After a string of terrible candidates, a newly-single Cat Grant is desperate to find a new nanny for her son. In steps Kara Danvers, fresh out of college and new to National City - and exactly who Cat and Carter need to brighten up the their lives. AKA the nanny AU I've been promising to write for absolutely ages and actually eventually did!

So, it's been a while, but I am (finally) back!

I've written waaaay ahead with this one but haven't quite finished it yet, and I'm hoping I'll be able to update weekly but we'll see how it goes.

A couple of things to set the scene - I've fiddled with ages a bit. Kara is twenty-three, Cat is early forties, and Carter is three. Kara has no powers in this universe, but things with Cat are mostly the same.

This story has been a real labour of love for me - it has taken nearly two and a half years to write, so it has a special place in my heart, and I hope you guys enjoy it, too. Please let me know what you think!
Chapter 1

Picture you’re the queen of everything
Far as the eye can see
Under your command
I will be your guardian when all is crumbling
Steady your hand

Kara’s phone rings just as she’s shoving the last bite of her breakfast bearclaw into her mouth.

Scrambling for the buzzing device and cursing when she gets powdered sugar all over the screen, she frowns when she sees the unknown number flashing across the screen. She shrugs and presses the green button anyway.

“Hello?”

“Hi, is that Kara? Kara Danvers?” The voice is unfamiliar, and Kara wonders if this was just another random woman trying to sell her car insurance, hovers her thumb over the end call.

“Yep, speaking.”

“I’m calling about a nanny job?” Kara’s breath catches – she’d only been in National City for two weeks, and hadn’t expected any calls about a job anytime soon. “You sent in your resume? My boss would very much like to talk to you about filling the position.”

“Seriously?” It sounds too good to be true – she’s living in her dream city just two streets over from her sister, and she’s already being offered a job she’s reasonably sure that she won’t hate?

Maybe she would’ve tried to graduate from college earlier if she’d known that this was what was waiting for her on the other side.

“Seriously,” Kara could hear the smile in the voice on the other end of the line. “Would you be willing to meet for an interview tomorrow morning? Say, 10:15?”

“Absolutely,” Kara quickly agrees. “What’s the address?”

“CatCo Plaza, fortieth floor.”

“I’m sorry,” Kara says, stomach doing a funny little flip. “CatCo plaza, as in the CatCo Plaza? As in Cat -”

“Grant?” The woman fills in. “You did send in your resume for this job, right?”

“I… yeah. I just… didn’t think I’d ever hear back.”

“Well, you are,” comes the cheerful reply. “Just let them know at the front desk what you’re there for, and if there’s any problems, feel free to call me back on this number.”

“O-okay.”

“See you tomorrow!” The line clicks, and Kara drops the phone from her ear and then stares at it for
one long moment, wondering if that was all just a dream.

Because surely, surely, there was no way that Cat Grant, queen of all media and Kara’s long-time crush, would have read her resume, out of the countless others she must have to go through, and decided that she was the one for the job.

Her.

Kara Danvers.

She’d sent her resume in as almost a joke, because she’d thought there was no chance in hell that she’d get it – Cat Grant could probably hire the most expensive, experienced nanny in the city, so why is she interested in her?

Kara can barely believe it.

It’s only then that it really dawns on her that tomorrow she’s going to be meeting the woman herself – to potentially be working for the woman herself, the woman that had practically been her idol whilst she’d been growing up, the woman that had pretty much singlehandedly made Kara realise she was gay when she was fourteen – and oh, god, she’s going to throw up.

She wonders briefly if she should do some research before her interview – her laptop sits on the kitchen counter, and Kara reaches for it with trembling fingers, opens the lid and types Cat’s name into the searchbar.

Almost every article that pops up are about her messy divorce to her now-ex-husband, and Kara rolls her eyes – Cat is queen of a media empire, and the only thing the news can focus on is her relationship with a man?

Her search is interrupted by her front door opening a moment later, and Kara grins as she turns to see her sister Alex and her girlfriend Maggie stride into the apartment, their hands clasped and wearing matching smiles.

“You still eat pastries for breakfast?” Maggie asks as she rounds Kara’s kitchen table, looking in disbelief down at the now-empty box of donuts. “And still manage to be that skinny?” Maggie shakes her head. “That is so not fair.”

“I’m still waiting for it to catch up with her in a few years,” Alex mutters, bumping her hip against Kara’s. “One day she’ll wake up huge.”

“I will not,” Kara rolls her eyes, but there’s an easy smile on her mouth, one that seeing the two of them together always brings out – Alex had spent so many years guarded and alone, but Maggie had lit up Alex’s life and Kara couldn’t be happier for them.

“Will so,” Alex argues, frowning a little as she glances at Kara’s computer screen. “Why are you stalking Cat Grant?” She asks, and Kara flushes red at being caught on one of the divorce articles. “Is it 2007?”

“Oh, shut up,” Kara mutters, quickly exiting the page and closing the lid.

“You saw she’s getting a divorce and wondered if you have a shot with her now?”

“No!” Kara’s cheeks burn, and when she glances up she sees Maggie watching the two of them bicker with an amused smile. “If you must know, I just got a call about a job – remember how I sent out those resumes about nanny jobs last week?” Alex nods, pulling out the chair beside Kara’s and
sitting on it backwards, chin propped in her hand. “Well I just got a call back, from a woman who’s presumably Cat’s assistant. I have an interview with her tomorrow.”

“No way.” Alex looks stunned, and Kara nods. “You have a job interview with the woman you’ve had a crush on since you were fourteen?” Alex looks positively gleeful. “You couldn’t even write this, oh my god. You’re going, right?”

“Duh.”

“There is no way you can keep your cool in an interview with her.” Alex’s lips curve into a wicked smirk. “Not without stammering and blushing every five seconds.”

“I could.” Alex raises an eyebrow, and Kara huffs before reaching for the coffee she’d long forgotten about – it was cooling fast, and she made a face as she set the mug down.

“That’s crazy, though. You used to watch her show every day.” Alex turns back to Maggie. “And I do mean every day. All I’d hear was ‘did you hear what Cat said yesterday?’ ‘Cat’s so clever’ ‘Cat looked so good to - ’”

“Alex!” Kara, mortified, slaps a hand over her sister’s mouth to get her to shut up. “Stop embarrassing me in-front of your girlfriend.”

“But that’s no fun,” Alex pouts when Kara let her go. “Half the fun in me having a girlfriend is that now I get someone to tease you with.”

“I don’t know, Danvers,” Maggie’s eyes sparkle as she eyes the two of them, affection written across her face – Kara was endlessly grateful that she and Alex had met not just for Alex, but also for her, because she felt like she’d gained another older sister, had another addition to her found family. “I’m with Kara on this one. Cat Grant’s hot.”

Alex looks scandalised, and Kara snorts at the look on her sister’s face, sliding out of her stool to brew a fresh pot of coffee in the machine she’d commandeered from Alex along with almost this entire apartment.

Another advantage of her sister having a girlfriend?

Alex had let Kara move into her old place when she and Maggie had decided to move in together. They’d waited until Kara was finishing college to break the news, knowing that she wanted to move to National City to be closer to her sister, and Kara was overjoyed that she didn’t have to spend months searching for a place before making the move, meaning she just got to spend even more time around two of her favourite people.

“You think Cat’s hot?” Alex asks, and Kara wondered if she’d inadvertently gotten Maggie into trouble when she sees the wounded look on Alex’s face.

“Well not as hot as you, obviously,” Maggie replies, crossing around to the other side of the table and dropping a kiss on Alex’s cheek. “But I do have eyes. And she was my crush growing up too, Kara,” Maggie directs that at her, arms draped around Alex’s shoulders. “I get it.”

“I can’t believe you’re siding with Kara instead of teasing her mercilessly about this.”

“Hey, I’m still kinda new to the family.” Alex gets a dopey smile on her face at that term, and Kara would roll her eyes at how completely in love she is if she didn’t find it so adorable. “I gotta keep your little sister on my side.”
“Wanna know who Alex’s crush was when we were growing up?” Kara decides that it was only fair for her to get her own back, grinning as Alex’s eyes widened in horror. “Cause that’s a real doozy.”

“Kara, don’t you dare - ”

“I also have six years’ worth of embarrassing childhood stories saved up, Maggie, if you’d like to hear those, too. Oh!” Her eyes light up as she glances at the stack of boxes she’d brought with her and had yet to unpack, littered around the apartment. “And I have an album full of photos over there.”

“Now that I would like to see,” Maggie tells her, and Kara grins as she grabs three mugs for the coffee, both she and Maggie laughing as Alex’s forehead thumps down onto the wooden table as she groans.

//

Cat Grant strides with purpose at the front of the meeting room, gesturing with one hand as she paces, because she is never still, rattling off figures and numbers to the room of bored-looking board members that fill the long table in-front of her.

Board meetings were her least favourite time of the month.

Cat’s other hand cradles the body of a three year old, attached to her hip, and she rocks him as she walks, letting him hide his face in her shoulder.

“Is there a problem, Dirk?” Cat asks, pausing her pacing, and her speech, when she notices that her least favourite person in the room eyeing her son with no small level of disdain.

She asks the question sweetly enough, but the underlying poison in her voice is noticeable to every single person in the room.

“I just don’t know if it’s…” He trails off, searching for the right word as he continues to turn his nose up at Carter, and the rest of the room draws in a collective breath as they wait for what he’ll say next – Cat is well-known for her acerbic tongue, after all. “Appropriate,” he settles on, eventually, and Cat’s eyes flash dangerously.

She has been told, more times than she can count, that it wasn’t possible to be a successful mother whilst running a company.

She had let one son slip through her fingers, be whisked away by his father because Cat hadn’t been in any kind of position to look after him the way she should (not without sacrificing a promising career, and sometimes, in her darkest moments, Cat wondered if she had made the right decision in giving Adam up), but the moment that Carter had been placed in her arms, wrapped in blankets and squalling, Cat had vowed that she wouldn’t make the same mistake again.

Carter is a beautiful, perfect thing in a world filled with so much bitterness and hate (both of which have been directed Cat’s way almost since the moment she was born, thanks to a mother who would never think her good enough), and Cat loves him with her heart and soul.

Every time she looks at him, every time she sees him smile or hears him laugh, Cat just becomes more determined; she could have it all, would have it all, and not a damn thing is going to stand in her way.

“And why’s that, hm?” Cat asks, shifting Carter a little in her arms – he’s small for his age but he’s still heavy, and she can feel the burn in her biceps from holding him for so long, her pilates classes
finally paying off. “He’s been perfectly well-behaved, quiet as a mouse, and hasn’t offered me any useless suggestions, which is more than I can say for several of the people in this room.” She pauses in-front of Dirk, and offers him her best razor-sharp smile. “Including you.”

Dirk’s lip curls into a snarl, and Cat knows that it’s a bad idea to rile him up, but god, she just can’t help it.

He is the walking personification of white male privilege, after all. He’s made in the image of every boss that Cat has ever had, every man that has risen to success in the field that she has chosen as her own – he represents everything that Cat has had to overcome to get to where she is today.

CEO of her own company.

It is written in white letters on the glass door of her office, and she smiles each and every time she reads it.

She’s sure it will never get old.

She is also one hundred percent sure that no-one has ever asked Dirk, feigning sympathy, how he manages to balance work and parenthood, whereas Cat has been asked that question almost once a day since Carter had been born.

“Now.” Cat turns away and restarts her pacing as Carter reaches up a chubby hand to play with a strand of her hair, “as I was saying…”

Cat continues her meeting as though Dirk had never spoken, delivering a flawless speech that would make a president proud, all the while balancing her son at her side.

It goes perfectly, but Cat still lets out a heavy sigh once everyone has departed and she’s safely back in her office, dropping down onto one of her two pristine white leather couches and settling Carter carefully down on the floor in-front of her.

She had never wanted to make a habit of having Carter at the office – it’s difficult enough for her to get things done without either her or her employees being distracted by the adorable toddler – but there had been no avoiding it.

Carter is supposed to spend his days with his nanny – one carefully selected and approved by Cat – which had been fine for his first two and a half years, as Cat had been pointed towards a woman named Ella by a close friend.

Ella had been wonderful, a gift, and Cat had never once worried for Carter’s safety whenever he had been with her.

But then Ella’s mother, on the other side of the country, had fallen ill, and Cat’s knight in shining armour, always prepared to drop everything when Cat needed her unexpectedly, due to a meeting or an awards show or a work-related emergency cropping up without warning, had had to leave.

In the five months since, Carter has had a revolving door of nannies, and Cat is beginning to grow frustrated.

His latest, a woman that Cat had thought promising, had been fired four days ago when Cat had come from work early to find Carter (thankfully) in bed, and the nanny and her boyfriend half-naked on Cat’s couch.

Cat had thrown the both of them out, pant-less, and immediately ordered the couch to be dry-
cleaned.

She was left having to find yet another nanny, a suitable one this time, on incredibly short notice, because she doesn’t want Carter to spend his days stuck in a glass cage.

There’s been an advertisement for the job online since that night, and there’s a stack of resumes from interested parties on Cat’s desk, but she’s yet to have the chance to look through them all.

“Ms Grant?” There’s a light knock on her open office door, and Cat glances up to find her assistant, Eve, hovering in the doorway.

Cat isn’t an easy boss, she knows that, and she’d used to fire assistants quicker than she’s been firing nannies as of late, but Eve has so far proven herself to be up the challenge, easily surpassing Cat’s expectations.

“Yes?”

“Two things – first of all, I glanced through those resumes,” just because Cat hadn’t had the time didn’t mean that she hadn’t delegated the task to someone else, “and I’ve set up interviews with the most promising four tomorrow morning.”

“Thank you, Eve.” Cat is flooded with gratitude, because no matter how difficult Cat is, Eve is always eager to please.

“And second of all – I’m really sorry,” there’s an apologetic look in Eve’s eyes, and Cat can tell that whatever comes next, Cat isn’t going to like it. “But I have Snapper Carr on the phone, and he’s asking to speak to you immediately.”

Cat groans, knowing that Snapper wouldn’t be calling her unless there was an emergency – she’d left the running of her beloved Tribune to him after she’d moved onto pastures anew because she knew he could handle himself and the publication without too much interference on her part.

“Did he say what the problem was?”

“Something about the printing press?” Cat would’ve sworn if her son hadn’t been sat less than a foot away from her.

“Alright, patch him through.”

“Do you want me to keep an eye on the little one?” Eve asks before she leaves, and Cat would have hugged her, if she didn’t have a strict no-touching policy in the workplace.

“Would you mind?”

“Not at all.” Eve scoops Carter into her arms before taking him back to her desk just outside of Cat’s office while Cat answered the phone.

It’s an issue that’s going to take her the better part of the day to resolve, and as Cat listens to Snapper’s tense voice in her ear, she watches Carter giggling at something Eve is doing through the glass, and knows she can’t force her assistant to be her babysitter for the rest of the afternoon.

Resigned, she reluctantly dials a different number once Snapper has hung up, tapping her foot against the floor as she waits impatiently for her useless ex-husband to pick up the phone on the other end of the line.
“Cat. What an unpleasant surprise.” Cat rolls her eyes at the greeting, used to the acidity – their relationship hadn’t exactly ended amicably, after Cat had walked in on him fucking his secretary, and they’ve been trading barbs ever since. “What do you want?”

“Can you watch our son this afternoon?” Carter had been more mistake than planned – Cat is fairly certain one of the main reasons Chris had wanted to marry her had been because she didn’t want kids, and when she’d found out she was pregnant Chris hadn’t exactly been thrilled by the news.

That isn’t to say that he doesn’t make an effort – he’s an asshole, but he at least tries to be a father to Carter.

He isn’t necessarily a good one, but Cat is still a little amazed that he hadn’t just bolted as soon as Carter was born and never looked back.

“That’s short notice even for you, Cat. And this is the second time this week.”

“Oh, because god forbid I ask you to spend time with your son,” Cat snaps, her eyes flashing – she isn’t in the mood to deal with him today, and she knows it shows in her voice. “Can you do it or not?”

“Yeah,” he sighs, after a moment’s deliberation. “I’ll take him. But I can’t keep doing this, Cat.”

“I have a stack of resumes for nannies on my desk, I’ll look through them as soon as I get the chance.”

“You know, if you’d let me help you to look - ” Cat cuts him off with a scoff, because she knows that if she let him within an inch of those resumes, he’d choose the first girl under twenty-five.

“What, so you can start screwing the nanny now that Pamela resigned?”

“She didn’t resign,” Chris’ voice turns cold. “You forced her out.”

“The maybe you shouldn’t have bent her over the kitchen table,” Cat hisses, hating that he’s still so able to get under her skin.

“I’m not doing this again,” Chris sighs again, sounding weary. “I’ll have Nick swing by and pick him up within the hour. I can work from home, if you’d rather he was back at your apartment.”

The custody arrangement had been easy to arrange – Carter was to live with her, and have the occasional weekend with his father. Thus far, he had yet to spend any time with Chris outside of the penthouse apartment they’d used to share, and that suited everyone just fine.

“Fine. I don’t know what time I’ll be home.”

“I can hang around until you get back.”

“Thank you.” She offers it begrudgingly, but Chris seems placated by it all the same.

“I mean it though, Cat. This is the last time.” He hangs up without giving her the chance to give a comeback, and Cat sighs as she drops her phone back onto the hook.

The day stretches on in-front of her, seemingly endless, and Cat goes to retrieve her son from Eve, knowing a quick cuddle with him, the smell of his baby shampoo in his gorgeous curls, will be soothing to the soul.

//
Cat’s mood, already soured by having to send Carter off with his father instead of having him close by as a calming influence, plummets steadily throughout the day.

Everything that could possibly go wrong does, and Cat has to resort to sending Chris a text asking him if he could stay a few extra hours, because she’s doubtful she’s escaping her office any time before seven.

At exactly five minutes past seven, Cat steps onto the sidewalk outside her office block, her car already idling by the curb.

She slips into the back seat and sets her bag down beside her, reaching for that pesky stack of resumes she’d taken home with her, determined to make a start on riffling through them that night, not wanting to ask Chris to watch Carter again any time soon.

Eve has already set up appointments with some of them, but Cat still wants to have a look herself. She doesn’t have the time to be thorough, but it’s simple for Cat, who has been involved in hiring so many employees at the Trib and then CatCo in recent years, to sort them into two piles – keep and discard – with just a single glance.

Her keep pile consists of just three pieces of paper – which isn’t a great start, considering she’s meeting four people tomorrow.

She doesn’t glance at the personal information or the education of any of them, just quickly scans the experience section and the references whilst they’re were stopped at a red light a few streets away from her apartment, and puts the most promising of the three on the top for her to look at in more detail at a later date, perhaps tomorrow if none of them went well.

She places the papers back into her bag as the car pulls to a stop, thanking her driver as he opens her door.

Cat steps out of the car and glances up to find the sky overhead clear, not a cloud in sight as the sun begins its descent on the horizon, and Cat knows that in a few hours the stars would twinkle brightly up above.

It’s the perfect night for stargazing, one of Carter’s favourite activities, and Cat decides that she’ll take him out onto her balcony after dinner, can’t wait to see that look he gets on his face whenever he looks up at the sky, wide-eyed and amazed, like he’s seeing it for the very first time.

It’s the kind of childish innocence that makes Cat fall in love with him all over again, because she is so cynical and jaded, but Carter makes her want to be something more, something better.

She taps her foot as she rides the elevator up to the penthouse suite, impatient to be home and to have Carter wrapped up in her arms once more, and she lets out a happy sigh when the doors fly open and she can make the short journey down the hall to her front door.

Before she slips her key into the lock, Cat pauses, taking a deep breath.

It’s something of a routine, for her, a way to let go of the cool, calm and some would say cold-hearted woman who has built up a media empire, the persona that she’d sunk into the second that Carter had left her that morning, and to allow herself to become the mother that Carter needed her to be.

It is also a way to prepare herself for the sight of the man she’d once stood opposite at an altar and agreed to spend a lifetime with, the man that she can now only look at with contempt.
As she unlocks the door and pushes it open, Cat tells herself that she doesn’t need Chris, or any spouse – she has her company, and she has her son, and that would be enough for her.

Cat steps through the door and is ambushed by her beautiful boy a moment later, barely able to slip out of her coat before he reaches her, bounding down the hall with a wide smile on his face and his favourite action figure clutched in one hand.

“Momma!”

“Hi, sweetie!” she says as she sweeps him up into a hug and kisses the top of his head, settles him on her hip as she kicks off her shoes and pads further into her home. “Where you a good boy for your father?”

“He was perfect,” Chris’ voice calls from the living room, and Cat steps inside to find him on the couch, a football game playing on the TV. As she approaches, he climbs to his feet, steps towards her and ruffles Carter's hair. “Weren’t you, buddy?”

There’s a soft look in his eye as he glances down at their son. He might not have wanted Carter but he does try with him, one of the rare things about him that Cat is grateful for, and it’s moments like this when Cat can see the man she’d fallen in love with five years ago – but then he glances up at her, and his expression changes, hardens, becomes the man that Cat knows today.

The one that can’t stand her.

“Thank you for today,” she tells him, hoping he can see how much she means it.

“No problem,” he says, already reaching for his coat. “But seriously, Cat – this is the last time.”

“I know.” She vows that it will be, that she’ll find a solution for this sooner rather than later, one that works for them both. “You can stay for dinner, if you want.” It’s a half-hearted offer, because she knows he won’t accept (doesn’t want him to accept), but she asks anyway for the sake of her son, a little worried what their fractured relationship will do to him.

“I already ate,” he tells her, and Cat feels a flutter of relief. “And I should really get going.”

She doesn’t want to ask why, doesn’t want to know if he’s running off to meet a woman – she might not love him anymore but she still doesn’t want to think about him with anyone else.

Their marriage had been far from perfect, but it still stung to see him with another woman, to know that she hadn’t been enough for him.

He gives Carter a kiss before he leaves, and the apartment feels too quiet, too empty, once he’s gone.

Cat plays with her son until the sky darkens, and then she takes him outside to look up at the stars, completely in love with the look of pure joy on his face. Afterwards, she puts him to bed, and then she eats alone at her kitchen counter, with the TV on too loud, trying to feel less alone.
Chapter 2

I wrote this so long ago that it was before the whole Sanvers Babygate thing, so, as I have taken to doing with almost everything post season one, just.. ignore that part of canon.

Thank you so much for all the love for this story, hope you enjoy part two :)

The next morning, Kara pauses on the sidewalk to glance up at the impressively tall high-rise building at CatCo Plaza, the logo clearly visible on the side, and feels a flutter of trepidation in her stomach. She swallows, hard, suddenly nervous, wracked with nerves over whether she’s actually cut out for this job, after all.

How can someone like her possibly be able to impress a woman like Cat Grant? A woman who built a company like this, who probably lived in a penthouse apartment where a single day’s rent cost more than an entire year of Kara’s?

She already feels like a fish out of water, and she hasn’t even set foot inside the building yet.

“Wow.” Alex, who had agreed to walk with her so she didn’t get lost on the streets of the city that she was still learning to navigate, comes to a stop beside her and lets out a low whistle as she follows Kara’s line of sight. “I know you can see this building from nearly anywhere in this city, but it’s even more impressive up close.” Kara has to agree. “Are you sure you wanna work for the woman who owns it?”

“Pretty sure,” Kara nods, trying to convince herself as much as Alex. “I can do this, right?”

“Yeah you can.” Alex bumps her shoulder into Kara’s. “You’ve got this.”

“You think?”

“For sure. Just, you know, don’t think about how hot you think she is.”

“So not helping my nerves,” Kara groans, and Alex grins.

“Right. Sorry.” Alex wraps an arm around Kara’s shoulders and pulls Kara into a tight hug. “But seriously, you’ll be fine. She’d be crazy not to hire you, you’re great with kids.” That is true – she’d earned the money for a car from babysitting jobs in high school, and it had been her main source of income in college, too. “I don’t know how.” Alex’s nose scrunches up in distaste, and Kara grins, because she and Alex have very different opinions when it comes to spending a significant amount of time around children.

“Kids are great.”

“Kids are messy,” Alex corrects, and Kara shakes her head. “They’re messy and they scream and I just,” Alex shudders, “I don’t know how you do it.”

“You work as a CSI,” Kara points out, rounding on her sister with disbelief. “Your job literally
involves dead bodies and analysing bodily fluids.”

“Whilst wearing protective clothing,” Alex stresses, and Kara rolls her eyes. “And speaking of work,” Alex glances at her watch, “I should probably be heading back to the lab soon. You gonna be okay here?”

“I’ll be fine,” Kara assures her, though her nerves come back full force as she comes closer to approaching the door of the building.

“You wanna meet for lunch? You can tell me how the interview goes.”

“Yeah, sounds good,” Kara agrees, because at least then she has something to look forward to if this morning is a disaster.

“Place down the street from the station?” It’s Alex’s regular haunt, being so close to her work, and Kara’s already eaten there a handful of times.

“Sure. Half twelve, right?”

“Right.” Alex pulls Kara into a hug, squeezes her tightly and presses a kiss to her cheek. “Good luck.”

“Thank you.” Kara squeezes her back just as hard. “I’ll see you later.” She watches Alex make her way back to the car she’d parked a little further down the street, waving one last time as Alex slips into the driver’s seat.

She takes that as her cue to move, turning to face Cat’s building and taking a deep breath. She forces herself to take a step, approaching the fancy glass revolving door and stepping inside, feeling immediately out of place in the cavernous lobby within.

It’s bustling with activity, and Kara weaves her way through a throng of harried office workers to approach the front desk. She almost expects the receptionist behind it to take one look at her, in her bright yellow sundress, and tell her that she must be in the wrong place, but instead he just smiles pleasantly as Kara rests her hands on the top of desk, barely refraining from bouncing on the balls of her feet.

“Can I help you?”

“I have a job interview with Cat Grant?”

“Ah.” Kara sees what looks like pity flash across his face and hopes she’s mistaken. “The nanny job?” She nods. “Well, hopefully you do better than the girl who went in before you, because she came back down here crying.” Well that doesn’t do anything to settle her nerves. “Elevators are there,” he indicates the left of the lobby with a grand sweep of his arm. “Press the button for the fortieth floor, and once you’re there, turn left and you’ll be in the bullpen. Cat’s office is the big glass fishbowl – you can’t miss it. Good luck.”

He smiles at her, and Kara almost wants to stay and ask for more details about the crying woman but decides that maybe it’s better if she doesn’t know.

She joins an elevator full of people, knots her hands together in-front of her and tries not to tap her foot impatiently as the floors tick by agonisingly slowly, people trickling out at each one. When they get to floor thirty-eight, only she and one other person remain.

She checks her watch – only five past ten – and when she glances up she sees the other guy looking
her way.

“Late for something?” He asks, friendly smile on his face.

“Early, actually.”

“I haven’t seen you around here before – are you new?”

“I have an interview. With Miss Grant.”

“You’re interviewing for the nanny job?” He looks at her with disbelief, and Kara wonders if she should be offended – it must show on her face, because she rushes to explain. “N-not that I don’t think you’d be good for the job, I’m sure you’d be awesome it’s just… Cat’s just… you just look so nice and I think she’s going to chew you up and spit you out.”

“Well, that’s reassuring.”

“Sorry,” he apologises, and he looks like he means it. “For what it’s worth, I hope I’m wrong.” The elevator doors ding open then, and Kara hopes so, too. “I’m Winn, by the way,” he continues, as they both step out onto the fortieth floor. “I work in IT. Cat’s office is this way.” She follows him around a corner, breath catching at the sight of the bustling bullpen beyond.

In another life, she could see herself working in a place like this, following in her cousin’s footsteps. But she’d chosen a different path.

It’s then that Kara sees her – Cat, in all her glory, settled behind her desk. She’s wearing a dress that’s a mix of different shades of blue, statement necklace hanging around her neck, hair as perfect as it always is, and oh, she looks even more gorgeous in person than anyone has any right to be.

She’s stunning, and Kara’s knees feel a little weak, nervous butterflies erupting in her stomach.

“Are you alright?” Winn asks her, a hesitant hand touching her elbow. “You look a little faint.”

“I’m okay.” She manages a weak smile. “It’s just a lot. Being here. I’ve admired Cat for a long time.”

“Well, that feeling might fade once you meet her,” Winn mutters, and Kara wonders if she’s supposed to hear it. “But I’m sure you’ll - “

“Where is my ten fifteen?” Cat yells from her office, voice echoing around the bullpen, and Kara’s mouth feels dry, because Cat sounds annoyed, *looks* even more so, and apparently being ten minutes early is late in Cat Grant’s book.

Maybe this wasn’t such a good idea, after all.

She almost turns around and bolts, but steels herself at the last minute, straightens her spine and puts her best foot forward.

//

“Where is my ten fifteen?” Cat asks again, well aware that she’s asking early, and entirely convinced that her next appointment wouldn’t be there, and she’d be able to offer them a withering smile when they *did* turn up and berate them because ‘early was on time, and on time was late’.
Her previous three interviews had all been disasters, and Cat is in a sour mood, almost feels sorry for the unlucky soul that’s last on her list for the morning. She’s starting to feel hopeless, wonders if she’s going to just have to give up her search and keep on bringing Carter to work with her. She supposes that at least it’s not too many years before he’ll be starting school – she could probably make it work, if she had to.

She just doesn’t want to.

She doesn’t want to spend another second interviewing a terrible candidate, either (she’s seriously considering asking Eve what the hell she’d been thinking, selecting these goons), but realises she’s going to be disappointed when a moment later, a blonde steps through the door.

“Miss Grant?” She sounds so chipper, is all bright smiles and has a goodamn spring in her step, barely looks old enough to be out of school herself.

Cat takes one glance at her and promptly turns her chair around. It’s childish, she knows, but she’s just so tired and there’s no way in hell this woman is the right one for her.

She waxes on about millennials – a speech that she’s already used once before today, and that candidate had soon burst into tears and fled the room.

She expects the same from this one – she’s so bright and sunny and Cat thinks it’ll take no effort at all to dash her hopes and her dreams, and then she can go about the rest of her day.

When she turns back around, speech complete, she’s almost impressed to see the girl still standing there, although she doesn’t look quite so chipper anymore.

Cat supposes she may as well give the girl a chance, seeing as she’s here.

And she was early.

“So, my ten fifteen,” she drawls, using her most bored-looking expression, “tell me why you’re special.”

“I-I’m not.” At that, Cat pauses, a spark of interest, of hope, igniting in her chest, because that was a new one, and maybe this girl would surprise her. She takes in the other woman fully, for the first time, tries to look past the hideous cardigan, glances up into brilliant blue eyes and tries not to think that she’s beautiful, because that would be a dangerous path to embark upon. “There’s nothing special about me, I am completely, one hundred percent normal.”

Oh.

She’s a rambler.

Cat’s hope starts to wither and die.

“Look…?” She trails off, looks at the girl expectantly.

“Kara?” Her answer is like a question, and Cat barely refrains from rolling her eyes. The girl looks terrified of her, which is a trait she would normally relish in a potential employee, but not in someone who’s going to be spending a lot of time around her son – she needs someone confident enough to communicate with her, not someone who’ll hide.

“Look, Kiera,” Cat pauses, waits to see if she’ll react to the wrong name – it’s a tactic she uses sometimes, a way to keep her employees at arm’s length, sometimes to remind them that they’re
expendable, easily replaceable – and tries not to be disappointed when Kara doesn’t speak up. “Why are you here today? Why do you want this job?”

“Well, I’m a hard-worker, and I’m reliable, and - ”

“That’s all very well,” Cat cuts her off, folds her arms across her chest and leans back in her chair, eyes never leaving Kara’s face, impressed when she doesn’t look away. “But I didn’t ask for your resume. I already have that. Why are you here?”

“I just… I just want to be useful, Miss Grant.” She fiddles again with her glasses, a faint tremble in her fingers. “And I think I could be useful to you. I would like to be useful to you. I’m here because I’m new to town, and I saw the job advertised, and I thought it’d be a worthwhile way to spend my time while I save up for my master’s degree. I think I can do this job, and do it well, if you’d only take a chance on me.” She’s sincere enough that Cat’s almost convinced, but she doesn’t want to make it too easy for her.

“Kiera - ”

“It’s Kara, actually, Ms Grant.” The interruption is timid, but it’s there, and Cat gives the girl an appraising look – maybe she does have a backbone, after all. “Oh, my gosh,” Kara quails under Cat’s scrutiny, mistaking it for annoyance, “that was so rude, I’m so sorry - ” Cat silences the rambling she suspects is going to follow by simply raising her hand, lips pursing as she looks at her with renewed interest.

“I… may have underestimated you,” Cat admits, because no-one interrupts her, stands up to her, ever, and it’s well, it’s kind of exhilarating, if she’s being honest with herself. “Kara.” Kara practically lights up with a Christmas tree at that, and Cat almost rolls her eyes. “Look, I’m not going to lie to you. You should know that I expect complete and under devotion to this job – to my son. I’m a busy woman, I work a lot of long, sometimes unpredictable hours and I expect you to do the same. I am also not an easy woman to work with, as you may have deduced from this interview.” Kara’s lips twitch. “You should think carefully about the kind of commitment I’m expecting, before we go any further.”

“I have thought about it,” Kara tells her, voice soft and so incredibly earnest. “I knew who you were before I came in here, Ms Grant – I know what you do, that you’re busy, although I can’t really imagine how much time running a company like this truly takes. But I’m willing to put in the work, if you’d give me a chance.”

“Even if it meant having little time for a life of your own?” Cat inquires. “You’re young – how young, exactly?” She has to ask, because she definitely doesn’t look old enough to have graduated from college.

“Twenty-three, Ms Grant. I graduated a few months ago, but I took a year out to do some charity work in Africa.” Of course she did – the girl was practically a walking girl scout. “And like I said, I’m new to town. I don’t have much of a life to speak of, at the minute. I want this job, Ms Grant.”

“And do you have much in the way of experience?”

“I’ve never been a full-time nanny,” Kara admits. “But I… growing up I spent some time in the foster system.” Kara looks away, and Cat suspects that it marks a dark period in her life. “A lot of my time there was spent looking after younger children, keeping them safe and out of trouble. That’s where the bulk of my experience comes from, but I also had a lot of babysitting jobs in high school and college.”
“Mm.” Cat pretends to think about it, but she’s already made her decision. “Very well. I’m going to give you a chance, Kara. You only get one,” she warns, and the girl’s expression, which had been about to glow, dampens somewhat. “So use it wisely.”

“I won’t let you down, Ms Grant,” she gushes, and Cat holds up a hand.

“Let’s not get carried away,” she says, and reaches for a piece of paper, scrawls her address on it with a nearby pen. “You need to meet my son first.” Eve had taken him while Cat was interviewing. “I’d prefer to do that at home, in a more familiar environment for him, so how would you feel about coming over for dinner tonight? It’ll also give me a chance to get to know you better, to see if we’ll be able to make a good team.”

“I-I’d love to.”

“This is my address,” Cat brandishes the paper at her. “I’ll notify the front desk that you’re coming, and they’ll let you up. Be there at 7 sharp.”

“Yes, Ms Grant.”

“And Kara?” Cat calls, just before she slips through her office door. “Let me be clear – if my son takes a disliking to you, you’re out, understood?”

“Yes, Ms Grant.” Kara nods meekly before practically sprinting from the room, and Cat watches her go, lips pursed, unsure what to make of her.

She’s certainly eager to please, a quality that Cat always appreciates in her new hires, and she’s shown that she’s not afraid to stand up for herself, when push comes to shove, which is promising.

But she’s also bubbly and so very, very young, and Cat honestly wouldn’t be surprised if she buckles under the pressure a few days in.

Cat finds herself hoping that that isn’t the case – there’s something about the girl, the way that she’d surprised Cat, that makes Cat want to see her succeed.

It doesn’t hurt that she’s nice to look at, too. Cat isn’t blind, and Kara could honestly be a swimsuit model if she stopped hiding behind those godawful cardigans.

Cat shakes her head, shakes those kinds of thoughts away – it’s not appropriate for her to think of Kara like that, not when she’s potentially about to hire her, and not to mention the fact that Cat’s almost twice her age.

Before Cat goes to retrieve her son from her assistant, she picks up her bag from beside her desk, wanting to check on something, a sneaking suspicion that’s been there in the back of her mind as she’d learned more about her 10:15.

She riffles through her bag until she found the stack of resumes she’d so carefully ordered the night before, and sets them down on her desk. The one that had been her first choice sits on-top, and Cat reaches for a pair of her glasses, slips them on, and purses her lips thoughtfully when she sees the name printed across the top.

Kara Danvers.

She chuckles to herself, and she’d already had a good feeling about Kara but now it only intensifies, and she thinks that Kara Danvers might just be exactly the right person for the job.
“So,” Alex asks, practically the second she drops into the booth opposite Kara for their lunch date, “how’d the interview go?”

“No Maggie today?” Alex was a CSI for the NCPD and Maggie was a detective, and Kara knew the two of them usually had lunch together, didn’t want to start telling Alex about her day if she was just going to have to restart it when her sister’s girlfriend arrived.

“Nope, she’s out investigating a lead for one of her cases.”

“The guy that killed his wife?” Kara probably isn’t supposed to know the details of as many NCPD cases as she does, but she’s grateful Alex and Maggie keep her up to date – she finds it morbidly interesting.

“Yeah, she thinks she’s finally going to nail the bastard.” A waiter comes to take their order, and as soon as he’s gone, Alex turns to Kara with pleading eyes. “So, the interview. Come on, Kara, I’m dying for the details here. How was it?”

“Um… okay?” Kara’s voice wavers a little with her uncertainty, because honestly, she really has no idea how she did. “I think?”

“You think?” Alex’s lips twitch with amusement. “How can you only think it was okay?”

“Because Cat Grant is really hard to read and more than a little scary?” Alex chuckles at that. “Not got a crush on her anymore, then?” She teases, and Kara vehemently shakes her head.

“Oh, no, I definitely still do.” Kara thinks again about that dress and sighs, because Cat had looked incredible. “She can be scary and hot. Scary-hot.” Alex rolls her eyes. “Anyway. We got off on the complete wrong foot, because apparently she has some vendetta against millennials? So when she saw I was one she wasn’t super happy. I’m pretty sure she’d already written me off before I even opened my mouth.”

“Ouch.”

“Yeah.” Kara takes a sip of the iced tea she’d ordered. “So then she started calling me the wrong name, and I corrected her - ”

“You corrected Cat Grant?” Alex looks at her with disbelief. “And lived to tell the tale? Damn.”

“I think it impressed her.” Kara had seen the flicker of interest in Cat’s eyes when she’d stood up for herself. “Something I did must have anyway, because she said she’d give me a chance.” Alex’s eyes widen. “I’m having dinner with her tonight so I can meet her kid – if we get along then I’m hired.” She pauses. “I think.”

“What?! Congratulations!” Alex looks overjoyed for her. “Why aren’t you happier about this? You’re having dinner with your longtime crush.”

“I know.” Kara smiles, but it’s small. “But it’s still… I have to impress her. Cat Grant. How the hell am I going to do that?”

“You just be yourself,” Alex tells her, reaching over the table to give Kara’s hand a squeeze. “That’s all. You go in there, and you charm the hell out of her like I know you can, and you make that little boy fall in love with you, and she won’t be able to turn you down.”
Kara wishes she had Alex’s confidence. But, she supposes, she didn’t make a fool out of herself earlier today – she just has to survive dinner with Cat tonight.

Alone, in her apartment.

She thinks she’s going to be sick.

“I can’t believe you have a date with Cat Grant tonight,” Maggie quips from Kara’s couch, watching on as Kara drags pretty much every item of clothing she owns from her closet and onto her bed, desperately trying to find something to wear.

“It is not a date,” Kara insists, feeling frazzled as she searches through her pile of clothes. “It’s just another job interview.”

“Yeah, at her house.” Maggie takes a swig of the beer in her hand, and Kara feels like she’s the evening’s entertainment for her sister and her girlfriend. “That’s not like any job interview I’ve ever had.”

“I’d be worried if the protocol for hiring new police officers involved a trip to the captain’s place,” Alex said, sitting beside Maggie on the couch. “No-one would want the job.” Maggie and Alex’s boss was kind of a hard-ass, Kara has learned.

“You guys could be helping, you know.”

“And miss out on this freakout?” Alex grins at her sister. “Not a chance.”

“Maggie,” Kara throws Alex’s girlfriend her best puppy dog eyes, knows they’re hard for the other woman to resist – Alex is the only person in her life who’s grown immune to them. “Please?”

“Alright -”

“Oh, you cave too easily, Sawyer. You’re a detective, you’re supposed to be a hardass.”

“It’s the eyes, Danvers, look at her.” Maggie waves towards Kara. “Look at that face.”

“So, what, if she ever murdered a guy and you were interrogating her she’d just have to give you the eyes and you’d let her go?”

“Um, excuse me,” Kara interrupts their bickering, “how did we go from me asking for help choosing an outfit to me murdering a guy?”

“Your sister’s mind works in mysterious ways, Kara,” Maggie says, and Alex elbows her sharply in the side. “Ow!”

“Guys, I love you, but seriously – if you don’t help me I’m going to kick you out.”

“Okay, okay. What did you wear to your interview earlier?”

“Uh, this,” Kara gestures at her current outfit, “obviously.” Maggie looks like she really wants to say something about her fashion choices, but holds herself back.

“Okay, well, you definitely shouldn’t wear that. You want something professional, but still nice – maybe even a little bit sexy, if you want to impress her.”
“Are you pretending this is a date again?” Kara asks, suspiciously, and Maggie rolls her eyes.

“No, but maybe it wouldn’t hurt if you dressed like it was one. What’s that dress there, the blue one.” Kara pulls it out of the pile – it’s one she’d bought when she’d been in college, for one of the few parties she’d been invited to.

“I can’t wear this,” Kara protests, “what if I turn up and she’s not dressed up at all?”

“That would be awkward.” Alex looks thoughtful. “Smart casual? Slacks and a blouse?” Kara likes the sound of that, would feel much more herself in that than something fancier.

“This?” Kara fishes out a pair of tan slacks and a patterned purple blouse, and Alex and, after a moment of consideration, Maggie, nod in approval.

“Yeah, that’ll do it.”
Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

Apologies for the slightly longer times between updates - life has been a bit of a dick, lately.

Hope you enjoy!!

If Kara had thought that standing in-front of CatCo plaza was intimidating, it’s nothing compared to how she feels standing on the sidewalk outside of Cat’s apartment building.

She squints up at the top floor, at the penthouse suite where she’ll be spending her evening, and lets out a slow breath, wondering when this had become her life, going from one skyscraper to another.

The lobby of this building isn’t quite as busy as the last, and Kara approaches the front desk hesitantly, earns a warm smile from the security guard sitting behind it.

“Kara Danvers?” He asks, and Kara looks at him suspiciously. “Ms Grant gave me your description,” he explains, and Kara wonders what that description was – probably nothing complimentary. “The elevator requires a keycard to get to the penthouse floor – I’ll swipe you in for now, and we can get you a card of your own if things go well. If you’ll follow me.” She does, stepping into the elevator when it arrives and watching him press the ‘P’ button. “Good luck,” he tells her, before the doors slide shut and she starts to whizz up the floors.

There’s only one door in the hallway she arrives on, and Kara glances at her watch to check the time before she knocks. She’s ten minutes early, but somehow she doesn’t think Cat will have a problem with that, so she takes a breath and raps her knuckles on the door.

It opens a few moments later, Cat standing in the doorway, a toddler in her arms. All Kara can see of him is a head of blonde curls, his face hidden in Cat’s shoulder, and wearing pyjamas with tiny spaceships on them.

Cat herself has changed out of the dress from earlier that day, is instead wearing black jeans and a white button-down shirt, and Kara thinks that the sight of a dressed down Cat might actually be the death of her, because she looks amazing.

“Kara, come in.” Cat steps aside to let Kara pass, and she wanders uncertainly into the apartment beyond, trying not to be wide-eyed as she takes it all in.

Because Cat’s apartment is nice, with an open-plan living room slash dining room slash kitchen, and her breath catches at the view from the floor-length windows that lie directly in-front of her. They look out onto the concrete jungle beyond, the sun just starting to descend on the horizon and setting the whole city alight with an orange glow.

It’s beautiful, just like the woman who comes to stand beside her.

“This place is really nice,” Kara feels like she should say, and Cat just hums quietly, and Kara wishes she weren’t so hard to read – she hopes it’s something she’ll get better at, the more time they (hopefully) spend together.
“I thought I’d get dinner ready whilst you spend some time with Carter – do you like carbonara? It’s been a while since I cooked anything, but that’s one dish I do know how to make.”

“Sounds great.”

“Carter,” Cat addresses the toddler in her arms, shifts him slightly so that his face is no longer hidden. “This is Kara.” He turns to look at Kara, his green eyes wide, and Kara tries not to squeal at how adorable he is. “She’s hopefully going to be looking after you whilst I’m at work.”

“New nanny?” He asks Cat, his voice quiet but his words clear.

“Yes, sweetheart.” Cat sets Carter down on the floor, and he wobbles over to the corner of the room, to what is obviously some kind of play area for him – there’s a tiny table and chair, paper and crayons lying on-top of it, a stack of books beside it, and a dozen toys dotted around. “I’ll be in the kitchen if you need anything,” Cat turns towards Kara, and the unspoken ‘and I’ll be watching your every move’ hangs in the air even after she’s walked away.

Carter sits down and reaches for a dinosaur action figure, and he eyes Kara suspiciously when she sits cross-legged opposite him.

“Hey buddy,” she says, as he lifts the toy and holds it close to his chest, like Kara’s about to steal it from him. “You like dinosaurs, huh?” He nods, and Kara thinks her first task is to get him to speak. “Me too. What’s your favourite dinosaur?” He stays silent. “Mine is the stegosaurus. Do you have one of those?”

Again, no answer, and Kara takes it upon herself to look around, sees a figure of one lying just out of reach and shifts to grab it, Carter’s wary eyes on her the whole time.

“This is a stegosaurus,” she tells him, and is ready to continue talking when he sees him open his mouth.

“I know.” It’s so unexpected, and comes out so haughtily, so undeniably reminiscent of his mother’s tone, that Kara breaks into a wide smile.

“You know, huh?” He nods. “Do you also know that even though they were really big, they had really tiny brains?” She can see the war within him – half of him wants to completely ignore her and wants her gone, and the other half of him really wants to know more dinosaur facts.

“Really?” He asks eventually, and Kara tries not to feel too victorious.

“Uh-huh. You know what they ate?”

“Plants.” The answer comes quicker this time.

“That’s right, they were herbivores.”

“Herb-vore,” he tries to copy, and he’s so cute that Kara could cry. “So is that one.” He points at another figure by Kara’s knee, a diplodocus.

“Yeah it is, you’re good at this.” Carter offers her an uncertain smile. “They used to use their tails as a weapon.” She does a demonstration, knocking a different dinosaur over with its tail, and Carter giggles. “And their brains were small, too.”

Carter points at another dinosaur, and another, and Kara feels like this is a test – is glad for her own childhood obsession that had well-prepared her for this moment. Once she’s gone around most of the
figurines he has, he looks like he’s contemplating something, before he crawls closer towards her and then holds out the dinosaur he’s been clutching close to his chest since he sat down.

Kara gets the feeling that this is some sort of high honour, takes it gently from the toddler.

“Favourite,” he tells her, and Kara smiles, hardly dares to breathe when Carter keeps crawling until he’s sitting in her lap.

“So, what else do you like, buddy?” She asks him, keeping her voice quiet, half-afraid that she’s about to startle him, make him run away and not come back. She peers at the stack of books for inspiration. “Oh, you like space, huh?” She supposes she should’ve guessed that, from the pyjamas.

“Yeah!” It’s the most enthusiastic he’s been so far. “I wanna be an astronaut!”

“You do?” He nods, a picture of seriousness. “It’s a lot of hard work, you know. I have a friend that’s training to be an astronaut.” Carter’s eyes grow comically wide.

“Really?” He whispers, voice full of amazement.

“Really,” she tells him, and he looks at her with wonder.

“Can they take me into space?”

“That’s not really how it works,” she laughs, and he looks disappointed. “But she could maybe come and talk to you about it one day, if she’s ever in town.” That seems to cheer him up massively.

“I’m sorry to interrupt,” Cat’s voice makes Kara jump, because she hadn’t heard the other woman approach, “but dinner’s nearly ready, and Carter, it’s nearly time for bed.” The kid has an impressive pout, Kara will give him that.

“Can Kara read my bedtime story?” He asks, and Cat looks taken aback.

“Oh, I wouldn’t want to overstep,” Kara starts, but Cat waves her off.

“Nonsense, this is why you’re here.” Cat leans down to scoop Carter out of Kara’s lap, and it’s the closest they’ve been yet and Kara has to remind herself to keep breathing. “Carter’s room is this way,” Cat inclines her head to a hallway on the left hand side of the apartment, and Kara follows as Cat makes her way down it. “Let’s brush your teeth while Kara picks out a book for you.”

Kara steps a little hesitantly inside Carter’s bedroom, easy to locate because his name is on the door in brightly coloured letters, and it’s plastered in his drawings. His bed is shaped like a rocket, and Kara smiles as she makes her way towards the bookshelf on the wall, Carter’s favourite books easily identifiable by the worn spines.

She chooses one at random, and Carter darts past her a moment later, Cat not far behind. Kara watches as Cat tucks her son into bed with a careful kind of devotion that screams how much Cat loves her son.

“He’s all yours,” Cat tells Kara as she straightens up, nodding towards the chair that sits beside the bed. “I’ll go finish up dinner.”

Kara sits, and cracks open the book, and she’s barely three pages in before Carter’s breathing slows, and she looks up from the book to see him fast asleep.

She smiles softly and closes the book, leaves it on the chair before she pads silently from the room,
butterflies definitely back at the thought of having dinner with Cat without her son there as a buffer.

Cat walks back to her kitchen filled with equal parts amazement and disbelief, barely able to believe just how quickly Kara had managed to win over her son.

She’d been watching the two of them closely as they’d played, and had nearly dropped a whole pan of pasta on the floor, filled with shock, when she’d watched Carter crawl onto Kara’s knee.

It had taken three weeks with their last nanny before Carter had stopped crying whenever Cat left the apartment, and yet fifteen minutes alone with Kara Danvers and she’s his new favourite person.

Cat wonders what it is about the girl that’s different from all the ones who came before her – even Ella, Cat’s wonder nanny, had had a difficult few days before Carter had accepted her presence in his life.

Cat can barely believe what she’s seen tonight, almost wonders if she’s dreaming.

After their earlier meeting, she’d expected Kara to be good, but not this good, and it’s honestly a little disarming, and Cat wonders if Kara will continue to surprise her, finds herself hoping that she does.

“Hey.” Cat’s just finished dishing up when Kara reappears, looking a little nervous now that Carter’s not with her – she’d been almost a different person with her son than Cat had seen before. “He’s out for the count.”

“He never did have trouble sleeping.” Even as a baby, he had slept through the night more often than not, and Cat knew that she was one of the lucky ones. “Here, sit.” She gestures for Kara to take a seat at the kitchen counter, feels like it’s slightly less informal than sitting at the table. Cat pushes a bowl of pasta towards her, and another to the seat beside her. “Would you like anything to drink?”

“Just water is fine.” Kara looks wildly out of place in her apartment, but it’s nice to have someone to share the space with. Cat fills two glasses, choosing to have water too, in place of her usual red wine, before she rounds the counter to sit next to her new hire. “Thank you for this, Ms Grant. It looks amazing.”

“You should call me Cat, if we’re going to be spending a lot of time together.”

“Okay. Thank you. Cat.” Cat tries not to think about how good it sounds, hearing Kara say her name. They start to eat, and Cat gives Kara a few minutes before she starts her latest round of questioning.

“So, how was that for you?”

“Pretty great.” Kara’s smile is bright, lights up her whole damn face, and Cat has to look away for fear of being burned. “He’s a really great kid.”

“I know,” Cat answers coolly, and Kara’s cheek tinge pink. “It seems you made quite an impression on my son – he rarely warms to people so quickly.” Kara’s smile returns. “Should I be concerned about your extensive knowledge of dinosaurs?” Kara nearly chokes on a sip of her water, and Cat smirks.

“I was a dinosaur nerd growing up.”

“Mm. And do you really have a friend who’s an astronaut in training, or was that a lie to try and get
my son on your side?”

“I wouldn’t lie to him,” Kara looks offended at the suggestion. “It’s true, we met in college. I know a few others, too, but not that I’d call friends. Comes with the territory.”

“Of?”

“Did you ever actually read my resume?” Kara asks, almost teasing, and it’s the most relaxed that Cat has seen her yet.

“Only the important parts – I didn’t dwell on your education.”

“Well, I went to Yale,” Kara supplies, and Cat tries not to look too surprised. “And I studied astrophysics.”

“Wow.” Cat can’t hide how much she’s impressed by that. “And that’s what you want to get your master’s in?”

“Yeah. And maybe a doctorate, I’m not sure. Haven’t really thought about it yet.” She’s so young, Cat thinks, still trying to figure out her career path, her future, still with a world of possibilities in front of her.

“That’s impressive.”

“It’s just what I’m good at,” Kara shrugs. “And apparently comes in handy when I want to charm three year old boys.” Cat smiles at that.

“Yes, well, Carter’s quite enamoured by you already – I imagine he’ll fall completely in love if you tell him all about space. He likes stargazing, but I’m never very good at pointing out the constellations.”

“Too busy writing stories to change the world?” Kara asks, and Cat quirks an eyebrow. “What? You can’t be surprised that I’ve read your work – you’re pretty well-known in this city.”

“Mm. So I’m sure that, as well as what you’ve experienced for yourself today, that you’ve heard what a hard-ass I am, so I’ll ask you again – are you sure you want this job?” Cat knows what they write about her in the magazines, especially now that her marriage has so publically fizzled out – that she’s cold-hearted and cruel, and so much worse.

“Of course I still want the job,” Kara replies, setting down her fork, bowl clean. “And for the record, I don’t listen to idle gossip, especially the kind that wouldn’t exist if you were a man. I admire you, Ms Grant.” Kara’s blue eyes met hers, and Cat can see the sincerity there – she wonders if perhaps Kara has a slight sense of hero worship, and can’t help but preen a little at the attention. “I have a little experience with what it’s like to try and succeed in a male-dominated field.”

“Astrophysics not popular with the ladies?” Cat asks, surprised to find a teasing lilt in her voice – maybe Carter isn’t the only person in this apartment who Kara is managing to win over.

“Not really.” Kara’s eyes sparkle, her lips curved into a small smile.

“Well, the job is yours if you do want it. Although there is one thing I wanted to ask – I did a background check on you.”

“You did?” Kara looks a little scandalised.
“It’s standard protocol for most of my employees, and definitely necessary for anyone who I’ll be trusting in my home and around my son,” Cat explains, and Kara relaxes a little. “It came back clean.” Cat had expected it would – the girl didn’t have so much as a parking ticket, and Cat doubted she’d ever even had so much as a detention when she’d been in high school. “But something was flagged – Kara Danvers only sprang into existence when you were fourteen. You mentioned that you were in the foster system,” Cat keeps her voice gentle, remembers the uneasy way Kara had brought it up before. “I’m assuming it’s something to do with that?”

“Oh, yeah. Danvers is the last name of my foster family.” Kara fiddles with her glasses, clearly uncomfortable. “Do you… do you need my previous last name?” Kara looks reluctant to offer it, for some reason, and Cat burns with curiosity, has to force herself not to pry.

“So long as there’s no criminal record associated with it, I don’t need to know.”

“No,” Kara murmurs, voice quiet, gaze on her hands. “But…” She bites her lip, looks like she’s having an internal debate over whether to continue speaking. “The events of my parents’ death were criminal.”

“There were murdered?” Cat guesses, and Kara’s discomfort starts to make a lot of sense. Her jaw tightens as she nods, and Cat aches for her, the pain of the loss written clearly in her eyes. “I’m so sorry, Kara.” Cat imagines the words are empty, that Kara’s heard them a hundred times before. “They caught whoever did it?”

“Yeah. They got put away for a long time.”

“Good.” Cat’s reaches out, gives Kara’s hand a hesitant squeeze. “It’s not my place to pry, so long as it’s in the past.”

“Thank you,” Kara murmurs, and Cat gives her a moment to collect herself, to blink away the tears that have gathered in the corners of her eyes.

“The job is yours then,” Cat tells her, “though this goes without saying – it’s Carter who comes first. You looked pretty cosy before, but should that change…”

“I’m outta here,” Kara finishes. “I get it.”

“Excellent. I already have a contract drawn up in my office from my previous hires – you can take it home with you if you like, read it over and check it’s all okay. If you’d like to follow me.”

The door Cat leads her to is locked, and Kara looks away as Cat types the code into the keypad, wondering if the lock is because she has something valuable in there, or if it had been installed so that she had a space to hide from her husband when things had gotten rough.

Cat beckons her in when she opens the door, and the room within is beautiful, dominated by a large mahogany desk that’s positioned to look out at National City through yet another floor-to-ceiling window. The desk is an organized mess of papers and magazine layouts, clearly Cat’s office away from CatCo, and Kara wonders if the woman ever actually stops working.

There are several framed articles on the walls, the ones that Cat had won awards for (those same awards span several shelves around the office), and Kara frowns when she sees a headline that she doesn’t recognise, stepping closer without even thinking to get a better look.

“What are you doing?” Cat asks from somewhere behind her and Kara jumps, whirls around to find
Cat’s eyes on her – she’s leaning against her desk with one hand, the other settled on her hip and, bracketed by the moonlight and standing dead-centre of that beautiful city view, Kara’s hands itch for her sketchpad, itched to capture this moment and Cat’s beauty so it never slipped from her mind.

“Sorry.” Kara replies, sheepish at being caught. “I just… I recognised most of the other articles.” She points at the one on the opposite wall. “Like that one, it won you a Pulitzer? I just wondered what was special about this one.”

“It was my first front page,” Cat offers, and Kara nods in understanding, immediately wanting to turn and read the words on the page, to see where Cat’s start had begun. “The only Daily Planet article I’ll allow in my apartment.” Kara grins. “You really recognised all the others?”

“I meant what I said before,” Kara offers with a shrug. “I admire you.” Kara just hopes that Cat will never find out quite how much. “I was a fan of yours growing up.”

“Well, that just makes me feel old,” Cat replies, nose wrinkled, and Kara’s cheeks tinge red.

“That’s not what I meant!” She rushes to correct herself. “I just - ”

“It’s alright, Kara,” Cat cuts her off, a half-smirk on her mouth, and Kara suspects that Cat just really enjoys making her blush. “I know what you meant. Here,” Cat holds out an impressive stack of papers that Kara assumes is her new contract, raising her eyebrows as she felt the weight of it in her hand. “Take tonight and the morning to have a look through it.”

“I’ll try.” Cat presses her lips together to hide a smile.

“Provided everything in there is okay with you, how about you bring it by my office tomorrow afternoon, say two p.m.? That’ll give you the chance to spend some more time with Carter.”

“Sure. I can spend the rest of the week watching him at your office, if you want? So you can see how we’re getting along before you have to trust me with him here alone.” Cat looks pleased by the suggestion. “I know it’s difficult to trust someone new with your kid.”

“Especially when they’re barely an adult themselves,” Cat says dryly, and Kara fakes offence.

“Hey,” she protests, as Cat leads her back towards the front door. “Twenty-three is adult. It’s like, mid-adult. Five years into adulting.”

“The word ‘adulting’ really makes you sound mature,” Cat tells her, though there’s a sparkle in her eyes that Kara is pretty sure is going to be the death of her. “I’ll see you tomorrow, Kara. Call me if you change your mind – my number is on there. Only to be used in case of emergencies.”

“Of course.” Kara grabs her bag from beside the door, slips her bag inside before stepping out into the hallway beyond.

“Would you like me to call my driver to give you a ride home?”

“Oh, no that’s okay, Ms Grant. I can just take the subway.” Cat looks horrified by the mere thought. “It’s fine, honestly.”

“Well, alright,” Cat looks reluctant. “But you’re not taking my son anywhere near the germ-infested thing, understood?”

“Is that in the contract?”
“Absolutely.” Kara had been joking, but at Cat’s stone-faced reply, Kara wonders if it actually is.

“Goodnight, Kara.”

“Goodnight, Ms Grant.” Kara presses the button for the elevator, nods to the security guard downstairs on her way out, and there’s a bounce in her step when she steps into the cool night air of the city.

She digs her phone out of her pocket to see a text from her sister.

*Call me the second you get home – we want to know how your date went.*

Kara rolls her eyes, slips her phone back into her bag as she heads for the subway station nearest to Cat’s place. She’s home less than twenty minutes later, changes into her pyjamas and curls up on her couch with her contract, opening up Netflix and playing some old episodes of *Friends* while she calls Alex.

“It was not a date,” Kara insists, before her sister even has a chance to say hello. “And it went pretty well.”

“Did you get a goodnight kiss?”

“I hate you.” Kara can hear Maggie laughing in the background, assumes she’s on speaker.

“No, you don’t, you love me.”

“Only sometimes.” Kara can almost feel Alex’s pout down the phone.

“So, what was she like? What was her apartment like?”

“She was… significantly less scary in jeans and with a kid in her arms than she is at work,” Kara replies, hoping her voice isn’t too dreamy. “And her apartment is… probably exactly like what you’d expect, but nicer.”

“You’ll have to sneak us in.”

“I am not going to do that,” Kara says, sternly. “You are not going to ruin this job opportunity for me just because you want to see where Cat Grant lives.”

“You’re no fun. You got it, then? The job?”

“Yeah.” Kara’s smile is wide, and she still can’t really believe how well tonight had gone. “I start tomorrow.”

“Wow, that was fast.”

“I guess she doesn’t want to worry about keeping an eye on her kid and a whole company full of people.”

“True. Should we leave you to get some rest, then? You wanna come over for dinner tomorrow night?”

“Sure. I’ll text you tomorrow?”

“Yeah. Night, Kara.”

“Goodnight.” Kara hangs up, drops her phone beside her and sighs as she pulls the contract into her
lap.

It looks like it’s going to be a long night.
Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

Apologies for the delay, again - life is still pretty terrible, but your comments never fail to brighten my day :)

Hope you enjoy!!

“You know, this thing is more iron-clad than some of my military contracts,” remarks Lucy Lane, flipping through the pages of Kara’s contract the next morning, an expression of deep concentration on her face. Lucy’s a lawyer, and had agreed to give it a once-over before Kara had signed it. “I think you’re good to go though. It’s mostly to do with privacy, there’s some non-disclosure agreements…” Kara nods, having expected no less. “I don’t see any problems with it.”

“So I’m not selling my soul?”

“Only signing your life away,” Lucy grins, dropping the contract back onto Kara’s coffee table, “to Cat Grant. Although according to your sister, that’s not much of an issue.”

“I am going to kill Alex,” Kara grumbles, and Lucy laughs.

“Hey, I don’t blame you – Cat Grant is hot.” Lucy stretches her arms over her head as she reclines on Kara’s couch, kicking her feet up on Kara’s lap. “If I wasn’t so happy with James, I might have gotten you to introduce me to her – can you imagine how pissed my sister would be, if I dated her mortal enemy?” Lucy looks delighted at the thought – the Lane sisters do not get along.

“How is James? I haven’t spoken to him in a while.” The two of them had met a couple of years ago, when Kara had been visiting her cousin Clark in Metropolis – Lucy was dating his roommate, and she and Kara had become fast friends from pretty much the moment they’d met.

“He’s good.” Lucy smiles, gets that look of love in her eye that Kara aches to have for herself one day. She’s never been in love, not the crazy, stupid kind of love that she’d watched her sister fall into with Maggie, or that James and Lucy have. She’s only ever had one serious relationship, while she’d been in college and it had ended messily and painfully, and Kara hasn’t fallen for anyone since. “Still at the Planet, although he’s starting to get restless… I don’t think it’ll be long before he starts looking for another job. Maybe with your new boss.”

“He wants to go to CatCo?” Kara asks, surprised.

“He’s talked about it,” Lucy nods. “He’s eyeing the director of photography job – if it’s ever up for grabs, I think we’ll be moving here. Unfortunately for you,” Lucy adds, teasing, and Kara shakes her head.

“Are you kidding? It’d be amazing to have you here.” Lucy’s only in town for two days for a client, and Kara’s enjoyed spending the morning catching up with an old friend. “You don’t get to visit often enough.”

“I know,” Lucy sighs. “And now that you’re in Cat’s clutches, you’re never gonna be able to come see me, either.”
“Like I could ever afford to make the trip before,” Kara points out. “Maybe I can sabotage Cat’s current director of photography and get her to hire James so you can move here.”

“Ooh, good plan, I like it.” Kara grins. “So, what’s she like, anyway? Cat? All I really know about her is from Lois, so that’s not even remotely reliable.”

“She’s… she’s just amazing,” Kara says, and Lucy chuckles.

“Your moon eyes can be seen from space.”

“Shut up.” Kara shoves at Lucy’s legs, but the other woman doesn’t budge.

“How long are you gonna wait til you ask her out?”

“I am not going to ask her out!” Kara is scandalised. “She’s my boss.”

“And?” Lucy asks, raising an eyebrow. “Plenty of people sleep with and/or date their bosses. And it’s not like you’re her assistant or something else that would cause a scandal.”

“Pretty sure rich CEO sleeps with her younger female nanny would still cause quite the scandal,” Kara points out. “Besides, there’s no way she’d ever want to sleep with me.”

“Why not? She’s bisexual, isn’t she?” Cat had spoken candidly about her sexuality in an interview a few years ago (one that Kara had read many times when it had come out), although she was yet to date a woman publically.

“Well, yeah, but…” Kara shrugs, “just cause she’s interested in women doesn’t mean she’ll be interested in me.”

“It means you have a chance.”

“Hardly,” Kara scoffs. “Because she’s Cat Grant, and I’m… me.”

“Hey, don’t put yourself down.” Lucy prods at Kara’s side with a foot. “You could totally charm her if you wanted to.” Kara isn’t so sure.

“But I’m not going to,” Kara insists, “because she’s my boss.”

“You’re boring,” Lucy tells her, with a pout, and Kara rolls her eyes. “This place is pretty nice,” Lucy changes the subject, glances around Kara’s apartment appreciative. “I like the cardboard box decoration.”

“I haven’t had the chance to unpack yet,” Kara defends, and Lucy grins.

“You’ve been here for two weeks – you’re just lazy.” She’s not wrong – she has had time to do more than she has, she just hates unpacking, hates the process of moving, finding a new space for everything in an unfamiliar place.

“Well, while you’re here you can help me out then, can’t you?” Lucy makes a face, and Kara grins, before taking her hand and dragging Lucy to her feet. “Come on, let’s do some now and then I’ll take you out for lunch before you have to meet your client.”

“Fine,” Lucy huffs, “but only ‘cause you promised me food.”
Kara gets so carried away hanging out with Lucy that she doesn’t realise the time, almost ends up late for her first day, and has to practically sprint from the restaurant they’d ended up at (thankfully only down the street from Cat’s offices) to CatCo, Lucy’s laughter ringing in her ears.

Today she’s glad for the long elevator ride, because it gives her a chance to catch her breath, and by the time she reaches the fortieth floor, her heart rate has returned to normal.

She still approaches Cat’s office a little hesitantly, wonders if there’s ever a moment where she’ll feel completely at ease around the other woman, hovers in the doorway until Cat glances up and waves her in.

She’s wearing a blue blouse today, two buttons undone and showing of an expanse of pale skin that Kara struggles not to stare at, hopes that Cat won’t notice if her gaze does linger.

“Good afternoon, Kara. I’m glad to see you haven’t changed your mind.” Cat manages the barest hint of a smile, and Kara wonders if it’s been a long day.

“Not at all, Ms Grant.” It feels wrong to call her Cat here. “Here’s the contract.” She doesn’t have time to hand it over though, because Carter, sitting on the floor of Cat’s office and playing with a blonde woman Kara hadn’t seen yesterday, clambers to his feet and darts over to her when he sees her in the doorway.

