a gentle hand to J’onn’s shoulder. “She’s my family. The truth is, I can’t imagine being anywhere else in the world right now. I might not be the best in the world when it comes to this stuff, but… but I really do care about her. I’m trying.”

“Kal—”

“How is she?” Kal-El asks worriedly, as he brushes a hand over Kara’s forehead. She’s cold, pale and diaphoretic.

“She’s alive,” J’onn replies honestly. “But only just barely. The truth is, I don’t know how much longer she can hang on. We have to start replacing her blood-loss right now, or we won’t have any hope of saving her.”

Superman is done waiting for the doors to open. He starts prying them open with his bare fingers. Besides, he can always fix them later, when his cousin’s life isn’t hanging in the balance.

As soon as the doors open, they are moving inside at a sprint.

“Help,” J’onn shouts, frantically. “I need a medical team over here!”

“Director!” a familiar face has J’onn breathing out a sigh of relief. He knows this man. He knows he can trust this man.

“I’m sorry that I didn’t call in ahead, but my earpiece was destroyed in the fight and there was no time,” J’onn apologizes.

“Don’t worry about it,” Doctor Carter replies. He looks ready for just about anything. J’onn envies the man, for being so calm about it. “What do you have for us?”

“She’s got major penetrating trauma to the chest,” J’onn tells him quickly. J’onn is visibly shaking as the adrenaline from his flight over leaves his body amped up for a fight. J’onn tries to hide it, by curling his hands into fists, but he’s sure that the Doc sees right through him. “She’s lost at least two and a half liters of blood. She’s going to need a transfusion.”

“Oh my…” The Doctor’s expression slips just a little bit when he suddenly realizes who his patient is.

“Alright, Director,” he responds calmly. “We’ll take it from here.”

“Are there any humans on base?” J’onn asks him.


J’onn responds, “No. That’s actually a good thing. She’s been injected with a radioactive isotope that will kill anyone who is human, or susceptible to radiation. It’s sort of why I had to bring her here.”

“Wexler, call a Trauma alert! Now! It’s Supergirl,” Gavin shouts to one of the other personnel, as a nurse rushes over with a stretcher.
J’onn carefully sets Kara down on the cot. In fact, he does so so gently that it seems as if he is afraid she might break in half. Gavin starts to move, as if he is about to take her away, when J’onn panics and reaches out to stop him.

“Wait!” J’onn nearly cries, as he grabs him by the shoulder, “Gavin—”

“Whoa! Listen, it’s gonna be okay. We’re going to do everything we can to save her, okay?” Gavin tells J’onn in a gentle voice. He’s so careful about his words that it seems as if he’s afraid of startling J’onn. “I promise you that, Sir. She’s in really good hands. We’re...we’re a good team. We practice for stuff like this all the time.”

“I know, but...”

“Dr. Hammond is one of the best trauma surgeons in the world, if not the very best,” Gavin assures him. “Look, I know it’s hard, but you’re going to have to trust us, okay? I’ll let you know as soon as I know anything!”

J’onn is forced to watch helplessly, as they start rushing Kara toward one of the trauma rooms. It’s one of the worst feelings in the world, to have to stand back and rely on someone else to save her. And yet, he has no choice.

This particular DEO facility had been shuttered for a number of years before J’onn found out about its existence. And on a whim, he’d decided to reopen it. He’d staffed it with a skeleton crew of trustworthy aliens, Xenobiologists, and medical staff.

After Cadmus infiltrated the DEO, and the United States Military started taking over certain DEO facilities, J’onn had kept the knowledge of this particular facility a secret. He kept it a secret on the off chance that the DEO was ever compromised, and he needed a safe place to go. It payed off.

He knew there would come a time, when a medical facility like this would be needed. He just never imagined that it would be so soon. And now, this place was Kara’s last and only hope.

J’onn follows slowly in the wake of the gurney, watching as the crew of medical personnel sprint down the hallway with the gurney carefully held between them. He can hear medical personnel rattling off what injuries they see, as they start a rapid assessment.

As soon as they arrive at the designated trauma room, they rush her inside. The door whirs shut, with a sense of finality, behind them. However, J’onn can still see and hear what is going on inside the room as they start tending to her.

“She’s not breathing!” Doctor Hammond announces. “I’ve got no radial pulse,” J’onn suddenly feels his blood go cold. “Does anyone else have a pulse?”

“I’ve got a pulse!” the words are shouted out into the room, with a sense of victory, “Right carotid.”

Superman rushes inside the room, and hands off the cooler of blood to a nurse.

“It’s hers,” he announces to that same nurse, “So there’s no need to cross-type. We put some blood into storage not too long ago, in the event that we ever needed it. I don’t think either of us realized that we would need it so soon, but—“ Kal trails off as they start cutting open Kara’s Supersuit. “I...I’ll just step out,” he says as he moves briskly from the room. The last thing Superman wants is to get in the way. He knows that he needs to let them do their job now.

“Alright,” the Doctor orders, “Let’s get her onto the table. We’ll go on three. Everybody got a hold?” He received nods from everyone around the cot. “Okay, on three! One, two, three!” J’onn watches
helplessly as they transfer her to the table so that they can lay her flat.

“Okay, I need large bore IV’s in each arm,” he tells them, giving them instruction. “Then, as soon as they’re in, I want you to bolus blood, plasma, and Lactated Ringers into her as fast as it’ll go.” J’onn tunes the man out for a moment as he struggles to take in everything that is going on in that room. Fifty things seem to be happening all at once. And everything is moving so fast that J’onn feels as if he can barely keep up. He never expected that the medical team would be so exceptional.

Everybody in the room before him had a distinct role - a responsibility. They were all accomplishing their tasks with efficiency.

Two people rushed over to the table, trying to pack gauze tightly into the wound in order to try and stop the blood flow.

“Carter, get me an airway!” Hammond orders, and the young blue-skinned Doctor quickly and eagerly complies. Kara’s jaw is quickly opened with a Jaw-thrust maneuver, and J’onn looks on in horror as blood gurgles up past Kara’s tongue, teeth and lips, until it slithers in small tracks down the side of Kara’s face and neck.

“Shit, I need suction,” Carter announces, “I can’t see a damned thing! Her entire airway has been compromised.” A Yankauer quickly changes hands, and Carter hooks it up to the suction tubing. J’onn watches as a nurse hits a switch and the suction turns on. Carter starts suctioning what turns out to be an almost endless torrent of blood from Kara’s airway. In seconds, the container on the wall has to be replaced. Finally, the torrent slows down and stops. There’s no more blood in Kara’s oropharynx.

“Damn!,” Doctor Hammond swears as he sees the amount of blood they’ve just pulled from her airway, “Alright, forget the large bore IV’s. There’s no time! Her pressure is crashing! Get me an I.O. Drill, and a stabilizer.” J’onn watches as the drill quickly changes hands. Then, Dr. Hammond locates the humeral head of Kara’s right arm, and drills right into the bone, without missing a single beat. This is easy for him. He’s done this dozens, if not hundreds of times before.

With the sure hands of a trauma surgeon, he pulls out the needle, connects some extension tubing to the catheter, stabilizes it, and hooks up the fluids to it. Then he starts pushing fluids into it as fast as he can get it to go.

“Alright, now get me those IV’s, Wentworth!” he orders. “I need at least two more lines.”

A nurse is already at it, trying to get a sixteen into the ante-cubital fossa of Kara’s left arm.

“Got it,” the nurse shouts victoriously, about ten seconds later. He hits the release, and drops the needle into a sharps container within arms reach, before taping down the line, and hooking up the line. J’onn watches as another nurse hangs a bag of blood, and starts running a line in. He watches with morbid fascination as the deep red liquid snakes its way down into Kara’s arm almost languorously.

His only fear is that it doesn’t seem to be going into her fast enough. They need it to move faster.

“I’m not getting lung sounds on the left,” one of the nurses announces a beat later, “She’s got a Hemothorax. Whatever it is that caused this damage, must have punctured her lung!”

“What about her heart?”

“Heart sounds are muffled. I think she’s got a tamponade,” she announces. “We’re losing her, Sir.”
“No, I am not losing her. Get me a chest tube!” Dr. Hammond says.

Eyes look on in horror, as Dr. Hammond picks up a scalpel from the tray. He quickly counts the intercostal spaces with his fingers, as he searches for the appropriate place, and cuts into Kara under the direction of a steady hand. In the blink of an eye, he is pushing plastic tubing into the incision. When he hits the appropriate depth, a deep red torrent quickly begins pushing its way out, splattering onto the floor. The sight of it makes J’onn sick. However, the Doctor doesn’t seem bothered by it.

I have lived in darkness
For all my life I’ve been pursued
You’d be afraid if you could feel my pain
And if you could see the things I am able to see

At that same time, Kara sees that same vacuum of existence threatening to take away everything she’d ever known. Her frantic heart barely manages to hold onto its staccato rhythm, somehow spurred on by the determination of the body that is its refuge, and a mind that intentionally pushes itself away from vindication in favor of holding onto life. Darkness gives way to light again, a light so bright that it almost blinds her, turning swirls of color into peaceful nothingness. Everything is uniform and monotonous. Everything is white.

Light begins to flicker, heartbeats fading in and out with every second that ticks past. There are people all around her, but Kara can’t seem to make them out.

She has a beating heart, but her lungs can’t seem to suck in air. The Kryptonite that encroached so very ruthlessly into Kara’s chest cavity has left her vital organs unable to perform their integral function. She is healing at an accelerated rate. But even that can’t seem to save her now. She needs surgery.

“Alright, get me an E.T. tube,” Hammond orders, as he grabs a laryngoscope and a Mac blade from the tray.

“What size?”

“7.0 mm,” he answers, as he pushes the curved blade into Kara’s cleared airway, depressing her tongue.

“She might still have a gag reflex, Sir,” one of the nurses warns him, as she notices Kara’s eyelids flicker.

“I know, but we still have to give this a shot,” he says. “We can’t afford to waste anymore time. We’ve got to get air into her lungs. She’s been without it for too long already. Go ahead and pull the drugs for rapid sequence intubation. And be ready with them, just in case.”

Sure enough, Kara’s autonomic reflex came into effect, just as the Doctor pushed inside far enough visualize Kara’s vocal cords. He started threading the intubation tube down Kara’s throat. As soon as it was in place, he quickly pushed air from the attached 10cc syringe into the balloon at the top of the tube, in order to hold it in place and seal off Kara’s airway. Kara gags, her jaw starting to clench down on the tube, as it fights this newfound and unnatural obstruction in her throat.

“Oh, she’s fighting it,” he says sadly. “Push the RSI drugs,” he told the nurse. “I don’t want to take away her respiratory drive, but we have no choice.”

Kara has no notion of what is happening to her as she finds herself lost in the space between existence and nothingness. Still, her body fights the tubing parting her vocal cords.
The nurse feeds the drugs into her newly established I.V. and Kara finally stops fighting it.

“Alright,” he says, “Bag her, Nora.”

With a squeeze of a blue bag, Kara’s chest moves again for the first time in almost five minutes. It’s been nearly two minutes since her brain has been provided with oxygen. Because of this, she had been past the brink of death. But now... now she’s gloriously being given a second chance.

No one will ever be able to say what pulled her back, or what kept her tethered to this life rather than allowing her to move into the next. Even Kara didn’t seem to know. But she was a fighter, and she was going to fight.

There are some people out there who believe that when someone is taken so prematurely, they are given a choice between life and what lies beyond. Did Kara choose life? Or did life choose her? Perhaps, Rao had seen a reason to intervene.

Unfortunately, an incredible amount of damage had already been done. And although blood was currently being pumped into her body in a vain attempt to replace the amount that had been lost, Kara was still severely lacking precious plasma and blood cells. Tanned skin that used to be so stunningly beautiful was now void of color.

The pale pallor of Kara’s body serves as a testament as to her ongoing struggle. No words can possibly describe the incredible strain on Kara’s body. It was like a mortal trying to hold up the entire sky.

Still, she fights. Her mind grabs onto the only sensation that is left in her body. The pain.

Of course, anyone in their right mind would do their best to avoid that particular sensation. It’s the one thing that in life that seems to build on itself more and more with each passing minute. Pain has the unique ability to drive one mad, to torture and torment. And yet, Kara clings to it as tightly as she can, knowing full well that it will cause her unbearable misery. She welcomes it. She is almost desperate for it, because she knows that it is the only thing tying her to life. To Lena, Alex, and to so much more. Carefully, Kara holds on.

I hail from the dark side
For all my life I've been besieged
You'd be scared living with my despair
And if you could feel the things I am able to feel

It is like a sick game of tug of war. All she can do is plant her feet, and hope that they hold up against the monumental forces trying to pull her away from the only life she’s ever known. Unbearable forces are threatening to pull them right out from under her, causing Kara to scream out like an animal not afraid to unleash its rage. She can feel her feet move. Inch by inch by inch she’s being carried away. Internally, Kara roars.

Break me out, break me out
Let me flee
Break me out, break me out
Set me free

But no one seems to hear her. No one except for J’onn, who hunches over and screams along with her.

“Turn her on her side!” Dr. Hammond orders. Gentle hands grope behind Kara’s right shoulder and
began lifting her up. As they begin to get a better grip, those hands slip behind Kara’s back and roll her away from them. With a push forwards, Kara is on her side.

A young nurse, squeezes at the bag, rhythmically, as two others check her back for the exit wound. They find it quickly. And it’s then that they realize the hot water she’s in. The Doctor notices it too.

“God almighty,” he breathes. “It hit her heart. We’ve got to get her to the OR now!” Heads bob in agreement, placing her onto a board, and quickly then onto the portable stretcher.

In a rush of pixilated colors things start to come back, only to be ripped away when Kara’s heart gives out on her again.

“Shit! She’s in full-arrest,” a voiced thunders, “Push one of epi.” In a seemingly futile effort, a syringe of liquid adrenaline is pushed into one of Kara’s veins. However, without a beating heart, everybody in the room knows that the liquid will not get far. Hence, the paddles. J’onn watches as paddles are rapidly brought into the picture. With a whine, one of the nurses charges the machine, while the other squirts gel onto the metal paddles so that they can transfer the shock to Kara’s body appropriately. J’onn watches in numb horror as she brings them down on Kara’s chest. One on the right side of Kara’s chest, and the other under Kara’s left axillary.

“Clear!”

“Clear,” everybody in the room verifies they are not in contact with Kara’s body.

Then the nurse squeezes the trigger. In a surge of energy, Kara’s body is launched into the air as if it is being controlled by a very morbid puppet master. Muscles throughout the whole of Kara’s body clench simultaneously, seeking life… seeking something tangible. However, things don’t take.

J’onn suddenly knows. She’ll have to take another shock. “Charge to 300!”

“Clear!”

\[
\text{Break me out, break me out} \\
\text{Let me flee} \\
\text{Break me out, break me out} \\
\text{Set me free}
\]

The next time Kara wakes, it feels different.

Kara takes a voracious breath as her body begins to wake and adjust to consciousness. She is still close enough to sleep to be utterly relaxed, and Kara’s breaths still deep enough to stretch her ribcage. Kara sighs, relishing in how wonderful it feels to be able to breathe without so much pain and effort.

It was painless, it was wonderful.

Kara moans. She hums softly in contentment.

Rao, Kara couldn’t ever remember experiencing something quite so wonderful.

She simply wants nothing more than to sink into the perfectly soft mattress she’s lying on, and live there, in this warm, soft version of heaven. Forever.

Kara turns her head away from the window, as the warm orange glow relentlessly permeates her thin
eyelids. She lets out a groan of lamentation, as she is loath to accept that the fact that morning has in fact come, despite her best wishes to the contrary. She stirs again, making the lengthy transition between a serene dream-like state, and what she knows now to be reality. She rolls over with a huff, and buries her face into the pillow. She’s not willing to get up. Not yet, at least.

As much as she wants to put off the rest of her responsibilities, she knows that she has no choice. She has to get up. After all, there is so much work to be done. She has a pile of articles on her desk that needs to be edited and turned in to her boss, meetings to attend to, and more importantly, people to see. And, at best, Kara has calculated that there can be only a few more minutes of indolence in store for her, before her annoying and relentless alarm clock will begin to go off.

Kara turns her head, so her face is no longer buried in her soft pillow, and lets her eyes flicker open. For a moment she lays completely still in the morning light.

As her eyelids part, the warm orange glow morphs into bright rays of sunlight. They are brighter than she expects, and for a moment Kara squints against the obtrusive light. She silently curses herself for not remembering to shut the blinds before she’d drifted off to sleep, and lifts her free hand to her face in an effort to try and wipe the tiredness from them.

Then Kara realizes something for the first time.

It jolts her to life, and her eyes shoot back open. After all, her discovery is troublesome to say the least. The rays of light coming in through the window should be yellow, not red.

“Oh Rao,” Kara breathes to herself, as she practically vaults off of her bed.

She is suddenly wide awake, as she rushes over to her window.

She’s so bothered by this singular thought that she doesn’t even bother to look at anything else in the room.

What she sees when she reaches the window, however, leaves little to no doubt in her mind. She’s not on Earth. She’s not even alive.

Everything suddenly comes rushing back. From the fight between her and Reign, to her tearful goodbyes with the ones she loved, to the cold table in the brightly lit room, and finally to the sound of her name urgently slipping from the lips hidden behind a white surgical mask. She remembers slipping away on that table, and remembers the white light obliterating everything she once knew.

Kara lets out a groan and lets her head drop forwards against the window with a dull thunk. She does not want to have to face what she knows is coming. Kara suddenly has a crisis of conscience.

Hadn’t she been comforted by the feeling that she would see her family again? Hadn’t she wanted to step out into Rao’s light once more? And if so, then why the hell did Kara feel so empty now?

Kara turns away from the window, and pads back to her bed. She drops onto it face first, and squeezes her eyes shut.

Knowing what lies in store for her, only makes Kara want to climb under the covers, and bury herself deeper in them.

Kara keeps her eyes shut, hoping that she might be fortunate enough to fall back into sleep. Her hope was that in sleep, she might be able to escape from all of the things that currently seem to be pulling
Despite her best efforts not to think about those things, however, Kara lets her mind wander, and she unknowingly fixates upon them. She knows that there will be no chance of her returning to her previous life. She tosses and turns for the next ten minutes or so, but finally gives up fighting and settles on her back. Kara throws her forearm over her eyes, and sobs for all of the things she’s lost. She cries like this until her lungs give out. And no matter how hard she tries, she can’t stop. The pain in her chest is excruciating. And what shocks her the most is how much it hurts. Because if she were being honest? It hurts worse than the Kryptonite. And Kara had thought that it would be impossible for anything to hurt worse than that.

Wasn’t she supposed to be happy? At peace? And if so, then why did she feel so empty. This felt wrong.

Kara cries until there is nothing left. She feels a pressure building behind her eyelids, and Kara can barely take it. She lifts her thumb and forefinger to her eyes and presses down as har as she can. She starts trying the breathing exercises that Alex once showed her. In, two, three, Out, two, three. In, two, three. Out, two, three. She breathes deeply in the silence, letting her breathing slowly even out.

She finally makes it back into sleep, but unfortunately, the peace doesn’t last long. Her chronographic alarm clock starts going off shortly after she dozes off, with a shrill chirp. Kara realizes that she must have forgotten to turn it off. She throws back her forearm, and rolls over, before silencing it with a slam of her hand down on the radio. Kara decides to take it as a sign from the universe. She rolls back onto her back, opens her eyes, and pushes herself into a seated position. Slowly, almost dejectedly, Kara gets up and pads down the hallway towards the stairs.

She pauses at the top. She can hear the murmurs of soft conversation going on below.

Whatever it is that is being discussed, sounds important. She can just make out the underlying alto of an all too familiar voice, but for the life of her, Kara can’t tell whose voice it is, or what it is that they are saying. Kara closes her eyes and concentrates harder.

She is frustrated. She’d gotten so used to being able to hear everything, that to have that suddenly taken away from her, was maddening. She would have to learn how to adapt all over again.

“Look, Zor-El, I know you can’t wait to spend time with her,” Astra says calmly, “But you’re going to need to give her some time to adjust, first. The first weeks are hard. You know that.”

“That’s easy for you to say,” Zor-El replied, “You got to know my daughter better than I did, Astra.”

"I know that," Astra conceded.

"This is my chance to get to know her," Zor-El argued, "-to get to know the kind of amazing young woman she's become. I need to make up for lost time."

"This is the afterlife," Astra reminded him. "I assure you. There's no shortage of time, here. In fact, we have nothing but time at our disposal. Waiting a couple of weeks for her to settle into things, will seem like nothing in comparison."

"Come on, Astra, don't be such a drama queen," Zor-El spoke. "She's strong willed. She'll be fine."

“Really? You seem to be underestimating how upsetting this will be for someone like her.”

“And you seem to be severely overestimating how upsetting that it will be.”
“We spend our whole lives waiting for the chance to see those we love again,” Zor-El argues. Then. “Besides, she had a chance to fulfill her purpose. There’s honor in that.”

“This isn’t about honor,” Astra argues.

“Look,” he sighs, “I’m just saying she should be proud. We both died before we had the chance to fulfill our destiny. She didn’t.”

“You’re focusing on the wrong things,” Astra said gently, but forcefully. “You need to take care of her. You need to try and protect her from this.”

“From what?” he shouts. “What makes you think that I can’t take care of her?” Zor-El challenges. “She’s my daughter.”

“Yeah? Well, she’s my niece!” Astra retorts, her voice cracking under the weight of her emotion. “And I will fight for what I think is right. She’s like a daughter to me too. Rao may not have blessed me with one of my own, but I did love her like she was. Kara has the biggest heart of anyone I know, and being here...being here will be hard for her.”

“Look,” Zor-El sighed. “We’ll figure it out as we go along. Okay? That’s the best we do right now. And without Alura here, we’re going to have to give her as much love and support as we possibly can.”

Kara takes another step, silently praying that nothing gives her away. Apparently luck isn’t on her side, though, because this reality doesn’t bend to her whim. She freezes, as the metal underneath her left foot squeaks loudly. Abruptly, the two downstairs stop conversing. Kara takes a deep breath, strides around the corner, and then descends the stairs to the sound of her aunt’s warm voice.

“Little One!” Astra cries out, before wrapping her arms around Kara tightly in a warm greeting. Kara quickly buries her face into her Aunt’s neck for a long moment, and just breathes in the scent of her. “Oh, how good it is to see you again,” Astra breathes as she hugs Kara like she never intends to stop.

“How did you sleep?” she asks. “I know that waking up here for the first time can be a little jarring.”

“It was,” Kara said as she pulls away. “But I’m okay. It’s good to see you again.”

“Kara,” Kara tries not to flinch at the sound of her name falling from her father’s lips. It’s been so long. Kara turns to face him.

Over the last several years, her perception of her father had greatly changed from that of what it once was. But seeing him there, standing there with such a wide smile on his face, it was hard not to be happy to see him too.

“My darling daughter,” he says as he reaches up to her shoulders. “Let me get a good look at you.” There were tears in his eyes as he said. “My, my, my, you’re all grown up now. And you’re beautiful...so beautiful. I can’t believe your mother and I created someone so beautiful. Look at you!”

“You must be hungry,” Astra says, after Kara pulls away from the hug in which Zor-El traps her.

“Sit,” Astra directs Kara to sit down on a chair at the bar in the kitchen. Kara watches her pour her a glass of juice, and thanks her as she sets it down on the granite in front of her. “I hope you’re hungry. I made you a feast.”

“You did?” Kara can’t help but ask, feeling rather surprised, “But.. But why?”
“Because this is joyous occasion!” Zor-El smiles. “It’s a celebration. You’re finally home, where you belong.”

Home. The word should have made her feel comforted, but instead it called to the pain in her heart.

Maybe a long time ago, this place would have been her home. But now? Now her home and her family were elsewhere. This was wrong.

"I made your favorite," Astra smiles, as she sets a plate down in front her. "You always loved this dish when you were younger."

Kara picks up a fork, and begins to prod the food around her plate, struggling to remember what it tasted like. It's been so long since she's had Kryptonian cuisine. And all Kara can seem to think about at the moment, is her favorite Earth food - of pizza, and potstickers, and chocolate pecan pie.

"Is something wrong?" Zor-El asks her as he catches her staring at it. As if to punctuate what she should be doing, Zor-El shovels a healthy bite onto his fork, and ferries the food to his mouth. He chews it enthusiastically, and swallows.

"No," Kara swallows, before shaking her head. She finally puts some food on her fork and lifts it to her mouth. She takes a modest bite, and chews. It's a little hard for her at first. After all, the taste is different than what she's used to. But eventually she's able to familiarize herself with it. It's like an old memory niggling at the back of her mind. In a few more bites, Kara is actually enjoying the meal. Sure, it's different from Earth food, but it's not bad. It's not bad by any means.

"This is delicious," Zor-El says, before taking another healthy bite.

"Thank you," Astra smiles at him, before turning her attention to Kara. "And how do you like it, Kara?"

"It's good," Kara tells her. "It's different from what I'm used to, but I like it. I almost forgot what Kryptonian food tasted like."

"Do you miss Earth food?" Astra asks her.

"A little," Kara admits.

"Well, maybe if you give me some recipes, I can try and make some for you," Astra offers. "I was never able to stomach Earth food, while I was there," Astra laughs, "But I'd be willing to try it again for you, Little One."

"Nonsense," Zor-El quickly cuts it. "There's no need for anything else."

"Zor-El," Astra begins, "I'm just trying to-"

"I know what you're trying to do," Zor-El cuts in, "But it's time Kara remembers who she really is. She's Kryptonian."

"Seriously?! Why do you do that?" Kara says angrily. She can no longer sit by and listen as her father talks down on the place that has been her home.

"Do what?"

"I know you've always talked about Earth like it was so far beneath us, but it's not," Kara says with a clench of her jaw.
"Kara-

"Do you even realize what you're saying?" Kara says the last word in an almost sibilant hiss, finally standing up for what she believes. "That place has been my home for the last fifteen years! I have people there that I love. The fact is, I wouldn't be who I am now if it wasn't for them. And I wouldn't be sitting here if it weren't for them! So how dare you? How dare you act like you're so much better than they are!"

Her father is stunned silent for a moment or two, and Kara jumps on it.

"The fact is, Alex and Eliza and Jeremiah, are more like family to me than you are," Kara tells him. She knows this will hurt him and she doesn't want to, but she also needs for him to understand. "I feel like I don't even know you anymore. Because this? This is not the sort of man that I thought you were."

"I-" Zor-El seems to be speechless.

Kara forces herself to look away then, and feels herself shut down completely. She never expected her father to be so against her. He seemed to have a problem with who she'd become, and Kara didn't know how to accept that. Sure, she was Kryptonian, but it also felt like she identified with the people of Earth. Earth was her home. Not this place.

"I'm sorry," he apologizes finally. Then, he adds, "Truly, I am. I just... I didn't think. I - I almost forget that you lived there longer than you did here."

"Why do you hate it so much?" Kara questions.

"I don't," he argues, "I'm sorry if I ever gave you the impression, because I don't. Sure, I might envy the people of it, but I-"

"Why?" Kara is honestly surprised by this statement, just a little bit. She never would have thought her father felt this way.

"Why do you think?" he says. "It's because they got to know you better than I did."

"Dad," Kara feels tears spring to your eyes.

"You were so grown up at that age," he tells her in a thick voice. "Your mother and I, we were so proud of you, Kara. And that's why I knew - I knew you would be okay. But you have to understand something else. That knowledge didn't make it any easier to say goodbye. The day that we put you into that pod was the hardest day of my entire life. And I will never be able to forget how that felt."

"It was hard for me too," Kara tells him. "And there wasn't a day that went by, that I didn't think of you or mom." Then she turned to her Aunt, "Or you Astra."

"So..." Zor-El begins, "Would you be willing to tell me a little bit about your time on Earth? Because I'd really like to know more about it, and I'm curious to know what your experiences were."

"Of course," Kara smiles, "I'd love to!"

They spend what seem to be hours, just talking. Kara tries to catch her father up on everything that has happened since she left him on Krypton's surface.

He happily supplies tidbits of his own, of course. Though, he doesn't seem to exhibit much tact in the
things he says, or in the way he says them. Eventually, he goes too far.

“What?” Zor-El suddenly asks, as he notices the look of devastation on Kara’s face. “What is it? What did I say?”

“Nothing,” Kara says with tears in her eyes, as she slips off of the stool. “It’s nothing. I’m sorry. I’m just feeling a little overwhelmed at the moment, and I need a minute to collect myself… Please excuse me.”

Kara flees from the room as fast as her weakened limbs can carry her. She walks into her bedroom, and into her walk-in closet. There, she leans against the door jam and closes her eyes.

How was she supposed to do this?

It felt like there was some invisible elephant in the room just looming over her. And Kara can’t take it.

She flees. She hates herself for her own cowardice, but she runs from her home as fast as she can possibly go.

In minutes, Kara watches her breath dissipate in the morning air before her, as she treks down a dirt path on the edge of the city. She staggers to a stop as tension in her back and shoulders reaches an unbearable level, and figures it is time for a little break.

She had taken very little with her when she left. But when hiking long distances, the weight of the little things taken with you seemed to grow with each passing step. Kara found that this was true for her as well.

Kara groans as she slips the small backpack off of her shoulder, and drops it onto the ground. There’s a soft thud as the bag hits the dirt. And Kara lets out a relieved sigh at the slight reprieve she’s given. She moans softly as she reaches up to massage the muscles in her neck and shoulders. With her movements, she consequently feels the pull in her muscles. Soon enough, however, she is able to massage some of the tightness and soreness away. Lazily, Kara unclips her water bottle from her bag and unscrews the lid. She takes a greedy pull from it, relishing at the way the water cascades over her tongue. She swishes the water around her mouth a bit before finally swallowing. Kara finds a nearby rock and walks over, sitting down on it.

As she continues to take periodic sips from her water bottle, she can’t help but look around at some of the flora around her. Everything is so bright and full of life. What makes it even more beautiful, are the ferns that flourish in the moist soil beneath. And these ferns stretch as far as the eye can possibly see.

She doesn’t remember Krypton looking like this. But, then again, she remembered it from the time right before its demise. By then the planet had been on its last legs. This, it seemed, was its afterlife. This was Krypton as it was meant to be. Krypton in the eyes of Rao.

Kara continues a long way down this winding path, happily vanishing in obscurity. She almost dares someone to find her all of the way out here.

Kara comes to a stop on the beach - just a little ways south of a small lake, and plops down onto the hot, red sand. Kara sprawls out, leaning back on her elbows as she stares up into the deep purple sky.

She can feel the warm rays of the sun across her face, and the heat diffusing from the sand into the
air around her body. Sweat pools at the base of her spine and slowly slips down, weaving a sinuous path down past the top of her pants. It is suddenly hot, humid, and Kara feels suddenly as if she is suffocating.

With a sigh, Kara wipes the sweat from her brow using the back of her sleeve.

The heat here is comparable to Earth’s heat in late July. The sky above her is a beautiful radiant amethyst, with only a few pink clouds dotting the horizon. The air is thick, however, in a way that she doesn’t remember it being. Subconsciously, she reaches up to tug at the necklace around her neck. The chain, there, feels as if it is growing tighter and tighter around her neck with every minute that ticks by. Kara closes her eyes, taking another deep breath.

“Good,” a voice has Kara jumping upright. “I was hoping that I might find you here.” Astra’s familiar lilt has Kara’s shoulders relaxing. “You always seemed to like coming to this spot when you were younger. Although, it looked quite a bit different then.” Kara opens her eyes and turns in order to find Astra’s form. The silver streak in her hair catches the light, as Astra lowers herself to the ground next to Kara’s side. Kara lets out a soft breath.

“I’m surprised you remembered,” Kara laughs, “That was a long time ago. Practically a lifetime ago.”

“Kara,” Kara is surprised at how apprehensive her Aunt sounds. She feels stiff for a moment, until Astra’s hand finds her own in the sand. “I imagine that none of this can be easy for you…”

“Yeah?”

“Yes,” Astra confirms. “Perhaps if you told me what was bothering you I could… I could help?” Astra voices, hesitating slightly at the very end. The way she says it sounds almost hopeful. It sounds as if she really wants to ease the pain in Kara’s heart.

“It’s nothing,” Kara shakes her head, but then hesitates at the last moment. “I’m… I’m fine,” Kara tries. She’s never lied to Astra like this before, and it doesn’t sit well with her. Still, she knows that Astra will probably see right through her anyway. Astra knows her better than she seems to know herself.

“No,” Astra shakes her head. “You are not. I know you, Little One. And I know when something is bothering you. You are, most decidedly not fine.”

“Please,” Kara’s voice hitches as she tries to speak, “Please don’t think that it’s because I’m not happy to see you. I promise you that it’s not that… But this? It doesn’t feel like home to me. It feels wrong, and I…” Kara desperately tries, but can’t seem to stop the sob from escaping, even though she struggles to swallow it back down.

“Oh,” the look on Astra’s face is one of pain. She suddenly seems to realize why Kara is so upset.

“I’m sorry,” Kara apologizes, “I don’t mean to hurt you. In fact, hurting you is the last thing that I want to do, but…”

“It's okay. I think I understand,” Astra whispers. When Kara doesn’t speak, she decides to go with her best guess.

“You left someone behind?” Astra breathes, nearly whispers as the realization washes over her.

“Someone you love.”

“More than I thought was possible,” Kara admits.
Kara suddenly feels incredibly restless. She stands up, starting to pace back and forth on the sand. Her mind is reeling, and she… she can’t be still. She can’t help but let out another ragged, unsteady breath, as sweat continues to streak down her face in the warm sunlight. Kara lets out a low humorless laugh, feeling her emotions start to get the better of her.

“Rao, how could I not know?” Kara asks herself. “How is it that I didn’t know until the very end? Until it was too late?”

“Kara-”

“She was everything to me, Astra,” Kara sobs. “She was everything to me, and I left her behind. And now it’s like there’s this emptiness… this emptiness inside of me, like everything good in me has been sucked away, and it feels like I can’t... I can’t breathe.”

Kara’s hyperventilating, when she feels herself pulled into the arms of her Aunt, who she hadn’t even been aware had drawn near. Kara allows herself to be comforted. She lets herself be pulled into arms that feel so much like her mother’s, and Kara loses it – loses all control. Kara sobs into her Aunt’s robes so hard she forgets how to breathe.

“Shh,” Astra soothes. She begins raking her fingers through Kara’s hair. “Shh, Little One. It’s all right. It’s going to be okay, Kara.”

“It won’t,” Kara cries. “I’m not supposed to be here. I promised her I would never leave her. I wasn’t supposed to leave.”

“I can’t imagine how difficult it is for you right now, but maybe it would help if you could tell me a little bit about her,” Astra asks gently. “I want to know more about this mysterious woman who has captured my young niece’s heart.”

“Her name is Lena,” Kara begins to tell her, calming somewhat as she does. “And she was...my best friend, the person I felt the closest to. She was the one person in the world that I felt like I could be myself with. With her, there was no need to hide. Ever. With... With everyone else it was like I was hyperaware. I was always afraid that I was going to say the wrong thing - do the wrong thing. Mostly, I was always afraid of giving away my secret. But with Lena it was different. I wasn’t scared to make a fool of myself. Because I knew that anytime I did, she would just laugh it off with me. She made me feel safe. For the first time in my life I felt as if I belonged. I felt like I had a home.” Kara paused in an effort to organize her thoughts a bit more. But the words were all begging to be set free, and Kara kept spilling more and more of them. "And she’s… She’s brilliant. She’s just so smart, Astra. The truth is, she could’ve held her own with anyone else in the guild. She’s easily the smartest person that I’ve ever met, and I’ve been surrounded by people like that my entire life, first with you, Mom, and Dad, and then with the Danvers. But, I think that what I love most about her, is that she’s so much more than her brilliance. She's more than a name. She’s funny, she's self deprecating, and she’s got this sense of humor that is just… I don’t know what to call it. It’s a little dark, maybe? A little twisted? But it works. She’s suffered a lot in her life, but somehow…. somehow she’s taken that darkness, that hatred, and she’s turned it into a beacon of light. She’s courageous, and loyal to the people she cares about. It’s just… There isn’t anything she wouldn’t do for those that she loves, no line that she wouldn’t cross to keep them safe. She’s a lot like me in that way. She compassionate, and generous, and selfless. She does… she does so much good in the world. And being around her? It inspired me. It made me a better person. It made me want to do better, to be better, for her and everyone else.”

“She… She sounds wonderful,” Astra smiles. “I wish I had met her. And she must be someone extremely special, if she captured your heart in the way she has.”
“She was my red sun, my chance to be human,” Kara smiles as she pulls away. “To her, I was just Kara Danvers. And yet she still loved me and cherished me anyway. She and Alex. They’re the family that I never thought that I would have.”

“Did she know?”

“I...I don’t know,” Kara admits. “I – I think so? I mean, I really hope so, but I didn’t… Like I said, I didn’t really know it until the end. We’d been fighting a lot leading up to my fight with Reign, and it took a toll on us. I was angry with her.” Kara pauses, as she realizes that that isn’t true.

“Wait,” Kara sighs in frustration, “That's... that’s not entirely true.” She’s left trying to come up with the best way to explain it.

“I thought that I was angry with her for something she did,” Kara continues, “But now? Now that I have a chance to think about it, I think that the one I was really angry at was myself. I was angry for not seeing what was in front of me all this time. I was angry that I was losing her to someone else. And I took all of that anger out on the wrong person.” Kara closes her eyes and lets out a sigh. “I never even got the chance to apologize for the way I acted. It just… It all happened so fast.”

“I think I understand what you're trying to say,” Astra nods. "There was someone else in the picture."

"Yeah," Kara swallows, "And I think she loves him. They've been dating for a while, and I could see her falling more and more in love with him. It... It hurt me to see it. I don't think I understood why, at first. But now I know why. It's because I was in love with her the whole time. I've been in love with her the whole time. Rao, I can't believe I was so blind."

"Do you think there might be a chance that she feels the same way?"

"I-" Kara lets herself experience self-doubt. "I don't know. I wish I could say, but I really don't know. That's what hurts the most, I think. What if I had a chance, but I blew it? What if I never get the chance to find out?"

"Kara,” Astra shakes her head. "Come on," Astra says gently, "If what you told me is true, then I have to believe that she loves you too."

“I miss her,” Kara whispers, before she sniffs loudly into the back of her hand as she tries to wipe away the tears and the snot that are dripping from the tip of her nose. “I just… Rao, I miss her. This doesn’t seem right. This can’t be… This can’t be right.”

“What if I told you that you could go back?” Astra questions, and Kara’s head snaps up so fast that it should be impossible.

“What? What do you mean?” Kara asks, as hope flails in her chest.

“I... “ Astra hesitates. “Your father will not be happy with me for telling you this. But I know you. And as much as I love you and want you here, it pains me to think that it would ever be at your expense. I want you to be happy, Kara. And I want you to be with the one you love for as long as humanly possible. So if you want to go back, then I think I know of a way.” Then. “You have a choice. You always had a choice. I just hope that we’re not too late.”

"I don't want to make any trouble, but you're my only hope, Astra. So please. Please help me," Kara pleads. "I need to try and fix my mistake before it's too late. I need her to know how I feel." Astra nods, resigning herself to the notion of letting her go again. She knows that she will miss Kara dearly, but she also wants Kara to be happy. And she wants Kara to experience as much happiness
as she possibly can, before coming back here, to this version of the afterlife. At that point they will all be able to live happily ever after. But before then? They'll just have to wait. She knows that their reunion will be all the more sweeter for it.
Chapter Summary

Lena has some rather powerful revelations.

Or

Lena rages against the universe.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

(Lena's POV)

“Come on,” Alex encourages her, as she carefully helps Lena from the back of the SUV and wraps an arm around Lena’s middle. “I’ve got to get inside. J’onn left me in charge of DEO, and I’ve gotta try and contain this situation before it gets any worse. Are you going to be okay on your own for a little bit while I do that?”

“Yeah,” Lena swallows. “Yeah, I think so,” Lena whispers, even though she isn’t really sure she’ll be okay on her own. But she can’t bear the thought of being a burden to Alex any more than she already has been. After all, Alex had a job to do. “Let’s just get inside.”

Together, the two of them limp inside, both looking more than a little worse for wear.

Lena has to keep holding pressure against her side with her hand, in order to be able to breathe normally. But so long as she can keep drawing breaths in and out, that’s all that mattered.

Just as Alex predicted, they’re met at the elevatory doors, by Winn, Brainiac-V, Vasquez, and a crowd of other high ranking agents. It’s hard to pick out individual words, as everyone in the crowd starts speaking over each other with what they feel are the most pressing issues.

Alex gives them a few moments to vent their frustrations and fears, before she loses patience.

“Hold up a second! One at a time, everybody!” Alex shouts in exasperation, effectively quieting them.

Slowly, all of the words peter out. Lena lets out a weighted breath, as she notices the expressions on all of the faces in the crowd. Most of them look as beat up as Lena feels. Some even have bruises and gashes visible on their cheek. However, what Lena finds the most telling, is their posture. Most of them are hunched over, are cradling limbs, or are holding their side as she is. As she examines them all, she finds that their weariness is evident. They look exhausted, but it's more than that. They're scared.

She can see it in their eyes. They all look as if they are unsure of what happens next. Now that the city is burning, and most everything has been destroyed, they need guidance. And they all seem to be looking to Alex for that guidance.
Lena suddenly doesn't envy Alex in the least. Still, Lena can't think of anyone better to lead them, than Alex. She's gotten to know Alex a lot over these last months, and it's become abundantly clear. Alex is a natural born leader. Everything about Alex commands respect. She's hard, but fair. She doesn't coddle, but she will give credit where it's due.

But more than that, she's family to everybody here.

“Okay, guys,” Alex’s says in a calmed but assertive tone. “Look, I – I know that you’re probably scared. And the truth is, I’m pretty scared, too. But there are a lot of people out there that are in need of our help. And we’ve got to help them.”

“How are we supposed to help them when we can barely help ourselves?” one of the men in the crowd interrupts her. And Alex seems to think about this for a beat before she responds.

“By resolving to do better,” Alex shoots back at him without missing a beat.

“Look, I get it,” Alex says after a moment of tense silence. “I get that things look pretty dire right now. But I also know that we are one of the precious few that have the resources and the means to help the people of this city. Sure, it won’t be easy. But we can do it. I fully believe that we can do it, if we all just work together.” Lena looks around, in order to see the doubt and the fear still etched on most of the faces in the crowd.

“Listen to me,” Alex orders, finally. “Someone very wise, and very important to me, once told me to acknowledge the fear. She told me to acknowledge the fear and then kick its ass. And what I’ve learned since then, is that determination… determination is a hell of a lot more powerful than fear.” Alex pauses and swallows. “So focus on the objectives if you have to. Solve one problem, and then move on. It’s easy to become overwhelmed if you try and think of all of the things you have to do at once. So work on one thing at a time and just keep at it. Before you know it? You’ll be done.” Lena’s lips twitch upwards into a smile as she realizes how amazing Alex is.

“Alright,” Alex exhales under her breath, “What now?” Lena is the only one that is close enough to hear this moment of doubt. “Right, we need a starting point - some place to begin.”

Then, louder. “Okay, what we’re going to do, is go into that room and come up with some sort of a plan. When we get in there, I want all of your best ideas… And, believe me, no idea is too big or too small. If we’re going to do this, we’re going to have to be creative.” Alex lets out a sigh of relief as everyone starts nodding.

“Good, now let’s do this,” Alex smiles. “And remember! Speak one at a time. Your ideas are going to be no good to me if I can’t hear them. I will not let this place descend into chaos.” Then, “If you want chaos, then feel free to go outside. I assure you! There’s plenty of that out there.” She indicates the windows at her back.

“What about Supergirl?” a voice pipes up. “Where is she?”

“She’s-“ Lena can detect the quiver in Alex's voice as she tries to respond.

“I’m afraid that Supergirl is not going to be of any use to us right now,” Alex’s voice is thick, as she responds. “She got badly hurt in the fight. So right now? Right now... the best way we can honor her, is by helping as many people as possibly can. We have to go on without her. I’m afraid we’re going to have to do this on our own.”

“All right! Let’s do this then!” somebody shouts. “For Supergirl!”

“For Supergirl!” The echoes leaves Lena’s breath catching in her throat.
Lena feels her tears begin anew, as Alex marches off with the small crowd.

Lena feels almost helpless as she watches her sole lifeline walk away from her, leaving her in a sea of uncertainty. It takes everything in Lena just to keep breathing, as she stands motionless in the middle of the DEO, staring at the place where Alex, and the rest of the crowd disappeared. Lena remains like that, as one minute ticks into another. She’s been standing like that for nearly a half an hour, before a touch sends her reeling, seemingly breaking the status quo. And Lena whirls around to face this unforeseen intruder.

She opens her mouth to yell, and ask this unforeseen interloper what in the hell it is they want, before she’s suddenly rendered momentarily silent.

Because she’s finally face to face with her boyfriend for the first time since the battle began hours ago. And Lena actually has to remind herself who he is. This is the man that she’s supposed to be in love with.

And don’t get me wrong. There’s a part of Lena that deeply cares for James, and an even bigger part that greatly respects him. But he doesn’t make her chest ache. He doesn’t make it hard to breathe in his presence. And one touch from him doesn’t set her ablaze. It’s not even close.

With Kara? With Kara it was different. There were honestly times when Lena was with Kara, that she was afraid for her own life. Lena was afraid that she wouldn’t make it, because her heart was beating so very wildly.

Wasn’t that what love was supposed to be?

What amazed Lena the most, however, were all of the times that Lena got lost in Kara’s presence, and everything in her just went quiet. In Kara's presence, it was like the world stopped spinning and nothing else mattered apart from the beautiful and amazing woman next to her. It was like she was at peace. All of her life Lena had felt as if she was surrounded by chaos. It was as if she were at the center of the hurricane, with everything spinning round and round her. Simply by existing, Lena left unfathomable destruction in her wake. The fact is, she'd grown used to it. It was simply the cost of being a Luthor. It happened whether or not she tried not to. But with Kara? With Kara it was like everything just stopped. She didn't have to worry, because Kara seemed able to handle anything. Kara was willing and able to accept Lena and all she brought with her.

“Lena!” Lena feels herself scooped into James’ strong arms, but those strong arms suddenly feel very wrong around her.

Lena can't help but think of Kara, then, and of what it felt like to be held in Kara’s incredibly strong but gentle hold. It's funny to her now. After all, with all of the strength that Kara had, it would have been easy for the blonde superhero to crush Lena in her embrace. But Lena never felt anything other than safe in Kara's arms. Kara always hugged with the perfect amount of strength. She approached their hugs with a desperation and a love that Lena had never felt from anyone else. But they were gentle, too - comforting. Kara's hugs were nothing like the one in which she now found herself, where James compressed her already sore ribs.

Lena tries to sink into the embrace as much as she possibly can. But much as she tries to, she can’t help the feeling of emptiness that settles over her. “Lena! Oh, thank god you’re okay,” James exhales. “When… When I woke up and you weren’t there, I thought-” James actually sounds like he is on the verge of tears, and Lena feels guilt swell up inside of her. The fact is, it’s almost overwhelming. He cares about her. He cares so much, and she can’t be bothered to pretend anymore.
She doesn’t know if she can pretend she’s not in love with Kara.

She doesn’t know if she can do this. James doesn’t deserve it and neither does she. “I was so scared that something had happened to you,” James admits.

Lena struggles not to pull away from him. Even though everything in her body crying out, and begging for her to pull away. The fact is, the war going on inside of her is nothing short of torturous. Nothing about this felt right, and she can't ignore her feelings anymore. Kara deserved better from her.

“James,” Lena’s voice is weak, but insistent as she starts to pull away. Unfortunately, it doesn’t go quite like she plans it. The fact is, James is so much stronger than her, that her efforts to pull away from his frame are almost futile. But Lena continues to fight, feebly pushing at his shoulders.

The truth is, she can’t bear to be touched by him. At least, not right now.

Lena hates herself as she sees how deeply hurt James is by this.

“What’s wrong?” he asks her.

“Nothing… It’s fine. I’m fine,” Lena whispers, but it’s clear from her tone of voice that this is a lie. She’s not fine. Not even close. And James seems to pick up on this right away.

James experiences panic, as he notices the blood soaking her hands and her clothes, for the first time.

“Oh my god,” James breathes anxiously, “Are you okay? Lena, are you hurt?”

“I…I don’t know,” Lena whispers. “I think something might be broken, but I’m… I’m okay.”

“Where are you bleeding from?” She flinches as James starts unzipping her tactical shirt, searching for any apparent life threats.

“Oh,” the word is little more than a puff of air. Tears are already seeping from her eyes, as she suddenly says. “No. No, It’s…It’s not mine. S-Something happened while you were unconscious…”

“Jesus, Lena,” James says as he notices something else about her, “You’re shaking. You’re shaking like crazy. I think you might be in shock.”

James gently grabs her gently by the shoulders, and Lena lets herself be steered by him as he leads her to a chair to sit down. Lena starts crying again, as he sits her down in the chair and slowly kneels down in front of her, trying to hold her gaze. Her hands are shaking violently, and she has a haunted look in her eyes that he has only seen once before. It reminds him of the night when they'd witnessed that first fight between Supergirl and Reign, the one where they'd seen Supergirl crash to the ground right in front of them.


“It’s Kara’s,” the name comes out as a sob. “Reign was trying to kill me and she… she intervened. She… She got hurt in the process. She was protecting me, James, and she-”

“Lena,” James’ voice is extremely gentle as he speaks her name.

“Lena starts, but her voice keeps betraying her by breaking on her. It was almost impossible to get it out. But she keeps trying. The truth is, she needs to get it out somehow. She can't keep it inside anymore. “There was so much blood. It was everywhere. J’onn… J’onn took her
away, and I... I don’t even know if she’s still alive.” Lena’s head drops down into her hands, as she
tries to conceal her tears. It is hard for James to watch, as her body convulses in sob after uncontrolled sob.

James has never seen Lena like this. Ever. And he suddenly realizes that he has no idea what he is supposed say, or do, in this situation.

“Lena,” James tries softly, “Lena...” Lena squeezes her eyes shut. And still the tears escape from them. They weave quickly down her cheeks, evading her fingertips as she tries to swipe them away.

“Damn her,” Lena sobs, “How could she do this? She promised me that she would always be my friend. She promised she would always protect me. And then...and then she left me! Why? Why does everyone always leave?”

“Hey,” James says, “Hey, I’m here. Okay? And I’m not going anywhere.” He thinks this will make her feel better, but instead, it only seems to make things worse. They make Lena think of the promises that Kara made her - promises that have since been broken.

James just doesn’t understand why he’s not good enough.

“Lena,” James hardly dares to breathe. “What can I do? What can I do to make this better.”

“I...I need to know if she’s alive,” Lena pleaded as she looks into James’ eyes. “Please... I need you to make sure Kara is still alive.”

“Lena,” James sighs. He can’t handle the pain in her eyes anymore. It breaks his heart to see her this way.

“Please,” the one word is enough to tip the scales.

“Yeah. Okay,” James says finally, leaning forwards to press a lingering kiss to her forehead in a gesture of love and comfort. “I’ll be right back.”

“I’ll be right back,” James promises again, before he finally stands up. Lena watches as he practically sprints through the middle of the DEO. With trembling fingers she pulls out her phone and dials the only number she can think off. It seems to take Eve forever to answer.

“This is Jess,” she speaks into the receiver. Lena squeezes her eyes shut, trying to keep the tears from falling. She struggles to find the right words to speak next.

“Eve? It’s Lena,” Lena speaks thickly, her voice a low, deep alto.

“Lena! Oh thank god,” Eve breathes into the receiver. “James said that you’d gone missing, and I’ve been desperately trying to get a hold of you ever since. I’m so glad you finally called.”

“Eve...” Lena breathes into the phone, the pain in her chest is nearly unbearable. “Listen, I’m... I’m at the DEO. Something happened to Supergirl. She’s been hurt. God she might even be dead... I—I don’t know.”

“What about Kara?” Eve asks. “Is she with you?”

“No,” Lena admits. “She’s missing. And I’m afraid... I’m afraid that something has happened to her, too.”

“What?” Eve sounds shocked. In fact, it almost seems like the floor has just been taken out from
under her. “I… I just can’t believe – I had no idea how bad it was. I mean…most news coverage was knocked out hours ago during the fight, but I never imagined…”

“It’s just…” Eve sounds flabbergasted. “Kara’s missing?”

“I know,” Lena’s voice cracks. Lena lifts a hand to her nose and sniffs. Then, Lena realizes how stupid this all is. In fact, it’s a miracle that the call hasn’t been dropped already.

“Look,” Lena whispers, “I could easily cry over this for hours with you, but I… I don’t know how long I have. In fact, I’m surprised that I was able to get through at all, honestly. I just… I wanted you to know that I’m okay.”

“I appreciate that, Miss Luthor,” Eve says with immense relief, “But, if you don’t mind me saying? It kind of sounds like you aren’t okay?”

Lena sighs. Eve had always been extremely perceptive about these kinds of things.

“You’ve got me,” Lena admits, “It’s just… I don’t know what to do. She’s my best friend, Eve. She means everything to me. And I don’t think… I don’t think I can live without her.”

“I know how much you care about her,” Eve says. “Look, I have some people I can reach out to. I’ll put out some feelers and see if I can’t find her.”

“Eve, that’s very kind, but I don’t think she’s-” Lena’s voice shook. “I… It’s my fault. She was trying to protect me.”

“Lena,” Eve sounds extremely worried, “Hey, calm down. It’s not your fault.”

“It’s is! She could be dead because of me,” Lena cries, “Eve….”

“Just let me try and help, okay,” Eve says quickly. “Lena, please let me do this for you?”

“I….” Lena shakes her head, but she hears herself say, “Okay.”

“Alright.” The matter seems to be settled.

“Eve,” Lena sounds a little bit scared, “Are you at the office?”

“Yeah,” Eve nods. “A group of us are in the sub-basement. You said it was the safest place in the building, so I gathered everybody and we hunkered down in here.”

“Good,” Lena’s voice is gentle and appreciative as she says, “That’s very smart thinking. Listen, the DEO is going to be sending a group to help you, but chances are they won’t be able to get to you until tomorrow, or maybe even a few days from now. You need to gather up as many resources as you possibly can, and then you need to lock down the building. I’ll let you know when it’s safe to lift the lockdown. But until then, just hunker down and stay safe, alright?”

“Understood, Miss Luthor, “ Eve replies, “I’ll take good care of your company, I promise.”

“And Eve?” Lena asks with a gentle inflection of her voice.

“Yeah?” Eve responds.

“Thank you,” Lena tells her sincerely, “Just, thank you.”
“You’re welcome, Miss Luthor,” Eve replies earnestly. “We’re going to figure everything out, I promise. And Kara...Kara is a hell of a lot stronger than people give her credit for. I’m sure she’s okay.”

“I sure hope so,” Lena says in a choked voice, before she utters a quick goodbye and ends the call.

For a long time after the phone call ends, Lena stares down into the fibers of the carpet at her feet. She is numb. When they were preparing for battle earlier this morning, she had no idea that it would turn out to be a day quite like this.

Lena honestly thought that they were prepared. Or, at the very least, thought that they were as prepared for the battle as they possibly could be. Supergirl had seemed so confident in the pre-op briefing. She’d been determined. She’d seemed ready to do battle.

They’d all known was at stake. They knew that they were fighting for the Earth itself.

Lena briefly thinks back to Kara's speech. Kara had said that she didn't like stealing other people’s words, but then she said that she would make an exception, just once. Then, in the loudest, booming voice that Supergirl could muster, she’d said the words. “Clear eyes, full hearts, can’t lose.” By the time she’d finished, the entire room full of grown men and women about to do battle had been shouting those same words. The energy in the room after that had been nothing short of electric. Lena had been sure that they would win.

And they did. They did win. But they also lost so very much. There was no one who knew this better than Lena. Because she had lost her whole universe.

Lena can scarcely breathe as she starts to hyperventilate just a little bit.

Anyone who knows Lena Luthor, would be able to tell you that she was used to close calls. In fact, she’s had a mind-boggling eleven assassination attempts against her at last count. The point is, she had gone through a number of them in the last few years, but never…never had she prepared herself for this kind of scenario. Never had she been prepared to lose the love of her life.

Supergirl had always been a little cavalier when it came to the kinds of danger they faced. In fact, Lena wasn't sure if Kara knew what it felt like to be afraid. And if she did, well, let's just say that she had a unique ability to overcome such fears.

During her tenure as Supergirl, Kara had gotten used to the idea of being nearly invulnerable. She had nurtured and grown qualities within herself, that made her a good hero. She was brave, and true, and she was selfless, so very selfless. She’d taken her responsibilities to heart, and so she’d been willing to sacrifice herself to save the planet that had become her home. She had given her life for Lena, and for the rest of the world without hesitation, not caring whether or not she was ever recognized for it or not. Lena had once admired these qualities in Supergirl. But now, Lena can't help but feel as if it were one of the things that she was so desperate to change. She can't help but think that maybe those qualities are what had gotten them here, to this moment - a moment where the love of her life was dead, and Lena was alone. Lena only wishes that Kara had been a little more selfish, and a little more self-serving. Perhaps, if she had, then Kara might still be there with her.

Unfortunately, that just wasn't who Kara was. Kara was a hero in every sense of the world. She was the kind of person who gave and gave and gave until there was nothing left. She helped people, and she did it all for free, without asking a single thing in return.

In all senses of the word, Lena couldn’t win. She was damned if she did, and damned if she didn’t. Hell, she was just plain damned, no matter what.
And now Lena was afraid she was really going to lose Kara for good. She closed her eyes, flashing back to a night just a few weeks ago.

"A Margarita for you," Lena heard the waiter say absently, before listening for the small thunk of the glass against the table.

"And a scotch for you, miss," Lena looked up as a waiter dressed in formal wear set down a crystal glass of scotch in front of her on the table.

"Thank you," Lena offered him a polite, but distant smile, as she handed him a crisp bill for the drinks.

"I'll get the change for you right away," he promised.

"There's no need," Lena told him. "Please. Keep the change."

"Really?" he looked genuinely surprised. "Thank you!" He quickly fled the table, but Lena knew he would be back. That hefty tip meant that he would be sure to get them refills as soon as they could drain their glasses.

"I wish you wouldn't do that," Sam said wryly.

"I'm sorry," Lena swallowed, as she traced the top of her glass with her finger. "I just thought-"

"Hey, it's okay," Sam breathed. "I know it's habit for you, but I was sort of hoping I could pay for the drinks, since I'm the one who invited you out."

"Oh," Lena looked a bit surprised. She picked up her glass and took a small sip of the amber liquid. It sparked to life on her tongue, the taste strong and biting. Lena quickly swallowed it down, with a pleased sigh. She dearly loved a good glass of scotch.

"How is it?" Sam asked hopefully.

"Good," Lena sighed, as she relaxed in her chair. "So good." She could feel the tension seeping out of her shoulders, as she took another sip, and felt it warm her on the way down. There was nothing better than a good Scotch when it came to eating away her stress.

Sam had insisted that they have a girl’s night out, and Lena had jumped at the chance. Lena felt as if she needed to clear her mind as much as possible. The stress of saving Sam had been eating away at her recently, and now that she'd accomplished that, it felt like there was a need for celebration.

"So," Sam breathed, "It's been a while. How have you been?"

"Me?" Lena seemed surprised that Sam was asking.

"Yeah you," Sam laughed. "How have you been?"

"I'm good," Lena laughed. "Life is really, really good."

"Still saving the world?" Sam asked her.

"I'm trying," Lena spoke honestly. "But it's harder than I thought it would be."

"It always is," Sam smiled. Then, "How is working with Supergirl?"
"Oh please," Lena huffed. "Don't get me started."

"She's just trying to help," Sam argued.

"To drive me up a wall, maybe," Lena laughed.

"Are you ever going to be able to forgive her?" Sam couldn't help but ask.

"Truthfully?" Lena replied. "I don't know. I mean... I want to forgive her, but I don't... Look, let's just say that forgiveness has never been one of my strong suits."

"Give it time," Sam told her. "You might be surprised."

"Yeah," Lena nodded. "I guess we'll see, won't we?" Then she changed the subject. "So... when is the last time we had a night out?"

"I don't know," Sam admitted. "Probably since before the whole Reign thing."