“Kara!” He collides with her legs, wrapping his arms around them in a hug, and Kara laughs and ruffles his hair, setting the contract on Cat’s glass coffee table for later.

“Hey, buddy.” The blonde woman in the room looks amazed by Carter’s enthusiasm. “You having a good day?”

“Yeah!” He stares up at her with bright eyes.

“He’s been talking about you all day,” Cat says, dryly, a fond look in her eye as she watches the two of them. “You made quite the impression last night.”

“I’ll say,” the blonde woman adds, smiling, and Kara recognises her voice – she was the woman she’d spoken to on the phone. “I think I’ve been replaced as his second-favourite person.”

“Kara, this is my assistant, Eve. Eve, the new nanny, Kara,” Cat makes the introduction, and Kara throws a warm smile Eve’s way. “Eve will show you around the floor, so you can acquaint yourself with the place, and you can come back here when you’re done, if you like.”

“I go too?” Carter asks, still hanging onto Kara’s legs.

“Of course you can go, sweetheart.” Carter beams, before reaching his arms towards Kara, and she bends down to lift him up, wondering how Cat makes carrying him look so effortless because the woman is tiny and he is heavy. “Behave yourself.”

“Always!” He yells over Kara’s shoulder as she follows Eve out of Cat’s office.

“I don’t know if I’ve ever seen him this animated,” Eve tells her, smiling. “He really likes you.”

“Well that’s good, because I really like him, too.” Eve points out her desk, just outside of Cat’s office, in-case she ever needs something when Cat’s not around or otherwise engaged, before pointing out the nearest bathroom and then taking her to the breakroom.

“Coffee?” Eve asks when they get there, and Kara nods, makes a note of where everything is as the
woman reaches for two mugs.

“Am I right in thinking you’re the only reason I got this job?” Kara asks as the coffee is brewing, keeping a careful eye on Carter as he explores the room. “Cause I get the feeling that if she’d arranged the interviews herself, I wouldn’t have been on Cat’s list.”

“Guilty,” Eve admits, leaning up against the counter with a friendly smile, and Kara decides then and there that she likes her. “I may have orchestrated things to give you a shot.”

“Why?” Kara’s grateful, she just doesn’t understand.

“You’re different that the people she usually hires,” Eve tells her, turning away to pour the coffee and sliding one of the mugs towards her. “I thought you’d be good for her, and him.” She nods towards Carter, who scurries back towards Kara when someone else enters the room, hiding behind her legs. “I wanted her to give you a chance.”

“Oh.” Kara doesn’t really know how to process that. “Well, thanks.”

“Oh, hey, you got the job!” Kara turns to see that the newcomer is the guy from the elevator yesterday, bright smile on his face. “Congrats.” She grins. “If you ever need a friendly face to talk to, stop by my desk – it’s next to Eve’s.” He grabs an apple from the bowl on the table in the centre of the room before leaving, and Kara turns to find Eve looking at her with raised eyebrows.

“What?”

“He likes you.”

“He does not,” Kara scoffs, but Eve just gives her a knowing look. “And even if he does, he’s barking up the wrong tree – he is not my type.”

“Nerdy?”

“Male.”

“Oh.” Eve nods to herself, covers her surprise well. “Fair.”

“Kara,” Carter tugs at her pants, and Kara looks down. “We play now?”

“Sure, kiddo. Let’s go.” She takes Carter’s hand and lets him pull her out the door and back towards his Mom. “Are you sure we’re okay to be in here?” Kara asks when they reach Cat’s office. “I don’t want to distract you.”

“It’s fine,” Cat waves a hand. “I’ll let you know if I need to concentrate, or you can go onto the balcony if you like. Carter likes the view.” Kara’s not surprised, because from what she can see out of the glass door that leads out there, the view is pretty incredible. “But you’re welcome to stay in here. I’m used to blocking things out when I need to.”

Kara decides to stay in the office, at least for now, chooses to sit on the floor instead of on one of Cat’s couches – it’s too white and pristine, and she’s terrified of dirtying it. She sets her coffee on the glass coffee table, and Carter settles down beside her, after collecting some of his toys from around the room.

Today Carter is in a superhero mood, and he delights in making Batman save the day, over and over again – Kara settles for Wonder Woman, herself – and her first hour flies by.
Not long after, Carter starts to yawn, his eyes drooping, until he’s practically asleep on Kara’s knee.

“He didn’t have his usual nap today.” Cat’s voice is soft, and Kara glances up to see the other woman watching them from behind her desk, glasses perched on her nose. “He was too excited about seeing you again.”

“And now he’s worn himself out.” Kara grins down at him, runs a gentle hand through his hair. “I think you’d be more comfortable on the couch, don’t you?” She lifts him carefully, settles him down on one of the couches and drapes a blanket over him.

“You don’t have to do that,” Cat says, when Kara starts tidying up some of the toys strewn over the floor, but Kara just shrugs.

“I don’t mind, it’s not like I’m doing anything else.”

“If you’re bored, you could always go and talk to my IT expert who I doubt has done any work this afternoon in-between stealing glances at you.” Cat levels a fierce glare to the bullpen beyond, and Kara turns to see Winn hastily looking away. “It seems my son isn’t the only boy you’ve made an impression on in your short time here.” Cat sounds disapproving.

“Oh, no, I’d really rather not.”

“No?” Kara almost feels like this is some kind of test, Cat peering at her with interest.

“I’m here to work, Ms Grant, not date – and if I were interested in dating someone from your office, it’d be more likely to be Eve than Winn.” Kara sees a flicker of interest in Cat’s eyes.

“If he’s bothering you, I can – ”

“That’s really not necessary,” Kara rushes out. “He’s harmless.”

“Hm. Well, if that ever changes…”

“I will let you know,” Kara promises. “So, uh, what are you working on? If I’m allowed to ask.”

“You may,” Cat concedes, leaning back in her chair. “I’m looking over budget reports to check there’s nothing out of place.” Kara makes a face, because that doesn’t sound very fun at all.

“Sounds thrilling.” Cat tries to hide a smile.

“Mm, such is the life of a CEO. Not as glamorous as it sounds.”

“You ever regret it?” Kara asks, curious. “Wish you’d kept writing?”

“Yes and no,” Cat answers, looking thoughtful. “I don’t regret this company – it’s the third-best thing I ever made.” It’s unspoken that Carter is the first, and Kara assumes that Cat’s other son, the one she’d had to give away, Adam, is the other. “And I’m proud of what I’ve achieved here, but… sometimes in the middle of a particularly terrible board meeting, or when my eyes are bleeding looking through expenses, or when my employees are being especially incompetent and I have to do their jobs on-top of everything else when all I want to do is go home and be with my son… then yes, I almost wish I’d never had the idea for CatCo in the first place. But I wouldn’t change it for the world.”

“What you’ve done here is incredible.” Kara hopes she keeps the extent of her admiration out of her voice.
“You’ve got the job, Kara,” Cat tells her, smile pulling at the edges of her lips, “you don’t have to
suck up to me.”

“I’m not,” Kara insists, shaking her head. “I mean it. You’re an inspiration.” Cat’s eyes widen, just a
little, and Kara flushes, worried she’s said too much. “I-I mean to a lot of people. Not just me.”

“Yes, well, thank you, Kara.” Cat clears her throat. “I should probably get back to work.”

“Right, of course. Can I?” She gestures to the balcony door, and heads out there with her bag when
Cat nods, leaving the door open so she’ll be able to hear when Carter wakes up.

It’s a bright day, the sky clear, and the air warm, and Kara curls her hands around the railing of the
balcony and peers over the edge of it, looks first down at the ground below and then at the city that
stretches before her.

Cat must feel like a queen surveying her empire when she stands up here, and the view leaves Kara
breathless.

There’s furniture out there, and Kara settles herself down a chair, reaches into her bag and pulls out
one of her sketchpads and a pencil, brought along for an instance like this, when Carter didn’t need
her eyes on him, to keep her from getting bored.

She sketches the city skyline, is just starting to fill in some of the details when the door creaks, and
Cat steps through with a sleepy Carter in her arms.

“I brought you a present.” Cat sets Carter down when he wiggles, and he makes his way towards
Kara and climbs up onto the chair beside her.

“Pretty,” he mumbles, pointing at her sketchpad.

“You want to see some more?” She asks him, and when he nods she flicks through her sketchpad to
show him some of her other drawings, hyper-aware of Cat behind her.

“You’re very talented,” Cat says when Kara’s flicked through them all and returned to the one she’d
just started, and she feels her cheeks colour at the praise.

“Thank you.” Carter reaches out for Kara’s pencil, and she smiles. “Do you want to draw
something?”

“Yeah!” Kara turns to a fresh page in the book.

“Oh, no, Kara, don’t let him draw in there – I’ll get you some paper.”

“It’s fine,” Kara says, stopping Cat in her tracks as she holds the sketchpad in-front of Carter. “I
really don’t mind, I’ve got a dozen of these, and half of them are filled with doodles from kids I’ve
looked after in the past. It’s nice to look back through them.”

“Oh, if you’re sure.” Cat doesn’t look entirely convinced.

“What do you wanna draw, buddy?” Kara asks Carter, because he’s just holding the pencil over the
paper, face scrunched up in concentration.

“You and Momma!” He settles on, eventually, eyes lighting up now that he has an idea, and the
pencil scratching over the paper.

“I’ll leave you to it,” Cat says, and Kara calls out to the other woman as she turns back towards her
office.

“We’ll come and show you the finished article when it’s done.”

//

“I think Momma will like this one.” Cat smiles as she hears Carter’s voice, his head bent over what must be his third drawing of the day, Kara supervising him diligently, Cat’s son cuddled into her side on one of the couches in Cat’s office.

“I think she will too, buddy.” Kara’s got this soft smile on her face as she looks down at Carter, one that Cat thinks must be similar to her own expression whenever she looks at him, and she wonders if it’s taken just two days for Kara to fall in love with him.

Cat should be finishing finalising the layouts for this week’s issue so that she can get them sent down to print and go home soon, but she just can’t help stealing glances at Kara and Carter every few minutes.

Kara being here is terrible for her productivity.

She just… she can’t believe how well she’s doing, how utterly captivated by her Carter is, doesn’t know what it is about her that has her son so engaged. She’d thought this morning that perhaps last night had been a fluke, that Carter would be standoffish and wary like he usually was around his new nannies, but as soon as Cat had told them that Kara would be coming by later that afternoon, he’d lit up and hadn’t wanted to talk about anything else all day.

It’s… astounding.

So she just can’t stop looking, trying to figure out just what it was about Kara Danvers that made her so special.

Cat is yet to draw any definitive conclusions.

She just was.

It’s maddening, not being able to pinpoint why.

So her productivity takes a hit, whereas having Kara here was supposed to have the opposite effect. But it doesn’t matter, because Cat has seen enough – Carter is perfectly at ease around her, and one more day in the office will suffice before Cat lets her loose in her home, trusts that the girl won’t burn it down.

Cat shakes her head, tries to ignore the quiet sound of Kara and Carter talking, and pulls her focus onto the layouts lying in-front of her.

Once she’s done, she calls for Eve, sends them to be printed, and relaxes back in her chair, work done for the day – unless there’s an emergency, of course.

“Are you finished, Momma?” Carter asks, turning to her with bright eyes, and when she nods he races off the couch towards her, trying to carry the sketchbook at the same time – only it’s almost as big as him, and Cat can’t help but laugh as he struggles his way to her desk, and she picks him up when he reaches her, sets him down in her lap. “This is you!” He says excitedly, pointing down at the page in-front of him.

Cat looks down and her breath catches at the sketch she sees – it’s clearly been coloured in by
Carter, in a mishmash of his favourite coloured crayons, but the sketch itself was done by a more expert hand, an outline drawn by Kara for Carter to colour in.

And it’s… well, it’s a sketch of her. It’s rushed, must have been for Kara to have finished it so quickly, but it’s still detailed, still beautiful, a depiction of her sat behind her desk, glasses on the edge of her nose, eyes focused on something in the distance.

“I… I hope that’s okay.” Cat glances up to see Kara hovering around the other side of her desk, a shy look on her face, refusing to meet Cat’s gaze. “He asked me to draw you and I… well, he can be very persuasive.” Cat’s lips twitch, because she knows that that’s the truth.

“It’s fine, Kara.” If she were being honest with herself, she’s flattered – the drawing is stunning, the planes of her face striking, her eyes piercing, and if that’s how Kara sees her… well, it’s certainly nice to be admired by someone so young, so beautiful herself. “In fact, I think it’s wonderful.”

“Y-you do?” Kara looks amazed.

“I do.” She turns her attention back to her son, then. “And I think it’s wonderful coloured in by you, sweetheart.” She presses a kiss to the top of his head and he beams. “Have you drawn anything else for me?” The previous pages show Carter’s efforts, a lot of stick figures of what Cat can only assume is supposed to be the three of them. “My, my, you have been busy, haven’t you? Have you enjoyed yourself today?”

“Yeah!”

“Had fun with Kara?”

“Kara’s the best!” Cat chuckles, sees that Kara’s charm has definitely not worn off.

“Yes, well, Kara can go home now.” His face falls, bottom lip starts to tremble, and Cat suspects that there’s a tantrum coming. That’s a new one, because until now, the only person he’s thrown a fit over leaving him had been her.

She tries not to be offended.

“But -”

“But nothing,” Cat tells him gently. “She’ll be back to see you tomorrow, and until then you can spend some time with me.”

“Okay.” He seems placated by that, until: “Is it tomorrow yet?”

“No, buddy,” Kara laughs, and Carter’s lips downturn into a pout. “Not yet, but it will be soon.”

“Promise?”

“I promise,” she tells him. “What time do you want me to come tomorrow?” She directs that at Cat, who thinks it over as Carter starts to play with her hair. “It’d probably be good for me to come a little earlier, get to know his usual routine.” Cat had been thinking the same thing, is impressed that the girl is on the same page.

“How about nine? That’s when I usually arrive here – though I’ll expect you at my apartment slightly earlier than that next week, when I leave him at home.”

“Of course, and nine’s fine. I’ll meet you here again?”
“Please.”

“Alright. Well, I’ll see you tomorrow, Ms Grant. And you, too, Carter.” She waves, and he waves back. “Have a good night!” She calls over her shoulder, far too chipper, and both Cat and Carter watch her go.

“You like her, huh, Carter?” Cat asks once she’s gone, and Carter’s need is enthusiastic. “You know what’s crazy?” He shakes his head. “I think I do, too.”

Kara is… refreshingly different from all those who had come before her, different even from anyone else she has in her life, constantly surprising and impressing Cat, and it’s only been two days.

She finds herself intrigued as to what their future may hold.
Kara spends her Friday at CatCo, manages to entertain Carter with a careful mix of drawing, playing, and a walk to the park just down the street, her first two hours with him away from the watchful eye of his Mom.

(When they get back, Kara watches as Cat carefully scans her son for any signs of damage, a pleased look in her eyes when she finds none).

Her weekend is spent unpacking the last of her boxes, her apartment finally starting to look more like a home.

When Monday comes, she sets her alarm for six thirty a.m. and groans when it goes off – she isn’t a morning person, never has been, and it takes an impressive amount of self-control to drag herself out of bed and into the shower, hoping that it’ll wake her up.

It doesn’t, but the coffee she collects from the coffeeshop down the street on her way to the subway does the trick, and by the time she’s stepping into Cat’s building at seven forty-five, she feels slightly more alive.

She’s a little nervous, about spending the day alone with Carter for the first time. She knows that she’ll be fine, that the kid already adores her, and she’s looked after countless others for longer, but it’s always nerve-wracking, that first time.

Cat had given her a key to the elevator before she’d left on Friday, and the security guards at the desk have clearly been warned about her coming, because they just smile politely as she presses the button, arriving at the penthouse a few moments later.

She’d also been given a key to the front door, but Kara decides to knock, instead, hears a muffled “just come in, Kara!” yelled from the other side.

Inside, she finds Cat standing in the kitchen with her hands on her hips, and Carter sitting in the middle of the floor, still clad in his pyjamas and with a stubborn look on his face that brightens when he sees her.

“Carter,” Cat says through gritted teeth, and Kara wonders if it’s been one of those mornings, “decided that he was not going to get dressed or eat his breakfast until you got here.”

“I missed you,” Carter smiles up at her, and Kara tries not to melt at the sight of him, tries to be stern as she kneels down to look him in the eye.

“Are you being naughty for your Mom, little man?”

“I want you to help.” He pouts up at her. “Because I missed you.”

“Okay, well, how about this – I’ll help you get ready this morning if that’s okay with your Mom, but I want you to behave for her tomorrow, alright?”

“Okay,” Carter sighs dramatically.

“Why don’t you go to your room and Kara will join you in a minute?” Cat suggests, and he scurries off down the hall. “Thank you,” Cat turns towards her, and she already looks stressed before the day has even really begun.
“I didn’t overstep there, did I?” It’s always something Kara worries about – she’s there to be a nanny, not a parent.

“Oh, no, by all means – if it gets him to listen, you should do it.” Cat’s phone rings, and she looks at the caller ID and sighs. “I have to take this – could you go and get him ready and I’ll meet you back here in a few minutes?”

“Sure.” Kara heads off after Carter, finds him sitting in his room. “What do you want to wear today, buddy?” He shrugs. “Want me to pick?” He nods. “Alright, where are your clothes at?” He shows her, and she ruffles through the drawers, takes out some tiny jeans and t-shirt that has a dinosaur on it that makes him beam.

Once he’s dressed she shoos him back to the kitchen, and Cat, already there, hoists him up so that he’s sat at the kitchen counter in-front of a bowl of cereal.

While he’s busy eating, Cat gives Kara a brief tour, reminding her where everything was. “It goes without saying, but my bedroom is off-limits, and so is my office.” Kara nods. “But everything else is accessible to you. Feel free to help yourself to anything in the kitchen; I’m hoping I won’t be back late, but it’s already been one of those days, so it’s a possibility – if it is late, please eat here. I have a chef that comes in every Friday who cooks meals that I can freeze and eat throughout the week – I told him to make double portions of everything from now on, just in-case, so please don’t hesitate to take anything you fancy.” Kara’s mouth waters at the thought of eating food cooked by a professional chef.

“And as for Carter’s meals, I made this for you.” There’s a chart on the refrigerator, a list of days and suggested meals for lunch and dinner. “You don’t have to stick to it, it’s just to give you an idea of his usual.”

“I appreciate it.”

“What else…” Cat pauses, taps a finger against her lips, and Kara tries very hard not to stare. “He usually has a nap at around one, although he’s being stubborn today so he probably won’t want to.” Kara smiles. “Feel free to leave the apartment, too, you’re not locked in here. There’s a park down the street that he likes, or if you want to go for a coffee or something then that’s fine, just… just be careful.”

There’s a flicker of apprehension in Cat’s eye, one that Kara’s seen on parents’ faces countless times before.

“We’re going to be fine, Cat.” It feels weird to call her that to her face. “I can text you hourly updates, if you like. Photos and everything, so you know that he’s doing okay.”

“You don’t have to do that.”

“I know, but I also know that it’ll reassure you, so I will.” Cat flashes her a grateful smile. “Don’t take this the wrong way, but aren’t you going to be late for work?” Kara catches a glimpse of the time on the clock in the kitchen, almost eight fifteen.

“Shi-oot,” Cat catches herself at the last minute, and Kara bites her lip to hide her smile. “Alright sweetheart,” Cat steps towards her son, his cereal finished. “You be good for Kara, you hear me?”

“I will,” he promises.

“You’d better,” Cat warns him, before she presses a kiss to the top of his head. “Let me know if you have any problems.” Cat says that to her as she’s shrugging into her coat, and Kara reaches for the
“Will do. And I’ll keep sending you those updates. Have a good day, Cat.”

“You too.” Cat casts one last look at them just before she steps through the front door, the first time Kara has ever seen her hesitate, before she blinks and turns on her heel, the door clicking shut a moment later and leaving her and Carter alone.

“So, buddy,” she lifts him out of his seat and sets him down on the floor, “you ready for our first full day together?”

“Yeah!” He claps his hands together excitedly before he reaches for Kara’s and drags her towards his toys.

Cat’s Monday is busy, and the only thing that gets her through the day is the regular pictures Kara sends her of Carter, always beaming at the camera.

True to her word, Cat gets at least one every hour, chronicling their day together, their first true test, and all Cat can do is marvel at how happy and at ease her son looks in every single one.

She manages to finish at six, some sort of record as of late, and there’s a spring in her step as she collects her things and takes her elevator down to her waiting car.

When she arrives home it’s to the sound of laughter, and Cat can’t help but smile as she shrugs out of her coat and kicks off her shoes, padding further inside to find Kara on her couch, helping Carter off of it so that he can rush over to Cat, who bends down to sweep him into a hug.

“Have you had a good day, sweetheart?” She asks him, although thanks to Kara, she already knows the answer.

“The best!” He tells her, with a smile so wide it lights up his whole face, and god, she loves seeing him so happy, even if she’s not the cause of it.

“What did you get up to?”

“We played lots, and I made you some more drawings – come look!” He takes her hand and drags her towards his craft corner, and Cat glances at Kara to see her watching them with a fond smile.

Carter proudly shows her dozens of pieces of paper that he’s doodled all over, and Cat tells him to pick his favourite and stick it to the fridge, and as he wobbles away she turns to Kara.

“And how was your day, Kara?” She asks, because it’s important for her to be happy here, too, not just her son, and Cat finds herself hoping that the answer is a good one because even just based on the last few days, she’s not sure what she would do if Kara decided she didn’t want to stay.

“It was great.” Kara’s voice is sincere, her smile almost as big as Carter’s. “He was an angel.” Carter overhears her on his way back over and beams, clambers back up onto the couch and sits so close to Kara that he’s practically in her lap.

“I’m glad he behaved.”

“Well, I should probably get going,” Kara says, and Carter’s pout is instantaneous. “Let you guys spend some time together.”
“You could stay for dinner, if you like?” Kara looks almost as surprised by the offer as Cat is for making it, but there’s just something about the girl that draws her in, and it was nice, the other night, to have some company other than a glass of wine – she’d never admit it, but it’s lonely, sometimes, now that Chris is gone.

She’s surrounded by people every damn day, but not a single one of them really knows her, really even likes her – she knows what her employees whisper about her behind closed doors, knows she’s not an easy boss but no-one ever became CEO without stepping on a few toes – and it’s different, having someone in her home, someone to gush about her son with, someone she can talk to about things other than work.

“I… are you sure?” Kara’s still hesitant around her, something that Cat hopes will change the longer she’s here for.

“I wouldn’t offer if I wasn’t, Kara.”

“Okay, then.” Kara’s smile is soft. “Thank you.”

“I think it’s lasagne tonight, is that alright?”

“Sure – do you want any help?”

“No, stay here, keep this one occupied.” She ruffles Carter’s hair gently. There’s a movie paused on the TV, and Cat recognises it as Carter’s favourite from the countless number of times the two of them had watched it together. “Finish your movie.”

Carter’s delighted by that, and Cat busies herself in the kitchen as Kara presses play, can’t help but smile as she listens to Carter’s giggles and Kara’s laughter, at the sheer warmth that seems to flood the whole apartment.

She thinks that this is something she could get used to.

As Cat plates up their food, Kara settles Carter down with another movie and some of his toys before she sets the table, and Cat smiles when she notices that she’s set two places next to one another, positioned in the best place to keep an eye on her son.

“So, Kara,” Cat begins, deciding to use this as an opportunity to get to know the girl a little better, “how are you finding National City so far?”

“It’s good,” she answers, around a mouthful of lasagne. “A lot busier than New Haven, and the small town I spent my teenage years in. But I grew up in Metropolis, and it’s nice to be back in a big city again.”

“What made you choose here over Metropolis?”

“My sister’s here,” Kara explains with a shrug. “She came here for college and liked it so much she stayed.”

“I didn’t know you had a sister.”

“Well, foster sister, technically,” Kara corrects. “But she was my rock, after…” She trails off, eyes growing dark. “After everything that happened with my parents. We didn’t get along very well at first.” Her smile is wry. “But pretty soon we were inseparable, and it was really hard when she went away for college.”
“Did you ever consider following her here?”

“That was the plan,” Kara admits, “but then I got an offer from Yale, and she said if I even thought about turning them down for her then she’d never speak to me again.” Kara’s eyes are fond when she talks about her sister, shining with the love that’s shared between them. “Whenever I came to visit her here though I loved it, so it just made sense to move to National City after I graduated. How about you?” Kara turns the question around on her. “Why did you decide to settle here?”

“I wanted a fresh start, and National City at the time didn’t have much in the way of big media companies. Plus, it was on the other side of the country from my mother.” Kara’s lips twitch into a smile. “And the greater the distance between us, the better.”

“I’m guessing you don’t get along?”

“That might just be the understatement of the year.” It’s been a while since Cat has been faced with the elder Catherine Grant, and Cat can’t say that she misses her mother – she’d been cold and cruel when Cat was a child, and she never ceased to remind Cat as an adult how much of a failure she was in Catherine’s eyes, despite everything that she’d created.

“Does she see Carter often?”

“I try and keep her away from him wherever possible.” Cat doesn’t want any part of her own childhood recreated with her son. “Sometimes I think she barely even remembers she has a grandson – even if I let her near him I doubt she’d want to spend any time with him.”

“That sucks.”

“He’s better off without her.” Kara looks taken aback by the vehemence in Cat’s voice, and she clears her throat, swiftly changing the subject. “I’m assuming you get on well with your foster parents?”

“Oh, it’s actually only one foster parent – Alex’s dad died a few months after I went to live with them.” Cat sucks in a breath, can’t imagine what that must have been like for her – to have lost on her own parents and then one of those who had taken her in – and she wonders how a girl who’s been through so much loss can still shine so bright. “But my foster mom, Eliza, she’s been amazing to me, I don’t know what I’d have done without her.” Kara’s smile is warm, her affection shining through. “Despite everything, I’ve been lucky.”

It’s the kind of sunny disposition that Cat would hate from anyone else, but somehow, coming from Kara, it doesn’t bother her, and she wonders how Kara has managed so easily to get under her skin.

They finish their food and Cat waves Kara away as she tries to help her clear the plates, instead nodding towards Carter who immediately clambers to his feet once he sees that they’re done and tugs on Kara’s hand.

“Can we go see the stars?” He asks, and when Kara looks towards Cat for permission she nods, watches as Carter leads the girl towards the balcony door. She puts the dishes in the dishwasher and tidies the kitchen before she moves to join them.

She pauses in the open doorway for a moment, just takes in the sight of them – Kara, on one of Cat’s outdoor couches, and Carter, perched in her lap, his back pressed tightly against her front and her arms gently around his middle to keep him secure. Every few seconds, Carter points up at the sky above and watches with rapt attention as Kara patiently answers each and every question he fires at her.
“What’s that one?” He asks, gesturing wildly up at the sky, and Cat wonders if Kara actually knows where specifically he’s pointing to because she would have no idea.

“Leo,” Kara answers without missing a beat, and Cat is quietly impressed.

“That one!” Carter points again, and Kara squints upwards before she smiles.

“Orion.”

“This one!”

“Hercules.”

“Oh, now you’re just making them up,” Cat teases, unable to help interjecting, smirking when Kara jumps at the sound of her voice, spinning round to face her with mock offence.

“I am not,” she protests, “most of the modern constellations have their basis in Greek myth.” It’s only then that she seems to notice the look on Cat’s face. “And you’re totally just teasing me.” Cat grins.

“You make it too easy.”

“Momma, come sit!” Carter is sleepy but still excitable, and when Cat sits next to them on the couch he moves to sit on her knee, instead, and she wraps him in a tight hug and presses a kiss to the top of his head. “Kara’s teaching me.”

“I can see that.” Carter relaxes back against her. “You really know your constellations.”

“Yeah, well,” Kara shrugs. “When I was a kid and I couldn’t sleep, my Dad used to take me into the backyard or for a walk round the neighbourhood, and he’d tell me all about the stars.” She smiles, though it’s sad, and her eyes shimmer in the moonlight. “After he was gone… I’d always try and find the stars, in whatever foster home I was in that night, because they’d never change, you know? It was always constant, unlike everything else that was going on around me.” She takes a breath, and Cat wants to tell her that she doesn’t have to continue, but she can’t find the words, doesn’t mind the fact that Kara’s starting to open up to her when thus far she’s been so timid.

“When I went to the Danvers’, I still had nightmares. They moved me into Alex’s room so I wasn’t alone, but then I just kept her up, too, so when we couldn’t sleep I’d teach her the pattern of the stars. I think there’s still a galaxy of glow in the dark stars on our ceiling.”

“Is that why you went into astrophysics?”

“It was definitely where it all started for me. I’ve always loved space, and then my Dad, both my foster parents and Alex are all scientists, so I guess it runs in the family.”

“Wow.” Cat lets out a low whistle.

“Yeah. We’re real fun at parties,” Kara jokes, and Cat can’t help but smile. “I think someone’s a little tired.” She nods towards Carter, and Cat looks down to see his eyes are starting to drift closed.

“I think it’s bed time for you, young man.” Cat says, and he must be sleepy because he doesn’t even try to protest.

“I should probably be heading home, too,” Kara says with a glance at her watch. “It’s getting late.”

“Of course.” Kara helps Cat to her feet as she carefully balances a heavy Carter on her hip. “Although you should probably say goodnight to him before you go.” Kara follows Cat inside to
Carter’s bedroom, hovering in the doorway as Cat helps him into his pyjamas and to brush his teeth before she tucks him carefully into bed. “I’ll be back to read your bedtime story after I show Kara out.”

“Okay,” he replies around a yawn, and Cat smiles fondly down at him. “Bye, Kara.”

“Goodnight, buddy, I’ll see you in the morning.” Cat kisses the top of his head before she leads Kara to the door. “I’ll see you at the same time tomorrow?”

“Of course.” She passes Kara her coat. “Hopefully he’ll be dressed when you get here.” Kara grins. “Oh, before I forget – there’s a gala dinner I have to go to next Thursday.” She makes a face, because she hates the damn things but she has to show her face and rub shoulders with her investors. “Will you be able to stay late that night? I’ll pay you double.”

“Yeah, sure, no problem.”

“You’re a godsend.” Kara grins again. “I know you’ll say no, but do you want me to call a car for you?”

“It’s fine,” Kara shakes her head. “Goodnight, Cat.”

“Night, Kara.” Cat shuts the door behind her and goes to read Carter his bedtime story, although he’s practically asleep by the time she finishes the first sentence.

Once he’s out for the count she goes to the kitchen for a glass of wine and retires to her study, and tells herself she’s ridiculous for feeling lonely, the apartment too quiet and empty, tries to focus on getting some work done before she falls asleep.

//

Kara’s first week with Carter is relatively uneventful – they spend their days playing in either the apartment or out exploring the city, sometimes dropping by Cat’s office during lunch so that she can have a few minutes break with her son.

She doesn’t stay for dinner again, and tries not to be disappointed – she loves spending time with Carter, but she loves any time she gets to spend with Cat almost as much. She’s a fascinating woman, and if Kara thought her crush would fade the more time she spent with the other woman she was sorely mistaken.

If anything, it’s only growing in volume, because the more she gets to know Cat, the more she sees behind the persona of her that she shows the world, sees past it to the woman beneath, who’s soft and warm with her son (and god her smile when she looks at him, like he’s her whole world, nearly has Kara melting each and every time she sees it), and kind and funny and all kinds of beautiful… and she’s definitely very screwed.

Because it’s Cat Grant that she’s thinking of like this, her boss, and she needs to stop before it gets her fired but she just… she doesn’t know how to look away when Cat’s standing in-front of her and asking Kara about her day.

Her phone, on the coffee table as she and Carter both spend some quiet time drawing (it’s one of his favourite things to do, she’s discovered, and he loves when she sketches something for him to colour most of all – Kara really hopes Cat doesn’t ever look inside her sketchbook, because Carter’s most common request is a drawing of his Mom and Kara thinks some of them are a little too detailed considering the woman herself has been nowhere in sight at the time, all of them done from memory), buzzes with a message, and she sets her pencil down and reaches for it, careful not to
knock Carter as he frowns with concentration down at his own sheet of paper, orange crayon held tightly in one hand.

*My ex-husband just called to say he was coming around to pick up somethings from the apartment. Usually he gives me a bit more warning, but I’m sure he wants to check out the new nanny for himself without me being there to interfere.* Kara grins as she reads the text, because in her head she reads the words in Cat’s voice, can imagine her exasperation and the eye-rolling that would accompany the message. *Hopefully he won’t be there for long. Feel free to kick him out if he lingers.*

Kara’s barely sent a reply when she hears the front door click, and Carter looks up excitedly at the noise, only to look away when he sees that it’s not his Mom who walks into the room.

Chris Wright is exactly the kind of guy that Kara would expect someone like Cat to marry – he’s handsome enough, she supposes, tall with impressive cheekbones, blue eyes that sparkle a little too much as they land on Kara, and brown hair that’s just starting to speckle with grey. She knows he’s a high flying lawyer, and she thinks from his pressed Armani suit and wide smile that he wants to rest of the world to know it, too.

“Hi.” He steps further into the room. “I’m Chris, Carter’s Dad. You must be the new nanny?”

“Kara Danvers.” He holds out his hand, and she shakes it with some reluctance. “Are you not gonna say hi to your Dad, buddy?” She nudges Carter with her elbow, and he doesn’t even look up from his drawing as he mumbles a ‘hi, daddy’ that’s hard to hear.

“You having fun, Carter?” He nods. “What are you working on?”

“It’s a picture of me and Mommy and Kara.” Kara tries not to feel awkward about being included in the family drawing when Chris is not, and she can tell from the set of Chris’ jaw that he’s annoyed by it.

“You not going to put me in there, too?”

“I never see you,” Carter answers bluntly, and Kara clears her throat and wishes she were anywhere else other than here.

“Well, that’s your Mom’s fault, kid, not mine.”

“Pretty sure Cat would let you see him whenever you wanted,” Kara can’t help but speak up, because she knows Cat wouldn’t keep Chris from Carter unless she had a reason to, and she’d said herself that he was a good father, just a shitty husband. “If you wanted to.” It’s more pointed than she intends it to be, and Chris’ eyes flash with anger as they settle on her.

“Is that what she told you?”

“What, the truth? Yeah, she did.” Kara offers him a sickly sweet smile, watches as his cheek twitches.

“Well, she’s certainly trained you well, hasn’t she?” His gaze now is cold, and Kara thinks that at least she won’t have to deal with any unwelcome advances from him in the future – she’s pretty sure she’s pissed him off too much for that. “I’m just here to pick up some things.”

“Yeah, Cat warned me you were coming.” He gives her a tight smile before disappearing down the hall. He reappears a moment later wheeling a suitcase, and barely says goodbye to Carter before he’s out the front door. “Do you get along with your Dad, Carter?” She asks, watching him closely as he shrugs.
“He’s okay. When he’s here.”

“Do you wish he was here more often?”

“Umm, no I don’t think so. Cause then I wouldn’t get to spend as much time with my Mom.” Kara can see why he’d want that.

They finish their work and then Kara makes him food and gives him a bath when Cat warns Kara she won’t be home until late, and afterwards when he’s in his pyjamas they curl up on the couch for their nightly movie.

Carter’s asleep with his head on her lap when Cat finally comes home, and though she looks exhausted from a busy day, the stress melts away as she looks fondly down at her son.

“Your day okay?” She asks, and Kara nods.

“Better than yours, judging by the time.” Cat grimaces. “I, uh, I already ate but I heated up something for you, too. It’s still in the oven.”

“You didn’t have to do that.”

“I know, but it was no trouble.” Cat’s smile is warm, and Kara feels her heart skip a beat.

“Did Chris swing by?”

“Yeah.” Kara makes a face, and Cat’s smile widens.

“He hit on you, didn’t he?”

“He didn’t, actually.” Cat looks surprised. “He checked me out,” she’d seen his wandering eye when he’d first walked in, “but that was all. I think I annoyed him too much for him to want to hit on me.”

“How?” Cat looks amused.

“He was trying to trash talk you, tell Carter that the reason he never sees him is because you won’t let him. I just… put him in his place.”

“You did?”

“Yeah.” Kara shrugs. “He shouldn’t be trying to turn your son against you. Especially with a lie.”

“I… thank you.”

“It’s nothing.” Carter stirs on her lap, and she gently nudges him awake. “Hey, buddy, your Mom’s home.”

“She is?” He yawns and sits up, and Kara tries to smooth down his bedhead. “Hi, Momma!”

“Hi, sweetheart. Are you ready for bed?” He nods around another yawn, and Cat chuckles as she takes his hand and helps him off the couch.

“It’s not too late for him to be up, is it?” Kara frets. “I just thought you’d want to see him when you got back, I didn’t think…”

“It’s fine, Kara.” Cat’s smile is warm. “It’s still relatively early – he always falls asleep if you put a movie on after seven.”
“Oh, okay, good.” Carter yawns again and tugs on Cat’s hand. “Well, I’ll let you get him into bed, and I’ll be back on Monday?” Carter pouts at that, but he’s too tired to argue.

“Yes, we’ll see you then.”

“Bye, Carter.” She waves. “Have a good weekend.”

“You too, Kara. Goodnight.”
Kara plans to spend her Saturday morning at National City’s Natural History Museum. She’s a museum nerd, and though she’d visited the city a handful of times when she’d been in college to catch up with her sister, they’d never made it there, and Alex had promised to take her the first weekend she could.

But when she arrived at Maggie and Alex’s apartment that morning, it was to be met with an apologetic Maggie, who had told her that Alex had had to rush off to a crime scene but would try to join them later.

Maggie offered to take her instead, and Kara was only too happy to spend some time with her sure-to-be future sister-in-law. It’s a bright, sunny day in the city, and there’s a spring in Kara’s step as she and Maggie make their way downtown.

“So, how’s your first full week been, Kara? Are you enjoying it?”

“Yeah, it’s really great.” She only has to think about her job and Carter and can’t help but smile, can barely believe how lucky she is, to have gotten a job that makes her so happy and pays so well. “It doesn’t even feel like work, most of the time. Carter’s a great kid, and spending my days in that apartment isn’t exactly a hardship.”

She loves the views, most of all – that balcony is her favourite place to sit, and she and Carter often sit out there, Kara sometimes sketching the city skyline, and at night the view of the stars is breathtaking.

“I would kill to see the inside of that place,” Maggie sighs wistfully. “To see how the other half lives.”

“If I thought I could sneak you in without Cat finding out, I would.” Maggie grins.

“I’d be too scared to touch anything.”

“I was for the first few days,” Kara admits – that first day had been a bit daunting, to say the least. “And then I broke a vase, and Cat was actually really cool about it, didn’t care at all even though it probably cost a lot.” She’d been playing with Carter at the time, and had knocked it clean off the table it was resting on – it had shattered into a dozen pieces on the hardwood floor.

It was the first time she’d made a mistake, and she’d been dreading Cat’s reaction; when Cat had come home Kara was quick to apologise, and offered to replace it even though she was sure she’d never be able to afford anything that Cat owned, but Cat had been quick to wave her off.

“Did anyone get hurt?” She’d asked, and Kara had been quick to shake her head – she’d been startled but Carter had merely giggled at the look on her face before he’d carried on playing. “Then it’s fine, Kara. Everything in this apartment, they’re just things – easily replaceable, but you and my son are not.” Kara’s cheeks had warmed a little at that. “Just don’t make a habit of it – although if
you do want to break another, choose that one there,” Cat had nodded towards another vase, “my mother got me that one, and it’s hideous.”

“And how’s your hopeless crush?” Maggie asks, though there’s a wry smile on her mouth that suggests she already knows the answer.

“Getting more and more hopeless by the day,” Kara sighs. “But at least Cat hasn’t figured it out yet.” She pauses. “I think.” Maggie laughs at the expression on her face. “Or if she has, she hasn’t mentioned it.”

“Well, I definitely envy you – your boss is smoking hot, you get to have fun all day, and your office is a ridiculously fancy apartment. It for sure beats the bullpen at the precinct.” Maggie wrinkles her nose. “I swear half of the cops I work with don’t own deodorant.”

“At least if you get them for secret santa you’ll know what to buy?”

“I like the way you think, little Danvers.” Kara grins at the nickname, practically bouncing up the steps as they reach the entrance of the museum. “So, where to first? I’ve never actually been here before.”

“As my tour guide, you probably shouldn’t admit to that.”

“Hey, I got us here, didn’t I?”

“I suppose that’s true.” Maggie shoulder checks her, and Kara’s smile widens. “Dinosaurs first?” Kara asks as she sees the signs pointing towards the exhibit. “I have to warn you to prepare for me being a giant nerd.”

“Alex has already briefed me.”

“How’s your week been? Your partner still an ass?”

“Yup. Yesterday, he - ”

“Kara!” Maggie’s cut off by a screech that startles them both, and Kara turns just in time to see a familiar mop of blonde curls sprinting towards her before she’s nearly bowled over as Carter collides with her legs. “Hi!” He peers up at her with a giant smile on his mouth, and Kara nearly melts at how cute he is.

“Hey, buddy - where’s your Mom at?”

“Carter!” Kara hears her before she sees her, Cat materialising in-front of them a moment later, hands on her hips and mouth pulled into a thin line. “I said you could go and say hello, not tackle the girl to the ground.”

“Sorry,” Carter mumbles against Kara’s knee. “Got excited. I missed you.”

“You saw me yesterday!”

“Long time ago,” Carter replies, looking solemn, and Kara can’t help but grin at the look on his face. “Did you miss me, too?”

“Of course I did, bud.” His smile is gigantic, and Kara’s heart swells in size. “You here for the dinosaurs?” He nods, and she leans down to whisper, “me too,” like it’s a secret, which makes him giggle.
“Come around with us?” He asks, and Kara looks helplessly at Cat, because she can’t say no to that adorable little face but she’s sure Cat has better things to do than spend her Saturday morning with the nanny, probably wants to spend some quality time with her son.

“Sweetheart, I’m sure Kara would rather spend her day off with her… friend,” Cat pauses for just long enough for it to be noticeable, and Kara wonders if Cat thinks this is a date, almost laughs at the thought.

“She can come too!” Carter declares, and when Kara glances at Maggie she sees the other woman pressing her lips together to hide a smile.

“Carter…” Cat’s voice is a warning, and Carter clutches at Kara tighter, and Kara feels like there’s a tantrum coming that she really does not want to be at the centre of.

The chiming of Kara and Maggie’s phones in unison temporarily diffuses the building tension between mother and son, and when Kara glances at the message she sees that it’s Alex telling them that she’s outside and asking where was best to meet them.

Babe, get in here now - Cat Grant is here and you’re missing the show!!!! Kara closes her eyes when she reads Maggie’s reply, vows to kill both Maggie and Alex if they embarrass her in-front of her new boss before the day is done.

“Hey,” Alex’s voice calls not a moment later, and Kara wonders if she ran, but her sister doesn’t look even remotely out of breath as she joins them, standing beside Maggie and slinging an arm around her shoulder and pressing a kiss to her cheek – a move that Cat watches closely. “How’s it going?”

“Cat, this is my sister, Alex,” Kara facilitates the introduction that Alex clearly wants her to make, judging from the elbow she gets in her side, “and her girlfriend, Maggie. Guys, this is Cat, and this,” she squeezes one of Carter’s shoulders, “is Carter.” He looks up at them shyly, and when Alex waves to him he hides his face in Kara’s legs.

“Nice to meet you,” Alex says. “We’ve heard a lot about you.” Kara whirls to glare at her sister, who merely grins. “I was talking about Carter, obviously.” Kara’s eyes narrow even further, and when Cat isn’t looking, mouths ‘I am going to kill you’.

“I’m sure.” Cat looks amused, and Kara wants to die. “Anyway, we won’t infringe upon your day any longer. Come on, Carter.” She takes a step towards him. “Let’s go.”

“But I want Kara to come too!”

“Kara can bring you back another day,” Cat tells him, which Kara thinks is a fair compromise – it’s not like their time together is limited.

“No! I want both of you to come!”

“You know, if you want to Kara, you can go.” Alex has a shit-eating grin on her face, obviously very proud of herself. “It’d actually be nice for us to spend some time together.” She pulls Maggie closer with a dramatic sigh. “Work’s just been so busy lately.”

Kara knows for a fact that until this morning, both Alex and Maggie had taken the entire week off, and spent every moment of it together sorting out their new apartment.

“Oh, I wouldn’t want to intrude,” Kara directs that at Cat, after throwing another glare at her sister.
“You wouldn’t be intruding,” Cat says, voice soft. “It’d actually be nice to walk through a museum with someone that can form full sentences.” Kara smiles at that. “You don’t have to, though.”

“I’d love to.”

“YAY!” Carter all but yells, and then he’s taking Kara’s hand and trying to drag her away.

“Hang on a sec, buddy,” she laughs, pulling him to a gentle stop before stepping to say goodbye to Alex and Maggie.

“You’re welcome,” is all Alex says, thankfully after Cat has moved out of earshot.

“I hate you. I’m not coming over for dinner later.”

“Yes, you are,” Alex tells her, very seriously. “You’re coming so that you can give us every detail of your date with Cat.”

“This is not a date!” Kara hisses, keeping her voice quiet.

“Alex,” Maggie laughs, tugging at Alex’s arm. “Stop teasing her or she’s going to explode.”

“You are just as bad,” Kara rounds on her, hands on her hips. “If you hadn’t sent that text then none of this would’ve happened.”

“Oh, please, stop acting like you’re not delighted at the thought of getting to spend more time with Cat,” Alex counters, and Kara hates that she’s right. “Now go, enjoy yourself. And be at our place at seven tonight.”

“I’m not coming!”

“Yeah, you are. Maggie’s making quesadillas, your favourite. And there’s a chocolate cheesecake in the fridge with your name on it.” Kara huffs because Alex knows she can’t say no to either of things. “We’ll see you later, love you!”

Kara’s still grumbling under her breath when she makes it back to Cat and Carter, although it is hard to be mad at the thought of a few more stolen hours with Cat, especially when she’s wearing black jeans and a white blouse, and Kara has to try hard not to stare at the pale skin of Cat’s collarbones, revealed by the undone buttons at the collar.

“You ready to check out some dinosaurs, Carter?”

“Yeah!” He reaches for her hand again, and with his other he takes Cat’s and pulls them both towards the doorway.

“I’m really sorry to intrude,” Kara whispers, leaning close to Cat so that Carter doesn’t overhear, close enough to smell the perfume on her skin, and when Cat turns her head towards her Kara tries not to drown in the green of her eyes.

“You’re not intruding,” Cat tells her, holding Kara’s gaze and nearly making her trip over her own feet. “Really – I’m happy you’re here. And he is, too.” Carter’s smile takes over his whole face, and there’s a smaller one on Cat’s lips, and Kara’s heart beats double time in her chest, thudding against her ribcage.

She thinks it might be a miracle if she makes it through this day alive.
“This one’s my favourite!” Carter’s on Kara’s shoulders, her hands holding onto his legs as he stares wide-eyed up at the enormous t-rex skeleton at the centre of the museum’s exhibition, and Cat can’t help but laugh at the look of amazement on his face.

“I thought stegosaurus was your favourite?” Kara asks, and Cat loves that she listens to him, that she remembers tiny details, that she makes so much of an effort and doesn’t seem to care at all about giving up her Saturday to keep a three year old happy.

Carter had taken off almost as soon as he’d seen Kara across the lobby, and Cat had been powerless to stop him.

Kara seems to have taken it all in her stride though, is happy to chatter away to him and answer any of his questions that Cat would never have been able to without the use of her phone, and as much as Kara’s tried to apologise for infringing on their day, Cat is actually enjoying just watching the two of them together, and seeing Carter so happy.

Kara isn’t bad to look at, either, and Cat keeps scolding herself for allowing her gaze to linger on her legs, left bare by the skirt she’s wearing. It’s inappropriate, and she knows it, but she can’t help it, sometimes – Kara’s gorgeous, even more so because she’s completely unaware of it, and the effect she has on other people.

Cat has seen it at work – her IT guy always falls all over himself whenever Kara brings Carter to visit, and she knows that Kara’s caught the eye of a few other members of Cat’s staff, but she’s oblivious, and that only makes her more endearing.

Kara will never know that secret, though – as good as the girl may be at getting Cat to open up, that is one that Cat will keep close to her chest, because she doesn’t want to do anything to jeopardise this.

Kara’s a godsend, Carter completely in love with her, and Cat would be loath to ruin it, especially after her run of bad luck with nannies over the past few months.

“This one’s cool, too!” Cat’s brought back to the present by Carter growing excited over yet more fossils. “Don’t you think so, Momma?”

“It’s very… impressive.” Cat has absolutely no idea what she’s looking at, and while Kara knows it judging from the grin she throws Cat’s way, Carter seems satisfied enough.

“Wanna go play in the fun part of this place?” Kara asks, and when Carter nods she starts walking, heading towards the interactive exhibits and the chattering of excited children. “Where do you want to start?”

The room is filled with puzzles, and Kara carefully sets Carter down and lets him choose one, and this is more Cat’s speed and she’s quick to help him, Kara leaning back to watch with her hands tucked into her jacket pockets.

Afterwards, they get lunch in a café down the street, Cat reluctant to say goodbye to Kara. She’s had fun today – she tries to reserve her weekends just for Carter, but as much as she loves her son it still gets lonely, sometimes, not having another adult to talk to.

She doesn’t have much in the way of friends in this city – she’s too busy and not great at cultivating personal relationships – and it startles her to think that Kara might be becoming one, because as much as Cat knows this is a job to Kara, she suspects that it’s more than that, too.

It’s in the way she’s always smiling bright and sunny when she walks into Cat’s apartment in the
morning, the way she never hesitates to put Carter first, in how she brings him by to the office because she knows it cheers Cat up, how she’d thought of Cat last night when she’d left food for her.

They’re all simple, tiny gestures, but they go above and beyond what Cat’s asked of her, and she knows, seeing Kara with Carter, that she’s already besotted with him, and even though it’s only been a week, Cat has no idea how she ever coped without her.

“Thank you for doing this,” Cat says softly, when Carter’s preoccupied with the colouring the waitress had given him. “You really didn’t have to – he’d have probably thrown a tantrum, but there would have been no lasting harm done. And I’ll pay you for today, of course.”

“No way,” Kara looks scandalised. “Honestly, it’s fine, today definitely hasn’t felt like work, and I’m happy to spend more time with you guys.” Kara’s cheeks turn pink as she says it.

“Even at the expense of spending time with your sister?”

“I’ll see her later,” Kara shrugs. “Besides, it’s always fun taking kids around museums if they haven’t been there before. They get so excited about everything.”

“So do you,” Cat teases, and Kara’s cheeks turn a darker shade, and Cat really shouldn’t be enjoying this as much as she is. “I’m glad you were there, though – there’s no way I could’ve answered even half of his questions as well as you did.”

“I’m sure you could’ve coped.”

“Not nearly as well as you.” Their food arrives, and Kara’s eyes light up at the sight of her burger and fries. She shakes her head in mock disappointment as Cat starts on her salad. “What?”

“It’s just leaves.”

“It is not just leaves,” Cat rolls her eyes. “There’s also dressing.” Kara grins, and Cat tries to ignore the way it lights up her face, and how Kara looks beautiful, even under the café’s awful fluorescent lighting.

They eat, and then they go their separate ways, and as she and Carter watch as Kara walks away, she feels lighter than she’s felt in a long, long time.

“I really like her, Momma,” Carter says, looking up at her with bright eyes, and Cat smiles and ruffles his hair gently.

“Me too, Carter. Me too.”

//

“So, how was your date?” Alex pounces on Kara almost as soon as she’s through the door, and she rolls her eyes as she sets a bottle of wine, her contribution towards dinner, on her sister’s kitchen counter.

“It was not a date!” She protests, bending down to pet the head of Maggie and Alex’s black cat as he winds herself around Kara’s ankles. “Was it, Salem? No, it wasn’t.”

“Okay, how was your not-date?” Alex corrects, jumping up to sit on the counter beside where Maggie is cooking on the stove.

“It was… it was actually really fun.”
“See? Aren’t you glad we interfered?”

“I think the interfering was all yours, babe,” Maggie objects.

“You still didn’t help me,” Kara points out, and Maggie nods her head. “And if either of you ever do something like that again I swear I will never talk to you again,” she tries to give her best warning glare, but Alex grins and it melts away, “but yeah, I guess.”

“I promise I’ll try my best.” Kara thinks that’s the best she can hope for. “Seriously, though, you look happy. Do you think you’ll ever actually make a move?” Kara is shaking her head before Alex has even finished speaking. “Why not?”

“Because she’s my boss. And Cat Grant. And I’m…” She gestures down at herself. “Me.”

“You shouldn’t put yourself down, you know,” Alex tells her, and Maggie nods in agreement. “You’re a catch.”

“But Cat could have anyone. Like literally anyone, why would she want me?”

“Um, because you’re amazing and she’s definitely going to see that if she hasn’t already? And come on, she must like having you around or she wouldn’t have asked you to stay this morning.”

“She was probably just being nice. And stopping Carter from having a tantrum.”

“Hm, I don’t know.”

“And even if she was interested, she’s still my boss.”

“So? That didn’t stop you last time.”

“Diana was my professor, not my boss,” Kara sighs, because they’ve had this argument before – Alex had very vocally disapproved of her last (and only) relationship. “And anyway – you weren’t happy about me being with her, so why is Cat any different?”

“Because Cat’s your boss, sure, but she doesn’t really hold a position of power over you, not like a teacher does over a student, or if you were her assistant or an employee at CatCo or something. It’s not like being with her advantages you in any way, or further your career. It might cause a bit of a scandal in the press if it got out, sure, but that’s about it.”

“I feel like you’ve thought about this too much,” Kara replies, to drag her attention away from the fact that Alex actually has some pretty solid points. “And it’s all irrelevant anyway,” she adds, when Alex opens her mouth to start arguing again, “because she’s not interested in me, so can we just drop it?” Alex’s mouth opens again. “Please?”

“Alright,” Alex huffs. “But you have to talk about her less.”

“Deal.” They shake on it. “So, what did you guys get up to today?”

“We went to that new tapas bar for lunch. We’ll have to take you there one day because it was amazing,” Maggie answers. “And then we went shopping for the last few bits we need to make this place more like a home.”

“We got a new rug,” Alex adds, stealing some cheese from a plate on the counter when Maggie isn’t looking. “Isn’t our life exciting?”

“I don’t know,” Kara looks at the two of them a little wistfully, “it sounds pretty perfect to me.”
She’s never had this kind of domestic bliss – the apartment and the girlfriend and the pet, the fact that Alex has someone to come home to after a long day at work, someone to cook with, and someone to decorate with. It’s something that she’s always ached for, and hopes like hell that one day she’ll be lucky enough to have it.

“You’ll have this one day,” Alex tells her gently, no doubt able to guess her line of thought. “I promise.”

Kara hopes that she’s right.

“I can’t believe you actually have the audacity to read that publication in my apartment,” Cat huffs when she gets home late on Monday night, after spotting the newspaper lying on the coffee table – Kara had read it after putting Carter to bed, and after setting it down had promptly forgotten about it.

“I’m sorry!” Kara can’t help but be sheepish. “I read the Tribune usually,” Cat narrows her eyes like she doesn’t believe her. “I do! It’s just… my cousin,” Kara reaches for today’s issue of the Daily Planet and waves it in the air. “He’s on the front page.”

“Your cousin is Metropolis’ biggest drug dealer?” Cat asks, eyebrows flying skyward as she reads the headline on the front page.

“No!” Kara’s cheeks flame red. “The byline – my cousin’s a reporter for the Planet.”

“He is?” An interested look flashes across Cat’s face as she takes a step closer, taking the newspaper from Kara’s hands. “Clark Kent is your cousin?”

“Yeah.” Kara smiles as she thinks of him – it’s been a while since they’ve had the chance to catch up face to face, but they still talk at least once a week, a tradition born after too many years of silence between them.

“Huh.” Recognition sparks in Cat’s eyes as she glances down at Kara. “I should’ve realised sooner – you have the same eyes.”

Kara wonders why Cat remembers Clark well enough to know the colour of his eyes despite leaving the Planet many years ago, when he was just an intern, and decides it might be best not to dwell on it.

“I didn’t think that Clark had any family left,” Cat continues, folding herself down onto the couch beside Kara and kicking off her heels. “We worked together for a little while back in Metropolis,” Cat explains in response to the question in Kara’s eyes. “He told me that his parents died in a car crash when he was fourteen.”

“They did,” Kara confirms – she hasn’t thought of her aunt and uncle for a long time, but her memories were always fond.

“And then he went to live with his aunt and uncle?” Cat’s eyebrows draw into a frown, as though she’s struggling to recall the details, and Kara nods, her mouth twisting down into a grimace because she knows which part of the story came next. “But they died in a fire… oh, Kara.” Sympathy flashes across Cat’s face, and Kara swallows around the lump that has wedged itself in her throat. “They were your parents?”

“Yeah.” Her voice is a croak, and she clears her throat and looks away from Cat’s kind eyes, staring down at her hands instead, and decides that it’s time that Cat learned the full story of what happened
to her parents. “My Mom was a judge.” Kara takes a deep breath, preparing herself to tell the story of how she had ended up with the Danvers’ – no matter how many times she told it, it never got any easier. “She was pretty high up in the system, handled a lot of high profile cases – sent a lot of dangerous people to prison.”

Kara curls her hands into fists in her lap to stop them shaking, flinching when Cat reaches out, her palm settling over her hands, warm and grounding as she squeezes gently. Kara’s skin felt aflame wherever Cat’s skin brushed against her own, tingles racing down her arm and making it hard to breathe, and when she glances up she finds Cat’s face close to her own.

She’s close enough for Kara to make out spots of green and gold in her eyes, and Kara’s breath catches in the back of her throat, because Cat is one of the most beautiful things she’s ever seen.

“You don’t have to talk about this if you don’t want to.” Cat’s voice is soft, her thumb brushing almost absentmindedly over the back of Kara’s hand and sending Kara’s heart into overdrive.

“No, I… it’s okay.” Kara manages a weak smile. “You should know.” She takes another deep breath, and feels stronger with Cat’s hand on hers. “I was twelve, and my Mom had just sent two gang members to prison for a really long time. They were… they were bad guys, had links with drugs, the cartel, human trafficking… and my Mom sent them down. And there were a few people who were a little upset with her for that.”

Kara remembers the week before the fire, the threats that her parents had tried so hard to hide from her and a seventeen year old Clark, the wounds of losing his own parents still so fresh.

“And then one night… I woke up and I couldn’t see. There was smoke everywhere, the smell of things burning, the sound of the flames…” She trails off, and when she blinks she feels like she’s back there, trapped in her bedroom on the top floor of their house, screaming for help as acrid smoke had filled her lungs, and Cat’s hand squeezes her tighter. “I was stuck, I couldn’t get out because of where the fire had spread but Clark… he ran up the stairs to get me, shattered by bedroom window and helped me down off the roof.”

She’d broken her arm in the fall, but it had seemed a small price to pay to be able to gulp in fresh air. “I wouldn’t be here if it wasn’t for Clark.” She’d screamed at him for it, in the moments after the fire crew had arrived, Clark’s arms wrapped around her as they’d come back outside shaking their heads, and Kara had felt numb as they’d told her that her parents hadn’t made it out alive. “He tried to go back in for my Mom and Dad, but…” She shakes her head, swipes at her eyes when she realises that silent tears have begun to stream down her cheeks. “They were gone.”

“Oh, Kara.” Cat’s voice is quiet, laced with sympathy, her expression heartbroken as she takes in the look on Kara’s face. “I had no idea.”

“It’s okay.” Kara sniffs and flashes Cat a grateful smile when she’s offered a tissue, dabbing at the tears that are gathered in the corners of her eyes. “After that… Clark and I didn’t have any other family, so we got put into foster care. The cops were worried that whoever had started the fire might come back to finish the job so they split us up.”

Thinking of that time in her life always made Kara’s stomach feel like it was tied up in knots. She’d been twelve, scared and alone, thrust into a group home and told that she couldn’t talk to the only person she had left.

“Clark tried to search for me, but he couldn’t get anywhere, and it wasn’t long before he got fostered – he changed his name, became Clark Kent, and moved away. He still tried to find me, and the Kents tried to help but… the system has a lot of flaws, and they never could. I was lucky,” she adds,
to ease some of the anguish in Cat’s gaze. “I got bounced around for a few months, stayed with some… not nice people, but then I met the Danvers’ and…” She shrugs. “They gave me the greatest life I ever could have asked for.”

She’d give anything to have her parents back, to have her mother wrap her into a hug or to hear one of her father’s fantastically woven bedtime stories. But they were gone, and though she wishes that she’d never lost her Mom and her Dad, she knows that she’d won the lottery by finding her way to the Danvers.

“How did you find Clark again?”

“By sheer dumb luck and random chance.” Kara’s lips curve into a small smile, relieved to be moving on to happier memories. “It was years later – I was in college, getting coffee with my sister and she brought that morning’s Daily Planet with her, because the front page was an article about the foster system and some of its failings and she thought I’d want to see it. I looked at the byline and…”

“Clark’s first front page article was on the foster system,” Cat remembers, and Kara looks at her curiously. “He was my intern, while I was at the Planet,” she explains, “I always make it a habit to keep up with the careers of those I’ve worked with.”

“Makes sense. Well, when I saw the article, I thought the name and the subject were too coincidental, so I found an email on the Planet’s website and sent a message. It turned out to be him, and we’ve been in semi-regular contact ever since.”

Sometimes it’s still hard for her to believe, that she’d managed to find Clark again after so long – that they’d both managed to wind up with such good families. She knows that they were lucky, that there were thousands out there that weren’t, and she wakes up every morning thankful to have the Danvers’ in her life.

“That’s quite the story.”

“Yeah,” Kara smiles and wipes away any lingering tears. “I can barely believe it myself, sometimes.”

“And what happened to your parents…” Cat trails off, shakes her head. “How can you have gone through all of that, and turned out like this? You’re extraordinary.” Kara flushes at that, quickly looks away from Cat’s gaze.

“I just look on the bright side. There’s no point in dwelling on the past, wishing that things could have been different. I don’t think my parents would have wanted that for me. They’d have just wanted me to be happy.”

“They’d be proud of you, if they were still alive.” Cat says it with certainty.

“I like to think so.” She takes a breath, and decides she’d like to change the subject. “Carter was great again today, although he did try really hard to stay awake for as long as possible.”

“I assume you eventually got him to bed?”

“He’s out like a light,” Kara confirms.

“I’ll look in on him in a minute.”

“And I’ll get going.”

“I know you always say no but please Kara, let my driver take you home tonight, it’s late.” She
opens her mouth to protest. “And he’s already downstairs waiting for you. So if you don’t use him, he’ll have just wasted half an hour for nothing.”

“Okay, you’ve got me there.”

“I’m sorry for keeping you here late two nights in a row.” Tomorrow is the gala dinner Cat’s not looking forward to.

“It’s cool, I know your schedule is unpredictable. It’s not like I had other plans.” Unless sitting on her couch and catching up on her Netflix queue counted, anyway. “I’ll see you tomorrow.”

She calls Clark in the car ride over to her apartment to congratulate him on another front page, and some of the sadness that still lingers, like it always does whenever she thinks about her parents, is eased by the sound of his voice.

It lifts even more when he tells her that he’s going to be in National City soon for a couple of days, and she’s quick to note the date down in her diary – it’s been too long since they’d last managed to see one another, and she already can’t wait.
Chapter 7

Cat breezes into her apartment on Thursday night with about five people, all laden with heavy looking bags, in tow, and Kara watches, wide-eyed as they file wordlessly down the hall and into Cat’s bedroom.

“My team of stylists,” Cat explains as she pauses in the living room to say hi to Carter. “To transform me into something beautiful.”

“They won’t have to work very hard, then.” The words slip out before she can stop them, and one of Cat’s eyebrows quirks up in surprise – Kara quickly looks away, knows she’s blushing again in front of Cat. “Just cause, you know, you’re already…” Kara waves a hand in Cat’s general direction, willing herself to stop talking because she’s digging herself a deeper and deeper hole. “You.”

“Well, thank you, Kara. Let’s hope my date for the evening is as complimentary as you.” Kara tenses a little at that – it hadn’t occurred to her that Cat would have company for the night ahead, but she supposes it probably should have. Cat was newly single, after all – it made sense that she’d have someone new on her arm at events. “If he’s early, would you mind letting him in?”

“Oh course.” Kara smiles, and knows that whoever he is, he’s a lucky guy, and she’s going to be jealous of him for the whole damn night.

Cat disappears into her bedroom to get ready, and Kara and Carter carrying on playing with his superhero figurines, acting out a major battle from one of Carter’s favourite cartoons.

When there’s a knock at the door a while later, Kara pushes herself up to answer it, smiling politely at the guy on the other side of it. He looks nice enough, she supposes, in a navy suit, good-looking and with a charming smile.

“Hey, I’m Kara, Cat’s nanny. She’s just finishing up getting ready, but come on in.”

“Thanks.” He steps over the threshold. “I’m Stephen.” He shakes her hand, and she leads him inside, feels as awkward as he probably does as he hovers uncertainly near the couch.

“You can sit, you know,” Kara says with a smile, trying to put him at ease as she settles back down next to Carter.

“Sorry.” He eventually settles on the couch. “I guess I’m a little nervous.” Kara can understand that – if she were about to go on a date with Cat, she would be, too. “So who’s this little guy?” Carter’s been quiet ever since Stephen came in, and is watching the man warily from beside Kara.

“He’s a little shy around strangers.” Kara wraps an arm around Carter’s back and pulls him closer until he relaxes a little under her touch.

“Me too, sometimes,” Stephen whispers, and Carter cracks the tiniest smile.

“Hey, look at that, you’re starting to win him over already.” The sound of heels echoes on the hardwood floor, and both Kara and Stephen turn to see Cat come into view and wow, Kara can barely look at her.

She’s wearing an emerald green dress that brings out her eyes, with a plunging neckline revealing an expanse of smooth, pale skin that Kara aches to trace with her fingertips. The dress is tight over Cat’s hips, and there’s a zip along the full length of the back that Kara would love to drag undone. Her
make-up is impeccable and every strand of hair in place, and she’s just… she’s the most beautiful thing Kara’s ever seen.

“Wow,” Stephen says, rising to his feet, “you look…”

“Beautiful,” Kara breathes, so quietly that she barely even says it at all. But her lips still form the words, and Cat is looking at her, not Stephen – she must see it, must have noticed the awestruck look on Kara’s face when she walked into the room, and Kara thinks that if Cat was ever oblivious to the effect she had on Kara, she’s sure as hell aware of it now.

“You look great,” Stephen finishes, and Kara almost scoffs, because is that really the best he can come up with?

“Thank you.” Cat’s eyes are still on Kara, she can feel them, but when Kara next looks up she’s at Stephen’s side. “Are you ready to go?”

“Sure.”

“Be good for Kara, sweetheart.” Cat steps towards Carter, risks her perfectly applied lipstick to press a kiss to his head. “And I’ll see you tomorrow.”

“Night, Momma.”

“Have a good night,” Kara offers, and Cat smiles as she moves towards the door, Stephen and her team of stylists in tow.

Kara watches Cat leave and sighs when she’s gone, falls backwards onto the floor and Carter giggles as he follows her, snuggling into her side, the both of them staring up at the ceiling – Kara’s glad she has Carter to distract her, because otherwise, she knows all she’d be thinking about was Cat in that dress, wishing more than anything that she was the one by her side.

God, she needs to get over this, before it kills her.

//

Almost the second Cat arrives at the gala, she’s ready to leave.

She hates events like this, having to rub shoulders with National City’s elite, smiling and laughing with people she knows will gossip about her almost as soon as she’s turned her back.

But it’s a necessary part of her life in the spotlight, and she only attends a handful a year, so if she makes it through tonight she’ll have a few months rest before the next.