"That long?" Lena questioned.

"Yeah, well it's hard to go out and get drinks with a homicidal maniac," Sam joked.

"Mmm," Lena hummed. "I guess so."

"I'm glad we're doing this," Sam said finally, with an optimistic smile on her face.

"Me too," Lena smiled genuinely.

She took another sip of her drink as she looked around. She liked to be aware of her surroundings wherever she went. Perhaps it was all of the assassination attempts that had been made on her life, after all she had a whopping eleven assassination attempts against her at last count, but Lena liked to be aware of everything going on around her. Finally, as she completed her sweep of the room, her eyes looked up to meet Sam’s. She set down her glass.

"You casing the place, or something?" Sam asked, which earned her a snort of laughter from Lena.

"Just making sure we're safe," Lena told her. "One can never be too careful."

"You have a Super on speed-dial," Sam laughed, "I think we'll be okay."

"Funny," Lena scoffed. Then Lena just shook her head. "The truth is, I'm not sure she'd come, if I called for help."

"Of course she will," Sam argued. "Look, you guys may not be on good terms right now, but she cares about you, Lena. And for whatever reason, she seems determined to protect you."

"Look, Can we- Can we please talk about something else?" Lena asked, before taking a pull from her drink.

"What do you have in mind?" Sam asked.

"I don't know... Something that doesn't make me want to pull out my hair?" Lena snarked.

“Okay. How is James doing?” Sam asked softly, swirling her straw around the inside of her own margarita.
“Really?” Lena laughed, “That’s what you’re going with?”

“What?! It’s a fair question,” Sam told her. “How is your boyfriend? Whom you love?”

“Good,” Lena finally stuttered, after summoning up some composure, “He’s good.” Lena took a deep breath. “A bit busy, but good,” she corrected a second later. “He’s been working a lot of hours.”

“I kind of gathered that,” Sam replied. "You guys get to see each other often?"

"Umm... Well, we've been trying, but we both don't have a lot of time to spare right now," Lena admitted. "Running two companies is difficult."

“But that seems to be working out pretty well for you, isn’t it?” Sam asked.

“I'm sorry?” Lena’s brow furrowed, “I’m afraid that I’m not following…”

“I sort of heard from Alex that you and Kara have been spending a lot of time together lately,” Sam said finally, not the least bit shy about addressing the truth.

“Sam,” the tone of Lena’s voice held a bit of a warning to it. “Hey, I know where you’re going with this. And I’m going to tell you this as kindly as I can possibly manage. Don’t. Don’t go there.”

“Hey, I know you’d probably rather not talk about this, but I have to ask,” Sam sighed, as she looked her friend deeply in the eyes, “I can’t help but wonder why. You have a perfect boyfriend who loves you, but instead of being completely elated about it, you are absolutely miserable…”

“I am not miserable,” Lena replied defensively. “Listen to me when I say this, Sam. I'm happy, okay?! Look, just because I don’t gush about James like you talk about Alex doesn’t mean that I don’t love him.”

“Come on, Lena, don’t deflect. You’re better than that,” Sam lectured. “Look, the thing is, I’m not even sure you realize what you’ve been doing. I mean, first it was a movie night here and there with Kara. Now it’s dinners, and drinks, and sleepovers. It’s just – you... you need to tread very carefully here, or someone is going to get hurt. Namely Kara.”

“Sam,” Lena shook her head, “Look, I know what you’re thinking, but it’s not what you think. We’re just friends.”

“You really expect me to believe that?” Sam asked seriously. “Because when she was mourning the loss of Mon-El, you were pining after her incredibly hard. In fact, you were so hung up on her that it was kind of hard to watch. And then when he came back, it was like you were seriously considering ways to make him go away again.”

“No,” Lena replied indignantly. “No, I... I got over that a long time ago.”

“Really?” Sam mumbled, still unconvinced, “And spending all this time together, it hasn’t changed your feelings for her at all?” Lena swallowed and looked away as she realized Sam had struck the nail on the head with that one. She could still remember how close she had come to telling Kara she loved her, while they were in bed together only weeks ago. And if she were being completely honest, her heart still raced from time to time when Kara was in her presence. But never once did Lena cross that very distinct line she'd put in place for herself.

She had come close to it last weekend when she’d had one too many drinks at Kara’s apartment. But, fortunately, Lena had managed to restrain herself before it happened.
“Ah,” Sam hummed as she saw the somewhat healthy flush that began to work its way up Lena’s pale neck.

“Lena,” she breathed, “Look, If you do then…. then you need to figure this out before things get out of control.” Lena still had to deny it. “She’s single now. And I’m sure that she has feelings for you.”

“Please,” Lena scoffed. “Look, I respect what you’re trying to do,” she said shortly - maybe a little too shortly, if she was being honest, ”but I’m telling you…”

“Lena-

“Nothing has happened, and nothing is going to happen,” Lena argued. “I'm smart. And I know where the boundaries are. I….I’m not going to cheat on my boyfriend. Okay? And despite what you think, I…I’m happy right now. I’m really happy with James.” She closed her eyes. “He’s smart, and he’s handsome, and...come on, Sam, have you seen him?”

“Lena,” Sam couldn’t help but shake her head a little bit. “I’ll admit that he’s very handsome, but looks aren’t everything. Hell….the heart of someone is so much more important to me. The fact is, it’s everything, and you’re selling yourself short if you don’t see that. You and Kara could be so much more than you could ever be with...” Sam trailed off as she noticed the look on Lena’s face.

“Okay,” Sam conceded, “I can see you’re not into this, so I’ll spare you the lecture.”

“Good,” Lena said with a huff. "Thank you!" Sam nodded, but Lena could see that she was still unhappy with the way they were leaving things.

“Look,” Lena says a fraction of a heartbeat later, “Even if I did have feelings for Kara, it’s obvious that... that dating her would be an all-around bad idea. If things didn’t work out, it would ruin our friendship. And the fact is, I can’t bear the thought of risking our friendship over feelings that are probably going to go away anyways. I can’t lose her, Sam.”

“And you’re okay with that?” Sam questioned. "You’re really okay with... with never knowing what it feels like to touch her? Kiss her?" Lena hates the reaction Sam's words have on her. But she feels an inexplicable tug, a pang of longing she doesn’t want to admit to. "Because I can't imagine never experiencing that madness - the absolute insanity that comes with making love to the person that you love most in this world."

Lena's mouth was suddenly dry, as visions of such a thing played through her mind in rapid succession. She could practically feel Kara's hands running over her naked flesh - feel her breaths catching as Kara's mouth devoured her inch by painstaking inch. Then she shook herself out of it.

"I have to be,” Lena answered.

Lena replied emphatically. ”We’re friends, Sam. And we’re going to stay that way.”

“But what about-” Sam began to ask, but Lena didn't let her get any farther.

“No,” Lena hissed, "We're done with this conversation"

“Can you please let this go? Please?” Lena sighed, “This was supposed to be a fun girl’s night out. Now it’s starting to feel like is an interrogation.”

“I’m sorry,” Sam apologized, “I'm just... I’m trying to make sure that this doesn’t turn into a problem. Your friendship with her barely survived the last time. And you both wound up getting hurt because you couldn’t admit how you really felt.”
“Sam… I’m telling you that there is no way I’m going to throw away a good relationship over something that may or may not ever work out. It’s not worth it. And I’m perfectly happy with the way things are now.” Another lie. She was all about denying her feelings for Kara, but deep inside she knew. She knew her best friend was right. She wasn’t in love with James. She was in love with Kara. And no matter how hard she tried not to be, she couldn’t help it. Lena struggled, “It’s just… We’ve been through a lot together, Sam. Kara… Kara understands me. She knows what I’ve been through, and the sort of insecurities I face on a daily basis. She’s my confidant. She’s my best friend… and I’m not going to risk our relationship or stop seeing her, just because you think I’m crossing some sort of boundary.”

“Please just be careful, Lena,” Sam sighed. She would never admit it to her best friend, but she still found herself rooting for the two of them, Lena and Kara. As peculiar a couple as they would be, and as convinced as Lena was that they would never work, Kara and Lena were perfectly matched in every sense of the word. They were equally passionate about doing good in the world, and had a lot of the same interests. Sam could understand Lena’s fears about losing the person that meant the most to her, but at the same time, Sam was convinced that Kara would never let anything destroy their friendship. She cared about Lena too damned much for that.

Sam also knew that Kara would lay down her life for Lena, and that was something that spoke for itself. No. She had no doubt they would be the couple that could make it through anything.

"I... I will," Lena promised.

“Lena?” James’ voice is enough to pull her back to the present. Lena can’t help but jump a little bit, as she suddenly and jarringly blinks, and finds herself back in the empty room where James had left her. James gently presses his hands to her shoulders as he tries to get Lena to look at him. “Lena?”

“What is it?” she questions. But she’s afraid of the answer that will follow.

“Okay,” James drops down in front of her, crouching on the balls of his feet. “So I just talked with Alex, who apparently just spoke with J’onn a few minutes ago. And… Kara’s alive. They have her stabilized. She’s alive. At least for now.”

“Yeah?” Lena almost sobs in relief.

“Yeah,” he confirms, “She’s okay. She’s still in pretty bad shape, but at least she’s alive.”

“Where is she?” Lena asks.

“I’m afraid that I can’t answer that,” James admitted. “From what I understand, she’s in a location not directly related to the DEO. And she will be there for the foreseeable future.”

“I just don’t want her to be alone,” Lena tells him as she fights back tears. “She must be so scared.”

“But she’s not alone…” James promises, “Okay? J’onn is there with her, and he will be for as long as Kara needs him. He promised Alex that she wouldn’t be alone.”

“She’s not alone,” he repeats, making sure that Lena hears him.

“And she’s going to make it?” Lena’s voice is weak as she looks James in the eyes. She knows that he would never lie to her.

“Barring any major complications, she has a chance,” James replies. “Lena,” he can’t help the large weighted breath that escapes him, “I’m not going to lie. There’s still a chance that she might not make it. According to Alex, Kara lost a large volume of blood, over a third of it. But whatever they
gave her to help fight the effects of the Kryptonite is working. It’s helped give her some of her strength back. And because of that, she has a fighting chance.”

“When will we know?” Lena breathes. Lena briefly glances down at her hands in order to find they are still shaking violently. James seems to notice this too, and takes them in his own, gently, while trying to calm her. He tries to ignore how cold they feel in his grasp. Lena’s hands are also sticky, and coated with stale, viscous blood.

“We won’t,” James replies honestly. “At least not until J’onn can get word to us again.”

“What do you mean?” Lena asks, with her brows furrowing in confusion. None of this makes sense to her.

“Well,” James awkwardly clears his throat, before speaking. “Apparently… wherever they are doesn’t have the best means of communication.”

“Apart from that,” Lena breathes, “How long will it be until we know for sure?”

“Alex says that we can give Kara pretty good odds if she makes it through the next twenty-four hours, without any major life-threatening complications.” Lena nods, as a fresh sob breaks its way out of her throat. James watches her look down at their twined hands, with a look of regret on her face.

“James,” Lena’s voice is thick with regret as she pulls her hands away.

“Lena,” James breathes softly, almost hesitantly, his eyes locking onto her stained clothes. Lena still looks like she is in shock. “We should really get you cleaned up.” Lena nods, absentmindedly. Her eyes are glazed over, and he can’t help but think that she’s a long way away. She seems distant to him, almost unreachable. As gently as he can manage, James pulls her up from the chair. Together, they walk slowly down the hall. Lena feels self-conscious as she realizes that she can feel everyone else’s eyes on her as they pass.

James leads her to an empty locker room, which is empty due to the fact that it is in the middle of the shift. James sits her down on a bench inside the door, as he walks for Lena’s locker. Lena, who is still acting quite catatonic, just stares into the bleached white floors, listening to the locker rattle as James opens it. In another moment he is pulling out a spare tactical uniform. He shuts it and turns around. James pulls her up and led her into an adjacent room. Lena swallows as she realizes the room’s purpose. It is a shower room.

“James…” the name catches in the back of Lena’s throat, and she feels her stomach sink.

“Hey, it’s okay. I received permission from Alex. No one will be in here. And, hey, if it makes you feel any better, I’ll even stand guard outside,” James reassures her. “Lena, it’ll make you feel better. It really will. I promise.”

“You’ll wait outside?” Lena’s voice inflects slightly on her words, as she looks up and into James’ sympathetic and soft brown eyes.

“Of course,” James replies quickly. “Just give a shout if you need me, and I’ll be here.”

“James,” Lena’s voice is soft when she finally manages to speak up and say the words she’s desperately wanted to say for the last few minutes. She sounds remorseful, as she breathes out the words, “I’m so sorry. I’m really sorry.”

“Hey,” James sounds so genuine, when he says them that it breaks Lena’s heart. She can’t help but
think that he deserves better. He deserves so much better than her. “You don’t have to be sorry. Look, I know you love Kara. She… She is your best friend. And she is mine, too. It just…it hurts. So you don’t have to be sorry for anything, Lena. We’ll get through this together. Okay?” Lena just nods.

“Before I forget, avoid using the second stall if you want any warm water. That faucet seems to be broken.”

“Thank you,” Lena says honestly.

“Hey,” he smiles at her, “It’s nothing.”

“No,” Lena argues, “It’s not nothing. In fact, I would still be standing in the middle of the DEO looking like an idiot if it weren’t for you. So thanks.”

“Lena, I don’t blame you for feeling lost,” James swallows. “Look, we all have our breaking points, okay? Even those of us that deal with stuff like this on a daily basis have trouble with certain things. It…it’s a lot to take in.” He shakes his head. “To have someone you care about hurt that badly… It’s unbearable, it’s heartbreaking.” Lena feels her heart shatter as he says, “I can’t even imagine what it would have been like for me, if you had gotten hurt.” James looks away as realizes he is probably saying too much. “I still feel awful for not being able to protect you. I’m sorry.”

“Hey,” Lena says, “It’s not your fault, James. You did everything you could. Don’t feel bad about it. I mean Kara was a Super, and she barely defeated Reign. Humans like us stood no chance at all. It’s a miracle neither of us were killed.”

“Yeah,” he swallows and glances away. “I should…” James suddenly hesitates, looking awkwardly around. “I’ll let you get to it.”

Lena nods, heading for the third stall in the room. She sets the outfit James gave her on the stool outside, and walks in, pulling the curtain shut behind her with a squeak of metal on metal. James stays where he is for a long moment, until he hears the creak of the pipes as they come to life, and is sure that Lena has turned the water on.

Inside the stall, Lena waits, holding her breath until she hears James’ fading footsteps, and is sure that he has stepped outside.

Lena cranks the heat almost all of the way up. And in no time, the water is almost scalding hot. Steam billows into the shower stall, and the surrounding areas, as it is introduced to the rest of the world. Lena signs as it falls upon her.

Inside of the stall, Lena strips out of her clothes and tosses them onto the floor at her feet. As much as she tries to keep it together, sobs tear through her body.

Lena pauses as she catches sight of her hands. She hadn’t let herself look at them until now. Not really. She was too afraid of what she would see. But now? Now the sight was almost unavoidable.

Lena lifts and holds out her hands in front of her, watching as the water dilutes the thick, sticky substance coating her hands, and carries it away down the pipe.

The water suddenly pouring down the drain is a deep red, and Lena closes her eyes. She can’t bear the sight of it anymore.

Unfortunately, she doesn’t realize there are worse things to be wary of. With her eyes closed, Lena is transported back to the place where it happened. She never wants to see it again. And so naturally,
it's the first thing her mind conjures up. She suddenly knows that the sight will haunt her for years to come. Kara’s blood had been everywhere. Nearly a third of Kara’s blood had spilled out onto the street, and Alex and Lena had been powerless to stop it.

Lena throws out a hand to hold herself up against the shower wall, as another violent sob wracks through her body. She pushes herself under the scalding water of the faucet, hoping it will take away all of the blood, the pain, and the terrible memory of this day in particular. She reaches over to the dispensers, and starts cleaning herself until she is practically rubbing her skin raw. The water feels like thousands of tiny blades on her skin.

Lena’s eyes stay shut tight as she lets the water fall over her naked and vulnerable body as if it is cleansing her. But the water does not heal and cleanse her like she anticipated. Instead, it simply scorches and tortures her. In a second of weakness, an image of Kara flashes unbidden through Lena’s mind, and then another and another. Lena cries out into the empty room, as she recalls the empty, vacant look in Kara’s eyes. She struggles to breathe as remembers the wet, crackling breaths that escaped Kara’s lungs with each feeble breath.

Lena suddenly remembers feeling the warm, sticky blood, seeping out onto her hands, as she held Kara close.

Even through these memories and images, Lena feels the sting of the blistering water hitting her pale shoulders, which are quickly becoming red and raw under the heated spray. It is almost as if she were being jabbed with dozens of spears. And Lena wants to scream as a particularly heart-wrenching image of a lifeless Kara becomes stuck in her mind.

She can’t do this anymore. Lena can’t handle it. She opens her eyes to see the torrent of crimson streaming down from her hands and the rest of her body.

Lena cuts the spray, then, and falls to her knees as the stream slowly peters out. She swallows as she kneels over where her clothes lie discarded in the middle of the floor. They are drenched in Kara’s blood. She examines the shirt she’d been wearing closely. Lena knows that it is ruined, and there is no hope of salvaging it. The fabric of Lena’s shirt had sucked up Kara’s blood like a sponge, and it had saturated the fabric.

Lena uses her undershirt to wipe her hands, and stands up, plucking her phone from the floor as she does so. Everywhere Lena looks, a hateful crimson color surrounds her. It taunts her, even as she looks down at the phone that she once used to text Kara so many words of love and affection. Even her phone seems to have been coated in blood. Everything was covered in Kara’s blood…everything. And it was just too much for her. Lena closes her eyes, and in one swift motion, Lena chucks her phone into the opposite shower wall with a loud, agonized scream. Lena forces herself to turn the water on again. And steps under the scalding water once more, slamming her hand into the wall in a fit of anger.

She screams. Again and again, she screams out her pain, as she struggles to cope with the agony, and the knowledge that she will never get to see Kara again. She screams Kara’s name over and over again as she sobs. She screams herself hoarse. She screams herself raw, until her throat hurts every time she tries to swallow – until the time comes that she can scarcely breathe at all.

"Is this what you wanted, Kara?!" Lena screams, to an empty room. "Tell me! Is this what you wanted?! To leave me here like this, alone?! Then. “How could you do this to me?"

“I love you,” Lena declares, “There, are you happy?! I loved you! Is that what you want? For me to finally stop lying about my feelings? Because I’ll happily say it to you as many times as you want. But you have to come back!” Hot angry tears streaked down Lena’s face. Lena isn’t sure that she will
ever be able to forgive Kara for putting her through this - for forcing her to endure this emotional hell.

"God I hate you. I hate you for doing this to me! How could you do this to me? Kara?! Kara!"

Lena screams her questions to the gods, all-the-while knowing that she will never get answers to them. But she demands to know anyway. Because she can’t imagine not knowing.

None of Kara’s answers had been good enough. The blonde had sacrificed herself for Lena, because she’d made Lena a promise and couldn’t bear the thought of something happening to her. But Kara was the one who had been selfish.

Kara had admitted that she couldn’t bear the thought of Lena being taken from her, of having to watch as the love of her life slipped away.

And so Kara had sacrificed herself, so that she wouldn’t have to watch Lena die. Instead, she’d made Lena suffer that fate. Lena had been the one who was forced to watch the love of her life bleed to death in her arms. Lena had been helpless to do anything as Kara slowly bled to death.

Lena finally starts to calm a little, as she starts washing her hair. She opens her eyes, and stares at the wall in front of her, wondering if Kara was thinking of her now. She can’t help but wonder if Kara hurt like she did, knowing that she will never see Lena again.

Lena squeezes her eyes shut again, as she rinses off one last time, and then cuts the flow of the water.

Chapter End Notes

So you guys probably think I hate Lena pretty damned much, huh? When, in fact, it's just the opposite. She’s one of the strongest, most complex characters that I've ever encountered (TV or otherwise). She's strong and vulnerable (all at the same time). She's a fricken writer's dream. I love Lena Luthor. Let it be known I'm crazy about her!

Give Lena Luthor a freaking hug. Give Katie McGrath a fricken Emmy. (I'm not joking!).

Thanks so much for reading this story. Honestly, I'd like to give everyone who made it this far a big fucking hug. I mean, the emotions in this story are off the charts. I haven't written anything this angst-heavy in years! YEARS!

So that's it for now. There's more to come tomorrow. It's already written it, and it just needs to be edited. I’m trying to make the story as cohesive as possible, even with all the scene and time jumps.
Lena wrings out her hair, as an eerie silence builds and takes over the room. It’s so quiet now, that Lena can hardly stand it. The only sounds she hears now, is the slow drip, drip, drip of the water falling from the tips of her fingers, and the ends of her hair. Lena breathes, heavily, hearing her rasping breaths echo around the shower stall. She wonders how far James has gone. She pushes back the curtain, with the screeching sound of metal against metal. It sounds a little too much like nails on a chalkboard for Lena’s liking, and so she only opens it a half a foot or so. Then, she pokes her head out of the side of the curtain, and looks around. She’s alone. That’s clear to her now as she looks around. James is gone. And part of her hopes that he hadn’t been too close. After all, she’d been screaming Kara’s name for the last several minutes, trying to get all of her hurt and anger out while she had the chance to be alone.

It hadn’t occurred to her, up until this point that she would need a towel to dry off with.

“Great,” Lena sighs to herself, before she ducks her head back inside of the stall. She’s going to have to air dry, or at least let most of the water drip off of her. Which is the absolute worst.

She shivers as the cool air in the rest of the room starts to sweep back into the space where she was standing, now that the hot water and steam wasn’t there to stave it off. “James?” Lena’s voice shakes. She sounds almost breathless, as she says, “I seem to have forgotten a towel, are you near?” Lena almost hates how rough her voice sounds in that moment. It honestly sounds like Lena had smoked a carton of cigarettes, or rubbed her vocal cords raw with a sheet of sandpaper.

“Lena?” Lena is almost shocked when she hears Winn’s voice respond to her, and not James’.

“Hey,” Lena feels her cheeks suddenly color with embarrassment. “I seem to have forgotten a towel. Could you help me out?”

“Sure,” Winn says. She can hear him open up a closet or storage locker of some sort, and she lets out a sigh of relief as she hears him start padding closer, with the coveted item clutched in his hands.

“I’m just going to set it down on top of your outfit, if that’s alright?” Winn questions quietly.

“Yeah,” Lena’s voice softens, “Yeah, that would be great. Thanks.” Then. “Hey, do you know where James went?”

“Oh, uh...” Winn hesitates, “He’s in the med-wing. He wasn’t feeling well, and Alex made him go get checked out. I guess he has a concussion, so they’re keeping him for observation.”

“Oh.”

“And, not to be the bearer of bad news,” Winn says, careful to break to news to her in a gentle way, “But Alex is insisting that you get checked out also.”

“Shit,” Lena laughs, “I was sort of hoping that Alex had forgotten about that.”

“I’m afraid not,” Winn replies. “I mean, according to Alex, Reign almost strangled you to death with
her bare hands."

“Don’t remind me,” Lena breathes, as she closes her eyes.

“Listen,” Lena swallows thickly, as she detects a peculiar sound. It almost sounds as if Winn is scuffing his feet nervously on the floor, as he tries to come up with the right thing to say. After a few tense moments, he finally seems ready to spit it out. “I...I can’t even imagine what you’re going through right now, and I...I just wanted you to know that I’m here for you if you ever need to talk,” Winn tells her awkwardly.

“Oh,” Lena feels her stomach drop. Because the way he’s talking to her now, it sounds like he knows. “I - I take it that you heard my little breakdown?” Lena asks with a sad inflection of her voice.

“A little...” Winn admits, before he seems to rethink his answer. “Okay, so I pretty much heard everything.”

“Did… Did James hear?” Lena asks, as she braces herself against the shower wall and closes her eyes.

“No,” Winn shakes his head. “Thankfully, he was gone before that point.”

“Oh, thank god,” Lena sighs in relief.

“Lena-”

“Shit, I..I don’t know what I was thinking. It would have really hurt him, if he’d heard,” Lena whispers. “I just... I don’t know what to do. It hurts so much, and I just – I had to get it out somehow.”

“Look, I know that you probably don’t want to hear this right now,” Winn says, “But you really need to tell him. You need to tell him how you feel about Kara. He cares about you, Lena, and-”

“I know,” Lena admits, “I know. And I will. I just...I need some time to think of what to say.”

“Just be honest,” Winn tell her. “Look, no one is going to fault you for loving her, Lena. Because we’ve all loved her at one point or another. And I’m including myself in that.”

“Somehow, I think James might disagree with you,” Lena laughs hollowly.

“Sure, he’ll be hurt, because he really cares about you,” Winn says, “But the last thing he’d want is to get in the way of your happiness. And he definitely would not want to be somebody’s second choice. I know it’s the last thing you want to do, but you… you have to tell him. At least then it’s all in the open. Whether you guys choose to work through it or not, I have no idea. But honesty is important.”

“Do you really think he’d want to stay with someone who has feelings – romantic feelings for someone else?”

“I can’t say,” Winn replies honestly. “The truth is, I have no idea how James will react, apart from the fact that he’ll be hurt. But I also know that he really cares about you, Lena. He will want you to be okay. He’ll want you to be happy.”

“Happy?” Lena says in disbelief. “The woman I love is gone, Winn. And I’m pretty sure she’s never coming back. She can’t.”
“No,” Winn says determinedly, “No, refuse to accept that. She’s coming back, Lena. I don’t know how long it’ll be before she comes back, but I do know in my heart of hearts that she will.” Then. “Look, I know it’s hard not to lose faith, especially after days like today. But one thing I know, is that Kara will never let anything get in the way of her and her family. And you’re her family. She’ll move heaven and earth, in order to come back, if she has to.”

“I really hope you’re right about that, Winn,” Lena breathes.

“I am,” he sounds so sure in that moment, that Lena can’t help but envy him. She wishes she could have that kind of optimism. “Hey,” he says after a moment. “I’ll step out for a moment. I imagine you’re getting pretty cold in there. Just give a holler if you need me, okay? I’ll be right outside the door.”

“I will,” Lena promises. “Thank you, Winn.”

“Anytime, Lena,” Winn says. She waits until she can’t hear him anymore and ducks her head out into the main area.

Much to her surprise, her eyes fell onto a crisp white towel neatly folded on the top of the scrubs. She is suddenly grateful to Winn for his kindness. She dries off methodically, drying her face and neck first. Then she moves onto her limbs, and finally her torso, before ruffling her hair and drying her shoulders and back. She reaches out and grabs the all black tactical outfit. She slips the 5-11 Tactical black cargo pants on first. She’s pleased, when they fit her perfectly. Then, she pulls on an undershirt, and all black tactical shirt. Her underclothes and her shoes are ruined, so she leaves them where they are.

She nearly laughs when she catches sight of the little footies lying under the stool. Winn had thought of everything, it seemed. Lena quickly pulls them on and walks out. She can’t bring herself to touch her clothes, which despite being diluted by water, are still saturated with Kara’s blood.


“Hey,” Winn’s voice has Lena jumping and turning around.

“You feel better?” he asks sheepishly.

“Much,” Lena admits, quickly averting her eyes. “Thank you.”

It wasn’t that she was uncomfortable. In fact, Winn was nothing less than amazing. It just felt awkward because he knew one of her deepest secrets, one she’d never been able to tell a living soul. And Winn was being so kind to her even though he knew she was about to hurt his best friend. “I umm…I left the clothes in the stall,” Lena breathes feeling weak and embarrassed. “I…I couldn’t bring myself to touch them.” Then she adds. “I’m sorry.” She walks to the nearest bench and sits down. He notices that although she looks a little more put together, the absent look in her eyes is still there.

“No,” Winn breathes, “Don’t be sorry. I’ll go grab them.” She watches as he grabs a biohazard bag and walks over to the stall. He stuffs her clothes into it, and throws it into a special basket in the back of the locker room.

“Thank you,” she barely whispers as he returns.

“Lena…” Winn says sadly. “It’s nothing.”

“No,” Lena says emphatically. “Don’t shrug it off as being nothing. I mean it. Thank you.”
“You’re welcome, Lena,” Winn tells her.

“Do you know what the worst thing about all of this is?” Lena asks him after a minute of tense silence.

“No,” Winn admits, “What?”

“I never even told her,” Lena mutters, with her head cradled in her hands. “Can you believe that? In fact, I’m pretty sure that she thinks I-” Lena trails off. She can’t bear the thought that Kara might think such a thing.

“Thinks that you what?” Winn presses as he sits down next to her, with his brow furrowed.

“We butted heads so much recently,” Lena admits. “The fact is, I was so cold to her all of the time, and I was constantly telling her we weren’t friends. She probably thought that I hated her.”

“Lena, no,” Winn shakes his head. “Absolutely not. I can promise you that she never thought that. Sure, she might have been hurt when you said that you weren’t friends. But I think she also understood that she’d broken your trust. And your relationship with her - Kara her – well, it was fine. She cherished your time together. And any doubts that she had about your relationship with her, were largely expunged.”

“But I never told her-”

“Lena, listen to me,” Winn says intensely, but calmly. “Look, I know that this is probably going to be hard for you to accept, but there are more ways to express how you feel about someone,” Winn argues. “Relationships are so much more than words. In fact, sometimes words aren’t needed at all.”

“Hey, did you know that over 55% of communication is interpreted via non-verbal means? While only 7% of communication is actually expressed with verbal means? So you tell me! What’s more important? Words? Or gestures?” There was a small bit of silence before Winn said, “So, yeah, you may not have explicitly expressed your feelings for her, but I’m pretty sure Kara knew you cared about her.”

“I just...” Lena’s voice breaks. “I miss her, Winn. I would give anything to hold her right now.” Then. “In fact, if she were here? I’d just hold onto her, and never let go.”

“Look,” Winn says quietly, “I know it’s probably not the same, but would you like a hug? I’ve been told that I give really good hugs.”

“I would like that,” Lena says. And she sighs as he pulls her into a hug.

He’s right. It’s not the same as hugging Kara. But it’s still a pretty good source of comfort to her nonetheless. Lena just closes her eyes buries her face into his shirt, and holds on. She breathes deeply in the silence, trying to hold onto the thought that having Kara alive out there somewhere was still better than not having her at all.

It might be difficult - nigh impossible – to make it safe for Kara to return. But Lena was going to find a way to make it so. Because she couldn’t imagine never seeing her again.

“Winn?” Lena swallows thickly as she lifts her head from his shoulder.

“Yeah?” he asks in a quiet, dulcet voice.

“I know that you probably have a lot on your plate at the moment,” Lena says quietly. “But...will
you help me? Will you help me find a way to-"

“Bring her home?” Winn finishes for her. “Of course. I’d love to help. And...I’m sure that Brainy would be willing to help, too.” Then. “We’re going to find a way to help her, Lena. But unfortunately it might be a while before we’re able to do it. Do you think you can hold on until then?”

“Well, it’s not like I really have a choice, do I?” Lena laughs hollowly, with her voice and her heart empty of warmth. “I have to.”

(Secret DEO facility, Somewhere in Canada)

(J’onn and Kara's POV)

J’onn slowly glanced up, as he heard a faint knock against the glass outside of Kara’s room. All of his movements were slow and almost lethargic, now. He’d been keeping vigil at Kara’s bedside for almost a week, too afraid to leave. He didn’t want Kara to wake up, and find herself alone. He knew that she would be scared, and confused. When J’onn finally did lay eyes on the one who knocked, he felt a spike of surprise. He wasn’t prepared to see Brainiac-V, standing there with a look of apprehension on his face.

J’onn waved the man inside before he could retreat.

“Hey,” J’onn tries to offer Brainiac-V a friendly smile, but instead it comes across as more of a grimace.

“Hey,” Brainy returns quietly. From the sound of it, it almost seems like Brainiac V is afraid of disturbing the peace.

“Don’t mind me,” J’onn speaks softly, “Come on in.”

“I… I don’t mean to intrude,” Brainiac-V replies, “I can come back later.” However, before Brainiac-V can slip out the door, J’onn stops him.

“Please,” he asserts. “Stay. She’d want you to stay.” Brainiac-V nods, swallowing over the golf ball sized lump in his throat. He feels guilty for intruding, but he listens. Brainiac-V slowly walks over to the chair at Kara’s bedside. He tries to relax as he listens to the sound of Kara’s heartbeat echoing around the room.

“How is she?” Brainiac-V asks as he looks over Kara’s slumbering form, to J’onn.

“As good as can be expected,” J’onn replies calmly. “Her vitals are good. It looks like she’s going to pull through this.” Brainiac-V lets out a sigh of relief. He’d been told this several times already, but his anxiousness made it hard to believe. It was incredibly easy for the doubt to creep in. Especially when so much time had passed by already and Kara still hadn’t woken up.

“Here,” J’onn says as he hands Brainiac-V Kara’s chart. “You can probably make better sense of this, than I can.”

“Well,” Brainiac breathes quietly as he looks over the chart, “Based on what I’m seeing. There is certainly reason for optimism. Her vitals look very good for someone who was speared through the chest with Kryptonite.” Then. “The isotope did its job well. It saved her. However, I don’t like the radiation levels that I’m seeing in her blood. She’s going to suffer some long term effects if we can’t find a way to purge it from her system, soon.”
“What do you mean?” J’onn can’t help but ask worriedly.

“Well, you know Overgirl? From Earth-X?”

“You’re joking,” J’onn says in disbelief. “Please tell me you’re joking.”

“Believe me,” Brainiac says, “I wish I were.” He takes a levied breath. “It’ll most likely start as radiation sickness. But eventually, if the problem isn’t resolved, it’ll prove fatal.”

“No,” J’onn denies this possibility.

“Don’t worry,” Brainiac-V says. “Lena, Winn, and I, are all working on the problem. We’ll come up with a solution, before long. But I’m afraid that you’re going to have to take her off planet until then. The risk of keeping her on Earth is too high. If she goes the way of Overgirl, it would be catastrophic.”

“And Alex agrees?” J’onn can’t help but question.

“Yes,” Brainiac-V nods. “Here,” Brainiac-V says as he hands J’onn several items. “I came up with a way that we can communicate while you’re on Mars. It’s a little tricky, since we don’t have any satellites orbiting Mars that can pick up our transmissions, but I think I figured out a way to make it work. I’ve set up a relay that will allow you to bounce transmissions to where you need them to go. But I think that I should warn you that there will be a significant delay, because of the distance.”

“She’s going to hate this,” J’onn whispers. “I feel like we’ve given her a fate that is worse than death. We’ve robbed her of her chance at peace, in favor of something so much worse.”

“I know,” Brainiac agrees. "I'd like to be able to tell you that she'll understand the decisions that have been made. But... But for the forseeable future, it might be hard for her to see the other side of it. Eventually, once this all plays out, she might be able to look back on this with gratitude and understanding. But truthfully? She's probably going to be furious when she wakes up and finds out what we've done. Mainly because Earth is her home, and she can't bear the thought of leaving the people she loves behind,” Brainy adds.

"Oh god," Jonn exhales, "What am I going to say to her when she wakes up? She's going to be so devastated."

"The truth," Brainy answers. "That's all you can do. The rest? The rest is up to her. How she chooses to deal with her life now, is up to her. But Kara is literally the strongest person I've ever met. If anyone is strong enough to handle this, it's her."

“I hope to God that you’re right about that,” J’onn says, “Because ultimately? I am the one that will be answering to her. And I can’t bear the thought that she might hate us for what we’ve done.”

“Here,” Brainiac-V says, as he pulls one more item from his person. “I would hold onto this for the rare moment that she’s particularly despondent. But I would only give it to her as a last resort.”

“What is it?” J’onn asks, as he examines the envelope.

“It’s a beacon of hope,” Brainiac-V responds. “But beyond that, I’m afraid that it’s private.”

“I understand,” J’onn nods. “I will make sure that Kara gets this. Thank you.”

“Take good care of her, okay?” Brainiac-V says earnestly as he stands, walks over and presses a hand to J’onn shoulder. “She means a lot to all of us.”
“I know,” J’onn nods. “She means a lot to me too. I’ll take good care of her. And I’ll be in touch with you soon.”

“Alex wants frequent updates, so try to adhere to the schedule as much as possible,” Brainiac-V reminds him.

“I will,” J’onn assures him. “Have a safe trip back to National City.”

“Take care, Man,” Brainiac murmurs quietly, as he heads for the door.

In another moment, Brainy had slipped out the door and shut it behind him.

J’onn sits still for several long minutes, just staring at Kara’s immovable form on the bed. His eyes linger on the wires running from her body to the monitors behind her, and swallows uncomfortably as he pays close attention to the numbers on it’s screen. Kara is breathing on her own now. And the thought makes his heart race. It is a good thing, of course, but it also makes him incredibly uneasy.

His eyes dart back to the door, and then move quickly around the room. Slowly he reaches out for Kara’s limp hand. He holds it, cradling it tightly in his own. Hours later, and several visitors later, J’onn is still there at his post, holding his place at her side. With a gruff sigh, he reaches up to rub over the stubble composing much of his jaw as he tries to keep himself awake. His head bobs back and forth every often as he nearly falls asleep. However, he always seems to catch himself just before falling into sleep.

Eventually, his resistance collapses and he slumps over. With a deep relaxed breath he falls into the darkness and accepts it with welcome arms. For the first time in a week, he feels at peace.

Give in, give in. I want you back
One heart, one too many to stomach
Love bites so deep, and we got tiger teeth

Kara yawned as she skimmed over the black and white text that was written in the report she currently held tightly in her hands. All of Lena’s latest trials with synthetic black-Kryptonite had resulted in undeniable failure, and things were tense at the DEO. They were all well aware of the stakes.

If they didn’t figure out a way to separate Sam from Reign soon, there wasn’t going to be anyone left to save.

Lena had gone to get more coffee, and Kara was alone temporarily, looking through page after page of results on the computer. She scrolled through page after page of results, making it through hundreds of pages in the span of a few minutes. Kara shook her head and sighed out of sheer frustration. What they were doing wasn’t working. And Kara knew it.

There was only one other thing that she could do now, and it wouldn’t be easy.

Kara would finally have to face her past. She would have to go back to the place where she’d lost everything. She would have to go back to Krypton.

She could only hope that they might be able to find the fabled Harun-El in the planet’s wreckage.

"I've got to go back," Kara sighed, as she reaches up to rub at the taut muscles of her forehead.
"Why even try?" Reign taunted her, from behind the shield, "Saving me won't earn you her forgiveness. She'll still hate you just as much as before."

"I know that," Kara nearly growled in agitation.

"Then why bother?"

"Because," Kara shot back, "It's the right thing to do."

"You know, it's kind of pathetic," Reign told her, "How in love with her you are? It's too bad that she'll never feel the same way." Kara let out a sharp breath as she felt the truth behind those words. Reign was right. Lena would never feel the same way about her. Lena despised everything about her.

Just then, Kara heard Lena's footsteps drawing near. Kara quickly hit the button, in order to make the force-field opaque and a wall sprang up between her and Reign.

Kara released the computer mouse, and stepped back from the screen as Lena neared the desk, with two coffees clutched in her hands.

"Coffee?" the inflection of Lena's voice sent shivers coursing unbidden through Kara's shoulders.

"Sure," Kara responded. She turned, and gently reached out to take the coffee from her when it was offered. The exchange was quick, feather light, but Lena's fingers still brushed hers enough to send an electric shock shooting up Kara's forearm. Kara felt her fingers twitch in response, while desperately trying to hide how affected she was by this small source of contact.

"Thanks," Kara smiled softly, meeting Lena's eyes for the briefest of seconds before she tore her eyes away.

"You're welcome," Lena breathed. "It's just. You look like hell today. I sort of figured that you could use it."

Lena took this rare opportunity to study Supergirl for a long moment, trying to discern just what it was about her expression and demeanor that seemed off. To her, it looked as if she hadn't slept in days.

If you come around, if you come around again
You better not come in, you better stay outside
Cause I can't hold my ground, I can't hold my ground, I can't
Not if you look me in, you look me in the eyes

She watched as Kara took a healthy sip of the scalding liquid, before carefully setting it on the table a safe distance away from the computer.

Kara let out a sigh, before planting her hands on the cool metal surface and leaning over. Lena watched in fascination and concern, as the blonde leant against the metal desk, and closed her eyes.

"You look exhausted," Lena commented, finally. "Is everything okay?"

"It's fine," Kara replied as she rubbed her eyes with his thumb and forefinger, trying to remove some of the sting in them. They were sore, and slightly bloodshot. For a moment, she saw stars, then, as she eased up on the pressure and removed her fingers, she saw orange. Kara kept her eyes closed for a long moment, wishing she could take a nap. But she knew she could not. Every time she closed her eyes for more than a few moments, the nightmares came.
Finally, Kara opened them, and squinted as she became used to the lights in the room once more.

Kara took a steadying breath, in an attempt to calm herself. After all, it was hard for her to be here, in this room.

This room held far too many memories for Kara’s liking. Because this is the room where things had seemingly fallen apart between them.

Deep down, in Kara’s heart of hearts, she knew. Reign was right. There would be no saving them.

Initially, Kara had been optimistic, as she always was in these kinds of things. But Lena had made it abundantly clear. She didn’t care enough about them to want to salvage what they had. The trust between them was gone, and the friendship between them was over.

Kara let out another long, weighted breath.

"Supergirl-" Lena began. But she found herself hesitating at the last possible moment. Instead, she gently pressed a hand to Supergirl's shoulder. She hoped it would off some much needed comfort, but Supergirl merely flinched away.

Her patience was being tested. She'd never wanted to run away so badly in all of her life.

"I'm sorry," Kara apologized. She didn't know what she was apologizing for exactly. She didn't know if she was apologizing for flinching away from Lena's touch, or if she was apologizing for the other hundred things she'd done wrong lately.

"No," Lena shook her head, "It's my fault, I shouldn't have-"

"Let's just forget about it," Kara spoke after a moment, unable to bear the tension any longer. "We have much more pressing issues to worry about. We're running out of time," Kara breathed.

A tiger in my heart again
When you swallow someone whole, you are bound to choke
Well, I guess we can never be friends
I ate you up the day we first spoke

"When is the last time you slept, anyway?" Lena questioned.

"I don't know," Kara admitted after a long contemplative moment.

"You don't know?" Lena repeated incredulously.

"Don't sound so scandalized," Kara told her. "I don't need as much sleep as humans do. I can get by fine without it," Kara explained. But Lena scoffed at this. After all, the idea was preposterous. Everyone needed sleep. Even Superheroes who were way too stubborn for their own good.

"That's bullshit," Lena said with a flash of her eyes.

Kara ignored her, and started busying herself with something else.

“Supergirl-” Lena said apprehensively, after a full minute of tense silence. The truth is, she couldn’t take the silence anymore.

“You having nightmares?” Lena asked worriedly, her brow wrinkling in concern as she held Kara's eyes.
Kara swallowed thickly as she thought about the real reason why she hadn’t gotten any sleep. She only hoped that Lena couldn’t read her mind. She felt a surge of guilt as she stared back into her eyes, because as much as Lena's secret had hurt him, she still couldn’t bring himself to reveal hers. She was still keeping the truth from her. A secret so big that she knew it would destroy what she and Lena had left between them.

They’d been through enough already. Kara had felt so betrayed by Lena's lie, that she was determined to pull away, to protect herself from the pain of the realization that Lena really didn’t feel the same way. She came to the realization that the only way to protect herself from the hurt, was to stop feeling anything for her. Of course, that was easier said than done. Lena was beautiful, strong, extraordinary, and had a magnificent heart. A chasm had opened up between them, and neither one of them was willing to jump to the other side.

“Look, I know that things between us are… are difficult right now,” Lena said after struggling to get the words out. “But-” Lena falters, as she loses momentum.

Why does this have to be so hard? This is wrong. She’s been trying so hard to pretend that she doesn’t care about Supergirl – that she doesn’t want to salvage what they have, but it’s a fucking lie. Because she cares. She cares, damn it! And she can’t bear to see Supergirl hurting like this anymore.

"But what?" Kara challenged. And Lena suddenly floundered for a response. After all, she couldn’t exactly say, "I'm here for you." Not after everything else that was said. She couldn’t even offer her the comfort that she wanted to. How could she claim to still care about Supergirl, when she’d flat out declared that they weren't friends?

"I -" Lena nearly groaned as she said, "I still. Look, I know that I don't have any right to say this after what I said to you the other day, but I still... I still care about you. Okay?"

"You still care about me," Kara repeated to her slowly. So slowly, in fact, that it seemed as if she were trying to make some sort of point as to how preposterous those words seemed. Or at the very least, like Supergirl was trying to puzzle out what Lena was really trying to say.

"I guess what I'm trying to say is... that I'm here if you need to talk,” Lena declared.

Give in, give in. I want you back
One heart, one too many to stomach
Love bites so deep, and we got tiger teeth
Give in, give in. I want you back
Keep count, one too many to stomach
Love bites so deep (and we got tiger teeth)

“I appreciate what you're trying to do for me, but I'm fine,” Supergirl replied. "I don't need you to take pity on me, Lena. In fact, it would help if you didn't try to muddy the waters. It's hard for me to know what you mean, when you say stuff like that. Especially after you made it clear that I mean nothing to you."

"That's not what I said," Lena argued, protesting vociferously.

"But that was the sentiment," Kara pointed out.

"Supergirl-"

"How about we agree to just leave that stuff alone?" Kara effectively cut off her next words. "I don't
want to fight about this stuff anymore, Lena. I'm too damned tired to fight with you right now."

"So you admit you're exhausted?" Lena questioned.

"I never denied it," Kara pointed out infuriatingly. And Lena had to restrain herself.

"Look, you don't have to worry about it. Okay? I just haven't been sleeping that well," Kara replied honestly. "I've had my hands full lately, and I haven't been able to..." Kara sighed, "You know what? Nevermind."

Kara's voice was curt, as she said, “Let's just get back to work.” Kara breathed heavily again, as she felt Lena's eyes on her. She knew she was looking a little rough around the edges. Perhaps all of the stress she'd been under was finally starting to show.

Kara's hair was always soft, and shiny, and her make-up expertly done. This morning, however, Kara had slept through her alarm, and found herself with only a few minutes to get ready. She was wearing minimal make-up, and her hair looked a lot more wild and untamed, than it usually did. She'd figured that she could run back to her apartment during her lunch-break to clean herself up a bit, but that plan had gone up in flames. Literally.

Lena huffed. “Please! I'm just trying to help.”

“Help?” Kara practically spat the word. “Come on, Lena, you've made it perfectly clear that you don't give a damn about me. We're not friends. So let's not pretend that we are." That effectively silenced Lena.

"Listen, we've got a job to do. so how about we just get it over with? Then we can go back to being sworn enemies or whatever."

"Look, I can tell that you're still-' Lena spoke.

"Can we not do this?" Kara cut her off. "Please?! You've already made your feelings towards me abundantly clear. I've acknowledged that I screwed up. I think it's time that we move on."

Lena let out a sigh, as she realized how much she hated this tension between them. She'd been having a lot of second thoughts about everything. And the truth is, a large part of her still hated how everything went down. She feared that she'd been too hard on Supergirl. But now the damage was done. Lena was a Luthor. And unfortunately one of the traits she acquired from her time in the Luthor household, was her inability to forgive and forget. She found herself holding grudges, whether she wanted to or not.

Don't you call me on the telephone
Don't make plans with my friends
I think that it's best if you leave me alone
When I'm with you I just want to play pretend

“So...I'm just curious. Are having nightmares about the World-killers?” Lena asked calmly, her brow wrinkling in concern as she attempted to meet Kara’s gaze.

“Who in the hell told you that?” Supergirl asked almost angrily, as she looked away. Kara was tense, her shoulder muscles were tight as she stood rigidly. She was staring at the wall with a gaze so hot, it's a miracle that she didn’t burn a hole in it with her heat vision. Kara tried not to flinch as she felt a hand press into her shoulder.

“Supergirl,” Lena’s voice was soft, but intense. Kara let out a weighted breath as she heard Lena’s
soft exhale, “Please, I know that what I'm asking is personal, but it's also extremely relevant to what we're doing. If the dreams are prophetic in any way, it will be good to know. We need to know what is coming.” The last word was breathed so soft, that Kara almost missed it.

“Fine,” Kara’s voice faltered. This conversation felt incredibly personal, but Lena was right. The dreams were relevant, and could be important to their cause. “You're right,” Kara admitted, Then, Kara paused for a moment, before she was able to make her confession, "Yes. I'm having dreams about the Worldkillers."

“And what exactly happens in the dreams, if you don't mind me asking?”

“Trust me, you don't want to know the answer to that,” Kara exhaled.

“Tell me anyway,” Lena pleaded. Kara closes her eyes and tries to remember. She slips into the memory, as she feels tears prick hotly at her eyes.

“It's orange. Everything is obscured and blurry because of the smoke. The shapes are hard to make out, and almost indecipherable in the haze. It's hot - hotter than anything I've ever felt in my life. It... It feels like my skin is slowly being seared from my bones. The whole world is burning. The trees, the grass, the sky. Everything is on fire. I see Reign wandering in the flames, standing over dead bodies, and I hear screams. I can hear the screams of everyone who is still left alive, as they slowly burn in the flames. All I can do is watch as the world is devoured slowly. It's...awful. Those that are left alive after the fires, watch helplessly as crops wilt and die before them. It happens quickly - faster than you can even imagine. People are crying out from hunger, begging for food. I feel them tug at me, pleading for me to give them something to eat. But I've got nothing to give them. I tell them I'm sorry, but they stare at me with deadened eyes. The people after that are emaciated and infirm. They're slowly dying in front of me. Again, they plead with me to be saved, but I do not have the medicine to save them. I'm... I'm useless. Before long, I'm the only one that's left. The world is dead.”

“And you haven't told anyone?”

“I've told Alex,” Kara admits. “But she seems to think that the dreams are less prophetic than I think they are.”

“Is there anything else? Or is it always the same dream?” Lena questioned.

“No,” Kara shook her head. “There’s another dream I started having a couple of weeks ago... It's different from the others. Not as bad, but it's still awful by anyone's standards”

“And what happens in that one?”

“I...” Kara hesitates. The truth is, she isn’t sure she can actually speak the words out loud.

“You, what?” Lena presses.

“I die,” Kara breathes quietly.

“What?” Lena sounds undeniably troubled by the notion that Supergirl could die. "No, that can't be right. You're invulnerable. You can't die."

"Trust me" Kara joked in a weak voice, "I wish I were wrong about this, but I know what I saw. I'm invulnerable, not invincible."

"Supergirl-" Lena looked stricken by Kara's words.
"It's fine," Supergirl says, as if this particular topic is not open for discussion.

"You said you saw," Lena hedges, "What... What did you see? I mean do you know how it happens?"

"Lena," Kara shakes her head. "That's private. Look, you can guilt me into telling you everything else if you want to. But this? This is mine."

"I just..." Lena's voice is suddenly thick. "Look, I know I've given you the impression that I don't care, but I do. Please... You have to know. I might be angry with you, but I would never... NEVER would wish you ill."

"I know," Kara nodded, "I know that." "Look, we're wasting time. We should... We should really get back to work. Look, don't worry, okay? It's going to be all right. I'm going to be fine."

Well, tiger in our hearts again
When you swallow someone whole, you are bound to choke
Well, I guess we can never be friends
I ate you up the day we first spoke

"Right," Lena agreed, but Kara could tell that this whole conversation didn’t sit well with her. It brought up a whole slew of emotions that Lena wasn’t exactly prepared for.

Still, Supergirl didn’t seem bothered by the notion that she might die.

"Listen, I’ve been thinking," Kara spoke as calmly and evenly as possible. "The synthetic Kryptonite isn’t working. You’ve done a good job creating it - a spectacular job, honestly. But... But I think something like this requires the Harun-El."

"The Harun-El?" Lena repeated.

"Yeah," Kara nodded. "It's made of black Kryptonite, and it's the only thing strong enough to split Reign from Sam without killing her."

"Okay," Lena breathed, "If that's true, then why are you only bringing this up now?"

"Well," Kara hedged, "Because it's... it's complicated. The Harun-El isn't readily accessible. In fact, it won't be easy to find or obtain."

"Where is it?" Lena asked.

"If we're lucky? It'll be in the wreckage of my home planet," Supergirl answered as she pulled up a map and pointed to the appropriate coordinates. "Krypton."

"Please tell me you're joking," Lena said as she noted how far away Kara was pointing on the map of the universe.

"Nope," Supergirl replied. "I assure you, I'm being completely serious." Kara let out a weighted breath. "I think that with the Legion's help, I can make it there in a timely fashion. I just hope the the Harun-El is there when we get there. There are no guarantees that it survived the death of my planet."

"Supergirl-" Lena sounded hesitant and unwilling. But Kara wasn't about to listen to Lena's concerns. Not now, when she was positive about the course of action that needed to be taken in order to save Sam from Reign."
"While I’m gone, I need you to work on a way of liquifying the Kryptonite so that we can inject it into Sam… And, come to think of it, we should probably design a device that can inject the Kryptonite directly into Reign's bloodstream. Then we can safely separate her from Reign."

"Do you really mean to tell me you’re going to travel halfway across the universe? On the off chance that piece of this Harun-El survived?" Lena questioned.

"Yes," Kara nodded decisively. "It's what has to be done."

"But what about Krypton?" Lena asked. "You'd really be willing to do all of that? You'd really be willing to subject yourself to all of that pain? Just on the off chance it survived?" Lena looked surprised that she would be willing to subject herself to the pain of seeing Krypton again – of seeing everything that she’d lost.

Give in, give in. I want you back
One heart, one too many to stomach
Love bites so deep, and we got tiger teeth
Give in, give in. I want you back
Keep count, one too many to stomach
Love bites so deep, and we got tiger teeth

"To save Sam? Yeah, I am," Kara nodded.


Kara swallowed as more tears of frustration threatened to escape. She hated it. Everything about this situation was ruining them.

If you only take one step closer
I could reach the zipper on your dress
We’re leaning out over the water
And we’re holding our breath

"Because I know how much you care about her, and I can’t bear the thought of you losing someone else that you love,” Kara said. Lena felt something monumental shift between them. She didn’t know what to say to that. But all of that became kind of a moot point anyway. Lena watched helplessly as Supergirl walked away from her with a swish of her cape.

Lena stared after her, watching the blonde’s retreat with her chest aching in hurt. She didn’t understand why it hurt so damned much.

Well, tiger in our hearts again
When you swallow someone whole, you are bound to choke
Well, I guess we can never be friends
I ate you up the day we first spoke

Love bites so deep (and we got tiger teeth)

Chapter End Notes

Hey, guys! Thanks so much for reading!
Also, I just wanted to let you guys know that the song featured in this chapter is called "Tiger Teeth," and it's by Walk the Moon. The song is one of my all time favorites, and I'm glad I was finally able to incorporate it into something I've written! If you have a minute, please check it out!
Chapter Summary

Kara finds out what J'onn did in order to save her, and learns the cost of her chance at a second life.

AND

Lena shares a priceless conversation with Eliza Danvers, during which Elize largely assuages Lena's guilt.

Chapter Notes

Hey, guys! I hope you all had a very Merry Christmas (or whatever holidays that you might celebrate)! I'm sorry it's been a little while since I've last updated, but I've been working 24 hour shifts every three days, and that hasn't left a whole lot of time for me to write or anything else. I'll try and update as often as I can, but I have to update in bits and pieces. The story is largely written, but there are some parts that have to be edited, and added to.

Thank you for your continued love and support. It helps me on the days that writing seems particularly difficult!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

(Flashback: 4 months ago. National City, U.S.A., Earth-38)

Lena lifted her hand to the off-white door of Kara's apartment, and knocked heavily against it with her knuckles. She winced slightly as the knock sent unwelcome jolts of pain over the bones beneath her skin, but she kept at it - knocking once, twice, three times against its heavy surface. Finally, she stopped. She paused for a moment, noting the small chips in the paint along the door's edges and figured that it was about time for a coat of fresh paint. Lena silently wondered if Kara knew - if she'd noticed how things had become worn and slightly broken in her time away.

It had been weeks, months since she'd seen her best friend. And Lena missed her so. The fact is, she'd never missed someone so much in all of her years.

Lena still wonders if there is anything she could've done to get her to stay.

Kara's absence came without warning. One day Kara had burst into her office, making a surprise announcement she was going undercover for a story.

That same day, Lena attempted to throw together a small going away party for her best friend. They'd exchanged hugs, well-wishes, and smiles. Lena had been hopeful that those hugs and smiles meant something.
But reality had come crashing back down, when the following day Kara had seemingly vanished off the face of the planet. Kara was just gone.

And none of Lena's attempts to get a hold of the blonde were successful.

Lena is almost embarrassed at how much of her time she spent searching for a lead - something that gave her hope the blonde hadn't been lost.

"Kara?" Lena knocked again, whispering softly under her breath. "Kara, are you home?!" Lena was met with nothing but silence. "Please... Please answer. I miss you."

Lena was starting to have doubts Kara was home. After all, everything was impossibly quiet inside.

But Alex had been sure. She had been certain. Kara was back in town, and would be for the foreseeable future.

When Lena still heard no noises inside of Kara's apartment, she became sure that Alex was mistaken. She took a step away from the door, as if to leave. But then the door was thrown open, without any sort of fanfare, and Kara was there, looking impossibly beautiful in the dimmed lighting, standing before Lena like some goddess of yore.

"Kara," Lena breathed softly - so softly it sounded as if the words had come from a ghost.

“Lena!” Lena watched in awe, as Kara came to life, with a soft beaming smile adorning her beautiful face, "Hi! It's so good to see you!" Then, the words Lena had been longing to hear for so long. "I've missed you."

"Me too!" Lena normally would have fought against her impulses, but she suddenly couldn't help herself. The truth is, she felt weak and powerless against them.

The next thing she knew, she was pulling Kara in for a crushing embrace, and burying her face into Kara's neck as she breathed in the blonde's scent.

It's as if she needed to know for sure that this wasn't her imagination running wild.

"Lee..." Kara sighed against her, her eyelids fluttering closed at the feeling of Lena against her. The truth is, she'd imagined holding Lena like this countless times over the last few months. But those thoughts had been soured by the memory that Lena despised her. That she felt nothing more then contempt for Supergirl. Slowly, Kara extricated herself from Lena's arms and took a step back, as if to shield herself from the feelings the memory brought with it. This did not go unnoticed by Lena.

"Hey, are you okay?" Lena asked worriedly.

"Of course," Kara faked a smile.

But she knew it fell flat when Lena's eyes sharpened, and honed in on her.

"You sure?" Lena asked again. "Cause it seems like something is bothering you."

"It's nothing... Just a bit of jet lag, honestly," Kara said, "I'm a bit tired."

“Would it be alright if I come in for a moment?” Lena asked timidly. Her hands fidgeted nervously, before Lena ultimately shoved her hands into her pant pockets. Kara watched as she bit down on her lower lip, looking torn in indecision.

“Sure,” Kara opened the door wider and stood back, gesturing with a flourish of her arm for her to
pass. With shaky legs, Lena forced herself to move passed her. When she was safely inside. Kara shut the door behind her, and flipped the lock. "I guess that Alex told you that I was back in town, huh?" Kara questioned.

"She might've mentioned it," Lena admitted.

"She never was able to keep a secret," Kara laughed, her laughter coming in huffs of air.

"So... you're back," Lena spoke with a tinge of disbelief. "You're really back."

"Yeah," Kara laughed, "I am."

"I mean Alex said you were back. But the truth is, I wasn't sure I believed her," Lena began. It was so uncharacteristic for the usually unflappable CEO, that Kara nearly laughed, "I mean, God Kara, it's been months since I've had any sort of word from you, and I'm not the only one. James said that he lost track of you, and had no idea where you'd gone. Winn had no idea either... Even Alex, who I expected to largely assuage my fears, was shockingly close lipped about the matter. It's like she wasn't sure if you were coming back either."

"I know," Kara agreed, "I know." Then she apologized, "And I'm so sorry for that. I can't even imagine what it was like for you guys, but I had to... I had to do it."

"Jesus, Kara," Lena said as tears built in her eyes, "Do you even realize what it was like for us?"

"Of course I do," Kara answered.