Usually, gala dinners were particularly dreadful because she’d had Chris by her side – at first, when things had been good between them, it had made them more bearable, because she had someone she could talk to, but later, when things had soured, it had been difficult just to make it through the night without screaming at one another, particularly when he wouldn’t stop his wandering eye from checking out every other woman in the room.

She’d been hoping that Stephen would be enough to keep her entertained, but she realises pretty early into their evening together that she’s sorely mistaken. He’s nice enough, that she already knew – she’s known him for a while, met him at a dinner like this a few months ago, and when he’d asked if she wanted to go with him to this one she’d been quick to agree – but what she didn’t know was that he had all the personality of a damp cloth.
He’s a doctor, and seems incapable of talking about anything other than work, which Cat would find interesting if his stories weren’t so boring, and even after three drinks he’s still so bland that Cat already can’t wait to be home and to never have to see him again.

Home, to where Kara is waiting for her.

Kara, who Cat can’t help but let her mind drift to whenever Stephen is droning on, because the look on her face when Cat had stepped out of her room… god, it haunts her.

Because Cat isn’t stupid – she’s known that Kara has a little bit of a crush on her for a while. The girl isn’t exactly subtle, and Cat has caught her staring on more than one occasion and can’t help but preen a little at the attention, because Kara is young and she’s gorgeous and the fact that she thinks Cat is attractive is something that she likes very much indeed.

But she can’t help but wonder, now, if it’s more serious than a little harmless attraction, judging from Kara’s reaction earlier that night. She hadn’t missed the way Kara had called her beautiful, and she also hadn’t missed the way her own heart had beat a little faster at the desire that she’d seen flash across Kara’s face, the thrill it had sent through her, like a bolt of electricity straight to her core.

It was only then that she’d started to wonder if maybe her own attraction (which has always been there – she’s not blind, and Kara is beautiful, too) is growing into something more.

And that is dangerous, because Kara is… well, she is so young and innocent and far, far too good for her. Cat blackens everything she touches, and Kara’s sweet young heart is something she will never touch, no matter how much she might want to, because Kara Danvers will not be another thing she ruins.

Especially considering how much she means to Carter.

So she lingers a little longer at the gala than she normally would, lets Stephen talk her ear off all night, and when she gets back to her apartment, she invites him upstairs even though she has no intention of letting him stay the night.

But Kara might think he is, and it’s the gentlest way to let the girl down that Cat can manage – it might hurt her (and the look in Kara’s eyes when she spots Stephen over Cat’s shoulder feels like a knife in Cat’s chest), but Cat thinks it’s better to do it now than later, that if Kara sees her with someone else maybe it will be enough to get her to move on.

“Everything go okay?” Cat asks as she lets Stephen help her out of her coat.

“Yeah, Carter went to bed fine. He tried to sneak back out a couple of times, but he eventually stayed put. Did you, uh,” Kara fidgets, eyes flicking between Cat and Stephen. “Have a good night?”

“Wonderful,” she lies.

“Great.” Kara’s smile is tight, and Cat almost breaks. “Well, I’ll um, leave you guys to it.” She reaches for her coat, and Cat tries to ignore the way her hands shake. “See you tomorrow.”

“Goodnight, Kara.” Cat watches her go with something heavy in her heart, but she tells herself that this is for the best – the girl will bounce back, and hopefully any ideas she has about Cat will be forgotten, and Cat will just have to try and push her own thoughts about Kara away, somewhere deep, deep down, until she forgets, too.

(She doesn’t think that that will be very likely – she hasn’t known Kara for very long, but it’s long
enough for her to have turned Cat’s world upside down, and she doesn’t know to ignore the way that seeing Kara with Carter, how happy she makes him, makes her heart thud painfully in her chest, makes her ache for a family, for a partner, for someone to share her life with and god, how has Kara done this to her, torn her carefully constructed walls down so easily, with just a disarming smile?)

God, she needs a drink.

She makes one, and one for Stephen, too, tries to chase away thoughts of Kara and that sad, sad look in her eyes with the bitter taste of scotch, but it doesn’t work.

Stephen tries to kiss her, and for a moment Cat lets him – it’s been a long, long time – but it feels wrong, and she’s quick to push him away.

“I think you should go,” she tells him, and he doesn’t put up a fight, just shrugs and then he’s out the door and Cat is left alone.

She goes and sits in Carter’s room for a while, watches the rise and fall of his chest and listens to his heavy breathing, lets it calm her but it doesn’t distract her, and when she eventually makes her way to her bed, she wishes more than anything she had someone to share it with.

//

Kara doesn’t sleep well that night.

She can’t stop thinking about Cat, and that stupid dress, and the fact that she’d probably spent the night with that guy, wishes she was the one who had gotten to drag that zip down Cat’s back, to kiss every inch of her skin, to fall into her and never let her go.

It keeps her up, invades her mind and drives her mad, and it’s how she ends up in the gym down the street at five a.m.

It’s busier than she expects, and she wonders, as she pushes herself on the treadmill, trying to outrun the thoughts that she can’t get out of her head, what’s haunting everyone else around her, because she’s pretty sure she wouldn’t be here this early if she had a choice.

It helps, a little.

She finishes off in the weight room. She normally wouldn’t venture anywhere near it alone, because it’s notorious for being full of guys who think they’re god’s gift to women, and sure enough, as soon as she steps inside she feels several pairs of eyes on her, rolls her eyes as more than one guy blatantly checks out her ass.

She shrugs it off, though, smiles as she makes eye contact with the only other woman in there, a blonde with killer abs and sparkling blue eyes.

She does a couple of warm ups before she moves towards one of the machines, and she’s barely settled on the bench press before a shadow falls over her, and she sighs as she prepares to hear someone mansplain how to use it.

But when she glances up she sees that it’s the woman who’s grinning down at her, and her sigh changes to one of relief – Kara definitely wouldn’t mind if she was checking her out.

“Need a spotter?” The woman asks. “It’s cool if not, but I thought I’d offer before one of these know-it-alls tried.”
“That’d be great, actually.” She does a few reps, feels the burn in her muscles as her arms tense and flex, and knows she’s going to be sore tomorrow morning. She sets the bar back down when she’s done and sits up, shaking out her arms to relieve some of the tension. “I’m Kara, by the way.”

“Sara.” The other woman holds out a gloved hand to help Kara up, and they swap places – Sara increases the weight, and Kara can’t help but be distracted as she watches the muscles in Sara’s arms work as she raises the bar above her head.

She’s hot and she’s **strong**, two things which Kara has always appreciated, and when Sara catches her staring Sara smirks, and Kara’s cheeks flame red as she quickly looks away.

“So, how come I haven’t seen you around here before?” Sara asks as she pauses for a drink. “You new in town?”

“Pretty new,” Kara answers. “I only moved her a few weeks ago, but I have been here before. Usually at night, though.”

“Not a morning person?”

“Not a morning exercise person,” Kara corrects. “But this morning I guess I just fancied a change,” she lies – she doesn’t think Sara would want to hear about her real reason for being here. She’s startled to realise that it’s the first time she’s thought about Cat for a while – maybe coming in here had been a good idea, after all.

“Well, I hope it’s a change you keep making,” Sara says, and Kara wonders if she’s being flirted with. “It’d be nice to see you here again.”

She’s about to reply when she feels her phone buzz in her pocket, and she reluctantly fishes it out, prepared to press ignore if it’s her sister (Alex would definitely understand if she could see what Sara looked like), but frowns when she sees it’s Cat.

“Sorry, it’s my boss,” she says to Sara, who nods with understanding as Kara presses the phone to her ear. “Hello?”

“Hi, Kara, sorry to call you so early, but something’s come up at the office – is there any way you could come over a little earlier this morning? Or pick Carter up from CatCo?”

“Uh, sure,” Kara answers, “I can actually come over to yours right now if you want me to? I’m just at the gym.” She glances down at herself. “Although if I did that I’d need to use your shower and maybe borrow some clothes?” She adds, because she hadn’t thought she’d need to bring any with her. “I can pick him up from your office if that’s easier, though.” She wishes she’d said that first, because what if Stephen’s still at Cat’s apartment?

“No, that’s fine, of course you can use the shower.” Kara curses herself.

“Then I’ll be there in like ten minutes.”

“Thank you, Kara.” She sighs as she slips her phone back in her pocket – she’d been expecting to have a bit more time to prepare before she had to see Cat again.

“Have to go?” Sara asks, and Kara nods.

“Unfortunately. Maybe I’ll see you around?”

“I sure hope so.” Kara smiles, and when she turns as she reaches the door of the room, she finds Sara
watching her go. Instead of flushing like Kara had when she’d been caught checking Sara out, Sara just winks, and Kara’s smile widens, a spring in her step as she heads outside and towards Cat’s apartment.

When she gets there, Cat’s in the kitchen on the phone, hand on her hip, and when she sees Kara she just stops mid-sentence, stares at her for long moment and Kara wonders if there’s something on her face, or if she’d imagined Cat’s call and she’s not actually supposed to be here, but then Cat blinks, and turns her back, and carries on talking like she’d never even stopped.

She hangs up a moment later and turns back towards Kara, frown turning into a tired smile. “Sorry again for dragging you out here so early.”

“Oh, it’s fine, honestly.” Kara shrugs out of her jacket and drapes it over the back of a chair, and she swears Cat is staring again, glances down and wonders if maybe she should have kept her jacket on, if Cat’s problem is that Kara’s just wearing a sports bra beneath it and she thinks that’s inappropriate, but it’s not like she planned this. “Um, sorry,” she feels like she has to apologise, folds her arms across her stomach to try and cover herself up, “but I didn’t bring any other clothes with me.”

“That…” Cat trails off, her eyes dragging slowly down Kara’s figure and wait, is Cat checking her out? Is Cat flustered by her lack of clothing, not annoyed by it? Is she dreaming? “That’s quite alright.” Kara drops her arms back to her sides, watches Cat swallow as she glances at Kara’s abs. Kara flexes her arms, just a little.

Cat clears her throat and quickly looks away.

“You can use the shower in my bathroom.” Cat recovers herself quicker than Kara would like, ruining her fun, and leads her down the hall. “And I’ll try and find you something to wear.”

Kara braces herself as Cat opens the door to her bedroom, half expecting to find Stephen inside it, but the room is mercifully empty.

It’s the first time she’s been inside it, and it looks exactly like she would have expected Cat’s bedroom to be – the decoration sophisticated, the room itself spotlessly tidy, pictures of Carter dotted all over the walls.

She tries not to let her gaze linger on Cat’s bed, tries not to imagine Cat lying in it, naked, her hands twisted in the white sheets and Kara’s lips on her skin.

Cat shows her to the bathroom before she disappears, and Kara thinks this may be the fanciest shower she’s ever used. She has no idea what half the buttons do and doesn’t dare touch any of them except to adjust the water temperature to just short of scalding, letting it ease the ache of her tired muscles.

She doesn’t really know what to do with the newfound information that Cat might be attracted to her – at least her body, if nothing else. That morning she’d been trying so hard not to think about her because she didn’t think there was any way anything could happen between them, but now she’s not so sure.

But, she supposes, just because Cat might be physically attracted to her, it doesn’t necessarily mean she wants to act on it. And all of her other reasons are still valid – Cat is her boss, and she loves this job and she loves Carter, and she doesn’t want to do anything to jeopardise that.
So it doesn’t change anything, not really.

Except she can be super happy about the fact that Cat thinks she’s hot, at least when she’s wearing workout clothes.

Maybe she should do it more often.

When she eventually emerges from the shower, wrapped in a ridiculously fluffy towel, she opens the bathroom door to find a stack of neatly folded clothes waiting for her.

The sweatpants (Kara can’t believe that Cat Grant owns a pair of sweatpants) are a snug fit, and stop halfway down her calves, but she manages to get them on and she’s reasonably confident that she can bend over in them so she supposes they’ll do.

The sweater that accompanies them is also a little tight, but Kara can’t complain – it definitely beats spending the rest of the day sitting in her sweaty gym clothes.

She returns to the kitchen where she finds a sleepy Carter, still in his pyjamas, waiting for her, and Cat almost ready to leave.

“Sorry about the clothes,” Cat says, and Kara tries not to smile when she feels her gaze linger a little longer than strictly necessary. “It was either those or some of Chris’ clothes that he’s left here – if you’d prefer those, I can get you some.”

“No, these are fine,” Kara assures her. “Would it be okay if I got my sister to swing by with some of my own clothes later, though? I don’t really want to wear these on the subway.”

“Of course,” Cat laughs. “I’ll let the doorman know that you might have visitors.” She glances at her watch and sighs. “Well, I suppose I should really get going.”

“Is everything alright?”

“Oh, yes,” she leans down to give Carter a kiss on the top of his head. “Just the latest fire to put out. I’ll try not to be back too late, but no promises. I’ll see you both later.”

“Hope your day isn’t too awful!” Cat grimaces like she knows it will be, and when she’s gone she turns to Carter. “Hey, buddy. You ready to get dressed or do you want breakfast first?”

“Food!” He declares, and Kara laughs, lifting him into his chair as she steps into the kitchen.

“What do you want? Should we make pancakes?” She’s hungry herself, and Cat has always told her she’s welcome to cook anything she wants, although she’s yet to try. Carter nods enthusiastically, and Kara stands with her hands on her hips and observes the three million different cupboards in-front of her. “Okay, well you’re going to have to help me out a bit here buddy. Do you know where your Mom keeps her mixing bowls?”

“In there!” He points to one of the lower cupboards and Kara peers into it.

“Well done, Carter.” She grabs one of the large plastic bowls from within it, and then a frying pan from a different cupboard. “Now, do you know what goes into pancakes?”

“No.”

“No? Has your Mom never made them for you?”

“Yeah, but I forgot.” Kara grins.
“Okay, well we’ll make the easy kind because I’m a terrible cook, so we just need flour, eggs and milk.” She gathers all three, and then finds the scales, quickly making up a batter while she heats the pan on the stove.

It’s one of the few things she’s actually confident enough to cook for Carter without wondering if she’s going to give him food poisoning, and before long there’s a stack of pancakes in the middle of the counter, and both of them are digging in.

“What do you want to do today, little man?” She asks him when they’re done, letting him help her out the dishes back in the dishwasher. “You want to go to the park?”

“Oh okay!”

“I’ll have to get some clothes first,” she remembers, looking down at her current attire. “Shall we go get you changed while I call my sister?” He nods. “You’re okay with my sister coming over, right? She’s really nice, I promise.”

He nods again, so she takes him to his room and picks out something for him to wear, and then calls Alex’s number. “Hey, you’re not working until this afternoon, right?” She asks when her sister answers.

“Uh-huh. What’s up?”

“Could you do me a favour?”

“Mm, depends what it is and what I get out of it.” Kara rolls her eyes.

“I need you to go to my place and pick up some clothes for me if you can? And bring them to Cat’s place? And what you get out of it is the chance to see the inside of her apartment.”

“I am sold,” Alex says immediately, and Kara didn’t expect anything less. “But wait, why do you need clothes? Oh my god, did you stay over last night? Did you sleep with her?”

“No!” Kara is appalled. “I did not sleep with her.” She lowers her voice to say that, conscious of Carter being right there, changing into his tiny little black jeans. “I was at the gym this morning and she called to ask if I could come over early, so I didn’t have time to get changed.”

“A likely story. You totally slept with her.”

“You are impossible.”

“And yet you still love me.” Kara sighs. “I’ll bring your clothes, calm down. Anything in particular?”

“Just whatever you grab. Do you need the address?”

“Naw, I already stalked where she lives. I’ll head to yours now, and I’ll see you in about half an hour. Oh man, Maggie’s going to be so jealous.”

“Bye, Alex.” She hangs up, and she and Carter settle down with his regular morning cartoons until there’s a knock on the door.

She goes to answer it, and Carter watches from the couch, standing up so that he can peer over the top of it, only his eyes and the top of his head visible.
“You’re a lifesaver,” Kara says when Alex hands her a bag of her stuff, and she stands aside to let her into the apartment. “Thank you.”

“Uh, no, thank you for letting me see this place.” Alex looks around her with wide eyes, and waves when she notices Carter staring. “Hey, kiddo.” He doesn’t answer. “You have fun at the museum the other day?” Alex tries again. “You like all the dinosaurs?” Eventually, Alex gets a small nod. “Kara tells me you like them.”

“They’re the best,” he says, his voice quiet.

“She tells me you like the stars, too. She taught me all the constellations when we were kids.”

“She’s teaching me, too.”

“She’s a really good teacher,” Alex tells him, and Kara smiles as she watches her two favourite people interact – she knows Alex is slightly (irrationally) afraid of small children, and the fact that she’s making an effort means a lot.

“Do you want to watch cartoons?” Carter asks, a high honour, and when Alex nods Kara goes back to the couch, perching next to Carter and patting the space next to her for Alex.

“So, how come you were at the gym so early this morning?” Alex asks once Carter’s attention turns back to the TV. “That’s unlike you.”

“I…” She glances at Carter, knows she can’t say too much. “Just had a lot on my mind. Wanted to clear my head.” Alex narrows her eyes at her sister.

“Cat?” She mouths, and Kara nods. “We need to get you a date.”

“I do not need a date.” Kara keeps her phone tight to her chest. “I don’t need to date, Alex.”

“Yes, you do,” Alex tells her. “Because if you’re not going to make a move with you-know-who, then you need to get over her, and you know what they say.” Kara rolls her eyes. “ Seriously, though, Kara, how long’s it been since you last went on a date?”

“Um…” She can’t actually remember – she just knows it has been a while.

“If you have to think about it for that long, then it has been too long. Gimme your phone, I’m downloading a dating app.”

“You are not.” Kara keeps her phone tight to her chest. “I don’t need to date, Alex.”

“Why not?” Kara doesn’t really have a valid answer for that. “See, you can’t answer that. Just let me download it, see what interest you get, and if you don’t like it, you can delete it.”

“No.” Alex sighs.

“You should think about it.”

“Yeah, yeah.”
Kara finds herself at the gym again on Sunday morning, this time with her sister and Maggie in tow, and she can’t help but be a little hopeful that she might run into Sara again.

She doesn’t spot her in the main gym, and after half an hour, she decides to go and check out the weight room in the vain hope that she might be in there.

“Why would you want to do that to yourself?” Maggie asks when Kara tells them where she’s going. “It’s just going to be full of dudes who think they know better than you.”

“No reason.”

“There’s a reason.” Alex is on her immediately – Kara knows she’s a terrible liar. “There’s a definite reason.”

“No, there’s not.”

“Then we’ll just come with you.”

“What?” Maggie protests. “Ew, no, why would we do that?” But Alex ignores her protests and merely drags her girlfriend along as she follows Kara down the stairs. “You owe me for this, Danvers.”

“I’ll buy you dinner,” Alex promises, which seems to satisfy Maggie.

Kara tries not to be disappointed when a quick glance around the weight room reveals only sweaty guys and no Sara in sight, but settles in to do some reps on one of the machines anyway – now that she’s here, she may as well get something out of it.

Plus, she’s really confusing her sister, who she can see out of the corner of her eye, desperately trying to work out why Kara had come down here.

“Oh, hey,” a familiar voice calls from behind her, and Kara spins to see Sara standing there, a smile on her face. “You came back.”

“I did.”

“And you brought friends?” Sara glances towards Alex and Maggie, who, Kara is horrified to see, are staring at Sara with near open-mouts. “Was I not a good enough spotter for you?” Sara teases, and Kara feels herself blush.

“What? N-no, you were great.” Alex puts a hand over her face in exasperation, and Kara hopes to God that Sara can’t see her. “This is my annoying sister, Alex, and her girlfriend Maggie.” They both wave. “And this is Sara. We met the other day.”

“Wanna be workout buddies again?” Sara asks, and Kara nods, because she would like to get her away from Alex as soon as possible, and also, she’s definitely not terrible to look at. “Awesome.” Sara’s smile is dazzling, and Kara refuses to look back at her sister as Sara leads her towards one of the machines.

“Your sister and her girlfriend make a cute couple,” Sara comments, glancing towards them as Kara does a benchpress.
“Yeah, they do. I’m glad they found each other.”

“And what about you?” Sara asks. “You have someone waiting for you at home?”

“Nope.”

“Seriously?” Sara raises an eyebrow. “A girl as cute as you?” Kara flushes. “Why the hell not?”

“New to town, remember? I haven’t had a chance to meet anyone yet. Well,” she adds, “except for girls at the gym who call me cute.” Sara grins.

“Hey, I just call it like I see it.” They swap places, and god Sara has great arms, and it feels kind of good, to be flirting with a hot girl, and she wonders if maybe Alex is right – maybe she should be putting herself out there. “I feel like we’re being watched.”

“Oh my god.” Kara looks up to see Alex and Maggie on the machine opposite and being completely obvious about the fact that all they’re doing is spying on them. “I am so sorry.”

“It’s cool,” Sara laughs, setting the bar down and sitting up. “Is there a reason?”

“Because their only goal in life is to embarrass me in-front of attractive women?”

“You think I’m attractive?”

“Have you seen you?” Kara asks, incredulous, and Sara grins. “I’m going to go tell them to leave.” She marches over to them and is immediately dragged closer by Alex, her grip vice-like on Kara’s arm.

“Um, excuse you,” Alex whispers, “why the hell didn’t you tell us about the hot woman you met at the gym?”

“Because I knew this would happen!” Kara hisses. “You two are unbelievable.”

“We are unbelievable?” Alex asks. “Us? What about you? How could you withhold something like this from us? Good god Kara, look at her!” Kara does, and Sara is watching them with an amused smile, gives her a wave. “If you don’t ask her out I am going to do it for you.”

“I was getting there and then your staring ruined it for me. Now go away, and stop being creepy.”

“I want every detail as soon as we get home!” Alex calls after her, definitely loud enough for Sara to hear, and Kara is going to murder her.

“Again, sorry,” she mutters, when she’s back at Sara’s side.

“It’s fine, this is the most entertainment I’ve had in ages,” Sara tells her, and Kara shakes her head.

“So, um, do you maybe want to grab a drink one night? See each other outside of a room full of sweaty dudes?”

“I thought you’d never ask.” Sara’s eyes are sparkling, and they crinkle at the corner when she smiles, and Kara thinks she’s beautiful.

“Next Saturday?” Kara suggests, and Sara’s smile turns into a pout.

“I have to wait almost a whole week to see you again?”
“Um, my job is kind of unpredictable,” she explains, “I never know what time I finish in the week until the day of, and I wouldn’t want to mess you around if it ended up being late.”

“Okay, I guess that’s fair,” Sara says. “But what’s wrong with tonight? Or do you already have plans?”

“I’m supposed to have dinner with my sister but believe me when I say she will be delighted if I cancel on her for this.” Sara laughs. “So I guess tonight it good.”

“Great. Gimme your phone.” Kara hands it over, and Sara is quick to type in her number and send herself a message. “I’ll text you and we can sort the details?”

“Sure.”

“I’ll see you later.” Sara presses a kiss to her cheek and Kara’s cheeks flame, and then she’s walking away.

Kara watches her go before she goes in search of Alex and Maggie, and finds them just outside the door.

“Tell us everything,” Alex demands.

“Well, I have a date tonight…”

Kara’s pretty sure she nearly goes deaf from the amount of squealing.

Sara, down the hall and definitely not out of earshot of that racket, glances back before she turns to corner, giant grin on her face.

//

“Are you nervous?” Sara asks, later that night, when she’s sat opposite Kara in a booth in the back of the bar Sara had picked for the evening. The leather of the seat is cool on Kara’s bare legs, and she fiddles with the tiny umbrella nestled on the rim of her glass as she decides whether to tell the truth or not.

“Yes.” She figures that there’s no point in lying.

“Why?” Sara’s got an easy smile on her face.

“Because you make me nervous!”

“What?” Sara looks at her in disbelief. “How?”

“Because I haven’t been on a date in ages and you’re very pretty and your confidence is a little bit intimidating.”

“Can I tell you something?” Kara nods. “I’m nervous, too.”

“You are not.”

“I am!” Sara’s smile widens. “Because this is also my first date in ages and it’s with a very pretty girl who finds me intimidating.”

“I didn’t say it was a bad thing!” Sara’s surprised at how much she’s enjoying herself, at how easy Sara is to get along with. “Is this really your first date in a while?”
“Yeah.” Sara’s smile turns a little sad. “I, uh, got out of a relationship not so long ago,” she admits. “So I’m only just starting to get back into dating. And I’m not really looking for anything serious right now – I thought I’d better say that sooner rather than later, in-case you are.”

“Not really,” Kara shrugs. “My last relationship was… well, kind of a mess, really.” That’s an understatement. “So casual is good. Probably what I need right now.”

“I’m glad we’re looking for the same thing.” Kara is, too – she’s not ready for a relationship, but some casual fun to get her mind off of Cat? That, she could do. “So, tell me more about yourself, Kara. You said you had an unpredictable job?”

“Kinda – I’m a nanny to a very cute three year old.”

“Oh, cool. Full-time, I’m guessing?”

“Yeah, his Mom’s a pretty busy lady, and his Dad is… very absent.” Sara nods. “But it’s a pretty sweet job. He’s a great kid.”

“I can tell by the way you talk about him,” Sara says. “So, was nanny always the plan? Are you going to take on another kid when he goes to school?”

“I’m actually hoping to go back to school myself,” Kara replies, taking a sip of her drink. “I want to get my masters, maybe doctorate, and go into teaching.”

“Of?”

“Astrophysics.” Sara blinks. “That’s always the blank face I get whenever I say that – it’s usually the end of the conversation.”

“Now I’m intimidated by you,” Sara tells her, and Kara shakes her head. “I am! That’s incredible.”

“It’s just what I’m good at,” she shrugs.

“Well, I’m afraid I will not be able to keep up with you if you talk about anything physics related, because I very nearly failed it in high school.”

“What do you do?”

“I have two jobs at the minute – I’m a barrista during the day, but I’m also a personal trainer, and I teach some martial arts, too.”

“Oh, nice. I have a black belt in karate.”

“Maybe we should spar some time.”

“I’d like that.”

They talk for a while longer before they decide to call it a night, the both of them with an early start in the morning. Overall, it’s been a good night – Sara is sweet and funny and easy to talk to, and Kara has more fun that she was expecting to, wouldn’t mind seeing her again.

Afterwards, Sara walks her home, and when they reach her apartment building, Kara turns and pulls Sara into a kiss. Her lips are soft and warm and it’s nice, and Kara feels herself wanting more when Sara leans back.

She doesn’t invite her inside, but they do make tentative plans for later that week, depending on
Kara’s schedule.

She’s smiling as she opens the door to her apartment, feels lighter than she has in ages, and she settles in-front of the TV and reaches for her phone, knowing that Alex and Maggie will be impatiently waiting for an update.

//

Cat’s Wednesday is hectic, and a mistake in that weeks’ layouts means that she’s not walking through her front door until ten past eight.

It’s another night of not putting her son to bed, something that she loathes missing. She doesn’t see him enough during the day, but she’d made a promise to herself that she would try with their nights, that she wouldn’t be an absent mother, leaving everything to the nanny and becoming distant from him.

Her worst fear is that Carter will resent her, that their relationship will turn sour, like Cat’s relationship with her own mother. She fears that she’s a terrible parent, fears that she’ll ruin things with Carter like she had with Adam, and sometimes she wonders if she’s doing a good enough job.

She knows that she could do better, that she should be home to feed him every night, not just to put him to sleep, but with her job it’s unavoidable, and as terrible as it may make her seem to others, she doesn’t think she could ever give it up.

She couldn’t be a stay-at-home Mom, marvels at people who are, because she’d go stir-crazy if she didn’t have her job to keep her mind active.

“Hey.” Kara emerges from the balcony, her sketchbook held loosely in one hand, and Cat’s breath catches at the sight of her, framed in the moonlight.

She’s gotten changed since that morning, into black jeans and a red blouse with a deep v-neck, showing off the sharp planes of her collarbones, and she’s more heavily made-up that Cat has ever seen her.

She looks gorgeous, and Cat can barely look at her.

“You look nice,” Cat tells her, because it’s the truth, and Kara’s answering smile is radiant. “Have you got plans?”

“I have a date.”

“Oh.” Cat supposes it shouldn’t surprise her – Kara is young and attractive, and of course it made sense for her to date, and she certainly has no right to be jealous of whoever that person might be. “I haven’t made you late, have I?”

“No, not at all,” Kara is quick to reassure her. “I should be right on time.”

“Good.” Cat wonders if her smile looks as hollow as it feels. “Everything okay today?”

“No problems to report,” Kara confirms. “We went to the park, he played with a couple of the other kids.”

“He did?” That’s unusual for Carter – he usually kept to himself, even on the playground.

“Uh-huh. Oh, and I keep forgetting to ask you – there’s an event going on at the Observatory on
Friday night, it’s like a family night where they’re open late and they let the kids tour their telescopes and things. I thought it might be fun for Carter? I was planning on going anyway to have a look around, but if the two of you wanted to come too, that would be cool. I can get the tickets.”

“Would you not rather go with someone else? Your sister or your date, perhaps?”

“Nah,” Kara shakes her head. “It’d be more fun with a kid. But it’s cool if you’d rather not.”

“No, we’ll come,” Cat decides, unable to say no to the girl. “I think Carter will enjoy it.”

“Awesome, I’ll get the tickets tomorrow.” Kara glances at her watch. “I should probably get going, sorry.”

“Don’t apologise,” Cat waves her off. “Go, have fun, you deserve it. She’s a lucky girl, whoever she is.” Kara smiles, and Cat wishes she could be happy for her, but all she can think about is Kara out there having fun and her spending another evening here alone.

“Are you okay?” Kara asks, a crease between her eyebrows and concern on her face, and Cat forces herself to smile.

“I’m fine, just tired. I’ll see you tomorrow, have a good night.” The door clicks shut behind her, and Cat heaves out a sigh, padding down the hall to check in on her son.

He’s sleeping peacefully, and she leaves him be, pours herself a scotch and grabs the bottle, takes it into her study and tries like hell to numb her mind, to chase away thoughts of Kara (always, always Kara – she’s inescapable, and Cat can’t even wish that she’d never come into her life, that she’d never hired her, because she’s so damn good at her job and Cat doesn’t know what she’d do without her).

It doesn’t work (it never does), just leaves a bitter taste in her mouth, and when she eventually falls asleep she’s haunted by blonde hair and blue, blue eyes.

//

“Are you excited, buddy?” Kara asks, as she and Carter make their way towards the doors of National City’s Observatory. He’s been hyper all day, hasn’t talked about anything other than tonight since Kara had told him about it yesterday, and he’s walking so fast that he’s nearly tripping over his own feet, and she keeps her hand tight around his, ready to catch him if he falls.

“Yeah!”

“Good,” Kara laughs at his enthusiasm. “Hopefully your Mom can join us soon.” Cat had gotten wrapped up in something at the office and was going to be a little late, but Kara hoped she got to spend at least some of the evening with them – she had a feeling that Cat would love to see him this happy.

“Yeah!”

“Good,” Kara laughs at his enthusiasm. “Hopefully your Mom can join us soon.” Cat had gotten wrapped up in something at the office and was going to be a little late, but Kara hoped she got to spend at least some of the evening with them – she had a feeling that Cat would love to see him this happy.

She thinks Cat might need cheering up – she’s been home late most night that week, and the stress of it is written clearly across her face. She’s been… quieter, the last couple of nights, more withdrawn, but whenever Kara asks her if there’s something wrong she just brushes her off.

The entrance hall of the observatory has a dome-shaped ceiling painted midnight blue, and across it the constellations are scattered across it in bright colours. Carter stares up at them with wide eyes, and Kara can’t help but smile at the sight of him, loving seeing him experiencing things for the first time.
There’s a show playing in the Planetarium, and that’s where they start. Carter listening with rapt attention the whole time, perched on Kara’s knee. Afterwards, they spend some time wandering around some of the exhibits outside it and Kara teaches him about the stars.

It’s there where Cat finds them some time later, when Carter is grilling Kara about his new favourite thing – black holes.

“You can’t see them?”

“Nope,” Kara tells him, waving as she spots Cat over his shoulder. “And that’s because nothing can escape them – not even light.”


“It sure is. Here’s your Mom.”

“Hi, Momma!” He turns to give her a hug, and Cat scoops him up in her arms and presses kisses to his cheek until he begs her to stop.

“Hi, sweetheart.” Kara is glad to see that Cat looks lighter, with her son in her arms. “Hi, Kara. Have I missed much?”

“Only Carter giving me a pop quiz.” He grins. “We can head out to look at some of the telescopes, if you want?”

“Sure.”

“Wait!” Carter calls out, and both Cat and Kara pause. He levels Kara with a very serious gaze. “Could Batman escape a black hole?”

“I don’t think he could, buddy,” Kara laughs, ruffling his hair. “How was your day?” She asks Cat as they head deeper into the observatory, following the signs directing them to the workshops they’re running for the kids.

“Let’s just say I’m glad it’s a Friday,” she sighs. “And I wish the weekend could be longer. I’m sure you probably think the same, with the hours I’ve had you working this week.”

“Are you kidding? This is the best job I’ve ever had, I honestly don’t mind the hours.”

“You don’t have to suck up to me, you know.”

“I’m not.” Cat just looks at her. “I’m not! Honestly, I really do love this job. And I know that you took a chance, hiring me, so… thank you.”

“I should be thanking you,” Cat tells her, stopping to set Carter down when he starts fidgeting. “You’ve been a godsend.” Kara flushes. “Sometimes I can’t quite believe you’re real – I’ve never seen him get along with someone as easily as he does with you.”

“Well, I’m just glad he likes me. And that you don’t hate me.”

“Did you think I would?” Cat asks, an amused smile on her mouth.

“A little?” Kara admits. “Just because you’re so cool and calm and collected and I am… not. I talk a lot. And I’m a millennial.” She tries to say the word with as much poison as Cat had injected during her interview, and Cat smirks.
“You do have a tendency to ramble,” Cat says, “but for a millennial, you’re not so bad – just don’t tell anyone I said that, or they might think I’m going soft in my old age.”

“You’re not that old.”

“Old enough,” Cat says, and Kara wants to ask old enough for what but she can’t because someone says her name and it’s a voice she hasn’t heard in over six months but it’s unmistakable, and it freezes her in her tracks.

“Kara? Kara, is that you?” She really doesn’t want to turn around, really wants to bolt and never look back. She feels dizzy, sick, and Cat is looking at with her concern but she can’t even open her mouth to lie and say that she’s fine. “Kara?” She takes a breath and turns, finds herself looking into a familiar pair of brown eyes.

“Diana. Hi.”

Diana Prince had been her first girlfriend, the only woman that she’s ever loved. She’d been her professor in college, and Kara had been smitten the very first time she’d laid eyes on her, during a lecture on just her second day as a freshman.

She’d harboured a crush for years from a distance, but in her final year she’d ended up on a research project in Diana’s lab, which had led to a lot of time spent together, eventually culminating in a kiss that had changed everything.

“It’s nice to see you.” Diana hasn’t changed, is still drop-dead gorgeous, and when she smiles Kara has to look away. “You look good.”

“What are you doing here?” Kara’s voice is clipped, but she doesn’t want to stand here exchanging pleasantries – she’s too busy reliving her heartbreak, remembering long hours spent crying on the phone to her sister.

“I was invited to give a lecture at NCU earlier today, and when I heard about the event here tonight, I thought I’d check it out.” Kara lets that sink in, decides she has astronomically bad luck. “I didn’t ever think that I’d run into you…” There’s something wistful in Diana’s eyes, and it makes Kara’s throat tight, and her eyes feel like they’re stinging and she wonders if she’s about to cry. “Are - ”

“I’m sorry.” She has to get out of there, or she’s going to break down and she doesn’t want Diana or Cat and Carter to see that. “But I… I can’t.” She rushes off without another word, towards the nearest bathroom, flooded with relief when she sees that there’s no-one else inside.

She sets her shaking hands on the sink and winces when she sees her face in the mirror – she’s pale, and her eyes are wild, and as she sucks in quick breaths she wonders if this is what a panic attack feels like.

When the bathroom door opens behind her, she pushes herself away from the sink, ready to flee into a stall, but she pauses when she realises that it’s Cat.

“Kara, are you alright?” She’s frowning, concern painted across her face, and even Carter, peeking at her from behind Cat’s legs, looks worried. “You look like you’ve seen a ghost.”

“Kinda.” She huffs out a laugh, but it’s hollow. “That was my ex. It, um,” she runs a hand through her hair. “It didn’t exactly end well. As you can probably tell.”

“Okay,” Cat takes that information in her stride. “So, what do you want me to do? Do you want to leave? Because we can sneak you out the back somewhere so you don’t have to see her again. Do
you want me to go out there and give her a piece of my mind for breaking your heart? Because I will be more than happy to do that. And if you want to stay, we can do that, too.”

“I… I don’t know.” Her voice is small, and she hates it. “I think… I think I just need a minute.”

“Okay. We can do that, too.” Cat takes a step closer, presses her hand against the small of Kara’s back and pulls her into a hug.

Kara’s breath catches, because Cat Grant has her arms around her, and she can’t help but melt into the embrace, rests her head on Cat’s shoulder and tries not to cry, although when Carter joins in, too, his arms wrapping around Kara’s legs and squeezing tight, she nearly loses it.

But Cat is warm and solid against her, and Kara draws strength from her, pulls back after a few moments with a bit more composure.

“I’m sorry.”

“Don’t you dare apologise,” Cat tells her firmly. “Not for this.”

“I can’t believe I’m still this much of a wreck over her.” It’s frustrating, “I just… I didn’t ever think I’d see her again.” She thinks it’s the shock of it, more than anything, that has her so shaken.

“What happened?” Cat asks, her voice soft. “Not that you have to tell me,” she adds hastily, looking like she regrets asking. “It’s none of my business, after all.”

“No, it’s okay.” Kara takes a deep breath. “She was one of my college professors.” Cat’s eyebrows raise at that. “I was always attracted to her, and when I did some work in her lab in my final year I found out it was mutual, and we started dating. It wasn’t technically against the rules, but it was frowned upon, so we kept it a secret, and everything was great, for a while.”

Those had been some of the happiest weeks of her life, until everything had crashed and burned around her.

“And then one night we got caught. It was stupid – we were working late and we thought we were alone, so I kissed her. Only we weren’t, and someone photographed us together, another one of her students. He’d always hated me because I did better than him, and with that picture he thought he knew why. Like I’d sleep with someone just for a better grade.” The thought angers her just as much now as it did back then. “Then he tried to blackmail Diana into giving him a better grade, so that he was top of the class. And when Diana refused, he leaked the photo.”

“Oh, Kara.” Cat’s voice is filled with sympathy, and she rubs a comforting hand across the small of her back. “That’s awful.”

“It got worse. He also went to the dean and claimed that the only reason I’d done so well was because we were sleeping together. I nearly didn’t graduate.” It had been one of the worst days of her life – and she’d had a few of them. “They couldn’t fire Diana because there wasn’t really a rule against it, but it tarnished her reputation, and mine, too. A lot of whispers followed me around campus for the rest of the semester, but I didn’t care, and I told Diana that, too. But she knew that I wanted to stay in academia, and that if we stayed together, it could affect me in the future – so she broke up with me. And then she moved schools.” She’d gone almost without warning, and Kara had barely had time to say goodbye. “I know she broke up with me for my own good, because she was trying to protect me, but… that almost makes it worse, you know?” She takes a shaky breath. “It’s hard to get closure.”

“You know, she’s out there right now,” Cat says gently. “If you want a chance for closure, this is
probably as good as you’re going to get.”

“You’re right.” Kara nods to herself. “Besides, I can’t hide in this bathroom forever.” She turns back to the mirror, checks that she doesn’t look too terrible, and takes a deep breath. “Are you gonna let me go, buddy?” Carter, who’s been quiet this whole time, is still clinging to her legs, although he lets his arms drop at her question. “I’m sorry if I scared you.”

“It’s okay.” He gives her a long look. “You okay now?”

“I will be, bud. I will be.” With another breath, she forces her legs to move, steps out of the bathroom and finds Diana waiting for her.

“I’m sorry.” She’s wringing her hands, and her eyes look so sad that Kara can barely stand it – she knows she wasn’t the only one left heartbroken by their break-up. “I know you probably hate me and I should’ve let you be but when I saw you I just… I didn’t think.”

“It’s okay.” Kara thinks she means it. “I just… needed a minute.” Diana nods in understanding.

“And I don’t hate you,” she says quietly. “I never could. It hurt, when you left, but I know why you did it.”

“I couldn’t bear it if you ruined your future just because I lacked the self-control to wait a few more months.” Diana offers her a wry smile. “You look like you’re doing well for yourself, though. Got a hot new girlfriend.” Her eyes flicker behind Kara, to where she assumes Cat is standing, and she can’t help but laugh.

“Cat is not my girlfriend – she’s my boss. I’m her nanny.”

“Oh.” Diana blinks in surprise. “I just assumed…” She trails off. “Never mind. What happened to doing your masters? To Oxford?” Kara is surprised that Diana had remembered her plans

“Oxford is expensive,” Kara replies, though she isn’t sure it’s her dream school anymore – it had used to be, but after living here, and being so close to Alex again… she isn’t so sure that she wants to move across the Atlantic. “I’m taking a year out to save up.”

“So that’s still the plan?”

“For now,” Kara shrugs.

“In that case… I’m in the middle of writing a paper, and I’d really like to use some of the data that you collected when we worked together. I wasn’t going to touch it, because I’d never use it without putting your name on it and I didn’t think I should contact you, but now that you’re here… well, there’s no harm in asking. And a published paper would look great on an application.”

“I… can I think about it?” She’s not sure working with her ex would be the best idea.

“Of course,” Diana answers immediately. “Take as much time as you need, and there’s absolutely no pressure if you decide not to; I can still publish without your data. And if you do decide you want to do it, we can have as much or as little contact as you want.”

“Okay. I’ll call you?”

“Or you can email, if you prefer.” Diana roots around in the pocket of her jacket and produces a business card. “It’s on there, if you want it.” Kara takes it, is careful to make sure their fingers don’t brush. “Well, I’ll let you back to your evening. It was nice to see you again – you look good. Happy.”
“I am.”

“That’s good.”

“I’ll, uh, maybe speak to you soon.”

“See you, Kara.” She walks away, heads towards the door, and Kara lets out a long, slow breath. When she turns she finds Cat waiting for her, and she’s quick to make her way back to her side, and lift Carter into her arms when he tugs at her skirt.

“You okay?”

“Yeah,” she says, and she means it – she feels like a weight has been lifted, one that she didn’t know was weighing her down. “I am.” She looks down at Carter. “You ready to finally go see some telescopes?”
Chapter 9

The incessant buzzing of her phone on her nightstand wakes Kara up on Sunday morning. Groaning, she rolls onto her side and reaches blindly for the offending item, wondering who's disturbing her at nine a.m.

When she sees it's Cat, she's quick to answer it.

“Hello?”

“Kara, thank god.” Cat sounds relieved. “I am so sorry to bother you on a weekend again, but... well, my mother decided to call me this morning to tell me she’s in town and wants to have lunch, and I’d really rather not subject Carter to her. Is there any way you could take him for the day?”

“Uh,” it takes Kara a moment to process the request, still blinking sleep out of her eyes. “Yeah, I can.”

“Are you sure? You can say no.”

“No, no, it’s fine.”

“You don’t have any plans?”

“My sister and her girlfriend are supposed to be coming over to my place later today but that’s about it. And we can rearrange.”

“No, you shouldn’t have to do that.”

“It’s fine, honestly.”

“How about...” Cat trails off, sounds uncertain. “Perhaps I could bring Carter over to your apartment and you can keep him there for the day?”

“That depends on whether that’s okay with you?” Kara asks – she knows that Cat trusts her with her son, but it’s different, taking him to an unfamiliar place that Cat herself doesn’t know. “My apartment isn’t a bombsite, but it isn’t exactly toddlerproof, either.”

“I trust that you’ll keep a good enough eye on him.” Kara smiles. “Are you sure that would be okay?”

“Yeah, yeah, it’s fine.” She rattles off her address, and when Cat tells her that she’ll be there within the hour she starts to panic, because her apartment is kind of messy and she definitely needs a shower.

Oh yeah, and there’s also a woman in her bed.

“Everything okay?” When Kara hangs up the phone she turns to see a pair of blue eyes looking up at her – she’d gone on another date with Sara last night, and when Sara had walked her home, Kara had invited her inside.

She’s only slept with one other person since Diana, and that had been a drunken mess, but last night had been fun, and casual, and exactly what she’d needed.

It didn’t hurt that Sara was amazing in bed, either.
“Yeah, fine.” She smiles, and has to admit that she likes the sight of the other woman in the morning, her hair a tangled mess and her eyes soft. “Turns out I have to work today, too.” Sara has the afternoon shift at the coffee shop where she works.

“You weren’t kidding about your job being unpredictable.”

“Nope. So I have…” She glances at her clock, “about fifty minutes to shower, get dressed, and make my apartment suitably tidy for a three year old.”

“Piece of cake,” Sara grins, and Kara leans forward to press a kiss to her lips before she drags herself out of bed.

She showers first, and leaves her hair to air dry as she returns to her bedroom, hunting for something clean to wear (Sunday is usually her laundry day, and she’s running low). She settles on sweats and a loose sweatshirt, and as Sara slips into her bathroom to have her own shower, she starts to tidy.

Clothes get thrown into the hamper, dishes get washed and put away, and she makes sure to clear some space on her coffee table in-case Carter wants to colour on it later. Then she does a cursory sweep of the place for anything that could be dangerous to toddlers, and, when she finds nothing, she lets out a long breath and makes her way to her kitchen, brewing a pot of coffee.

There’s a knock on her door a few minutes later, and Kara is quick to answer it, smiling when she’s almost bowled over by a mop of blonde curls.

“Hey, buddy,” she laughs. “How you doing?”

“Good because I get to see you!”

“That’s sweet.” She glances at Cat, standing behind him, notes the harried look on her face. “I’m guessing you’re not doing so good?”

“I’ve had better Sundays,” Cat grimaces. “I really am sorry about doing this to you again.”

“Honestly, it’s fine. We’re gonna have a good day, aren’t we, Carter?” He nods enthusiastically. “Is it okay with you if we hang out with my sister again? And my friend Maggie, who you met at the museum? She’s a policewoman.”

“She is?”

“Uh-huh.”

“That’s cool!” Kara smiles. “Is this where you live?” Carter peers around her to look inside the apartment. “Can I go look?”

“Of course you can.” She takes his hand, not wanting him to go too far – she doesn’t know if Sara’s finished getting ready. “Do you want to come in, too?” She asks Cat. “I just brewed a fresh pot of coffee.”

“I’d like to – oh.” Cat pauses as Kara’s bedroom door opens from behind her. “Sorry, I didn’t realise you had company.” Cat’s eyes land on Sara, and Kara watches her silent appraisal. “You should’ve said, and I’d have sorted something else out.”

“Oh, it’s fine,” Sara answers, reaching for the leather jacket Kara had thrown over the back of her couch last night. “I have to be at work soon anyway. I’ll call you later?” She directs that at Kara, who nods. “Cool. Have a good day,” she murmurs as she passes Kara, pressing a quick kiss to her
cheek.

“You too!” Kara calls as she leaves, before turning back to Cat, whose face is unreadable. “Coffee?”

“No, thank you.” Kara thinks that she was going to give a different answer before. “I should probably get going – you be good, young man,” she tells Carter, who just beams.

“I always am!”

“I’ll let you know when I can escape from the devil.” Kara tries not to smile. “Here’s some of Carter’s things.” Cat hands over a very full bag. “It should keep him occupied.”

“Thanks. I hope your day isn’t too awful.” Cat makes a face like she knows it will be, and gives Carter one last wave before she turns on her heel. Kara closes the door behind her, and then gives Carter a brief tour of her apartment.

He’s particularly interested in her easel and her paintings, and she lets him look through the stack of them that lean against the wall – she hasn’t had time to find space to hang any of them since she’d moved in.

“You want to try with some paints?” She asks him, and when his face lights up she knows the answer will be an enthusiastic yes. “Let me go and see if we can find an old shirt of mine for you to wear so your Mom doesn’t get mad if we get paint on yours.”

She grabs an old paint-spattered t-shirt and tugs it over his head – it’s long enough that it falls to his knees, and when she sits him on her stool she grabs a towel to cover the rest of him, too. There’s a stack of blank canvases on the floor, and she sets one up on the easel and fetches her palette, Carter’s eyes on her the whole time.

“Oh, bud, what colour do you want to start with?” He scrunches up his face as he thinks carefully about his answer.

“Orange!”

Alright.” She puts some in the palette and then hands him a brush. He takes it carefully, and she shows him the best way to hold it. “Off you go, kiddo.”

She lets him go crazy, and the end result is a mishmash of different colours, bright and wild and actually kind of beautiful.

“You think mom will like it?” He asks her as they’re cleaning up, and she ruffles his hair.

“Of course she will, bud. She’ll love it.” He grins.

“And let me put it in my room?”

“I… don’t know.” Kara’s not sure what Cat’s stance is on decoration. “But we can ask her.” That seems to satisfy him, and once they’ve put everything back in its place, they settle on the couch for some cartoons.

Alex and Maggie arrive at midday with lunch, and though Carter’s a little wary at first, he soon relaxes and starts to quiz Maggie on her job as he tucks into a grilled cheese sandwich (his favourite, that Kara had requested on his behalf when Alex had texted to ask what they should bring).

“What do you want to be when you grow up, Carter?” Maggie, his favourite person for the day with
the high honour of having Carter choose to sit on her knee, asks.

“An astronaut,” he answers without hesitation.

“Oh yeah? Is that what you’re gonna dress up as for Halloween?” The holiday is coming up, and Kara’s a little ashamed that she hasn’t asked him about it before – if he needs a costume, they’re going to have to get one soon. “Are you going to go trick or treating?”

“What’s that?” Carter’s face scrunches up in confusion, and Alex gasps in mock horror.

“You’ve never been trick or treating?” She asks him, and he shakes his head with some uncertainty. “Oh, my god, Kara, you have to rectify that immediately.” Halloween was Alex’s favourite holiday (mostly because she got to torture Kara with gory horror movies that Kara flat out refused to watch at any other time of year), and when Kara had used to babysit in high school, the only time Alex had ever been willing to help out was the 31st of October, where she’d take a troupe of kids around their neighbourhood.

“What is it?” Carter asks again.

“It’s a Halloween tradition where you get dressed up and knock on people’s doors and yell trick or treat and they usually give you candy,” Kara answers, and his eyes widen.

“Really?”

“Uh-huh.”

“Can we go?”

“I’ll ask your Mom, but I can’t see her having a problem with it.” She thinks for a minute. “Although I think we’d have to find somewhere else to go other than your apartment building.” Somehow, she doesn’t think Cat’s neighbours are the type to have a bag of candy ready by the door.

“You could do it around here,” Alex supplies. “All the kids from the building used to go from floor to floor – we always had loads knocking when we lived here.”

“We’ll see what your Mom says, buddy.” Carter seems placated by that. “Speaking of,” Kara’s phone buzzes with a message from Cat. “She’s on her way back over here now.”

“Does that mean I have to leave?” Carter looks disappointed.

“Afraid so, little man.” Somehow, she doubts Cat will want to spend the remainder of her Sunday with her. Although she supposes Cat might want the company, a little distraction, if her mother is truly as terrible as Cat claimed.

//

Cat’s in a foul mood when she knocks on the door of Kara’s apartment.

Her day had started off terribly, with a phonecall from the one woman she dreaded hearing from, and there was only one way it could have gone from then on: downhill.

Because when she’d dropped Carter off earlier that day, it was to find that Kara wasn’t alone, had clearly spent the night with a beautiful woman – a fact that Cat has been unable to stop thinking about ever since she’d left.

And then at lunch her mother had been in particularly fine form. It was the first time they’d seen one
another since the news of Cat’s divorce had broken, and Catherine Grant had wasted no time in
telling her what a disappointment she was, how it was somehow her fault that he had decided to fuck
his secretary, and how she shouldn’t have let such a ‘minor misdemeanour’ ruin her marriage and her
image.

There’d been the usual remarks about her disappointing career (even though she’s the most powerful
person in National City, and the most successful woman in her field, but no matter how much she
achieves, her mother will never be able to get over how her start had been in a gossip column), and
absolutely no mention of her beautiful boy, and Cat had escaped from the restaurant as soon as she
possibly could.

She’s tipsy – she’d had more drinks than she’d intended, but she needed it just to get through lunch
(and to get images of Kara and her blonde companion out of her head) – and she takes another sip
from the bottle of water she’d bought at the store across the street as she waits for Kara’s door to
open.

Kara greets her with her arms full of Carter, and Cat smiles in spite of herself when she sees her son,
gathers him in a fierce hug and sets him down when he tries to wiggle away.

“Have you had a good morning?”

“The best! Come see my painting!” He takes her hand and tugs her forwards, but Cat is reluctant to
cross the threshold.

“Oh, I wouldn’t want to intrude.”

“It’s fine,” Kara says, her eyes bright and her smile welcoming. “You can come in. You can even
stay for a bit, if you like.” Cat thinks that would be a bad idea, but she glances at Kara’s couch – it
looks worn but comfortable, the apartment cosy, and she can hear Alex and Maggie talking within
and wonders if maybe it would be nice to have some company, something to take her mind off of her
mother’s scathing words.

“I…”

“Please, Mom? I don’t want to go home yet.” Carter’s looking up at her with his puppy dog eyes,
and Cat sighs.

“Very well. If you’re sure that’s okay?”

“Absolutely. Come on in.” Kara takes her coat and Cat kicks off her shoes, lets Carter pull her over
to the easel in the corner, where a canvas sits, the paint still wet.

“You did this?” She asks, looking down at her son, who nods. “It’s wonderful.” He beams.

“He’s a natural.” Kara comes up beside her, fond smile on her lips. “You’ve got an art maestro on
your hands.” Cat smiles. “I think he might want to take it home,” Kara murmurs, voice low in Cat’s
ear, and she tries not to shiver. “But I told him I’d have to ask you first.”

“I can find somewhere to hang it.” When she was younger the things she’d made had never ended
up in the walls of her home – her mother had never deemed them good enough – and she never
wants Carter to feel like that, is filled with pride when she sees his drawings plastered across her
walls.

“I’ll bring it over when it’s dry.” Cat watches as Carter wanders over to the couch, is surprised as he
clambers up on Maggie’s knee. “I’ve been replaced as his favourite,” Kara sighs, though she’s
grinning. “I think it was because she let him use her handcuffs. I was chained to the table. He didn’t let me out for ten minutes.” Cat laughs at the image. “Do you want anything to drink?”

“What do you still have that coffee?” She could use it to sober up.

“The first batch is all gone because my sister is a caffeine addict, but I can brew another pot.” Cat follows after Kara as she moves towards the coffee machine in her kitchen. “How was lunch?” Cat makes a face. “That bad?”

“Even worse.”

“That sucks, I’m sorry.”

“Oh, it’s not your fault.” Cat waves her off, and tries not to get distract as Kara leans on her tip toes to reach for a mug.

It makes her shirt ride up, reveals a thin strip of skin at the small of her back that Cat longs to trace with her fingers. At least she’s not wearing her gym attire again — Kara in only leggings and a sports bra had knocked her speechless, because she had *abs* and her arms… before that day Cat had never seen her arms, always hidden by a sweater or a cardigan, but Kara had serious muscles and that had always been Cat’s weakness.

(Shell’s only slightly ashamed that since that day she’s called Kara over to her place early twice in the hope that she might get to see her in a similar state of undress — both times she’d been left disappointed).

Cat is quick to look away when Kara turns back around — it wouldn’t do to be caught staring — and smiles gratefully when she’s handed a steaming mug a few moments later.

“Thank you.” Kara leads her back towards where the others sit, and Cat takes a seat on the armchair next to the couch, leaving Kara to squish in beside Maggie and her sister. “It’s nice to see you both — sorry to interrupt your day again.”

“It’s all good,” Alex assures her.

“Momma, can Kara take me trick or treating for Halloween?” Carter asks her, his voice eager.

“Only if you can’t take him,” Kara is quick to add, and Cat knows she still worries about overstepping, not wanting Carter to choose to spend time with her over his mother, and it just makes Cat all the more grateful for her.

“No, you can take him.” Cat doesn’t want to promise she will when she doesn’t know if she’ll be home, and she doesn’t want him to miss out on a childhood because of her job.

“Yay! I’m going to be an astronaut!” Cat smiles at his enthusiasm, and she decides that they’ll try and stop at a costume shop on their way home so they can get him one. “Are you going to dress up, too?” He asks Kara.

“Of course I am.”

“As what?”

“I have no idea.” Kara purses her lips, thinking.

“Please go as a pumpkin again.” Alex is grinning at whatever memory she has in her head. “God,
“...that was a good year.” She turns to Maggie. “She only just fit out of our front door.”

“I did not think it through,” Kara admits.

“Is there photographic evidence of this?” Maggie asks.

“Ummmm,” Kara frowns, thinking. “Maybe. One sec.” She goes to a bookshelf across the room, runs her fingers across the spines of some photo albums nestled within it. “Alex, do you remember what year it was?”

“Was it my senior year?” Kara selects one of the albums and leafs through it, laughing at some of the photos she sees within it. “Bring it here, let me see.”

“Let me see if it’s the right one first.” It must be, because a moment later she returns to the couch – on her way she shows Cat the page it’s open on, of a grinning Kara as a gangly teenager in a round pumpkin costume, Alex next to her dressed as the Grim Reaper.

“That is... quite the costume,” Cat tells her, lips curving into a smile. Kara sits and the album is immediately stolen by her sister, who flicks through the pages with Maggie, occasionally pausing to tell a story to both her and Carter.

“Are there any embarrassing photos of a young Cat Grant in full costume floating around out there?”

“Probably,” Cat admits. “I didn’t dress up much when I was a kid, but in high school... well. Let’s just say I wore a few things just to scandalise my mother.” She smirks at the memories.

“Were you a rebel?”

“Mm, not really. I only really acted out when I was at home, and since I got packed off to an all girl’s boarding school after my Dad died, I didn’t have much opportunity to. I bet you were a girl scout.”

“She was,” Alex confirms, without looking up. “She got detention once and she cried.” Kara reaches for a pillow to smack her sister with, but Alex anticipates it and bats it away.

“It was your fault!” Kara exclaims. “You texted me in the middle of class.”

“Excuse you, you should’ve had your phone on silent.”

“You shouldn’t have texted me!”

“It was important.”

“The fact that you were bored during biology was not important.”

“It was to me,” Alex says, voice solemn, and Kara huffs – Cat gets the feeling that they have had this argument many times.

Cat listens to them reminisce for a while longer, smiling softly at the thought of Kara as an awkward teenager.

“...Oh, hey, have you thought any more about Diana’s offer?” Alex asks when her sister is returning the photo album back to the shelf, and Cat perks up at the sound of the other woman’s name.

Meeting her the other night had been... interesting, to say the least. Kara had been visibly shaken by the sight of her ex, but it had shaken Cat, too, to discover that Kara was interested in older women, had been with one before, her professor no less.
It changed things, slightly – she’d been convinced that while Kara might have a crush on her, it was just in an abstract way, that she hadn’t really thought about what a relationship with someone older might mean, but now?

Now she’s starting to rethink that, which is dangerous, as is the flutter of jealousy, deep in her gut, as she wonders what offer Kara’s ex might have made.

“Uh, a little.” Kara looks uncomfortable at the question. “I think I’m going to turn it down.” Cat tries not to look too curious, but must fail, because Kara catches her eye and explains, “she asked me if I wanted to work on a paper with her. It’ll look good on my school applications but I… I don’t know if I can work with her again.” Kara’s look turns pleading, like she’s asking for advice.

“It’s a little different, but I’ve had to write many articles over the years with people I couldn’t stand,” Cat says. “It’s not too difficult to avoid speaking to them too much. And if it would benefit your future career…” She trails off, not wanting to dwell on the fact that Kara won’t be with her forever, will be off doing better things as soon as Carter’s ready to start kindergarten.

“I just… it took me so long to get over her, you know?” She directs that at Alex, who nods and gives Kara’s shoulder a squeeze.

“But it wouldn’t be like you were seeing her every day,” Alex reasons, “where did she end up, Harvard?” Kara nods. “So it’d just be over email, you wouldn’t have to Skype her or anything if you didn’t want to.”

“I guess.” Kara worries at her bottom lip. “I’ll sleep on it,” she decides, “and then I’ll see how I feel tomorrow.”

“Alright.” Alex seems to accept that as the end of the conversation. “Looks like we tired out the little man.” Cat looks towards Carter, who is now curled up against Maggie’s side, his eyes closed and his breathing even, and she can’t help but smile.

“Should we move him to your bed or something?” Maggie asks. “I don’t wanna wake him. And he doesn’t look super comfortable.”

“Uh, yeah.” Kara bites her bottom lip. “I’m just gonna go change the sheets.” She says that quick and quiet, her cheeks tinged pink.

“Kara Danvers,” Alex sounds amused, eyes on her sister’s face as Kara gets to her feet, “did you have a girl over here last night?” Kara’s blush deepens to crimson. “Oh my god, you did!” Alex looks delighted. “Was it hot gym girl?”

“She has a name.”

“Was it Sara, then?” Alex clarifies, after rolling her eyes, and when Kara starts to move towards her bedroom, she’s quick to hurry after her. “Excuse me, where are you going, I need details.”

They disappear behind Kara’s bedroom door before Cat can overhear any, which she’s grateful for. The reminder of Kara’s morning guest is unwelcome – Cat hadn’t reacted well to seeing another woman in Kara’s apartment, her hair damp from a shower and her clothes rumpled, clearly from the night before.

She knew Kara was dating, and obviously she’s allowed to take whoever she wants home, but Cat doesn’t want to see the morning after, have the image of another woman kissing Kara’s cheek burned onto her eyelids for the rest of the day.
Her jaw clenches, and she tells herself she’s being stupid – she has no right to be upset about it, and if anything, she should be relieved that Kara isn’t hung up on her.

Instead it just stings.

She glances up and notices that Maggie’s eyes are on her, a curious look on her face, and Cat clears her throat, tries to school her expression into something normal.

“So, how long have you and Alex been together?” It seems a safe question to ask, a way to steer Cat’s thoughts away from Kara and hopefully keep Maggie from wondering what is on her mind, and she knows she’s made the right decision when Maggie lights up as she answers.

“About two years. We met at work.”

“Kara said you’re in the force?”

“Yeah, detective.” Cat is impressed – she looks young to have such a high up position.

“And Alex?” She asks. “I thought Kara mentioned that she was a scientist.”

“She’s in the forensics department.” That made sense. “I transferred here from Gotham City just over two years ago, and on my first day, my first crime scene, Alex bitched me out for the way I was handling evidence.”

“Because you were doing it wrong!” Alex and Kara re-emerge from her room, overhearing the end of Maggie’s sentence.

“Yeah, yeah.” Maggie rolls her eyes, but she’s smiling.

“So it was love at first sight?” Cat teases, and the look that passes between the two of them is fond.

“Something like that,” Maggie says softly, and then she’s looking back down at Carter as he shifts against her. “Do you maybe want to move him?” She asks Cat, who’s quick to get to her feet and gather him in her arms.

He’s heavy, and she has to shift him a little so that she’s sure she won’t drop him, but through it all, he doesn’t stir. Kara follows behind her, and Cat is aware of Maggie beckoning Alex over, the two of them speaking in hushed voices as Kara watches them with narrowed eyes, but Cat can’t make out any of the words.

Kara’s room is small, dominated by the large double bed in the centre of it. The duvet that covers it is a galaxy, and Cat thinks that Carter will appreciate that when he eventually wakes up.

“I’m just going to go see what they’re doing while you get him settled,” Kara says, eyes on Maggie and her sister as she hovers in the doorway, and Cat doesn’t miss the fact that she closes the door behind her, leaves it open just a crack.

Cat puts Carter down in the middle of the bed and pulls the duvet over the top of him, tucking him in and pressing a kiss to the top of his head. She starts to make her way back to Kara’s living room, but pauses at the door when she hears raised voices from outside of it.

“What do you mean you’re leaving?” Cat can’t see her face, but Kara sounds annoyed.

“Exactly that, and keep your voice down or she’s going to hear you.” Cat recognises Alex’s voice, and presses closer to the door, wonders what she’s not supposed to hear. “Do you not want to spend
more time with her?”

“That’s not the point!”

“Yeah, it is.” Cat doesn’t know Alex that well, but she’s pretty sure the elder Danvers sister is rolling her eyes. “Look, Maggie said she was bothered by you sleeping with Sara.” Cat breathes out a curse, wonders when she got so bad at hiding her emotions.

(She knows when – it was at 10:15 on the Tuesday morning that Kara Danvers walked into her life).

“So?”

“So,” Alex continues, “if she’s jealous of Sara, then it means she might have feelings for you.”

“She doesn’t,” Kara replies immediately, and oh, how wrong she is, “and even if she did, it still doesn’t change anything, because - ”

“Because she’s your boss, yadda yadda yadda.” Cat wonders how many times Kara and Alex have had this conversation. “But she’s not going to be forever.” Alex lets that hang in the air for a long moment.

“I can’t believe you’re encouraging this so much.”

“Because my little sister deserves to have some fun. Especially with Cat Grant.” Cat recoils from the door as if she’s been burned, wonders if that’s all she is to Kara – some kind of conquest, to be bragged about with her friends, her one night with the queen of all media.

The logical part of her mind knows that Kara isn’t like that, but her wounded heart doesn’t want to listen to reason. She supposes that at least now she knows what Kara’s intentions are – at least if she knows that Kara’s only after sex, she’ll be able to keep her heart closely guarded, not allow herself to be hopeful for something more.

(Shes knows it won’t be that easy, that she’s already in too deep, that Kara has wormed her way into her heart and isn’t going to leave it anytime soon, but if she can just fool herself for a while longer, maybe she’ll make it through to the other side).

Now, more than ever, she is certain that nothing can ever happen between them – it would hurt too much, in the end, when it all came crashing down.

She hears footsteps, the front door opening and closing, and she’s quick to make herself look like she hadn’t been eavesdropping, stands in-front of the large collection of framed photos Kara has on one of her walls.

Most of them are of her and Alex, their smiles wide in each one, though there are others, too. In some there is a blonde woman with sad eyes, and her resemblance to Alex leads Cat to conclude that she must be Kara’s foster mother. There’s some of Clark, too, as both a gangly teenager standing with who must be Kara’s birth parents, and as the young man that Cat had known, his arm slung across Kara’s shoulders.

“Hey.” Cat jumps at the sound of Kara’s voice, not having heard her come in. “Alex and Maggie had to leave.” Cat hopes her surprise looks genuine. “They had to go help out a friend.” It’s a thin excuse, but Cat accepts it, and Kara looks relieved. “Do you want a drink?”

Cat thinks about declining, about shaking Carter awake and taking him to get that Halloween costume, spending the night curled up with him on the couch watching his favourite movies.
But Kara is looking at her with hopeful eyes that Cat is powerless to resist.

“Sure.”
She’s going to *kill* her sister.

As if she’s not already bad enough, obsessed with getting Cat and Kara in a room together, but to suggest that the only thing Kara would want out of it was a famous notch on her bedpost?

That made her sick.

“‘Some fun’?” Kara’s eyes flash with anger, and she has to force herself to keep her voice down, all too aware that Cat is only one door away. “Are you serious?”

“Hey, you know I didn’t mean it like that,” Alex quickly backtracks when she realises that she’s crossed a line, holding her hands palm up in-front of her. “I just think you should stop worrying so much. Live a little.”

“And I think you should stop meddling in my love life.” Kara folds her arms across her chest. “You tell me to start dating so that I can get over her, so I do, and now you’ve all of a sudden changed your mind?”

“Because she’s interested in you, too.”

“You don’t know that,” Kara shakes her head, refuses to believe it.