But Lena just barreled on with her speech, "Kara, I - I looked everywhere for you. I reached out to everyone I knew in the international community, but all of my leads came up empty. I couldn't...I couldn't find you."

"I know," Kara swallowed. "I know, and I am so so sorry for that, Lena. The fact is, I never meant to cause you or anyone else pain."

She hated how much pain she saw in Lena's glossy eyes.

"I was actually starting to think that you might be dead," Lena paused, "But then Alex called me, and said that she'd found you. She said that you were home."

"Yeah," Kara exhaled.

"Just tell me... you weren't being held hostage somewhere were you? Because if you were in need of help, and I wasn't there for you, then...."

"No," Kara shook her head. "No, Lena. I was never held against my will. That I can promise you. It's just... I was just a very long way from home, and I couldn't leave without accomplishing what I'd set out to do."

"Kara-"

"Eventually, I had to accept that it just wasn't going to happen. But, the truth is, I'm pretty sure there's no worse feeling than returning home empty handed."

"So the story was..."

"A bust," Kara says sadly. "The whole thing was a bust, honestly. I've got nothing..."
"But surely there's something you have to show for it," Lena said optimistically.

"It's sweet of you to say that, but no."

Kara was having a hard time breathing normally as silence built between them for a long moment. It built and built, until it was so thick between them that Kara was sure that they could probably cut it with a knife.

"So the whole thing was a bit of a disappointment. But you're okay, right?" Lena asked her softly as she followed Kara to the couch. She watched Kara drop onto the leather sofa, wearily. Lena felt a pang of remorse as she noticed how exhausted Kara looked.

"Yeah" Kara lied, even though her chest seemed to ache more and more with each passing minute. "Yeah. I'm okay."

"Good," Lena swallowed. "I'm glad."

"Lena-"

"Kara-" They both say at exactly the same time, after the silence drags on for just a little too long. Kara laughed for a moment, before she finally asked the question she'd been wanting to ask.

"So... umm what brings you by?" Kara questioned as she reached up to fiddle with her glasses for several moments, before glancing away. Lena tried to catch her gaze, but seemed to notice how Kara was looking everywhere, but at her.

"You mean besides the obvious?" Lena joked. To which Kara laughed just a little bit.

"Kara-" Lena's voice held something in it that Kara couldn't quite discern. It drew Kara's gaze to Lena's own. Lena felt her breath catch as she took in Kara's icy blue, searching gaze. She'd almost forgotten how blue Kara's eyes were. "Feel free to tell me if I'm wrong, but it sort of feels like you don't... don't want to be my friend anymore."

"What?" Kara looked genuinely shocked. "Please, don't be absurd! You're like my best friend in the entire world, Lena. How could you ever think that I didn't want to be your friend?" Kara shook her head. "Look, I know I screwed up. But the only way that you're ever getting rid of me, is if you tell me that you never want to see me again."

"I would never do that," Lena told her.

"Look, I know you're upset with me. I know I hurt you. But I promise you that I never meant for all of this to happen," Kara confessed. "It's just... everything happened so fast. I had this fall into my lap, and I had to pursue it."

"Kara, you just vanished," Lena told her. "I've never heard of anyone disappearing like that."

Lena shook her head. "You went completely dark. No one knew where you were! No one! Hell, you might've been in a completely different universe for all the good my sources did me."

"I know," Kara swallowed. "And I'm sorry for that. I never meant to be under for so long, but it took me a while. I just... had to be really careful."

"You've been gone for months," Lena replied.

"I know," Kara replied, almost sounding as if it were rehearsed. "The truth is, I thought about
coming back...so many times actually. But I...I just couldn't give up on it."

"Why not?"

"Because I couldn't bear the idea of anyone being disappointed in me!" Kara exclaimed.

"Kara," Lena's voice instantly softened. "How could you think we would ever be disappointed in you?"

"Are you really saying that you aren't?"

"No," Lena protested. "Of course not. Kara, I could NEVER be disappointed in you."

"I just wish you would've kept me updated. You could've called or texted," Lena argued. "Even just a single word would have been better than nothing. I thought you were dead, for crying out loud!"

"The place I was didn't really have good cell reception," Kara explained.

"And where were you exactly," Lena joked, "Antarctica?"

"Not quite," Kara replied. "Look," Kara sighed, "I'm sorry. The last thing I want you to think, is that you don't matter to me... because you do. I hope you know that you matter to me a great deal." Kara paused. She wished she could tell Lena why it is that she'd disappeared. She wished that she could tell Lena the reason she left. But she couldn't. Because doing so meant telling Lena she was Supergirl. And Kara knew what that would mean. So Kara continued to lie through her teeth.

"I promise you..." Kara assured her, "Everything is really like I've said. I - I just wasn't in a place where I could readily respond."

"But even now that you are back," Lena swallowed, "You still seem distant - as if you're off in another world. And I just... I need to make sure that it's nothing I've caused. Things have been different between us. I don't know when they changed exactly, but I do know they're different now."

Lena tried not to notice the way Kara flinched, ever so slightly at the memory. "I just want to make sure that you know what happened between Supergirl and myself, has no bearing on our relationship. I don't blame you for anything that transpired."

"I never thought you did," Kara said, as she looked away again. "But it poses a bit of a problem for me."

"What do you mean?"

"I'm not entirely sure I can explain it," Kara admitted. "But I feel torn - trapped between two people I deeply care about."

"Kara," Lena seemed remorseful. "What can I do? What can I do to fix this?"

"You can't fix it, I'm afraid," Kara sighed, sadly. "Because I would not ask you to give up your morals, just as I would not ask Supergirl to surrender hers."

"I - I'm sorry."

Kara's features were impassive as Lena held her gaze.

Kara's eyes stared back at her with undeniable weariness. It was as if Kara no longer knew what to do, or what was worth fighting for. Lena swallowed, noting how Kara's eyes seemed empty of their usual sparkle. The woman who Lena knew to be more like a twelve year old, was gone, and in its
place was a woman she hardly recognized. Lena breathed, despite the fact that her chest felt like it was on fire all over again. Only she knew that this time it wasn’t something physical. Slowly she pulled her hands out of her pockets and she clenched her hands into tight fists as if that would ward off what she knew was about to come.

“You’re still being distant with me,” Lena accused her finally.

“I’m not,” Kara denied as Lena shuffled closer.

“Yes you are,” Lena asserted, “You’re guarded. The fact is, your posture right now almost reminds me of hers. It’s strange on your likeness. I...I don’t like it, Kara.”

“I’m sorry,” Kara found herself joking as a defense mechanism, “Would you rather I slouched a bit?”

“Funny, that’s funny,” Lena replied, although she was clearly not amused. She just wished they could finally get past whatever it was that had ripped them apart. “Look, will you please just tell me what’s wrong? Is there something else that I’ve done to upset you?”

“No,” Kara shook her head.

Another lie. How could you tell someone that they had betrayed you and your feelings in every sense of the word, when you knew it wasn’t exactly their fault? Kara can’t help but wonder where they would be now, if she’d told Lena the truth months ago. Would Lena have still created Kryptonite? Would she still consider her an enemy? As something to be neutralized?

“Kara, maybe you think I’m an idiot,” Lena swallowed, “But I don’t believe that for a single second.” She sounded calm as she spoke the next bit. “You left. You just up and left!” Kara looked away as Lena hit a sore nerve.

“See?” Lena breathed, reaching out to touch her face. With gentle manipulation she forced Kara to look at her. Kara met her eyes, albeit, very reluctantly. “I’m right aren’t I?” she breathed. “You ran away.” She felt her resolve start to falter as she saw the pain in the baby blues staring back at her.

“Lena,” Kara begged her softly, “Don’t do this. Please.” She stopped breathing for a second as Lena scooted closer to her, until there was no more space between them. Lena could feel Kara’s warm body next to her own. Kara burned hotter than Lena remembered. And despite the fact that she tried to do everything to fight it, she could feel Kara’s body start to react to her close proximity. “I’m fine. Everything between us is...” Kara choked out, “fine.”

“Okay,” Lena said harshly, “You really expect me to believe that?” Lena asked incredulously.

“No. You’re right,” Kara finally admitted, hoping that she could get Lena to leave her alone if she just gave her the truth.

"I've been lying," Kara admitted. Lena opened her mouth to respond, but Kara cut her off. "And no...before you go and try to twist my words around, I wasn't lying about the story. There was a story. But, I guess, you could say that I lied about my reasons for wanting to take the story."

"What do you mean?" Lena asked.

"I wanted out," Kara spoke. "I was upset. I was unhappy, and I just... I basically had this opportunity fall into my lap that let me-"

"Run away," Lena finished. "You ran away." Then Lena seemed to catch herself. "I'm sorry. You're
trying to tell me something important and I'm jumping in. I should...I should just shut up and let you finish."

"No," Kara shook her head. "It's fine. The fact is, you're not wrong. I owe you the truth" Lena swallowed as she watched Kara's expression change. She looked like she was in physical pain. "and the truth is that I... I haven’t been entirely honest with you, Lena."

"What are you-"

"I thought I could handle it... but I couldn't. I couldn't pretend that it was all okay. I just..."

Lena breathed. "Kara, what are you talking about?" It was hard for her to admit, but she knew she owed her the truth.

"I've been lying to you about what I know," Kara confessed.

"Know?" Lena pressed, "Know about what?"

"I know that Alex isn’t with the FBI. I know that she works for a secret governmental organization called DEO. And the truth is? So do I," Kara told her.

"Wait, what?!!" Lena gasped. "You work for... You work for the DEO, too? Doing what?"

"I'll explain later," Kara answered. "But right now? That's really not important."

"Not important?" Lena said incredulously. "Because from where I'm standing right now, it seems kind of important."

"Lena-"

"What?!!"

"I know what you did," Kara effectively cut her off.

"What?"

"I know more about what happened between you and Supergirl, than you might like me to," Kara confessed. Lena's jaw fell open, working furiously as she struggles to comprehend the things she's being told.

"I don't know what it is that you think I've done exactly, but I don't appreciate you making it sound like I've done something wrong."

"I know that you kept Sam locked up in one of your labs when you realized she was Reign. I know that you used Lex’s formulas to create Kryptonite. And I know that you had a falling out with Supergirl, because she asked James to find out if you had Kryptonite."

"Kara-"

"Do you wish her ill?" Kara couldn’t help but ask her.

"Of course not!" Lena protested angrily. She was actually pretty upset that Kara would ask her such a thing.

"And yet... you were experimenting with the one thing on this planet that can kill her," Kara said slowly, almost disbelievingly.
“I really don’t think that you want for us to get into this now,” Lena said, carefully.

“But it’s an important question,” Kara said tightly. “Lena, what if I were an alien? What if I were Kryptonian? Would you think of me as the enemy?”

“Clearly you’ve given this some thought,” Lena laughed. But Kara didn’t find this conversation funny. Not at all.

“And you haven’t answered any of my questions,” Kara pointed out.

Lena opened her mouth, but Kara didn’t let her speak.

“It’s okay, you know?” Kara swallowed. “As hard as it was for me to accept, I’m glad that I know what you really think.” Lena opened her mouth to speak, but Kara didn’t let her speak. “No,” she shook her head. “Let me say this, Lena. Please.”

“No!” Lena shouted. “Not when you’re insulting my character in the way you are now.”

Then, “God. You sound so much like her right now, i’m starting to think she got in your head.”

“As if I’m not capable of having thoughts of my own?” Kara spat.

“Kara-”

Kara pulled herself away from Lena’s touch and ran her hand over her jaw as she exhaled.

“I thought I knew you. God, I was so sure that I knew the kind of person you were. Even during some of our earlier debates about aliens, I tried to give you the benefit of the doubt. But, I guess you could say that I’ve always been a bit naive. It’s not for lack of trying. It’s just… I’ve always been this way.” Lena was forced to listen helplessly as Kara kept talking a mile a minute. "I knew that one day this world would make me a hell of a lot more like you - cold, and cynical, and protective. But until that day came, I wanted to believe... believe that people were fundamentally good."

"Kara," Lena nearly whimpered in sadness, hating that she could hear the pain in Kara's voice.

"I got pieces here and there. Just enough to keep me going, but no matter how badly I wanted it to, the universe did refused to bend to my whims. I wanted. I…I wanted to be right about this, Lena. I wanted to be right about you. I… I would have given anything.” Kara couldn’t stop the tears now. They were hot, almost scalding as they spilled over and streaked down her cheeks. "But I was wrong."

All the walls were crumbling and falling around her and she couldn’t stop it. She wiped away at the tears quickly.

“Kara?” Lena started to reach out for her, but found herself hesitating at the last moment. Kara suddenly seemed so far away from her now, and Lena was scared. Having Supergirl look at her like that was one thing, but to have Kara do so? Well, Lena couldn’t handle it.

“I never imagined that this would be so hard,” Kara told her. Kara took a deep staggering breath, trying not to feel like the most awful person in the world as she watched tears streak down Lena’s face. “Lena,” Kara breathed. “What I’m trying to say is…” Kara let out a deep breath. It was a hell of a lot more difficult than she ever thought it would be. “As much as I want to tell you that I think you’re right, and she’s wrong? I can’t. Because I don’t think you’re on the right side of this.”

“What?” Lena choked out, feeling her stomach drop.
“I’m choosing my side,” Kara breathed. “I’m telling you the truth. I’m telling you what I really think, Lena. And I don’t think Supergirl is like your mother… it’s not even close. Sure, people put her on a pedestal. They idolize her, but she’s not perfect. She’s human-like in her qualities. She’s fallible.”

“That may be true,” Lena argued, "But she's a hero, all the same. And people are going to hold her to a higher standard. She has to be held to a higher standard.”

"Really?" Kara scoffed, "Then I wonder as to how she has any friends at all." "But then again, it seems that some people are more capable of forgiveness than others."

"And just what is that supposed to mean?" Lena hissed. "Are you suggesting I'm not capable of forgiveness?"

"In her case? No."

"How can you even suggest such a thing?""

"Am I wrong? Are you still friends?" Lena remained silent on the matter. "Or maybe you're just more willing to forgive people, when there isn't a Super attached to their name."

"She asked James to go behind my back, and then had the gall to suggest I was untrustworthy because of my name!"

"... I think she got lost in her own fears and made a horrible mistake. But I don't fault her for that. She was hurt. It hurt her to know that someone she held in such high regard, still saw her as nothing more than a threat."

“That’s not why I did it,” Lena argued.

“But it’s not just about truth, it’s about the way our actions are perceived!” Kara argued back. “You were defensive. But you never really took her aside and talked to her about it, did you?"

“I told Supergirl and DEO about the Kryptonite,” Lena argued.

“But you lied about other things. And you only told them the truth, when your hand was forced. Can you really blame her for having doubts?”

“I am not having this conversation with you,” Lena said coldly.

“Okay. Fine, then I won’t make you,” Kara relented.

Lena wasn’t sure what happened now.

"Kara-"

"I... I don't mean to be rude, but I think you should probably go now," Kara told her.

"Are you kicking me out?"

"I think you've made it clear that we're done," Kara said.

"Can I have my coat?" Lena asked.

“Look, if all of this means that you don’t want me in your life anymore, then I understand,” Kara said as she turned away, and began gathering Lena's things, "The fact is, we're both adults. We can
both agree to disagree. We can move on.”

“No,” Lena said quickly, “No, You don't seem to understand. That's not what I want.” Her voice was broken as she elaborated. “Losing you isn’t what I want at all. Look, I won't lie to you. I-I thought it mattered to me, but I was wrong, Kara. I don’t care what it means… I don’t care if we disagree about this. I just don’t want to lose you. I can't lose you.”

"I don't want to lose you either," Kara sobbed. It was then that the dam broke.

Lena felt like such an awful person as she pulled Kara into her arms.

Kara buried her face into Lena's neck and cried. Lena closed her eyes as each sob that passed through Kara’s lips felt like a dagger to her own heart. “Oh, Kara,” Lena soothed finally. “Shh. Don't cry. Please don’t cry. It kills me to see you cry.” Kara clung to her tighter as she only started to cry more violently. Lena’s resolve was suddenly crumbling into tiny pieces. Lena had never seen Kara this emotional. Not ever. And the thought occurred to Lena that maybe Kara needed her. Maybe, just maybe, Kara loved her too. “I’m sorry.” Lena finally breathed, feeling the need to be forgiven for hurting Kara this way. “I'm so sorry. I love you, and I promise you that nothing you do could ever change that. I hate that this has caused you so much pain.” Then. "I'm going to fix this. I promise."

She
When she cries
Can the whole world feel the rain?

With a gasp, Kara shot up in bed. All her muscles simultaneously tensed in a state of flexion. Her body went rigid, nearly as hard as granite for that one infinitesimal moment before it finally gave over and relaxed. The scream that threatened to tear its way free, seemingly became stuck in her throat, as Kara’s hand shot up to her chest in order to press where the pain was the worst. Another gasp escaped Kara’s lips as another jolt of pain inflicted havoc throughout her chest. It was like a white hot iron had been pressed against her skin over her ribs, and sank deeper and deeper inside of her until it could no longer be touched. A dense sheen of perspiration coated her body, and soaked into the blankets beneath it, leaving Kara feeling cold. Her own arms wrapped around her own midsection tightly, as she was left clinging, and begging for warmth. She had only felt this cold once before, and forgot how terrible it was. All she wanted now was to be returned to her old self.

By the time she opened her eyes, her heartbeat was already thundering deafeningly in her ears. It was nearly pitched black, and the cold sheets under her made it nearly impossible to stay warm. Her body convulsed in violent shivers as it struggled to warm itself.

For a long moment, Kara struggled to breathe. She actually had to remind herself to mechanically breath in and out, and most of her vital oxygen supply came in uneven spurts of air. She wished she could say that she was becoming used to waking up like this now, but there was no way she could ever become accustomed to it. Oftentimes, she felt like she’d been launched back into life with a pair of jumper cables. It was like a surge of something more than her body could handle.

The cause? It was her heart.

Her heart had been the one thing to hold up under the tremendous amount of stress that night bestowed upon her. But even now it seemed damaged, and not quite up to the task.

The loud beeping filling the room, had Kara wincing in discomfort as her head pounded relentlessly. She felt as if she had been struck over the head with a hammer. A gentle hand wiped back the sweat and dirt caked hair from her face. Kara moaned, savoring the contact as she rolled her head back and
forth gently on the pillows. She took a deep breath, immediately regretting having done so as a stabbing pain made her cry out.

"Oh thank goodness, she’s awake," Gavin’s soft voice whispered, as Kara’s eyes blinked open for the first time. Firstly, seeing blurs of color, and then the worried and grieving expression on J’onn’s face. It took one moment. Just one moment for her to realize that it hadn’t been a dream. It had been real. God, it was all real.

"Uh oh," J’onn was the first to notice the emotions sweeping across Kara’s face. She knew. She knew immediately something was missing.

It was like an alarm going off in her skull. Kara jumped forwards, pushing herself forcefully up off the bed. Quickly, J’onn restrained her, and pushed her back down. But Kara was not done fighting. She continued to struggle against him, though her efforts were weak and almost futile. She was still severely weakened by her injuries, so her attempts were easily thwarted.

“Easy,” J’onn told her as he wrestled with her, and held her down, “Easy, Kara. It’s all right. You’re safe.”

"What... happened? Where's Lena?” Kara’s loud piercing cries had all of those within several rooms wondering what awful thing was happening in the room next door. “Lena!”

When
We collide
Hell and heaven come to play

“Kara, easy! Please listen to me. You're going to hurt yourself if you keep struggling like this,” Kara continued to fight as she shouted Lena’s name over and over and over again until she was hoarse, “I need you to calm down.”

“Look, I know you want to see her right now,” J’onn attempted to soothe her, “But I’m afraid she’s not here. She’s at the DEO. Okay?” Still, this did little to settle Kara down.

"Kara,” J’onn forced his way into her field of vision, "Kara, look at me. Kara!” He winced as a fist struck him in the shoulder before she finally latched onto the material. J’onn seized Kara’s cheeks and forced her to look him in the eye. "She’s okay. Lena is safe. She and Alex are both safe. All right?! You... You saved them. You protected them."

"But Reign-"

"Reign is dead,” J’onn told her. "Despite the odds being stacked against you, you managed to kill her."

Gavin injected a sedative into Kara’s I.V. at J’onn’s behest.

“But where – where,” Kara lost all momentum, sinking back down onto the bed. Her heart was still beating a mile a minute. She couldn’t seem to catch her breath. And if she was being honest, it felt like she’d just ran a hell of a sprint. “Where are we? Why am I here and not at the DEO?”

“We’re on Earth,” J’onn told her calmly and patiently. “We’ve been trying to prepare you for the trip, but you were too weak – and too badly injured to make it. You wouldn’t have survived, so we had to get you stabilized first.”

“A trip?” Kara repeated in confusion, clearly not understanding what J’onn was getting at. “A trip to where?”
“To Mars,” J’onn answered calmly. “Kara, listen, this won’t be easy for you to hear, but you...you were on the brink of death when I reached you and you weren’t going to make it. I had to inject you with a radioactive isotope in order to save you, and because of that it’s not...it’s not safe for you to be here. Much as we've tried, we couldn’t make the isotope safe for humans.”

“What are you saying?” Kara questioned.

“We can’t stay here. As of right now, you will kill any human that comes into contact with you. And in order to protect the people of Earth I have... I have to take you off of the planet. We have to go away.”

“Oh Rao, what did you do?” Kara asked him as she fought against the sudden fatigue that was threatening to pull her back under. “My God, J’onn, what in the hell did you do?”

“Kara-” J’onn tried not to let his own feelings show. But the guilt he suddenly felt in that moment was overwhelming. He’d robbed Kara of her chance at an honorable death. He’d given her, what he knew she would see as a fate worse than death. Not only had he forced her back to life. But he’d done so at the expense of her ever being able to be with the ones she loved most. “You don’t understand. You were dying, and Alex… Alex was begging me to save you. I couldn’t just let you die. I had to – I had to try.”

“By robbing me of an honorable death, J’onn? By robbing me of the chance to ever see those that I love again?” Kara said angrily. “Look, I’ll admit that I wasn’t ready to go. But what good is this life, if it means that I never get to see the people I love again?” Kara can’t stop the sobs from escaping. “Rao, how could you? I would’ve thought you would understand it better than anyone else! How could you do this to me?”

“Kara,” J’onn felt his own voice break, as the tears that were threatening spilled over, and slid down his cheeks, “Kara, I’m sorry.”

“I know you were just trying to do what you thought was right, but you have no idea what you’ve done to me, J’onn. God I can’t...I can’t even look at you right now,” Kara confessed. “You’ve ruined me. And by telling me this, you’ve just shattered what was left of my heart. I can’t... I can’t even begin to tell you the pain that you’ve caused me.”

“Kara-” J’onn felt broken. It killed him that he was the reason for Kara’s pain. “Kara, please.”

“Get out,” Kara ordered.

“Kara-”

“I said get the hell out of my room!” Kara’s booming voice actually made J’onn feel afraid of her. “I don’t want to see you right now! I don’t want to talk to you! Just get the hell out!” He could feel her pain, and her hatred. And he knew that she was completely justified in her anger. After all, he can’t imagine that he would have felt any differently, if he were in Kara’s current condition.

“Okay,” he breathed. J’onn opened his mouth to say something else, but thought better of it, and closed his jaw again. He walked from the room without another word, leaving Kara loudly sobbing in his wake, as she realized for the first time what she’d lost. She would never see Alex again. She would never see Eliza, or Lena, or Winn, or James. Her life from now on would be empty, hollow, void of anything akin to sunshine or warmth.
She
Is the first and last for me
She
Is the everything between

Lena swallowed as she woke to darkness around her. It was quiet, and save for the sound of the machines in her room, only the faintest of sounds flooded in from the hall outside. As she looked over towards the door, she could see the thin beam of light spilling in from the hallway. The door was cracked open, but still shut so as to offer privacy. She looked down to her arm and stared at where the flesh left off and the tubing began. She felt as if she had some of her strength back already and could only surmise they’d pumped fluids into her to offset the bleeding and dehydration she’d suffered from. Still, her throat was dry as the desert and it took effort to swallow. She shifted on the mattress, groaning gently as her body still ached. She heard shuffling as someone reacted to the sound of her moving about on the bed. She blinked as a silhouette came into focus and she waited for her pupils to adjust so she could figure out whom it was. She let out a sigh as Alex appeared before her.

“Hey,” she whispered softly. Lena’s eyes darted briefly over to where James slept. She figured they hadn’t left her bedside.

“H-Hey,” Lena’s breath hitched, she didn’t really trust her own voice to bear the brunt of her emotions. Her throat hurt so much and she couldn’t seem to remedy the dryness in it. Her voice sounded as if it had been grated with sandpaper.

“How are you feeling?” Alex breathed quietly as she perched herself on Lena’s bed. She sighed as Alex reached out and brushed the hair from her eyes. It was done in the way that a sister might do, gentle, attentive, loving.

“How are you feeling?” Alex breathed quietly as she perched herself on Lena’s bed. She sighed as Alex reached out and brushed the hair from her eyes. It was done in the way that a sister might do, gentle, attentive, loving.

“Tired,” Lena managed to choke out. “I wanted to tell you… I’m sorry. I’m sorry about earlier. I… I didn’t mean to unload on you like that.”

“Hey,” Alex shook his head, “You don’t have to apologize, Lena. I…I can’t imagine what it’s like. I mean God, you’re talking to me. I’m as devastated as you are right now.” Alex’s own voice sounded strained as the woman struggled to relate to her without getting overly emotional. “I don’t know what to do.” Alex swallowed before continuing. “I know that you blame yourself for all of this… and I know that it’s hard for you to accept it, but I’m really glad that you’re okay, Lena.” Alex punctuated her statement with a comforting squeeze. It was what Kara would have done if she had been there.

“Kara,” Lena breathed, still sounding as if the thought of her only brought Lena unbearable pain.

“Made the right choice,” Alex cut in softly, her tone nothing short of patient. “Lena, I know it’s hard for you to see it from his point of view, but… if it had been me, I would have done the same thing. Kara… She loves you. She loves you more than anything, and there was no way she could’ve let something happen to you. There’s just no way. Sure, you can be angry with her if you have to. But can you really fault her for what she did?” Lena looked away as she felt more tears seep soundlessly from her eyes. This time she tried to show more restraint. She tried not to let the sobs out. She knew that crying wasn’t going to do anything. It certainly wasn’t going to bring Kara back, no matter how much she wished it would. Lena felt a heat flush in her cheeks as Alex, sweet as she was, wiped them away with the pad of her thumb. Lena had earned Alex’s respect and admiration a long time ago, for her strength and perseverance.

She is the darkness
She is the daylight
She is the calm
She is the storm

“I wish I could say that I was worthy of the love that she gave me,” Lena spoke. It felt like there was a lump in her throat as she tried to swallow. It hurt to swallow, beyond what Lena thought was possible.

“Oh, Lena,” Alex sighed. “I wish I could make you understand.” Alex paused. “I’m sorry that it took me so long to see it. But… you were always worthy of the love she gave you. It’s just that some of us were able to see it, before others. And I’m sorry for that.” Alex closed her eyes. “I just wish… I wish I had seen it sooner.”

“Alex,” Lena spoke, thickly.

“Sorry,” Alex shook her head. “I can tell that I’m making you more upset, which is the last thing I want to do.”

“So… what did the tests show?” Lena asked.

“Well,” Alex replied. “Your x-rays came back. You managed to make it out of the fight largely unscathed. But you have some broken ribs on the right side. I wrapped those, so you should already notice an improvement in your breathing. You also have a broken clavicle, which is why you weren’t able to move your shoulder well. You’re going to have to be in a fancy sling for a while, but you should be fine. Lastly, you needed some stitches. But luckily I was able to sew you up before you passed out on me.”

“Sorry,” Lena looked sheepish. “I guess that I was more tired than I realized.”

“Don’t be sorry,” Alex told her. “Just get some rest, Lena. I’ll be back in a little bit.”

After Alex departed, Lena climbed out of bed, and walked into the adjacent bathroom. She examined her face in the mirror. It wasn’t a pretty sight. But who really cared how she looked. She’d been lucky enough to survive this whole mess, when hundreds, and thousands of others, weren’t so fortunate. With all of the day’s excitement and the pain killers she was currently hyped up on, Lena was exhausted. Fortunately, sleep came easily for her. As she fell asleep, she tried desperately not to think of Kara.

She is the moment
The endless and only
She is my all
She is the one

The next morning, Lena moaned and groaned as her body came back to life. Every muscle, every inch of her hurt and she couldn’t make it go away. She switched positions repeatedly, trying to ease the pain in her neck, back, and shoulders. Finally, she forced herself out of bed and into the shower as she tried to wake her body. She caught site of her own freckled, purple, and blue bruised jaw in the mirror. She looked more grotesque than ever before.

Lena studied the stitches along her cheek and lip with her fingers before she ultimately cleaned them as instructed. She tried not to stare too long into the reflection of her own eyes. She was particularly afraid of what she might find in them.

Lena finally dressed in some lounging clothes, a warm sweatshirt and some yoga pants, when she decided that she wasn’t going to get anywhere with her current appearance. Alex had told her to take
it easy, even though she hadn’t sustained any serious injury.

What Lena wasn’t expecting when she finally ventured outside her room, was to find Mon-El standing there. She sighed as he turned around to face her. Lena winced at the hurt she saw in his eyes, as Mon-El’s gaze raked over the consequences she had reaped.

“Lena,” Mon-El looked pained, as he regarded her. She could only surmise that her presence was an unwelcome reminder of what had transpired. Kara should have been the one standing there in front of him, not Lena.

“Hi,” Lena greeted him. It had never hurt so much to talk to someone, in Lena’s entire life. “How are you?”

“I’m... I’m good,” his attempt at a smile was weak, but Lena pretended not to notice. She hated herself for robbing Mon-El of the love of his life. Still, Mon-El was undeniably kind. He made every concerted effort to offer her comfort and kind words. “How are you?”

“I’m...” Lena hesitated, “I’m okay - a bit sore, but I can’t really complain.”

“Good,” he said earnestly, “That’s good. Listen – I... I know that the timing of this is horrible, but Kara asked me to make sure that I got this to you, if something happened to her. And I - I promised that I would. She said that you might not be ready to listen to it right away, and that’s okay. But she wanted me to make sure that I got it to you.” He cleared his throat, and held it out to her. Lena stared at the object in his hand for a long time, before she actually stepped forwards to take it.