“Honestly, Kara, she looked pretty upset when you mentioned Sara,” Maggie, who’s been quiet so far, pitches in. “I don’t know what other reason there would be for that.”

“Can you both just stop, please?” It’s too much to think about, makes her head spin.

“Alright, but we’re still going to go.”

“Yeah. I think that would be for the best.” Alex winces at her tone, harsher than she’d usually use, but Kara’s annoyed and she wants Alex to know it.

She walks them to the door, says goodbye and after she closes it behind them she pauses to take a deep breath, trying to let go of any residual anger, doesn’t want Cat to ask her what’s wrong.

She doesn’t allow herself to think of the possibility that Cat might be jealous of Sara, like Maggie had suggested (although unbidden, an image of Cat’s face, twisted with something unrecognisable when she’d seen Sara emerge from Kara’s room earlier that morning, comes into her head, and she quickly shakes it away).

It won’t do her any good to dwell on what ifs.

When she pushes open her bedroom door she finds Cat looking at her photographs, and she’s relieved when she doesn’t show any signs that she’d overheard any of Kara and Alex’s heated exchange, and doesn’t question the fact that aside from a sleeping Carter, she and Kara are alone.

“I don’t actually know what I have to drink,” Kara realises after she’s made the offer, padding towards her kitchen. “My liquor cabinet consists of only whatever housewarming gifts people got me.”

“Water will be fine.” Cat follows in her footsteps, leans a hip up against her kitchen counter.
“I think I can conjure up something slightly less boring than that.” Kara opens up one of her cupboards and crouches. “Uh, I have…” She reaches inside it, pulls out a couple of unopened bottles. “Vodka, gin or scotch.”

“You drink scotch?” Cat sounds surprised.

“I do not, but this is what the neighbour across the hall gave me when I moved in. I think he was trying to impress me.” Kara makes a face. “Needless to say, it did not work.” Cat smiles. “On the rocks?”

“Please.” Kara can feel the weight of Cat’s gaze on her back as she drops some ice in a glass and fills it with the amber liquid, and tries not to blush. “Not bad,” Cat says after she takes a sip, and she hands the glass out for Kara to try.

She does, and almost immediately sputters.

“God, that’s disgusting.” Cat laughs, a sound that Kara doesn’t think she’ll ever tire of hearing. “I’ll stick with a gin and tonic.” She makes one, and then leads Cat back to the couch.

She feels nervous, for some inexplicable reason. It’s not like she’s never been alone with Cat before, but then, she supposes it’s always at the end of the day, and she’s usually quick to take her leave, not wanting to overstay her welcome.

She’s certainly never been alone with Cat in her apartment, never thought for a second that Cat would ever be in her home, and now that she’s here, she’s edgy, and she wonders if Cat feels the same way.

From the way she shifts beside Kara on the couch, her fingers tapping an errant rhythm on the side of her glass, Kara thinks she might be.

The TV is still on the kids channel from earlier, and Kara reaches for the remote, flicks through the channels for a moment and eventually settles on the news, wonders how to break the awkward silence that seems to have fallen between them.

“So, do - ”

“Your - ”

They both start speaking at the same time, and Kara huffs out a laugh, tries to ignore the way that the curve of Cat’s lips as she smiles makes her wonder what it would be like to kiss her, whether she’d enjoy scotch more if she was tasting it on Cat’s tongue.

“Sorry,” Kara sets her drink down on the table, thinks that she probably shouldn’t have too much if her mind is going to continue to go **there**. “What were you going to say?”

“Just that your apartment is nice,” Cat says softly, eyes flickering around the space.

“Oh. It’s small,” Kara shrugs, especially compared to Cat’s place, “but it’s home. It was my sister’s, before, but when she moved in with Maggie she gave it to me.”

“How long has she been in the city?”

“Alex? She went to NCU for college, so about eight years. She’d only had this place for about half of that, though.”
“Do you get lonely, living alone?” The question surprises Kara, and she wonders if Cat does, in that big empty apartment, after Carter has gone to bed.

“Sometimes,” she admits, “but I’m not really here all that often – it’s only the nights and the weekends. And I spend most of my free time with Maggie and Alex, so it’s not so bad. Although sometimes it’s hard when I see how happy they are together,” she admits. “It makes me want that.”

“You’ll have it, one day.” There’s no trace of uncertainty in Cat’s voice, and Kara wishes she could be that confident. “Maybe with your friend… Sara, was it?” Cat’s trying for nonchalant, but she’s falls just short.

“Oh, things with Sara are just casual,” Kara says. “She’s still hung up on her ex and I…” She trails off, decides that to say in place of ‘and I’m hung up on you’. “I don’t know if I’m ready for anything serious right now.” Cat seems to buy it. “What about you? Have you, um, seen Stephen again?”

“Are you really asking me about my love life?” Cat asks, eyebrows raised, and Kara just shrugs. “No, I haven’t. He was… well, just so incredibly boring.” Kara laughs. “Dating at my age is… unappealing.” Cat scrunches up her nose. “I think I’m going to give it up.”

“Don’t you want to find someone? Someone who treats you better than your dick of an ex-husband?” Cat looks amused by Kara’s assessment of Chris.

“Honestly? I don’t know if there is anyone out there for me.”

“There’s something out there for everyone,” Kara disagrees, and Cat offers her a small, sad smile.

“That’s very idealistic, Kara, but… I’m not so sure it’s true. It’s alright, though.” Cat drains the last of her scotch in one long gulp. “I don’t need anyone else.” It sounds like a lie, but Kara doesn’t call her out on it, allows her to change the subject when her gaze falls on Kara’s bookshelf. “You have quite an extensive games collection.”

There are very few actual books on her bookshelf – she doesn’t own many and most of the ones she does are still in a box somewhere under her bed – and most of the shelves are instead filled with board game boxes.

“Oh, yeah,” Kara’s smile is bashful. “They’ve built up over the years. It started when me and Alex were teenagers – we used to play a lot, after Jeremiah passed away. It kept us busy.” They’d been some dark days for both of them. “And I used to play with my roommates in college.” Cat hums, eyes reading the titles of some of the games on display. “Do you, um, want to play one?”

She doesn’t expect Cat to say yes, and she’s surprised when she does.

“Which one?” Kara asks.

“Mm, do you have scrabble? Or Catan.”

“Those are two very different games,” Kara points out, “but I have both. Let’s start with scrabble.”

Cat is, unsurprisingly, very good, and she wipes the floor with Kara in both games they play. Pouting after her second loss, Kara suggests they move into Catan, which she’s usually pretty good at.

Cat is better.

“This isn’t fair,” Kara whines when Cat flips over a card to get her final point and win the game.
“Rematch?”

Before Cat can answer they hear the creak of a door, and a very sleepy Carter wanders into the room, rubbing at his eyes.

“Hi, sweetheart, did you have a good nap?” He nods, clearly not awake enough for words yet, and Cat lifts him up onto the couch to sit in-between them.

“Hungry,” he says after a few minutes, and Kara grins because the kid’s got his priorities straight.

“Should we get you home for some food?”

“Want to stay here.”

“I don’t know if I have any food for you here, bud,” Kara tells him – she’s not proud to admit that she’s not actually sure what the contents of her cupboards is, because usually Maggie is the one to fill it, often cooking dinner for her and Alex, appalled that they can barely fry an egg in the kitchen.

“Can we look?” Kara glances at Cat for an answer.

“If Kara doesn’t mind.”

She doesn’t, and she lift Carter up to take him to the kitchen, depositing him carefully on the counter, Cat following in their wake.

“So, full disclosure. I don’t even know what food I have.”

“What? How can you not know what’s in your own kitchen?”

“Um… because I don’t cook?” She’s sheepish, and Cat looks appalled.

“At all?” Kara shakes her head. “Then what do you eat?”

“Uh, well, on the nights when I don’t eat at your place,” that is one perk of the job that she’s definitely going to miss when she moves on, “I usually end up at Alex’s place, and Maggie cooks. She sometimes cooks here, too – that’s what most of my stuff will be from.”

“And when there’s not someone around to cook for you?”

“Um, take-out. Usually.”

“And you’re still that skinny?” Cat’s eyes flicker down her body, and Kara flushes.

“I have a good metabolism?” Kara suggests, and Cat shakes her head.

“God, that’s not fair.” Cat sounds exasperated, and Kara grins.

“It’s not that I don’t want to cook, I’m just really terrible at it. I set off the smoke alarm. A lot.” Cat smirks.

“Well, let’s see what I can teach you that’s relatively easy.” Cat stands on her tiptoes as she surveys the inside of Kara’s cupboards. “We’ll make pasta for the little one.” Carter seems happy enough with that, and Cat hands her a packet. “I assume you can manage to boil some water and put that in a pan?”

She’s teasing, her smile soft, her eyes sparkling, and she’s standing so close that Kara can see the
flecks of gold in green, Cat’s perfume invading her senses, and she’s so, so beautiful that it almost hurts to look at her.

“I’m not completely inept,” Kara huffs, pretending to be offended, but she can’t help but smile at Cat’s chuckle.

“Hm.” Kara grabs a pan, fills it with water and sticks a handful of pasta inside it before setting it on the stove. “You do usually feed my son, right?”

“Yes.” Carter looks less sleepy, now, perked up by the thought of food, and Kara gives him some paper and his crayons to keep him from getting too bored. “What are we having?”

“I’m thinking risotto.” Kara wasn’t even aware that she had rice. “Although that would depend on you owning at least one vegetable, which feels like a long shot.”

“Excuse you, I own multiple vegetables.” Cat looks like she doesn’t believe her. “They are just frozen.” It’s Maggie’s stockpile.

Cat goes to look, and seems to like what she finds if the way she nods to herself is any indication. She fetches a few more pans, dumping some broccoli and carrots in one and rice in the other.

“Do you want me to do anything?” Kara asks, because she feels kind of useless, standing in her own kitchen while Cat does all of the work.

“No, it’s alright – I wouldn’t want you to set off the smoke alarm.” She’s smiling, clearly in high spirits despite her terrible start to the day, and Kara doesn’t know how to look away from her.

She pretends that she’s interested in what Cat’s making, but in truth she’s barely paying attention, and feels a little guilty when Cat starts to explain what she’s doing.

She doesn’t tell her to stop, though, allows herself to revel in the domesticity of this whole thing – Cat in her kitchen, cooking her dinner, whilst Carter colours away nearby.

She realizes that it’s something that she desperately wishes she could have every day, and the depths of that want makes her realize something else.

She thinks she might be falling in love.

And she doesn’t know how to stop it, though she thinks she needs to, before it’s the death of her.

She’s cut out of her thoughts by the ringing of her phone, and if it’s Alex calling to see how things are going she’s definitely not going to pick up. It’s not, though – it’s Sara – and Kara mouths an apology at Cat as she turns her back and presses the phone to her ear.

“Hey.” She feels almost guilty, for thinking about Cat the way she is when this morning she’d woken up next to Sara. She knows that she isn’t doing anything wrong, that what she and Sara have is casual and will never be more, but it still doesn’t sit right in her chest.

“Hey. So, this totally sounds like an excuse to see you again, but have you happened to notice a pair of keys at your place? I can’t find mine, and I think they might’ve fallen out of my pocket last night.”

“Oh, Um, I haven’t, but I can look. One sec.” She takes her phone with her, doesn’t want Cat to see Sara’s name on the screen, and checks around the couch, where Sara’s jacket had landed. She checks under it, too, and lets out a noise of victory when she spies a keyring glinting under it. “Got them.”
“Amazing. Could I swing by and pick them up later? I’m with clients until nine, is that too late? Because I can try and make it there beforehand.”

“No, that’s fine.” Cat should be long gone by then, and Kara thinks that maybe it’s time that she and Sara talked, because she doesn’t know if she can keep doing this while she’s in so deep with Cat.

“Okay, I’ll see you later.”

“Everything alright?” Cat asks, when she hangs up, and Kara nods.

“Yeah, just some lost keys.” She holds them up, and is relieved when Cat doesn’t ask who they belong to.

They eat dinner, which is delicious, and then they play one final game of Catan before Cat decides to take a yawning Carter home.

“Thank you for today,” Cat says, lingering at the door, and if this had been a date then this would be the moment where Kara would kiss her goodbye. “I’ve had fun.” She says it like it doesn’t happen to her a lot, and Kara’s heart breaks for her, just a little – she doesn’t think Cat has anyone outside of Carter, not really, and that must be hard.

“You’re welcome any time,” Kara says, and she means it, because she’s had fun, too, wouldn’t mind more weekends like this. “I’ll see you in the morning.”

Kara waves them goodbye before settling in-front of the TV, catches up on some of Netflix queue until the clock hits nine, and there’s a knock on her door.

“Hey.” Sara greets her with a smile, and Kara tries her best to return it as she gestures for Sara to come inside, but it must fall short because as she passes her by Sara pauses. “Everything okay?”

“Yeah, I just… can we talk?” She hates that phrase because nothing good usually comes after it, but it just sort of spills out of her, and Sara’s eyes widen slightly.

“It’s not,” she’s quick to reassure her. “There’s just… a few things on my mind.” She settles on the couch, and Sara sits next to her, right on the edge, like she’s ready to bolt at any moment. “I guess I wasn’t really honest with you the other day. I said I wasn’t ready for anything serious because of what happened with my last relationship - which was a mess, I wasn’t lying about that.” She hasn’t had long enough to plan this conversation, her thoughts jumbled, and she just hopes she manages to make sense. “But I, um, I’m kind of hung up on someone else, and I thought that if I went out with someone who was smart and cute and funny that it might… help get my mind off of her, but it didn’t. So I don’t know if I can do this,” she gestures between the two of them, “anymore. I’m really sorry.”

“Why are you sorry? I mean, don’t get me wrong, I had a lot of fun last night and I’m kinda sad it won’t happen again,” Kara laughs in spite of herself, “but you don’t need to be sorry. You haven’t done anything wrong.” Sara reaches out and squeezes her hand. “As long as we can still be friends, because god knows I could use a few more of those in this city.”

“Me too,” Kara admits, and Sara smiles.

“This woman you’re hung up on - it’s your boss, isn’t it?” Sara asks. Kara’s eyes widen, and Sara chuckles, getting her answer without Kara saying a word.

“Am I that obvious?”
“A little,” Sara tells her, and Kara groans. “Plus, you kinda looked like you’d been caught with your hand in the cookie jar when she saw me come out of your room this morning,” she adds. “And I don’t blame you - you didn’t tell me your difficult boss was Cat freaking Grant.” Kara flushes. “And for what it’s worth, she didn’t look happy to see me this morning, so. Maybe there’s something there.”

“Maybe.” She doesn’t want to think too much into what that might mean, though, not tonight. Sara’s phone buzzes and when she pulls it out of her pocket she frowns. “Everything alright?”

“Yeah…” She trails off, still frowning. “It’s my ex, actually. She texted before telling me she was going to be in town next weekend, asked if I wanted to meet up.”

“Are you going to go?”

“I’m thinking about it.”

“Why did you break up?”

“I was an idiot,” Sara sighs, and Kara is surprised - she’d expected it to be the other way around, from how Sara was around her. “My, uh, my sister was killed a couple of years ago.” She keeps her eyes trained on her hands as she says it, the wound clearly still raw, and Kara can’t even imagine what losing Alex would do to her.

“I’m so sorry.”

“Thanks.” Sara takes a deep breath. “She… she was murdered. And I… I didn’t take it well. I went a little crazy, trying to find the guy that did it. I pushed everyone away, including Ava, and I wasn’t there for her when she needed me to be. And then I found the guy, and I… I would’ve killed him. I wanted to.” Sara’s hands shake, and Kara rests a hand on her back, feels the tension coiled in the muscles underneath, like she’s reliving that night. “I think I would have, if not for her. She followed me, pulled me off of him, and I… I think I scared her, you know? She’d never seen me like that. So she left, and I don’t really blame her. I would’ve left me, too.”

“That’s awful,” she whispers, and it makes her wonder what she would have done, if she had been older when her parents had died. Would she have sought revenge on the people that had done it? Would she have hunted them down, made sure that she got justice for her parents deaths?

She thinks the answer would probably be yes - she’d been filled sadness at the time, but beneath it, anger had simmered, and if she’d have been older, she’s sure she would have unleashed it on the world.

It scares her.

“When she texted, she said that she’s heard that I’m doing better. That she’s forgiven me. But I don’t know if I deserve that, you know? I don’t deserve her - I’ve already hurt her so much, what if I do it again?”

“You can’t punish yourself forever, though,” Kara says, her voice soft. “You deserve to be happy, and if she makes you happy…” She trails off. “If she’s forgiven you, then maybe you should forgive yourself. Try and move on.”

“I think you might be right.”

“I usually am,” she jokes, and Sara grins, knocks Kara’s shoulder with her own.
“Sorry for spilling all this to you.”

“It’s cool. We’re friends, right?” Sara nods. “Well, that’s what they’re for.”

The door slams behind Cat when she arrives home on Monday night, and Kara knows that it has not been a Good Day.

Carter’s on her knee, sleepy but just about still awake, and there’s a movie playing on the TV but it’s not quite loud enough to drown out the sound of Cat’s voice as she speaks to someone on the phone.

Her ex-husband, if Kara had to guess, from the anger she can hear lacing every word.

“Are you fu– “ Kara is quick to clamp her hands around Carter’s ears “-cking kidding me?” Cat stays in the hall, but Kara can still hear every word. “You don’t even care, do you?” Whatever the reply, it makes her scoff. “Oh, save it.”

She must hang up then, because silence falls, and Kara risks a glance over the top of the couch, sees Cat with a shoulder against the wall, looking defeated, but then she takes a breath and forces a smile as she makes her way towards her son.

“Hi sweetheart.”

“Go hug your Mom,” Kara whispers in his ear, helping him off the couch so he can reach her – when he does he yawns, and Cat chuckles as she scoops him up.

“Are you tired?”

“Wanted to see you before I went to bed.” Cat’s smile softens, and she squeezes him a little tighter. “Will you read me a story?”

“Of course I will.” She glances at Kara, who waves her off.

“I’ll tidy up a little.”

“You don’t have to.”

“I know, but you look like you’ve had A Day.”

“Thank you.” Cat takes Carter down the hall, and Kara begins collecting the toys that he’s scattered across the room during the day, putting them all back in their rightful places.

She’s emptying the dishwasher that she’d loaded earlier when Cat pads back down the hall, looking exhausted.

“Everything alright?” She asks, and Cat gives her answer by reaching for the expensive looking bottle of scotch in her kitchen and pouring herself a generous glass.

“It’s my useless ex-husband,” she sighs, after she’s taken a long sip, settling into one of the seats at the kitchen counter and gesturing for Kara to sit beside her. “Every year, I spend a few days in December in the CatCo offices in London. They’re the headquarters for Europe, and I like to check that everything over there is running smoothly.

“Usually”, Christopher comes with me – he has family over there, so he takes Carter to spend some time with them. He assured me that this year would be no different, except now he’s decided that
he’d rather take his latest conquest,” Cat sneers the word, “to Mexico than spend some time with his son. So now I have to try and find childcare over there at one of the busiest times of the year, on-top of everything else I have to deal with on any given day.”


“I know, but I didn’t think that word was in your vocabulary.” Cat’s lips curve into a small smile.

“I can watch him, you know,” she offers, because she really wouldn’t mind – it is her job, after all. “While you’re gone.” Cat looks apprehensive at the suggestion, and Kara wonders if she’s overstepped. “I mean, if you wouldn’t mind me staying here, that is. I could take him to my place but I don’t have anywhere for him to sleep, although I guess I could take the couch, or - ”

“Kara.” Cat holds out a hand, stopping her mid-ramble. “It’s not that – of course you’d be welcome to stay here. It’s just… I’ve never been away from him for that long,” she admits, voice quiet. “He’s still so young and it’s close to the holidays and I… I don’t want him to think that he’s not important.”

“He knows he’s important to you,” Kara assures, but Cat doesn’t look convinced. “He does. But I understand you wanting to take him with you. Could your assistant not keep an eye on him? He seemed to get along well with her.”

“I’ll need her with me. And there’s no-one else I’d be taking, unless…” Cat eyes her appraisingly, and Kara’s breath catches at how it feels to be trapped under the weight of her gaze. “No,” Cat shakes her head. “No, that’s a ridiculous idea.”

“Um, what is?”

“I thought…” Cat trails off again, and Kara can see the internal debate that’s raging within her mind. “That perhaps maybe you would want to come, too.” Kara’s eyes widen. “You don’t have to, and I’d pay for everything, and you’d also be paid regular wages, of course, but - ”

“Yes,” Kara doesn’t even think about it, but she doesn’t need to – an all-expenses paid holiday to London with Cat, spending time with her favourite tiny human? She could think of no better way to spend her time.

“Yes?” Cat sounds confused. “You’re sure? You should take some time to think about it.”

“I will, but my answer’s not going to change,” Kara says. “I’d love to come. If you’d like me to.”

“I would like that very much.” Cat holds her gaze for one long moment in which Kara can barely breathe, and then she blinks and looks away. “And I think Carter would, too.”
Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

If you liked the domesticity in the last chapter, here’s a double dose. Hope you enjoy it!

Wednesday is Halloween, which as far as Kara is concerned, marks the start of the holiday season, her favourite time of year.

Carter is so excited that he practically vibrates the whole day, and when she finally lets him put on his costume (which he’s been asking for ever since Cat had left for work that morning), she doesn’t think she’s ever seen a happier little boy.

One he’s all dressed up, Kara sends Cat a snap of him to get her through the rest of her workday, before she takes Carter back to her apartment building.

They pass dozens of kids already out trick-or-treating on the way, and Carter watches them with wide eyes, holding his own little pumpkin-shaped basket that Kara had gotten him for his candy tightly in his hands.

Kara’s costume is relatively simple this year – she’d gone with a witch, opting for a black floaty dress and donning a pointy hat on her head, Halloween themed tights covering her bare legs.

When they get to her building she lets Carter loose on the first floor, and it isn’t long before his basket is nearly overflowing with candy.

She suggests they eat some before knocking on a final few doors, and he’s only too eager to share, and Kara takes another photo of his face smeared with chocolate and sends that to Cat, too.

Once they’re done she takes Carter back to her apartment to wait for Cat to come and get him, and shows him her favourite Halloween movie, *Hocus Pocus*, and tries to limit his intake of candy for the night so that he’s not bouncing off the walls by the time Cat arrives.

The knock on the door comes just after the movie ends, and Kara is quick to answer it and let Cat inside.

“You have Halloween decorations?” Is the first thing Cat says, eyes flickering around Kara’s apartment.

“Are you really surprised?” Kara asks, and Cat’s smile is wry.

“No, I suppose not.” She’s nearly bowled over by an over enthusiastic astronaut a moment later. “Hi, Carter,” she laughs, “have you had a good night?”

“The best! I got so much candy! Come look!” He takes Cat’s hands and pulls her over to Kara’s coffee table, where his basket awaits.

“I hope all those wrappers aren’t yours, young man.” There’s a pile of them on the table, and Kara sheepishly sweeps them into her nearby bin.
“Most of those are definitely mine,” she admits, “but you didn’t mind sharing, did you, buddy?” Carter shakes his head, and Kara ruffles his hair. “I tried to keep him from eating too much,” she tells Cat, “I didn’t want him to be too hyper for you.”

“Thank you.” She turns towards Carter. “Shall we get going, sweetheart? I’m sure Kara has plans.”

“Only watching a stupidly scary movie at my sister’s place.” She makes a face. “Which I am not in any hurry for.” Out of the corner of her eye, she sees Carter yawn. “Although the little guy probably needs his bed.”

They leave not long after, but only after Carter, bless his heart, empties out half of his candy haul onto her coffee table to thank her for taking him trick-or-treating. She gives him a hug and waves goodbye to Cat before changing out of her costume and making the short walk a couple of blocks over to Alex and Maggie’s place.

The three of them curl up on the couch, and Kara gets her pillow ready to hide her eyes. There’s popcorn, but Maggie tells her sternly she’s not allowed to hold it, because the last time Alex had made her watch a scary movie, Kara had jumped so violently that Maggie had still found popcorn littered around the room three weeks after the event itself.

She’s on edge the whole time, and she smacks Alex with the pillow for paying more attention to her reactions than the actual movie, and when her phone buzzes in her pocket she nearly has a heart attack, much to her sister’s amusement.

Grumbling at Alex’s laughter, she fishes for the offending item in her pocket, and she’s flooded with curiosity when she sees Cat’s name across the screen, opens the message to see a picture of a fast asleep Carter, still in his astronaut apparel.

*He wouldn’t take it off*, is the caption, and Kara could imagine only too well Cat’s exasperation, the way she’d stand with her hands on her hips until Carter gave her his puppy dog eyes and then she’d break. *I thought this might take your mind off the movie, if only for a little while.*

It’s such a small thing but it’s so, so sweet, and to know that Cat had thought of her, that she’s on Cat’s mind when she’s not around, makes her smile so wide it hurts her cheeks.

“What are you smiling at?” Alex asks, eyeing her closely, but Kara simply types a quick ‘*it did, thank you <3*’ and slides her phone away.

“None of your business.”

The rest of the movie doesn’t seem so bad after that.

Much to Alex’s disappointment.

//

When Cat goes to get Carter up the next morning, she’s surprised to find him already awake – he’s usually still passed out, and is notoriously difficult to rouse – and is quick to worry.

With good reason, too, because as soon as Cat steps into his room, he calls out.

“Momma I don’t feel very well.”

“You don’t?” Cat is on him in a flash, smooths his sleep-tousled hair away from his face, and tries to decide if he looks paler than normal as she presses a hand to his forehead to check for a fever.
“What’s wrong?”

“My tummy hurts.”

“Perhaps you ate too much candy last night.” It’s a logical explanation, but he does feel a little warm, and she tells him not to move as she rushes away to get the thermometer out of the first aid kit in the bathroom.

His temperature is slightly higher than normal – not enough to warrant a call to the doctor, but enough to have her concerned.

“When did it start?”

“I don’t know.” He looks miserable, and she hates it – she’s always loathed him getting sick, felt useless not being able to do anything to help him. “When I woke up.”

“Alright, sweetheart. I still want you to eat something for breakfast, okay? Even if it’s not a lot.” He’s reluctant, but she manages to coax him out of bed, wrestles him out of his Halloween costume and into some pyjamas before she leads him to the kitchen.

He doesn’t manage much of his cereal, but he drinks the glass of water she gives him, and she’s still fretting over him when Kara lets herself into the apartment.

“What’s wrong, buddy?” She’s quick to ask, noticing that something’s off within seconds, and god, Cat loves how well the girl knows her son.

“Don’t feel good.” At Cat’s insistence, he goes and curls up on the couch, and she wraps a blanket around him as she sets up the TV with his favourite morning cartoons.

“I didn’t break him, did I?” Kara whispers, once Cat turns away from Carter, finds the other woman looming over her shoulder. “With the trick-or-treating? Like, he’s not allergic to anything, is he?”

“No, nothing.” Cat worries at her bottom lip as she looks down at him, his usual brightness nowhere to be seen. “I thought maybe it was all of the candy, but… it doesn’t seem like that.”

“I didn’t think I let him eat that much.” Kara looks so concerned, her eyebrows pinched into a frown, and Cat can’t help but reach out and rest her hand on Kara’s arm.

She jumps, and Cat tries to ignore the warmth of Kara’s skin beneath her fingertips, the way that being so close to her has her heart racing more than it has in years.

“It’s not your fault,” Cat tells her, squeezing her arm gently (and oh, those muscles are even better up close, and she has to drop her hand away before she does something stupid). “I don’t think it’s the candy. I think it’s something else. A stomach bug, maybe?”

“It could be,” Kara nods. “Has he been sick?”

“Not yet.” Cat’s phone vibrates, a warning that she’s about to be late for her first meeting that morning, and she sighs.

“What do you want me to do?” Kara, as always, says exactly the right thing – Cat is loath to leave Carter when he’s feeling down, but she knows that he’s in more than capable hands.

“Just keep an eye on him, keep checking his temperature, and let me know if anything changes.”

“Okay, I can do that.” Kara offers her a reassuring smile. “I’ll send you regular updates.”
“Thank you, Kara.” She kisses Carter on the forehead before she moves to leave – she pauses in the doorway to look back, sees Kara looking down at her son with nothing but care and concern, and it’s enough to get her through the door, knowing that he’s safe with her.

Her meeting drags, as does the one after that, and Cat has to resist the urge to check her phone every five minutes to see if Kara’s called (something that she is usually quick to shut down if she sees any one of her employees doing the same).

Almost two hours have passed by the time she gets the chance to check it, and her heart nearly drops when she sees that she has a missed call, and a text from Kara saying ‘call me when you can’.

She ushers everyone out of her office to take the call, and is relieved when Kara picks up after just two rings.

“Is he alright?”

“He’s getting worse,” Kara tells her, and Cat feels her heart drop, “he’s thrown up a few times, I keep giving him fluids but he can’t keep them down. Do you want me to call someone?”

She gives Kara the number of Carter’s paediatrician, and waits impatiently whilst she listens to Kara’s half of the conversation when she calls him from Cat’s landline.

“Sorry,” Kara apologises when she comes back on the line, “he said it’s most likely a stomach bug, and all we can really do is keep him hydrated and wait it out.”

It’s both good and bad news – good that it’s not something more serious, but bad because there’s nothing they can really do for him.

“Call me back if he gets worse?”

“Of course.”

Cat is scattered for most of the day after that, but it’s helped by the regular texts that Kara sends her. She never says that Carter is feeling better, but he’s not deteriorating, to Cat’s relief.

She vows to finish earlier, get home to look after her baby, but of course there’s a fuck-up with the layouts for the issue that’s supposed to be going to print by the end of that day, and she’s stuck in the office until nearly seven.

“Kara, I’m so sorry,” she calls her when she’s finally logged off her computer and is throwing things into her bag, “I had to put out a few fires before I could leave.”

“It’s alright.” Kara’s voice sounds… odd, not like her usual chirpy self, and Cat frowns.

“Is everything okay?”

“Carter’s fine. Well, not fine,” she elaborates, “he’s still feeling pretty rubbish, but he’s managed to keep water down for a couple of hours, now, so I think he might be over the worst of it.”

“That’s good,” Cat’s relieved to hear it, but Kara still seems off. “But that’s not exactly what I asked – is everything alright with you ?”

“Um.” Kara pauses. “Well, not really. You see, Carter’s over the worst of it, but I am not.”

“You caught it?”
“Kinda.”

“Why didn’t you say anything?” Cat is already marching towards her elevator, completely exasperated.

“Because I knew you were busy, and I didn’t want to bother you, and – oh god.” Kara groans. “And I think I need to hang up now.”

“I’ll be home in ten minutes,” she promises, and tells her driver to put his foot down when she gets in the car.

She makes it there in eight, and she stabs impatiently at the button for the penthouse in the elevator, as though by sheer force of will she can make it move faster.

“Kara?” She calls out when she steps inside her home, because she can see no sign of either her or Carter, the two of them absent from their usual position on the couch.

“In here,” a voice calls from down the hall, and Cat follows the sound of it towards the bathroom adorning Carter’s bedroom.

Inside, she finds the two of them – Kara slumped against the wall, looking much paler than Cat has ever seen her, and Carter curled up on her lap, wrapped in blankets that Kara must have raided from the linen closet.

“Oh, Kara.” Carter, at least, does look a little perkier, greets her with a wide smile though he doesn’t move to get up.

“Don’t come in,” Kara waves her arms as Cat moves to step into the bathroom. “You’ll get sick.”

“If I was going to catch it, I probably would have this morning,” Cat reasons, because while she may not have been around Carter for as long, she’d certainly been close to him. “And if I get sick, I get sick,” she shrugs. “Someone needs to look after the pair of you. You make a sorry sight.”

“We made a nest!” Carter says, voice filled with glee, and Cat chuckles.

“You certainly did. How are you feeling, Carter?”

“Better,” he replies, nodding.

“Good. Have you eaten?” Kara groans at the mere mention of food, but Carter shakes his head. “Okay, I’m going to make you some soup. And you,” she points at Kara, “have you been keeping yourself hydrated?” She looks immediately guilty. “Kara,” Cat admonishes, “you have to look after yourself as well as my son.”

“He’s the more important one.”

“You both are,” Cat insists. “Let me get you some water.” She does, and then she leaves Carter to keep Kara company whilst she heats up a tin of soup from the cupboard. When it’s done, she pours two bowls, though she suspects only one of her two patients will have any, and goes to fetch them from the bathroom.

Carter bounds to his feet, clearly feeling much better than he had that morning, but Kara wobbles a little when she stands, and Cat is quick to reach out and steady her.

“Thank you.” She’s still so pale, and she feels warm, and once she’s wrestled the both of them into
stools at the kitchen counter, she fetches the thermometer and hands it to Kara. “Seriously?” Cat just
raises an eyebrow, and Kara sighs before she sticks it in her mouth, and Cat frowns when she sees
the resulting temperature.

“You’re close to running a fever.”

“Really? Cause I feel great.” Cat rolls her eyes at the sarcasm. “Do I have to eat this?” She looks
a little queasy as she looks down at the bowl in front of her. “Because I don’t know if I can.”

“Try.” She does, although after only a handful of spoonfuls she pushes the bowl away with a
grimace. Carter, on the other hand, finishes his within a minutes. “Hungry?” She asks, amused, and
he nods. “You can have some more in a bit if you still feel okay.”

“Can I go draw? I want to make Kara a pretty picture to cheer her up.” Kara smiles softly at that.

“Of course you can, sweetheart.” He rushes off to his crafts table, and Cat turns back to Kara. “You
should eat some more.”

“I really don’t think I can.”

“You must be ill,” Cat teases, trying to get her to smile – it works, though it’s small. “Do you want a
drink? Water? Tea?”

“Cat, you don’t have to -”

“Yes, I do.” Cat waves her off. “You did what I couldn’t – you looked after my son all day, even
after getting ill yourself.”

“But I should get going -”

“You’re not going anywhere like this,” Cat tells her, sternly, folding her arms across her chest for
extra effect. “Stay the night. Let me keep an eye on you until you’re feeling better. Please.”

“I…” Kara trails off, grimaces. “Really need to use your bathroom.” She rushes off, and Cat watches
her go, filled with empathy for the poor girl.

When she goes in search of her a few minutes later, Kara tells her not to come in and Cat obliges,
instead just leaves a bottle of water outside the bathroom door.

She goes to sit with Carter, instead, helps him with his drawing, yet another photo of the three of
them together that makes Cat smile.

“I wish you and Kara would get married like you and daddy were.” Carter tosses out the words
carelessly, as his head is bent over the page, but they make Cat freeze, stun her into silence for
several long moments.

“I’m afraid that’s not going to happen, Carter,” she manages to say eventually, though the words
want to stick in the back of her throat.

“Why not?” He looks up, frowning. “Girls can marry other girls. It’s in one of the books that Kara
got me.”

“I know they can, sweetheart.” Cat’s glad to see that Kara is educating her son.

“Then why not? Do you not want to marry Kara?” Carter’s frown deepens. “Because you should.
She’s nice and funny and she makes me happy. She makes you happy, too. More than daddy did.”
She’s shocked that he’s astute enough to have noticed that, and feels guilty for letting him see the strained relationship of his parents – she’d never wanted it to affect him. “Do you like her?”

“Of course I do, Carter.”

“Then you should get married,” he nods to himself, firm in his belief, and Cat wishes that everything could be that simple.

“I don’t think Kara would want to marry me, sweetheart.”

“Have you asked her?”

“I… no.”

“Then how do you know?”

“I just do.” Carter doesn’t look convinced, but before Cat has a chance to further shut him down, she hears a noise from behind her.

“Sorry.” Kara looks like she’s been caught doing something she shouldn’t, hovering in the hallway, and Cat dreads to think how much of that conversation she might have heard.

It’s not too incriminating, all things considered, but still, she doesn’t dare ask.

“Feeling any better?” Kara makes a face. “I’ll take that as a no.”

“Thanks for the water.” She waves the bottle, now half-empty, before she sits down in the armchair next to the couch. “Are you sure about me staying here? Because I can call my sister and she can probably come and get me.”

“Probably?”

“She’s on the night shift this week.”

“Then that settles it – you’re staying. You shouldn’t be at home on your own, I won’t have it.”

“You’re staying?” Carter looks overjoyed. “Sleepover!”

“No, not a sleepover,” Cat elbows Carter’s side gently, “Kara needs her rest.” Carter pouts, but he doesn’t argue.

“Want to see my drawing?” Kara nods, and he gets up off the couch to present it to her proudly. “Do you like it?”

“I love it, buddy. I’m gonna hang it up on my wall.”

“Really?”

“Really.” He beams, and Cat doesn’t doubt that Kara doesn’t mean it for a second. “You want to go put it somewhere safe, in the meantime?” He takes it to his crafts corner, and finds the artists’ sketchbook that Kara had given him, hides it carefully in the pages before he returns to the couch, cuddling up against Cat’s side.

They watch cartoons for a while, until he gets sleepy – she puts him to bed and hopes that he’ll be better tomorrow than he had been that morning, and hopes the same for Kara, who looks miserable when Cat makes her way back to the living room.
“Are you okay?”

“I hate being sick.” Kara pulls a face. “I’m not very good at it.”

“Me either,” Cat admits, and she’s glad that so far, she seems to have escaped the effects of Carter’s illness. “Would you like to do something to take your mind off of it? A game, perhaps?”

“You just want to beat me again, don’t you?” Cat just smirks. “Way to kick a girl when she’s already down.”

“You might win,” Cat pats her shoulder as she walks by, heading towards the cupboard that contains the few games that she owns. “Think of how much that’ll cheer you up.”

“Oh, we both know that that’s not going to happen.” Kara already looks a bit perkier when Cat looks back at her.

“It won’t with that attitude,” Cat tells her, and Kara’s lips curve into a smile. “What do you want to play? I don’t have a great selection, but we can have a Scrabble or Catan rematch.”

“Both?” Kara suggests. “If we have time.” Cat grabs both boxes and sets them down on the coffee table, rearranges the furniture slightly so that both the armchair and the couch are close enough to the table for them to play comfortably.

They start with Scrabble, play it twice and Cat is a little smug that Kara doesn’t get anywhere near her score on either try – she pouts even though she tries to hide it, clearly a sore loser, and Cat tries (and fails) not to find her adorable.

But she is and the more time Cat spends with her the more she can’t stop noticing it.

She keeps learning new things about her, like the fact that when she’s really concentrating, she chews on her bottom lip and she gets a tiny pinch between her eyebrows, and when she thinks she’s got a good word her eyes light up.

Honestly, it’s a miracle Cat wins considering she spends just as much time studying Kara as she does the board, but she just doesn’t know how to look away.

She’s getting in deep, perhaps too deep, but she doesn’t know how to stop it.

(Doesn’t know if she even wants to, because the way it makes her heart flip, when Kara glances up and catches her eye, is a special kind of exhilarating that she never thought she’d ever feel again).

They move onto Catan, and Cat wins their first game, but only narrowly – Kara seems to quickly get to know her style of play – and the second is just as tight, but it’s Kara who comes away with the victory.

“Yes!” Her shout is quiet, so she doesn’t wake the sleeping toddler down the hall (considerate, as always, and god, how does she make it so easy to fall for her?), her arms stretching above her head, her smile dazzlingly bright and Cat can’t help but chuckle at her antics. “You didn’t let me win,” suspicion quickly follows Kara’s cheer, and she narrows her eyes at Cat, “did you?”

“Of course not,” Cat scoffs, because as if she ever would, no matter how deeply Kara might have embedded herself in her heart.

“Sure?”
“Yes, Kara, you beat me fair and square.” Kara’s grin returns full-force. “How are you feeling?”

“Better, thank you.” Her smile is warm and her eyes are bright, and Cat has to look away. “I can probably make it hom - ”

“You’re staying, Kara,” Cat uses her best no-nonsense tone, “please just accept it.”

“Okay. Thank you.”

“It’s no trouble, honestly.” It’s not – it’s nice having someone else here. “Are you tired?”

“A little,” Kara admits, and Cat nods, knowing that the both of them need the rest. “Could I, um, use your shower before I go to bed? I feel a little gross.”

“Of course.” She leads Kara to her bathroom, even though she knows Kara knows the way. “Would you like to borrow some clothes again?”

“Please.” Cat rifles through her closet until she finds something suitable. “Uh, would it also be possible to…” Kara shifts her weight, fiddles with her hands, “to maybe borrow some underwear?” The words come out rushed, like she has to say them fast or they won’t come out at all. “I just don’t think there’s any point in me going back to my apartment in the morning when I’m already here, and I don’t - ”

“It’s fine, Kara,” Cat cuts off her ramble with a wave of her hand, gestures to the top drawer of her dresser, “just find something you like while I go and get you a clean towel and a spare toothbrush.”

When she gets back from the linen closet, she finds Kara staring, looking a little dumbstruck, at Cat’s rather extensive underwear collection, and Cat wonders if she’s managed to short-circuit the poor girl’s brain.

She purposefully knocks into the door, to give Kara a head’s up that she’s back, and watches as she hastily grabs the closest pair to her hand and steps away.

Cat hands her the towel and ushers her into the bathroom, and while she’s gone, Cat readies herself for bed and tries very hard not to think about the fact that Kara’s naked and wet less than ten feet away from her.

It’s distracting, and when Kara emerges in a cloud of steam, Cat hopes that her expression is neutral, that her thoughts aren’t written all over her face, but it doesn’t last for long.

Because Kara is framed in the light from the bathroom, her face in shadow but her eyes bright in the darkness, and she’s wearing Cat’s clothes (Cat’s clothes that are definitely too tight, cling to every muscle in the most delicious way, and maybe she has some larger clothes in her closet that would have fit Kara a little better but no-one needs to know that), her damp hair already starting to curl at the nape of her neck.

She’s so beautiful that Cat can hardly believe that she’s real, that she’s here, that someone like this is in her life and she’s not allowed to have a taste of what she so desperately craves.

“Feel better?” Cat asks, because she has to say something, because she’s definitely been staring for just a few seconds too long.

“Much.” Kara’s smile is soft, tired, and it makes Cat wonder what she looks like first thing in the morning, sleep-softened and tousled. “Thanks. Should I just leave this in the bathroom?” She’s still holding her towel.
“I’ll take it,” Cat replies, because she needs to go in there anyway. She crosses over towards Kara, tries not to react to the way Kara’s eyes flicker down, take in the black silk slip she usually sleeps in, darken as her teeth drag across her bottom lip and oh, Cat thinks it would be so easy to reach out and steal a kiss.

The air between them feels electric, tonight, and when she reaches to take the towel their fingers brush and such a simple touch is almost enough to make her shiver.

“Do you know where the guest bedroom is?” She has to say something to break the spell before she does something stupid. Kara nods, and she breathes, “goodnight, Kara,” in a voice that’s probably too low, too obviously affected by her closeness, before she slips past her and into the bathroom.

“Sleep well.”

Cat knows she won’t – that she’ll be tortured by images of Kara, especially knowing that she’s just down the hall, that she’s in for a restless night – but she appreciates the sentiment all the same.

“You too.”

Her bedroom door clicks shut a moment later, and Cat lets out a long breath.

God, she’s so fucking screwed.
Chapter 12

Kara doesn’t sleep well that night, despite the high thread count of the sheets in Cat’s guestroom.

She spends half the night in the bathroom and the other half tossing and turning, and by the time the clock strikes two a.m., she’s almost ready to give up on sleep entirely.

But then there’s a tiny knock on the bedroom door, and when she opens it she finds Carter standing there in his pyjamas, rubbing at his sleepy eyes with one hand and clutching his favourite teddy with his other.

“Are you okay, buddy?” Kara crouches so that they’re the same height, worried that he’s gotten out of bed – she knows from Cat that he usually sleeps easily through the night, and can be pain to wake up in the mornings. “I didn’t wake you up, did I?” She thought that she’d been careful to keep quiet when she was wandering the halls.

“No.” He shakes his head and tries to smother a yawn. “I had a nightmare.”

“You did?” He nods. “Come here.” She pulls him into a gentle hug. “You want me to check your room for monsters?”

“No. Want to stay here with you.” He peers at the bed behind her, eyes turning pleading. “Can I?”

“I… don’t know what your Mom would have to say about that, kiddo. She’ll worry when she can’t find you in the morning.”

“Please?” He looks up at her with his best puppy dog eyes, the ones that Kara always struggles to deny. “Just this one time.”

She caves, because of course she does, and less than five minutes later Carter is curled up beside her, his teddy hugged tightly in his arms. He’s asleep soon after, breathing quiet and even, and it’s enough to lull her to sleep for the first time that night.

//

She wakes early the next morning needing to pee, and carefully slips out of the bed without disturbing the sleeping toddler.

On her way back to the bedroom, she notices that the light in the kitchen is on, changes course and finds Cat standing at the counter, mug in hand as she waits for the coffee machine to finish. She’s not dressed yet for the day, is clad in only her sleepwear and a huge fluffy dressing gown, slippers on her feet and her face bare of make-up, and it’s an image that makes Kara ache for her sketchbook, to jot the view down so she never forgets it.

Because bathed in the glow of the rising sun, Cat is stunning, a vision, so utterly captivating that it’s devastating to look directly at her.

“Kara.” Cat turns and notices her standing there, and Kara hopes that she hasn’t been caught staring. “Are you feeling better?”

“Much,” she nods, grateful for it because yesterday had been brutal and she doesn’t want to feel that way again anytime soon. “Thanks for letting me stay here.”
“It’s fine,” Cat waves a hand. “Do you want some coffee? Apologies for my less than put-together appearance – I didn’t expect you to be awake.”

“Usually I wouldn’t be,” Kara admits, “but I’m never very good at sleeping somewhere new, for the first couple of nights, anyway.” She thinks it’s probably left over from her days in the foster system, never knowing how long she’d be in one place. “And I think I’ll pass on the coffee.” She grabs a water instead.

“I assume my son is in your room?”

“Oh, yeah.” Kara looks sheepish. “Sorry. He knocked on my door early this morning, said he had a nightmare. I couldn’t say no to his eyes.”

“He can be very persuasive,” Cat concedes. “You can wake him if you like.” The coffee machine beeps, and Cat fills her mug. “While I go get myself ready for the day ahead.”

Kara does just that, gently rousing him and helping him get changed (after doing so herself, and she doesn’t think she’ll ever be over the fact that she’s wearing Cat Grant’s underwear (and god, that glimpse into her drawers last night had nearly short-circuited her brain and honestly, it’s a miracle that she can still form words), for the entire day), before ushering him into the kitchen for his breakfast.

They’re having matching bowls of cereal when Cat returns, now dressed in a sinfully tight pencil skirt and a blouse with enough buttons undone to expose her collarbones, and Kara has to quickly look away lest her gaze linger.

Cat’s phone buzzes, and when she glances at it she sighs, heavy and tired.

“Everything okay?”

“Just an unpleasant reminder about finalising the divorce tomorrow.” Despite how the marriage had ended, Kara doesn’t think it’ll be a pleasant day for the other woman. “Are you still okay to take Carter for a couple of hours?”

“Of course – for as long as you need.”

“Thank you, Kara.” Cat’s smile is warm and genuine, and it makes Kara’s heart flutter in her chest. “I see you both have your appetite back.” Cat nods towards the two now empty bowls on the counter.

“Thankfully,” Kara chirps, barely able to remember the last time she went without eating for so long. “Do you have a busy day today?”

“No more so than usual.” Kara honestly doesn’t know how she does it – Cat has to juggle so much at work alone, but to watch her be such a great Mom at the same time is… inspiring, to say the least. “And I should probably get going. I’ll see you later, sweetheart.” She presses a kiss to Carter’s head. “Have a good day, Kara.”

“You too.” Cat’s heels click down the hall, the front door shutting a moment later as Kara gathers up the breakfast dishes, Carter bouncing impatiently on his chair behind her. “So, buddy,” she starts when she’s done, turning back around to face him, “what do you wanna do today?”

//

The divorce proceedings are… surprisingly easy, all things considered.
Chris is actually civil towards her, although Cat suspects that’s just because they have witnesses and he doesn’t want to tarnish his reputation around other lawyers.

They’d already split all their assets and decided on an iron-clad custody arrangement as Cat’s insistence, so all that’s left to do is sign on the dotted line, and then their marriage and their eight year relationship is over.

She’s a single woman once again.

Officially alone.

It stings, a weight pressing down on her chest, and she knows it’s stupid, that this has been coming for quite some time, has been official in all but name for months, but finalising it just feels different, leads her to a bar down the street before she goes to pick up her son.

She nurses a scotch in a booth near the back, and tries to drown out the sound of the happy people around her, tries not to wallow in self-pity, allows herself just the one drink to fall apart before she pulls herself together and gets out her phone to let Kara know that she’s done.

“Hey.” Kara is breathless when she answers, and Cat ignores the way it makes something flutter in her chest. “Are you okay?”

“Fine, thank you,” she keeps her voice steady even though she’s touched by Kara’s concern. “Are you at your apartment?”

“Oh, not exactly.” Cat hears Carter’s gleeful voice in the background and can’t help but smile. “We’re just at the gym by my place, but if we start to head back there now we should be able to meet you there.”

“No, it’s okay, I’ll come to you.” Carter sounds like he’s having fun, though she’s intrigued by what, and besides, Cat can’t resist the potential opportunity to see Kara in her workout gear again.

“Are you... are you sure?” Kara sounds shocked by the very possibility, and Cat supposes she can’t really blame her.

“What’s the address?” Kara tells her, and two minutes later, Cat relays it to her driver as she slips into the back of the waiting car. He raises his eyebrows, but doesn’t say a word as he pulls out into the street.

Kara texts her directions of where Cat can find her, and though the receptionists behind the desk eye her curiously as she bypasses the front desk, they make no move to stop her. She ends up in-front of a closed door, hopes it’s the right one as she pushes it gently open to reveal some kind of training room within.

One of the walls is mirrored, and the rest of them have various items of gym equipment pressed up against them, waiting to be used. The wooden floor is partially covered by thick mats, and it’s on one of these that Cat finds Kara.

She’s doing push-ups with a giggling Carter sat on her back, her arms bare and god, Cat can’t look away from her, transfixed by the muscles tensing and flexing as she raises herself up again and again, far fitter than Cat had ever imagined.

She’s staring, and she knows it, but she doesn’t know how to stop because Kara is always, always beautiful, but like this? In leggings and a tank top that clings to her in all the right ways, sweat glistening over her skin?
This is something else entirely.

She only manages to look away when Carter notices her, scrambling off of Kara with a cry of ‘Momma!’ and racing towards her on his little legs, a huge grin on his face.

And it’s only then that she realises that there’s someone else in the room – leaning against a punching bag a few strides away stands the blonde that had been in Kara’s apartment the other day, a stopwatch in her hand and a knowing smirk on her mouth, and Cat thinks that she’s just been caught staring by Kara’s girlfriend.

Wonderful.

“Twenty-three in just under two minutes,” Sara calls, as Kara climbs to her feet, breathing only slightly laboured. “Not terrible.”

“Not terrible?” Kara feigns outrage. “I’d like to see you do any better.”

“Okay,” Sara shrugs, the two of them clearly competitive, and when she turns towards Carter Cat doesn’t know how to feel when he leaves her side to trot over to the other woman. “You ready, kiddo?”

“Yeah!” He clambers onto Sara’s back when she lies down, crossing his legs and holding on tight to her shirt when she tells him to.

“Okay, go.” Kara presses start on the stopwatch, and Cat refuses to allow herself to be impressed as she watches Sara start her push-ups with impressive energy. “Hey.” Kara comes to stand by Cat’s side, though her eyes never leave Sara and Carter. “Sorry about this – Sara texted this morning and said her client dropped out so the room was booked if I wanted to come by and train. I said I couldn’t because I had Carter but she suggested I bring him too and I thought it might be fun for him… I thought it’d be fine with you but I’m sorry if not.”

“It’s fine, Kara – he looks like he’s having the time of his life.” His smile is wide, his giggles easing some of the pressure in Cat’s chest that’s been there ever since she spotted Sara nearby. “I’m just sorry to interrupt your day with your girlfriend.”

“Sara’s not my girlfriend,” Kara says immediately. “We’re not dating anymore – she’s just a friend.”

“Oh. Sorry to hear that.” Although it doesn’t look like there’s any animosity between them – it must’ve ended amicably, or fizzled out as quickly as it started.

“It’s fine,” Kara shrugs, and Cat wants to ask her why it ended but before she can open her mouth Kara is calling out for Sara to stop as the watch beeps in her hand.

“Twenty-six,” Sara singsongs before Kara can even speak, and the pout on her mouth tells Cat that the other woman has counted correctly, and she shouldn’t think that it’s cute, how much of a sore loser Kara is, but she does and she’s already fallen so far that she doesn’t know how she’ll ever surface again. “You lose.”

“Shut up,” Kara mutters, and both Cat and Sara laugh at the look on her face. It clears, a little, as Carter bounds up to her.

“Can you flip me again?” He asks, eyes bright an excited, and Cat would be alarmed if she didn’t know that Kara was as careful with Carter as Cat was. “That was fun!”

“Alright, bud. You remember what I taught you before?” He nods, and Kara leads him to the centre
of the mat and kneels down in-front of him. The move that comes next is startlingly fast, and ends with Carter flat on his back and laughing loudly, Kara balancing herself carefully above him.

“Again, again!” Kara tries a couple of different moves on him before he’s had enough, and Cat can’t keep the smile off of her face, watching the two of them together – she loves seeing Carter like this so much, so open and unguarded and so happy that he’s practically bursting with it.

“One sparring session before we finish?” Sara suggests, once Carter is back at Cat’s side, beaming. “Give the kid a show?”

“Sure,” Kara shrugs, taking a swig of water from her bottle, and Cat watches a bead of sweat slide along the side of Kara’s neck as she tips her head back, wants to trace the same path with her tongue.

They begin to circle one another, hands raised, and Sara is the first to make a move. Cat tenses as the swing comes in, but Kara dodges it easily with a smile, and her worry eases.

They’re evenly matched, and absolutely breath-taking to watch as they practically dance across the mat, each one of them desperate to gain the upper hand. At one point, Kara does an impressive backflip that makes her shirt ride up, and good god, those abs should be illegal because they nearly stop Cat’s heart dead in her chest.

After that, Cat is particularly interested in the way Kara’s muscles ripple whenever she moves, the strength within her astounding considering how meek she seems, and it’s certainly the most interesting thing she’s seen in a long, long time.

(She thinks this image, of Kara all in black, working hard and slick with sweat, will haunt her mind, waking and sleeping, for days and weeks to come).

They call a truce after a while, neither one of them able to come up with a victory, and when Carter applauds them as they wind it down Cat is tempted to join in too, because what a show that was.

“You enjoy that, kiddo?” Kara asks, ruffling his hair as she steps in close, and Cat can feel the heat radiating off of her and allows herself a brief fantasy of Kara putting that strength to good use, pressing Cat hard up against a wall, lifting her up so that she could wrap her legs around her waist and –

“Cat?” She snaps out of it to find Kara looking at her with some concern, and she hopes that that was the first time that Kara tried to get her attention. “Would that be okay?”

“Hm?”

“If I taught Carter some karate. I have a black belt,” Cat files that away under ‘interesting information to come back to later’, “and I used to teach kids when I was in college, so I do know what I’m doing.”

“Oh.” She glances down to see Carter looking up at her with hopeful eyes. “Of course, as long as you’re careful.”

“Always.”

“Yay!” Carter practically bounces up and down as he hugs Cat’s legs in thanks. “You’re the bestest. Can we start now?” He directs that at Kara, his pleading eyes turning to her.

“I don’t think so, bud – we gotta leave here soon.” She glances at her watch. “Now, in fact.”
“Oh, shoot, is that the time?” Sara frowns as she checks her phone. “I’m meeting Ava in like ten minutes and I need to shower.” She grabs her bag and slings it over her shoulder. “I’ll see you around, Danvers. Nice to see you both again,” she gives Cat and Carter a little wave before disappearing out the door, leaving the three of them alone.

“Anything else planned for today?” Cat asks her, as Kara begins to gather up her own things.

“Nah,” Kara shrugs, leading Cat back the way she came, “probably just catch up on the chores I’ve been neglecting for too long. A real fun day ahead – don’t grow up, buddy,” she says that last part to Carter, whispering it like it’s a secret, “it’s really boring.” She’s grinning, though, looks unfairly stunning in the midday sun as they step outside of the gym, and Cat has to quickly look away. “What about you guys?”

“What about this one wants to do,” Cat replies, ruffling Carter’s hair – she needs the distraction, today, so she doesn’t self-destruct, wants nothing more than to spend some quality time with her boy, with the one thing from her marriage that hasn’t been tainted with so much bitterness.

“Ice cream!” Carter is quick to exclaim, face alight, and Cat chuckles.

“Ice cream it is.” Her car comes around the corner, coming to a stop in-front of where they stand. “Do you want a ride back to your apartment?”

“It’s okay, it’s only a couple of blocks away.”

“If you’re sure?” Kara nods. “Alright, then – I’ll see you on Monday.”

“Have a good weekend – and enjoy your ice cream!” She waves goodbye to Carter, waits on the side of the road until they’re in the car, and it’s only when they’re halfway down the street that she turns and walks away.

//

The week passes quickly and without incident (despite Carter’s newfound fondness for karate, the two of them have managed not to break anything in Cat’s apartment during their lessons), but when Kara arrives on Friday morning, Cat looks more stressed than usual, her mouth pinched into a thin line, and her fingers tapping rapidly on the kitchen counter where she stands nursing a cup of coffee.

“Everything okay?” Kara asks, when Cat doesn’t give her usual greeting – at the sound of her voice, Cat startles, like she hadn’t even noticed Kara opening the front door, some of her coffee sloshing over the side of her cup and onto her hand and the counter. “Oh, shoot, sorry.”

“It’s alright, I was miles away.” Cat bats Kara’s hands away as she rushes to clear up the mess, and rolls her eyes (but does as she’s told) when Kara tells her to run her hand under cold water.

“What’s wrong?” Carter is sat at the kitchen counter, too engrossed in his colouring to pay them any attention.

“It’s nothing,” Cat says, though it very much seems like something, and her sigh is heavy. “Chris has decided he wants to take Carter for the weekend.” Her voice is quiet, and Kara understands it, then – Cat is facing a weekend alone without her son for presumably the first time since he was born, and Kara knows that can’t be easy. “Finalising the divorce has apparently made him realise that he’s been an absent father as of late.” Cat’s mouth twists, and Kara reaches out a hand to give her shoulder a sympathetic squeeze.

“I’m sorry.”
“Oh, it’s fine.” Cat’s trying to brush it off, but her eyes remain troubled. “He’s entitled to see his son — and Carter should have his father in his life. It’s just… not something I wanted. To have another son split between two homes.” Her gaze never leaves Carter’s face, and it’s so clearly written across her face, how much she loves him. “But we’ll just have to adapt.” Her phone buzzes, and Cat scowls down at it. “Well, I’d better get going. Chris should be picking him up at seven — I’m hoping I’ll be back before then,” she casts another baleful look at her phone, “but in-case I’m not, I’ve packed an overnight bag for him. It’s in his room, if you think of anything else he needs, could you put it in?”

“Of course.” Cat flashes her a grateful smile before gathering up her things, managing to tear Carter’s gaze away from his colouring for just long enough to get a goodbye. “Have a good day, Cat.” She’s out the door a moment later, and Kara approaches Carter from behind, peering over his shoulder to see what he’s working on — it’s mostly squiggles and splotches of colour, but Kara knows his work well enough by now to recognise it as another drawing of the three of them together, Carter in the middle, gazing up at a dark sky littered with dozens of stars.

“Do you like it?” Carter asks, peering up at her.

“It’s really good, buddy,” she tells him, and he beams. He hands it to her when she’s done, and she slots it into the giant folder she has of all of his drawings, ready to present to Cat at Christmas. “You want to go to the park today? And maybe the library, too?”

“Yeah!” She throws a few of his things into a bag, along with the handful of books that he’d finished since their last trip downtown a couple of weeks ago, while he’s putting on his favourite pair of shoes.

Outside there’s a slight chill in the air, summer giving way to fall, the leaves on the trees starting to fall, and Carter’s joyful at the crunch they make when he stomps through them.

The park is already busy, and Carter is quick to claim one of the swings, squealing in delight as Kara pushes him higher and higher. When she sets him back on his feet, he races over to the climbing frame, and Kara keeps a careful eye on him as she answers her phone, buzzing from her pocket. “Hello?”

“Hey, little cousin.” She’d answered without checking the caller ID, and when she hears Clark’s voice her face splits into a wide grin. “Can you talk?”

“Sure — is everything alright?”

“I can’t call just to catch up?” He teases. “Everything’s fine. More than fine, actually.” He sounds giddy, like he had when they were younger and getting away with mischief. “I have some news — Lois and I are engaged.”

“Oh my god!” He’d told her last time they spoke that he was thinking of finally popping the question (Lois had been throwing massive hints for at least the past two years), but she hadn’t realised that it would be so soon. “Congratulations, Clark.” She’s glad that he’d found Lois — his life has been even more tumultuous than Kara’s, but he lit up around Lois Lane, and the second Kara had seen them together, she’d known that they were meant to be. “I’m so happy for you.”

“Thanks, Kara.”

“So, tell me everything — how did you do it? Did you have a speech? I bet you had a speech.”

“Oh, I definitely had a speech,” Clark chuckles, and Kara grins. “And while I’d love to tell you all about it, I have a deadline that I’ve been neglecting that I really need to get back to.”
“Okay – call me later?” Kara watches Carter closely as he zips down a slide, giggling the whole way before scrambling back to the top to go again.

“Sure, or I could tell you about it when I come visit you in National City for Thanksgiving.”

“You’re coming?” They haven’t spent the holiday together in a while – between Lois’ family, his foster family and then Kara and her foster family, he had a lot of people to alternate with. Kara’s hosting it this year, celebrating finally having her own place, and she’d known that Eliza was making the trip to National City, but had no idea his trip to the city would be for the holidays.

“Yeah,” she can hear the smile in his voice, “it’s been too long since we saw one another. You got enough seats at that table of yours for two more?”

“I think we can manage. You can probably stay with me, too – between my place and Alex’s, there should be plenty of room.”

“Awesome. I’ll call you closer to the time to arrange things?”

“Yeah, sure.” Carter, after going down the slide for the fifth time in a row, bounds towards her. “Speak to you soon.” She hangs up just as Carter collides with her legs, and she lifts him in the air and spins him around until he begs for her to stop. “You had enough, or do you want to play a while longer?”

“Lib-ary!”

“Alright, bud.” She sets him down and takes his hand, leading him out of the park and onto the street beyond. “Let’s go get you some books.”

Back again?” The elderly librarian greets them as they step inside, a friendly smile on her mouth, and Carter hides behind Kara’s legs as she sets Carter’s stack of finished books on the counter to be returned. “You’ve been a busy boy!” Carter peers at her from around the side of Kara’s legs. “We have a couple of new books I think you’ll like – they’re on that shelf over there.” She waves over to one side, and Kara smiles her thanks as she lets Carter drag her over to them.

There are a couple on Carter’s favourite two subjects – space and dinosaurs – and one with a dragon on the front that he takes an immediate liking to. They check out six in total, but before they leave they curl up in the kids’ reading corner, Kara on a cushion and Carter on her knee, and she lets him pick one for her to read to him.

When they’re done they head home, and spend the afternoon playing and watching cartoons. Night falls all too soon, and when her phone buzzes with a text from Cat, Kara knows what it’s going to say before she even reads it.

Won’t be home for seven. Kiss Carter goodbye for me.

It’s short, and Kara can only imagine how upset Cat is, based on how she’d been that morning, and with a glance at the clock, she makes a quick decision, makes her way over to the fridge and to the phone numbers that are pinned onto it, and types in Chris’.

“Hello?”

“Hi, this is Kara Danvers, Carter’s nanny?”
“Oh right, Kara, hi. Is everything alright? Cat hasn’t changed her mind, has she?” His voice turns annoyed. “Because I’ll - ”

“She hasn’t,” Kara cuts him off before he can continue. “I was just wondering if you’d mind picking Carter up from CatCo plaza instead of the apartment?”

“Oh. Uh, yeah, alright. From Cat’s office, I assume?”

“Please. See you later.” She hangs up before he has a chance to say anything else, turning back towards Carter who’s sitting on the living room floor playing with her action figures. “You wanna go visit your Mom?”

“Okay!” Kara quickly throws a couple more things into Carter’s overnight bag, and double checks that his favourite teddy and blanket are in there before she hoists it over her shoulder.

She calls Cat’s driver to pick them up, because her office isn’t overly close and she doesn’t want to be pushed for time, and they’re in the elevator on their way to the fortieth floor before the clock hits half six.

“I hope your Mom doesn’t hate this surprise,” Kara mutters under her breath as they step out onto Cat’s floor, balancing Carter on her hip as she picks her way through the desks in the bullpen, pausing in-front of Eve’s.

“Oh, thank god you’re here,” she says when she glances up to see them, some of the lines on her face smoothing out, relief in her eyes. “She’s been on the warpath,” she whispers that like she’s afraid Cat might hear her, “and when she found out she wouldn’t be home early it was… not pretty.”

“Well, hopefully we can fix that.” Kara offers her a sympathetic smile before glancing towards the glass walls of Cat’s office, sees her sitting behind her desk, glasses perched on her nose, fingers pressed to her temples as she frowns at something on her laptop screen. “Are we alright to go in?”

“Please.” Kara taps her knuckles on the glass before she opens the door a crack.

“I thought I was clear when I said I didn’t want to be disturbed?” Cat doesn’t even look up, her voice crackling with fury and in that moment she isn’t the woman that Kara knows so well, she isn’t Carter’s mother – she’s Cat freaking Grant, queen of all media, she’s the Cat from Kara’s interview with her, and it’s enough to stop her in her tracks.

“Um…” Cat’s head snaps up, so fast that she nearly loses her glasses.

“Kara?” Cat blinks like she can’t quite register what she’s seeing. “What on earth are you doing here?”

“I knew you’d wanna say goodbye to this little guy,” she sets Carter down so he can trot over to Cat, who lifts him into her lap, “so I thought I’d bring him by. I called Chris to ask him to come here.”

“You… you did?” She still looks a little shocked. “I… I don’t know what to say. Thank you. And I’m sorry for snapping at you.”

“It’s alright,” Kara shrugs, dropping Carter’s bag to the floor beside on of Cat’s leather couches.

“You look like you’ve had a trying day.”

She lingers in-case Cat needs to get back to work, but slips out onto the balcony while Carter tells his Mom about his day, taking in the impressive sight of the city in darkness. She hears Cat’s phone ring a few moments later, and Carter soon joins her, looking up at the sky with wide eyes.
“You remember your constellations?”

“Some.”

“Which ones?” She lifts him up so that she can see where he’s pointing, and she’s impressed by how much he’s remembered.

They return to the office when Cat’s finished on the phone, and Chris arrives soon after. There’s a tension in Cat’s shoulders as she waves him inside, and the way he gives Kara a once-over makes her skin crawl.

“Cat,” he nods towards his ex-wife before turning a smile on Kara. “Kara. Nice to see you again.” He pauses like he expects her to say it back.

She doesn’t.

“Hey, little guy.” He re-directs his attention to Carter, who’s sitting beside Kara on one of the couches. “You ready to go?” Carter shakes his head, his mouth downturned, and Kara wonders if there’s a tantrum brewing – she hasn’t witnessed many, but the few that she has have been big.

“It’s alright, sweetheart.” Cat scoops Carter up into her arms. “You’re going to have a nice weekend with your Daddy.”

“Want to stay with you.” He clings on tight to Cat, and Kara watches Chris’ face twist with displeasure.

“I’ll see you on Sunday,” she tells him, pressing a kiss to the top of his head. “It’ll be here before you know it.” Carter looks doubtful, but he allows himself to be passed over to Chris with only a small amount of protest. “Everything he needs is in here.” Cat’s voice goes from soft to ice-cold as she addresses her ex-husband. “You’ll call me if you have any trouble?”

“I know how to look after my son, Cat.”

“That’s not what I - ” Cat’s voice starts to rise, but with no small amount of effort, she takes a deep breath and cuts herself off. “Just call if you do, will you?”

“Alright. Shall we get going, Carter?” Carter doesn’t say anything, and Chris sighs. “Say goodbye to your Mom.”

“Bye,” he mumbles, and Cat leans in to give him one last kiss before pulling away.

“Goodbye, sweetheart.” Kara waves him off, and gets one in return before Carter disappears from view, and she watches as Cat’s shoulders drop with something like defeat before she walks over to the bar she has in one corner of the room, throwing down two fingers of scotch like it’s water. “Drink?” She asks Kara, who shakes her head. “I have water, too.”

“I’m good.” She eyes Cat closely as she sets down her glass with shaking fingers. “Are you alright?”

“I will be,” she says softly, not looking Kara in the eye, and she wonders if it’s a lie.

“How much longer do you have to stay here for?” She asks as Cat makes her way back towards her desk, and Kara hovers in-front of it, fingers resting lightly on its surface.

“Well, I have nothing to be home for now, so…” Cat trails off with a small shrug, “a while longer yet.”
“But it’s a Friday,” Kara protests, frowning. “You can’t stay here all night.”

“It’s not like I haven’t done it before,” Cat points out, and Kara wonders how many nights she’d spent at this desk before Carter was born.

“That doesn’t mean you should.” Cat just levels her with a stare. “Okay, well, if you insist on working late,” Kara puts on her best disciplinarian voice, the one that always works on Carter, “you need to eat at some point, so come on.” She holds out a hand, and Cat’s eyebrow twitches upwards in surprise.

“What are you doing?”

“Making sure you look after yourself.”

“I wasn’t aware that was in your job description.” Cat’s challenging her, arms folded across her chest, chin tilted upwards as she looks up at her. “You’re supposed to look after my son, not me.”

“Part of looking after Carter is making sure his Mom is alright.” Cat tilts her head to one side, considering. “You don’t have to eat with me, just… take a break, okay? You work too hard.”

“Very well.” Cat surprises her, pushing herself up from her chair. “Let’s go.”

“Really?”

“Before I change my mind.” Kara presses her lips together to hide a smile before she follows Cat out of the door. “Eve, I’m heading out for a bit – finish whatever you’re working on and go home for the night, will you? I’ve just been informed that because it’s a Friday, we can’t stay here all night.”

Eve looks up at her with wide eyes, and when Cat’s back is turned she mouths ‘thank you’ to Kara, her face filled with gratitude.
Chapter 13

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Cat observes Kara over the rim of her glass as she takes a sip of water.

They’re in a booth at Noonan’s, and Cat’s just as surprised as the hostess that had greeted them that she’s in here.

Kara’s just… well, very persuasive, for a start, and nice to look at, and pretty great company when she’s feeling lonely and filled with trepidation at the thought of returning to an empty apartment.

It’s certainly better than spending the night in-front of a computer, wanting to bash her head against her desk.

She’s staring, and she knows she is, but she just can’t put her finger on it, can’t figure Kara out, because what she’d done tonight, bringing Carter to her and then making sure she ate, is probably the kindest, most considerate thing that anyone’s ever done for her.

And she’d done it just because that’s who she is, selfless and caring and wonderful.

“Do I, um, have something on my face?” Kara squirms under the weight of her gaze, nose scrunched up, self-conscious and absolutely adorable.

“No, sorry.” Cat tears her gaze away, clears her throat. “Just lost in thought. Trying to figure out a problem.”

“Oh yeah? Anything I could help with?”

Probably, Cat thinks, given that this particular problem is you and what to do with the way you make me feel.

But of course she can’t say that, so instead she shakes her head and quickly changes the subject.

“While we’re here,” she starts, gaze settling on Kara once more and trying not to smirk when she fidgets in response, “I’d like to check in with you – you’ve been with me for a few weeks now, is everything still okay? Are there any issues you’d like to bring up?”

“I didn’t know this was going to be an employee review,” Kara says, but she’s smiling. “But no, no issues. And everything’s great – if anything, I fall more and more in love with this job every day.”

“The hours don’t bother you?”

“I knew what I was signing up for,” Kara points out. “You warned me, and it’s been fine.”

“Good, good. And Carter still sings your praises constantly, so I know he’s happy.” Kara grins. “How are the college applications going? You’ll warn me if I need to start searching for someone new?”

It’s something she tries not to dwell on too much – the thought of Kara no longer being in her life, and the effect that will have on both her and Carter – but it’s always there, in the back of her mind, that this won’t last forever, and her happy bubble will pop, sooner rather than later.
“Of course,” Kara looks offended that Cat even has to ask. “And I haven’t started applying yet – the deadline for most places isn’t for a while.”

“Where are you thinking of applying? Still got your heart set on Oxford?” The thought of Kara being so far away makes something in her chest twist, and she has to force it down deep.

“I don’t think so,” she shakes her head. “It was my dream, for a while, but… I just got my sister back, I don’t know if I want to move away again. And NCU actually has a really great masters program.” Cat’s eyebrows quirk up in interest. “So you definitely don’t need to start looking for my replacement anytime soon.”

“Glad to hear that. And Carter will be, too. He’s rather fond of you.”

“The feeling is definitely mutual.” Kara’s smile is soft, and it fills Cat with warmth, how openly and completely the other woman cares for her son.

Their food arrives, then, and Cat picks at her salad as Kara inhales her pasta, Cat watching her with no small amount of amazement.

“Hungry?” Cat asks, lips twitching with amusement as Kara settles back in her seat when her bowl is empty, Cat’s salad looking like it’s barely been touched.

“Always.”

When they get the bill, Kara tries to insist on paying because Cat wouldn’t be there if not for her, and after a five minute argument, Cat reluctantly agrees to split it.

(She agrees because she knows Kara won’t back down, *not* because of those damn puppy dog eyes).

Kara gets a text as they’re heading outside, Cat back to the office and Kara to wherever it is she spends her Friday evenings.

“Anything plans for the rest of the night?”

“I didn’t ‘til my sister just messaged.” Kara waves the phone in her hand. “She just asked if I wanted to go see some band play in a dive bar downtown.”

“God, I haven’t done that in years.” She’d used to, when she was a lot younger – most of her later teenage years and early twenties had been spent in them, and it was in one of those that she’d met Adam’s father.

“Really? I can’t picture you in a place like that.”

“Because you can only picture me as I am now,” Cat points out, and Kara nods, expression thoughtful.

“Well, you could come, if you wanted. It’d be nice not to be a third wheel.”

She should say no.

She knows that – the line of employer and employee between the two of them is already blurred, is already a little too close to friends than Cat would like – and it would be a terrible idea to spend the rest of the night with Kara, to confuse things between them even more.

She should say no, but Kara looks at her with those eyes, with her head tilted to one side, with a soft, shy smile, and when she opens her mouth she’s *supposed* to say no, but…
She says yes, instead.

//

Kara doesn’t expect her to agree.

She really doesn’t, but it’s half an hour later, and they’re slipping through a side door and into a bar packed with people and Cat is by her side, and Kara feels like she should pinch herself to make sure she’s not dreaming.

Cat should look out of place, in her blouse and her black slacks, but somehow she fits right in, easily weaving her way through the crowd towards the bar, Kara trailing in her wake.

“Is your sister already here?” Cat has to lean in to be heard over the sound of people talking and the soundcheck taking place on the tiny stage, and Kara shivers at the feeling of her breath against her ear, the warmth of her, pressed up against Kara’s side.

“I think so.” She checks her phone, scans the bar and finds Alex waving at her from across the room, she and Maggie claiming one of the few tables in the place. “They’re over there.”

“Drink?”

“I’ll get them.” She orders a scotch for Cat and a beer for herself, and she follows the path Cat makes for them over towards Alex and Maggie.

“Cat.” Alex inclines her head towards them when they reach their table, and Kara hopes that her sister is going to behave, because when Kara had sent a text warning her that Cat was coming, the reply had been simply about ten exclamation points and nothing else. “Good to see you again.”

“You too.” Cat nurses her scotch and leans her shoulder against the wall, and the dim lighting casts shadows across her face and god, she’s gorgeous.

It’s too loud, once the music starts, to talk much, and Kara finds herself stealing glances at Cat whenever she can – she flushes when Cat catches her, their eyes meeting and her lips curving into a smirk, quickly looks away, back to the band on stage.

They’re not great, but they’re not terrible, either, and it’s definitely not the worst Friday night she’s ever had, especially with Cat by her side.

Alex and Maggie wade into the crowd at some point to dance, and a little while later Cat disappears to get them another drink, leaving Kara to man the table.

Cat’s only been gone for a few moments before someone approaches, a woman with dark hair and blue eyes, and she’s pretty, a smile on her mouth as she comes to a stop at Kara’s side.

“Hey.”

“Hi.” Kara’s not used to people coming on to her, and it makes her awkward, it always has, and she shifts her weight from one foot to the other.

“Can I buy you a drink?”

“I actually have one on the way.” She gestures vaguely towards where Cat had melted into the crowd.

“Oh, sorry – is the blonde your girlfriend?”
“Uh, no, definitely not.” Only in her dreams. “But I’m also not really looking for one right now.”

“Who said anything about a girlfriend?” The woman quirks a suggestive eyebrow, and Kara’s cheeks flush pink.

“I, um…” She trails off as she catches a glimpse of Cat over the woman’s head – she’s frozen just a few yards away, a drink in either hand and something dark on her face, but as her eyes meet Kara’s her expression shifts into something unreadable, before she downs her own drink in one gulp, striding forward to set Kara’s on the table.

“Sorry to interrupt,” she says to the brunette, though she doesn’t sound sorry at all, “Kara, I think I’m going to head home – I still have work to do, after all.”

“Cat, wait - ” But Cat doesn’t listen, slips away, and Kara barely even offers the brunette a ‘sorry’ before she takes off after Cat, eventually catching up with her when she’s outside, phone in her hand and foot tapping impatiently, no doubt waiting for her driver. “Cat, what’s wrong?”

“Nothing.” Her eyes don’t look up from her phone screen, her face impassive, and it’s like staring at a brick wall. “I have work to do, and you should be talking to attractive women who think you’re hot.”

“But I… I don’t want to do that.” Kara frowns. “I wanted to spend the night with you.” It comes out all wrong, probably revealing too much and she wishes she could bite the words back but she can’t, it’s too late and they’re out there, and when Cat looks up from her phone her gaze is cold, and Kara’s heart turns to ice in her chest.

“Look, Kara,” Cat sighs, and this wasn’t how the night was supposed to go, they’d been having fun, but now it’s all crashing down. “I think… I think there’s been some confusion, in our relationship with one another. And we’re both at fault, I’ll admit that – but you’re my employee, not my friend,” it’s a blow, and Kara tries not to wince, “and perhaps in the future it would be better if things between us were to remain strictly professional. That way, no-one gets hurt.”

“I… okay.” Kara tries to swallow around the lump that’s nestled in her throat. “If that’s what you want.”

“I think that would be best.” Cat’s car comes to a stop in-front of her. “For the both of us – it’s best not to muddy the waters. For Carter’s sake.”

“R-right.”

“I’ll see you on Monday.” Cat slips into the backseat of the waiting car without another word before it pulls away.

She stands for a long time staring at the point where the car had disappeared, tears stinging at her eyes, with absolutely no idea how she ended up here.

She doesn’t realise that she’s crying until Alex finds her, concerned hands tugging at her shoulders, forcing her gaze away from the empty street and to look into her sister’s worried eyes.

“Kara? What’s wrong?” Maggie’s there, too, frowning, step close as Alex wipes some of the tears from Kara’s cheeks. “Why are you standing out here?” Kara’s throat feels tight, too tight to speak, so all she can do is shake her head. “Where’s Cat?”

“She’s gone.” Kara manages to find her voice to answer Alex’s final question, her words coming out shaky and quiet, almost snatched away on the breeze in the air.
“What do you mean she’s gone? She left? And that’s why you’re upset?” Kara shakes her head.
“Then what’s wrong?”

“I think I ruined everything.” It’s a whisper filled with anguish, and some small flicker of understanding passes across Alex’s face.

“Alright.” Alex rubs her hands up and down Kara’s arms, and she hadn’t even noticed that she was shivering. “Come on, let’s get you home.” Alex wraps an arm around her back, steers her down the street, Maggie filing in next to them.

They take her back to their place, because it’s only a couple of blocks away, and Kara can’t find the strength to argue, to go home alone.

It’s probably pathetic, to be this upset, because she and Cat had never even had anything, and it’s not like she’s never going to see again, but the thought of Cat being distant, of things being ‘strictly professional’ makes something twist in her stomach.

“We only have vegan ice cream, which I know you think is an abomination,” Maggie tells her as she unlocks the door to their apartment, and despite herself, Kara manages a small smile, “but I’ll whip up some hot cocoa.”

“You don’t have to.”

“I know.” Maggie heads for the kitchen anyway, and Kara curls up on the couch with Alex, who immediately pulls her into a tight hug.

“You want to talk about it?”

“While you guys were dancing, Cat went to go get some more drinks.” She gives Maggie a grateful smile as she joins them, handing her a steaming hot mug that’s practically overflowing with cream and marshmallows, just how she likes it. “I was on my own and some girl appeared to hit on me, and then Cat came back, looked pissed and then disappeared outside.”

“So she was jealous,” Maggie surmises, and Kara just shrugs, because if tonight has proven anything, it’s how impossible it is to know what Cat’s thinking.

“I followed her outside and I asked her what was wrong, and she basically said that I should stay and talk to the girl that was flirting with me but I said I didn’t want to, I’d rather spend time with her, and then she gave some speech about how our relationship is getting confusing and that we’re colleagues, not friends, and that things between us should be strictly professional from now on so no-one gets hurt.”

“Ouch,” Maggie murmurs, and Alex gives her a sympathetic squeeze.

“Yeah. So, I ruined everything.”

“I don’t think you did.” Kara gives Maggie an incredulous look. “Sounds to me like maybe Cat’s just scared. That she’s realising she’s thinking of you as a friend or even something more, which she probably feels is unprofessional, given the fact that you work for her and you’re younger than her, so she’s trying to put some distance between the two of you.”

“And that’s a good thing because…?”

“Well, I didn’t say it was a good thing, just that you haven’t ruined anything. But it probably means that she’s got feelings for you, or she’s starting to.” The suggestion should make her happy, but all
she feels is miserable. “And if trying to keep you at arm’s length doesn’t work, then it’s only a matter of time before something happens between the two of you.”

“And if it does work?”

“We’ll get you through it,” Alex says, giving her another squeeze, and Kara sighs and finishes the last of her cocoa. “Ready for bed?”

“I’ll go back to my place, I don’t want to - ”

“Nope, you’re staying here, we’ve already decided for you,” Alex cuts her off with her best no-nonsense tone. “so come on.” Kara doesn’t argue, just goes to use the bathroom before heading for the guest room and the pare pyjamas she has stashed there for nights like these.

She goes to say goodnight to Maggie and her sister, but when she hovers in the door to their room, Alex beckons her inside and lifts up the covers, and Maggie pats the space between them. “Get in, we’re making a sister sandwich.”

It’s something she and Alex had used to do, back when Kara had first gone to live with them – she’d had nightmares, horrible, awful nightmares that had kept the both of them awake, so whenever she couldn’t sleep, she’d crawl into Alex’s bed, and Alex would wrap her in a tight hug and tell her over and over again that she was safe now.

“But - ”

“No arguing.”

She gets in the bed, and she’s immediately squished inbetween the two of them, laughs in spite of herself. “I love you guys.”

“We love you, too,” they both echo, and it warms her heart so much, that she has the both of them in her life, that Maggie doesn’t mind her being a complete mess and needing her big sister, that she goes above and beyond to know that she will always be there for her, too.

Once upon a time, she’d thought that she’d never have a family again, but here she is, in the middle of the two best big sisters she could have ever dreamed of having, and it’s enough to make her think that no matter what happens, she’s going to be okay.

//

Cat slams the door shut behind her when she gets home, before stalking into her study and reaching immediately for the bottle of scotch she keeps in one of her desk drawers.

She can’t believe she’s been so stupid, let herself get in this deep, because when she’d seen that woman with Kara, that charming smile on her mouth that had made Kara blush, it had felt like a knife through her heart.

Because Kara should have that, should flirt with gorgeous women on a night out with her sister, should have someone her own age who isn’t old and jaded, someone who doesn’t work such ridiculous hours that it’s hard to have a life.

She and Kara can never have that, the easy kind of relationship that would start with eyes meeting from across a crowded room, and it had hurt almost more than Cat could bear.

So, she’s stupid, so unbelievably stupid, for not putting a stop to this sooner, for not smothering the
growing spark that flickers to life whenever she and Kara are alone, but at least she’s done it now, had seen the pain in Kara’s eyes as she’d walked away, knows that from now on, things will be different, colder, between the two of them.

That hurts, too, and Cat sit at her desk and holds her head in her hands, because she thinks she might be falling in love, and she wasn’t supposed to, not again, and damn Kara with her bright smiles and sunny personality, damn her for bulldozing down the walls Cat kept around her heart, because she really doesn’t think she’ll ever be the same again.

She wishes Carter were here, that she could go and watch him sleep, press a kiss to his head and inhale the scent of his baby shampoo, let him calm her racing heart and mind.

But then, if Carter were here, Cat wouldn’t have been able to spend the night with Kara in the first place, so she wouldn’t even be in this mess.

Which is Chris’ fault, so fuck him, because it’s a hell of a lot easier to blame this disaster on him than to admit she’s handled this all wrong, had let Kara get too close, let her believe that maybe there was a chance at something, for the two of them, but now she’s crushed the girls’ heart in the palm of her hands.

Kara will be alright, though, Cat tells herself. She’s young, and she’s beautiful, and she’ll have no trouble at all finding someone new.

Cat, on the other hand, will not, but she’s had her heart broken enough times to know that she will survive, even if she has to leave a piece of it behind.

She takes a swig of scotch right from the bottle before setting it down, settling herself in for the night as she switches on her computer – if she can’t distract herself with her son, then she’ll use her second greatest love, her work, instead.

She works until the early hours of the morning, until her eyes are bleary and it stings to keep them open, and even then she tries to soldier on for a while longer.

She finally gives in at around four a.m, stumbling down the hall and to her bed, not bothering with her usual nightly routines as she just strips off her clothes and slips underneath the covers.

She knows that she will be back in her desk chair come morning, after snatching a few hours of sleep, anything to keep herself distracted, just until Carter comes back to her on Sunday, anything to keep her mind off Kara, and whether the pain in her eyes will have faded by the time Monday comes around.

Cat had been falling asleep at her computer just a few minutes ago but now, lying in bed and staring at her ceiling, nothing to focus on but her swirling thoughts, she’s suddenly wide awake.

It takes her a long time to fall asleep and even when she does, it’s fitful, because all she can see when she closes her eyes is Kara’s face, the look on it as Cat had driven away, so lost and broken.

She hates that it’s her fault, that she did that to her, hurt her so badly, but she just has to keep telling herself, over and over again, that it was the right thing to do.

It was for the best.

And it’ll work itself out eventually.

(She hopes).
Kara spends her weekend with Alex and Maggie, who do everything they possibly can to keep her mind off of Cat.

It works, most of the time.

And when it doesn’t, she doesn’t try to let it get her too down, keeps herself occupied, but she still doesn’t sleep great on Sunday night, stomach knotted with nerves over what will happen when she goes to work tomorrow morning.

Her routine is the same as always – groan when her alarm goes off and hide under a pillow until she has the energy to turn it off, drag herself out of bed and into the shower, get dressed with her eyes still half closed, and only begin to wake up properly sipping her morning cup of coffee and a piece of toast, catching up on any news from over the weekend.

She nearly spits out her coffee when she sees one of the headlines – *Cat Grant spotted cosying up with mystery woman* – clicks on the link with a shaking finger, wondering if Cat had been seeing someone this whole time.

But it isn’t a mystery woman at all – in fact, it’s *her*, a grainy photo taken through the window of Noonan’s the previous night, Cat’s hand on Kara’s back as she guides her to the door.

It’s taken from far enough away that no-one would recognise her, and the second photo of them leaving doesn’t catch her face, which she’s grateful for, considering the article speculates on her identity, on whether Cat’s having a midlife crisis in response to her divorce, and Kara closes the link before she can read too much of it, stomach churning, and she sets her coffee down with a grimace.

She’s just grateful that they hadn’t followed them to the bar – she doesn’t want any photographic evidence of that moment.

She wonders if she should bring the article up when she arrives at Cat’s, wonders if that classes as unprofessional, hates that she has to doubt what she can and can’t say around the other woman.

She decides, as she heads out of the door and towards the subway station down the street that she’ll see how Cat reacts to her and go from there.

When she gets to Cat’s door, she doesn’t know if she should knock or walk in like she usually does, mutters to herself to stop being so stupid and unlocks it with her key, kicking off her shoes and padding warily into Cat’s home.

She’s in the kitchen, one eye on her phone as she types something, the other on Carter, munching on his cereal like always in his spot at the counter.

“Good morning, Kara.” Cat doesn’t look at her, and Kara tells herself that that’s fine, that it doesn’t send a shard of glass piercing through her heart.

“Good morning, Miss Grant.” Cat looks up at that, throws her a sharp, considering glance, but doesn’t say anything, attention soon returning to her phone, and Kara sighs.

“Kara!” The other occupant of the apartment is happy to see her, at least, Carter beaming at her as she steps in close and ruffles his hair.

“Hey, buddy. You have a good weekend with your Dad?”
“It was okay.” Carter scrunches up his nose.

“What did you do?”

“I rode a pony!”

“You did?” He nods. “Did you like it?”

“Was too tall.” Kara chuckles at his assessment.

“Maybe you can try again when you’re a bit older.” Carter nods, but his attention is already back on his cereal, and Kara taps her fingers nervously on the counter, feeling more anxious in this apartment than she had her first time here.

“Is everything alright, Kara?” Cat’s looking at her, and there’s a challenge in her gaze, a dare for Kara to bring up what happened the other night, but she refuses to take the bait.

“Have you, um, kept up with the news this weekend?”

“It’s my job to do that, Kara.” Cat sounds annoyed, like she should know that already, like it’s a stupid question that Kara shouldn’t have bothered to ask, and it grates on her nerves – if Cat is going to be petty, then so is she.

“Right. Never mind. I’m sure you’ll see it eventually.” Cat opens her mouth like she wants to ask for an explanation, but Kara turns her attention away from her, focuses instead on Carter, who’s finished his breakfast and is waiting to be released from his chair.

Kara helps him down, lets him drag her over to the living room to play with his action figures, and when Kara risks a quick glance back at Cat, she finds her watching with her jaw clenching, a muscle in her cheek twitching, and Kara thought it would feel good, to make Cat feel as miserable as she does, but instead it only leaves her feeling empty.

“I shouldn’t be back too late tonight,” is the next thing Cat says, as she’s shrugging into her coat and high heels, leaning down to give Carter a kiss goodbye.

“Alright. Have a good day, Miss Grant.” Cat’s lips purse, but other than that she doesn’t respond, and Kara lets out a heavy sigh when she hears the front door close.

Well.

That had gone just about as terribly as she’d imagined it would.

//

Cat pauses in her hallway after closing her front door, taking a deep breath and letting it out slowly, gathering herself before she heads for the elevator and her waiting car.

The morning had gone like she’d expected – stilted and awkward – and when she’d seen the uncertain look on Kara’s face as she’d walked into her kitchen, it had almost been enough to make her crack, to say that she’d been drunk on Friday night, that she’d said things she didn’t mean, and could things just go back to the way that they were?

But she’d held her resolve, been as cold and distant as she’d sworn to herself she would be, even though it had been difficult.

As soon as she’s settled in the backseat of her car, she reaches for her phone, determined to find
whatever news Kara had been talking about earlier.

She assumes it’s something to do with her, so she types in her name, curses when she sees the headline and the photos of her and Kara within.

It’s certainly not damning, though she’s a little annoyed at herself for not noticing someone watching them, and it doesn’t sit well with her, that Kara had been photographed without her permission, that she’s been exposed in such a way because of her, and she supposes she should be glad that the clearly inexperienced cameraman hadn’t managed to get a clear shot of Kara’s face.

She briefly toys with the idea of putting out a statement, that it was a work dinner and nothing more, but she decides that that will just bring the story to the forefront, throw more fuel on the fire, so instead she settles on doing nothing.

It hasn’t been picked up by any major news outlets, and she’s confident that it won’t be, that she story will soon die down and be forgotten – and it’s not like she’s going to be photographed with Kara again, to give the claims more legitimacy.

And if she needs to, she can arrange a date with someone high-profile, make it public enough that it will be noticed, make that the story, and make sure Kara’s name is kept out of the limelight.

She’ll do nothing, and she won’t say anything about it to Kara, and the two of them can just keep on pretending that everything between them is just fine.

Chapter End Notes

*hides*

Don’t hate me too much??

I wouldn’t be me if there wasn’t some angst in here, but I promise everything works out eventually!!
Chapter 14

The next two weeks are… difficult, but Kara survives them.

She and Cat settle into their new dynamic rather quickly, all things considered. Kara keeps calling her Miss Grant, focuses her attention solely on Carter, and they don’t really talk much, anymore, unless it’s about him.

And it’s fine.

(It’s not, it’s anything but fine – sometimes she looks at Cat and she’s desperate to say something to get her exterior to crack, to get her to open up, to just look at her with eyes that aren’t wary and guarded or, worse, completely and utterly disinterested, but this is what Cat had wanted, what Cat thought was best, so Kara does nothing even though sometimes it feels like it’s going to kill her).

She leaves the house almost as soon as Cat gets home, and she doesn’t think they’ve been in a room alone together for longer than thirty seconds since that night.

She’s noticed that Cat hasn’t been working as late, recently – or perhaps she’s just leaving her office early and working through the night in her study, instead, based on the bags under her eyes that she tries hard to hide, but Kara can’t ask her what’s wrong, or if she’s taking care of herself, so she just has to bite her tongue – meaning that she’s often home a lot earlier, with free time on her hands.

She keeps herself busy, with Alex and Maggie or Sara and Ava (who she’s finally met, and who doesn’t immediately hate her on sight, despite the fact that Kara had slept with her girlfriend).

When she’s not with them, she’s at the gym, or working on her paper with Diana, or trying to put herself out there and make more friends in the city.

(Shes joined a cooking class, and she’s a bit of a disaster, makes the teacher despair, sometimes, but she can now make three basic dishes and even though they’d been very doubtful, she hadn’t given Alex or Maggie food poisoning when she’d cooked for them last week).

She even gets dragged to a gay bar one weekend by Sara when Ava’s working, Sara promising to be her wingwoman for the night. She doesn’t go home with anyone, but she dances with a few girls and gets a few phone numbers, and Sara’s been pestering her ever since to message one of them.

She hasn’t, yet, but the possibility is there, and that’s something, some small little victory, evidence that she can come out the other side.

All in all, she’s busier than she has been since she graduated from college, but there’s still a part of her that feels empty, like she’s not completely whole, no matter how hard she tries to fill the void.

//

Lois and Clark arrive in National City the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, and Kara practically bounces her way to the restaurant she’s meeting them at for dinner, because it’s been way too long since she saw her cousin, and his visit couldn’t have come at a better time, a welcome distraction from her own tumultuous life.

Clark is already sitting at a table when she arrives, but he stands and wraps her in a tight hug when she reaches him, sweeping her off her feet and around in a circle, making her feel like a little kid all over again.
“Hey, little cousin.” There’s an easy smile on his mouth when he sets her down, his eyes bright, and he looks happier than she thinks she’s ever seen him. “It’s good to see you.”

“It’s good to see you, too.” She notices that the table is only set for two, and frowns. “Is Lois not coming?”

“She is having drinks with Cat,” he tells her, sitting back down, Kara settling opposite him, and her eyebrows rise in surprise.

“I thought they hated each other?”

“They kinda do? But they also kind of don’t and are really good friends even though they’re nearly always mean to one another?” That sounds more like the relationship Kara thought they had. “I don’t really understand it, but I don’t question these things.”

“Which is why you’ll make an excellent husband, one day soon.”

“Exactly.” Clark’s eyes light up, and it’s palpable, how much he loves his fiancée.

“I’m so happy for the two of you.”

“Thank you.” His smile is warm.

“Have you set a date yet?”

“Not yet,” he shakes his head. “It’ll probably be sooner rather than later, though.”

“Lois already bugging you about it?”

“I need to be married before I’m eighty, Clark.” He imitates her exasperated tone perfectly. “She’s already on my case about how long it took me to propose. I think I’ll be lynched if the wedding’s over a year away.”

“Well, if you need any help with planning…”

“I will call,” he promises. The waiter comes to take their food order, and Kara gets the biggest burger they have on the menu because, as always, she is starving. “Will you even have time to be a wedding planner, anyway?” Clark asks when the waiter’s gone. “Aren’t you like super busy?”

“I can make time.”

“Googling dresses during naptime?” Kara grins, thinking that that’s not actually a terrible idea. “How is your job, anyway? What’s it like, working for Cat?” Her face must fall at the mention of Cat’s name, because Clark’s eyebrows furrow into a frown. “That bad, huh?”

“No, it’s… it’s fine.” That’s her favourite buzzword, at the moment, when it comes to Cat.

“So, you’re still a terrible liar. You always look left just before you do it, complete tell.”

“Stop using interview techniques on me,” Kara throws a breadstick at him, but he catches it easily.

“Can’t ever turn off the reporter in me,” he says, voice solemn, and Kara rolls her eyes. “But no, seriously, talk to me. Is she being hard on you? I know she’s not easy to work for.”

“You knew her, didn’t you?” Kara seizes the opportunity to change the subject, knows it won’t work for long, but figures she may as well try anyway. “Back when she worked at the Planet.”
“Our paths crossed occasionally, yeah,” Clark shrugs.

“What was she like?”

“She was… a force of nature.” Kara can imagine that, although she struggles to think of a younger Cat, before she built up her media empire. “I was only an intern, so I didn’t know her well, but it was obvious that she was going to make something of herself, be a household name one day.”

“Did you ever work for her?”

“Nah, but I know some people who did. Said she was a great boss, until you did something to piss her off.”

“That sounds about right,” Kara mutters, but Clark throws a look and she knows he’d heard her.

“What on earth could you, my sweet and innocent little cousin, have done to piss off Cat Grant? You didn’t drop her kid, did you?”

“No.” Kara knows he’s joking, but she’s still offended by the mere suggestion.

“Then what?”

“It doesn’t matter.”

“Kinda looks like it does.” Clark’s looking at her with a searching gaze, the one that sees right through her and whatever façade she’s trying to project and down into her soul. “Kinda looks like something’s upset you. A lot.”

“I thought I told you to stop using interview techniques on me,” she grumbles.

“And I told you I can’t switch them off, but for what it’s worth, I’m not using them. I know you, Kara. I know when something’s on your mind.” She sighs, fiddling with the straw of her drink to buy her some time. “You don’t have to talk to me if you don’t want to. I just hate seeing you unhappy.”

“It’s not so bad,” she lies, but she knows from the look on his face that Clark doesn’t believe her. “Okay fine, it sucks.”

“So what did you do?”

“I… may have feelings for her.” She doesn’t look at him, doesn’t want to see his reaction. “And she may have figured that out. Or also have feelings for me, I’m not really clear on what she’s thinking in all of this.” She risks a glance up, but Clark’s face is carefully blank, hiding his reaction. “But she doesn’t think anything should happen cause she’s my boss so now all we can talk about is her kid – who is great, by the way, and the reason I definitely don’t want to quit – and it’s driving me a little bit crazy.”

“Feelings haven’t gone away, huh?”

“Nope.”

“Well, you’re right, that does suck.”

“Yeah.”

“Are you gonna do anything about it?”
“I don’t really know what I can do,” Kara shrugs. “Other than try and get over her.”

“How’s that working out for you?”

“Not great.” Their food arrives, then, and Kara drowns her sorrows in her cheeseburger and fries, and is grateful when Clark changes the subject.

When they’re finished eating they go to an arcade nearby, and challenge each other at every game possible before they move onto bowling, and it’s nice, to spend time with him, to feel like she’s a teenager again, outraged whenever he manages to beat her at something.

She knows he’s doing his best to keep her mind off of Cat, and she loves him for it, and she’s so, so unbelievably grateful that she’d found him again, that he’d come back into her life, a link to the girl she’d used to be.

//

Cat makes sure she’s ten minutes early to meet Lois, sits herself down at her usual table in the hotel bar she frequents, usually when she’s trying to make a good impression on potential investors.

She orders herself a scotch, and some godawful fruit cocktail for Lois, that she knows that other woman will hate, because that’s just what they do to one another, and their drinks have just been set down in-front of her when she sees Lois on the street outside.

“What, no hug?” Lois asks when she reaches her, shrugging out of her coat and settling opposite Cat, taking a sip of her drink and trying not to grimace at the taste. “Anyone would think you weren’t happy to see me.”

“When am I ever happy to see you?” Lois just smirks.

It’s an… unconventional friendship, that that two of them have, and Cat knows that anyone who knows them struggles to understand it.

They’d met at the Daily Planet, both started as interns, at the bottom of the pile, with big dreams, matching aspirations to become journalists and huge successes in their field.

They’d both been hired as junior reporters, the only two women in a department full of men, and though there’d been a sense of competition between them, a sense that only one of them would ever be able to succeed, there had also been a comradery, too.

They’d looked out for one another, had each other’s backs, and there was a mutual respect between the two of them, an acknowledgement that they’d both managed to make it, both managed to be the best, even with the odds stacked against them.

“So, Kent finally popped the question?” Cat nods towards the diamond ring sparkling on Lois’ finger, her eagle eyes not missing a thing. “I hope he knows what he’s signing up for.”

“I think he’s well prepared.”

“I hope so – you don’t want to end up like me, three divorces to your name.”

“Maybe if you stopped marrying assholes, you’d be alright,” Lois points out, and Cat chuckles.

“Careful,” Cat murmurs, fingers tapping against the side of her glass, “people might start to think you care about me.”
“Please, I just don’t want to have to keep buying a new dress every time I get a wedding invitation.” Cat chuckles, knowing that it’s a lie, that Lois does care about her, that she’s probably the oldest friend that she has. “How’s that gorgeous little boy of yours?”

“He’s perfect.” Cat can’t help but smile at the thought of him, always does, knows she shines with how deeply she cares for him.

“And Kara?” Cat looks up sharply at the sound of her name, and Lois’ eyes spark with interest, and Cat curses herself, fears she might have just given herself away. “She is his nanny, right?”

“She is.” Cat clears her throat. “And she’s fine.”

“Fine?” Lois raises an eyebrow. “There’s no way you’d settle with someone who’s ‘fine’ around your kid.”

“Okay,” Cat rolls her eyes, “she’s great with him. Excellent, even. I’m lucky to have her – better?”

“Hm.” Lois studies her for one long moment, trying to read her face, and Cat wants to look away but doesn’t dare, doesn’t want to show any sign of weakness for Lois to pounce on. “She’s pretty, isn’t she? Kara, I mean.” Lois looks innocent, but Cat narrows her eyes.

“Where are you going with this?” She asks, because she doesn’t want to answer that question.

“Just making an observation.” Lois rests her chin in the palm of her hand, elbow resting on the table, watching her closely. “Trying to figure out why you reacted like that when I said her name.”

“I didn’t react.”

“You totally did, but it’s alright,” Lois says when she sees Cat’s mouth open to deny it, “I’ll figure it out at some point tonight.” Cat scowls. “Excuse me?” Lois collars a passing waiter. “Could we order some more drinks please?”

“Of course, what can I get for you?”

“We’d like two piña coladas, please,” Lois says before Cat gets the chance, and she makes a face, because she hates them and Lois knows it, judging from the smirk on her mouth.

Cat will get her back with the next round.

She’s already got her eye on the menu, trying to decide what Lois will detest the most.

//

It’s half ten and they’re eating ice cream when Clark’s phone buzzes, and from the smile on his face she knows that it’s Lois, and he shakes his head when he reads the message.

“Everything alright?”

“She is very drunk,” Clark says, chuckling. “If I’ve deciphered this correctly, she can’t feel her legs, or remember where you live, so she needs me to go and pick her up and take her back to your place.”

“Do you know where she is?”

“Again, I could be wrong, but I think she’s in a hotel bar. The… Watson? I think.”
“It’s a fancy enough place for me to see Cat going,” Kara says, “and it’s not too far from her place, either. I’ve walked past it a few times.”

“Are we nearby?”

“Not really – probably best to get a Lyft.”

“Okay, I’ll do that and see you back at your place?”

“Do you remember where I live?” Alex had picked him and Lois up from the airport because Kara had been working, and taken them back to Kara’s to drop their stuff off, but she knows for a fact that Clark has a terrible sense of direction and will definitely not remember her apartment building, let alone number.

“Umm… I can figure it out. I’m very resourceful.”

“Uh-huh. I’ll go with you.”

“Are you sure you want to do that? I assume Cat’s still there.”

“Yeah, well… maybe if she’s drunk, she’ll forget she’s not supposed to talk to me.” Kara’s already got her phone in her hand to order a ride. “Besides, I’m not sure you’d be able to handle a drunk Lois and a drunk Cat at the same time.” Lois when she’s drunk is… an experience, a hilarious one, but the two of them together?

Kara can only imagine the chaos.

“You’ve probably got a point, there.” Their Lyft pulls up a few seconds later, and both of them slide into the back seat. “You don’t have to come inside, you know,” Clark says, when they get to the hotel. “You can just wait outside.”

“It’s fine, Clark, honestly.” Inside, the pair of them are easy enough to find – Kara would recognise Lois’ drunk cackle from a mile away.

“Clark!” Lois is the first to spot them, her words a little slurred, a wide smile on her mouth as they approach, and when Clark is close enough to reach, she grabs his wrist and pulls him towards her, wrapping an arm around his waist. “You came.”

“Of course I did.” He presses a kiss to the top of her head. “You did ask me too, right?”

“Did I?” Lois squints in confusion. “I don’t remember.” Clark shakes his head, and Kara chuckles – it draws the attention of Lois, who gasps when she sees her.

“Kara! Did I… did I call you too?”

“You did not. I came to make sure this one didn’t get lost.” She knocks Clark’s shoulder with her own, and blocks him when he tries to tickle her in response, desperately trying to ignore the eyes she can feel on her from across the table.

She doesn’t last long, her gaze falling on Cat, and damn her for looking so amazing – the dress is green, and tight, hugging her in all the right places, her hair curling around her shoulders, and she’s so beautiful that it makes her breath catch in her throat, and she has to look away, but the imprint of Cat is burned onto her eyelids every time she blinks.

“Should we get going?” Clark asks, and Kara turns to find him shooting furtive glances between her
and Cat. “Can you feel your legs yet?” He directs that at Lois, who nods before trying to get to her feet, and then immediately nearly falls down, Clark’s hands quick to reach out and stop her.

“Ohops.”

“Just how many drinks have you had, babe?”

“Um…” Lois looks like she’s trying really hard to remember. “A lot?”

“Okay,” Clark chuckles, and helps her into her coat. “Cat, how are you doing?”

“Just fine, thank you.” But she, too, stumbles when she attempts to stand, and this time Kara is closest, steadies her with a hand at her back, and her dress doesn’t have a back so Kara’s hand is on her bare skin, and her fingertips tingle and her head feels kind of fuzzy like she’s been drinking and god, she is so, so unbelievably far gone.

“Fine? Really?” Kara doesn’t try to hide her scepticism, and Cat huffs, wrenching away from Kara’s touch but all it does is nearly send her toppling over, and Kara has to grab her again.

“…Perhaps I miscalculated,” Cat admits, and Kara sighs.

“Give me your phone, I’ll call your driver and make sure you get home safe.” Cat stares at her for one long moment, and Kara thinks that she’s going to disagree, say she doesn’t need her help and storm off, but instead she reaches for her phone and drops it into Kara’s hand.

“You sure, Kara?” Clark asks, eyeing them with concern. “I can take Cat and you can take Lois, if you want?”

“It’s alright.” She calls Cat’s driver on Cat’s phone whilst ordering a Lyft for Clark and Lois on her own. “Here, take my keys.” She tosses them to Clark. “It’s apartment 3B – think you can find the right one?”

“I’ll try my best.” He ruffles her hair, and Kara sticks her tongue out at him. They manage to make it outside unscathed, and find their two cars already waiting for them – she opens the door for Cat, and slides in after her, focuses on her hands, knotted in her lap, instead of the other woman, even though she can feel Cat’s eyes burning into the side of her head.

“Why are you helping me?” Cat’s voice is quiet, and when Kara turns to look at her, she finds her eyes are sharp, despite her drunken state. “Being so nice to me?”

“I want to know you get home safe, because Carter needs at least one decent parent.” It’s not the only reason, but it’ll do, should be enough to get Cat off her back. “Speaking of, who’s watching him?”

“I have a neighbour who doesn’t mind taking him every once in a while.”

“Why didn’t you ask me?”

“Because I knew you were spending the night with your cousin, and I’ve already taken too much time away from you.”


“You don’t have to come up,” Cat says, when they come to a stop outside of her apartment building, after a silence that stretches on for just a little too long to be comfortable.
“I know. I’m going to anyway.”

“You’re very stubborn,” Cat tells her, and Kara huffs out a laugh because it anyone’s stubborn here, it’s definitely Cat. “Derek?” She wraps her knuckles on the partition that separates the front of the car from the back. “Will you wait outside for Kara to come back down and take her home, please?”

“Of course, Miss Grant.”

“You don’t have to do that,” Kara frowns, because she’s more than capable of finding her own way home.

“You’re not the only one who gets to worry about getting home safe,” Cat murmurs, hand closing around the door handle, “or who cares.”

Kara’s not so sure she’s supposed to hear that part, but before she can react Cat is already out of the car, and Kara hurries after her. Cat is steadier on her feet, doesn’t stumble on her way to the elevator or to her front door, and when she opens it Kara hovers uncertainly on the threshold, unsure if she should go inside.

“Well, you’ve come this far,” Cat turns to look at Kara over her shoulder, already out of one of her shoes, noticing Kara’s hesitation. “You may as well come inside.”

She sighs as she does, shutting the door and then reaching out to grab Cat’s elbow when she teeters as she tries to kick off her remaining shoe, still clearly more affected by the alcohol running through her veins than she’s pretending to be.

An elderly woman is sitting on Cat’s couch, and while she’s giving Cat a rundown of Carter’s evening, Kara heads to the kitchen, fills up a glass of water and passes it to Cat when she heads down the hall to check on Carter, her neighbour dismissed.

She returns soon after, glass empty, setting it down on the kitchen counter and looking surprised when she sees Kara standing there. “Why are you still here?”

Kara doesn’t think that Cat necessarily means it in a bad way – she sounds honestly curious, not cruel, but it still makes her bristle, still makes her defensive, her back straightening as she struggles not to grow too exasperated.

“I told you – so I know you’re safe.”

“Well, here I am – safe and sound in my own home.” Cat settles a hand on her hip, quirks an eyebrow. “Not in any immediate danger, and yet still, here you are.”

“Because I care about you, Cat, okay?” It comes bursting out of her, and she has to make a conscious effort not to raise her voice too much, not to wake the sleeping toddler down the hall. “I’m sorry if that’s unprofessional.” She says the word like a curse, desperately tries to control the emotions surging within her, but it’s been so hard, biting her tongue around Cat for the past two weeks, and she’s worried it’s going to come spilling out of her, all her pain and anger. “I’m sorry that I give a shit. I wish I didn’t – then maybe it wouldn’t hurt so much.”

Cat blinks at her, slowly, completely taken aback, and Kara’s only salvation is that, with the amount Cat seems to have had to drink tonight, she doubts Cat will remember any of this in the morning.

“I… I didn’t mean to hurt you,” Cat whispers, and this is wrong, Kara thinks, they shouldn’t be having this conversation, not when Cat’s drunk, not when her inhibitions are lowered, not when she might say things that she wouldn’t dare if she were sober. “I never wanted that.”
“It’s okay,” Kara says, though the words stick in her throat because she doesn’t mean them, it’s not true, and Cat doesn’t think so either from the way she shakes her head, but she just needs to say something, needs to put a stop to this, needs to get out of that door before Cat says something she might regret.

“It’s not.” Cat’s voice is soft, her eyes tortured, and if there weren’t a kitchen island between them, Kara’s scared she’d wrap Cat in her arms just to try and soothe that look away. “It’s not, but I didn’t know what else to do, I had to push you away, because if I didn’t I’d end up -”

“Stop.” Kara holds up a hand, cuts her off. “I don’t want to hear it.”

But god, she does, she wants to know what Cat’s going to say, so badly that the unfinished sentence is going to haunt her, drive her insane with what it could mean, but it feels dishonest in a way that makes her uncomfortable.

“And I’m going to go,” she continues before Cat can say anything else, but before she does she makes sure to refill the glass of water, and press it and a box of Advil into Cat’s hands. “Take these before bed, okay? It’ll help with the hangover.”

She slips away before Cat has the chance to stop her, slumping against the wall of the elevator as she heads for the ground floor with her head in her hands, Cat’s unfinished words still ringing in her ears.
Chapter 15

Kara’s up early the next day, ready for her family to descend for Thanksgiving.

She hadn’t slept well, a combination of her mind too preoccupied with Cat, and her not-terribly comfortable sofabed (she’d given Clark and Lois her bed while they were staying, despite both their protests) so it’s almost a relief when her alarm clock hits seven, and she decides that it’s an acceptable time for her to be awake.

She makes an effort to be quiet as she moves around the apartment, not wanting to wake Clark or Lois. Clark had waited up for her last night, but she’d soon sent him to bed after his fiancée when she’d seen him struggling to stay awake, tired from the flight.

She tidies as much as she can, glad that she hasn’t lived here long enough for the place to be too cluttered, and drags the only tablecloth she owns out of a drawer, draping it over the table as she waits for her coffee machine to finishing brewing.

She’s pouring herself a mug when she hears movement from behind her, and she’s surprised that Lois is the first to emerge, her eyeliner from the night before smudged under her eyes, her hair a complete mess and her eyes barely open, and Kara chuckles at the sight of her, pours a second cup without being asked.

“Thanks,” Lois murmurs when Kara passes her the mug, wrapping her fingers around it. “You got any painkillers?”

“Sure.” Kara gets her some, and Lois smiles her thanks.

“Remind me never to try and outdrink Cat Grant ever again,” she groans, washing down two Advil with a sip of her coffee. “It is so not worth the hangover.”

“How bad is it?”

“I had worse in college and survived, but I was younger and healthier then.” Kara grins, before she knocks Lois’ hip with her own.

“Congrats on the engagement, by the way. Can I see the ring?” Lois offers her hand. “It’s gorgeous. Was he nervous? He left that part out of his story.”

“Oh, god, yeah. His hands were shaking so bad. I was actually worried he was going to pass out at one point. As if I was ever going to say no.” Lois rolls her eyes, smiling at the memory. “Did you guys have fun last night?”

“Yeah, it was nice to catch up. We missed you, though.” She’s glad to see that Lois is looking a little better already, the caffeine perking her up. “Did you, hangover aside? I didn’t even know you and Cat were close.”

“It’s an impression she does her best to maintain,” Lois says with a wry smile. “She can’t have people knowing that the queen of all media actually has a heart.”

“But she does.” It’s a statement, not a question, but Lois answers it all the same.

“She tries hard to hide it, but Cat has one of the biggest hearts of anyone I know – except maybe you.” Kara ducks her head. “You just have to scale a hundred foot high wall to get to it, first.” Kara
almost laughs, because she knows that only too well. “What’s going on with the two of you?”

“What?” Kara gives Lois a sharp look. “Did she say something to you last night?”

“Not exactly.” Lois watches Kara closely over the rim of her mug as she takes a sip of coffee, looking much more awake. “But she didn’t have to. I knew something was up the second I said your name.”

Kara wonders what Cat’s reaction was, but doesn’t dare ask – she doesn’t think Cat will appreciate her trying to pry, if she ever found out.

“There’s nothing going on.”

“Do you want there to be?” Kara presses her lips together, and Lois looks like she’s going to press, but she’s interrupted by Clark, who strides out of Kara’s bedroom to save her.

“Morning.” He swoops in to press a kiss to Lois’ cheek. “I’m gonna go for a run, anyone want to join me?” Lois makes a face, but Kara sets down her mug, coffee finished.

“Yeah, I will – let me just go get changed.” Lois watches her go with unasked questions on her face, but Kara doesn’t plan on giving her a chance to ask them, changes quickly into some of her workout gear before re-joining Clark in the kitchen.

“We won’t be long,” he tells Lois, and Kara grabs her keys and slips them into the pocket of her running jacket, before she leads Clark out onto the street.

She has a rough running route, with her warm-up walk finishing just before they reach a park which has a path through the woods that’s softer than the road, and she breaks into a light jog that quickly turns into a sprint, as though she can somehow outrun her thoughts, outrun her feelings for Cat, as though if she pushes herself just hard enough, everything will fix itself and be normal again.

It doesn’t work, and she soon has to stop, the muscles in her legs burning and her chest tight as she struggles to draw in enough air, and she rests her hands on her knees as she tries to catch her breath.

She hears footsteps behind her, and Clark reaches her a moment later.

“You alright there, Kara?” Even he’s out of breath from trying to keep up, and there’s worry on his face as he looks down at her. “Is there something chasing us that I need to worry about?”

“Just my stupid mind,” she mutters, straightening up and kicking out at a nearby pile of leaves, frustrated at herself for being so worked up.

“Okay, I’m going to need some context, here.” Clark stands with his hands on his hips, his voice patient, always ready to drop into big brother mode. “Is it Cat? I told you not to take her home last night.”

“Yeah, well, I definitely should’ve listened.” He doesn’t press for her to continue. “I just feel so stupid, you know? Like, I shouldn’t be this hung up on someone who doesn’t want me. I’m not that girl, the one who lets someone treat her like crap, accepting breadcrumbs, waiting for them to get their shit together. That’s not me – it never has been, and yet here I am.”

“You’re being too hard on yourself,” Clark says, as reasonable as ever. “If you’re expecting your feelings to suddenly evaporate overnight, they’re never going to. And you’re not being stupid. You’ve just gotten your heart a little broken, and it’s okay to be upset about it, to give yourself some time to heal.”
“But we weren’t even together.”

“Doesn’t matter. Sometimes, the ‘almosts’ and the ‘could have beens’ are even more painful, because you never know what could’ve happened. You never really get closure.”

“How do you always know the exact right thing to say?”

“It’s a skill,” he grins, and Kara rolls her eyes. “Wanna head back? Not at break-neck speed this time?”

“You don’t wanna race? You couldn’t really keep up, there.”

“I totally could,” Clark replies, offended.

“Alright, then – let’s go.” She takes off without another word, tearing back down the path, leaving Clark spluttering behind her before she hears his pounding footsteps trying to catch up, her laughter carried away by the wind.

Cat wakes up with a killer hangover.

She groans, pulling the covers up to shield her eyes from the sunlight streaming into her room, hiding for a few more minutes before facing the day.

Damn Lois Lane to hell, Cat thinks as she sits up in bed, her head pounding, and when she sees the Advil on her bedside table, she breathes a quiet prayer, takes down two of them with a gulp of the water that sits beside them.

Drunk Cat isn’t usually so thoughtful towards her sober self, and she casts her mind back to the night before, wondering what was different – and then feels ice slip down her spine when she realises that Kara had been here last night.

And no matter how hard she tries, Cat can’t remember what they talked about.

She can’t remember much from after her fifth drink, vaguely recalls Clark and Kara showing up at the hotel and Kara escorting her home, but the finer details evade her, and it makes her uneasy, because god only knows what might have slipped out whilst she was inebriated.

She doesn’t even know what she and Lois talked about, whether the other woman managed to weasel Cat’s feelings about Kara out of her, in the end, if that might have been a catalyst to her admitting something she shouldn’t have done, with Kara here in her home, the two of them alone for the first time since everything had fallen apart.

She groans, but there’s nothing she can do about it now– the damage has already been done – and all she can hope is that Kara is polite enough not to bring it up again.

And that’s not unreasonable, because Kara barely even looks her in the eye anymore, let alone talks to her, and Cat shouldn’t miss it considering she was the one to push her away, but… she does , an almost unbearable ache in her chest whenever she thinks about her.

It’s unlike her, to feel that way (to feel any of the things she does whenever she looks at Kara, whenever she crosses her mind), but it strengthens her resolve, rather than weakens it – because if this is how she feels now, then she can’t even imagine what it would be like if they got together, and it all went down in flames.
Cat drags herself out of bed and into the shower, the temperature almost hot enough to scald her, but it eases her headache and she feels more human when she emerges a few minutes later in a cloud of steam.

Carter is fast asleep when she checks on him, and she decides to leave him be for a while longer, goes to the kitchen to make her usual cup of coffee, and frowns when her phone rings, and if it’s to do with work she’s going to throw the damn thing out of the window.

But it’s Lois’ name on the screen of her phone (well, it actually says ‘she-devil’), and Cat swipes accept and presses the phone to her ear.

“I’m never drinking with you again,” Cat tells her, because this is the worst she’s felt the morning after in a long, long time – she and Lois had definitely overdone it with the mixing and matching of various spirits in their multitude of very strong cocktails last night.

“Oh, I assure you, that feeling is definitely mutual. I don’t know how we’re still alive.”

“I don’t feel very alive,” Cat murmurs, leaning her hip against the kitchen counter. “Is there a reason you’re calling?” It’s unlike Lois to make a social call, especially if they’d seen one another as recently as the night before.

“Just… checking in.” Cat’s ninety-nine percent sure that that’s a lie.

“You don’t call to ‘just check in’,” Cat points out, and Lois hums on the other end of the line. “Did… did Kara say something to you?” Lois chuckles, and Cat frowns.

“You know, that’s funny – Kara asked me the exact same thing this morning about you. You two sure are interested in what the other one thinks. It’s… interesting.” Cat pales at the tone of Lois’ voice, thinks that she’s just dug herself into a hole that the other woman is unlikely to let her climb out of anytime soon.

“Is there a point to this call, Lois?” Cat sighs, ready for it to be over, but she knows that if she hangs up, Lois will just call and call and call until she’ll speak to her, and if she didn’t, she wouldn’t put it past her to appear at Cat’s door unannounced.

“Like I said, it’s interesting. And to answer your earlier question, the only thing Kara said to me was that there was nothing going on between the two of you.”

“Let me guess – you find that interesting, too?” Cat bristles, ready for a confrontation, ready for Lois to tell her to stay the hell away from Clark’s cousin, but it doesn’t come.

“Mm.”

“Again – your point?”

“Just that you deserve to be happy. And so does she. Think about it.” Cat’s eyes widen, and she’s too stunned to come up with a response, before Lois is speaking again, her voice far too chipper. “Oh, and happy Thanksgiving! Bye, kitty Cat.”

Cat’s eyes narrow at the old nickname – Lois had called her that the entire time they’d worked together at the Planet, just because she liked the annoyance that flashed across Cat’s face each and every time – but she’s hung up the phone before Cat can formulate any kind of response.

She stares down at the phone in her hand for a long time, as though it’s the device’s fault that her mind is spinning, and not Lois’. She thinks about the other woman’s words as she drinks her coffee,
wonders if Lois had actually just given Cat her blessing, was actively encouraging her to pursue something with Kara, and almost convinces herself that she imagined the whole thing.

She didn’t, though, and the question at the forefront of her mind is does it change anything?

No, she decides, after some deliberation – Cat isn’t sure if she deserves to be happy, but what she does know is that Kara does, and Cat has already convinced herself that Kara would be much happier without her.

She drains the rest of her coffee before she pads down the hall to wake Carter, knowing that his infectious energy will be just what she needs to perk her up, and keep her mind from craving what she so desperately wants but knows she can’t have.

//

Kara wins their race, much to Clark’s disgust, and she’s still lording it over him when they get back to her apartment.

She’s feeling better, and her smile widens when she opens the front door to find Maggie already in her kitchen, the turkey already roasting, and Lois apparently in charge of peeling vegetables at the kitchen counter.

“Hey.” Kara gives Maggie a kiss on the cheek instead of her usual hug, because she looks nice in a black blouse that Kara doesn’t want to get sweat all over. “Happy Thanksgiving. I’ll grab a quick shower and then you can give me my orders.”

“You think you’re gonna be allowed near the kitchen?” Clark asks, eyebrows raised in disbelief, and Kara shoves at her shoulder.

“Excuse you, I go to cooking classes now.”

“And you haven’t burned the building yet?” He dodges her next blow with a laugh. “I’m amazed.”

“Maggie,” Kara turns towards her, pout on her mouth, “tell him.”

“She did cook for me and Alex last week, and we are still alive,” Maggie says, smile pulling at the corners of her mouth, “so that’s something.”

“So I’m allowed in the kitchen?” She asks, hopeful, and Maggie, Clark and Lois all share a nervous look.

“You can be in charge of drinks,” Maggie tells her, and Kara’s pout deepens. “And vegetables. Maybe.”

“You all suck,” Kara grumbles, stalking into her bedroom to grab some clothes before heading for the shower. When she emerges, Clark, Lois and Maggie are all catching up in the kitchen, and Kara takes a sneaky photo of the three of them.

“I saw that,” Maggie catches her in the act, but Kara just grins as she joins them.

“You’ve been a part of this family long enough to know that candid photos are gonna happen,” Kara tells her, and Maggie smiles softly.

Kara knows that she doesn’t have my family of her own – her parents had disowned her when they’d found out she was gay, and the only member of her family to keep in touch with her, her aunt,
had passed away a few years ago.

Ever since Alex and Maggie had started dating, Alex had dragged Maggie along to every holiday, and both Kara and Eliza had been more than willing to welcome her with open arms.

“I’m gonna hit the shower – don’t burn this place down while I’m gone.” He ruffles Kara’s hair as he passes, and she sticks her tongue out at him.

“Need any help with anything?” Kara asks, but Maggie shakes her head.

“Think we’re all covered for now. And Alex and Eliza should be here any minute.” Alex had volunteered to pick her up from the airport, seeing as Kara didn’t own a car. They settled down on the couch to watch the Macy’s parade, Clark coming out of Kara’s room only a few seconds before Alex and Eliza arrive from the airport.

They all exchange hugs before squishing back down onto the couch to watch the last of the parade. When it turns to the buildup to the football game, Maggie and Clark (both the respective cooks in their relationships – Alex is barely any better than Kara, much to Eliza’s despair, and Lois has a propensity to set off the fire alarm, too) disappear to the kitchen to start the food, waving off Eliza’s offer to help.

“So, sweetheart,” Eliza shuffles closer to Kara on the couch and slips an arm around her shoulders, “how is everything? Are you settling in okay?”

“Yeah, everything’s great.” Eliza definitely does not need to hear about her disaster of a love life.

“You like it here?”

“Yes, I do.” She’d fallen in love with National City the first time she’d visited Alex, and the decision to move here herself had been an easy one. “I’m actually thinking of staying a while longer – I’ve applied for the master’s program at NCU.”

It’s the first time she’d told anyone – she’d only sent it in a few days ago, finally committing to her future, and whilst she’ll probably apply to other colleges too, her mind is already pretty set.

“You have?” Alex’s eyes light up, and Kara smiles, nods, and is almost suffocated when Alex leaps across the couch to wrap in her a tight hug. “That’s amazing, why didn’t you tell me?”

“I wanted to wait ‘til I’d actually done it. Thought about waiting until I got my acceptance, but it could be a while before I hear.”

“You’ll get in,” all three of the women around her say as one, and their confidence fills her with warmth.

“I hope so.” If she doesn’t get in, she’s not sure what her plans will be, but that’s something to worry about in the future.

“And your current job?”

“Is all good.” Alex and Lois share a look, and Kara elbows Alex in the side and shoots Lois a glare when Eliza’s not looking. “Shall I break out the wine?” She asks, eager to change the subject. “We have something to celebrate.”

“Oh, of course, the engagement!” Kara leaves Eliza cooing over the ring while she fetches some wine glasses, Alex following to grab the bottle, popping the cork and pouring a generous glass for all
of them. “Speaking of engagements,” Eliza raises her voice, and when Kara turns around, she’s peering over the back of the couch and looking between Alex and Maggie meaningfully. “Are we going to have a second wedding anytime soon?”

“Yeah, aren’t you lesbians supposed to move fast?” Clark’s eyes are sparkling as he accepts the glass Alex hands him. “Shouldn’t you already be married with two kids by now?”

“It’s only been two years,” Alex groans, and Kara knows for a fact that Eliza has been pestering her about this since the first time she’d met Maggie.

“I had to wait eight,” Lois adds, and then it’s Clark’s turn to groan as the rest of them chuckle.

“We’ll get engaged when we’re ready, Mom,” Alex says, same as she does every other time, but she looks at Maggie across the kitchen, her eyes soft and full of so much love that it makes Kara melt, and she suspects that it’s going to happen sooner rather than later – she’ll be amazed if it hasn’t happened by this time next year.

“Alright, alright,” Eliza holds her hands up in defeat, before accepting a glass from Kara that she raises as soon as everyone else has one. “To Lois and Clark.” They all echo the toast, and Kara nearly chokes on her wine as Eliza chooses that moment to ask her about her own dating life.

“How about you, Kara? Are you seeing anyone?”

“Nope.”

“Not at all?”

“I’ve been busy,” she shrugs, taking another long sip of wine. “You know, new city, new job and all. Haven’t really had time.” Eliza seems to accept that, but Kara still escapes to the kitchen a few minutes later in case she tries to pry any further.

“Go away, I’m hiding in here,” Alex whispers when Kara leans up against the counter beside her. “I had to endure a whole car ride of questions about my life – now it’s your turn.”

“Excuse me, at least you all,” she waves a hand between Alex, Maggie and Clark, “have your lives together,” Kara points out, stealing a chip out of the bag Alex has open in-front of her. “Mine is a fiasco.”

“It’s not that bad.”

“Oh yeah? You think Eliza will take the news of my giant crush on my older boss who has a three year old kid will go down well?”

“It’d definitely make the afternoon interesting.” Kara throws a chip at Alex’s head. “I’m kidding, I’m kidding. For what it’s worth though, she probably wouldn’t care.”

“She didn’t exactly take Diana well.”

“Well, yeah, because she’s a professor also and she knows that sleeping with your students is a no-go, and also, she only found out after Diana broke your heart.”

“I guess. Still not telling her about Cat.”

“Probably for the best.” Alex throws her a sympathetic glance, and Kara grabs another handful of chips, before the bag is swiped away by Maggie.
“Will you two stop snacking and ruining your appetite?” There’s a stern expression on her face, her hands on her hips. “Now, stop hiding and go and spend some time with your mother, who flew all the way down here to see you.” The two sisters share a glance, before scurrying away, back towards Lois and Eliza.

Maggie and Clark make an amazing feast, and by three o’clock they’re all in a food coma, Kara worst of all because she never knows when to stop eating, and she stretches out on the floor in-front of the couch, thankful that her run this morning will at least have burnt of some of the many, many calories that she’s just consumed.

When they’re all recovered it’s time for games, and Kara teams up with Eliza against the other two couples. She can’t help but think, as Alex and Maggie crush them all at Taboo, that it would be nice to have someone here, nice to have a partner, someone she could curl up against to watch her crazy family, just to have someone to share this with.

There’s an ache in her heart because she wants it with such desperation, and it’s not like she knows what it’s like, because she’s never brought someone home, she’s never spent the holidays with anyone other than her friends and family, so it’s not like it’s something new that’s missing, but she can’t help but imagine what it would be like with Cat and Carter here.

She’d thought about asking her, a few weeks ago. She knew that Cat wasn’t close to her family, that this would be her first Thanksgiving without her husband, considered extending an invitation so that she wouldn’t be alone, but she’d never had the chance.

Her apartment is filled with love and warmth and laughter, and it breaks her heart, a little bit, to think of Cat with only Carter for company, wonders what she’ll do when he’s gone to bed, if she’ll be lonely, if she’ll find herself at the bottom of a bottle.

‘Are you okay?’ Alex mouths from across the room, catching her eye, and Kara hopes that her thoughts aren’t written across her face but judging from Alex’s frown of concern they must be.

She manages a weak smile and a nod, tries to force the thoughts of Cat away, to focus on the here and now, on having all the people she loves all in the same room.

Perhaps next year, she’ll have someone to hold.

(She hopes that in a year’s time, it isn’t still Cat on her mind).
“Kara!” Carter thuds into Kara’s legs when she arrives at Cat’s apartment on Monday morning, the longest she’s gone without seeing him since she’d started the job. “I missed you.”

“I missed you, too, buddy.” She musses up his hair as he beams up at her. “Did you have a good Thanksgiving?”

“Was okay,” Carter shrugs, before he goes back to playing with his toys, and Kara chuckles, leaning up against the edge of the couch as she watches him.

“He liked the parade.” Kara jumps at the sound of Cat’s voice – she’d been on the phone when Kara had walked in, and had completely ignored her arrival – whirls around to find her standing just a few feet away.

She’s got a hand on her hip, and she’s wearing a blue blouse that has one too many buttons undone, her black shirt clinging to her hips and honestly, it should be illegal to turn up to work looking like that, and Kara has no idea how anyone at the CatCo office get anything done when Cat’s stalking around looking like a goddess.

She realises she’s staring, clears her throat and tears her gaze away, mortified when she feels a blush on her cheeks.

“I liked it, too. Did you, um, did you have a good weekend?” The last time she’d been here, Cat had been very drunk, and before that they’d barely interacted directly for a while, and Kara isn’t sure what is and isn’t allowed, eyes Cat warily once the question leaves her lips.

“Yes, thank you. Did you?”

“Yeah, it was nice to have everyone together.” Cat’s gaze feels heavy, her eyes searching Kara’s face, and she has no idea what she’s looking for, waits to see if an explanation will come.

“Thank you, for getting me home safe the other night,” is what she says, eventually, her voice soft, and Kara wonders if this is Cat’s attempt at extending an olive branch. “I’m sure I wasn’t easy to deal with.”

“You don’t remember?”

“Bits and pieces, but not anything specific.” It makes sense, then, Cat’s careful observation of her – she doesn’t know if she said something she shouldn’t have the other night, is trying to deduce what happened from Kara’s reaction to her.

So it’s not an olive branch, after all, it’s just Cat trying to save her own skin, and a spark of anger ignites in Kara’s chest.

Well, let her wonder – Kara isn’t going to tell Cat what happened, or what she said.

Let her be driven mad by the possibilities, just like Kara had been, desperately trying to figure out what Cat might have ended that damn sentence with.
“Well, you didn’t embarrass yourself too badly,” Kara says, keeping her voice purposefully light, and when Cat’s lips purse, she feels a flash of vindication.

She looks like she wants to press further, but seems to think better of it.

“I’ve been meaning to ask you…” Cat’s voice is hesitant, and it makes Kara curious. “The London trip next month, are you still available?”

Kara’s availability isn’t what she’s really asking for – what she wants to know is if Kara still wants to come, but asking that means acknowledging the night at the bar and that is something that they definitely do not do.

“Of course, I’d have told you if I wasn’t.” Sure, the thought of being on a plane for several hours with Cat and spending days in a city she’s never been to doesn’t fill her with as much excitement as it had when Cat had initially asked her to go, but she isn’t going to back out, not when she knows that both Cat and Carter need her.

“I’m going to have Eve book everything today, I’ll have her email the details to you.” With that, Cat decides that she’s lingered too long, says her goodbyes to Carter and leaves the two of them alone.

Kara sits beside Carter on the floor as he plays, and he’s uncharacteristically quiet, doesn’t really engage her when she tries to talk to him, and his mouth is downturned, something clearly on his mind. Kara doesn’t press, knows that if he wants to talk to her he will in his own time.