“What is it?” Lena questioned him.

“It’s a message,” he answered, “Apart from that I can’t say. I don’t know what’s in it. Only that it’s for you.”

“Thanks,” Lena told him softly, as she toyed with the object in her hand, running her fingers over and over its smooth, cool, metal contours.

After her painful conversation with Mon-El, Lena retreated.

2 hours later...

“Alex!” Ruby’s voice echoed down the hall as she approached them at a near run. Sam wasn’t far behind her daughter. Alex couldn’t help the grunt that escaped her lips, as Ruby barreled into her with all the force of a bulldozer, seemingly completely unaware of Alex’s injuries. Alex, however, didn’t seem to care. She hugged Ruby back with everything she had, holding the young woman who she’d come to care about like one of her own.

When Sam tentatively approached them at the DEO, Lena and Alex looked beyond beaten. Sam took note of how Lena’s hands trembled. Lena tried to hide it, of course, but Sam could see it clear as day. She knew what it meant, too. For some reason, Lena’s hands always shook when she was under a great deal of emotional stress. Lena was extremely good at hiding how she was feeling, but by looking at Lena’s hands, Sam could usually tell when she was distraught. Sam knew that Lena put a lot of effort into learning to conceal her innermost feelings, because Lena rarely gave away what she was thinking or feeling. After all, showing emotion in such a position of authority was considered a sign of weakness, and Lena didn’t want the men she worked with to think she wasn’t strong or tough enough to do her job.

A lot of the time Sam wished that Lena would just let her in, but the brunette CEO seemed bound
and determined to keep a wall up between her and everyone else. Sam expected it had a lot to do with the things Lena had been through in the past. Sam knew that Lena had discontinued her partnership with Jack, because of the fact that he had been the one to see her at her most vulnerable. Jack had even sworn that he would never think less of Lena, but for some reason, Lena was bound and determined to hold him at a distance. Sam knew that the things in Lena’s past only made the woman stronger. After all, not many people could go through something like that, and come away from it a better person. But Lena had.

Sam watched as the younger woman’s hands kept curling into fists, before uncurling again. She knew that the shaking must be bothering her. And so she watched, completely entranced by the way Lena’s hands kept tightening, then relaxing, curling, then extending. Lena’s strong shoulders remained tight, squared and intimidating. Finally, Lena let out a deep huff of air and clasped her hands tightly in front of her, hoping that it would still her hands. It didn’t work. Lena had never felt so desperate for something to release the fury pent up in her body. It felt like she might explode if she didn’t get out her anger somehow. Sam swallowed uncomfortably as her eyes raked up and down Lena’s body. Lena finally gave up. She walked to the wall, put her back to it and slid down, crumpling into a mess of arms and legs that loosely resembled a heap. She watched as Lena let out a groan, and dropped her head into her left hand. Sam knew she was watching Lena break apart. Out of respect, she wanted to look away, but she couldn’t. She remained transfixed as Lena’s trembling hand ran through her hair, trying to comb her way through the tangled mess. Lena’s breathing was erratic. For the first time since they’d met, Lena seemed unable to hide from her. Sam took in Lena’s disheveled appearance, wishing that she could take the woman’s pain away. Lena was a mess, although, it was understandably so.

Then a thought seemingly occurred to her for the first time, her eyes searched the hallway for a trace of red, blue, and gold, but Sam came up empty. She turned to Alex, since Lena didn’t seem to be in any position to answer any questions. Alex was still goofing around with Ruby, trying to cheer up the young woman.

“Where is Supergirl?” Sam asked Alex. And Sam watched helplessly, as Alex’s mood dramatically changed. As if Sam had just reminded her of something awful. Sam’s breath caught as she realized what it meant. Without speaking any words, Alex had just told her everything she needed to know. Supergirl hadn’t made it. No wonder Lena was so upset.

Sam knew that Reign was dead. After all, the gossip had spread like wildfire as soon as the battle was over. But no one had mentioned anything of Supergirl’s demise. Maybe because it was so hard to believe that the blonde heroine could have fallen.

Sam looked back to where Lena sat hunched over in the hallway. She couldn’t help but think that brunette should really be in a bed resting, but figured that Lena was being stubborn. Leave it to Lena to shun a Doctor’s order. In addition to some minor scrapes and bruises on Lena’s face, a neat row of stitches covered the woman’s left temple, lip, and cheek. What was even more disturbing than the rest, however, was the striated appearance of the brunette’s neck. Sam let out a gasp as Lena let her head fall back against the wall with a dull thud. The brunette’s strands fell away from Lena’s neck, and Sam saw the purple lines marring the side of her best friend’s neck. They hadn’t been nearly as visible to her when she approached, but she saw them now. Sam felt sick to her stomach as she realized just how close Lena must have come to certain death.

At that moment, Lena finally spared a look in her direction, acknowledging Sam’s existence. It was a hard thing to do, given the things that had happened between them lately, but it seemed like they were both finally ready to acknowledge that they needed one another. Sam found it hard to breathe as she watched Lena’s eyes flicker in her direction before the brunette quickly looked away again. Lena squeezed her eyes shut, hoping that she wouldn’t lose what little respect she had left by crying
in the middle of the hallway. Sam’s eyes flickered over to Alex, who looked as equally torn up about what to do. Her eyes met Sam’s, and then flickered back to Lena. Lena looked absolutely exhausted. To say that it had been a hell of a week would be a complete understatement. This one event had seemingly destroyed them all. Lena took a deep breath as she opened her eyes.

Sam desperately wanted to make things right with Lena, but she wasn’t sure how to go about it. Sam still blamed herself for everything that happened. She had brought a lot of undue pain to all of their lives.

“Lena,” Alex’s voice filled the silence between them. “You okay?”

Yeah,” Lena’s voice was hardly recognizable. Her usual husky alto, sounded like it had been replaced with sandpaper. “It’s just… I could really use some something to drink. I-I think I’m going to go get a coffee or something,” Lena mumbled, pushing herself up from the floor. She stumbled and Sam took a step forwards, wanting to help. Sam steadied her for a moment, making sure that Lena had her feet underneath her before she let go. “I’ll be back,” Lena spoke as her eyes met Alex’s.

“Okay,” Alex replied, knowing that she needed a minute to pull herself together again. The way she had found her tonight had nearly scared the hell out of her. Lena had declared adamantly that she was fine, and had refused to accept that she might not be. Sam watched Lena turn the corner and she felt an undeniable urge to follow after her. She wanted to stay close to Lena, so that she could make sure that her friend was in fact ‘all right’ as Lena seemed to keep insisting. At the same time, however, she knew Lena didn’t like to talk about her feelings and probably wouldn’t want anyone around when she was reflecting on what had happened.

Sam finally swallowed her pride. She was willing to be the sacrificial lamb so long as it meant that Lena had someone to comfort her. Lena clearly needed someone to hold her up. Sam caught up with the impenetrable, guarded CEO at the coffee maker in the break room. Sam could tell by the set of her shoulders that Lena was prepared for anything. And yet, Lena also looked as if she might blow over in a gentle breeze. Sam watched the woman closely. She was tapping her fingers on the side of the coffee machine as she waited for it to dispense the rest of her coffee. Sam took a deep breath and slowly closed the distance between them. Lena looked over her shoulder and finally turned around as Sam approached.

The clicking of boots on the floor that was so undeniably Sam, had alerted Lena to the fact that she was being followed, but she’d let Sam come to her of her own accord. Lena knew Sam would want to talk. Lena swallowed, tugging her shirt’s collar up around her neck so that Sam wouldn’t have to see it.

“Lena,” Sam spoke softly, her voice quavering.

Lena watched carefully as a swell of emotions swept across Sam’s beautiful and symmetrical features. There were so many that Lena had a difficult time naming them all. However, the tears shimmering in Sam’s eyes told her all she needed to know. Sam was experiencing, sadness, fear, and regret. Lena knew, because she was feeling them too.

Sam opened her arms in a silent invitation, and Lena took it without any hesitation whatsoever. She rushed forwards into Sam’s waiting arms, and suddenly, Sam couldn’t bring herself to care about the anything else. Sure, there were some unresolved issues, and hurt feelings, but they could overcome it all with patience and some hard work.

“Hey,” Sam greeted.
“Hey,” Lena grunted as the shorter, immaculately put together woman threw her arms around her friend’s lean body and buried her face in crook of Lena’s shoulder. Lena closed her eyes, taking a long minute to breathe in Sam’s comforting scent. Despite the fact that Lena had to do it shallowly, she got her fill, letting Sam’s sweet scent fill her up. Lena’s side ached as if there was no tomorrow.

Sam held Lena just as tightly, never wanting to let go. She felt the dark haired brunette’s raw pain as Lena’s body started to shake uncontrollably in her arms. Sam’s body tightened, unprepared for Lena’s very violent breakdown. Lena rarely cried, if ever, and so Sam knew that Lena must be really upset. Sam swallowed painfully. She felt so very awful for causing Lena’s pain, as the woman in her arms let out sob after sob. Alex, who had followed to make sure everything was okay, watched the exchange, feeling sadness sweep over her.

“I’m sorry,” Sam breathed, brushing her fingers gently through Lena’s hair. “I’m so sorry.”

“It’s not your fault,” Lena tried to tell her, but Sam couldn’t believe her. After all, all of the horrible memories that she still carried with her, tended to make her think otherwise. After her split from the entity that they call Reign, Sam still remembered all of the horrible things that she’d done…including trying to kill Supergirl. So no, Sam couldn’t really let herself off of the hook for this. She still felt responsible for all of it.

“But it feels like it is,” Sam told her. “Lena, I’m so sorry.” Lena hissed as Sam squeezed a little too hard in the wrong spot, and a bolt of lightning went surging through Lena’s ribcage.

Sam looked into Lena’s dimmed green eyes. “Cracked rib,” Lena whispered as an explanation.

“Oh…” Sam looked apologetic. “Shit, I’m so sorry.”

“Lena, I’m so sorry,” Sam thought, “I’m so sorry.”

Hours later, Lena found a deserted room, and made herself a new home inside of it. She flipped absentmindedly through one book after another, watching the hands of the clock move millimeter by millimeter around the circle, before starting their progress all over again. She had no perception of time and how much it had passed, as she became too distracted by her own feelings.

The rich smell of coffee wafted through the air around her. She looked up to see another Agent from the DEO nursing a Styrofoam cup, as he sat chatting with one of the other agents from the strike team. They were sharing war stories, and boasting about their own acts of heroism. The thought that they were so oblivious of her pain, nearly made Lena sick.

Lena’s stomach rumbled loudly, reminding her she hadn’t eaten in a long time now. But Lena couldn’t even contemplate the notion of food at this point. Her stomach was twisted into countless knots, constantly churning in unrest. Her whole body seemed to be operating under extreme duress. Her head pounded relentlessly, and her hands went through fits where they started to shake and she could do nothing to steady them.

“There you are!” a familiar voice startled Lena from her reverie.

“Hey,” Lena said weakly, “How did you find me? Did you guys really miss me that much?”

“Oh, you know it,” Winn replied, “Alex told us you were ill.” He took a long look at Lena, noting that she looked a little paler than usual. “You feeling any better?”
“Much,” Lena replied with a small smile. “Thank you.” Winn noticed that Lena’s eyes kept darting to the coffee clutched in his hand every couple of seconds. The young brunette cocked his head to the side, as Lena eyed it longingly.

“That for me?” Lena asked hopefully. Winn could tell that Lena was only joking, but the thought was enticing. Winn looked down at the cup in his hand and stared at it longingly. It had been days since he’d had coffee of any sort and he wanted it so. But some things in life were worth giving up. He’d been trying to talk himself out of it since he walked into the break room where he usually got his coffee every morning.

“Aww, heck. Sure, why not?” Winn replied as he held it out for Lena. Lena hesitated, her arm stopping only a couple inches shy of the cup.

“Are you sure?” Lena asked, skeptically, her eyebrows rising high on her forehead. “I can really have it?”

“Yeah,” Winn replied gruffly, while adding a smile to offset the tone of his own bitterness. “I thought I was ready for coffee, but my stomach is still a bit…” Winn let his voice trail off. “Hey, are you going to take it, or what?” Lena plucked the coffee from Winn’s hand. Brainy looked up and saw this.

“What?!” he squeaked. “You gave her your coffee? Why didn’t I get coffee?”

“Well, for one, probably because you never asked,” Winn, laughed. Brainy shook his head, clearly frustrated by the whole thing.

“So,” Brainiac-V began, “I delivered your letter to J’onn. And, from what it looks like, Mon-El finally delivered Kara’s to you.”

“He did,” Lena confirmed, “But I can’t… I don’t think I can listen to it right now. I’m not… I’m not ready.”

“Hey,” Winn’s voice softened. “It’s okay if you’re not, you know?”

“Thanks,” Lena said gratefully. “I will listen to it soon. But I just need some time to sort out my feelings first.”

Lena let out a sigh, reaching up to rub at the aching hollow of her stomach. She felt eyes on her, and knew that her friends couldn’t help but analyze her ministrations. It was clear they were still worried she was going to break at some point. She knew that she must’ve looked thinner, frailer than usual.

Lena swallowed, trying to think of anything else, but the final moments she spent with Kara on the concrete.

“So,” Brainy hedged. “We know that you’re still recovering. But we were wondering if you might like to get to work. We can’t really bear the thought of sitting around any longer, and I’d much rather be doing something worthwhile…. something that will help Kara.”

“Why I thought you’d never ask,” Lena said with a smile. “Let’s get to work, boys.”

(Deo, National City, United States of America)

Five Days Later…
Lena can’t help but let out a groan as she finds herself elbow deep in paperwork. In between working on the problem that the isotope poses with Winn and Brainiac-V, she’d been trying to find ways to save a crumbling city. She sighed heavily as she reached up in an attempt to wipe the blurriness from her eyes. She was so tired that she could hardly think straight.

Because it had been such a busy week, Lena kept telling herself that she’d do it the next day. But then of course the next day’s events would cause her to bump it back until the next day, and so on… until the pile on her desk became nothing short of overwhelming. Lena was in the process of skimming through one of her reports when she noticed several spelling errors. With a frustrated growl, Lena crumpled the piece of paper and chucked it into the waste bin. Lena let out a sigh, and dropped her head onto the desk. God, she was so tired, that it’s practically all she could think about. And as much as she wanted to get caught up on all of her paperwork, Lena just had to admit that it wasn’t going to happen.

Lena shifted in her chair, groaning at the soreness in her shoulders, and lower back. The chairs at the DEO clearly weren’t built with comfort in mind, she’d quickly realized. Lena swallowed as her eyes flitted to the clock. Another twelve hours had gone by. Lena reached up to rub the back of her neck with her free hand. The other was curled into a fist in her sling. She had to keep working.

Lena would not give up on it. Kara was the strongest person she’d ever had the privilege of knowing. And Lena knew Kara would not give up easily. The fact that Kara was still alive was a testament to that.

She
When she breathes
It's a gift she gives to me

Lena jumped slightly as the door opened and light flooded into the room from the hallway. Lena spared the visitor a look and re-focused her attention back on what she was doing. Lena let out a sigh as the blonde-haired, blue-eyed woman sat down next to her, and reached out a hand to touch her shoulder.

“Alex told me that I might be able to find you here,” Eliza told her gently. Lena squeezed her eyes shut.

Lena knew how hard the last week must have been for Eliza Danvers. And Lena respected the woman for coming to her. Lena would never be able to thank Eliza enough, because the woman was ultimately able to tell her what Kara hadn’t ever been able to voice aloud.

Lena suddenly found it very hard to breathe as she turned to face a woman she’d grown to love and respect a great deal. She let out another strained breath as she looked back to the computer in front of her.

“You should get some rest,” Eliza suggested in a soft whisper. Lena met the woman’s eyes, sadly. “Lena, do you really think that I haven’t noticed? You haven’t left here, you haven’t slept, and you haven’t eaten in nearly four days now. She wouldn’t want you to do this to yourself.” Lena merely shook her head. She didn’t trust her voice at the moment. Silence built between them as they sat side by side for a long minute. Both seemed to respect one another. They both understood that their feelings for Kara were the same. They both loved Kara very much, and both missed her.

“I’m sorry,” Lena finally spoke into the silence between them. Lena nearly broke out in a fresh bout of tears, and her throat closed up on her, all over again. She’d been struggling to say those words to Kara’s mother since the moment Kara had nearly bled to death on the concrete. Only saying those words was a hard thing to do when she knew what it meant. It meant that she had failed Kara. It
meant that harm had come to her and she hadn’t been able to stop it.

“Lena,” Eliza gently sighed. “Please. You can’t keep blaming yourself. You can’t keep beating
yourself up like this. I don’t want you to do that. And Kara? She wouldn’t want you to do it either.”

“No,” Lena choked out emphatically. “It’s my fault. I’m her best friend. I was her partner… I was
supposed to protect her, and I…I failed. If I had realized what was happening just a moment sooner
then I could have spared you from this. She would have been spared from this.” Tears built in her
eyes for the hundredth time in the last week.

Cause she
Is the first and last for me
She
Is the everything between

Kara worked each day, as if it were her last. And Lena had grown to love and respect her for that
very unique ability she possessed. Perhaps Kara had never noticed it herself, but she really was
extraordinary in every respect of the word. The truth is, that there was just no one like her on this
planet. Cat had seen it in her all those years ago when she’d walked into the interview, and Lena saw
it now. Lena had known from the moment she’d met Kara, that she was remarkable.

“No you wouldn’t,” Elize spoke calmly. “Instead of you sitting here it would be her. Even if you had
realized what was happening sooner, it still would have been you that had taken the sword, and not
her.”

“I wish it had,” Lena confessed for the first time. “I wish it had been me,” Lena spoke softly. And it
was true. She hadn’t stopped wishing for that fact since the moment that it had happened. “I really
do.”

“I know,” Eliza nodded. “That’s what makes this all the more heartbreaking.”

“You really do love her, don’t you?” Eliza said, looking at Lena with her own respect and adoration.
“I’m sorry to say this, but there was a time when I thought that you couldn’t be trusted. All I ever
wanted was to protect my daughter, and I thought that you would bring her misery. But what I didn’t
realize is how much happiness you would bring her. I should’ve known. I should have known from
the first moment that she defended you, just how special that you were. She – My daughter believed
in you Lena. She saw how good you were, how virtuous, and brave, and true. I only wish that I had
seen it sooner.”

“Eliza-”

“I’m sorry, Lena,” Eliza said, “That’s what I’m trying to say. If anyone here needs to apologize? It’s
me. Not you! You loved my daughter. You loved her, and I? I was a fool.”

“Yes,” Lena breathed aloud, without hesitation. “I loved her very much.”

She is the darkness
She is the daylight
She is the calm
She is the storm

“Then go rest, Lena,” she ordered softly. “Please. Take a shower, eat something, get some rest, and
then come back tomorrow. The work will still be here. It’s not going to go anywhere.” She held
Lena’s eyes in a sort of challenge. Lena let out a gruff sigh of resignation and reluctantly released the
edge of the desk. After all, how could she deny the woman? Eliza deserved her respect. The wise, insightful, and very kind woman, was right.

Lena’s hand froze on the door handle when Eliza’s voice filled the room. “Lena?” Lena turned around slowly to see that Eliza was still watching him. “I know that I can’t make you stop blaming yourself for what happened, but you have to know somewhere in that head of yours that it’s not really your fault. And if you really can’t believe me, then try to think about it in a different way. Kara never would have made it this far without you.” Lena opened her mouth to protest, but Eliza seemed to be reading her mind because she cut Lena off before she could even begin. “Don’t argue with me. I know… I know about it all despite Kara’s best efforts to keep me out of that part of her life.”

“Mrs. Danvers,” Lena breathed as she ran a hand over her face in a rough manner “She wouldn’t have even been in those situations if it weren’t for me. She would have never been so reckless, if it weren’t for my own stupidity. I led her there. Me. In all senses of the word, you should hate me.”

“Then you’re out of luck,” Eliza replied sternly, “Because I don’t… In fact, I’m quite indebted to you.” Lena just shook her head.

“You’re not giving yourself enough credit,” Eliza stood up, shaking her head. “Lena, you honestly don’t know how lost Kara was before she met you. You haven’t seen the transformation, as I have, because you had nothing to compare it to. But Kara? It took her a long time to start living after she got here. You may not see it, but I do… You - You taught her how to live again. You taught her how to feel like a human. She was so afraid of happiness, of living that she threw herself completely into a role where she lived on the brink of life everyday. She didn’t really live. She didn’t breathe… U-Until you.” Lena swallowed. “I guess what I’m trying to say is that you saved her in more ways than you ever realize. And for that? I…I want to say thank you, Lena.”

She is the moment
The endless and only
She is my all
She is the one

“I hope you know that I would have done anything for her,” Lena confessed wholeheartedly, her voice thick with emotion. “I’m just sorry that it wasn’t enough…” Then she added, “I’m so sorry that I wasn’t enough… I couldn’t make her stop. If I had then maybe…maybe she wouldn’t be lost to us all.” Lena watched as Eliza opened her mouth, closed it, then opened it again as she grappled for the right words to say. Lena swallowed, deciding that she couldn’t take much more. “Take care, Mrs. Danvers,” Lena said as she pulled the woman in for a soft hug. She was surprised at the strength with which the matron of the Danvers’ family reciprocated.

She is

She
When she cries
Can the whole world feel the rain

“She loved you too, Lena. Please don’t ever doubt my daughter’s love for you,” Eliza said softly and Lena couldn’t keep her body from breaking out into reckless, uncontrollable sobs. She fled from the room with embarrassment, wiping furiously at her cheeks as she rushed through the halls of the DEO. She needed an escape. She needed to get away, and she knew exactly where to go.

She is the darkness
She is the daylight
She is the calm
She is the storm
She is the moment
The endless and only
She is my all
She is the one
She is...

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading!

If you have a moment to spare, please take a moment to leave me some feedback! I'd really appreciate it!

I love you guys!

P.S. The song featured in this chapter is entitled, "She," by We the Kings
Let Go

Chapter Summary

Lena gets drunk, and James confronts her in her office at L-Corp. Lena finally comes clean with her feelings for Kara.

AND

Lena finally listens to Kara's message.

Chapter Notes

Trigger Warning! This chapter has some dark moments at the beginning, and if anyone is easily triggered it might be safer to skip this Chapter. I've sectioned it off, so look for the asterisks, when looking for the place where it's safe to read. You won't miss much, just a full-fledged meltdown.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Trigger Warning (It is highly recommended that you skip this bit if you think depictions of self-harm will upset you!) Look for the asterisks below, in order to tell you where it's safe to start reading! Thank you!

(3 weeks later: Lena’s office @ L-Corp, National City, U.S.A., Earth-38)

Lena was numb. She sat utterly defeated and destroyed, her body hunched over in a position that eerily resembled the fetal position. She could feel the floor beneath her, despite the fact that her backside had gone numb a long time before. Her back remained pressed against the couch, as if anchored there. She felt undeniably tied to the piece of furniture, to the couch where she’d spent so many precious moments with Kara. There were so many moments that she would give everything to go back to and relive. Because doing so would mean that she would have more time with Kara. It meant that she might have the chance to right some of the horrible wrongs and mis-steps that she'd made.

Lena swallowed painfully over the lump in her throat, as she hefted a crystal glass full of amber liquid in her hand. She could feel the undulations of the liquid inside, as it sloshed against the walls of the glass. She vaguely felt some of that liquid escape and run down the side, finding her fingers. They became sticky under the liquid, but Lena could not be bothered to pay it any mind. She had far more pressing things to worry about.

She stared without seeing at the floor, listening to the distant memories replaying themselves in her mind.

I've spent most of my life wishing I could talk to people that are no longer here.

"How did you know?" Lena whispered. "Damn it, Kara. Why... Why didn't you tell me?" Lena
swallowed. Her throat burned fiercely under her questions, and so did her eyes.

Lena felt her own losses in the echoes of Kara’s words. She wished that she could talk to Kara now. She wished she could tell her all of the things she hadn’t had the courage to say before.

Lena’s eyes were red-rimmed and bloodshot, from the tears she reluctantly shed. Her vision blurred at the edges, with all of the tears that she was now holding back. Her body shook with the pain she felt. Glimpses of memories flashed through her head repeatedly.

Kara had been wise beyond her years. Even now, looking back on some of the earliest conversations they’d had, it seemed like Kara had the knowledge of a thousand lifetimes settled upon her shoulders. She’d never really understood how that could be so. She never understood how Kara knew the things she knew. But now Lena finally understood why. It was because Kara had lived countless lives... (if two lives and an interwoven web of identities and secrets could be counted). But Kara... Kara had a unique ability to see things that others missed. She had a strong moral compass, and learned from mistakes. She had seen the destruction of a planet, and in an effort to make sure that no one else had to go through that pain, she’d taken up the mantle of protecting another. Because of the losses she’d suffered as a young woman, Kara knew the value of things in life. She knew the value of love, of kindness.

During her tenure as Supergirl, Kara had seen the best and the very worst, of humanity. And because of that, she knew what qualities were worth cherishing in one’s self, and which were worth banishment.

But somehow, no matter how evil, or how misguided someone might be, they were not beyond saving. No one was. Kara was very strict about that fact.

And Lena knew that if Kara hadn't believed that fact, that she would have cut Lena from her life the moment she found out about the Kryptonite. But Kara had stayed. She had fought tirelessly for what Lena was so ready to throw by the wayside. Kara had fought for them. She'd fought for Lena, and Lena still didn't fully understand why Kara was so unwilling to let her go.

*I know what it's like to be disillusioned by our parents. But I'm a pretty good judge of character. And you are not like your mother. She is cold and dangerous. And you are too good and too smart to follow in her path. Be your own hero.*

For the first time in her life, Lena saw everything clearly. There had been so many moments over the years during which Lena had asked herself if the effort was worth it. If the pain and the heartache and the hardship was really and truly worth it. Because from where Lena stood – or sat - it seemed that they were fighting a battle that just couldn’t be won. Sure, they’d won this battle. But so many people had been lost in the process.

That was another thing. They had a death toll, now. Every day those numbers climbed higher. It was both painful and disheartening. Still, every time the number climbed higher, Lena willed herself to remember. It could have been 7.5 billion. They could have lost 7.5 billion people. Humanity as they knew it, could have been destroyed.

The difference? Was one brave, selfless, and fearless young woman.

It all started with *one.*

Lena let out a levied breath. How many people in earth’s history have looked at the world's problems and thought, "Yeah, there's a problem, but what can I do? I'm only one person. It's too big, too daunting."
And then there was Kara - her dear, beautiful, sweet, loving, Kara, standing in the way of a titan. She’d stood in-between humanity and what most people might have considered a God, and said, ”No. I will not let you take this world. You’ll have to pry it from my cold, dead fingers. There are still good people left on this planet, and I will not let you take it from them without a fight.”

And what had Lena done? She’d given the titan the means to kill her. She’d created the blade of the weapon used to spear Kara through the heart.

Lena squeezed her eyes shut, willing the pain in her chest to go away, as more tears streaked down her cheeks. It was an absolutely gut-wrenching thought. And it destroyed her day in and day out. What had she done?

Had Kara been right all those months ago? Was Lena no better than her brother? Kara had trusted her. She had believed in the things that Lena was doing. She’d always believed there was good in her. But had she been wrong?

What made it worse, was that Lena constantly heard Kara's voice in her head telling her it wasn't her fault. Kara's voice was constantly reminding Lena that she was good, and that she should never doubt it. But then Lena's own voice would grow louder. It would drown all of the good in darkness, it would drown it with it's sheer volume, and leave Lena desperately wanting to know. Who was right?!

No one could make it through life without optimism, without a promise that things would in fact get better. Sometimes, however, things just didn’t. Sometimes, in the case of Lena, things only got worse.

It wasn’t the first time she’d seen someone die in front of her. Hell, it wasn’t even a rarity. Lena seemed to be cursed. One by one, she’d watched those she loved most vanish from her life one by one. First, it had been her mother – her real mother, then Lionel, and Lex, and Jack. But Kara… Lena had been so sure that she would be the one to defy the odds. There was something special about her, something that defied all logic and expectation. And then, of course, there was the promise that she’d made on this very couch, something about protecting Lena – always. Always. Oh boy. What a mockery that word had become in Lena’s mind.

Lena couldn't fathom why she was still so angry over a broken promise. I mean, it's not as if Kara really had much control over the things that had transpired.

Unfortunately, Kara never had a chance at upholding that promise. It was impossible for Kara to keep. Because the promise that Kara had made her on that fateful night, on the very couch behind Lena's back, had been an oxymoron.

Kara had been unable to protect Lena, and uphold her promise of always, at the same time. Keeping one promise meant breaking another. And Lena can't help but think that Kara made the wrong choice.

Lena lifted the gun higher, opening her eyes. Oh, yes, Lena saw things a lot clearer now. For all of the good that that knowledge did her.

What a joke.

_Drink up baby doll_
_Mmm, are you in or out?_
_Leave your things behind_
_'Cause it's all going off without you_
Lena’s head throbbed with the pressure behind her eyes. She’d had way too much to drink. She could feel it now. She’d passed the point of inebriation, long ago. After all, the decanter in front of her was nearly empty now. But it didn’t stop Lena from lifting the glass to her lips, once more, and didn’t dissuade her from taking another healthy sip of the amber liquid. It was a gulp, more like, but Lena no longer cared. No one was here to stop her. And if Lena wanted to drink herself to death, well then, Lena felt that was her prerogative.

Slowly Lena lifted the gun in her other hand higher. The weight of weapon seemed to grow with each passing second.

She wanted the pain to end. One question passed through her mind over and over again. What if she had lost perspective? What if she had let too much darkness in, and it had corrupted her? It was a delicate balance, that was for sure, but what if Lena was starting to cross a line? What if she was starting to do more harm than good? She always thought that the best thing she could do, was to do her job, but what if it was about more than that? Maybe the best thing she could do, was let things go.

So, let go, let go
Jump in
Oh well, what you waiting for?
It's all right
’Cause there's beauty in the breakdown
So, let go, let go
Just get in
Oh, it's so amazing here
It's all right
’cause there's beauty in the breakdown

Lena felt her phone start to go off in her pocket. She knew without a doubt it was James calling, and swallowed hard, feeling her throat constrict tightly. She didn’t understand why he kept trying. Why he kept fighting for her, when she didn’t want him to fight for her anymore. His constant pressure to talk about the things she was going through, only made her feel worse. Mainly, because Lena just didn’t know how to explain what she was going through. She knew she’d have to tell him everything, in order to explain why she was so adversely affected by Kara’s death.

She was use to people keeping her at a distance - at that safe 10 foot distance she’d joked about many a time before. And because of that, she had been afraid to let anyone get too close to her, now. She was afraid that she wouldn’t be any good at it - at sharing her feelings, and talking about her hopes and fears.

From a very young age, Lena had learned to be self-proficient and self-reliant. Her family, (specifically her adoptive mother Lillian) had been apathetic. In fact, Lillian did not seem to care the least bit about her well-being. Lena is still convinced that Lillian, if she’d had her way, would have thrown Lena to the wolves. Lena was sure that her father did, in fact, care for her a great deal. But his work had taken precedence over her. Her father was a hard-working man, who earned every cent of what he’d made (And believe me, Lena would know. She'd seen the kind of hours that he kept). Lex, had been the one to show the most deference for her. He’d shown her move love in those first couple years, than she thinks a young boy should have to give a complete stranger. But over the years, Lex had fallen victim to his madness. And when he’d seen that she did not share his
viewpoints, he'd abandoned her. Lena had seen her value, more clearly, when her parents elected to send her away. They defended their decision many times over the year, claiming that it was for the benefit of her education. But Lena feared she'd known the reason all along. She was an inconvenience, both to Lillian and Lionel. When Lena graduated from secondary school, she had immediately been ready to move on with her life. She applied herself in her studies to an almost unhealthy degree. And upon graduation, she had no shortage of degrees. From then on, she had become entirely independent. She'd taken over the wreckage of her father's company. She resurrected that same company, and re-built it (into something she could be proud of). She was a driven woman in a field dominated by men, and when she set her sights on something, nothing could stop her. Lena had always put work before relationships. She wasn’t afraid of risking her life. But she was petrified of risking her heart.

When it came to Kara, Lena’s feelings were strong. In fact, they were so strong and so overwhelming that it became frightening. And it didn't take long for Kara to worm her way inside, either. Part of Lena is sure she'd been ready to give Kara her heart, after their first real argument in this very office. Lena had spent so long building walls around herself, and so long putting all her feelings into neat little boxes, that it shocked her when she realized how far inside Kara had gotten into her heart. Lena had secretly loved Kara for standing up to her. She loved the fact that Kara had principles, and even more, for being willing to stand up for those principles, even if it meant exchanging a discourse with a friend. Over the years, Lena had seen all of Kara's great qualities. She'd come to see a few of the negative ones, too, But Kara's good qualities distantly outnumbered the bad.

Even so much as a few months ago, Lena had wanted to confess her feelings, but knew that she couldn’t do it in the way she wanted until she figured out how to let the beautiful woman in.

Lena didn’t know how to admit the truth… and the truth was, that she was not only attracted to another woman, but that she was in love with another woman. Lena also couldn’t bring herself to admit that she needed Kara in her life. She had seen the correlation. There was a direct correlation between Lena's own happiness, and Kara. So there it was, the problem. Lena wasn’t used to needing someone, and she certainly wasn’t used to depending on another person for love or comfort. So when she fell so hard for her best friend and realized it for the first time, she became petrified. Lena did the only thing she knew. She ran. She spent weeks avoiding Kara, at great expense to her mood (as Eve and Jess had so kindly pointed out). Lena had forced herself to come up with excuses as to why they shouldn’t be together; knowing all the while that it was the one thing she wanted more than anything. She loved Kara more than she'd ever loved anyone else. She wanted nothing more than to make the light haired, blue-eyed woman happy, and yet, she was desperately afraid that she would never be good enough for her. She was afraid that a dark soul like hers, would only bring Kara down. After all, wasn't it plausible that Lena's dark could cancel out Kara's light. She couldn't bear the thought that she would bring darkness to the kind of sunshine Kara exhibited.

Lena's hand tightened around the handle as she lifted the gun, pressing the cool metal barrel against her temple. It felt soothing. She pressed it against her skin harder, wanting to feel the pain and the bite that came with it. The muscles in her hand tightened, while her finger slowly slid to cover the trigger. Lena gritted her jaw against itself, locking it into place. She caressed the trigger with her index finger, lovingly, almost as if it were a lover’s caress. She let out a breath out slowly through her nose, closing her eyes again as the finger on the trigger squeezed tighter and tighter, trying to find the fine line between it lying dormant, and exploding in a mess of power and destruction. Finally, with a thundering, almost lurching pulse of her heart, Lena found it.

‘Click’

Lena gasped as her heart began to thunder away in her chest, reminding her that she was in fact a
coward. She felt a surge of adrenaline, and for that fraction of a moment she felt the high. She felt powerful, and unafraid. But the truth was, that she was incredibly afraid of death… She was petrified of actually experiencing the unknown. She didn't really believe there was a god. She didn't believe in any sort of an afterlife. And what if all that was waiting for her on the other side, was blackness? Unimpeachable, unimpeded darkness, with no beginning and no end? And when did consciousness or self-awareness end? Was it right away? Or would she have to answer for her endless crimes, first? No, Lena did not really want to find out the answers to those questions. At least not now.

Seeing Kara go in the way that she had? Well, it only made Lena more afraid. Because Lena knew without a shadow of a doubt, Kara had suffered. She could feel it in the blonde's waning and strenuous breaths. Sure, Kara had tried to hide it. And she'd really hid it well. To some untrained passer-by who didn't know Kara well, they might've missed it. But Lena? My god, she'd seen the pain shrouded in Kara's beautiful blue eyes. And hell, even remembering it now, caused Lena undeniable pain.

"It should have been me," Lena said with a thick voice. "It should have been me that paid the price!"

Lena felt angry now. "How dare you? How dare you try and pay the price for me, Kara?!!"

Again she shouted her questions to no one. And god damn did it hurt.

Lena let out a quavering breath, her whole body shaking. With a huff she set the gun down on the floor next to her, deciding to pay attention to the glass of scotch she held in her other hand. She took a healthy swallow, coughing as the alcohol burned on its way down. Lena closed her eyes, waiting for the first sip to settle in her stomach before taking another and another.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{It gains the more it gives} \\
\text{And then it rises with the fall} \\
\text{So hand me that remote} \\
\text{Can't you see that all that stuff's a sideshow?} \\
\text{Such boundless pleasure} \\
\text{We've no time for later} \\
\text{Now you can't await} \\
\text{your own arrival} \\
\text{you've twenty seconds to comply}
\end{align*}
\]

She yearned to be free of the agony.

Lena figured that with some more liquid courage in her, she would be brave enough to go through it. Minutes passed and Lena finished the decanter of scotch. She finally had a pretty good buzz going at that point. Finally, she felt numb, oddly detached. It was what she wanted, and yet? Lena was desperate to feel something, anything at all. Lena glared down at the glock on the floor, Slowly, she reached for it and picked it up. She stared at it for a long moment, weighing her options.

Could she actually do it? Lena still didn't actually know.

"i guess there's only one way to find out," Lena breathed to herself. With a flick of her thumb she switched off the safety.

She swallowed, as she pulled back the hammer and loaded the chamber.

This time there was a round in the chamber. This time she could end her seemingly pathetic existence.

Failure. Alone. Coward. The words echoed around her head in a taunt. Slowly, Lena lifted the gun,
taking it in her hand once more.

Lena lifted the pistol back to its place against her temple. After all, she had no desire to swallow her gun, and figured that it would be just as effective to do it her way.

Lena’s eyes were closed and she was focused on the cool metal pressing against her skin, when fate so kindly and unwelcomely intervened.

Lena stiffened, remaining completely frozen as she heard a key slide into the lock. Her brain was telling her to drop the gun and hide it, but a part of her was so dazed that she didn’t know what was happening. A frantic breath escaped her lips as the door was thrown open. So much for her plans. Man, life was really a bitch sometimes.

The only action that Lena seemed able to take, was to let her right arm drop slightly so that the barrel was aimed at the ceiling at a shallow angle. She could still feel the soothing metal still pressing against the skin of her temple, but even if the gun went off it would likely ricochet, and couldn't kill her.

Lena's eyes dropped to floor, as if averting in shame. She concentrated on the warm timber of the music as the strings took over the central theme once more. Cello and bass hummed softly beneath higher strings and winds as they took over the melody, with a certain gentleness. The vivacity and boasting grandeur of the earlier piece, seemed to give way to some semblance of peace and quiet. It was so different from just moments before.

Lena had always loved Dvorak’s New World Symphony. She felt like the music accurately covered both sides of the spectrum of life. With the winds playing, the melody could be extremely gentle and serene. However, the lower strings and brass could instill a sort of turmoil and urgency in one’s soul. With the crescendos, dynamics, and key changes, the symphony could be seen as a classic play on good and evil. Of strife and victory. Of strength and perseverance. Lena stared at the floor between her legs. For the first time, she thought of James as she caught the smell of cologne wafting into her office. It was strong and overpowering. It was so different from Kara's smell, which seemed muted, and quiet - almost delicate in comparison.

Delicate. Lena nearly snorted with humor at the word choice. Because Lena was sure that the words, Delicate, and Kara, shouldn't ever be used in the same sentence. If anyone was larger than life, it was Kara. Kara had a strength both inside and out, that Lena could only fathom.

James froze just inside of the door. He’d called Lena more times than she could count, and when she received no reply, he’d started to worry. It was with good reason. James let out a gasp as he stepped into Lena’s office and saw the CEO for the first time. Even in the dim lighting, there was no mistaking the item in Lena’s hand. James saw the glint of light reflecting off the pistol in Lena’s hand. Panic and fear flashed across his features in rapid succession as he sprung into action. He knew all about guns. He knew about the minute force that was needed to compress the trigger, and fire the weapon. He knew all about the diameter of the chamber, the bullet casing and the explosive force with which the bullet was expelled from the chamber. And though he was deathly afraid of the object and the way Lena was holding it in her hand, he didn’t let his fear stop him from moving. He couldn't let her go through with it.

****End of Trigger Warning ****

Before she knew what was happening, Lena felt James’ warm hands gently pry the service weapon from her hand, lifting it away. With a sigh of relief, James felt no fight in her as he pulled away the weapon. He slid the clip out of the handle, emptied the chamber, and set it down on the table, all the while with his heart thundering in his chest. He couldn’t breathe. The look in Lena’s eyes made him
fear what was to come. Because he didn’t recognize the woman staring back at him. The Lena he knew and loved was nowhere to be found. And for the first time in her life, James didn’t know what to do. Nothing had prepared him for this moment.

While gulping air, James knelt down forcing Lena’s legs apart with his hands. James moved forwards, and Lena turned away, determined not to let James see the turmoil inside. She didn’t want James to know that she was a shell of a human being. Tears built in Lena’s eyes. Her vision blurred and her eyes burned as she fought back the tears. He’d watched over the last few weeks as Lena slowly slipped away from him, seemingly self-destructing, but he’d never imagined it coming to this. Lena had always been so strong. In fact, Lena was one of the bravest people that James had ever met, and he loved that about her.

So, let go, so let go
Jump in
Oh well, what you waiting for?
It's alright
’Cause there's beauty in the breakdown
So, let go, yeah let go
Just get in
Oh, it's so amazing here
It's all right
’Cause there's beauty in the breakdown

James knew the signs of depression, and now that he saw them in front of his own eyes, it seemed like a whole other reality. How had he not noticed before? A shudder took over James' spine with paralyzing fear, as he realized that if he’d been so much as a few minutes later, that he might have been kneeling over Lena’s lifeless body.

Slowly James slid forwards, closing the distance between their bodies. He reached out, trapping and cradling Lena’s face in her hands. Lena fought the touch, trying to pull away, but James wouldn’t let her. He needed answers. Now that he knew what was really at stake, he knew he had to get them. Because if he didn't? Well, let's just say that he might not be so lucky next time.

“Lena,” James whispered. “You have to talk to me. Please,” James begged desperately. Lena tried to look away, squeezing her eyes shut. But once again, James would have none of it. “I need you to talk to me. I need you to try and meet me half way. Because I can’t keep doing this by myself. Lena, you have to start letting me in.” Lena shook her head.

“I can’t,” Lena whispered, her voice breaking roughly.

“You have to!” James breathed rather emphatically, “I mean, Jesus! I just found you with a gun to your head. Do you have any idea how unbelievably scared I am right now?” Lena remained utterly and completely silent. Lena took a deep trembling breath as her hands began to shake. “Please. We’re never going to make it through this if you won’t let me in.” Lena stared into the James’ shimmering eyes for a long moment, searching for something.

"Lena-” His jaw worked furiously as he tried to come up with the questions he knew he needed to be asking. "How long have you been thinking about hurting yourself?” he finally asked. "And why on earth would you want to?"

Lena couldn't help but feel a little defensive as she asked, “Where the hell is this coming from?”

“How dare you ask me that?” James hissed angrily, his brown eyes flashing in hurt. “I care about you, Lena!”
There was a slight pause, and then Lena breathed, “But I don't get it! Why? Why do you care?” She saw something flicker through Jame’s eyes. She swallowed when she recognized it. James was telling the truth.

“How - How can you even ask me that?” James questioned. “I mean God, Lena, is that really so hard to believe? That someone might actually care about you?”

"Truthfully?"

"Yes," he demanded.

"Then, I would say yes. It's hard for me to believe that someone...anyone would care about me."

James closed his eyes, and let out a defeated breath. He hadn't realized just how difficult and heartbreaking this conversation would be.

They’d been dating for months, and Lena had never given him the slightest indication. He knew she was guarded. That she kept a lot of things to herself. But the fact that she could be harboring these feelings inside of her, after months of them dating absolutely destroyed him. He felt like he didn't know her at all. And, he reckoned, maybe he didn't. He felt like a fool.

He can remember thinking that she was like the others in her family. He can remember once thinking that she put up a front, in order to deceive others. But no. It had just been about hiding her pain. Years and years of unfathomable pain. He couldn't even imagine having to live with that sort of pain. He suddenly felt horrible. If anyone was unworthy of love, it was him.

“You should go.”

“No,” James refused.

"James-"

“No! You’re really messed up if you think I’m going to walk away now - not more than a minute after I found you with a gun!” Anger raged inside of James at Lena’s stubbornness. “God! Don’t you see what holding all of it in is doing to you?” James asked. “Can you really not see it?” James swallowed. "Look, i'm sorry, okay? I'm sorry that I didn't see it sooner. But please don't mistake my ignorance as indifference."

“I can’t do what you’re asking me to do,” Lena repeated.

“So you should probably get out of whatever this is now before you get hurt.” Lena gestured to the space between them with her hand.

“No! I’m not leaving you,” James choked out, grabbing Lena’s hands in his own. He could feel how soft and fragile they felt in his own. “Look at me, Lena.” Lena, ever the stubborn one, refused. Lena gasped a little as James forced her to. “I don’t know how to make you understand, but somehow... somehow I have to!” Lena stared back at him, still frozen. Her whole body stiffened at his touch. Her wrists throbbed where James kept a steadfast grip on them. They ached, but when Lena tried to pull away or tried to break the contact, James kept a steadfast grip on them. “Why can’t you understand?” James asked quietly, with each word hitching in his throat. “I care about you,” James cried. He was actually crying now. For her. For him. For the both of them, together. “And so does Winn, and Alex, and Brainy. And Kara… Kara did too. She loved you. Please. She wouldn’t want you to do this.”

“But you still haven’t explained why you care about me,” Lena’s rough voice was hardly audible as she silently begged with her eyes for James to take it all back. Unfortunately, James couldn’t. “You
can’t mean it.”

“Why not?” James challenged.

“Because,” Lena tossed back him, not knowing what to say. Finally, she managed to make more of an argument. “I’m not worthy,” Lena bit out, still trying to pull away from James. James felt sick, knowing that Lena believed herself unworthy of love. When she was most beautiful person, both inside and out, that he had ever known. “And I have absolutely nothing to offer any of you. I don’t know how to-” Lena swallowed. “I’m not good enough, James,” Lena breathed with conviction, “I’ll never be good enough for you. You deserve someone better.”

“So, let go,
Jump in
Oh well, what you waiting for?
It’s alright
’Cause there’s beauty in the breakdown
So, let go, yeah let go
Just get in
Oh, it's so amazing here
It's all right
’Cause there's beauty in the breakdown

“Lena,” he watched helplessly as Lena’s eyes brimmed over with tears, and one escaped. He watched, completely transfixed as the tear trailed down Lena’s fair cheek. “You must not see yourself the way that others see you,” James informed her. “You’re strong, brave, selfless, compassionate, driven, generous, kind, beautiful,” James listed off. “And before you tell me that it’s not true, or that I can’t possibly mean that,” James spoke preemptively, “I do. I mean it with every fiber of my being.” It was sad. He was more in love with her than ever before, and she didn’t want it. Lena didn’t want his love. She couldn’t accept it. Because he wasn’t Kara.

“James,” Lena swallowed, her throat constricting uncomfortably. James stopped breathing as he realized, for the first time, that Lena was only inches away from him now.

For some reason, her close proximity had James’ heart racing out of control in his chest. James silently wondered if he affected the her in the same way. They were close enough to each other that they were breathing the same air. And James closed his eyes, as he finally gave in and breathed in the delicate scent of Lena’s perfume.

Lena’s eyes fluttered closed as James moved the last couple of inches, and captured her lips with his own. James felt the gentle pressure of soft, pliant lips against his own. Noses brushed together as the kiss quickly deepened. James’ hands moved up to pause at Lena’s shoulders, before ultimately slipping into her long hair. Silken strands ran through his fingers, as James tried to keep some sort of hold on the woman. She yielded, and began kissing him back. Lena’s lips parted a small fraction as James teasingly ran his tongue along the edge of Lena’s lower lip, seeking entrance. Lena didn’t open her mouth, but James did as a silent invitation that he was hers if she wanted. His lips parted, letting Lena’s tongue press inside. James let out a moan as Lena’s tongue slipped inside to mate with
its counterpart. It was a nice moment. The moment was shattered soon enough, however.

James could taste scotch, its taste strong and repulsive, as Lena perused the warm confines of James’ mouth. It was a reminder of Lena’s current state, and it served as a wake up call for James.

Lena was drunk. She could not properly consent to anything. And he was taking advantage of her love and her kindness. Again.

Lena savored the taste and the feel of James’ mouth against hers, not sure if she’d ever get a chance to kiss him again. James’ body was flush against hers, and even though they were both fully clothed, Lena could feel the heat that was steadily building between them.

James retreated as air became a necessity and the kiss broke. They locked eyes briefly.

Lena couldn’t seem to take in enough air, and so she took in oxygen through labored rasps. She noticed what she could only assume was regret cross over James’ features, as he pulled away.

Tears started seeping from Lena’s eyes, as James’ eyes opened and she registered the agony and pain in the usually strong man’s gaze.

“Lena,” James pleaded, “Talk to me.” Lena’s breathing hitched. “Please tell me what you’re thinking.” Lena, who was desperate to preserve whatever was left of her pride, started rebuilding her protective walls.

They were both too stubborn. But James had no choice but to keep prodding. “Please…” ‘stop’ Lena didn’t speak the second word, hoping that the plea would be enough by itself. “Let it go, and just go home.”

“I can’t do that,” James spoke softly, reaching out to touch Lena.

“Why are you doing this to yourself?” he asked her. He sounded like he was in pain. “Lena, why are you so hellbent on causing yourself so much pain and misery?” Lena clenched her jaw, stubbornly refusing to answer.

“Lena, please… just give me something…anything. You have to let me in. Because… I - I can’t keep doing this. I can’t keep seeing you hurting like this. it’s absolutely killing me inside. The truth is, I want so badly to take your pain away, but you’re making it so impossible for me to do anything to help.”

“James.”

“Just tell me why!” he ordered, his patience nearly at an end. Then something seemingly occurred to him for the first time. “Is this about her? It is, isn’t it?” Lena tried not to react to this question, but her face must have given something away, because he latched onto the idea. “This is about Kara. It’s always been about Kara.”

Lena swallowed and looked away. She suddenly couldn’t bear to look him in the eye. Because she was sure that if he saw into her eyes, then he would know the truth. He would know she’d been in love with Kara all along.

“Why?” he pressed. “I don’t understand. Why can’t you let it go, Lena? She was my friend too, you know? And she’s Alex’s sister for crying out loud, but neither one of us spends every night trying to drink ourselves into oblivion So I’ll ask you again! Why?! Why are you doing this?”

“Because she wasn’t just a friend to me!” Lena shouted. It was like a reflex. And the truth is, Lena
wasn't sure she could've stopped herself from answering. James looked shocked.

"She was more than a friend to me," Lena said quietly, but more passionately than she'd ever spoken anything in her whole life. She was no longer able to hold back the words. "More than family. I was... I was in love with her, James! I was in love with her, and I didn't know." James swallowed. It was taking everything in him, just to keep breathing. "I didn’t realize it until she was already gone," Lena told him.

So, let go,
Jump in
Oh well, what you waiting for?
It's alright
'Cause there's beauty in the breakdown
So, let go, yeah let go
Just get in
Oh, it's so amazing here
It's all right
'Cause there's beauty in the breakdown

“Oh...” James suddenly seemed at a loss for words. “But... you’re with me.”

“I know,” Lena exhaled.

“You’re supposed to be in love with me,” he spoke, with his voice holding a little more passion in it.

“I know that too,” Lena admitted as she looked away, staring right through him and into the night curtained behind glass windows.

“But you’re not,” James spoke the realization with such pain, that Lena was sure she was going to hell for having caused it.

“No,” Lena confirmed gently. The words were so quiet, that James had to strain his ears in order to catch them. “No, I’m not.”

“Because...” he swallowed loudly, before repeating the words very slowly as if he were willing himself to process them, “Because you’re in love with Kara. And you always have been.”

“James, I never meant to... I never wanted to-,” it was Lena's turn to flounder now. "-to hurt you,” Lena finally and painstakingly finished.

“I’m sorry,” He breathed. “But I can’t... I can’t do this. I have to... I have to go.”

“James, please.”

“I’ll have Alex or Winn come and be with you because you shouldn’t be alone,” James spoke, “But I can’t... I can't stay here.”

“James.”

“You just kissed me!” he sounded angry. His voice was accusing as he looked at her with something akin to hatred.

“I’m drunk,” Lena reminded him, her words slurring as she tried to speak. “I’ve been drunk this whole time.” Her eyes had trouble following him as he moved. There were two of him now, which Lena knew was a very bad sign. She must be more inebriated than previously thought. And now that
she thought about it, she was slurring her words quite heavily too.

“Did you ever have feelings for me?” he couldn’t help but ask. “Or was it always her?”

“I think I wanted… I wanted to, James,” Lena admitted, “Please believe me when I say that you’re a really amazing guy. If I had realized it sooner, I never... I never would have let it go on this long. But I didn't know. I didn't know until it was too late. And then, even when I did, I didn't know how to tell you without absolutely destroying you, so I tried to keep it inside.”

"How long?" he asked. "How long has it been? You said that you didn't know until it was too late."

"She was bleeding to death in my arms," Lena told home. She had to stop to try and choke back a sob, but it still burst forth. "I tried... I tried telling her."

“Did she know?”

“No,” Lena replied sadly.

“Not even at the very end?”

“No,” Lena confirmed. "I don't think she heard. Her eyes were empty. She...she was gone."

“I know you probably won’t believe me when I say this,” James said, as he slowly got up and walked to the door, “But I’m sorry. I’m so sorry. I can't even imagine what you must be going through. To love someone and lose someone is bad enough. But knowing that they didn't know how you felt? Well-”

“I’m sorry, too,” Lena said as tears streaked down her face.

“I know,” he nodded. “Look, for what it's worth? It would be really shitty if she somehow came back after overcoming unbelievable odds, only to find that you’d done something to yourself. You need to fight for it, Lena. And if you can't do it for yourself? Then please, do it for her! She gave up her life so that you would have one.”

“I never asked her to,” Lena told him as she reached up to swipe away at the tears that were slipping down her cheeks. "I think that's what makes it even harder. It feels like she paid the price for something I'd done. It... It should have been me."

“I know.” He sighed. “But I don’t think she could have made any other choice.”

“What are you saying?”

“I'm saying that I think that she... she was in love with you too,” James told her.

"Why?" Lena couldn't help but ask, "Why do you say that?"

"You mean, besides the obvious reasons?" he quipped, before he finally decided to elaborate, “So I'm pretty sure you remember this, but... When the Daxamites invaded? Kara willingly made the choice to irradiate Earth’s atmosphere with lead, even though she knew that it meant she would have to send Mon-El away. She decided that saving the world from the Daxamites was more important than having a loved one. But that night over the reservoir? She couldn’t let you fall, Lena. She knew what was at stake. She knew the risk. And she flat out refused to choose the people of National City over you. And that was just a city, not the Earth that we're talking about."

"I'm sure there's more to it than that," Lena argued. "There must have been something else factoring
into her decision."

"There might've been," he admitted, "But that's just one example of many, Lena. She...fiercely
defended you time and time again, when no one else would've."

"That's just stupidity-"

"That's love," he argued back. "That's trust. That's faith. A belief that you can trust someone.. that
you know their heart."

"And as much as I want to be angry, as much as I'm jealous of her right now?" James confessed.
"Lena, I never would have seen the kind of amazing person you were. There is no way I could have
come to love you in the way that I did, without her loving you first."

"It's just - she chose you, and I have a feeling that she will always choose you, Lena. So... no matter
what happens. Whether you feel worthy of love or not, don’t you ever forget that. You earned her
love every day, every moment that you two spent together. You are worthy of love, Lena. Don't let
the darkness and the fear and the doubt inside of you win. Let love triumph.” By the time Lena
looked up and turned towards the doorway, James was already gone.

So she just sat, staring into the night as she listened to the piano take up a soothing melodic line. She
began thinking how screwed up everything had become.

Had James known Kara was in love with her, even before she did? And if so, did that mean that his
reasons for telling Lena about the Kryptonite were self-serving?

Lena set the glass of scotch down on the floor beside her, and tried to push herself to her feet. She
stumbled and fell right back down onto her backside.

In the breakdown
'Cause there's beauty in the breakdown
The breakdown

So amazing here
'Cause there's beauty in the breakdown


“Locating… File located.”

“Play it.”

Then surprisingly, without fanfare, the music cut off mid-note and Kara’s voice began to play
through the speakers in Lena’s office.

“Uh...hey, Lena,” Despite the fact that she'd asked for the message to be played, Lena hadn't really
been prepared to hear the sound of Kara's melodic voice playing through her speakers.

Her body's reaction was involuntary. Lena felt her heart skip a beat, then beat faster and faster as the
blonde's voice continued. The truth is, Lena hadn't realized how much she'd missed Kara's voice
until now. “I – I hate to do one of those if you’re listening to the sound of my voice, then it means
that something happened messages, but I... I thought that at the very least I needed to say a few
things before surrendering to the great unknown. So...here goes,” Kara began, before quickly
gaining traction. “I know... I know that you probably see me in a whole new light. Perhaps, you
even feel a bit of hatred towards me for the things I’ve done, and I just - I wanted to say I’m sorry.
I’m sorry, Lena. I know it doesn’t excuse anything. And I know that it really sucks that I’m trying to get in the last word, when there’s no chance that you will ever be able to tell me what a fool I’ve been. But more than anything I wanted to make sure that you know… that I’m sorry. I’m sorry for lying to you about who I was. I’m sorry for what I asked James to do. I’m sorry that I didn’t trust you – and that I ever tried to imply that you were untrustworthy because of your name. Because that’s not… That’s not how I feel at all. In fact, I trust you more than you could possibly realize. You and Alex, you were always what kept me grounded, and I would not be half the person that I am today without the two of you. So please! Don’t think that I kept my secret from you due to a lack of trust. it’s just the opposite. You might think I’m just spewing bullshit, but I promise you. it’s true. I...I was selfish, Lena. And I’m not even going to try to lie about it, or try and give it a more positive spin. I. Was. Selfish. I saw the value of what I had, and I didn’t want to give it up. I was afraid. I was a coward, and I made a deliberate choice to keep lying to you about who I was. Because I knew that if I ever told the truth, I would lose you.” Lena listened as Kara’s voice cut out for a moment. And for those seconds, Lena held her breath. “I know you’re probably going to think this analogy is stupid, but – you were my red sun, Lena. You were the one person who made me feel human, and free of the expectation that came with me being someone else. Everyone who knew me as Supergirl, couldn’t see me as anything else than her. But most of the time? I was just as lost, and as afraid as everyone else. I...I lost everything. And I’m not just talking in hyperbole. I literally lost everything. Even my mother, who I’m sure you remember meeting not too long ago, wasn’t… well… she wasn’t the woman I left behind when I was twelve.” Kara sighed. “When I got to Earth, it… it hurts me to say it, but I never really felt like I belonged. I tried… I wanted to, but it wasn’t home. It wasn’t until I started to connect with people that I finally started to feel like I belonged. First, it was the Danvers. Then, it was this kid named Kenny. Then Winn, and James, and Cat, and...and you. But it wasn’t really until I met you that I felt...” Another heartrending pause. “Home. I felt home, Lena. Rao, this probably sounds so stupid to you, but I...I felt undeniably connected to you, in a way that I’ve never had with anyone else.” Lena had to choke back a sob as she realized that she felt the exact same way about Kara.