“Did you and my Mom have a fight?” He asks eventually, his eyes fixed on the Batman figurine he has in his hands, and she sucks in a breath at the question, not realising he’d picked up on any animosity between them.

“What makes you think that?”

“Dunno.” He lifts his shoulders in a shrug, and when he squints up at Kara he’s biting his bottom lip. “You don’t stay long. Or talk. It’s like what happened before Daddy left. Are you getting divorced?”

“You have to be married to get divorced, Carter,” Kara chuckles in spite of herself, leans her back against the couch and wraps her arms around Carter when he crawls into her lap. “And your Mom and I aren’t.”

“Why not?” She’s overheard him having this exact conversation with Cat, and she’s honestly surprised it had taken him so long to bring it up with her.

“You have to be in love to get married,” she tells him, prodding his nose and making his face scrunch up.

“You don’t love my Mom?” Carter looks like that offends him.

“She definitely doesn’t love me,” she says, when what she should be saying is ‘no’, but somehow she can’t, because even though she doesn’t think she’s in love with Cat, she’s definitely halfway there, and to deny it completely would feel too much like a lie.

“Oh.” Carter looks disappointed. “I love you.” He blinks up at her, so sweet that she melts. “Can I marry you?”

“You’re a little young for me, kiddo. Maybe when you’re older.”

“Okay!” That seems to placate him and distract him, because he goes back to playing with a much
“What do you mean, there are no spare rooms?” Cat stares up at Eve with annoyance, the other woman looking nervous as she stands behind Cat’s desk, her tablet clutched in hands that tremble in response to the tone of Cat’s voice.

“Um, well, as you know I ensured that your usual suite was reserved a few months ago, and reserved another room for myself, but when I called to request an additional one, they said that they were unaware that you’d be needing any more rooms, and that they’re fully booked up with it being so close to the holidays.” Eve speaks too quickly when she’s nervous, but she’s been Cat’s assistant for long enough that she can keep up with the frantic speech. “But, uh, Kara can just have my room, and I’ll try and find another hotel nearby, or an air bnb, it’s not - ”

“Nonsense,” Cat cuts her off with a raised hand. “I need you nearby.”

“But… you need Kara nearby too, for Carter.”

“Yes.” Cat purses her lips at the unpleasant circumstances. “Are you sure they won’t make an exception, just for me?”

“I tried, but…” Even trails off, apologetic, and Cat sighs.

“Get the manager on the phone.” She’ll try herself – most people are more amenable when they hear her voice, rather than her assistant’s, and Eve snaps into action quickly, returning to her desk and lifting her phone to her ear, patching the call through a few moments later.

“Miss Grant,” the manager has his best customer service voice on as Cat accepts the call, “I’m very sorry about this, but as I told Miss Teschmacher, we have no further rooms available - ”

“Not a single one?” Cat asks, because the hotel is huge, and the price tag isn’t exactly affordable, and surely there’s no way it could be full, regardless of the time of the year? “Hell, I’d even take a broom closet, if there’s one of those free.”

“We have no vacancies.” Cat grinds her teeth. “But if I could remind you, your suite has two bedrooms, and a capacity of four.”

Cat’s well aware of that fact – her original plan had been to have Kara in there with her, close to Carter, which is why she hadn’t had Eve reserve a third room earlier. But in light of recent events, she’d thought that Kara would be more comfortable somewhere else.

Now it looks like they’ll have to share close quarters for the week they’re in London together.

Not ideal.

“That’ll have to do, then,” Cat replies, voice clipped. “Thank you.” She hangs up, muttering under her breath, not happy with this latest turn of events.

There’s a timid knock on her door, and when she glances up Eve is hovering, as she’s known to do when she has to disturb Cat when she’s in a mood.

“Any luck?”

“No,” Cat sighs, rubbing her temples, feeling a vicious headache coming on. “Kara will have to stay
in my suite.”

“Oh, well, at least she has somewhere.” Eve perks up a bit. “I’m going to book the flights next – do you want Kara up in first class with you and Carter, or coach with me?”

Cat pauses, deliberating – she doesn’t know if she wants Kara too close, but she suspects that Carter will have a tantrum if she’s not nearby.

“Just put us all in first class,” Cat decides, because then at least Eve can act as some sort of buffer, and besides, there’s enough space in first class that they should be spread out enough, not cramped into too-small seats, their legs and arms touching with each jolt of turbulence.

“Are… are you sure?” Eve’s eyes are wide, but Cat just waves her.

“Yes, just go and book it before I change my mind.” She scurries off, and Cat casts a longing glance at her liquor cabinet, but she knows that a glass of scotch will do little to ease the ache starting behind her eyes.

The rest of the day passes slowly, is trying, and even though it’s a relatively early night for her, Cat is bone-tired by the time she’s on her way home at seven o’clock.

Carter is sleepy when she gets home, struggling to keep his eyes open as she lifts him into a hug, smiling when he snuggles into her chest, his arms curling around her neck and calming her instantly.

“Did Kara wear you out today?” She asks him, gets only a mumble in response.

“We went to the park,” Kara tells her because Carter won’t, “and then the gym. You should think about signing him up for martial arts classes – I think he’d do well. And it’d be good for him to get to know some other kids his age.”

“Thanks for your parenting input.” It comes out more scathing than she intends – a lingering aftereffect of the day she’s had, and she doesn’t even really mean it, regrets it as soon as she sees the wounded look in Kara’s eyes.

“I wasn’t - ” Kara starts to argue, but then she cuts herself off with a sigh and a shake of her head. “You know what, never mind. Next time I’ll keep my mouth shut.” She’s annoyed, an undercurrent of anger crackling through her words, and in the set of her shoulders as she clambers to her feet. “I’ll see you tomorrow.”

“Wait.” Kara pauses on her way down the hall to get her coat, turns back to face Cat and she’s probably expecting an apology, but she isn’t going to get one. “Here. The details and confirmations for everything next month.” She hands Kara the folder Eve had put together, and Kara takes it without looking at it. “We fly out on the 18th, back on the 22nd.”

“Great.” Kara’s voice is flat, and Cat wishes it didn’t hurt so much, didn’t feel like a knife in her chest.

“And there… there weren’t any extra rooms in the hotel, so you’ll be staying in a suite with Carter and I.”

“Can’t wait.” It’s heavy with sarcasm, and Cat winces but Kara doesn’t catch it, has already turned her back. “Bye, Carter!” She sounds a little happier as she calls that over her shoulder, but Carter is half-asleep and doesn’t say it back.

When she’s gone, Cat takes Carter to his room, tries to wake him up enough to get him to brush his
teeth and then into his pyjamas.

Typically, he looks wide awake the second he’s in bed, and Cat settles down in the chair beside it, ready with his bedtime story, one of the books that Kara had gotten for him from the local library.

“Mom?” He asks before she can start reading, looking up at her with wide eyes.

“Yes, sweetheart?” She expects him to request a different book, or to ask if he can stay up later, but instead his question is so unexpected that it shocks her into a stunned silence, and all she can do is blink at him.

“Why don’t you love Kara?”

“I… what?” Not her most eloquent response, considering her career, but he is three, and she doesn’t think he’ll even remember this conversation in the morning. “Why would you ask that?”

“Why are you fighting with her?”

“I… we’re not fighting.”

“You are.” His voice is solemn. “It upsets her.” He’s too damn observant, for a toddler, and his words feel like a sucker punch right to her gut.

“Where is this coming from?”

“I asked Kara if you were going to get divorced because you were fighting like before Daddy moved out.” His words come out in a rush, like if he doesn’t say them quickly he’ll forget them. “But she said you couldn’t get divorced if you weren’t married and I asked why you weren’t married and she said because you have to be in love to get married but that you didn’t love her, so.” He takes a deep, dramatic breath. “Why don’t you love her?”

“I…” She’s lost for words, doesn’t know what on earth she’s supposed to say to him, doesn’t want any of this conversation getting back to Kara, because that wouldn’t do either one of them any good.

“She makes me happy.”

“I know she does, sweetheart.”

“Does she not make you happy?”

“She does.”

“Isn’t that what love is?” He peers up at her with earnest eyes. “Someone who makes you happy?”

“That’s a part of it,” Cat confirms, “but it’s a little more complicated than that.”

“I think you do love her but you’re scared.” He’s hugging his teddy bear to his chest, and he is three but the look in his eyes is older, wiser, and Cat stares down at him in astonishment. “Because Daddy left and you don’t want her to leave too.”

He rarely talks about his father, but she knows it had affected him, much as she had tried to shield him from the apocalyptic demise of their marriage.

“I don’t think Kara would leave,” Carter continues, and he looks so hopeful that it breaks her heart.

“Maybe not,” Cat murmurs, brushing his hair away from his face, “but there’s one important thing
you’re forgetting in all of this – Kara doesn’t love me.”

“Have you asked her?”

“I don’t need to,” Cat tells him, and before he can open his mouth to ask her something else, she continues with, “now, are you ready for your bedtime story?”

He nods, albeit reluctantly, and within ten minutes he’s fast asleep, his breathing soft and laboured, arms still wrapped around his teddy, and she presses a kiss to his forehead before she slips from the room, closing the door quietly behind her.

His words play on her mind the rest of the night, and she dreads to think what he’s been asking Kara when she’s not around to overhear, wishes she could find out, wishes she knew Kara’s responses, most of all.

She sighs and eats alone in her kitchen with a bottle of wine for company, refusing to dwell on how much brighter it would be if Kara were opposite her. Afterwards, she retires to her study, knowing she won’t be falling asleep anytime soon, works until the early hours of the morning, until she’s too exhausted to let thoughts of Kara keep her awake any longer.

//

Cat has to attend an awards show on Thursday night, which means that Kara’s on Carter duty for the whole night.

She doesn’t mind at all, but she remembers the last time Cat had spent the night out, the fact that she’d had a date, and she hopes that tonight there’s not going to be a knock at the door, an eligible bachelor standing on the other side with a winning smile on his face, because she’s sure Cat will lay it on thick if she knows Kara is watching, just to drive the stake further into her heart.

Not that she’s being dramatic, or anything.

She’s playing with Carter, lifting him into the air and spinning him around when the front door opens, and Kara nearly drops him in shock, because Cat is in her bedroom being made over by her team, and as far as Kara is aware, no-one else has a key.

Carter squeals as he falls, thinking it’s a game, and Kara is quick to grab him before he’s anywhere near the floor, readjusting her grip so that he’s balanced on her hip as she turns towards the door.

A woman stands in the hallway, dressed in an elegant black dress that matches the frame of her glasses, perched on her nose. Her lips are pursed as she surveys the apartment, and the look she gives Kara is so withering that it actually makes her take a step back, like she’s the one who’s not supposed to be there.

“You’re not my daughter.”

Well, that explains it – Katherine Grant is even more formidable in person than Kara could have ever imagined from Cat’s stories, and she tightens her hold on Carter, aware that Cat has tried to shield him from his grandmother as much as possible, as though the woman is going to come over and pluck him right from her arms.

“Um, no, I’m not. I’m Kara, the nanny.”

“You’re the nanny?” Katherine looks at her in disbelief. “You’re practically a child yourself.”
“I’m twenty-three.”

“Exactly.” Carter’s hiding his head in Kara’s hair, and she wishes she could do the same. “Is my daughter here?”

“Oh, yeah, she’s just – ”

“Catherine?” Kara doesn’t get a chance to finish before Katherine is calling Cat’s name, her voice high and shrill and Kara winces.

It takes less than five second for the sound of running footsteps to sound down the hall, and Cat bursts into the room a moment later, a stricken look on her face that confirms Kara’s suspicions that Cat had no idea Katherine was planning on dropping by.

“Mother?” Dear god, Cat’s not even properly dressed, her dress for the evening unzipped, held up only by the hand Cat has pressed to her chest, the back gaping open to reveal an expanse of smooth skin that Kara would love to trace with her fingertips. “What on earth are you doing here?”

“You wouldn’t take any of my calls,” Katherine sniffs, and Cat’s eyes widen in disbelief.

“So you thought you’d just show up at my home unannounced?”

“I’m your mother, Kitty – I’m allowed to drop in on my daughter whenever I like.”

“What do you want?”

“I wanted to know if you were coming to the show tonight – you know they’re honouring me, don’t you?” A muscle in Cat’s cheek twitches, and the nod of confirmation looks like it physically pains her. “I assume from your current state that you are, but is that really what you’re wearing?”

Katherine’s lip curls as she looks at Cat’s dress, voice filled with disdain and Kara has never been more grateful to have Eliza as a foster mother as she is right now.

“Yes, mother.” Cat speaks through gritted teeth, and Kara wonders if she could sneak away with Carter into his room to hide until Katherine’s gone. She tries, slides a step backwards, and Cat throws a ‘don’t you dare leave me’ look that stops her in her tracks. “This is a custom-made Versace.”

“It doesn’t look like it.” Kara swears she hears Cat growl. “And do you have a date?”

“No.”

“You don’t?” Katherine looks appalled. “Kitty, you can’t show up to things like this alone, especially with the divorce so fresh on everyone’s minds.”

“Because god forbid a woman over forty be single in public?”

“Exactly.” Cat rolls her eyes so dramatically it’s a wonder she doesn’t pull something. “I’m sure I can make a few calls and arrange something - ”

“I don’t need you to set me up.”

“Really?” Katherine raises her eyebrows. “How many dates have you been on since Christopher left you for that skank, hm?”

“That’s none of your business.”
“At least one,” Katherine answers her own question, and there’s malice in her eyes and Kara knows that whatever comes next, it isn’t going to be good, “if those little gossip columns you love so much are to be believed. You were photographed with a woman, were you not?” Kara goes cold all over, her fingers quaking where they’re wrapped around Carter, because she knows where this is going, and when Katherine’s eyes flicker to her she wants the floor to swallow her whole. “A woman who, if I’m not mistaken, bears a striking resemblance to your new nanny.”

They’d never talked about it, the news article that had linked the two of them together.

Kara had tried to bring it up and Cat had shot her down, and although she knows that Cat must have seen the story, would have googled it the second she was out of Kara’s sight, she hadn’t said anything about it when she’d gotten home and, if she’s being completely honest, Kara had almost forgotten that it ever happened.

Unlike certain other people in the room.

“Are you taking after your ex-husband, Kitty? Screwing the help?”

“That is enough.” Her voice is deathly quiet, but rage crackles through every word, and Kara has never seen Cat look so mad – her face is pale, her eyes flashing, and she draws herself up to her full height, her free hand shaking when she curls it into a fist at her side.

“Oh, I’m sorry, have I crossed a line by bringing your girlfriend into this?” Cat’s lips curl into a snarl as she takes a step forward, and Kara takes another half-step back, ready to bolt if punches start to fly.

“She is not the help,” Cat spits, and Kara just really wishes that she weren’t a part of… whatever this is turning into. “And she is not my girlfriend – not that it would be any of your business if she were.”

“On the contrary,” Katherine settles her hands on her hips and stares her daughter down. “It’s very much my business who you date, and what your image is – and three divorces and a twenty year old nanny don’t exactly paint you in the best light.” Katherine’s eyes flit back over to Kara. “And if you’re hoping to get some gain in status by - ”

“You don’t even get to look at her, let alone speak to her, especially in that tone,” Cat snaps, and she positions herself in-between Kara and her mother. “The only thing she’s doing here is her job – which she is damn good at, by the way – and I am not going to let you scare her away.”

“My, my.” Kara can’t read the expression on Katherine’s face, but she’s pretty sure it’s not a good one. “You certainly have made an impression, haven’t you? She didn’t even defend her husband with such vigour.”

“Get out.” Cat’s voice is laced with pure vitriol, but Katherine doesn’t even flinch, and Kara dreads to think how frosty the air between the two of them will be when they cross paths later in the evening.

She’s almost surprised when Katherine listens, but she does, turning on her heel and stalking from the apartment with one last dark look between Cat and Kara.

The door clicks shut with a sense of finality, leaving the two of them alone.

Cat is breathing so heavily that her shoulders shake, staring at the spot where Katherine had disappeared, her face still twisted with rage. Kara opens her mouth to break the rather awkward silence around them, but before she gets the chance Cat disappears back to her bedroom, slamming
the door so violently behind her that it’s a wonder she doesn’t pull it off its hinges.

“Is it over?” Carter mumbles, mouth quiet, pressed close to her ear.

“Yeah, buddy, it’s over.” He lifts his head to check for himself, casting his eyes around the room to check that Katherine is gone. “That was intense, huh?”

“They always fight.”

“Yeah?”

“I don’t like her. She’s mean to my Mom. And she doesn’t care about me.”

“Trust me, kiddo – that’s probably not a bad thing.” Her arms are getting tired from holding him up, so she sets him carefully down. “You want to play some more?” A distraction (for the both of them), probably isn’t a terrible idea, and she’s relieved when he nods.

Cat’s team file out soon after, the woman herself taking a few minutes longer before she pads into the living room, a pair of high heels in her hands. There’s still a tightness in her jaw, a blazing heat of anger in her eyes, but she doesn’t bring up her mother as she crouches down beside them to say goodnight to Carter.

“Be good for Kara, young man,” she tells him, pressing a kiss to his head and looking like she wishes more than anything that she could stay. “And I’ll see you later, Kara.”

“Hope your evening isn’t too terrible.” Cat grimaces like she knows it will be, and then she’s slipping into her shoes and clicking her way down the hall. “What do you wanna do now, Carter?”

“Cartoons!”

“Cartoons it is.”

//

Cat has a dreadful evening.

If she’s not trying to dodge the affections of every single (and some taken) man in attendance who thinks he has a shot with her just because she’s there solo, then she’s hearing all about her mother’s many achievements and how she must be so proud, despite the fact that she herself is more successful in her field than Katherine Grant will ever be in hers.

And in addition to all of that, she has to try and avoid the woman in question, still furious with her for the stunt she’d pulled earlier.

The more she thinks about it, the more she decides that it had been a calculated move.

Katherine Grant is not supportive of her daughter’s bisexuality, and has made that very clear since she’d walked in on Cat kissing her best friend at the time when she’d been just fourteen years old.

She was shipped off to an all-girl’s Catholic school not long after (and really, the logic behind that decision, Cat does not understand, because she’d slept with more girls in her four years there than she probably has in any other period of her life), and Katherine’s disapproval had dripped into the few relationships with women she’s tried to embark on in her life.

She’d probably seen that article and panicked that Cat’s next suitor would be a woman, assumed that Cat would be bringing her tonight, and must’ve had a field day when she’d walked into Cat’s
apartment and come face to face with Kara.

Because the pictures may have been blurry, but her mother has a sharp eye, and she’d have recognised her immediately.

She just can’t believe the **audacity**, but she supposes she shouldn’t be surprised – tonight was honouring Katherine, after all, and she’d have been furious if Cat had shown up here with a woman on her arm.

She’d thought about doing it, just to piss her mother off, but she’d thought of Kara, of that wounded look in her eyes the *last* time that Cat had had a date, and decided against it.

She wanted Kara to keep her distance, but she didn’t want to be cruel.

Cat doesn’t even look towards her mother once all night, fury still licking through her veins like fire, and Katherine stays away, too – she’s probably afraid of the confrontation is she tries. Cat hates that Katherine knows she got under her skin, but hearing her talk to Kara like that had just made her snap, and she’d given herself away, to her mother, at least.

Thankfully, she doesn’t think that Kara is any the wiser.

She escapes as soon as it’s polite to, slipping out a side door and having to wait only a few minutes for her to car to pull up in-front of her. She’s home by eleven, and she’s quiet as she opens the door, not wanting to wake Carter.

It takes her a moment to spot Kara, her eyes taking a moment to adjust to the darkness inside her apartment, lit only by the TV, playing an old episode of *Friends*. She sees her eventually, when she steps into the living room – Kara’s lying on the couch, fast asleep, and Cat stops short, her throat tight with the unexpected emotion that floods through her at the sight.

God, she’s beautiful – Cat has tried not to look at her too closely, lately, hadn’t wanted to be caught staring, but she lets herself now, drinking in the sight of her, face relaxed in sleep, the light from the TV casting shadows across her face.

She looks so young like this, so peaceful, none of the hurt on her face that always seems to be lurking, just below the surface, whenever Cat meets her gaze.

Cat’s loathe to wake her, but her couch can’t be terribly comfortable to sleep on, and Kara really ought to be getting home. Her driver is waiting downstairs with instructions to drop Kara off at home (no matter how much she protests), and she doesn’t want either one of them to have too late a night.

“Kara.” She starts off with her voice soft, trying again a little louder when it has no effect, but again, Kara doesn’t stir. So she crouches down, reaches out a hand and shakes her shoulder gently, trying to ignore the sparks that shoot through her fingertips wherever she touches Kara’s bare skin. “Kara, wake up.”

It has the intended effect, Kara’s eyes flying open, and she blinks sleepily at Cat a few times, her face so close (too close, the closest it’s ever been, and she could drown in those eyes, in those gorgeous pools of blue, wouldn’t be able to find the will to surface for air), before she’s scrambling upright, wrapping her arms around herself protectively.

“Oh, shoot, sorry – I didn’t mean to fall asleep.”

“It’s alright, it’s late.” Kara glances at the clock as if she’s checking Cat’s telling the truth, and Cat wonders how long she’s been asleep for. “Was everything okay?”
“He was in bed by eight – he tried to escape a couple of times to watch some more cartoons, but he’d passed out by nine and been quiet as a mouse since.” Kara’s voice is a pitch lower than normal, rough with sleep, and Cat tries to ignore the way it makes her stomach flip.

“Good.”

“Guessing my evening was better than yours?”

“You could say that.” Cat smiles, though it lacks any humour. “I’m… I’m sorry about all of that unpleasantness before. I had no idea she was coming, let alone that it was specifically to attack you.”

“It definitely sounded like more of an attack on you than me.” Kara looks surprised, and Cat realises she’s still crouching in-front of her, stretches and perches on the edge of the coffee table, instead. “Your Mom is… a lot. I can see why you keep her away from Carter.”

“Was he okay?”

“Yeah, he was fine. Hid in my hair the whole time, lucky thing.” Cat’s lip twitch. “I think he forgot about it about three seconds after she left.”

“Good.” Cat really doesn’t want to explain to him why her mother thinks Kara is her girlfriend, considering his persistent line of questioning lately. “And… and you’re okay?” Cat asks it hesitantly, and Kara eyes her warily, like she’s wondering if she has an ulterior motive.

“What, with your mother’s opinion of me?” Kara raises an eyebrow. “Well, seeing as I’m not actually your girlfriend, it doesn’t really matter what she thinks, does it?” There’s a glint of challenge in Kara’s gaze when it meets her own, some of that steel that only Cat seems to be able to elicit. “Not that I care anyway.”

Cat wishes she’d been so quick to brush off her mother’s opinion, hadn’t wasted so many years on trying to get approval she’d never receive.

“My car is waiting for you downstairs.” Cat decides it’s best to change the subject before they end up on heavier topics, best to send Kara home before she gets too lost in her eyes. “It’ll take you home.”

“You didn’t have - ”

“- to do that,” Cat finishes, because they’ve had this argument too many times before. “I know, but I did it anyway, and if you don’t use it, my driver will have waited an extra ten minutes that he could’ve been at home.” Cat knows that guilt is the best way to get Kara to comply.

“Alright, alright.” Kara drags herself to her feet, runs a hand through her hair as she slings her bag over her shoulder.

“Thanks for staying so late.” She would’ve asked her to just stay the night seeing as she’ll be back here in less than eight hours anyway, but she knows that Kara never would have agreed.

“It’s all good.” She shrugs on her boots and coat at the front door, gives Cat one last wave around a yawn before she’s gone, and Cat pads to her room and wonders how different her night would have been if Kara were by her side.

Chapter End Notes
So we are officially over the halfway point with this story now, and I hope you're all still enjoying it!!

Next up - London. Hope you're all ready!
Chapter 17

Chapter Notes

You can have a bonus early update because I'm stuck supervising undergrads in the labs and am bored out of my minddd.

Hope you enjoy!!

“Jesus Christ, Kara, are you leaving for a month?” Alex says when she arrives at Kara’s apartment on the day of her trip to take her to the airport, eyebrows shooting skyward when she catches sight of Kara’s very full suitcase.

“I didn’t know what I’d need,” Kara defends.

“So you thought you’d take everything you owned?”

“Yes.” Alex shakes her head, but she helps Kara lug the suitcase down the stairs to her waiting car anyway.

“How are you feeling?” Alex asks when they’re on the road, and Kara shrugs, because she’s not really sure.

She’s never been out of the country before, certainly never been away without her sister in tow, and it’s strange, to know that she’s going to be flying across the Atlantic without her.

But she’s excited, too, because she’s going somewhere new, and she gets to spend time with Carter, gets to explore a new city and see it through his eyes, too. And she’ll be with Cat, too, and though things between them have remained a little strained, they’d improved, somewhat, since their conversation that night after Katherine’s unannounced visit.

“It’ll be… an experience, if nothing else,” she says, and Alex’s lips curve into a small smile – she hadn’t been too happy, when Kara had told her she was still planning on going, worried that it wouldn’t be good for her, that she needed to stay away from Cat, not jet across the ocean with her, but Kara had assured her sister that she’d be fine.

“And you’ll call me, if you need anything?”

“Yes, Mom.” Alex reaches across the centre console to poke her squarely in the ribs, eyes never leaving the road, and Kara squirms away. “Will you manage to survive a few days without me?”

“Somehow I think I’ll manage,” Alex replies dryly, and Kara pouts.

“You won’t miss me?”

“You know I will.” Alex pulls up in the departures carpark and turns to face her. “Have the best time, and take all of the photos for me.”

“I will, I promise.” She wraps her sister in the best bear hug she can manage whilst they’re in the car. “I’ll let you know when I get there.”
She retrieves her bag from the trunk before entering the airport, turning to throw Alex one last wave over her shoulder before she disappears from view. There’s a flutter of nerves in her stomach as she approaches the check-in desk, the same ones she always gets whenever she sets foot in an airport.

She’s not scared of flying, exactly, but she doesn’t really enjoy it, and the thought of nearly eleven hours on a plane when her record thus far is half that sets her on edge.

She’s not very well travelled, but she’d flown between Yale and Midvale on her own often enough that she knows what she’s doing, gets herself checked in without an issue, watches her bag disappear and hopes that she’ll see it on the other side.

The line for security is long, and by the time she’s through to the other side she doesn’t have much time. She browses through a couple of the shops, fills her backpack with snacks, and then she wanders down to her gate, feeling a flutter of disappointment when Cat is nowhere to be found.

She’s probably in the first class lounge – Kara knows she has access to it, too, but she knows she’d only feel awkward and out of place in there, will be bad enough on the actual plane, so instead she settles down against a window, leans her side against the glass and watches the planes fly down the runway.

She doesn’t actually run into Cat until she’s on the plane – Kara’s been sat for a while, flicking through one of the magazines she’d found in the seat pocket, more relaxed in her comfy seat with the extra legroom than she’s ever felt on a plane before – when she hears Cat’s voice, phone to her ear and rattling off a list of instructions to whoever is on the other end of the line, Eve following a half-step behind.

“Kara!” Carter is in Cat’s arms, but he wiggles when he spots her, and Cat sets him down, watches him carefully as he sprints over and scrambles into Kara’s lap. “Hi.”

“Hey, buddy.” He’s in his favourite pair of spaceship pyjamas, his teddy in his arms, and he’s so adorable that it warms her heart. “You doing okay?”

“Yeah! I like planes.”

“You do?” He nods, leaning over Kara to peer out of the window, and she keeps a careful hold of him so he doesn’t fall down, and smiles at Eve as she drops into the seat next to Kara with a sigh. “Hey.”

“Hey, glad to see you made it – it’s nice to have someone else along this year.” Kara hasn’t spent too much time with Eve, but she’s nice, and she knows that she has her to thank for getting this job, and she wouldn’t mind getting to know her a little better.

“Is it usually just you?”

“Me, Miss Grant, the little guy and the,” she mouths ‘asshole’ so Carter doesn’t hear her say it, and Kara snorts in amusement.

“Hopefully that won’t be my nickname by the end of the week.”

“As long as you don’t try and look down my top or stare at my ass whenever I bend down then you’ll be fine.”

“I’ll try my best,” Kara promises, and Eve grins, although it soon slips off her face when she looks up and sees Cat’s eyes on them, her phonecall finished. “Morning,” Kara greets her, and Cat’s lips manage a tight smile.
“Good morning. Carter, are you going to come and sit down?” Cat’s seat is apparently directly in-front of Kara, and she leans over the back of it to try and get her son’s attention.

“Want to stay with Kara.”

“You’ll have eleven whole hours to spend with her once we’re up in the air but for now, you need to sit with me.” He grumbles, but he lets Kara hand him over without too much complaint, and Kara drums her fingers nervously against the arm of her seat as the cabin crew start to prepare for departure.

“Nervous flyer?” Eve asks, eyes filled with understanding as they meet her own, and Kara nods.

“Never been out of the country,” she admits. “Or on a plane for longer than five hours. Although,” she notes, glancing around her, “this isn’t the worst place to try it.”

“Yeah, it’s pretty cool,” Eve nods, and there’s a similar look of awe on her face. “I’m usually back in coach, which is fine, but this is… something else.” Kara wonders what had inspired the change, but she isn’t complaining – Eve seems like a talker, will no doubt keep her entertained for the next few hours, and it means she’s not alone up here with Cat.

Who is steadfastly ignoring the two of them, which Kara supposes she should be used to by now, but still stings.

“So, um, how long have you been working for Cat?” Kara asks, after the cabin crew have done their safety speech and the plane starts to head towards the runway, desperate for a distraction – takeoff and landing are the worst parts of the flight for her.

“About eighteen months,” she says, and Kara is impressed, because Cat kind of seems like the kind of boss who cycles through assistants regularly. “That’s the face most people make when I say that,” Eve says, chuckling, leaning closer to Kara’s ear so that Cat won’t be able to overhear them. “But it’s honestly not that bad. You just gotta learn to read her moods. And not get upset when she yells at you.”

“I have not mastered either of those things,” Kara murmurs, more to herself than anything, and Eve gives her a sympathetic pat on the hand.

“You’ll get there. It took me a while.” The plan picks up speed, and Kara swallows thickly, digs her nails into her armrests and tries to remember how to breathe. “Have you thought much about what you’re gonna do when we get there? What you wanna take Carter to see?” Eve, bless her, sees her obvious discomfort and tries to keep her occupied.

“I’m not sure,” she replies, because there are a lot of things she’d like to do. “The natural history museum, for sure.” Carter had liked the one in National City so much that she knows it’ll be a hit. “Maybe the tower of London? But I’m not sure. Do you know what he’s already seen?”

“I don’t think he’s seen a lot of the touristy stuff,” Eve admits, and Kara’s surprised, although she supposes that he would have only been two the last time he was there. “Chris usually had him in the days, and he’s not really the type.”

“Makes sense.” They’re up in the air by then, the seatbelt sign disappearing a few moments later, and almost immediately, Carter’s head pops up in-front of them, peering over the back of his seat. “Hey, kiddo.”

“Were you talking about me?”
“Just about what we’re gonna get up to this week. You got any ideas?”

“Dinosaurs!” He yells, and Kara laughs.

“Well, yeah, that one was kind of a given.” He disappears from view, only to reappear in the aisle, and Eve moves her legs out of the way so that he can reach Kara. As she leans down to lift him up, she glances through the gap in the seat to see that Cat already has her laptop open, working away, and she settles back in her seat with Carter curled up in her lap. “What do you wanna do, Carter? You want to play a game?”

“Okay.” Eve opens up her own laptop as Kara lets Carter look through the in-flight entertainment system for something to play, and when he gets bored he flicks through the kids section until he finds a cartoon he wants to watch, presenting Kara with an earphone so that she can watch it, too.

She plays with his hair and smiles when she watches his eyes start to droop, the excitement of the day (and the lack of his afternoon nap), catching up to him, and he’s snoring on her chest soon after.

“He’s so cute,” Eve murmurs, as Kara gently extricates the headphone from Carter’s ear, switching the screen over to one of the films she’d spotted earlier.

“Yeah, he is.” She’s careful not to move too much, doesn’t want to wake him, but she has to when the food trolley first comes around, because the only thing more grumpy than a sleepy Carter was a hungry Carter.

It’s actually pretty good, as far as plane food goes, and there’s an endless supply of drinks and snacks, too, and Kara thinks that she could probably get used to this whole first class thing.

If only it didn’t have such an extraordinary price tag attached.

She dreads to think how much her ticket cost, or the price for a night in the presidential suite she’s staying in with Cat for the week.

She’s pretty sure if she ever finds out the full amount, she’ll pass out.

“Kara.” Once she’s finished eating, Carter, still on her lap, tugs insistently at her sleeve. “I gotta pee.”

“Oh my god, are you alright?” One of the air hostesses rushes to her side, but Kara is already scrambling to her feet, because there’s a jolt of turbulence that sends Kara flying – she’d have been if she was alone, but she’s got Carter in her arms, and her priority is keeping him safe, so she doesn’t try and catch herself as she falls, ends up on her knees in the aisle, her head smacking against the arm of one of the chairs.

Luckily, it’s padded, and it doesn’t hurt as much as it could’ve done.

“Oh my god, are you alright?” One of the air hostesses rushes to her side, but Kara is already scrambling to her feet, because there are too many eyes on her and her cheeks are red and she can’t believe she’s just made a fool out of herself when she’s trapped in this tin can in the sky for another seven hours.

“I’m good,” she waves off the concerned hands, forces a smile even though her brain feels like it’s just been rattled around in her skull. “Just clumsy. Are you okay, Carter?” She’d put him down when she stood up, and he’s peering up at her with wide eyes but he nods and she feels a flutter of relief.
“If you need anything,” the air hostess still looks concerned, “please let me know.”

“I will, thank you.” She scurries off down the aisle, Carter behind her, but before she can duck back into her seat, a hand curls around her wrist and tugs, and Kara falls in an unceremonious heap into the chair that she realises, when she turns with an indignant huff to her left, is the empty one next to Cat.

Carter carries on to the row behind, chattering happily to Eve as he clambers back into Kara’s chair.

“Only you could give yourself a concussion on an aeroplane.” Cat’s voice is dry, but her eyes are worried as they scan across Kara’s face.

“You just almost gave me another one,” Kara grumbles, rubbing at the skin of her wrist where Cat had grabbed her.

“Sorry.” Cat reaches out, brushes her fingers over the spot where Kara had hit her head, and it makes the breath catch in her throat, makes her forget how to breathe, and she swears her heart has stopped beating. “Are you alright?”

“I…” Cat’s fingers slide down to her chin, turn her head so that she can get a better look, and Kara feels dazed but she knows it has everything to do with Cat touching her and absolutely nothing to do with any damage done during the fall. “I’m, um, g-good.”

“You don’t sound it.” Cat quirks up an eyebrow, but she drops her hand, and Kara can breathe once more.

“I’ve definitely had worse hits,” Kara tells her, because you don’t get a black belt and not have your head bashed into the floor a few dozen times. “And my fair share of concussions – this isn’t one.”

“You’re sure?”

“I mean, I’m no doctor,” Kara says, trying not to smile because Cat is worried about her, Cat cares about her, enough to show it, enough to drop her ice-queen façade. “But I’m as sure as I can be.” Cat nods, and Kara takes it as a dismissal, rises to her feet to return to her own seat, and frowns when she sees that Carter’s stretched out in it, fast asleep and using his teddy bear as a pillow. “Um, I seem to have lost my seat.” Cat turns to glance over the top of her own, her lips curving into a small smile when she sees her son. “Is it okay if I stay here?”

“As long as you’re quiet.” Cat has already turned back to her laptop, and Kara twists in her seat to ask Eve to pass over her headphones, and to check that she’s alright with having a sleeping toddler beside her.

“Oh, he’s fine,” Eve assures her with a smile, “I’ll let you know if wakes up looking for you.”

She puts her movie from before on, fast forwarding to the last bit she could remember, but she finds herself paying more attention to Cat than she does to the screen in-front of her.

She’s frowning down in concentration at her screen, fingers tapping at the tray table it’s resting on in frustration.

“Stop staring,” Cat mutters after a while, and Kara flushes, hadn’t realised that she was being obvious, “it’s distracting.”

“Doesn’t look like I’m distracting you from much,” Kara quips, and she just grins when Cat turns to her with an annoyed glare. “What are you working on?”
“I wasn’t aware you were an experienced journalist.” Cat’s voice is heavy on the sarcasm, but the words aren’t biting, and her eyes are unguarded when they meet Kara’s.

“I was just curious,” Kara replies, voice soft, and Cat shoots her a disbelieving look. “I am! I don’t… you spend most of your time at work, but I don’t really know much about what you do there. Like, I know you’re the CEO, but not what that involves.”

“A lot of paperwork, mostly,” Cat says dryly, and she looks a little touched by Kara’s interest. “Making sure things are running smoothly, managing budgets, making sure we’re not losing too much money.” Kara’s sure that that’s a vast oversimplification of what Cat does all day. “But this isn’t,” Cat waves towards her laptop screen, “anything to do with being CatCo’s CEO. This is me trying and failing to get back into journalism.”

“I wasn’t aware you ever left it.”

“I haven’t written an article in a long, long time,” Cat says, and there’s a wistful expression on her face. “I wanted… to prove to myself, I suppose, that I hadn’t lost my touch. All I’ve done is quite the opposite.” She laughs, but it’s humourless.

“Just ’cause you’re having trouble, it doesn’t mean you’ve lost your touch,” Kara tells her, frowning. “It sounds like you’re putting too much pressure on yourself, thinking about it too hard. Maybe you need to take a step back from the story, focus on something else for a while. Go back to it when your mind is fresh.” Cat stares at her, surprised, and Kara shrugs. “Graduated college not so long ago, remember? That was how I managed to write all my assignments.”

“Perhaps you’re right.”

“It can happen,” Kara teases, feeling lighter than she has done in a while, “I know it’s hard to believe.”

Cat’s lips twitch, but she doesn’t say anything else, closes the window she’d had open and switches to something else that looks like a budget report, and Kara quickly loses interest, finally finishing her movie.

Carter wakes up soon after, and she switches back to her other seat to entertain him without being too disruptive to Cat.

The rest of the flight passes much quicker than Kara expected it to, and though she doesn’t manage to get much sleep (she snatches about half an hour whilst Carter is taking a nap, but it’s restless, and she’s never slept well when she’s not in a bed), she doesn’t feel too bad when the pilot comes on the intercom to tell them that they’ll be landing soon.

Carter is passed back to his mother, and Kara cranes her neck to look out of the window, able to see land beneath them now instead of the endless blue of the sea.

This is her favourite part of flying – until they start to hurtle towards the ground, anyway – looking down at the world spread out beneath them, green and brown fields turning into a sprawling mass of buildings, and Kara tries to spot different landmarks to keep herself distracted as they begin to lose altitude.

The touchdown is relatively smooth, and Kara breathes out a sigh of relief once they’re safely back on land, the plane taxiing its way to their gate. She feels wide awake when they’re allowed off, shuffles to the exit and shivers when she feels her first bite of English air – it is cold here, the temperature vastly different from home, and she draws her cardigan tight around her as she and the
Heathrow is one of the world’s busiest airports and it shows, people hurrying everywhere as they’re swept in a crowd of people towards arrivals, and the queue at passport control is massive, but though she’s impatient to get through to the other side to begin her adventure, Kara doesn’t mind the wait too much, appreciating the opportunity to stand up and stretch her legs after so long cooped up.

They’d landed just after three p.m., but it’s nearly half five by the time they’ve collected their bags. There’s a man in a suit waiting for them with Cat’s name written on a piece of card, her driver for the duration of their stay, and the towncar he leads them too is black and sleek, almost an exact replica of the ones that Cat uses back in National City.

Whilst they were inside the airport, the sun had set, and as they set off the sky is dark, the city lit up by sparkling lights.

It’s beautiful, and Kara stares out of the window as they crawl along in rush-hour traffic, Carter at her side and Cat going through her plans for the week with Eve, who scribbles down everything Cat says with startling speed.

Their hotel is in the heart of the city, and the drive is a long one. Kara feels exhaustion kick in, her limbs growing tired and her eyes starting to droop shut, but she knows she needs to keep herself awake for a while longer or jetlag would get the best of her.

“Flagging?” Eve asks her, voice laced with sympathy, and as far as Kara’s aware, she hadn’t slept a wink on the flight over and it’s unfair how wide awake both she and Cat look.

“Daniel?” Cat calls through the partition to the front of the car. “Is there a drivethrough Starbucks anywhere nearby? I think we could all use a pick-me-up.”

“Of course, Miss Grant.” Kara orders a double shot of espresso – usually it would make her feel too jittery, but tonight it’s exactly what she needs, and it’s enough to keep her awake until they reach the hotel.

Check-in doesn’t take long, the staff all eager to please Cat, and when Kara sets foot in what will be her home for the next few days her breath catches, because it’s the most elegant, beautiful hotel room that she’s ever seen (and probably ever will see) in her entire life.

It’s like a whole apartment, with a kitchen, dining room and living room, and the guest bedroom alone is almost the same size as Kara’s whole apartment back home, the bathroom all marble. Everything looks so expensive that Kara is afraid to touch a thing, and she finds herself drawn to the floor length windows in the living room, offering the most gorgeous view of Hyde Park, and she already can’t wait to see what it will look like when the sun’s up in the morning.

“Amazing, isn’t it?” Eve asks, appearing at Kara’s elbow, and somehow it feels like an understatement. “I’m heading to my room for the night – I need about twelve hours sleep if I’m going to be fully functioning tomorrow.” Kara grins. “I’ll see you in the morning.”

“Sleep well,” Kara calls after her, and with one last wave at Cat she heads for the front door, leaving the three of them alone.

“I’m going to give the little one a bath,” Cat decides, and now that they’re in their room, she’s starting to look tired, hides a yawn behind her hand, “do you want to order room service? I don’t have the energy to go out in search of food.”

“Me either,” Kara admits, and Cat hands her the menu. “What do you guys want?”
“I’ll have the Caesar salad, and Carter will have whatever you think he’ll eat from the kid’s section.” Kara nods, because she thinks she knows his tastes well enough by now. She ends up getting him macaroni and cheese that will probably be stupidly fancy, and a burger for herself along with Cat’s salad order.

While she waits, she drags her suitcase to the guestroom and starts to unpack her things, longing for a shower, feeling stale from the traveling.

Twenty minutes later there’s a knock on the door and Kara hurries to answer it but Cat is already there, ushering in the employee on the other side with the trolley. Carter is already at the dining room table, his hair still damp and in a different pair of pyjamas, and he looks happy enough when he’s presented with his food that Kara congratulates herself on a decision well made.

The burger is nice, but it’s a little too extravagant for her (she’d much prefer a greasy one from the nearest fast food chain), but she’s starving so she wolfs it down with her usual enthusiasm, Cat shaking her head like always.

“Right, Carter, whose room do you want to sleep in tonight?” Cat asks Carter when they’ve all finished eating, all three of them ready for bed.

“Kara’s!” He answers immediately, and Cat doesn’t look too surprised (or offended).

“Do you want to tuck him in while I have a quick shower?” Kara asks, because she wants to sleep but she definitely needs to shower first. Cat nods, and she pads to her room, grabbing her pyjamas before ducking into the bathroom.

The shower is even better than the one at Cat’s place, which Kara hadn’t thought possible, and she’s reluctant to get out of it, despite her weariness. She manages to drag herself out eventually, brushing her teeth and getting changed, and when she opens the door she finds that Carter’s already asleep, Cat sitting in the chair beside the bed with the book she must’ve read to him still in her hands.

“You’re alright with him staying in here?” She asks, and Kara nods. “Alright then, I’ll see you both in the morning.”

“Night, Cat.” The bed is huge, and Carter is tiny, so she’s not worried about waking him as she lifts the covers and sinks into the bed. It’s comfy, and she’s exhausted, and she barely remembers to set her alarm and put her phone on charge before she’s fast asleep.
Chapter 18

When Kara wakes up she feels well-rested, but it’s still dark, and she groans when she catches sight of the alarm clock in the corner and sees that it reads one a.m., and she’s only been asleep for four hours.

She closes her eyes and tries to go back to sleep but she feels wide awake, and after half an hour she gives up, knowing it’s not going to happen anytime soon. Wary of waking Carter, she grabs her phone and slips as quietly as she can from the bed, cracking open the bedroom door and padding into the living room beyond.

She reclines on the couch, which is definitely comfier than her bed back home, and switches on the giant plasma TV, keeping the volume low as she flicks through the channels for something to watch. She settles on a quiz show, and scrolls through her phone in the hope that she’ll start to feel sleepy again soon.

It doesn’t work, and she’s still wide awake when she hears a door open, and she tilts her head back to look over the back of the couch and nearly falls off it when she catches sight of Cat walking towards her, because the tiny black nightgown she’s wearing should, quite frankly, be illegal.

It shows off far too much leg, the expanse of Cat’s thigh left exposed and Kara’s reasonably confident that if she turned around, her ass would barely be covered.

Thankfully, she’s also wearing a dressing gown, and when she catches sight of Kara she fastens it hastily around her waist, covering herself up as she pads closer.

“Sorry, did I wake you?” Kara asks, a little sheepish because she thought she’d been quiet, but Cat shakes her head and, to her surprise, joins her on the couch, sitting at the other end beside Kara’s feet.

“You couldn’t sleep either?” Cat asks her, keeping her voice low despite the fact that Carter probably wouldn’t hear them even if they yelled, considering how massive this place is.

“I did for a while, got about four hours I think. You?”

“About the same.” Cat leans back against the couch and closes her eyes, and Kara studies her face in profile, aches for her pencil so she can sketch the perfect view. “You’re going to be wrecked tomorrow.” Cat tells her, eyes still closed. “If you’ve never had jetlag before.”

“I’m not the one who has to work all day.”

“Oh, so I don’t have to pay you watch Carter anymore? Excellent news.” One thing Kara’s noticed these past few weeks is that at night, when she’s tired, Cat is much more likely to let her guard down and relax around her than she is in the morning, and right now she’s the least guarded that she’s been for a long while.

“You know what I mean,” Kara rolls her eyes. “I’m pretty sure Carter would be happy to lounge around here all day tomorrow if I made it fun enough – you actually have to go out and talk to people.”


“Do you usually have trouble sleeping?” She’s noticed a few more bags under Cat’s eyes, lately,
though they’re very carefully disguised and Kara’s never dared ask about them.

“Sometimes.” She finally opens her eyes, turns her head to look at Kara, cheek pressed against the back of the black leather couch. “It’s been worse, lately, since… since Chris left.”

“Gotta get used to sleeping alone again,” Kara says, and she hates herself for wondering when Cat last let someone share her bed.

“Mm. Luckily, I don’t need much of it to function.”

“Are you one of those people who thinks that sleep is for the weak?”

“For slackers,” Cat corrects, and Kara’s lips curve into a smile. “How about you? Not even an eleven hour flight enough to get you to sleep through the night somewhere new?”

“Apparently not,” Kara shrugs, and Cat raises an eyebrow like she’s pressing for an explanation but doesn’t know if she’s allowed to ask. “I guess it’s probably left over from my time in the system. Your first night somewhere new, you had to be alert, because you didn’t know who was going to come near you while you slept. One of the other kids, or the creepy foster dad…” She trails off, and Cat looks horrified.

“No-one ever… you were never abused, were you?”

“Nah,” Kara shakes her head. “I was already pretty good at karate by the time my parents died, and before we got split up, Clark made sure I knew how to throw a punch in-case anyone tried anything with me.” She’d given a few people a black eye or a punch to the throat, either to protect herself or the other kids around her, and she’d quickly gotten a reputation that she wasn’t to be messed with.

“But still…”

“It wasn’t the best time.” Kara manages a smile, but it’s more of a grimace. “But hey, it all worked out in the end, even if some of the aftereffects still linger. I’ll be fine tomorrow.”

“Even with a wriggling toddler sleeping next to you?”

“He’s a lot less wriggly than Alex was when we were teenagers, believe me. She kicked.” Some of the bruises had lasted for days. “Besides, he might want to bunk with you tomorrow.”

“I doubt that.” Cat doesn’t look like she minds, though. “I’m going to go make some cocoa,” she says then, getting to her feet, “do you want some?”

“Ooh, yes please.”

“There are some games in that cabinet, there.” Cat inclines her head to the one that sits by the TV. “If you’d like to play something, pass the time.”

Kara would, very much – it sure beats watching crappy TV and scrolling through the same three apps on her phone – and she crouches on the floor, rifles through the sizeable stack of games and grabs both Scrabble, because she knows it’s Cat’s favourite, and Monopoly, because that’ll definitely waste a lot of time.

“There’s no Catan,” Kara says when Cat returns, a steaming mug in either hand, “but I made do.”

“I guessed that you’d like a ridiculous amount of cream on yours.” Cat sets a mug down on the coffee table in-front of her that’s nearly overflowing, and Kara beams. “It is not fair, you looking like
that with the amount of calories you consume on a daily basis."

“I have a high metabolism,” Kara replies with a shrug, “and I work them off.”

“You certainly do.” It’s murmured so quietly that Kara doesn’t think she’s supposed to hear it, or notice the surreptitious glance Cat throws towards her biceps, and so maybe she flexes them a little when she leans over to set up the board for Scrabble, but really, if it gets Cat to look at her like that, can you blame her?

Even at two in the morning, the both of them are super competitive, and when Kara actually wins a game, Cat *stares* down at the board like she can’t believe what she’s seeing, and Kara can’t help the smug smile on her face.

(So maybe she rubs it in a little, suggests that Cat is losing her touch, and so maybe Cat absolutely wipes the floor with her in the next game, and Kara’s smile quickly turns to a pout).

“Monopoly?” Cat suggests, after their fourth game of Scrabble, and Kara nods, setting up the board. “I don’t have any weird rules – do you?”

“Nope,” Kara shakes her head, and their game begins.

After about an hour and a half, Kara starts to flag, and she thinks Cat is, too, based on the way she’s resting her head on her arms, folded on the coffee table (they’d moved onto the floor a while ago, to move their pieces easier), her eyes half-closed.

“You wanna call it a night?” Kara asks, because she’s honestly a little bored, and she’s relieved when Cat nods. “Count up the money and whoever has the most wins?”

It’s Cat, surprising neither of them, and she doesn’t gloat so she must be tired.

“What time do you have to be up?” Kara asks once they’ve packed the game away, still sitting on the floor because she really can’t be bothered standing up yet.

“In about… two hours,” she says, wincing as she glances at the clock nearby. “I suppose I should probably try and get at least a bit more sleep before then.” She doesn’t seem inclined to move, though.

They do eventually, Kara dragging herself back to the guest room but she pauses in the doorway, because somehow Carter’s managed to starfish across the whole entire bed, even though he is tiny, and she doesn’t think there’s any way for her to slip back under the covers without disturbing him.

She could probably shift him without waking him, but it’s not a risk she wants to take, so instead she grabs a blanket from the closest, and heads back towards the couch.

“What are you doing?” Cat is coming back from the kitchen having tidied away their mugs, and frowns when she watches Kara flop back down on the couch.

“Your kid is starfishing, and I don’t wanna wake him, so I’ll just sleep here.”

“You shouldn’t have to do that.”

“It’s fine,” Kara shrugs. “Besides, this couch is probably comfier than my bed at home.” She can lie down comfortably, rest her head flat and not even have her feet touching the opposite arm of the couch.
“I…” Cat looks down at her, conflict in her eyes, and for a moment, just one split second, Kara swears that Cat’s going to ask her if she wants to spend what remains of the night in her room, curled up in bed with her.

But that would be crossing a line (and Kara suspects neither of them would get any sleep, would both lie awake in the dark, hyper aware of the heat of the other woman’s skin, desperate to reach across the bridge of space between them), and Cat seems to think better of it.

“If you’re sure.”

“It’s all good.” Kara already feels herself falling asleep, and she mumbles “g’night Cat,” as she hears the other woman walk away, feels a flash of gratitude when she flicks the lights off as she goes, leaving Kara in darkness.

Tonight has been good, great, even – it had felt like before, had been devoid of any awkwardness, and Kara wonders if things will be different here, if London will be some kind of bubble where they could pretend that that night never happened.

She feels better than she has done in a long time, despite the weariness settling in her bones, and she falls asleep with a smile on her mouth, and Cat on her mind.

//

Cat groans when her alarm goes off, and curses herself, like she knew she would, for trying to fight off sleep for so long last night just to spend more time with Kara.

It had just been so nice, like old times, her defences down after she’d walked out of her room to find Kara lounging on the couch, in fluffy pyjamas that had llamas on them that should look ridiculous but instead looked adorable.

It’d have been better for both of them if she’d have just turned around and gone back to bed, but she’d known she wouldn’t have gotten any sleep, had wanted the company more.

She regrets it a little now, though, as she rubs her hands across her face, opening her bleary eyes to see that it’s still dark outside, the sun not having risen yet.

She forces herself out of bed and into the shower, feels more human when she emerges and pulls on her clothes for the day.

In the living room, Kara is still asleep, and Cat tiptoes her way around her to the kitchen to make herself some coffee.

“What time is it?” Comes a barely-human groan some time later, as Cat’s sipping her coffee and flicking through her tablet at the dining table, and when she glances over she sees a sleep-rumpled Kara peering at her over the back of couch, the sunlight that’s now beginning to stream through the windows apparently waking her.

“Half six.”

“Ugh.” Cat chuckles as Kara falls dramatically back down onto the couch, makes her way over to the other woman and looks down at her, a hand on her hip.

It’s unfair, really, how she’s just woken up but still manages to look gorgeous, sunbeams streaking across her face and lighting up her features in shades of orange and yellow.
“Go in my room, sleep for a little while longer.”

“No, I’m good.” She’s not, though, and Cat prods her in the side until she looks up at her again.

“Go on. I’ll send Carter in to wake you up before I leave.” She doesn’t argue this time, and Cat wonders if she should help Kara to her room, because the girl is clumsy and she’s pretty sure she’s yet to fully open her eyes, but Kara manages to make the journey without falling down, Cat’s eyes on her every step of the way.

Once she’s out of sight, Cat eats some toast for breakfast and catches up on any emails she’s missed from overnight, and when there’s a knock on her door at half seven she knows that it’s Eve, as punctual as ever.

She lets the other woman in, glad to see that she looks much more put-together than Cat feels (at least one of them will be operating at full capacity, today), before she goes to wake Carter.

She has to be out the door at eight, but it still gives her enough time to get him up and dressed, his teeth brushed and his breakfast eaten, before she opens the door to her room and sends Carter careening in to wake up Kara.

Once she’s sure Kara’s not going to fall back asleep again and leave her son to his own devices (not that she thinks for a moment that he would let her – he’s very attached), she says her goodbyes to them both and heads for the waiting car downstairs with Eve at her side, ready to face the day.

She just hopes it’s not a long one – although, if any of her meetings do drag, at least she still has the image of Kara’s pouting face clear in her mind, knows that thinking about that will be enough to get her through it all.

//

Kara wakes up when a three year old kneels on her chest.

She opens her eyes and it takes her a minute to remember where she is, the room dark and the sheets around her smelling of Cat, and Carter is peering down at her, his eyes wide and, in her opinion, far too awake, and he tugs excitedly at the collar of her pyjamas.

“Kara! Wake up! It’s time for dinosaurs!”

“Manners, young man,” Cat admonishes him from where she’s standing at the foot of the bed, and she looks far too put-together considering Kara’s pretty sure she’d had even less sleep than she has, and she feels half-dead.

“It’s time for dinosaurs, please.” Kara chuckles, and shifts Carter so that he’s sitting beside her, instead of on-top of her.

“Alright, buddy, give me a minute to wake up, and then we’ll go find some dinosaurs.” That seems to satisfy him, and he scampers off to say goodbye to Cat while Kara makes her way back to her own room.

She’s ready in record time, hunts around in the kitchen for something to eat before she wrestles Carter into some winter clothes to ward against the chill in the air. He’s not happy about the hat, scarf or gloves, but he looks so cute with them on that all the wiggling was worth it.

It’s about a half hour walk to the Natural History museum from the hotel, but they take the scenic route, winding through Hyde Park, Carter chasing ducks and squirrels with glee, and Kara watching
him with soft eyes, snapping the occasional photo to send to Cat so that she knows they’re both okay.

He loves the museum and the dinosaur skeletons, much more extensive than the collection in National City, and she loves the look of awe on his face as he gazes up at the t-rex replica in the museum lobby.

They find a science museum nearby, and they spend the afternoon there playing amongst the interactive exhibit, and before she knows it the sun is starting to set, and she decides that they should probably head back to the hotel.

They take the same route back through the park, because the streets are full of busy Londoners that Kara does not want to have to weave through, and the suite is empty when they get back.

The kitchen is fully stocked, much like Cat’s apartment at home, and she wonders if she puts a specific order in each year, or if it was always like that. She rifles through the cupboards until she finds something she can make for Carter, and wonders if she could get takeout delivered here, or if that would be frowned upon by the hotel staff.

Cat texts to tell her that she’s going to be a while, and to order room service if she’s hungry so she does, deciding to leave her dreams of greasy pizza for the next night, and orders (the cheapest) steak, instead.

Even though he slept through the night, Carter is sleepy by seven o’clock, so Kara puts him to bed with a story and pads back into the living room, hoping that she’ll be able to join him soon.

She’d hit a wall at about three that afternoon where she’d nearly curled into a ball in the astronomy section of the science museum (embarrassing, considering what she wanted to do with her life, but they’d been watching a movie about how the universe had formed and it was dark and okay, maybe her eyes had definitely slipped shut for a few seconds, but no-one had noticed) for a catnap before remembering that she was responsible for a tiny human and absolutely could not do that.

She’s wide awake now, though, typically, and not even a long hot shower (she uses Cat’s, so she doesn’t wake Carter, doesn’t think Cat will mind) is enough to make her ready for bed.

It’s getting late and Cat still isn’t home and she still isn’t tired, so she drags a chair over to one of the floor-length windows in the living room and grabs her sketch pad from her bag (she’d brought her supplies in-case Carter wanted them), rests it on her knee and grabs her sharpest pencil to sketch the breath-taking view.

The park is lit only by the occasional streetlight, the top of the trees merging into a sea of black, but over the top of them is the London skyline, and she sketches the skyscrapers with as much detail as she can, wanting this image to be immortalised so she never forgets that she was here.

She hears the door unlock and jumps, having lost all sense of her surroundings, and when she glances at the clock she realises that she’s been sat there for well over an hour, shifts and winces as her muscles protest at the movement, having locked into place.

“Are you not going to invite me in?” Kara hears a voice that definitely doesn’t belong to Cat and freezes – there’s a suggestive lilt to it that makes Kara’s skin crawl, and she wonders if she can sneak back to her room down the hall without attracting any attention, because she’s pretty sure she doesn’t want to hear whatever comes next. “We haven’t finished our conversation.”

“You can come in for one drink.” That’s Cat, and Kara’s still frozen, is too quick to spring into
action and army crawl along the floor out of sight before she hears the click of her heels approaching.
“See you’re on your best behaviour.”

“When am I ever?” It’s too familiar, too teasing, and Kara thinks she needs to get out of there right now, is halfway to her feet but when she turns Cat is there, framed in the soft lamp light and even though it’s late, even though her make-up is a little smudged and her hair is a little messy, her eyes tired after a long day, she still manages to be the most beautiful thing Kara’s ever seen, and it’s this that Kara should be committing to memory, not the view out of the window at her back. “Oh.” Cat’s companion appears over her shoulder, a guy with a handsome face and dark hair streaked with silver, the pressed suit he’s wearing screaming that he has money. “I didn’t realise you had company.”

“Yes.” Cat seemed to have fallen under a spell when her eyes met Kara’s, snaps out of it to look between the two of them. “This is Kara, my nanny. Kara, this is Patrick, the head of the CatCo. London branch.”

That explains the familiarity, then – he must meet with Cat every year, and Kara wonders if he’s always this flirtatious or if it’s just because Cat’s single now, hates herself for imaging the two of them out for dinner earlier that night, wonders if he’d tried to kiss her, wonders if Cat would let him if he tried.

“Oh, of course, you brought your son. How is the little one?” Kara’s ninety-nine percent sure that he doesn’t remember Carter’s name but wants to try and show an interest anyway, to score points with Cat, and she feels a muscle twitch in her jaw.

“He’s fine. Had a good day, from the looks of it – thank you for the pictures.” Cat directs that at Kara, who shrugs.

“It was nothing.” Patrick is looking at Kara like she’s a bad smell, like she should make herself scarce, and while she kind of wants to stick around just to piss him off, she also really doesn’t want to try and hear his attempts to get into Cat’s pants. “I’ll, uh, leave you guys to it.”

“You don’t have to.” Cat stops her before she can make her exit, eyes flitting to the sketch book held in Kara’s shaking hands. “You can finish your drawing.”

“Maybe we should go down to the bar for that drink, instead,” Patrick suggests, settling his hand on Cat’s waist and Kara has to press her lips together to hide a smile when Cat shrugs him off.

“It’s cool, I’m pretty tired anyway,” Kara lies, and she’ll say anything to escape, feels trapped by the heavy weight of Cat’s gaze, feels sick at the sight of them together, because he’s perfect for Cat – similar status, similar age, could probably give her the world, if she asked – and she wonders, as she looks at them together, if this is what Cat had felt, that night at the bar when she’d seen Kara with that girl.

She thinks she might get where Cat was coming from (not the words, but the sheer agony that would have sent her running, that would have pushed Kara desperately away, because surely, surely, it shouldn’t hurt this much, this glimpse at what she can’t have, and she, too, would have done anything to stop it in its tracks, to stop the pain before it became too overwhelming), because all she wants right now is to disappear and never look back.

She flees without a goodnight, slips into her room and heads straight for the bathroom, leans against the closed door and sinks down to the floor, puts her head in her hands, her mind overrun by the thought of what might be happening in the other room, and she hates herself for caring so much, hates herself for hurting this much, hates herself for not being over this yet.
It was just… last night have been so good, felt like such progress, and she doesn’t know how much longer she can keep doing this, this back-and-forth, icy one minute and friendly the next, because it’s messing with her emotions more than she can bear.

She doesn’t know how long she sits there, but it’s a while, and by the time she feels okay again it’s nearly midnight, but she’s still not tired, knows that it can’t be healthy but there’s not much she can do about it, here.

She grabs her blanket and heads for the couch again, stops in her tracks when she realises that Cat is already there, glasses on her nose and laptop on her lap.

The relief that floods through her at the sight of Cat alone nearly knocks her off her feet.

“Kara.” Cat hears her coming, turns to face her and damn her for always looking so perfect. “I thought you were tired?”

“Oh. Um, I was, but,” she shrugs, “as soon as I got into bed I was wide awake again. You know how it is.”

“Hm.” Cat looks at her like she sees straight through her, like she knows that Kara was lying through her teeth before, like she’d seen the pain in Kara’s eyes and knew that she was the cause, and Kara can’t look at her, stares at the floor instead and debates fleeing back to the safety of her room.

“What, um,” Kara’s voice is a little hoarse, and she pauses, clears her throat and tries again. “What about you? What happened to your friend?” Kara’s mouth twists around the word, but if Cat notices, she doesn’t mention it.

“I sent him away,” Cat waves a hand, “he was a little too forward. I think he thought he was entitled to a date, now that I no longer have a husband.”

“Men are the worst.”

“Some of them are, yes,” Cat says, lips twitching. “Perhaps I should stick to women.” ‘Like me?’ Kara wants to ask, but she bites her tongue. “And as for why I’m not in bed, I had some work to catch up on.”

“Does it ever end?”

“Not yet.” Cat’s smile is tired, but there’s a spark in her eyes and Kara knows that she adores her job, wouldn’t change a thing about it. “If sleeping next to Carter is an issue, you can take my bed, and I’ll take yours, or the couch.”

“Oh, no, I’m not kicking you out of your own bed.”

“It’s fine,” Cat brushes her off. “Technically, I am in yours right now.” Cat’s eyes flit to the blanket she holds in her hands. “Honestly, Kara – at least one of us should be using it.”

She goes because she doesn’t want to argue, even though she wants to tell Cat that she can come with her, if she wants, but she doesn’t dare, because she knows that regardless of what Cat answers, it will ruin things between them.

It feels like they’re standing on a precipice, balancing delicately on the edge, and just one wrong word will be like a strong gust of wind, send them teetering over the cliff, and shatter the peace.

Kara’s not willing to make that move, not yet, would rather deal with the torture she’s in now, than
risk losing Cat for good, so she walks down the hall, slides under sheets that still smell like Cat, and when she falls asleep, her dreams are haunted by black nightgowns, pale skin, and shining hazel eyes.
Her time in London passes much quicker than Kara wants it to, her days filled with exploring the beautiful city with Carter, visiting historical landmarks and tourist traps, dozens of shops or just walking, the both of them taking in the glittering city lights with wide eyes.

They go ice skating one day, their backdrop the tower of London (which they’d visited the previous morning, and both Kara and Carter had enjoyed it immensely), and Kara is hopeless but Carter gets one of those penguins to hold onto because he’s so little and so what if Kara ends up using it more than him?

She’s having the best time, not only her days filled with light and laughter but her nights, too, she and Cat playing games some nights or just sitting with one other, existing in the same space in a way they haven’t been, back home, and Kara really doesn’t want the trip to end.

But it has to, eventually.

On their final night, Cat is already waiting for them in the hotel room when Kara and Carter get back from their day of fun, having finished her final day of work early, and she announces that she’s scored four free tickets to a West End show.

Eve declines, saying that she doesn’t want a late night before travelling, and Kara wonders if she should, too, whether she should give Cat and Carter a night to themselves, but she sees the hopeful look that Carter (and Cat, she’s pretty sure) throws her and knows she can’t say no.

They go for dinner first in some fancy restaurant where everything on the menu is out of Kara’s price range, but Cat tells her she can order whatever she wants and she’ll foot the bill. The place is busy but they’re mostly hidden away in a booth in the corner, giving them the illusion of privacy, and the lights are dimmed low, Cat’s eyes sparkling at her from across the table, and even though she knows that it’s not, it’s hard for Kara not to think of it as a date.

“What are your plans for the holidays, Kara?” Cat asks after they’ve ordered, Carter quiet with some colouring Cat had brought for him.

“I’m going back home to Midvale.” She, Alex and Maggie are all making the journey when Kara arrives back from London, and she’s planning on spending the five hour drive sleeping. “I haven’t been for a while, so it’ll be nice.” They’d spent last Christmas at Alex and Maggie’s place in National City, but Eliza wants to host is this year, and Kara’s happy to let her, wouldn’t mind a break from city life for a few days. “We’re driving up the day we get back.” The holidays have fallen kindly this year – Cat had told her that she wasn’t working Christmas Eve, which was a Monday, so it meant Kara could spend five days in Midvale before returning to National City.

“With your sister and her girlfriend?” Kara nods. “Clark and Lois going to be there?”

“Nah, they’re spending a couple of days with his foster parents in Smallville, and then I think back to Metropolis to see Lois’ family. What about you guys?”

“Well, it’s just us.” Cat ruffles Carter’s hair. “I think we’ll probably go to the beach house, lock ourselves away from the world for a few days.”
“You have a beach house?”

“Mm, about two hours outside of the city.” Kara bets it’s massive, sits right on the beach with gorgeous views, can imagine a huge Christmas tree next to a roaring fire. “It’ll be nice to get away for a while.”

Kara wonders when the last time Cat had a proper break was, when she last allowed herself to truly relax and just be, wonders if she’d even be able to answer if Kara asked.

“You excited for Christmas, Carter?”

“Yeah, presents!”

Kara chuckles at his enthusiasm.

Their food comes, and Kara has to admit it’s pretty good, and might even be worth the price, even though she’d never pay it for herself. The theatre is only down the street, but it’s busy, and when Cat slips her hand into Kara’s to guide her she nearly jumps out of her skin but instead she holds on tight, praying that Cat can’t feel the frantic hammering of Kara’s pulse in her wrist.

Because they’re holding hands and sure, it might only be so that Kara isn’t swept away into the crowd, but she’ll take it, because Cat’s hand is warm and her hold tight and she’s touching her, seemingly thoughtlessly, and her skin feels like it’s on fire.

Cat drops her hand when they step into the theatre, and while Kara mourns the loss of contact, she’s also pretty sure that she wouldn’t be able to speak with Cat’s hand in hers, so it’s probably for the best.

Their seats in the theatre are in a private box, and Kara leans her hands against the railing and peers over the edge at the people milling about below them. She hasn’t been to many shows – she’d been to one once when she visited National City to see Alex, and she’d seen a couple of the theatre club’s productions at college, but this is a different kind of energy.

The theatre is beautiful, and the show is wonderful, and she keeps glancing over at Carter beside her, who watches the entire thing with wide eyes, barely fidgeting at all.

When it’s finished Kara has to give a standing ovation, Cat’s eyes glinting with amusement as she watches her, and Kara feels like she’s on-top of the world, there’s so much happiness flowing through her veins.

This time, it’s Kara who slips her hand into Cat’s as they leave the safety of their box – she stiffens, just a little, and Kara quickly goes to pull away, terrified she’s ruined things, but Cat catches her fingers before she can, holds on tight and drags her forward, her other arm wrapped around Carter, in her arms.

Kara doesn’t let go until they reach Cat’s car, parked down the street waiting for them, and she feels like she’s floating when she’s in the backseat, stealing furtive glances at Cat as Carter struggles to stay awake between them.

There’s a different energy in the air tonight, a charge that just needs a tiny spark to set it alight, and it makes the hair on the back of Kara’s neck stand up, tension thrumming through her veins.

Their time in London is nearly up, and that means that their bubble is about to pop, and Kara has no idea what will happen when they get back home – all she knows is that she never wants this night, this night that seems to be filled to the brim with possibilities, to never end.
When they get back up to their suite Cat puts Carter to bed because it’s way past his bedtime (Kara’s pretty sure he’d fallen asleep in the elevator with his head on Cat’s shoulder), and Kara mills around in the living room because she’s not ready to sleep, yet.

“One last game of Monopoly before we go?” Kara asks when Cat returns a few moments later. “Winner takes all?”

“You’re only suggesting that because you’ve lost every single game we’ve played.” Cat comes to a stop beside her at the back of her couch, cocks her hip and settles a hand on it, looks up at Kara through eyes glimmering with a challenge. She’s discarded her heels, and without them, she’s a few inches shorter, and if Kara dared to kiss her, she’d have to tilt up Cat’s jaw and duck her head to press their lips together.

“Excuse you, I have won some.”

“Two games, Kara. Two. Out of about twenty.”

“…I still won some.”

Cat chuckles, low in the back of her throat, and it does things to Kara that makes her mouth dry and all appropriate thoughts flee her mind. “I’ll play,” Cat decides, “you set up while I go and get a drink – do you want any wine?”

“No, thanks.” She wants her mind clear, not clouded, and when Cat returns with a glass of lemonade, Kara raises an eyebrow. “That doesn’t look like wine.”

“I didn’t want to drink alone,” Cat shrugs, even though she usually does, but Kara doesn’t question it, instead finishes dealing out all the money they need to start the game.

As the night wears on, neither one of them seems to want to call it quits, and they play until there’s actually a clear winner.

It’s Kara, and she’s gleeful as she takes Cat’s last fake bank note, waves it in front of her face victoriously, enjoying the sour expression on Cat’s face more than she probably should.

“No one likes a gloater,” Cat tells her, as they’re packing the game away, and Kara grins.

“No-one likes a sore loser, either,” Kara fires back, but Cat just rolls her eyes.

Kara is reluctant to move, after she’s put the lid back on the box – she’s sat on the floor on one of the couch cushions, Cat doing the same beside her, and when she looks up she finds Cat’s eyes on her, soft and open, and for once, she doesn’t look away when Kara catches her staring.

It’s… intense, having the weight of Cat’s gaze on her, and her throat feels tight, her heart hammering in her chest, and Kara wants to ask what happens in the morning, if Cat will still be like this tomorrow, if they’ll play games and have playful banter once they touch down in National City.

But the words stick in her throat, because she doesn’t want to break the spell – if she only has this for another night, then she’s not going to risk throwing it away yet.

Cat’s the first one to blink, looks a little dazed, and she clears her throat before she climbs to her feet. She has to step closer to Kara to put the couch cushion back, and Kara still hasn’t moved, so she looks up at her with dark eyes and when Cat offers Kara her hand she takes it, lets the other woman pull her to her feet.
Cat is strong and Kara nearly goes flying, not expecting the tug to be quite so powerful, and she steadies herself with a hand on Cat’s waist.

She feels dainty, beneath the weight of her palm, and Kara feels the delicate point of Cat’s hipbone pressing against her skin, can’t help but curl her fingers and stops breathing when she hears Cat gasp in response.

They’re close, closer than they’ve ever been before, chest-to-chest and she can feel Cat’s breath on her neck and she knows, she knows that she should step away, laugh nervously and disappear down the hall, but god, she can’t, because Cat is magnetic and Kara can’t look away from her, never mind move, is frozen in place by limbs that feel like lead.

She should move away, but she knows she won’t, she won’t because things feel different, here, and if this is the only way she can have Cat (the only time she can have Cat), then she’s sure as hell not going to let the opportunity slip through her fingers.

If this is her once chance, she’s going to take it, no matter the consequences, because at least then she tried, and there will finally be no lies and barriers between them, and if Cat doesn’t want her back, then she’ll make it through, somehow, she’ll survive, because at least then she can get closure, instead of… whatever weird limbo they’re in right now.

Kara doesn’t even know for sure if she’s the one who started it, but all she knows is that suddenly, they’re kissing, Cat’s mouth hot and desperate as it slants over her own, and Kara’s pretty sure she’s died and gone to heaven.

She moans into Cat’s mouth and a hand slides into her hair in response, tugging as Cat’s tongue slips into her mouth and god, Kara’s not going to survive this night because she’s imagined this, a hundred times, but nothing, nothing compares to the reality, to having Cat in her arms and her lips moving against hers.

She slides her other hand down to Cat’s hip, pulls her close and allows herself to fall backwards, until she’s on the couch and Cat is straddling her, a knee on either side of Kara’s hips. Cat’s weight in her lap is perfect, and Kara’s hands skitter across Cat’s thighs, over bare skin and she feels Cat groan into her mouth and fuck, Kara thinks she’s going to spontaneously combust, has never felt so alive, sparks dancing across her skin wherever she and Cat touch.

And then it all crashes down, because of course it has to, at some point.

They wouldn’t be them if it didn’t.

Distantly, Kara hears the ringing of a phone, persistent and annoying, and she’s ashamed of the whine that leaves her lips when Cat pulls back, until she sees the look in her eyes – they’re molten fire, dark and dangerous, and Kara swallows thickly at the desire that she sees swimming in their depths.

But then she seems to realise where she is, what she’s doing – she glances down, at Kara’s kiss-swollen lips, at Kara’s hands on her thighs, and then her expression changes, her mouth twisting and her eyes turning guarded, and Kara feels her slipping away, retreating back behind her walls, feels her only chance turning to dust in her hands.

“Cat, I - ” Kara tries to salvage this, tries to make it better (even though she has no idea what to say, no clue what she could possibly do to get Cat’s face to change), as Cat carefully extracts herself from Kara’s arms, slipping off of her lap and getting to her feet.
She stumbles, as she turns, and Kara reaches for her, wraps her fingers around her wrist but Cat wrenches her hand away like Kara’s touch burns and Kara hates that she feels tears sting at the back of her eyes.

“Kara, that… that cannot happen again.” Cat’s voice is shaky, but her eyes are steady, and Kara wants to shrink back against the couch cushions, wishes she’d just gone to bed with Carter.

“Why not?” It’s a whisper, and she doesn’t necessarily mean for it to slip out but it does, and Cat stares down at her like she’s trying to figure her out, and Kara has no idea what expression is on her face, what she might be giving away to Cat’s probing gaze.

“Because that was a mistake.” This time, her voice doesn’t waver, her jaw setting and Kara knows that if there had been a chance to salvage this, it’s gone now. “I’m not… I’m just not interested in you like that.”

“You kissed me back.” She’s too quiet, too weak where Cat is set and strong, fighting a losing battle but not willing to quit yet.

“A… momentary lapse in judgement.” It stings, cutting her deep, like a thousand shards of glass slicing into her skin, into her heart until it’s left in tatters, and she was wrong, before, because this isn’t closure, this isn’t better – this is the end of everything she cares about, falling to pieces in her hands. “It won’t happen again.”

It’s a promise that she doesn’t want Cat to keep, but the will has gone out of her, now – Cat’s too convincing, looks completely unaffected as she smooths out any wrinkles in her dress put there by Kara’s hands, and she slumps back against the couch cushions, completely defeated.

“Okay.” Her voice doesn’t sound like her own, sounds like it’s very far away, and she thinks Cat says something else but she doesn’t hear it, her head feeling fuzzy, and when she next looks up Cat is gone, retreating back to the safety of her own room.

Kara doesn’t even realise she’s crying until the tears slip down her cheeks, and she wipes them hastily away but more keep coming and she doesn’t know how to make them stop.

She’s been so stupid (she always has been, when it comes to Cat – she never should have applied for this job, never accepted it, because even from that first interview she’d been in too deep, and it had all led her to here, to crying her eyes out on a couch a world away from home, more alone than she’s felt in a long, long time), can’t believe that she’d just done that, just ruined something so precious in the space of a few minutes.

At least she knows where she stands now, though, once and for all.

Cat doesn’t want her (never had), and now that she knows that, maybe she can start to move on.

(She knows she won’t.

She just needs to figure out how in the hell she’s going to be able to look Cat in the eye without her feeling like her heart is tearing itself in two.

She doesn’t even know if that’s possible).

//

Cat shuts her bedroom door behind her and leans back against it, twists a hand through her hair and fights the urge to scream.
She’s an idiot, hadn’t been able to keep her distance this week, had indulged too much, let Kara too close, let her think she had a chance, and now… now everything is in pieces.

Kara had kissed her (or she’d kissed Kara, she’s honestly not sure who started it, they’d just been so close and then Kara’s mouth was against hers and then Cat hadn’t been able to think about anything else, because although Kara seemed meek and chaste, she kissed with fervour, with precision, and it had lit a fire in her and she doesn’t think the embers will ever truly die).

Kara had kissed her, and all Cat could do was kiss her back, because it’s all she’s wanted to do all damn week (and for much longer, longer than she’ll ever admit to another living soul), and whoever had called her is going to face her wrath because she’d been snapped to her senses much quicker than she’d wanted to be.

She hadn’t wanted it to end, but she’d known that it would, and badly, almost as soon as Kara’s lips had brushed against her own, had kissed her back with an aching desperation because she knew she probably wouldn’t get another chance.

It was torture, to push her away.

One of the hardest things she’s ever had to do.

And she knows she could undo it, so easily – she could go back down the hall, to where Kara is probably still curled up on the couch, and she could pull her close and kiss her hard and never let her go.

But it would end, she knows it would – she’s yet to have a relationship that last, and she thinks that there are just too many obstacles that stand in their way.

Surely it’s easier (even though it doesn’t feel it, not now with the taste of Kara on her lips, with her moans still echoing in Cat’s head, and whenever she closes her eyes, all she sees are Kara’s broken eyes as Cat had walked away), to end it before it even begins.

Her resolve nearly crumbles when she hears the sound of a sob, the noise wrenching through her chest and leaving her breathless, and she shoves herself away from the door, away from Kara, not wanting to hear any more because she knows it will break her.

This is for the best, she tells herself, as she yanks off her dress with trembling fingers (the dress that smells like Kara, the one that’s still a little rumpled from where her hands had touched her) and climbs beneath the covers.

It’s futile, because she knows she won’t sleep, not when her mind is so busy and not when Kara’s so upset (not when she’s so upset, and she doesn’t remember the last time she cried but she’s close to it, now, feels her eyes sting and she doesn’t fight it when the first tears fall, more following in their wake).

She can’t believe what she’s been reduced to, some lovesick fool crying over a girl half her age, and she has no idea how Kara has done this to her.

She’s never felt like this – even when Chris left her, but she supposes that had been inevitable, as had the divorces that came before it. She’d felt them all slipping away, had known the end was near, but this…

Kara was like a hurricane, springing into existence and hurtling into her life like a freight train, leaving nothing but destruction in her wake.
The best thing to do, for both of them, is probably to fire her.

She’s never contemplated it before, but she does that night – it would hurt Carter, and he’d probably hate her, for a little while, but Kara would be out of her life (the scars that she’d leave behind would linger, and Cat would never be the same, but she wouldn’t have to see her every day and she thinks, with distance, Kara will heal and move on, even if Cat never does), and she would be out of Kara’s, and maybe then things would be okay.

But she doesn’t have the heart to do it – Kara is already down, and she doesn’t want to hurt her anymore, doesn’t want to push the knife any deeper than she already has.

She’ll just have to go back to keeping her distance, only more diligently, this time – she won’t slip again, won’t encourage Kara ever again, will treat her like she treats all of her other employees, like she doesn’t even matter.

(But god, she matters, she matters so much that Cat can hardly stand it, and she just doesn’t know how this happened, how is Kara so special? How is she so perfect? How does someone like her even exist in this cruel and unforgiving world?).

She’ll keep her distance, and she’ll behave herself, and maybe, just maybe, they can get through this intact.

Or maybe Kara will, at least.

She thinks it might be too late for her.

She thinks she might be in love, doesn’t know when she’d fallen, but she has, hard and fast and so dizzyingly deep that she’ll never be the same again.

//

Kara barely sleeps at all that night.

She doesn’t move from the couch (doesn’t even change out of yesterday’s clothes, doesn’t even get a blanket, she just… she just lies there and self-destructs, gives herself that one night to fall apart and promises herself that she’ll try and put herself back together again, try to function just enough to get home, to not let Cat see how much she’s hurting), and she’s still lying there, staring at nothing, when the sun rises over the horizon.

They’re supposed to be meeting Eve at nine to head for the airport, but by half eight, Kara hasn’t heard any movement from down the hall, so she guesses it’s up to her to make sure Carter’s up and ready.

She doesn’t mind it, it’s a nice distraction, and she gets changed into some fresh clothes while he’s waking up – she doesn’t really bother with her hair, or her makeup, and she’s sure she looks like shit but she doesn’t care, especially seeing as she’s only going to spend eleven hours on a plane, anyway.

She forces herself to act normal around Carter, gets him dressed and some cereal into him as she makes sure they have all of their stuff packed away. She’s wondering if she’s going to have to check if Cat’s awake (she really doesn’t want to do that, but the clock is ticking closer and closer to nine and she doesn’t want them to be late) when she hears a door open at exactly 8:59.

Cat strolls into view a moment later, dragging her suitcase behind her, and she doesn’t even look at Kara as she wishes her son a good morning and asks him if he’s ready to go.
They meet Eve in the lobby, check out and pile into the car that’s waiting for them outside, and the silence is stifling, but Kara doesn’t know what to say, so she says nothing at all.

“Is, um,” Eve is the first one to break the quiet, shooting nervous glances between Kara, who’s staring pointedly out of the window, and Cat, who is tapping away on her phone, “is everything alright?”

“Fine,” Cat replies, with a note of finality, and Kara can feel Eve’s worried eyes on her but she doesn’t turn around, thinks she’ll break if Eve asks her if she’s okay.

The traffic is lighter than it was when they arrived, and it doesn’t take them as long to get to the airport. The queue for security is huge, though, and things are awkward, as they wait, Eve bouncing nervously on the balls of her feet, and Kara only paying attention to Carter, who’s restless in her arms.

When they get through to the other side, Kara isn’t surprised when Cat says she’s going to the first class lounge, lets her drag Carter off with her (he tries to protest, but Kara assures him that she’ll see him in just a few minutes time, and that seems to placate him), feels like she can breathe a little easier when Cat’s no longer nearby.

“Kara?” She feels a hand on her arm, the touch light, and she lets Eve turn her around so that they’re facing one another, and there’s a frown on her face as she bites at her bottom lip. “What’s wrong?”

“I’m fine.” She’s not, and she knows she doesn’t look it – she’s barely said a word all day and she looks like she hasn’t slept and she hasn’t made any effort with her appearance – but she really doesn’t want to have this conversation in the middle of the duty free store, as she’s being jostled by other passengers as they hurry by.

“Kara…”

“I will be fine,” she says, instead, because then at least she’s not lying (at least, she hopes she’s not, hopes she’ll one day be able to look at Cat without feeling the need to burst into tears).

“Did something… did something happen last night? When you guys went out?” Eve looks nervous, and Kara’s gaze turns sharp, her eyes narrowing, because why would she ask that, specifically? “I… There’s probably something you should see,” Eve says with a sigh, before she takes Kara’s arm and tugs her out of the store, finds a space outside of it that’s relatively quiet, and taps at something on her tablet while Kara taps her foot impatiently, with no idea where this is going.

Eve hands her the tablet without another word, and Kara’s blood runs cold when she sees the headline of the story that’s open on the screen.

*Cat Grant spotted on romantic getaway with mystery woman.*

It wouldn’t be incriminating, the photograph beneath of the two of them, if they weren’t holding hands.

But there are and there’s a soft look in Kara’s eyes and an easy smile on Cat’s lips (she’s holding Carter but his face is, thankfully, blurred), and she knows what it looks like, knows what people will think when they see it.

They’ll think that they’re a couple, because they look like one, even Kara can see that (and she knows, from the look on Eve’s face, that she thinks so, too). The article even includes the older photos of her and Cat in Noonan’s, and though at the time she’d been grainy and unremarkable, the similarities are there enough for the reporter to begin to speculate on how long she and Cat have been
dating in secret, and how serious it must be if they’re taken a family trip together.

Kara feels like she’s going to throw up.

It’s cruel, in the face of what happened last night, hurts like a sucker punch because this could be what they could have – they could be this happy, they could go on trips together with Carter, they could be a family – but she knows now that she’ll never have that, that it’s just a distant dream that will never be realised.

She stops reading and shoves the tablet back at Eve, doesn’t want to look at that picture for another second, and Eve clears her throat and puts it away, looking as awkward as Kara feels.

“We’re not… that’s not… I know what that looks like, but we’re not together.”

“You want to be, though, right?”

Kara laughs, so bitterly that she doesn’t sound like herself. “Am I that obvious?”

“Not really.” Eve is quick to reassure her, gives her arm a gentle squeeze. “I’ve just… I’ve seen the way you look at her, sometimes. And I’ve seen her all but melt around you, this week. So, I’ve had my suspicions. It’s actually why I didn’t tag along last night… I didn’t want to be a third wheel.”

“I wish you would’ve come,” Kara murmurs, “maybe you’d have been able to stop me being an idiot.”

She knows it would’ve happened anyway – there’d been an inevitability around them for a while, now, and she would’ve caved and have kissed Cat at some point – but at least it might not have been now.

“I know I don’t really know you all that well, but one thing I do know for sure is that you’re not an idiot.”

“I feel like one,” she sighs, running a hand through her hair and leaning back against the wall behind her. “I fucked everything up and now she won’t even look at me.”

“She’ll get over herself,” Eve tells her, and Kara tries to believe her, she really does, because Eve probably knows Cat the best, spends her days at her side, but it’s just… it’s hard.

“And if she doesn’t?”

Eve doesn’t have an answer for that, just gives Kara a pat on the shoulder, and tries her best to distract her as they wander aimlessly through the airport stores until it’s time to board their flight.

She feels numb, but she’s grateful for Eve, who doesn’t leave her side and seems happy to have a very one-sided conversation – it doesn’t feel suffocating, even though Kara doesn’t really know her that well. She’s touched, more than anything, that Eve even cares (Cat’s her boss, after all), and she’s just so, so glad that she’s there.

Cat and Carter don’t board until almost the last second, and again, Cat doesn’t look at her, even though Carter yells her name and tries to wriggle his way out of her grip to sit on Kara’s knee.

She wonders if Cat had tried to change seats – she’s in-front of them again – if she’s that petty, and decides that, with the way her gaze is fixed firmly forwards, that she wouldn’t put it past her.

Carter’s a good distraction, for a while, once they’re up in the air. He wants to read a book, then
watch some cartoons, and when he asks if he can colour, Kara is only too happy to draw him whatever he requests, before handing him the sketchbook to colour carefully within the lines.

But when he returns to his own seat to curl up and sleep, Kara feels restless, her mind swirling with things she doesn’t want to think about, with the memory of Cat’s skin under her fingertips, the feeling of her mouth against hers, the look in her eyes as she’d stared down at Kara on the couch and told her it could never happen again.

She knows she won’t sleep, even though she desperately needs it, can’t concentrate on a movie or a book because her mind is too active, won’t rest, so instead she pulls her sketchbook out of her bag and opens it to a fresh page.

She glances out of the window for inspiration, but although it’s bright, the sun nearly blinding, they’re over the ocean and will be for a while, so instead she reaches for her phone, flicks through the photographs she’s taken over the last few days until she finds one she wants to re-create.

She’d taken Carter on the London Eye, and the view from the top had been amazing; she has a dozen photos of it, and it’s one of those that she chooses, sets the phone down as she begins to sketch the skyline.

She’s precise, really focuses in a way she hasn’t done for a long time, loses herself in the scratch of pencil against paper.

When she’s done she leans back in her chair, stretches her back out because it’s aching from being hunched over for too long, and she hears a low whistle from beside her, turns to find Eve looking down at the page with something like reverence in her Eve’s.

“Wow, you’re really good.”

“It’s okay.” Kara glances down at it with a critical eye – it’s not her best work, but it’s nowhere near her worst, either.

“Are you kidding?” Eve’s eyebrows twitch upwards in disbelief. “Kara, that’s amazing. Do you sell these?”

“Thanks.” Her cheeks turn a little pink, not used to praise. “But no, I don’t – they’re just for me, usually.” Alex has a couple of her sketches, and Eliza has half an attic full of them from when she was younger, but that’s about it.

“Well, you should. I’d buy one.”

“You can have this one.” The pages are easy to tear out (she’d bought this book especially for Carter, so that she could keep all of his drawings together in one place – the folder of them is wrapped in red paper in Carter’s room, the kid under strict instructions to give the present to Cat on Christmas Day), and she hands it to Eve with a small smile – probably her first genuine one since last night.

“Are you sure?”

“Yeah,” Kara shrugs, “think of it as a ‘thank you’ for today. I know I haven’t been the best company, but… you’ve really helped a lot.”

“It’s really not a problem.” Eve tucks the sketch carefully into her bag, and Kara bites on the end of her pencil as she considers what to draw next.
She decides to just go freehand, stream of consciousness style, draws whatever comes into her head. She drops her pencil when she realises that she’s drawn a pair of eyes, dark and stormy, the shape of them unmistakably Cat-like, and she swallows hard and slams the book shut, her inspiration disappearing in an instant.

She gets out her laptop, instead, glad for the complimentary Wi-Fi, loses herself in a YouTube loop for a while until she gets an email notification.

It’s been forwarded from Diana, an email from the journal that she’d submitted their paper to (it had been pretty easy for Kara to put her section together, in the end, and the amount of contact she’d had to have with her ex had been, thankfully, minimal), a note to say that it had been accepted for publication, pending a few changes.

It’s excellent news, and she knows it’ll go a long way to getting her master’s acceptance. She emails Diana to let her know that she’ll do the changes, and it keeps her occupied for a couple of hours – when she’s done she sends it back to Diana and closes her laptop, her eyes stinging from staring at the screen for too long.

She manages to fall asleep, but when she wakes up she doesn’t feel rested, can’t wait to be back home and in her own (childhood) bed.

When her eyes blink open, Carter is sitting on Eve’s knee, and when he notices that she’s awake her clambers over the space between them and wraps his arms around her neck, the best hug he can manage, and she curls her own arms around his back and holds him close.

“What’s this for?” She asks him when he won’t let go, and he only squeezes her tighter.

“You look sad.” It breaks her heart, the way his voice wavers, the way he’s trying to comfort her, and she almost bursts into tears, bites down sharply on her bottom lip in an effort not to let any tears fall.

“I’m okay, buddy,” she murmurs into his ear, and he leans back to look her in the eye.

“Are you and my Mom fighting again?” She stiffens, because how does she even answer that? How does she even begin to explain what’s happened to him, in a way that he’d understand?

“I… your Mom isn’t happy with me right now, no,” she tells him, eventually, her words stilted because she’s choosing them carefully.

“Did you say sorry? Whenever she’s upset with me I say sorry and then it’s okay again.”

“I don’t think this is something sorry is going to fix, buddy.” She wishes it could be that simple, but she knows that it’s not, that it will take far more than an apology to fix the rift between the two of them.

Not that really feels like she needs to apologise – Cat had kissed her back (and might have even started it – Kara still really can’t remember, thinks maybe both of them had leaned in at the same time), after all.

She doesn’t know where they go from here, really, but she’s glad she has a few days away, some time to gather herself, space to clear her head.

Carter sits with her until the seat belt signs flicker back on, ready to start their descent, and Kara is filled with even more relief than usual when they touch down, because she’s home and she only has to keep herself together for a little while longer and then she can break down.
She hasn’t told her sister what had happened last night, yet – she’d known that Alex would just worry, and there was no point doing that when she couldn’t do anything to help, but she knows that the second Alex lays eyes on her she’ll know that there’s something really, really wrong.

They left London in the morning and they land in National City just a handful of hours later thanks to the time difference. Kara’s bone-tired as they stand in the queue for passport control, grateful when Eve involves Cat in a conversation about work to avoid a heavy, awkward silence.

Once they’re through to the other side, all of the bags are already on the carousel, so they walk to the exit together – Cat’s driver is waiting for her, ready to take her, Carter and Eve back into the city, and Kara spots Alex and Maggie a little ways away, can’t wait for them to wrap her in a hug.

“Have a good Christmas, buddy.” Kara wants nothing more than to flee, but she knows that she can’t go without saying goodbye to Carter, first, and he hugs her tightly like he doesn’t want her to leave. “I’ll see you soon.”

“I’ll miss you.”

“I’ll miss, you, too.” She gives him one last squeeze before rising to her feet. “Hope you have a good holiday as well, Eve.”

“You too.” To Kara’s surprise, Eve also gives her a hug, whispers into her ear, “I hope you feel better soon.”

That just leaves Cat, who’s still focused on her phone, and she highs, heavy and tired, and forces herself to say, “see you, Miss Grant.”

She feels like she should say thank you, because Cat had paid for her to come on this trip and she doesn’t want to be ungrateful, but a part of her wishes she’d never come along, because then they wouldn’t be in this position.

Cat doesn’t say anything, so Kara turns to leave, but freezes when she hears Cat say her name.

“Kara.” She turns, but Cat still isn’t looking at her, is still staring at her phone though Kara’s pretty sure the screen is black so she’s not actually doing anything, just avoiding Kara’s eyes. “Don’t come back until January.” Kara nearly blanches, because that sounds so far away. “The 2 nd – you deserve a break.”

“What about Carter?” Her voice is barely more than a whisper and she hates it, hates that Cat is standing there looking so completely unaffected while Kara’s splintering apart, hates that Cat is acting like she doesn’t even care.

“He can come to the office with me, or spend some more time with his father.” It shouldn’t sting, because Chris is Carter’s father, but it does. “Take some time off, spend some more time with your family.” Then, Cat does look up, and her eyes are blank, unfeeling, her face impassive, and Kara wants to cry, because why is she the only one who feels like her whole world if falling apart?

How is that fair?

“Clear your head.” It’s what Kara had wanted (what she needed, really – some time and distance from Cat), but she didn’t want the absence to be so long. “We’ll see you in the New Year.”

“I… okay.” She doesn’t have the strength to argue (doesn’t have the strength to do anything and really, after it all it’s a miracle that she’s even still standing). “Bye.”
She turns and walks away, refusing to look back, dragging her suitcase behind her and her eyes are so blurry with tears that she doesn’t even notice Alex is in front of her, nearly crashes into her and stops at the last second.

“Kara?” There’s a hand on her cheek, gentle fingers tilting her head up, and Alex’s eyes are swimming with concern. “What’s wrong?”

She doesn’t answer, doesn’t know how – instead she falls into her sister’s chest, lets Alex’s arms wrap around her, and prays that Cat isn’t looking, that Cat can’t see how broken she is, how many tears Kara has shed over her.

She doesn’t ever want Cat to find out just how much Kara loves her.

Chapter End Notes

You guys didn't really think it would be that easy, did you??

But seriously, don't hate me *too* much - this is the last hurdle they have to get over. There will be a bit more angst, and then I will drown you in the fluffiest of fluff so that you forget about all of the pain and suffering. I promise!!
Chapter 20

SURPRISE!

I realised after I posted yesterday that I'm out of the country next week so won't be able to update, and it would be cruel to leave you with angst... so I'll leave you with a double-dose of it instead :D

The response to the last chapter has been overwhelming, and I can't thank you guys enough <3 There's a little healing in this chapter, and our ladies will take their first steps towards getting their shit together. I hope you enjoy it! And I will be back with the regular weekly updates around the 11th of July.

Whenever Cat closes her eyes, all she can see is Kara’s face.

She’s inescapable, even here, in Cat’s beach house, a place where Kara has never even been. She’d only been able to spend a couple of hours in her apartment when she and Carter had gotten back from the airport, because reminders of Kara were all around her and she just needed an escape.

She’d thought it would be better, here, but it’s not.

She blinks and she sees Kara’s face, the wrenching pain in her eyes or the blank expression she’d worn the whole flight home, or worse, the way she’d looked like she was crumbling as she walked towards her sister.

She’d seen Kara fall into her arms, seen the panicked look on Alex’s face, and then Alex had raised her head, sought out Cat from across the crowded room, and the second their eyes had met understanding flickered across Alex’s face and then her expression had changed.

Kara’s sister had looked at her with such contempt, such fury, that it had made Cat’s blood run cold.

She’s glad that she has a few more days before Kara comes back, knows she wouldn’t have been ready, wouldn’t have her walls back in place (would’ve cracked and broken down the second that Kara had looked at her), if she’d have had less than a week’s reprieve.

Carter will be fine for a few days in her office or with Chris – although she thinks he’d probably prefer being with his father, because he’s not happy with her, not his usual self and she knows it’s because he senses that something is deeply wrong between Cat and Kara and she hates it (hates herself), because she was supposed to protect him from this, she wasn’t supposed to fall for Kara, and she sure as hell wasn’t supposed to act on it.

But the damage is done, and while she doesn’t know if they’ll be able to move past it, she won’t know for sure until Kara returns to work, so there’s no point dwelling on it now.

(She does, though, the uncertainty driving her slowly insane, as she runs through different scenarios of what might happen, hates that she doesn’t know which one is the most likely).

She doesn’t know how she’s going to react, is the thing. Because she’d told herself before that she
would keep Kara at arm’s length, but she’d cracked the second they’d been alone together in London, somehow convinced herself that it was different, there, that it wouldn’t count, that whatever happened wouldn’t have any repercussions once they got home.

And it had been so hard, that morning after, when she’d gotten a look at Kara (a brief look, as she’d been striding for the front door, with only a minute until they were supposed to be in the lobby, minimising the amount of time they were around one another because she didn’t trust herself), to pretend that she was completely unaffected by the bloodshot eyes, by the tear tracks on her cheeks, knowing that it was all her fault.

She couldn’t look at her, didn’t want to see what she’d done to her (she was a coward, something she’d sworn to never become), had shoved headphones in her ears and played music loudly so she could drown out the sound of Kara’s voice, even as it echoed around in her head.

(She hears Kara ask ‘why not?’ in that soft and scared voice, she hears her accusing ‘but you kissed me back’ and thinks that she handled it all wrong, that she should’ve fallen back into Kara’s lap and kissed her senseless, consequences be damned).

Cat thought a break from her life would do her some good, but all it does is leave her with time to think. Carter is grumpy, most of the time, sometimes doesn’t want to talk to her, and at night when he’s gone to bed she’s left with nothing but her thoughts for company.

It’s a dark time, and she thinks it was a bad decision, to come out here.

She decides to stick it out, though, because it’s only five days, and she hopes that Carter will cheer up on Christmas morning.

He does, a little – and then he disappears off down the hall, toddles back a few moments later with a bag that Cat hasn’t seen before, and Cat narrows her eyes at it suspiciously as Carter drops it in-front of her.

“This is from Kara.” He looks more cheerful than he is since they came out here, and it stings, to know that it’s Kara who put it there, and not her.

She’s always marvelled at how quickly Kara had won him over, but now she can’t help but wonder if they’d become too attached, dreads to think what it will do to him, when she leaves (either to go back to college or sooner – Cat thinks it might be sooner).

He’d been upset when Ella left, but Cat already knows that this will be so much worse.

Cat assumes that both the presents inside are for Carter, but he hands her one of them, her name scrawled on the tag in Kara’s writing, and she can’t help but run a fingertip over it, her throat tight.

Carter’s gift is his very own sketchbook and art supplies, and Cat has to take a picture of the joy on his face after he’s opened it, knows Kara will want to see it.

She opens her own present with fingers that tremble as she slips them under the paper, tearing it off to reveal a black folder – within it, is a stack of Carter’s drawings, some clearly sketched by Kara for him to colour, but some that he’s done himself.

She clenches her jaw and tries not to cry, because it’s such a Kara gift that it hurts – she can imagine her carefully collecting them all up, setting them aside and putting them all together, knowing that Cat would love it.

She’s so thoughtful, so wonderful and Cat doesn’t deserve her – in her life or otherwise – and her
heart feels like it’s being squeezed in a fist, tighter and tighter, a pressure on her chest that’s unrelenting.

“Mom?” Cat tears her gaze away from the folder, finds Carter looking up at her with a frown. “Are you okay?”

“I… I’m fine, sweetheart.” But her voice shakes and so do her hands, and she has to close the folder and set it down before she splinters apart.

“Do you not like it?”

“I love it.” More than she’ll ever be able to express – she thinks it’s probably one of the best gifts she’s ever gotten, because Kara has actually thought of her, given her something that she knew she’d like, rather than just the biggest diamond around.

“Then why is your face all funny?”

Cat manages a small laugh, because damn him for being so perceptive. “Because I… I didn’t get Kara anything,” she lies.

“Oh.” Carter blinks up at her. “You don’t have to – just don’t be mad at her anymore. That’ll make her happy.”

Cat sucks in a sharp breath, feeling like he’s just stuck a knife in her chest. “I’m not… I’m not mad at her.”

“She said you were.” Cat frowns, and maybe blasting music hadn’t been the wisest decision, or she’d know what Kara had said to him on the flight back home. “Why won’t you talk to her?”

“It’s complicated.” He looks like he wants to press, to argue, but Cat does not want to talk about it anymore, not with him, not when she’d never be able to get him to understand. “Why don’t you try out your new art supplies, and I’ll send a photo to Kara so she can see you, hm?”

That seems to distract him, and she does as she promises, opening her message to Kara and attaching a couple of pictures of him with the caption ‘thank you for these – you didn’t have to, but you’ve made his day. And mine. Merry Christmas.’

She doesn’t know if it’s necessarily appropriate – she had, after all, completely ignored Kara the last time they were together – but she thinks it’d be rude not to say thank you.

She tries to pretend that it doesn’t sting when she doesn’t get a response.

//

It’s nice, to be back home in Midvale.

She sleeps almost the entire drive, her head pressed against the window, using Maggie’s jacket as a pillow, trying to ignore the worried glances that the both of them keep shooting her from the front seat.

She hadn’t had the strength to explain, but Alex seems to understand – or she gets the gist of it, anyway, had ushered Kara to the car and away from prying eyes and asked her if she wanted to talk about it.

“Not yet,” Kara had answered, and Alex had accepted that, bundled her into the car and they’d been
on their way.

She wakes up when they hit the town limits, and she glances out the window as they drive through the centre towards her childhood home. It’s dark, but still recognisable, and she lets the memories of her youth wash over her.

There’s the old library where she’d spent many hours curled up reading as many books as she could manage, and the park where she and Alex had used to play, where Kara had used to lie to look up at the stars and marvel at their beauty, and their old high school.

The house is still the same as ever, and Eliza rushes out to greet them, wrapping the three of them in a tight squeeze.

“Are you alright, Kara?” There’s concern in her eyes as she catches sight of her face and Kara knows she probably looks like she’s been to hell and back.

“Yeah, I’m just tired.” It’s not really a lie – she’d slept in the car but she still feels lethargic, can’t wait to lie down in an actually bed. “From the travelling and all. And I didn’t sleep well while I was there.”

Eliza’s quick to send her up to bed, and Kara pretends she can’t heat the three of them whispering about her as she treks up the stairs.

She usually sleeps in her old room, because there’s two singles in there and a double in the guestroom for Alex and Maggie. She and Alex were supposed to have separate rooms when Kara moved in, but Kara’s nightmares had been so bad, terrified of being left alone, that they’d ended up sharing.

The room is relatively untouched – her bed is still the same, as are all the posters lining the walls, and she still has her glow in the dark stars stuck up on the ceiling.

She’s desperate for a shower even more than she is for sleep, drags herself down to the bathroom and feels a bit better once she’s back in her room, the heat of the water easing the ache of her muscles and washing away the dirt and grime of the last couple of days from her skin.

She wishes it would wash away some of the memories, too.

It doesn’t, and she doesn’t really expect to sleep when she crawls under her covers, thinks that thoughts of Cat will play on her mind and keep her awake like they had the other night, but she’s too tired, too exhausted, and she slips into unconsciousness almost the second her head hits the pillow.

//

She wakes up early the next morning, the sun barely over the horizon as she glances out of the window.

It’s a gorgeous view – her room looks out towards the ocean, and as she stands there, she watches the sun start to slowly rise over the waves, bathing them in a swathe of red.

She feels better, well-rested, and she pulls on some clothes before padding down the stairs, her stomach grumbling in protest, and she can’t even remember the last time she ate a proper meal – Alex had stopped at a fast food place for lunch yesterday, she vaguely recalls, but she didn’t eat much.

She makes some coffee and is debating whether she’d be able to successfully make a full breakfast of
eggs, sausages and bacon without setting off the fire alarm when she hears the sound of quiet footsteps on the stairs.

“Hey, Kara.” It’s Maggie, still in her pyjamas and not looking massively awake, who rounds the corner into the kitchen. “How are you feeling?”

“Better.”

“You look better,” Maggie tells her, grunting in thanks when Kara pours her a mug of coffee.

“Well, I don’t think I could look much worse.” It’s good that she can joke about it, she thinks – she feels more stable, after sleeping, a little less breakable, though she knows it will take her a long, long time to heal. “Sorry if I freaked you guys out yesterday.”

“We were worried,” Maggie admits, “but you looked like you needed the rest.” Maggie’s eyes flit to the kitchen counter, to the food that Kara had retrieved from the fridge. “Please tell me you weren’t about to cook breakfast.”

“Um, kinda? I’m hungry.”

“Out of the way.” Maggie hip checks her and starts bustling around the kitchen like it’s her own. “You can’t be trusted.”

“I’m getting better!”

“At some things,” Maggie concedes, and Kara hops up on the kitchen counter as Maggie sets the sausages and bacon sizzling on the stove.

“How was your week?”

“Same old, same old,” Maggie shrugs. “Glad to have a break.”

“Yeah, me too.” A longer one than she’d initially planned – although she thinks that might be a good thing. She feels Maggie’s eyes on her, knows she’s curious, knows she should talk about what happened, and breathes out a heavy sigh. “We, um, we kissed. Me and Cat. The night before we left.”

To her credit, Maggie masks her surprise well, turns the heat on the stove right down and turns to face her, leaning her back against the kitchen counter.

“I don’t really know what happened… we’d been getting closer all week and it was late one night and we just… we were kissing and it was amazing and then her stupid phone rang and everything went to hell.” She’s wondered, more than once, what would have happened if Cat’s phone hadn’t gone off – how far they’d have gone, if she would have woken up in Cat’s bed the next morning, instead of on the couch, alone.

Wonders whether Cat would have still pushed her away, and if she should be thankful that they hadn’t gotten too carried away.

“She told me it was a mistake and it could never happen again because she wasn’t interested in me like that.” Her mouth twists, her eyes focused on her hands, twisted in her lap, as she wills herself not to cry. “And then she walked away and hasn’t really looked at me since. Told me not to come back to work until January.”

“Oh, Kara.” Maggie wraps her in a warm hug, squeezes her so tight that it’s hard to breathe. “I’m so
“At least I know where I stand, right?” Her voice is weak, her eyes a little watery, and Maggie leans back, wipes away and tears before they fall.

“She doesn’t deserve you,” she says, her voice fierce. “If she can’t see how amazing you are, then she’s an idiot.”

“Thanks.” She doesn’t want to talk about it anymore, is relieved when her stomach rumbles – Maggie laughs and moves away, back to the stove. “Could you, um, tell Alex? I don’t really want to relive it again.”

“Of course.” Kara hears a door open upstairs, the sound of Eliza and Alex talking. “The smell of food must have lured them out,” Maggie says with a grin, and Kara jumps of the counter to grab some plates and set the table.

She’s nearly mowed down on her way back to the kitchen by a mountain of fur, and she laughs as she rubs the head of Eliza’s husky, Bella.

“Hey, girl.” There are paws on her shoulders, and Bella licks at her cheek in response. “I’m sorry I didn’t say hi properly yesterday.” She’d slipped past when Bella had been distracted by Alex and Maggie, only given her a brief pat on the head. “Are you still causing trouble?”

She was a rescue that Eliza had gotten a couple of years back, with the house feeling too empty after both Kara and Alex had fled the nest, and she’s a handful, but Kara knows Eliza wouldn’t change her for the world.

“Always,” Eliza answers, and Bella leaps down to follow her into the kitchen, wagging her tail. “You know how she knows how to open doors if they’re not locked?” She can leap up and pull the handle down – Kara and Alex may be responsible for it, having taught her one time they were both home, but what Eliza doesn’t know won’t hurt her. “Well, when the neighbour was watching her while I was at yours for Thanksgiving, she escaped out the back door and he thought he’d lost her. Found her sunbathing on the beach two hours later.”

“That sounds like our girl.” Alex scratches behind her ears as Eliza pours some biscuits into her bowl. “Thanks for making breakfast, babe.” She gives Maggie a kiss on her cheek as she hands out full plates.

“No problem,” Maggie shrugs, and her eyes sparkle as they land on Kara, “it was that or leave your sister to her own devices, so really, I had no choice.”

“Rude.” Maggie sticks her tongue out at her, and Kara grins, because this is exactly what she needed – to be surrounded by her family.

Once they’ve eaten, Kara insists on doing the dishes, and when she’s done she dries her hands, decides she doesn’t want to be idle so goes to get changed, deciding to take the dog out for a run.

“I’ll come with you,” Alex says when Kara tells them where she’s going, and she squints suspiciously at her sister.

“You hate running.”

“I don’t.”

“Yes, you do, you have said multiple times that it’s the devil and the worst form of exercise.”
“Well, maybe I changed my mind.” Kara doesn’t buy it, but she doesn’t argue, waits until Alex is changed before she asks Bella if she wants to go for a walk – she immediately bolts towards the door, and returns a moment later with a lead in her mouth and her tail going a million miles a minute.

Kara clips it to her collar before leaving through the back door, heading for the path along the edge of the cliffs that she’d used to run along back when she’d been in high school. It’s familiar to her, and she picks it up into a light jog after a few minutes, Alex on one side of her and Bella on the other.

She doesn’t go too fast because she knows Alex will kill her, but after a few minutes Alex waves her on ahead anyway, tells her Kara can catch up with her later, and she picks up her pace, Bella matching her easily – the dog is probably more fit than she is.

Wind whips through her hair and the view over the cliff’s edge is stunning, and Kara wishes she could do this all day.

She can’t, though, soon feels her muscles protesting so she turns back, and when she reaches Alex, she slows down to a walk, breathing heavily.

“I really don’t see how this is enjoyable.” Alex has gotten her breath back, and Kara’s pretty sure she would’ve dropped to a walk as soon as Kara was out of view. “You were the one that wanted to come.”

Yeah, well, I had ulterior motives.”

“You don’t say.” Alex shoves at her shoulder, and Kara grins, deciding to take a detour, walking down the steps cut into the side of the cliff that lead to the beach, letting Bella off her lead so she can paddle in the water. “Maggie told you what happened, huh?” Kara guesses, dropping down on the sand and stretching her legs out in-front of her, Alex joining her a moment later.

“Yeah, she did. I just wanted to see how you were doing.”

“I’m not… I’m not okay, really, but I’m better than I was yesterday,” Kara replies honestly. “I just need some time, I think. My head feels clearer, when she’s not around.” She watches Bella come bounding out of the ocean, shaking herself and sending water droplets everywhere. “Being here helps.”

“And if you need to talk about it, you’ll come to one of us, right?”

“Of course.” She rests her head on Alex’s shoulder, and she laughs when Bella trots over and sits right in her lap, still dripping water, and sticks her nose in her face.

She spends her Christmas in Midvale with her found family, healing more and more every day, and when Maggie and Alex head back to National City, Kara gets on a plane, and she flies halfway around the country to Metropolis, to visit Clark and Lois.

They’re delighted to see her, despite the short notice (she’d called Clark on Christmas Eve, asked him on a whim if he’d mind her dropping in, seeing as she had those few extra days off, and he’d been quick to say yes).

It’s been a while since she’d visited and they’ve moved apartments since, have an extra room that becomes Kara’s for the duration of her stay.
Her first night there, Lois is out so it’s just her and Clark, curled up on the couch watching old Christmas movies that they’d used to watch when they were kids, and it’s nice, being back with him again.

Both he and Lois are off the next day, and they spend it taking Kara around the city – she’s been a few times, but it’s been a while, and she’s never been at Christmas, loves the way everywhere is lit up bright.

They even take her ice skating, and Kara is just as bad as she had been when she took Carter, but Clark is amazing, grabs her hand and whirls her around and around until she’s dizzy and begging him to stop.

Clark has to work on the Friday, so he retires to bed early, leaving Kara and Lois watching TV in the living room. After a while, Kara feels Lois’ eyes on her, turns to find the other woman regarding her with interest.

“Something on your mind?” She asks, after a few moments of each one of them quietly observing the other.

“I just… well, I saw an interesting headline the other day.” Kara stiffens, just a little, knowing what’s coming even before Lois opens her mouth – she’d actually kind of forgotten about the article that Eve had shown her, her mind too overrun with other things at the time, but it comes flooding back to her in a rush. “Cat and I have google alerts set for each other, so we can make fun of the stupid things other people write about us. Needless to say, I was pretty surprised when I got an email about a new article, and saw a photograph of you.”

Kara doesn’t really know what she’s supposed to say about that, so she just fidgets where she sits on Lois’ couch and says nothing at all.

She thinks she’s been pretty good at putting on a brave face whilst she’s been here – she tries not to think about Cat, about the lingering sense of dread in her stomach as the date of her return to National City draws nearer.

And she’s doing okay – Alex and Maggie had done their best to keep her occupied, as had Eliza, even though all she really knew about it was that Kara had gotten her heart a little broken (she doesn’t know who by, although she’s a smart woman, and she’s probably got her suspicions – Kara’s crush on Cat in her youth hadn’t exactly been subtle, after all).

They’d both asked her how work was going but she thinks she’d been pretty convincing when she’d said fine, and she’d shot Lois a wary look to see if she had anything to say, to see if she’d heard anything from Cat, but if she had, it hadn’t shown on her face.

“I’m guessing from the look on your face you’ve seen the article?” Kara gives a tiny nod. “If I asked you again what was going on between the two of you would you still say nothing?”

“We’re not together.” Lois just gives her a look. “We’re not, and if you want to know what’s going on between us you should ask Cat, not me, because god knows I don’t know what’s going on in her mind.”

“I tried to ask her – well.” Lois tilts her head to one side, lips twitching. “I sent her a text and got something very non-complimentary in response, so I decided not to push.”

“What did you say?”

“I sent a screenshot of the article headline and said ‘congrats on getting over yourself and getting the
girl’. Kara feels like she can’t breathe. “I got ‘stay the fuck out of my business you prying hag’ in reply, so. I think I touched a nerve.”

“What do you mean, getting over herself?”

“She’s too scared to fall in love with someone who’s actually good for her,” Lois says with a roll of her eyes, “so when I was in National City I tried to give her a little push. Told her that the both of you deserved to be happy.”

“She… she told me she wasn’t interested in me, like that.” There’s a buzzing in Kara’s ears, a numb feeling spreading through her fingers, because this isn’t… this conversation can’t be real, she must’ve fallen asleep on the couch and this is all just in her head.

“Well, she lied,” Lois says with absolutely zero hesitation, seemingly not realising that the statement throws Kara’s whole world off-kilter.

“But that… that doesn’t make any sense.”

“Sure it does.” Lois gives her a pat on the knee. “Like I said, she’s scared. She probably thinks she’s going to ruin you or something.” She rolls her eyes again. “Because she’s an imbecile. But there’s no way she’s not interested in you, Kara. I’ve seen the way she looks at you.”

Kara doesn’t know what she’s supposed to do with that information, and it makes her angry, more than anything, because it’s cruel, for Lois to tell her this now, when she’s been doing so well at keeping Cat off her mind.

“That doesn’t change anything,” she insists, the words shaky. “Until it comes from her, it doesn’t change a damn thing.” It’s meaningless, after all, if it’s not coming directly from Cat – Lois might be her oldest friend, but that doesn’t mean she knows what’s on her mind. “I’m going to bed.”

It’s abrupt, but she needs to get out of there, needs to lock herself away for a little while and try to control her tumultuous thoughts.

“Kara, wait -” Lois tries to stop her, wraps a hand around her elbow, frowning when Kara turns back to face her. “I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to upset you.”

“I know. It’s okay, I’m just tired.” Lois still looks concerned, but she lets her go.

She gets into bed and she hears Lois in the other room on the phone, and she knows it’s to Cat. She’s tempted to press her ear to the door, to hear at least one side of the conversation, to gain some insight into just what the hell Cat is thinking, but she knows it won’t do her any good.

Instead, she grabs her laptop and her headphones, plugs them in and blasts her music so loud that she can barely even hear herself think, let alone what’s happening in the other room.

//

“You’re a fucking idiot.”

“Well, hello to you, too.” Cat blinks in surprise at the tone of Lois’ voice, having not expected that to come out her mouth when all Cat had said when she’d picked up the phone was a simple ‘hello’.

And sure, her last text to Lois had been a little scathing, but that was what they did, and that was days ago, anyway – a little late for a response, especially one so vicious.
“Do I get to know why you think I’m an idiot?”

“Oh, I’m sure you know why.”

“Please, enlighten me.” Her voice is purposefully light, in contrast to Lois’ fury, and she knows it will only anger her even more.

She’s still in her office, Carter off with Chris for this night and the next, and she leans back in her chair and takes her glasses off her nose, spinning around so that she can look outside the window at the view it offers of the city.

“You and Kara, Cat. You take her out for dinner and hold her hand and then turn around and tell her that you’re not interested? What the hell?”

“You’ve spoken to her?” Cat is surprised – she hadn’t thought that Kara and Lois were that close.

“She’s in my guestroom right now, probably crying her eyes out over you.” Lois doesn’t even try to hide her disgust, and Cat flinches at the image it conjures up.

“You know when I told you that you deserve to be happy? Well, I take it back. You can go to hell.”

“I didn’t… I didn’t want to hurt her,” Cat says, her voice soft, and she rubs a hand over her eyes and decides she needs a drink if she’s going to get through this conversation, goes to pour herself a glass of scotch. “That was never my intention.”

“Well, you failed.”

“I know that,” Cat snaps, because of course she does, hasn’t thought about anything else in the days since, still haunted by Kara’s eyes.

“I just don’t get it, Cat.” Lois sounds as weary as Cat feels. “You like her, she likes you – what’s the holdup?”

“I wasn’t aware it was any of your goddamn business, Lois.”

“It is when you’re hurting someone I love. I told her, you know. That you were completely bullshitting when you told her you weren’t interested.”

“Why the hell would you do that?” Now Cat is furious, her voice low and dangerous, because how dare she meddle in their lives like this?

“Because she deserves to know the truth, Cat!” They haven’t argued, really truly argued, over something serious and not something trivial, in years, but Cat feels like this could turn into a full on screaming match, is glad that she’s in her office alone. “If you’re scared, tell her. If you don’t want a relationship with her, tell her why. If you think she’s too young for you, speak up. If you don’t want to date an employee, let her decide if she’d rather have a job or a girlfriend. If you think you’re going to wreck her, tell her why and let her make a decision on whether that’s a risk she’s willing to take. Just… for god’s sake, just stop dancing around things and being such a coward and tell her how you really fucking feel.”

Cat blinks, shocked by the outburst (and by the fact that Lois knows her so well, well enough to know exactly why Cat had done what she did, and provide a counterpoint to each and every single one), hating that she actually might have a point.

“Are you still there?” Lois prompts when Cat doesn’t respond, but she doesn’t know how to, doesn’t know what she’s supposed to say.
“Yes.”

“Are you going to think about what I just said and maybe not be such a giant idiot in the future?”

“We’ll see.”

“Cat…”

“Goodnight, Lois.” She hangs up without another word, downs the rest of her drink in one before stalking back to her desk, but she knows she won’t get any more work done tonight.

No, her mind is too overactive, courtesy of Lois fucking Lane.

After thirty minutes of staring blankly at her screen and getting absolutely nowhere, Cat decides it’s time to go home, calls her driver and heads for the lobby, all the while with Lois’ voice ringing in her ears.

She wonders if she has been stupid, to let Kara slip through her fingers, wonders if she should have done this all differently, been honest with her from the start.

She wonders where they’d be now, if she had.

(Certainly not here, with Cat going back to an empty home, miserable and alone, Kara on the other side of the country, no doubt feeling the same).

Is it worth it? What they both feel now? It is worth it, rather than the risk of what could be, if Cat could just, as Lois had so elegantly put it, ‘get over herself’?

If you’d have asked her a week ago, Cat would give a resounding yes, but now?

She’s not so sure anymore.
Chapter 21

Chapter Notes

Surprise!! (Again)

I ended up with some time to edit this so thought I’d upload it.

I have no idea how postgrad stuff in the states work, so I just used the system we have in the UK because it fit better with the story haha.

Hope you enjoy!

Kara very nearly doesn’t turn up for work, when the 2nd rolls around.

She’d returned to National City on New Year’s Eve, spent the night out with Alex, Maggie, Sara and Ava, had even found someone to kiss when the clock struck twelve, but it wasn’t even a shadow of the kiss she’d shared with Cat, and she’d been quick to pull away.

The break had been nice, despite the circumstances.

She’d quickly forgiven Lois for her interfering, knowing she thought she was helping, and she’d spent the following day dragging her around bridal shops to get her opinion on wedding and bridesmaid dresses to keep her mind off of Cat.

She’d even gotten the chance to spend some time with Lucy and James whilst she’d been in Metropolis, which had been amazing – she doesn’t get to see her enough, and when Lucy told her that they were thinking about moving to National City, would be coming over soon to go apartment hunting, Kara had squealed and hugged her so tight she’d lifted her clean off the ground.

So, all things considered, she’s had a pretty good couple of weeks – until she has to go to bed on New Year’s Day, knowing that she’s going to be seeing Cat in the morning.

Her stomach is in knots, and she doesn’t sleep well, tosses and turns late into the night before exhaustion finally takes over.

It takes a herculean effort to drag herself out of bed the next morning, to force her legs to propel herself out of the front door and onto the street, setting off on her usual route to Cat’s apartment.

She doesn’t knock when she gets there, uses her key instead, just to buy her a few more moments before she has to come face to face with the woman who’s been haunting her dreams.

Her conversation with Lois is never far from her mind, and she wonders what she’d said to Cat after Kara had gone to bed – whatever it was clearly hadn’t had the intended effect, because Kara hasn’t heard from Cat since the text that Kara had ignored on Christmas Day.

She takes a deep breath before she makes her way down the hallway, but before she can make her way towards the end of it, she hears the sound of tiny feet running towards her, and laughs as Carter hurls himself into her arms.
She lifts him up and swings him around in a circle, some of her nerves easing now that she has him in her arms.

“Hey, kiddo.”

“I missed you.”

“I missed you, too.” She had, so much, and if not for how much she adored him, she knows she wouldn’t have come back at all (in all honesty, the thought of quitting is still on her mind, and the only thing really holding her back is Carter, and how upset he would be). “Did you have a good Christmas?”

“It was okay.” Kara wonders if he’s been difficult, if he blames Cat for Kara being gone for so long. “Thank you for my presents.”

“You liked them?”

“Yeah!”

“Have you used them yet?”

“Yeah, come see.” She’s still by the front door, still rooted to the spot, but she draws strength from the boy in her arms and forces herself forwards, telling herself that she can do this, she has got this, and everything’s going to be just fine.

But then she sees her — Cat is leaning against the back of the couch, and she’s on tapping on her phone but when she hears Kara she looks up, meets her gaze and Kara freezes, because she’d thought she was ready, but god, she really, really wasn’t.

She’d thought that she was okay, that over the course of the past two weeks she’d begun to pull herself together, the pain of their last night in London fading, just a little — she’d thought that she’d be able to face Cat again and not have it all rush back to her.

She thought that was doing okay, but one look from Cat and that goes out of the window, because she feels like she’s breaking apart all over again.

She still wants her, still can’t help but notice how beautiful she looks, even after everything, and she wonders if she’ll ever be able to look at Cat without wanting something that she’s just not prepared to give.

“Kara.” Cat’s eyes are on her, and she can’t breathe, doesn’t realise she’s squeezing Carter too tightly until he wriggles in her arms, and she’s quick to set him down in-case she hurts him.

She can’t read the expression on Cat’s face, wishes she could, wishes she knew what she was thinking, just for once, but doesn’t think she ever will.

“Good morning, Miss Grant.” She tries to go for distant, unaffected, thinks she probably falls a little short. “Hope you had a good Christmas.”

“I… it was fine.” Cat’s still looking at her like she’s trying to see through her, like she’s trying to figure out what she’s thinking. “Thank you again, for mine and Carter’s gifts – you didn’t have to.”

“No problem,” Kara shrugs, and she wonders if this is how it’s going to be, now — awkward small talk whilst Kara wishes the floor would open up and swallow her whole.
She’s relieved when Cat heads of to work, leaving her alone with Carter.

He shows her all of the drawings he’s done in his new sketchpad, and she smiles at the happiness on his face, knows she’d done a good job and thinks she might have a teeny tiny artist on her hands. It’s nice, being back – she’d been dreading it but it’s actually okay, and without Cat there she can almost convince herself that it’s just like old times, that nothing has changed.

But it has, and when Cat isn’t back by the time she puts Carter to bed, she gets antsy because she knows she won’t have her buffer in place when Cat gets home. She’s on the couch watching TV and trying to keep herself calm when she hears the click of the front door, and she’s already on her feet and into her jacket before Cat has even come into the room.

“Carter’s fine, he was in bed by half seven, asleep by eight, I’ll see you tomorrow.” The words come out of her in a desperate rush, her eyes on her feet so she doesn’t get lost in Cat’s eyes, but when she makes to duck around Cat and head for the door, Cat’s hand curls around her wrist and stops her in her tracks.

The touch burns, and Kara wrenches her arm away so violently that she nearly sends Cat sprawling, but she can’t touch her, can’t be too close to her, doesn’t want her to know how desperately Kara still wants her (how desperately she loves her).

“Kara, I…” She doesn’t know what look is on her face, but Cat’s eyebrows are drawn close together, and her eyes are dark with emotion, and when she asks, “are you okay?” Kara can’t help the dark laugh that leaves her lips.

“What do you think?” Her voice is bitter, she knows, and Cat flinches.

“I didn’t… I never wanted to hurt you. I know that’s pointless, now, but I - ”

“What do you want from me, Cat?” Kara cuts her off, can’t stand to hear another word leave her lips because she thinks she’d rather have a Cat who’s cold and distant than one who’s apologetic (unless she says she made a mistake the other night, that she didn’t mean a thing she said, but somehow, she doesn’t think that’s what’s happening here). “Because I can’t… I can’t take all of this back forth, not knowing where I stand with you anymore, so just… figure out what the hell you want so we can both try and move on with our lives.”

She leaves without waiting for her reply, wants her to actually think about it, and she heads for Maggie and Alex’s place, because she’d promised them she’d stop by when she was finished for the day so they knew she was doing okay.

She’s perched on their couch when her phone buzzes, and she checks it (totally not half-hoping that it’s a message from Cat, asking if she could talk), and she nearly drops it when she sees that it’s an email notification, and that it’s from the admissions department at NCU.

“You open it.” She thrusts the phone into Alex’s hands, feeling sick, hides behind her hands and peers at Alex through her fingers as she opens the email, tries to gauge from her face whether it’s good news or bad. “What? What is it?” The anticipation is killing her, and when Alex just mutely hands her phone back, Kara is convinced that she hasn’t gotten in.

It takes a few tries to read the email – her hands are shaking, and her eyes won’t focus properly – but then she does, and she has to re-read it about five times before it really starts to sink in.

“Can someone please tell me what it says?” Maggie asks, gaze flitting from between Alex and Kara impatiently.
“I… I got in.” Kara’s heart is beating a million miles a minute in her chest, and her hands are shaking so badly it’s a miracle she hasn’t dropped her phone.

“Kara, congratulations!” Maggie leans over to give her a hug, but Kara feels too numb to respond, and when Maggie pulls back, she’s frowning. “That is a good thing… right?”

“I… I was applying for August admissions, but they said that a space has opened up so I could start in January. In like, two weeks.”

This had been her plan, this had been what she wanted, but now that she has it, she doesn’t know how to feel – she was supposed to have months to plan for this (months to say goodbye to Cat and Carter), but to have only two weeks?

She feels like her whole life has been flipped upside down.

“You could probably postpone it, if you wanted.” Alex always knows exactly what’s on her mind, speaks softly, like she doesn’t want to startle her. “If they want you this bad, they’d understand if you wanted to wait.”

“Do you think I should?”

“I think you should do whatever you want to do, Kara.” The thing is, she doesn’t know what that is anymore.

“I… I’m going to have to think about it, I guess.”

And she’s going to have to talk to Cat, because this kind of affects her, too.

She’s already dreading how that conversation’s going to go.

//

It’s quiet when Cat returns home on Thursday night, and she glances at her watch with a frown – it’s only just past seven, and Carter shouldn’t be in bed yet, but when she rounds the corner she finds only Kara, playing nervously with her hands.

She’d been odd that morning, distant and distracted, and Cat had thought it had to do with their conversation last night, but now she’s not so sure, thinks that there’s definitely something else on Kara’s mind.

“Is everything okay?” Kara jumps at the sound of Cat’s voice, like she hadn’t noticed her come in, and when she glances up there’s something tortured in her eyes that immediately has her worrying.

“E-everything’s fine, I put Carter to bed early because I wanted to talk to you.”

“Oh?” Cat quirks an eyebrow, settles herself down on the couch opposite the chair Kara has claimed when she motions towards it. “What about?”

“I… um… do you remember me saying a while back that I was thinking of sticking around here, and applying to NCU?” This is definitely not where Cat expected the conversation to go, and she nods, eyebrows scrunched up in confusion. “Well, I, uh, applied. And I kinda got my acceptance yesterday.”

“Congrat - ”

“They want me to start this month.” Kara speaks over her, and the rest of the word die in the back of
Cat’s throat. “The 14th. And I’ve thought about it, about pushing it back until the summer, but I… in light of everything that’s happened, between me and you, I don’t… I don’t know if I want to. I love this job and god, I adore Carter more than anything but I… I have feelings for you, really strong, not-going-away no matter what I do feelings and I… I know you don’t want that, but I don’t know how to be around and not… not want that, so I think… I think maybe it would be best if I just quit, and started my masters, and then you don’t ever have to see me again if you don’t want to.”

Kara’s words come out in a rush, like if she doesn’t say them quickly she won’t be able to get them out at all, and Cat rocks back against the couch cushions, feeling like a bomb’s just been dropped on her.

She doesn’t know to process this – that Kara just admitted she had feelings for her, in the same breath that she also told her she wanted to leave, and she feels like there’s a weight pressing down on her chest, making it hard to breathe.

“Obviously, I know you’re going to need some time to find a replacement.” Kara’s looking at her curiously, and god knows what expression is on Cat’s face – she’d lost the ability to regulate her emotions sometime around ‘really strong’. “And I checked in my contract and there was nothing about how much notice I had to give, so I’ll work right up until I have to start, and if… if you don’t want me to go, then I won’t. I’ll stay, until the summer. If you want me to.”

She’s obviously thought about this a lot, and her distraction this morning makes a lot more sense in light of this.

“No, no, you should… you shouldn’t wait.” It’s her future, her career, has been for longer than she’s had this job, and even though it kills her to say it, she knows that she can’t hold Kara back, even though she knows all it would take for her to stay would be her asking.

“But Carter…”

“Carter will be fine.” He’ll throw a fit, but he’ll survive. “I think… it would be best if it came from you, though.”

“Yeah, I know.” Kara looks pained, and she knows that this isn’t a decision that she’s come to lightly.

“And you’re… you’re welcome to see him anytime you like. I know he’d love that.”

“Really?” Kara looks up at her with hopeful eyes, and Cat’s throat feels tight.

“Of course you can. If you want to, of course.”

“I’d like that.” Kara looks like she’s about to cry, and Cat feels like her own eyes are threatening it, too – she knows if she thinks too much about the fact that Kara won’t be with her for much longer, she’ll lose the battle to keep her tears at bay.

“If you could finish out the next week, that should give me enough time to find someone else.”

“Okay.” Cat watches Kara clench her jaw, knows that she’s struggling to keep her emotions under control. “I, uh, I should get going, it’s getting late.”

It’s not – it’s not even eight o’clock, but Cat doesn’t question it, lets her go, and once she hears the front door close her shoulders slump and she curls in on herself, feeling like the floor has been ripped out from right underneath her feet.
She’d known that Kara wouldn’t be here forever, obviously, but this is just so sudden, so unexpected, that she doesn’t know how to process it.

It’ll take her some time (a lot of it), and she can barely comprehend that in just over a week’s time, Kara will be gone.

She won’t see her every morning, won’t go to work with the imprint of her sunny smile in her head, won’t get to come home to find Kara waiting for her.

She thinks of Kara’s words ‘I don’t know how to be around you and not want you’ and wonders if she would be so eager to leave, if London had never happened.

She’d said that Carter will be fine, that he will survive if Kara goes, but she doesn’t know if she will, not really – she thinks of Kara slipping away and feels cold all over, thinks of never seeing her again and feels ill, thinks that Kara will be the one she never gets over, even though they were never together at all.

They could be, she knows – if she reached out, if she told Kara how she felt, then she knows they could have something.

She thinks of Lois’ encouragement, thinks that if Kara no longer works for her, then there’s no barrier, not really.

She thinks of a life alone, and whereas once she would’ve had no problem with it, valuing her independence, she knows it wouldn’t compare to having someone to come home to at the end of each day.

Someone with a beautiful smile and a sunny personality, someone who can light up the parts of her that Cat had thought would be dark forevermore.

//

“Hey, Carter? Come here a second, I need to talk you.” Carter eyes Kara warily from his position on the floor – he’d been playing with his action figures, and Kara’s been trying to find the best time to have this conversation all day but she knows there’s never going to be one, just needs to take the plunge and get it over with.

“What’s wrong?” He crawls over to her, and Kara lifts him up so that he’s sat on her lap facing her.

“Okay, first of all, you know how much I love you, right?” He nods, frowning, and Kara takes a deep breath, opens her mouth and nearly drops him when Carter speaks before her.

“You’re leaving, aren’t you?” Kara’s mouth falls open, and Carter looks up at her with sullen eyes. “Because of my Mom. You had a fight and when she gets mad at my nannies she fires them and then I don’t see them again.”

“Well, you’re going to see me again because I’m going to keep coming to visit you, alright?”