“Even that first day in your office, when you asked me if I understood what it was like to want to make a name for myself outside of my family, I understood. The truth is, I saw a lot of myself in you. I recognized the pain that you carried with you. I saw your hopes for the future. I saw your fears. But more importantly? I saw the amazing things you were trying to accomplish. I don’t even know when it is that I fell in love with you. It… It might’ve been that very first day, or it might’ve been that night you saved the city from the virus, or the day of the final battle with the Worldkillers – or any day in-between. All I know is that I love you. As we prepare to go out to fight Reign, I can honestly say that I love you. I’m in love with you. And the feeling just kind of snuck up on me. I remember… We were watching that movie together a few weeks ago, and you were a bit cold so you shimmied closer to me on the couch. I...I could tell that you were still cold, and so I threw the blanket over our legs. You smiled at me in appreciation, curled up against my side, dropped your head onto my shoulder, and I just... looked over at you, I looked over at you, and I knew. Without a shadow of a doubt, I knew you were the one I was meant to love for the rest of my life. I, Kara Zor-El, was in love with you. And you didn’t even know my real name.” Kara let out a harsh breath, and Lena could hear from the sound of her breathing that Kara was crying. “I’m sorry,” Kara spoke after a moment, “I can’t even say good-bye properly, because I’m too busy crying. I’m sorry, Lena. What I’ve taken far too many words to say, is that I’m sorry. I’m sorry and I love you. I will always love you.” Lena couldn’t help but cry harder. “I know you don’t owe me anything. In fact, I’m pretty sure that I’m the one that owes you. But please… Please just do something for me? If... If I’m really dead, or if I’m not able to come back and give you the love that you so very much deserve. Please… Please just try to be happy for me. Do as much good in the world that you can possibly can. And show the rest of the world what an incredible, amazing, wonderful, and beautiful person you are.” There was another pause, some commotion of someone talking in the background before she heard Kara say, "Already? Yeah, okay." Then, Kara's voice cut in properly, and said, "Sorry. I've just been told to wrap it up.
I’m... I’m out of time.” Finally, Kara said the two words that Lena was secretly dreading the most. “Goodbye, Lena.” Then the message cut out, and silence took over the room.

“No,” Lena jumped up, suddenly a hell of a lot more sober than she’d been the minute before. “That can’t be it. There has to be more.”

“I’m afraid that’s the end of the recording,” a computerized voice spoke up.

“Then, save it,” Lena ordered, “Save the recording, and put it in my archives. If I lose it, I’m blaming you. It - It can’t ever be lost, do you understand?”

“Done.”

“Good. Then replay the message,” Lena ordered. The message started over from the beginning.

She listened to Kara’s recording about ten times, before she stopped tormenting herself with the sound of Kara’s voice. She still wasn’t sure if Kara's last message was a curse, or a gift.

But at least it gave her something to live for.

*Kara is still out there, Lena thought. She's out there, and she needs me to be strong. I have to do this. For her.*

Chapter End Notes

Hey, guys! So that's it for now!

I hope you guys enjoyed it! I'll try to post more soon!

Oh! BTW, Happy New Year, everybody! I hope everyone's new year is off to a great start!

Thanks for your support last year! You guys mean so much to me! Hopefully, this year will be another great one! I love you guys!

P.S The song featured in this chapter is "Let Go," by Frou Frou. It's so good, and one of my all time favs. Go check it out if you have a minute! :)
Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

Kara's despondent, and deep in her depression. J'onn and Kal-El fight to pull her out of it.

*(Top Secret DEO facility, Somewhere in the Canadian wilderness. North America, Earth-38)*

Kara hardly stirred, listening in a sort of a daze as footsteps steadily approached her room from down the hall.

She was weak, and unbelievably tired. But she also felt restless – so incredibly restless that it was driving her a little insane. She wished she could sleep, but her thoughts refused to quiet (even after all of this time), and she couldn’t turn off her brain. Instead she felt herself focusing on all of her regrets, her feelings and anxieties. She can’t even remember the last time she’d slept.

Her first few days at the complex had been spent under a haze of sedatives, and medications, which made sleep easy. But once those had worn off, and Kara had refused any others, she found sleep elusive and impossible.

She’d merely laid there for hours and hours and hours, listening to the regular and evenly spaced tick, tick, tick, tick, of the clock down the hall.

Every so often, flashes of her fight with Reign would catch her unaware. Kara would feel her heart start to pound relentlessly in her chest. It would speed up, skip beats, and Kara would find herself unable to catch her breath. She would see glimpses of green, and red (my god, there was so much red). She would hear the dulcet tones of someone speaking to her, but would be unable to pick out individual words. Kara would shake. She’d feel her whole body tremble. And then she’d go numb. She would actually be paralyzed. She was helpless to get her limbs and muscles to follow her mind’s commands.

She knew what it was, but she was afraid to admit to it. She was too afraid to say the words out loud. She didn’t want to admit what she was seeing, what she was feeling. But the panic of it… the feeling of helplessness she experienced – and the fears that she was constantly under siege and was about to die, Kara knew what it meant. It was PTSD. She, a largely invincible Superhero who was supposed to be fearless, was suffering from PTSD. And Kara couldn’t make it stop.

Kara listlessly rolled over onto her back, sprawling out on the uncomfortable mattress in the room. Her arm flopped to the side in her efforts, and Kara just left it there, while her other hand came to a rest over her pained insides. Her stomach was sunken in and hollowed out, like some crater at the very center of her being. Kara pressed there. Unfortunately, even after all of this time, Kara wasn’t sure if pressing there with her hand made the pain worse, or made it better. She felt that pain all the way through her very being. It settled in her back, between her shoulder blades, and Kara let it.

*Help me, it's like the walls are caving in*

*Sometimes I feel like giving up*

*But I just can’t*

*It isn't in my blood*
Slowly, almost lethargically, Kara moved her hand around, letting it follow her body’s curves with almost detached interest. Kara could feel the shallow grooves just beneath her skin. Those crests and shallow grooves she found, made up the bottom half of her rib-cage, and Kara ran the pads of her fingers side to side, sweeping back and forth in a soothing and an almost languorous manner. She ached. She ached everywhere. From her intercostals, to her abdominals, from her biceps, to her quads. Every muscle in her body hurt. They fought against any exertion, almost as if they were pleading for her to just be still and stop fighting. Kara probably would have listened, if not for the constant restlessness that she felt.

Kara groaned. She writhed as the ache between her shoulders became unbearable, and her back arched off of the bed.

Laying on the bathroom floor, feeling nothing
I'm overwhelmed and insecure, give me something
I could take to ease my mind slowly

She felt like she should be fighting this. After all, she couldn’t believe that she would be reduced to this – this pathetic, feeble human being. Wasn’t she supposed to be strong? Wasn’t she supposed to be invincible? Superhuman? If so, then how could she be this?

She couldn’t. It couldn’t be. If this was what it meant to be human, then Kara could safely say that she wanted no part in it. It was awful. It was torturous. And it made her feel weak.

Kara squeezed her eyes shut, and willed herself to be still. She held her breath for a long moment.

“Please,” Kara groaned, “Please just make it stop.”

Kara just laid there, for several long hours. Trying to focus on anything except for the pain.

Kara was despondent now that her sole reason for living was gone. She lay awake, staring at stains and spots on the ceiling. They were the only thing left over from when water had leaked through and dried during the spring thaw. It was cold in Kara’s room, colder than Kara ever remembered it being before. And Kara shivered. She shivered, though it was sporadic and did little to warm her. There was a blanket across the room, lying on an abandoned chair. Every so often, Kara would stare at it wistfully, almost as if she could will it to her side with her thoughts alone.

Or even better, she could get out of bed and walk over to it. She could drape it over her own shoulders, and huddle inside of it for warmth. But that would require effort - an effort that Kara was not willing to expend.

Just have a drink and you'll feel better
Just take her home and you'll feel better
Keep telling me that it gets better
Does it ever?

She had been left alone for most her time here, mainly because Kara demanded it.

A blue-skinned Dorian Doctor had come in hours ago, in order to check on her. He’d sensed her suffering, and had offered her pain medication, in an effort to ease that suffering. But Kara refused. She knew it was pointless. Sure, they could dose her to high heaven, they could try to drown out her pain with medication, but the sorrow and the suffering would still be there. There would be no drowning it out. Because it wasn’t the physical pain that was driving Kara mad. It was pain of an entirely different sort. It was emotional agony that was slowly driving Kara insane.
The pain of her injuries was nothing compared to the lack of food and water over the last week.

Kara has read a lot of literature in her lifetime, and she is still absolutely convinced that no one has come close to accurately describing the agony of starvation, and the sort of hollow pain associated with it. Until now, she’d been fortunate to always have enough to eat. Until now this agony has been a stranger to her. Because this? This was as close to hell as it got. This was agony in the worst way, and Kara wanted no part in it - ever again.

Once Kara had arrived on Earth and her powers had started manifesting themselves, she’d had to consume thousands of calories a day, in order to fuel them. Part of her is still unsure of how the Danvers had managed to afford to pay for her almost insatiable appetite for all of her years living with them. And, of course, now that she was on her own, it was one of the reasons why Kara would never really be able to put as much money into her savings as she might have liked. She’d made some deals with restaurants in National City over the past few years, to help ease the cost. But even so, it was a delicate balance. What she saved by not having to buy a car and gas, she more than exceeded with food expenditures.

Still, for the last couple of weeks, Kara hadn’t eaten.

Kara is still convinced she’d never suffered in such a way before. It was excruciating.

Kara continued to claw at the space where her stomach should be, as she became desperate to ease the pain. It felt as if there were actually a part of her missing, a hole boring all the way through to her back. She had a new appreciation for what it felt like to go to bed hungry, to wake up hungry. The thought that millions of children went through something similar on a daily basis, broke Kara’s heart. She vowed that she would do something about it. Should she survive this mess, she decided that she would donate every cent she could. She would do everything she could, so that no one else had to suffer in the way that she was suffering at that moment. With the combination of hunger combined with heartbeat, Kara had never felt anything so excruciating in her life.

She felt abandoned, and often had to remind herself that it was her own doing, or that it was fated all along. She felt alone. Kara was so alone, and weary, and defeated. It took all of her strength not to cry.

Help me, it's like the walls are caving in
Sometimes I feel like giving up
No medicine is strong enough

She doubted she could eat or drink anything at this point, even if it was offered to her. The nausea was a force to be reckoned with. Together, the smell of the bleach, and the pain, was enough to make her feel ill. There were moments Kara would close her eyes and start breathing through her mouth in a vain attempt to overcome it. Kara moaned, as she finally rolled over to gaze at the dark ceiling above. It was dark. It was always dark where she was, and so she lost track of time altogether. It felt like days had passed her by. It was all a blur, and Kara wished she could drift off peacefully.

Someone help me
I'm crawling in my skin
Sometimes I feel like giving up
But I just can't
It isn't in my blood

Kara did not move or flinch as the door was thrown open.
Kara squinted against the light. Her gaze flickering over to the door with almost detached interest, as several bodies filtered into the small room.

“Oh good, you’re awake,” J’onn spoke.

“And you’re in my room,” Kara breathed flatly, her voice sounding strangely detached from reality. “I thought I was very clear, when I told you that I didn’t want to see you,” Kara said coldly. Her voice sounded deadened and lifeless, as if the effort couldn’t be expended to give life to her words. So they hung in the air, seeming oppressive and suffocating.

“Yeah? Well, this might come as a bit of a surprise to you. But I no longer care what you want,” J’onn was right phrase his words in such a way, because his words genuinely shocked her, and Kara sucked in a sharp breath.

“I’ve given you a week to get your head on straight, Kara,” J’onn spoke. “I thought I could trust you to look out for yourself. I thought I could trust you to look out for your own best interests, your own safety. But it’s become absolutely clear to me these last seven days, that you no longer care whether you live or die.”

“That’s not true,” Kara denied.

“No?” J’onn snapped. She could tell he was angry now. “You’ve refused medicine, food, water. You haven’t had a bite to eat in over seven days. You’re so weak that you can’t even get up to go to the bathroom. But it’s more than that! We just got your bloodwork back. Your body has started metabolizing itself in order to survive, Kara. Another week or two, and you could do permanent irreversible damage to it.”

“Look, I get that you’re angry with me,” J’onn spoke. “I get that some choices were made without your consent that affected you deeply. I get that you’re hurting right now, and I know that you’re in pain. But I will not – I repeat, will not apologize for saving your life, Kara. The fact is, I can’t apologize for that. Because I… I love you. I love you like you are one of my own. And I could never let you die, without a fight. I was trying to do the right thing for everyone involved, and I… I had to make a really tough call. You may not agree with it. Hell, make me the bad guy, hate me if you want to, but you’re… you’re alive now. You have people on this planet who love you, and care about you. And it would be awful of you to throw this second chance at life away…to give up on this life, when people are depending on you to fight for it!” J’onn was crying now. “You are… You are the strongest person that I have ever met, Kara. What – What happened to you was not fair. It was not just. But I also know that if anyone is strong enough to make it through this, it would be you.” J’onn pulled out an envelope. “I was hoping that I wouldn’t have to resort to this. I was hoping that it wouldn’t be needed, but I can tell you need something to fight for right now, and…” J’onn hesitated, setting the letter down on the bed next to Kara’s hand. “And I hope that this will serve that purpose,” he announced. “It’s… it’s from Lena.”

“J’onn-”

“The way I see it, you have two options,” J’onn spoke. “You can try and eat something, or-”

“I’ll try to eat something,” Kara cut him off. “But I should warn you. I’m nauseated, and in pain – and I don’t know how it’s going to go.”

“I can help with that,” Dr. Carter piped up. He looked happy to be needed, and he gave Kara a warm smile. “I can give you some medicine beforehand that I think will help you keep the food down.” And Kara nodded. “You don’t have to go crazy, either. Just a few bites to start and we’ll work our way up from there.”
“That sounds...” Kara swallowed, “That sounds good.”

“Good,” J’onn nodded, “That’s settled then.”

“J’onn-” Kara tried, but by the time she was able to push herself into a seated position and look after him, J’onn was already gone.

_I’m looking through my phone again, feeling anxious
Afraid to be alone again, I hate this
I’m trying to find a way to chill, I can’t breathe, oh
Is there somebody who could-?

When Kara woke the next morning, all was quiet, save for the faint sound of the machines in her room. Only the faintest of sounds flooded in through the hall outside. She heard footsteps grow louder as someone walked towards her room, and then wane as they walked past it.

Kara rolled over with a faint moan, and opened her eyes. As she looked over towards the door, she could see a thin beam of light spilling in from the hallway, forming a very clear and distinct line on the floor, before growing wider further away from it. The door was cracked open, but still shut so as to offer her some privacy. She felt as if she had some of her strength back already and could only surmise that the food she’d eaten had contributed to that fact. Still, her throat was dry as the desert and it took effort to swallow. She shifted on the mattress, grunting softly as her body still ached. She looked down at her own body, amazed she was pretty much unscathed, save for the few bruises still coloring her skin an eerie purple. She heard shuffling as someone reacted to the sound of her struggling with the blankets. She blinked as a silhouette came into focus and she waited for her pupils to adjust so she could figure out whom it was. She let out a sigh as J’onn appeared before her, rubbing the sleep from his own eyes.

“Hey,” he whispered softly. Kara’s eyes darted briefly over to where Kal slept in a chair near the door, and then back to the man she loved and trusted. She figured they hadn’t left her bedside.

“H-Hey,” Kara’s breath hitched, she didn’t really trust her own voice to bear the brunt of her emotions. Her throat hurt so much and she couldn’t seem to remedy the dryness in it. Her voice sounded as if it had been grated with sandpaper. He handed her a glass of water, and Kara took a greedy pull from it, guzzling most of it down, before her thirst was sated. He took the cup from her and set it on a nearby table.

“How are you feeling?” he asked quietly, as he perched himself on her bed. She sighed as he reached out and brushed the hair from her eyes.

“Tired,” Kara managed to choke out.

“I imagine so,” J’onn said with a knowing glint in his eyes.

“J’onn, I-” Kara began hesitantly, “I feel like I owe you an apology... Actually, no – scratch that. I know that I owe you an apology. I’m just – I am so sorry about earlier. What I did to you – the way I treated you, it was not... not fair. You wanna talk about things being unfair or unjust, well, the way I treated you was completely unfair, and I’m really really sorry.”

“Hey,” J’onn shook his head, “You don’t have to apologize. Look, I -”

“No,” Kara interrupted him, “No, I do! What I said to you was horrible. J’onn I basically blamed you for everything that was wrong in my life, when... I bear responsibility for it all. You’re like a father to me, and I never should have treated you the way I treated you this past week, whether I was hurt
or upset, or not.

“Kara,” J’onn smiled at her, “it’s okay. Look, I guess what I’m trying to say, is that I forgive you, and I understand why you felt the way you did. Please just know…. For better or worse, I’m here for you, okay? I promise, I’m here, and I’m not going anywhere. I know… I know that you probably wish that it were Lena that were here with you, or Alex, but… I’m afraid you’re going to have to settle for me in the interim.”

Kara laughed, “J’onn! What makes you think that I’d be settling? You’re like the best man that I’ve ever known. I love you so much. And I’m sorry if I ever made you doubt that for a moment, because you are so so wonderful, and I’m extremely lucky to have you in my life.”

“I love you, too,” he told her as he pulled her in for a hug.

Help me, it's like the walls are caving in
Sometimes I feel like giving up
No medicine is strong enough
Someone help me
I'm crawling in my skin
Sometimes I feel like giving up
But I just can’t
It isn't in my blood

J’onn’s own voice sounded strained as the man struggled to relate to her without getting overly emotional. “I just want you to know that I understand the pain that you’re in right now.” He swallowed before continuing. “And I…I know that it’s hard to accept it yourself, but I’m really glad that you’re okay.” He punctuated his statement with a comforting squeeze. “We’re gonna get through this, Kara. It may not be easy, but we’re going to get through this. I promise. And some day, when you and Lena are together, you’re going to look back on all of this pain, and see it as a stepping stone to something so much greater.”

“I don’t know what I ever did to deserve you in my life, but thank you,” Kara said emotionally.

Then she seemed to realize something for the first time. “Wait a minute! Did you just say what I think you said? You think Lena and I are going to get together at some point?”

“Oh come on, Kara! You can’t really be that oblivious!” J’onn teased.

“Please,” Kara scoffed. “I mean, obviously I’m in love with her. But I think we all know that Lena is completely out of my league, and she always will be.”

“Oh, Cuz,” Kal piped up from the shadows. He was suddenly wide awake. “Please tell me you’re joking,” he groaned for dramatic emphasis.

“I’m not joking!” Kara sounded immensely frustrated. “She’s dating James.”

“She’s in love with you, you dork,” Kal said as he threw up his hands. “Did you not read the letter that J’onn gave you?”

“Oh of course I did!” Then she seemed to catch onto the implications of Kal’s statement. “Hold on a second! Did you read it?!” Kara looked genuinely affronted. She blushed a deep shade of scarlet as she recognized his deer in the headlights look all too well. She then promptly picked up the pillow from her bed, and hurled it at his head with all of the force that she could muster. “Get the hell out of my room, Kal! That letter was private!”
“For what it’s worth,” he said as he hovered in the doorway, “What she wrote was really sweet, and heart-felt. Hell, if I wasn’t with Lois, I’d consider-”

“Don’t you dare finish that sentence!” Kara burst out. “I may be weak and infirm at the moment, but make no mistake, Kal – I will kill you if you dare to finish that thought.”

“Fine… Fine!” Kal groaned before he left the room. “I’ll be back later,” he hollered, and Kara laughed.

“Can I just say? You two have a very strange relationship,” J’onn commented a moment later, with a wry shake of his head. Kara just shook her head, and laughed right along with him.

I need somebody now
Someone to help me out
I need somebody now

At first light the next morning, Kara abruptly woke. With a jolt, she sat up, her body transitioning from sleep to wakefulness rapidly in response to some sort of stimuli. A shiver ran up her spine as the blankets fell away from her torso and the cold air met her upper body. Over the course of the night, sweat had collected on her body as her body overcompensated, and became feverish. She ran a hand over her jaw as she yawned. She looked around anxiously, as she was still quite unfamiliar with her surroundings. Finally, after taking in her surroundings, her eyes finally met those of her cousin, who was standing close by. He was dressed in a heavy jacket and nice slacks, with a large bag slung over his shoulder. Kara’s brow furrowed as she took in Kal’s posture and the way he was dressed. His intent was obvious, but Kara wasn’t ready to be left alone just yet. Kara shifted, sitting up a little straighter as she swiveled so that her feet touched the floor and she was facing him.

“You’re leaving?” Kara asked as she hastily rubbed the sleep from her eyes.

“I’m sorry,” Kal said quietly, and almost sheepishly, “I… I don’t want to go, but I can’t afford to wait any longer. If I’m not back in Metropolis by 8 a.m., I’m going to have to answer a lot of questions, and I’ll most likely lose my job.” Kal swallowed. Then, he spoke, “I’m really sorry, Kara.”

“Hey, it’s okay,” Kara breathed almost gently, as she began to stretch out the incredibly stiff and sore muscles of her shoulders and lower back, before ultimately standing.

“Here.” Kara’s reflexes were tested as Kal picked up the bag at his feet and threw it towards Kara. Kara caught the bag Kal tossed towards her, and unzipped it. Her jaw fell open, as she saw all of her most precious possessions contained inside.

“Kal,” Kara couldn’t help but feel a little emotional, as she quickly sifted through the items and knick knacks inside.

“I uh… I know that it’s not everything you might have liked, but space was kind of limited. I just grabbed the things that I thought you’d want with you the most,” Kal explained.

“I can’t believe that you did this for me,” Kara spoke in a state of disbelief.

“Well, believe it,” he said, with a wry smile. “Us Supers have to look out for one another, you know.”

“Oh my Rao!” Kara said excitedly. “You brought my sweatshirt!”

“I did,” he nodded in confirmation. “It’s weird. I sensed it was important to you, but I… I didn’t really
“It’s uh… Okay, this is going to sound kind of embarrassing, but that sweatshirt is what Lena wears whenever she comes over, and wants to change into something more comfortable than her work clothes,” Kara explained with a healthy flush of embarrassment on her cheeks. “She gets cold and she always winds up borrowing something of mine to wear. Namely this sweatshirt.”

“Well,” he chuckled, “Then I’m especially happy I decided to bring it for you.”

“It still smells like her,” Kara couldn’t help but murmur in wonder, as she inhaled Lena’s scent from the fabric and closed her eyes. “Thank you for this.”

“Anytime,” Kal nodded, “I was happy to do it for you, Cousin.” They are interrupted as Kal’s phone started to go off, filling the room with Lois’s ringtone.

“I-” Kal began, but then hesitated.

“You have to go,” Kara reminded him.

“I have to go,” Kal-El confirmed. “Listen, I know these next months won’t be easy on you. You’re probably going to be faced with some of the darkest thoughts that one can face. But I also know that you’re strong enough to overcome it all. You’re the strongest person I know, Kara. So just… don’t forget that okay? Whatever choices you make from here on out are yours and yours alone.”

“The phone in there should be untraceable,” Kara felt herself nod once more, and then swallowed thickly at the implications of what having a phone meant. It meant that she had a lifeline to the outside world. Immediately she thought about calling Alex, Lena, and Winn. However, before she could even dwell on that thought for a single moment, Kal seemed to read her mind, or catch a look in her eyes because he quickly said, “I thought that you might have a couple calls that you’d like to make.” Kal took a breath. “You’re going to want to hear their voice more than anything in the world. But I should warn you, calling them will make things harder on you. Calling them will make it harder on all of you.” Kara’s stomach felt as if it were sinking.

“I…I just want them to know that I’m okay,” Kara suddenly looked visibly upset. “Surely, giving them some closure can’t be a bad thing, can it?”

“I – I don’t know,” Kal told her honestly, while shaking his head. “Look, I know that you really want to talk with her, but it’s risky. And ultimately, the sooner you get used to being alone, the better. You’re going to have to accept that you have to be separated.” Kal felt himself sigh, as he observed the look in Kara’s eyes, and saw the raw pain in them. “No one said this would be easy.”

“Right,” Kara choked out numbly. She could feel herself falling apart inside.

“Kara-”

Help me, it's like the walls are caving in
Sometimes I feel like giving up
But I just can’t
It isn't in my blood

“I need some air,” Kara informed him, with a hint of a bite to her words. Kal stepped back, as he felt Kara pushing him back and out of the way.

He could sense her anger. The way Kara’s shoulders were set as she pushed the door open, was a main giveaway as to her current mindset. Kal could practically feel the anger and frustration rolling
off of Kara, in waves. By the time he turned to look after her, she was already gone. He couldn’t help but wince, as he heard another door slam in the distance.

He couldn’t imagine what it must be like to know that you have no one… to know that you have to sever the ties between you and everyone else in your life. It wasn’t something someone did willingly. Kal can only assume it would be less painful to rot away in prison, or take a bullet to the chest, than to go through what Kara has over the last few weeks. At least if she had been in prison, Kara would have been able to have visitation with those that she loved. Kara would have been able to see Alex and Winn. She might even have been able to visit with Lena. Kal could understand how lost she must feel. Everything in Kara’s entire life had been ripped away from her, and she couldn’t do anything about it. She hadn’t gotten to make any choices for herself. Instead, every choice had been made for her. Alex had decided to bring her back to life, because in her mind, it was the right thing to do. She hadn’t realized that she was forcing Kara to live a life full of regret and torment. She hadn’t realized that instead of making the situation better, she was making it worse.

Kal gave Kara a few minutes to calm down, and then headed for the main doors. His heart squeezed painfully in his chest, as she found Kara kicking trees and screaming out her anger. Kara stopped her tantrum as she felt her presence and sank down near where she stood, sitting down on a tree stump with her head in her hands.

“It isn’t in my blood
It isn’t in my blood
I need somebody now
It isn’t in my blood
I need somebody now
It isn’t in my blood

“You’re angry,” Kal-El breathed as he sat down next to her. “I get that. The truth is, I…I can’t even imagine what it’s like, Kara, but you…you have to get through it somehow.”

“I didn’t want this,” Kara spoke as her face scrunched up. “I didn’t want any of it.”

“I know,” Kal replied, sitting down next to her. He squeezed her shoulder.

Kara swallowed, as her voice broke. “She thought she was helping. But what if all she did was make things worse? What if I’d rather be dead?”

“Hey,” Kal spoke emphatically. “Don’t let those thoughts in. I have to be able to trust you can take care of yourself, Kara. And I can’t do that when you’re saying stuff like that.” Kal took a deep breath. “You have to get through this. You have to make the most of what you have.”

“Why?” Kara asked into the chilly morning air. “What’s the point?”

“The point is,” Kal spoke slowly, “That even though they feel like they are a million miles away right now, you have a Mother, and a Sister who love you, and a whole gang at the DEO who feel the same way.” Kara nodded. “They might not have understood the kind of doubts and feelings that they would expose you to as a result of their actions, but their motives came from the right place. In this case, their heart and their head led them to take a specific course of action, in order to make sure you would be okay. They love you. They couldn’t just let you go without a fight.”

“I think I just feel so angry because they took away my choice. They didn’t let me decide what I wanted, Kal. They just… they just did it,” Kara huffed in frustration.

“Well,” Kal hedged, “In all fairness, you weren’t really in a place to make that decision. You were
on the brink of death. Past the brink of death. It’s not like… it’s not like they could have asked you what you wanted.”

“I know that,” Kara groaned. “I mean, logically I know that. It just… This whole situation is—” Kara trailed off. She was having trouble picking out a word, but it didn’t seem to matter. Clark completely understood the sentiment.

“I’ll be okay,” Kara promised him. “I’m just going to need some time. It… It will get better with time, won’t it?”

“Yeah,” Clark agreed. “You know the saying. I think it’s something like, ‘Time heals all wounds.’”

“Right,” Kara laughed. “Man, I’m going to be so pissed if that’s all a lie.”

“I know it doesn’t feel like it know, but it will,” Clark assured her, “It will be okay, Kara.”

“Just do me a favor? Keep an eye on them for me?” Kara pleaded softly. “Make sure they are sought after.” Kal nodded.

“I will,” Kal promised.

“And Lena?”

“I’ll check on her every day. Hell, I’ll check in with her so often that she gets sick of seeing my ugly mug,” Clark joked. His chest puffed out a little in pride when he got a good boisterous laugh from his cousin.

“You should go,” Kara said as she looked over at him. “And… have a safe trip, alright?”

“Actually,” Kal spoke. “There’s one more thing I wanted to talk to you about before I go,” Kal told her as he dug something out of his bag. “We’ve all been trying to come up with ways to communicate while you’re away. As you know, Mars is millions of miles away from Earth, and so it’s very difficult for messages to get back and forth. NASA uses X-radio waves in order to communicate with their rovers on the Martian surface. So… Brainy and Winn came up with something similar – something that they think will work on radio waves.”

“Okay,” Kara nodded slowly. “I think I’m following. What is this innovative new device they’ve designed.”

“Actually,” Kal laughed, “It’s not so new.” Then. “It’s called a teletypewriter. And it dates back to the early days in communication and technology. But it’s compatible, because it uses Radio waves to communicate with other devices. It’s all very rudimentary, of course, but you almost have to go back to the basics for something like this. Anyway, a teletypewriter would allow you to communicate with us over large distances, so long as you have the appropriate settings. The only catch is… they are pretty uncommon nowadays. They became obsolete decades ago, and so they are almost impossible to find.”

“What are you saying?”

“I’m saying that you’ll have to build it,” Kal told her. “I obtained all of the parts that you’ll need, and had J’onn put them in the trunk. These… These are the instructions, and the settings you’ll need to reach our teletype once it’s all assembled.”

“You’re serious?” Kara seemed flabbergasted.
“Well, it’s not like you’ll have cell reception,” he joked. “We needed to think outside of the box. I’m just happy that we finally found something that will work.”

“I don’t know what to say,” Kara admitted. “Thank you.”

“Of course,” Kal nodded. “And hey, I’ll come visit you soon. It’ll be my first trip abroad. I’ll finally get to say I’ve stood on more than one planet.”

“That sounds good, Kal,” Kara said as she pulled him into a crushing embrace.

“I love you,” he told her.

“I love you, too,” Kara told him. “Have a safe trip.”

“You too,” Kal bid her. “Try not to let J’onn drive you up a wall.”

“He’s not so bad,” Kara laughed, her voice teasing.

“No, he’s really not,” Kal laughed back. “Once we got past the whole Kryptonite thing, he turned out to be a pretty cool guy. And, I mean, he cares about you, so he must not be all that bad.”

“You’re such a dork,” Kara tells him.

“Hey! I’ll have you know that I’ve never tried to hide it,” Kal shot back. “And you’re an even bigger dork than I am, Kara Zor-El.”

That’s it for now. Take a second to save a few words, if you have time to spare. Otherwise, thanks for reading! :)

End Notes

There will be more soon! I’m trying to juggle 50 things at once, but I plan on continuing with all my stories. Please just be patient with me. And, as always, thank you to all of you for the love and support! It truly means the world to me!

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