“You will?”

“Of course I will, buddy.”

“You won’t forget about me?”

“Oh, sweetheart.” His bottom lip trembles, and Kara hugs him to her chest. “I could never forget
about you. And I’m not leaving because of your Mom, so don’t be mad at her.” It might be a
contributing factor – she needs to be away from Cat if she’s going to get over her – but it’s not the
main reason for her quitting by any means.

“Then why do you have to go?”

“Because I have to go back to school.”

“That sounds boring.” Kara chuckles, ruffles his hair gently.

“It probably will be, compared to watching you every day, but it’s what I need to get the job I want,
bud. I think I want to be a college professor – teach kids a bit older than you about space.”

“You’d be a good teacher.”

“You think so?” He nods, and Kara smiles, knowing it’s a high seal of approval. “I get to spend a
few more days with you, though, if that’s okay.”

“And you promise you’ll still visit me?”

“I promise.” She knows it’ll be an easy one to keep – it might be difficult, to still have Cat as a part
of her life, but she’d take it, if it meant she could still see Carter, because she’d come to love him like
he was her own kid, over the past few months.

She’s going to miss him so much, but she knows she’s made the right decision – it’s time for her to
move on with her life; she just wishes that to do that, she didn’t have to leave so much behind.

//

“Eve, could you put up a job advertisement for a new nanny ASAP, please?” Cat asks as she breezes
into her office on Friday morning, trying to keep her voice neutral, to not give away the emotion
churning away inside of her, how much it cuts her up inside just to say those words.

“What?!” Eve looks horrified, nearly drops Cat’s latte before she can pass it to her, and Cat raises an
eyebrow at her. “Um, sorry, I just… what happened to Kara?”

“She’s leaving.”

“Leaving?” Eve scurries after her as Cat walks into her office, throwing her bag and her coat on one
of her couches. “She quit?”

“She got a better offer.” Cat sinks down into her desk chair – Eve looks stunned and a little unhappy,
and Cat wonders just how much she’d picked up on, on their week away. “If you could put that
advert up…?”

“Oh, right, of course.” Eve hurries away, and Cat lets out a long breath.

She’s not looking forward to being back at the beginning, to having to search for yet another nanny,
and she knows that, no matter who she finds, they won’t hold a candle to Kara.

Her cellphone rings halfway through the day, and she frowns down at it, midway through an
important email and debating if she needs to answer it, but when she sees the name, she knows she
can’t ignore it.

“Hello?”
“Miss Grant?” It’s Ella, Carter’s old nanny, his first (and longest lasting), and Cat wonders if this is some weird coincidence, or if luck’s actually on her side, for once.

“Ella, how many times have I told you to call me Cat?” She knows she won’t, though, never has, even after working for her for two years. “How are you doing? I was sorry to hear about your mother.” That’s why she’d left, and Cat knows she’d passed away about six months later.

“I’m doing okay, Miss Grant, thank you. I moved back to the city a few weeks ago, been thinking about going back to work… I actually asked that assistant of yours, if Carter was getting on okay, or if you had an opening.”

“Let me guess – she just called you to tell you there is, now?” She glances out at the bullpen to see if Eve is paying attention, but she’s frowning down at her computer screen, and Cat thinks maybe she ought to give the girl a raise.

“She did,” Ella confirms. “Is that… is that right? Are you looking for someone?”

“I am – I take it you’re interested?”

“Very, Miss Grant. I missed Carter a lot whilst I was gone. He’s probably forgotten all about me now.”

“I very much doubt that.” There’s a smile playing around the edges of Cat’s lips, because Ella had been a godsend during Carter’s early years, knows exactly how Cat works and how insane her hours are, and the thought of not having to go through the ordeal of finding someone new is a relief. “How about you come to my office later today if you’re free, and we can talk it over?”

“When would be best?”

Cat tells her three, and Ella shows up five minutes beforehand, knowing Cat’s love of punctuality. She’s more than happy to take over from Kara, and Cat knows she would start that night if Cat asked her to.

She doesn’t want to take Kara’s final week away from her, though (from neither her or Carter), so they agree that she’ll start on the Monday that Kara’s classes start, and Cat will call her if she needs her to come over before then.

She feels a little better, knowing that Ella will be taking over the reins – if anyone can live up to Kara, it will be her, and Cat knows it’ll make the transition easier on Carter if it’s someone he already knows.

She’ll still be sad to see Kara go, of course she will – but if she gets her way, it won’t be a goodbye.

She isn’t planning on letting Kara get away
Her last day is a Friday, and she doesn’t even get to say goodbye to Cat.

Chris is taking Carter for the weekend, picks him up before Cat gets back (she’d said goodbye to him in the morning, not expecting to be home early), and Kara feels silly, staying there without Carter, so she takes one last glance around the apartment and tries not to cry.

Carter had, as his father had taken him away – he’d hugged her tight before he went, and Kara had promised him that she’d see him soon with her own throat tight with tears.

They’ve had as much fun as possible this week – Kara had pretty much let Carter do whatever he wanted, and Cat hadn’t seemed to mind. They’d been back to the museum, to the Planetarium, and done more sketching than Kara has ever done before in her life.

She hasn’t had this job for long, but it feels like the end of an era as she takes one last glance around her – she’ll probably be back to visit, but it’ll feel different, she thinks, if she’s not Carter’s nanny anymore.

She knows she’s leaving him in good hands – Cat had told her that his old nanny was back in town, and she’s glad that things had worked out, that she wasn’t leaving Cat and Carter with someone who might be terrible.

Things with Cat this week have been… weird. They haven’t talked much – Kara is still a little mortified that she’d admitted her feelings, but they’d just sort of spluttered out of her during her whole tirade, and she hadn’t been able to stop them.

To her credit, Cat hasn’t brought it up since, but Kara still feels like it’s there, some kind of elephant in the room whenever they’re alone together, and she’s tried to make sure that that doesn’t happen too much.

She’s been home early most nights, so Kara has been free to kiss Carter goodbye and skitter out of the door, so they haven’t had the chance to talk much – she’d thought that Cat would have made an effort to be there, tonight, to say goodbye and maybe wish her luck, but apparently Kara is less important than whatever work is keeping Cat late that night.

She supposes she shouldn’t be surprised, at this point, but it still stings, and her mood is a little sour as she heads for the door.

She’s excited at what next week will hold – it’s the start of her future, and something she’s been striving for for a while, but she feels… empty, as she rides the elevator down to the lobby of Cat’s building for what could be the last time.

She gets off the subway three stops earlier than she usually would, walks the rest of the way back to her apartment, using the time to try and clear her head.

She’s replying to a text on her phone when she reaches her floor, so she’s not paying attention as she makes the now-familiar journey to her front door, doesn’t look up until she’s nearly there, and skids to a stop when she sees someone standing in-front of it.
Cat is leaning casually against the wall, looking completely out of place in the white dress she’d been wearing that morning and a black blazer, and there’s a bouquet of roses held in one of her hands and Kara wonders if she’s dreaming.

“Cat? What are you… what are you doing here?”

“I wanted to talk to you.” Cat’s voice is soft, and she looks nervous, her teeth worrying at her bottom lip.

“About what?” Kara asks, dumbly, because she really can’t comprehend that Cat is here at her apartment and holding flowers that she assumes are meant for her.

“I think it’s a conversation that would be better served in your apartment, and not out here. Can I come in?”

“Oh. Um, yeah, of course.” She feels like a bumbling idiot, but she’s been knocked off-kilter by having Cat here in her space, reaches for her key and hopes Cat doesn’t notice that her hands are shaking when she unlocks her front door and leads her inside. “I didn’t, uh, expect to have company.” She tries to tidy things as surreptitiously as possible as she heads for her kitchen. “Sorry about the mess.”

“It’s alright.” Cat waves a hand like she doesn’t care, like her apartment isn’t always immaculate. “These are for you.” Cat hands her the flowers, and Kara really isn’t sophisticated enough to have a vase, so she shoves them in the tallest glass she can find, instead. “To say thank you, for everything you’ve done for me and Carter.”

“Oh, um, thanks.” She runs a finger over one of the petals, soft against her skin. “Do you always buy your employees red roses when they leave?”

“Just the special ones.” Cat is close, closer than she’s been since they kissed, and Kara can feel the heat of her body, shrinks back against the kitchen counter, and tries not to lose herself in pools of green. “Kara, I - ”

She’s cut off by the sound of the front door open, and they both whirl around like they’ve been caught doing something the shouldn’t – Alex stands in the doorway, and when she sees Cat standing in Kara’s kitchen, she drops the container of takeout she’d been holding, spraying rice and potstickers all over the wooden floor.

“Alex!” Kara hadn’t realised she was coming over – Alex had asked if she’d finished work, but nothing else – and there’s an unreadable expression on her sister’s face as she looks between the two of them.

“What the hell is wrong with – oh.” Maggie appears over Alex’s shoulder, sees the situation unravelling in-front of her. “I’m just gonna,” she indicates behind her with her thumb, and tugs on Alex’s elbow. “Babe? Maybe we should - ”

“What the fuck is she doing here?” Okay, so Alex’s expression isn’t unreadable anymore – instead it’s angry, her eyes narrowing into slits and Kara looks nervously at Cat who actually takes a step back (Cat Grant backs away from her sister, and maybe Kara gets it, because if looks could kill Cat would definitely be keeling over right about now). “What are you doing here?” Alex directs that at Cat, instead, and Kara thinks it’s only Maggie’s hand, still wrapped around Alex’s elbow, that’s stopping her from advancing on Cat with fury in her eyes.

“Well, we were just about to get to the why when you came barging in here,” Kara says, and she
feels like she needs to step in-front of Cat to shield her from some of Alex’s anger.

“I wasn’t aware that I was going to be interrupting anything.” Kara has never seen Alex like this – she’s in full-on big sister mode, and it’s kind of terrifying. “You should leave,” she tells Cat, and Kara makes an indignant noise.

“You don’t have to do anything,” she tells Cat, who remains silent, and Alex scoffs in disbelief.

“Are you serious, Kara? How many tears have you cried over her in the past few months? How many times has she made you feel like shit? Worthless? And what, she just shows up here with some flowers and suddenly you forget all about that?”

“I haven’t forgotten anything.” Her voice is quiet, and when she steals a glance at Cat, she sees that she’s gone very still, looks like she’s going to bolt at any moment, and Kara really doesn’t want that to happen before she finds out what Cat had come over here to say.

“Alex.” Maggie tugs against at Alex’s arm, but she doesn’t budge. “Maybe we should go, give them a chance to talk.”

“I’m not going anywhere.” Alex shakes her off, sets her jaw. “All you’re going to do is break my sister’s heart, *again,*” Kara winces because Cat doesn’t need to know this, “and I want to be here to pick up the pieces so you can talk, if you want to, but I’m going to be right here.”

She stalks into Kara’s bedroom and slams the door, and Kara runs a hand over her face because this is not how she expected her evening to go.

“Do you want me to go talk to her?” Maggie asks, still hovering inside the doorway and looking like she’d really rather be anywhere else.

“No.” Cat speaks for the first time, her voice quiet but deathly calm. “I’ll go.”

“Cat, you don’t have to - ” Kara reaches for her arm, because she’s actually a little concerned that the two of them might come to blows, but Cat shrugs her off.

“I’ll be fine.” Kara watches her go with worry gnawing at her gut, but when the door shuts behind her, she doesn’t hear any raised voices (at least not right away), so she supposes that’s not a terrible sign.

“You got a broom, Little Danvers?” Maggie snaps her gaze away from her bedroom, and she remembers that there’s food all over her floor, grabs a broom from the kitchen and concentrates on tidying it up, in an effort not to obsess over what might be happening in the other room.

“Do you think they’ll be alright?”

“Well, I haven’t heard any screaming,” Maggie jokes, but it does nothing to set Kara at ease. “You wanna fill me in on what’s happening, here?”

“You know as much as me,” Kara says with a shrug. “I got back from Cat’s place and she was standing outside my door holding those,” she nods towards the roses, “and said she wanted to talk. And then you guys walked in about two seconds later.”

“Oh. What do you think she wants to talk about? Has she been weird with you this week?”

“I’ve barely seen her.” Now she wonders if Cat has been avoiding her on purpose, hopes that Cat and Alex will emerge soon because there’s anxiety swirling around in her gut, makes her bounce her
“Where’s the kid?”

“At his Dad’s.”

“Was that always the plan or was it a last-minute thing?”

“I… I don’t know.” Cat hadn’t mentioned it until Wednesday, but that didn’t mean she hadn’t arranged it earlier. “Does it make a difference?”

“Mm, maybe not. Just means she might’ve put a bit of planning into this.” Kara frowns, because she doesn’t even know what this it, but before she can ask Maggie for any more ideas, Kara’s bedroom door opens and Alex comes striding back out, Cat following a few steps behind.

Both Kara and Maggie eye them warily, looking for any signs of damage, but it doesn’t look like any blood has been drawn.

“Maggie and I are gonna go, give you a chance to talk.” Kara is surprised by Alex’s change of heart, is dying to know what Cat had said to her. “You call me,” she says to Kara, her gaze intense, “if you need me, okay?”

“I will,” Kara promises, and Alex gives Cat one last, long (warning?) look, before she’s heading for the front door with Maggie, shutting it quietly behind them and leaving Cat and Kara alone.

“What did you say to her?” Kara asks, and when Cat folds herself down on Kara’s couch she follows, sitting down next to her but leaving a few inches of space between them.

“She asked me to explain myself, so I did,” Cat says, like that makes anything clearer. “And I… I owe you an explanation, too.” Cat takes a deep breath, like she’s steeling herself. “I’ve never… I’ve never been very good at falling in love.” Kara forgets how to breathe. “At being vulnerable, like that, at letting someone else in. I don’t know if you’ve noticed, but I have a bit of a prickly exterior – not that you let it bother you for a second.” Cat’s lips curve into a small smile, and her eyes are shining when she turns her head to meet Kara’s gaze.

“You took me completely by surprise. You won Carter over in two seconds flat, didn’t back away when I challenged you. I have a fortress around my heart but I didn’t even notice you sneaking inside it until it was too late, and I was too far gone.”

“But in London…” Kara trails off, doesn’t want to relive it again, and Cat winces.

“Like I said, I’m not very good at letting someone in. When I kissed you, it… I don’t know if I’ve ever felt like that before and honestly, it terrified me. You could destroy me, Kara, if you wanted to.” Kara wants to laugh, because if anything, it’s the opposite – but Cat’s eyes are shining with sincerity, and she knows it’s not a lie. “I’m not… an easy person. You’re young and so selfless and wonderful and I… I didn’t want to taint that, so I thought it would be better to push you away.”

“And how did that work out for you?”

“Not well,” Cat concedes, ducking her head. “I shouldn’t have reacted the way I did, and I’m sorry that I hurt you in the process.”

“You could’ve told me all of this at the time, you know,” Kara murmurs. “Or after that night in the bar – it would’ve saved us a whole lot of trouble.”
“I know.” Cat bites at her bottom lip. “Believe it or not, communication isn’t one of my strongest points.”

“You run a media empire.”

“That’s work,” Cat stresses. “In relationships I’m not… I’m not good at it. Or them.”

“Why… why are you telling me all of this now? What’s changed?”

“Everything.” Cat looks at her, then, really looks at her with emotion shining in her eyes and it takes Kara’s breath away. “Lois was the catalyst, I suppose.” Cat doesn’t look happy to admit that. “She pointed out what an idiot I was being, and it was unfair of me to hurt us both without letting you know what I was thinking, to make your own decisions. I was still hesitant, because of Carter, but then…”

“I quit.”

“You did. And then I was faced with the thought of never seeing you again, of losing you for good and I… it was unimaginable. And if I let fear get in the way of that, of the way I felt about you, if I threw away a chance at happiness, I… I never would’ve been able to forgive myself.” Cat reaches out and takes her hand, and the contact is electric. “I know that this is a lot, and probably seems like it’s out of the blue but I had to… I couldn’t let you go without telling you how I felt. And you can tell me to go, if you want, or if you need time to think - ”

Kara kisses her.

She can’t help it – Cat looks so worried, like Kara is going to throw her out and tell her to never come back, that she can’t not reach out to pull Cat close, curl a hand around her cheek and press a kiss against her lips.

It’s chaste, barely any contact, but it still sets her heart racing, and her fingertips tremble against Cat’s cheek.

“If there’s one thing I don’t need to think about, it’s the way I feel about you.” Cat’s breath catches. “And I’m not… the past few weeks haven’t been great.” Cat opens her mouth, no doubt to apologise again, but Kara kisses it from her lips. “And it might take me some time to get over that, but I… I still want this, want you. That never stopped. But,” Cat leans back a little, some fear in her eyes. “You need to talk to me, Cat. If we do this, it needs to be… we have to be honest with each other, always.”

“I will,” Cat promises, “god, Kara, I’d do anything to make you mine.”

“Anything?” Kara breathes, and when Cat shifts closer, slides one leg over Kara’s lap so that she’s kneeling over her, she nearly dies and goes to heaven – it’s a mirror of where they’d been last time, before everything had gone to hell, but this time, she knows Cat won’t disappear.

“Mm, anything you want.” Cat’s voice is low, raspy, and if Kara thought she was hot before, it’s absolutely nothing compared to having Cat like this.

“Just kiss me,” she pleads, and so she does, Cat’s fingers curling around her jaw and her tongue sliding into Kara’s mouth, and god, she’s perfect, kisses like it’s a competitive sport, leaves Kara breathless and aching and wanting, her hands on Cat’s thighs and holding her close.

“You have no idea how long I’ve been wanting to do that,” Cat says when she pulls away, and she’s breathless too, her eyes dark and hooded, her lipstick smudged, and she’s the most beautiful thing that Kara has ever seen. “No idea what you do to me.”
Kara’s pretty sure she’s going to die, if Cat keeps talking – Cat Grant talking dirty is just not something she can survive without spontaneous combustion.

Kara kisses her again just to shut her up, hands sliding to Cat’s ass, digging her fingers in to drag her hips forwards, and Cat groans against her lips, a sound that Kara wants to hear her make over and over again.

“We should stop,” Cat says when they next part, but it’s breathy and it does things to Kara, makes her insides twist and sends a bolt of heat between her thighs. “Before we get too carried away.”

“What’s wrong with getting carried away?” Kara asks, because that sounds pretty good to her, but Cat shakes her head.

“I don’t want to rush this.” There’s longing in her eyes but her voice is soft, and Kara knows that she means it. “I want to do things properly.”

“Why can’t putting out on the first date be doing things properly?”

“I wasn’t aware we’d been on a date,” Cat points out.

“Well, we’ve been out to dinner together twice – so technically, this is our third date, which is apparently the sex date, so we’re actually doing things right on schedule.”

Cat rolls her eyes. “Those were not dates, and neither’s this.”

“What is this, then?”

“Mm… this is me admitting my feelings and you acting like a horny teenager.”

Kara chuckles, loving the sparkle in Cat’s eye – it’s been so long since she’d seen her like this, so relaxed and carefree, and she’s missed it.

“I can’t help that that’s what you reduce me to,” Kara defends, and shakes her head. “And we can still turn this into a date – are you hungry? We could go out and get some food.”

“I’d rather stay in.”

“Now who’s horny?” Cat swats at her shoulder. “We could order takeout?” Cat nods, and Kara adjusts her grip on Cat’s hips so that she can lift her, grins when Cat makes an undignified squeak as she scrambles to grab at Kara’s shoulders, her legs wrapping around her waist.

Kara deposits her on the kitchen counter, and doesn’t move away as she roots around in one of her drawers for her stash of takeout menus.

“Was that really necessary?” Cat asks, raising an eyebrow as Kara hands her the stack so she can pick something, and Kara grins up at her.

“Yes, because we both know that you like how strong I am.” Cat’s cheeks tinge pink at being caught out, and Kara leans up on her toes to press a quick kiss to her lips, loving that she can do that now, that it can be thoughtless. “What do you want?”

They decide on Chinese (Kara’s still in mourning for the potstickers that she’d had to throw out before, and orders a double portion to make up for it), and they curl up on the couch, Cat flicking through the TV until she finds something she wants to watch, Kara content with anything, just as long as Cat is by her side.
There’s a part of her that’s definitely in shock, that can’t quite believe that Cat is sitting beside her right now, is curled into her side with her head resting on Kara’s shoulder, Kara’s arm wrapped around her back.

It’s surreal, when just yesterday, she’d been lying on this same couch alone, wondering how in the hell she was going to cope without seeing Cat practically every day.

Cat gets a phonecall, and when Kara sees Chris’ name on the screen and the time, she knows that it’ll be Carter calling to say goodnight, and she goes to move away, give Cat some privacy, but Cat just tugs her back into place.

“Hi, Mom.” Carter sounds sleepy, and Kara’s put him to bed enough times to know what expression will be on his face – his eyes bleary and half-closed.

“Hi, sweetheart, are you okay?”

“Yeah.”

“What are you going to do tomorrow?”

“Dunno.” He’s not talkative when he’s tired, usually resorts to one-word answers. “I think we might be going to watch baseball.” He sounds completely unimpressed, and Kara presses her lips together to stop a laugh escaping.

“Well, you have fun and be good for your father – do you want to go to sleep?”

“Yeah. Love you.”

“Love you too, Carter.” Chris hangs up without saying a word, and Kara thinks that suits Cat just fine.

“You okay?” Kara asks, because she knows it must be hard, not having her son all the time.

“Yes, it’s nice, to have someone here. To not be alone.” Kara holds Cat tighter, presses a kiss to the top of her head, hates to think of her in an empty apartment.

“Have you… have you spoken to Carter about any of this?” Kara makes a vague gesture between the two of them, and Cat shakes her head.

“No, I haven’t. It wouldn’t surprise me if he knew already – he’s too perceptive, that boy of mine.” Kara knows that all too well. “But I didn’t want to get his hopes up before I’d talked to you.”

“That makes sense,” Kara nods. “I, um, I think maybe we should hold off a bit before we tell him? Wait a while, just to make sure we work? Not that I think we won’t, or that I’m trying to tell you how to parent your kid, but - ”

“Kara, slow down.” Cat gives her a gentle squeeze. “I think you’re right, I think we should wait. Just for a little while.”

“Do you think he’ll be happy?”

“I think he’ll be over the moon.” Kara smiles. “He’s already asked me why we aren’t married, you know.”

“Oh, hey, he’s asked me that, too. Think he was hinting at something?”
Their food arrives, and Kara munched on potstickers whilst watching Cat eat with chopsticks, using them in a way that Kara will never be able to master, and it’s nice, having her here – it’s not awkward, the conversation isn’t stilted, and she feels more relaxed than she has done in a long, long time.

“Do you, um, do you want to stay here tonight?” Kara asks, a little later, when they’re lying on the couch, and there’s a movie playing on the TV but Kara hasn’t watched a single second of it (couldn’t even name it), has instead been focused on watching Cat fall asleep on her chest.

“Are you propositioning me again?” Cat asks, cracking one eye open, and Kara chuckles and brushes a strand of Cat’s hair out of her eyes.

“No, you just look sleepy and your apartment is so far away.”

“It’s a five minute drive, Kara.”

“But why make the effort to go outside when you could just stay here?”

“Mm, you make a good point.” Cat opens both eyes. “Are you sure?”

Yeah, come on.” Her bedroom is a mess, but Cat doesn’t seem to mind, and Kara rifles through her closet until she finds some pyjamas that won’t completely drown Cat. “Probably not what you’re used to, but…”

“They’re fine – they’ll smell like you.” Kara smiles, and when Cat goes to the bathroom, she quickly changes and then tries to tidy up as much as she possibly can in the five minutes that she has. “Do you have a spare toothbrush?” Cat calls through the door.

“Should be one under the sink.” Cat emerges a moment later wearing her clothes and smelling minty fresh, and Kara can’t help but kiss her, pressing her back against the wall next to the bathroom door, one hand tangled in her hair and the other settled on her waist.

“Mm, what was that for?”

“Just felt like it,” Kara shrugs, and Cat smiles, Kara slipping past her and into the bathroom.

Cat hovers by the side of the bed when she comes back out, and she raises her eyebrows. “You can get in, you know.”

“I didn’t know if you had a side.”

“I don’t really have one,” Kara shrugs. “It’s not like I share a bed a lot.”

Cat settles on the left, but Kara drags her into the middle of the bed once they’re both under the covers, presses her forehead against Cat’s and closes her eyes.

“I can’t believe you’re here.” She’s got an arm slung over Cat’s waist and Cat’s fingertips are tracing the slope of her cheekbone, and she feels like the luckiest woman alive.

“Honestly? I can’t either.” When Kara opens her eyes she finds Cat watching her, her eyes achingly soft. “I can’t believe you still want this, after everything I put you through.”

“It was worth it.” There’s doubt in Cat’s eyes, and Kara knows that there’s a part of her that thinks this won’t last, that’s still convinced that she doesn’t deserve this.
Kara would love nothing more than to prove her wrong.

//

Cat wakes in an unfamiliar bed, with an arm wrapped around her waist and a warm body pressed against her back.

It takes her a moment to remember where she is – and then the events of yesterday come flooding back to her, and she smiles, snuggles back into Kara and wishes that she never has to leave this bed.

She’d done it – she’d put her heart on the line, come clean and told Kara how she really felt, and it hadn’t all blown up in her face. Kara still wants her, wants this, had kissed her so softly and held her tightly, like she never wanted to let her go.

She can’t quite believe it – she’s ached for this for what felt like an eternity (but had it really just been a few months ago that Kara had come into her life? She feels like it’s been longer, feels like she’s always been a part of her, can’t even really remember what it was like before her), but now she’s in Kara’s bed and she hasn’t ruined everything, after all.

There’s sunlight streaming in from behind the closed drapes, a beautiful morning in National City, and Cat shifts, turns so that she’s facing Kara. Her eyes are closed, her breathing slow, illuminated in a soft glow, and she’s so perfect that Cat can barely believe that she’s real.

She can’t believe that she’s here, that after everything, Kara hadn’t wanted space, had accepted her with open arms, and she thinks it might take a while to sink in.

She reaches out a hand, runs her fingertips over Kara’s cheek, just because she can (just because she wants to make sure she’s really there and this isn’t a dream), tracing a path down the side of her neck, over her shoulder and across her arm, biting her lip at the muscle she feels hiding beneath Kara’s skin.

“What time is it?” Kara doesn’t open her eyes, and her voice is a sleepy rumble.

“A little after nine.” It’s later than Cat has slept in a long time, and she knows that it’s entirely due to the woman beside her, to feeling warm and safe and not alone.

“Mm, too early.” Kara curls a hand over Cat’s hip, pulls her closer, and when she runs her thumb over Cat’s skin she shivers.

“This is a late morning, for me.” Kara opens her eyes, and Cat loses herself in a sea of blue, feels herself fall just that little bit deeper but this time, she doesn’t let it scare her. “Let me make you breakfast.”

“No.” Kara’s hand tightens, fingertips digging into Cat’s skin. “No leaving the bed.”

“I thought food was the most important thing in your life?”

“Not anymore.” Kara says it softly, sweetly, and her eyes are on Cat’s face, holding her gaze, and Cat wants to melt, feels her heart thud hard in her chest. Cat leans forward, kisses Kara gently, and grins when Kara’s stomach rumbles.

“Sure about that?”

“…Maybe I could eat,” she admits. “But I’ll do it.”
“What are you going to make? Burnt toast?”

“What?" Kara’s still sleepy, her eyes half-closed and there’s an adorable pout on her mouth. “I can handle toast, and make a mean bowl of cereal, thank you very much.”

“I don’t doubt it, but let me go – you stay here and we can have breakfast in bed.” That seems to be an offer Kara can accept, and she lets Cat slip away. She goes via the bathroom, winces when she catches a glimpse of her reflection – yesterday’s makeup is smudged under her eyes, and her hair is a mess, and she’s surprised she hadn’t scared Kara away this morning.

She knows she doesn’t look her age when she’s all prim and proper and put together, but without her usual mask, she thinks she does, scrutinises the wrinkles on her forehead and under her eyes before dragging her gaze away and heading for Kara’s kitchen to see what she can rustle up.

“Kara?” She calls, gets a grunt in response. “Do you like omelettes?”

“I like pretty much any food, Cat.”

She figured, but it’s always best to check.

She vaguely remembers where everything lives in Kara’s kitchen from the last time she was here (it feels like an age ago, now, and she remembers flirting with Kara over the stove, wonders where they’d be now if she’d given in to temptation earlier), grabs a mug for the eggs and a pan.

She finds cheese and ham in Kara’s fridge for the filling, puts half the omelette on one plate and the rest of it on another, pads back into Kara’s room and pokes her in the side when she sees that she’s fallen asleep again.

“Wakey, wakey, sleepyhead.” Kara grumbles but perks up when she smells food, shuffling so that she’s sat with her back against the headboard. “Want some coffee?” She’s already brewed the pot. “You look like you could use some – are you always like this in the morning?”

“It takes a lot of effort for me to be at your apartment before eight every day,” Kara confirms, and then her face falls, just a little. “Or it did, anyway.”

Cat’s stomach feels funny, whenever she thinks about the fact that Kara doesn’t work for her anymore, that she won’t get to see her first thing every morning, even though she knows that Kara’s moving onto bigger, better things.

“Hey, on the bright side, you might be able to get up later now.” Cat nudges her shoulder, and she manages a small smile. “Do you have your class schedule yet?”

“Mm, come sit, and I’ll show you.” Cat does, after making a quick return to the kitchen for two cups of coffee, and she’s not even remotely surprised to see that Kara’s omelette is almost gone by the time she’s back in her room. “This is amazing, thank you.” Cat settles down beside her, starts her own omelette while Kara reaches for her phone, bringing up her schedule and showing it to Cat. “I don’t have that many classes, so hopefully I won’t be too busy.”

Cat knows it’ll be difficult for them to find a balance between Cat running CatCo and looking after her son, and Kara’s work, but she knows that the both of them are more than willing to put in the necessary effort to make things work.

“Could you… could you send me a copy? So I know when you’re busy?”

“Yeah, of course.” Kara’s smile is soft, and she goes to forward the email, pausing when a
notification for a new text from her sister flashes across the top of her screen.

Do you still want to go to NCU later today or are you too busy with your new girlfriend?

Kara swipes it away, presses send on her email and sets her phone down.

“You can reply to your sister, you know. It’s okay if you have plans – you didn’t exactly know I was coming over.”

“You could come with?” Kara suggests. “She was going to take me around the campus so I don’t get lost on Monday. I’ve been there couple of times, to visit Alex when she was there, but it’s been a while.”

“I wouldn’t want to intrude.”

“You wouldn’t be,” Kara insists, but Cat isn’t so sure – she might have won Alex over just enough for her to trust Cat alone with her sister yesterday, but she knows it’ll be a long while before they’re anything close to friendly.

And Cat doesn’t blame her – she’d be furious if she were in Alex’s shoes. She’d been there to pick up the pieces when Cat had broken Kara’s heart, after all, and Cat knows that Alex is just being cautious, knows that it will take time for Cat to convince her that she’s going anywhere, this time, that she’s not going to hurt Kara again.

“I think maybe… maybe some time apart would be a good thing.” Kara frowns, and Cat leans forward to kiss it away. “It’s not that I want to leave, just that… yesterday was a lot, for both of us, to process, and we could probably do that better if we don’t get distracted by kissing every five seconds. I just want you to be sure about this.”

(It’ll break her if she’s not).

“I am,” Kara assures her, kisses Cat a little deeper this time, and Cat can taste coffee on her tongue.

“But I get it. Could I… could I see you again tonight?” She looks shy, like she’s not sure if she’s allowed to ask.

“Of course you can. We could go out? Or you could come over to my place, and I’ll cook for you.”

“That sounds like a much better plan.”

Cat already can’t wait.

Chapter End Notes

I told you guys you wouldn't have to wait too long for fluff!! I hope this delivered what you've waited (super patiently) for.
“You’re late.” Kara meets her sister in a coffee shop on NCU’s campus at ten past twelve, finds her sitting at a table by the door. “This might be cold.” Alex pushes one of the two cups on the table towards her, but when Kara picks it up, it still feels pretty hot.

“Sorry, the bus was running behind.” Cat had offered to drop her off, but Kara had declined – she was going to have to take the bus every day anyway, so she may as well start now.

“No one wants to see you were supposed to catch because you were too busy making out with Cat.”

Okay, so maybe that’s true – Kara just hadn’t been able to let her go, had grabbed Cat’s hips and pressed her against the wall beside her front door, kissed her until they were both breathless and dizzy, and almost dragged her back to bed, would have if not for Cat’s impressive self-control.

(Kara can’t help but wonder what it would take to break it, to have Cat desperate and begging, can’t wait to have the opportunity to try.)

“Maybe.”

“She stayed the night, then?” Alex asks, rising to her feet and leading Kara out the door. The campus sits just outside the city limits, is full of open spaces and greenery, and it’s beautiful on a day like today, the sky clear and the sun shining.

“Yeah.” Alex is quiet, stares straight ahead, and Kara sighs. “Look, Alex, I know you don’t approve -”

“I never said that.”

“Your face kinda does, though.” Alex’s lips twitch, and she grabs Kara’s elbow, leads her down a path she never would’ve noticed, and at the end of it is a gorgeous lake, a few stone benches set up around it that Alex heads towards.

“I just want you to be careful.” There are ducks swimming on the water, and Kara watches them as she waits for Alex to continue. “I’ve never… I’ve never seen you as torn up as you were when you got off that plane, Kara. And I don’t ever want to see you like that again.”

“I don’t want to feel like that again, either,” Kara admits – it seems like a distant memory, now, but the pain is easy for her to recall. “What did you say to her, yesterday?”

“She didn’t tell you?”

“All she said was that you asked her to explain herself, so she did.”
“I told her she had five seconds to give me one good reason why I should let her within five foot of you and not launch her out the window,” Kara’s lips twitch in spite of herself, wonders what Cat’s response to that would’ve been, “and she said, ‘I can’t. I don’t have a good reason for anything I’ve done, for how much I’ve hurt her, other than I’m an old, scared fool that doesn’t deserve her.’ That kind of threw me for a loop.”

“I’ll bet.”

“I could just… I could see on her face how much she cared about you, how much she was hurting, too, and I believed her when she said she wasn’t going to run away from her feelings anymore, and I figured you deserved to hear what she had to say. I have no right to stand in the way of that, and you can make your own decisions.”

“Do you think it’s the right one?”

“I think… I think that we can’t choose who we fall in love with, and I think you both deserve a shot at happiness, and if you make each other happy, then,” Alex shrugs. “I hate that she hurt you, but I think she does, too. And I’m happy for you, Kara. Just don’t forget all about your big sister.”

“Hey, I would never.” Kara turns and pulls Alex into a hug. “Thank you.”

“Now, come on – lemme show you around this place.” Alex gives her a tour, showing her where she’ll need to register and then where all her lectures are, finishing up at the physics building where Kara will be spending most of her time.

It feels weird, actually being here – she’d been convinced that she wouldn’t get in, and thought it’d be months before she’d start if by some miracle she did – knowing that in just two days her classes will start and probably take over her life.

It’s exciting, though, feels like everything is coming together – she’s going to get her master’s, going to be one step closer to her future career and she hopes that, through it all, she’s going to have Cat by her side.

//

Cat hopes no-one recognises her as she makes her way down the stairs of Kara’s apartment block (what kind of place doesn’t have an elevator in this day and age? Thank god she’s only on the third floor), hopes no-one has a camera handy if they do because this wouldn’t be a good look, splashed across the front pages – Cat in last night’s clothes, doing a walk of shame from a neighbourhood she wouldn’t have been caught dead in, just a few short months ago.

Oh, how times have changed.

Her driver doesn’t comment on her appearance as she slides into the backseat, and she’s thankful. She asks him to wait when she gets back to her apartment, hurries upstairs to get changed and put on some makeup before she goes back downstairs, instructs him to take her to the nearest supermarket.

He looks surprised, and Cat doesn’t remember the last time she did her own grocery shopping, but she’s cooking for Kara tonight, and she wants it to be special, wants it to be something she’d done entirely herself.

She browses the aisles and tries to ignore the curious glances she gets from some of the patrons – she looks out of place, she knows, stalking around in four inch heels and a skirt that’s more officewear than Saturday morning shopping, but she knows she looks good, and that’s the main thing, really.
She even buys ingredients to make a cheesecake for dessert, and wonders when she’d become this person, almost domestic – she’d certainly never gone to this much effort in any of her previous relationships to make a good impression, but Kara is just... different.

She wants to make an effort, wants to make her feel good, feel wanted, and it’s not even because of their history, because she feels guilty – it’s just because she wants to, because she can imagine the way Kara’s eyes will light up and the smile that will be on her face.

(She’s already in so deep and god, she doesn’t even care, has never wanted so fiercely, and it should terrify her more than it exhilarates her but it doesn’t even come close).

When she gets home she changes into a pair of old sweatpants that no-one would ever suspect her to own, let alone wear, gets a recipe up on her tablet and starts her cheesecake, whittling away the hours until she sees Kara again by spending her time in the kitchen.

She can cook, and pretty well, but she doesn’t often get a chance to, and she’s forgotten how much she enjoys it.

The day passes quickly, despite her impatience for the clock to hit seven, and at six she disappears into her room, has a long shower to try and ease the nerves somersaulting through her stomach (it’s stupid to be nervous, she tells herself – it’s just Kara, and they’ve spent countless hours together before), before drying her hair and getting changed.

She opts for black jeans and a blue blouse rather than a dress, undoes a couple of the buttons, and returns to her kitchen to finish her preparations for dinner.

The knock on her door comes at seven on the dot (Kara had left her key on Cat’s coffee table when she’d left yesterday, although Cat’s pretty sure she’ll be returning it to her, sooner rather than later), and Cat smiles, pads down the hall and opens the door to the most beautiful woman she’s ever seen.

“Hey.” Kara’s wearing a dress, a shade of blue that matches her eyes, the neckline plunging, and Cat itches to trace the hem of it with her fingertips (or her mouth). “We match.”

“We do. Come on in.” Cat steps aside, lets Kara get out of her jacket before she reaches for her, twists a hand through silken hair and pulls her head down for a kiss, open-mouthed and messy and leaving her absolutely wrecked.

“Hi,” Kara says when they part, and she’s got her hands underneath Cat’s blouse, blazing hot on the bare skin of her back. “Is it stupid to say I missed you?”

“No, because I missed you, too.”

Kara’s hands slide down, until they’re in the back pockets of her jeans, and she squeezes. Cat tightens her fingers in Kara’s hair, revels in the groan that it pulls from the back of her throat, her eyes dark and stormy. “God, I don’t know how I’m going to survive you.”

“Um, have you looked in a mirror, lately?” Kara asks, eyebrows shooting skyward. “You’re the one that’s going to be the death of me.”

“Hm, I don’t know about that.” She separates herself from Kara a little reluctantly, takes her hand and pulls her to the kitchen after she’s kicked off her heels. “Wine? I have red or white.”

“Red, please.” Cat grabs a bottle of her favourite, and pours a splash into two glasses before handing one over. “It smells amazing in here.” As Cat turns towards the stove, Kara wraps her arms around her waist and sets her head on her shoulder, pressing their cheeks together. “What are we having?”
“Nothing, if you don’t keep your hands to yourself,” Cat cautions, as Kara’s hands start to wander over her hips, “because I’ll end up wrecking it.”

“Okay, okay.” Kara laughs, leaning back. “I’ll behave – for now.”

It sounds like a promise of what might come later, and Cat’s mouth turns dry when she sees the heat in Kara’s eyes.

“And we’re having ravioli, if that’s okay with you?” She fills a pan with water and leaves it to boil. “I went with spinach and ricotta, but - ”

“That sounds great, Cat, stop worrying.” Kara’s eyes are sparkling, enjoying her nerves far too much. “Did you make these yourself?” Kara looks impressed when she spots the pasta parcels as Cat tips them into the pan. “Are you trying to impress me?”

“That depends – is it working?”

“You know you don’t have to do that, right?” Kara’s frowning, now, watching her closely. “Don’t get me wrong, they look amazing, but you know that I’d be happy with a Papa John’s pizza if I got to spend the night with you.”

“I know.” Cat’s throat feels tight with the weight of emotion behind Kara’s words, and she has to blink and look away. “But it wasn’t too much trouble – I don’t remember the last time I got to spend so long in the kitchen. It’s been nice.”

“As long as you don’t expect something similar when you next come to my place.”

“There’s going to be a next time?” Cat asks, a teasing lilt to her voice. “That’s very presumptuous of you.”

“Well, I was already planning on asking, and I definitely think I could get you to say yes – I can be very persuasive.” Kara’s eyes are dark and her slow smile is sinful, makes Cat swallow thickly, every coherent thought flying out of her head.

She hadn’t expected this, is all – Kara looks (and acts, most of the time) like a girl scout, all meek and sweet and innocent and it’s only now that Cat’s getting a look beneath that exterior, wonders if Kara’s hiding a filthy streak, and can’t wait to find out.

“I don’t doubt that.” Her voice is more strained than she would like, and Kara’s lips curve into a smirk.

She nearly forgets all about the pasta, snaps back into motion and hopes that it isn’t too overdone – it’s not, and she breathes a sigh of relief, leaves the pasta to drain while she heats up the sauce she’d made early.

“Should I go set the table?”

“Okay.” They rarely eat in there, usually just sit at the kitchen counter, and Cat wonders if Kara wants to use the dining room as a way to mark tonight as something different, the start of something new blossoming between them.

Cat follows her in with two bowls of pasta (one significantly larger than the other, and she sets that one down in-front of Kara), and sits down beside her.

“This is incredible.” Kara looks like she’s in heaven, at the first bite, and Cat is flooded with relief,
glad that she’d done well. “Can I hire you to be my own personal chef?”

“I’m a little busy for that, I’m afraid.”

“A travesty.”

Cat grins. “Did you have a good day?”

“Yeah, Alex took me all around campus, so I think I’m all ready for Monday.” She fidgets in her seat, a little, and Cat thinks it’s with nerves. “And then we got lunch with Maggie when she finished work. Did you just cook all day?”

“I didn’t do a single work-related thing,” Cat confirms, had barely even thought about it, if she’s being honest with herself, for the first time in a long while.

“Enjoyed it?”

“A break is always nice. I love the job, but it… can be a lot.”

“You ever think about slowing down?”

“Sometimes,” she admits. “I know a lot of CEO’s who are barely involved in the day-to-day running of their companies, but… CatCo is my baby, you know? I created it, built it up, did everything myself and the thought of leaving it in the hands of someone else…” She trails off, shakes her head. “I don’t know if you’ve noticed, but I’m a bit of a control freak.” Kara’s lips twitch. “It would be difficult for me to put that much faith in someone else.”

“That’s fair.”

“I’ll have to one day, obviously.” She knows she’s not going to be able to go on forever, that she’ll have to hand over the reins eventually, but that day is a long way off, and whoever it is, they’ll be well trained by the time Cat steps down. “But not anytime soon.”

When they’ve finished eating, Kara insists on doing the dishes, waves Cat away so she settles on the couch with her wine and tries to find something for them to watch. She settles on an old movie, suspects that they probably won’t watch much of it anyway, and her suspicions are confirmed when Kara returns, plucks the wine glass from Cat’s hand and drops into her lap.

“Have I told you yet how beautiful you look?” Cat asks, tilting her head back so she can take in the sight of Kara above her.

The lights are down low, but Kara’s eyes are bright, smouldering as they meet Cat’s, and she has no idea how she got to be this lucky – she doesn’t deserve this, doesn’t deserve to have this woman in her arms, but god, she’s never going to let her go.

“So do you.” Kara’s hands cradle Cat’s jaw, tilt her head and she ducks down to kiss her – it starts off slow but quickly turns heated, Cat’s pulse pounding in her ears as Kara’s fingers slide into her hair, nails scraping against her scalp.

Her own hands are on Kara’s thighs, her skin warm beneath her palms, and she digs in her fingertips, feels taut muscle tense beneath her touch and can’t help but wonder what it’d feel like to have those legs thrown over her shoulders, to have Kara writhing against her mouth, feels longing curl in her gut.

She pulls away from Kara’s mouth to press a line of kisses along the slope her neck, and she hasn’t
allowed herself to think of this too much, of what it would be like to have Kara against her, her breathing laboured and her quiet moans echoing in Cat’s ears, but god, the reality is a thousand times better than anything she could have ever imagined.

Kara’s got one hand tugging at Cat’s hair and the other wrapped around the back of the couch, and when Cat parts her lips and drags her tongue across Kara’s pulse point, she digs her fingertips into the leather so hard that it creaks in protest

Cat nips at her skin and feels Kara’s hips shift restlessly in her lap, and Kara drags her mouth away from her skin, kisses her hard and desperate, licking at the back of her teeth and Cat groans when Kara slides a hand down the side of her neck to the collar of her blouse, fingers tugging at one of the buttons.

“Is this okay?” She asks, breathless against Cat’s mouth, and she nods, kisses Kara again as she twists the button free, and another, and then she’s palming one of Cat’s breasts, fingers sliding beneath the cup of her bra, thumb circling her nipple and Cat gasps into her mouth, feels molten heat spread through her, settling at the apex of her thighs.

With her hands on Kara’s hips to steady her, Cat shifts until she’s lying flat on her back and Kara’s above her, and when she slots a thigh between Cat’s hips she sighs into Kara’s mouth, grinds her hips, her eyes rolling back when the seam of her jeans presses against her clit.

She lifts her own thigh, feels Kara rock down against her, feels the heat of her through the denim and groans, hands sliding down to Kara’s ass, holding her close.

“Cat, I - ” There’s a desperation in Kara’s voice, a wild look in her hooded eyes, and Cat can feel her breath puffing against the side of her neck as she leans down to kiss her skin. “M-maybe we should stop.”

“I don’t know about you,” Cat’s own voice is breathy, and she doesn’t know when she last felt like this – so close from so little contact, so turned on that she can hardly stand it, every touch of Kara’s lips to her skin kindling to the fire that rages inside of her, “but if we stop now I don’t know if I’d survive it.”

“But I’m going to - ”

“It’s okay,” Cat murmurs, digging her nails into the supple skin beneath her hands, and Kara swears against her neck, hips stuttering in their rhythm, and when she tugs at Cat’s nipple in response, Cat sees stars, “me too.”

She curls a hand in Kara’s hair, turns her head so that she can kiss her, slings a leg over Kara’s hip so she can grind against her harder, comes with Kara’s hands on her skin and her tongue in her mouth.

“God, you’re amazing,” Kara breathes, when they’ve both stopped shaking, trying to catch her breath, and she slides a hand over Cat’s cheek, brushes away a few strands of hair from her damp forehead, and Cat blinks open her eyes, takes in the sight of Kara on-top of her, spent and beautiful and absolutely devastating. “That was…”

“Intense?” Cat supplies, and Kara shifts so that she’s lying beside her, squeezing into the tiny gap between Cat and the back of the couch.

“Yeah.” Kara settles a leg across Cat’s hips, the hem of her dress riding up to reveal an expanse of smooth skin that Cat can’t resist tracing her fingers over.

“Do you want to stay, tonight?” Cat asks her, drawing aberrant patterns on Kara’s thigh, Kara’s
breathing soft in her ear.

“I’d love to."

“And you want dessert? I made you a cheesecake?”

“You really are the perfect woman,” Kara breathes, with no small measure of reverence, and Cat chuckles, leaves Kara on the couch while she goes to the fridge, returning with two slices of cake, which Kara eats with great enthusiasm.

They get changed into the pyjamas (Cat offers Kara an old-worn sleepshirt, the only thing that won’t be too small on her), and they lie facing one another in the muted darkness of Cat’s bedroom, trading stories and sleepy kisses, and Cat feels asleep in Kara’s arms for the second time that weekend with a smile on her face, never wanting to sleep alone again.

//

Kara wakes up to the sound of a quiet buzzing, burrows further into her pillow, not ready to wake up and face the day just yet.

Cat’s bed is the nicest she’s ever slept in, the sheets like silk against the bare skin of her legs, and Cat warm against her front, Kara’s arm still slung over her waist from the night before.

She feels Cat shift, tries to tighten her hold so that she doesn’t disappear, but she wiggles away and she realises the buzzing must have been Cat’s phone, because she’s answering a call a moment later.

“Hello?” Her voice is raspy with sleep, and Kara opens her eyes, takes in the sight of her, framed in the morning sunlight – her hair is a mess and her face is pale, and she’s absolutely gorgeous like this, all sleep-rumpled. “Is everything alright?”

Cat stiffens at whatever the response is, turns to glance down at Kara, eyes a little wide. “N-now?” The reply has Cat springing into action, practically flying out of bed and over to her closet. “Alright, alright, I’ll see you soon.”

“Everything okay?”

Cat emerges holding a pair of jeans and a flannel shirt, and Cat is somehow infinitely more attractive when she’s dressed down than when she’s in a dress (not that she doesn’t also look great, then – it’s just that she feels like no-one gets to see Cat at home, feels like it’s something special, that Cat allows Kara to see her like this).

“Carter’s coming home. Chris got called into work, so he’s dropping him off in about,” Cat glances at the clock on the wall, “five minutes.”

“Oh. Crap.” Kara scrambles out of the bed so fast she nearly falls over, wondering if she can get ready and get out before he arrives. “I can probably disappear before they get here.”

“If either one of them spot you in the lobby wearing that dress you had on yesterday we’d be in trouble,” Cat sighs. “No, stay… we’ll tell Carter you came over to see him, see if he buys it.”

Kara doesn’t know if he will, hopes that he’ll be too excited to see her to question it too much. She throws her dress from yesterday on, and Cat hands her a blouse that just about fits her that makes it look like a skirt, and slightly more acceptable to wear around Carter. Then she steals Cat’s brush to make herself look a bit more put together, and like she hadn’t just woken up in Cat’s bed about ten minutes ago.
There’s a knock on the door as Kara’s brewing a pot of coffee, and Cat hurries past her to answer it.

“Hi, Mom!” Carter sounds chipper, and Kara smiles at the sound of him.

“Hi, sweetheart, did you have a good time?”

“Yeah.” Kara hears his footsteps, turns just in time to see the look of surprise on his face when he sees her standing in her kitchen. “Kara!” He flings himself at her, and she lifts him up easily, balances him on her hip. “What are you doing here?”

“I left something here the other day so I came back to get it,” she lies, “and your Mom said you’d be home soon, so I thought I’d stick around to say hi to you.” He looks overjoyed – Chris, who’d come into the apartment presumably to say goodbye to his son, does not.

He looks suspiciously between Cat and Kara, his eyes narrowed, and it might not be obvious to a three year old that she spent the night here, but it certainly is to him.

“Carter, do you wanna go say bye to your Dad?” Chris and Cat are staring at one another with daggers in their eyes, and Kara knows he’s dying to say something, that whatever it is will not be complimentary, and that Cat will not take it well, so she tries to break up the growing tension in the room.

She goes to set Carter down but he clings on tight, calls “bye, Dad!” without even looking his way.

“See you, Carter.” Chris jerks his head towards the door, and Cat heaves a long-suffering sigh before she follows him out.

“Shall we go put your stuff away in your room?” She asks him, grabbing the overnight bag Chris had deposited on the floor, because if there’s going to be an argument she doesn’t want him to overhear it.

“Okay!” She unpacks his things while he chatters away about his weekend, and knows it’s safe to emerge when she hears the front door of the apartment slam loudly, whispers at Carter that he should go find and hug his Mom, and he toddles away to do just that.

Kara catches a glimpse of Cat’s face before she forces a smile for her son – her eyes are still glittering with anger, her mouth set in a thin line – and once she distracts Carter with some of his action figures, Kara presses close against Cat’s side, rests a hand on the small of her back, the two of them watching him from behind the couch.

“Are you okay?” She keeps her voice low so Carter doesn’t hear her, but he doesn’t even glance up, eyes on his favourite Batman figurine as he has it take down a T-Rex.

“Yes, he’s just an asshole.”

Kara’s lips twitch. “Guessing he doesn’t approve?”

“Of course not – which is rich considering the way he ogles you. It’d be fine if he was sleeping with you, but god forbid an older woman be with a younger one.” There’s still a tension in the set of Cat’s shoulders, but it eases when Kara slides a hand over her hip and squeezes Cat into her side. “Do you want to spend the day with us?”

“Would that be okay?” She’d understand if Cat wanted some alone time Carter after not having him for a couple of days.
“Of course it is.”

“Then I’d love to.” Cat’s eyes are soft as they meet her own, and it takes every ounce of Kara’s willpower not to kiss her senseless.

“Carter,” Cat raises her voice, and he glances up from his toys, “you don’t mind if Kara spends today with us, do you?”

“No!” His grin is full of joy. “Does that mean you guys made up?”

“Yeah, buddy.” Kara’s eyes never leave Cat’s, and she just can’t believe that she’s here, that she gets to have this, everything she’s wanted for so long. “We sure did.”

They decide to spend the day at the local aquarium, at Carter’s request.

They make a quick pitstop on the way at Kara’s apartment so that she can get changed, and she emerges from her bedroom in ripped jeans and a faded band t-shirt, shrugs on a leather jacket and combat boots, and Cat can’t stop sneaking glances at her, because she looks gorgeous and it’s really not fair that she can’t show her just how much she appreciates the look.

But she’s on her best behaviour, conscious of Carter, sitting between them in the car, looking happier than Cat has seen him in weeks, and she knows that it’s because he’s with his two favourite people, and that he can no longer sense any tension between them.

It does worry her, a bit, how attached he is to Kara. He’d been so miserable with Cat over Christmas, and Kara had told her how upset he was on Friday when he thought he wasn’t going to see her for a while, and she’s a little scared of what it would do to him, if she and Kara don’t work out.

Dating with a child isn’t something that she’s ever had to really think about before – she hasn’t been on a single date since the divorce, not counting the guy she’d taken to that awards dinner, what felt like a lifetime ago.

She’d known that it would be more difficult – just finding the time to date alone between Carter and her job would always be a challenge – but at least she doesn’t have to worry about Carter’s reaction to her bringing someone home, because when she tells him she and Kara are together she knows that he’ll be over the moon.

But if they ever broke up?

It would break not only Cat’s heart, but his, too, but she knows she can’t dwell on that, that she needs to put all of her energy into making things with Kara work, do her best not to let her insecurities get in the way again.

She can’t help but wonder if Kara is prepared to be a mother – she knows that Kara loves Carter, that she wasn’t just in the job for the money, but it’s different, being a nanny and being an actual parent, because that’s what Cat would want her to be, if things between them go well.

She wants someone to come home to (wants to come home after a long day at work to Kara, curled up on her couch with Carter by her side, in an apartment that they both share), and once she’d ended things with Chris she’d never expected nor wanted to be married again, but as she looks at Kara, pulling faces at Carter to keep him entertained on the drive… she wants so fiercely to spend the rest of her life with Kara that it knocks her breathless.
And it’s too early to be thinking like that, she knows. She’ll keep that close to her chest, doesn’t want to scare Kara away (not that she thinks that’s likely – she suspects that Kara is in this thing just as deeply as she is).

“You okay, there?” Kara asks when the car pulls to a stop, as she tries to wrestle an excited Carter out of his carseat, a tiny crease of worry between her eyebrows. “I can practically hear you overthinking.”

“I’m fine,” she replies, “great, actually.” She feels lighter than she has in a long time, as the three of them head into the aquarium, Carter with one hand in Cat’s and his other in Kara’s, tugging them along.

“Slow down, buddy!” Kara says, laughing, as he nearly walks face-first into a glass door. “You’re gonna hurt yourself.”

“But I want to see the sharks!”

“We will, but we gotta pay first.”

Cat buys three tickets and then Carter’s off, hurrying towards the shark tunnel that Cat suspects they’ll be going through several times before the day is done, Cat and Kara following close behind him.

Carter has the time of his life, and Kara, surprising no-one, knows a load of random fish facts, tells them to him as they wander through all the exhibits, and Cat watches the two of them with a soft look in her eyes, sure she’s wearing her heart on her sleeve, wonders if Kara can see just how far she’s fallen whenever their eyes meet.

She just… she knows that Kara is good with Carter, obviously, otherwise she wouldn’t have hired her, but she doesn’t often get to see it, especially not for a prolonged period of time, and it’s… it warms her heart, knowing how much she cares because Carter is Cat’s pride and joy, the light in her life, and she’d never expected to find someone who feels the same way about him as Cat does.

She really just doesn’t know how Kara exists, how she’d found her way to Cat, wonders if it was fate, that had brought Kara into her life when she needed her the most.

It’s hard, to be so close to her but not be able to touch her – she wants to slip her hands into the pockets of Kara’s leather jacket and tug her close, steal kisses when nobody’s watching, hold Kara’s hand as Carter leads them around.

“How do you know so much about so many things?” Cat asks after she listens to Kara tells Carter that sharks don’t have any bones. “You’re twenty-three with the knowledge of a hundred year old.”

“I was a nerdy child,” Kara tells Cat with a grin. “I stored up a lot of facts over the years.” Cat can imagine her as a kid, surrounded by stacks of books, trying to learn as much as she possibly could. “Needless to say, I was not one of the cool kids in school.” She’d been carrying Carter, but when he spots a tank of piranhas nearby he wriggles free so that he can press his face against the glass. “I bet you were, though.”

“I was in with the popular crowd,” Cat admits. “We ran the school.”

“That does not surprise me.” Kara’s leaning one shoulder against the wall, looking down at Cat with an easy smile, and the urge to lean up and kiss her is overwhelming.

She refrains, just barely, but later, when they’re back home and Carter is tucked away in bed, and
Kara is getting ready to leave, Cat curls her hands around the lapels of Kara’s jacket and tugs her close, lets Kara press her against the wall, and kisses her hot and dirty.

“I wish I could stay.” Kara presses their foreheads together when their lips part, a little breathless, her hands in the back pockets of Cat’s jeans.

“I know, but your classes start tomorrow, and we’d have a lot to explain to Carter if he saw you here in the morning.”

“We’ll tell him soon, right?” Cat wonders if it’s been as torturous for Kara as it has been for her, to keep her hands to herself all day.

“We will,” Cat promises, because it isn’t a secret she wants to keep for much longer, anyway. “He’ll probably ask me about it, and I won’t lie to him.”

“That’s fair.” Kara kisses her again, slides her tongue into Cat’s mouth and draws a groan from the back of her throat, and really, for Kara to look like she does and kiss like that should be illegal, because there’s only so much one woman can take.

“You should go, before I drag you down the hall,” Cat tells her, and Kara grins.

“Feeling a little hot under the collar?”

“Always, when it comes to you.” Kara chuckles, but she dips down to press a shorter, sweeter kiss to Cat’s lips before straightening up. “Call me tomorrow, let me know how it goes?”

“I will.” Kara pauses just before she goes, looks back at Cat leaning in the doorway of her apartment and Cat knows if she asked her to stay she wouldn’t hesitate to say yes.

But she shouldn’t, because she has work tomorrow and Kara has her first day at NCU, and neither one of them needs to be up late trading lazy kisses.

“I’ll see you soon,” Kara promises, before she’s heading for the elevator, and they haven’t made a date for when they’ll next see one another, but Cat doesn’t doubt that it will be soon, knows she won’t be able to stay away from Kara for too long.
Kara’s first week at NCU goes pretty well, considering how nervous she’d been on Monday morning, as the bus had pulled onto campus.

Her classes have been great, all her professors seem nice, and she’s even hung out with a couple of her classmates at some of the events that have been held across campus to welcome the new students.

She’s been so busy that she hasn’t had the chance to see Cat all week – they talk every night, and text throughout the day, but Cat has been slammed with work, too – so they’d decided to spend their Friday night together.

Kara’s last class finishes at five, and she doesn’t expect Cat to be done by then but makes her way over to CatCo anyway, figuring she can entertain herself in Cat’s office for a while, if she needs to – she already has a load of reading to do.

Cat is in her office when Kara arrives on her floor, phone pressed to her ear and Kara decides not to disturb her just yet.

“Hey, Eve.” Kara hovers around her desk, and Eve glances up at the sound of her voice, eyes widening as she sees Kara standing in-front of her. “How’s it going?”

“Kara?” Eve looks thoroughly confused to see her. “What… what are you doing here? Didn’t Cat fire you?”

“Uh, no, I quit.” Eve leans back in her chair, and Kara leans a hip against her desk. “I got into NCU – I’m getting my masters.”

“Oh.” Eve blinks up at her. “But you’re here, even after you quit, and you have two coffees…” Kara had stopped at Noonan’s on her way over to pick up a latte for Cat, “does that mean that you guys are…?”

“Together?” Kara fills in, and Eve nods. “Yeah, I guess you could say that.” She glances around to check no-one is listening in – she doesn’t know how much Cat wants her employees to gossip about her dating life.

“I’m glad you worked everything out,” Eve says, her smile genuine. “And if you could go in there and work a little Kara-magic, that would be great.”

“Kara-magic?” She raises an eyebrow.

“Oh, um, it’s just… whenever you’ve come here in the past, she always mellows out around you, yells a lot less so that’s just what I used to call it in my head… please don’t tell her about any of this.” Eve looks panicked at the mere thought, and Kara grins.

“Don’t worry, your secret is safe with me.” She’s touched, that Cat softens around her to the extent that other people notice. “I’ll try my best to do my thing.” Cat is finished on the phone, and Kara knocks quietly on her door, smiles when she’s waved inside. “Hey, beautiful. Long day?” Cat looks weary, behind her desk, her smile tired as she meets Kara’s eyes.

“Just busy,” she sighs and rises to her feet, “I actually have to go yell at someone in a different department – feel free to make yourself comfy, if you want to stay, but if not I can meet you somewhere later?”
“I’ll stay,” Kara assures her, handing Cat her latte. “I have some work of my own to do, anyway.”

“Already weighed down with assignments?”

“Mostly reading.”

“Just channel your inner nerd, and you’ll be fine,” Cat tells her, eyes sparkling, and she presses a quick kiss to Kara’s cheek before striding away, and Kara’s skin tingles long after she’s gone.

She settles on one of Cat’s couches and pulls out her laptop, trying to ignore the curious eyes she can feel on her, the employees of Cat’s bullpen trying to work out what she’s doing there without Carter in tow.

“What the hell are you all staring at?” Kara hears Cat return before she sees her, lips twitching as she glances out of the office’s glass walls to see her standing just outside the door, her hands on her hips. “Get back to work, for God’s sake.”

“Regretting your lack of solid walls?” Kara asks, when Cat comes back inside, retreating back behind her desk.

“Almost always,” she sighs, fingers rubbing her temples. “It seemed like a good idea when I was building this place, to have them think I was always watching. I didn’t think they’d have the audacity to watch me.”

“You are very watchable.” Kara’s doing it now, her eyes firmly on Cat, her desire to continue reading about wave equations waning fast. “Do you have much more to do?”

“A few more bits and pieces, sorry.”

“Hey, don’t apologise.” Kara knows that Cat worries that her job will take its toll on their relationship, like it had done with others before her, but she knows that CatCo is important, and that sometimes she’ll have to accept that it might come before her. “It’s fine.”

Kara tries her best to concentrate on her reading and not on watching Cat work, but it’s hard because she looks unfairly beautiful, illuminated by the light of the setting sun, glasses perched on the end of her nose.

“Miss Grant?” Eve knocks lightly on Cat’s door before poking her head inside. “I have that paperwork you asked for, for your new director of photography.”

“Ah, yes, Mr Olsen – thank you, Eve.” Cat takes the papers Eve offers her, and Kara, unable to not overhear, frowns.

“Wait, did you just say Olsen? James Olsen?”

“Yes, he came for an interview this morning…” Cat trails off, squinting at Kara from across the room. “What’s wrong, do you know him? I did poach him from the Daily Planet.”

“Uh, yeah, he’s Clark’s best friend, and his fiancée is one of my best friends so I can’t believe neither of them mentioned this…” Especially considering she’d seen the both of them just a few weeks ago. “I’m going to call them.”

Cat nods, and Kara retires to her balcony so she doesn’t disturb her, finds Lucy’s name in her contacts.
“Hey, Kara.” She answers after the second ring, sounding as chipper as ever. “How’s college life?”

“Don’t ‘hey, Kara’ me – why didn’t you tell me James was interviewing for a job at CatCo?”

“Well, first of all, I don’t think you should be telling anyone off for failing to mention things, Miss I’m-dating-Cat-Grant,” Kara makes a noise of surprise, because Lucy is definitely not supposed to know that yet. “and as for why we didn’t tell you yet, we were waiting to see if he got the job before we got your hopes up, but he did, so surprise! We’re moving to National City.”

“That’s amazing, Luce.” She’s already excited – she doesn’t get to see Lucy enough, and to have her in the same city would be wonderful.

“We’re celebrating tonight, if you want to join us.”

“Wait, you’re here, too?”

“Mhm. We were gonna surprise you, but you kinda ruined it.” She doesn’t sound mad, though. “So, you and Cat – don’t think you can just skate over that, because I want details, Kara. Details.”

“How do you even know about that?”

“Well, I texted Alex to check that you guys didn’t have any plans this weekend, and she said that she didn’t but that you might be busy with your new girlfriend, so I sent her a lot of question marks and she eventually caved and told me it was Cat. Don’t be mad at her – she assumed I already knew.” Lucy sounds a little wounded, and Kara winces, leans her arm over the edge of the balcony railing and glances down at the city below.

“Sorry, Luce, that’s not how I wanted you to find out. I was going to tell you, we were just… we’re taking things slow.”

“It’s okay, I get it.” Lucy has never been one to hold a grudge – unless it was against her sister. “You can make it up to me by telling me everything this weekend.” Kara laughs. “We’re staying at Maggie and Alex’s place, so do you want to meet us there, later? Bring Cat, if you want.”

“I’ll ask her.” She hangs up, pads back into Cat’s office, finds her typing away, small frown of concentration on her face.

“Everything alright?” She asks when she hears Kara approach, glancing away from her screen.

“Yeah, turns out they were just waiting to see if he got the job before saying anything.”

Makes sense,” Cat nods, “although I don’t know why he was worried – he’s more than qualified for the job, an excellent candidate.” Kara feels like compliments like that from Cat are rare. “What does his fiancée do, does she have a job here?”

“Nah, but she’s a lawyer, and a pretty good one, so I’m sure somewhere will snap her up.”

“Just tell her to steer clear of my husband’s firm.”

“You could tell her yourself, if you wanted.” Kara takes the opening offered to her. “They’re, uh, staying here this weekend, and asked if I wanted to hang out, celebrate – they invited you, too.”

“Oh.” Cat blinks, surprised.

“It’s just at Alex’s place, I think, and you don’t have to say yes, I just… thought it would be nice, for you to meet my friends. You know, as my girlf – person that I’m dating.” She catches herself at the
last minute – she and Cat haven’t had the ‘what are we?’ talk yet.

“I’d love to meet your friends, Kara,” Cat says, “it’s just… I’m very aware that this is Ella’s first week back, and having her watching Carter until late might be too much too soon – not that she’d ever tell me that.”

“Oh, of course, that makes sense.” She’d suggest Cat bring Carter with her, but she thinks it’s going to be a late (and very loud, knowing Lucy) night, and would probably be too much for him.

“You should go, though, spend some time with your friends.”

“But we were supposed to spend tonight together.”

“I know, but your friends are in town, and you should celebrate with them – I’m not going anywhere, but they are.”

“They’re coming back.” Cat just shakes her head. “I wish you could come with me.”

“I know, me too.”

“Have dinner with me, before I go?” Cat agrees, finishes up the last of her work and then they leave together – Cat slips her hand into Kara’s as they exit her office, tugging her towards her private elevator.

The few employees left in the bullpen watch them go with wide eyes, and Kara can hear the whispers that erupt as the elevator doors open, but Cat doesn’t seem to care, just tugs Kara close as soon as they shut, and kisses her senseless the whole way down to the lobby.

//

Kara lets herself into Alex and Maggie’s apartment at a little after nine, opens the door to raucous laughter and smiles as she’s immediately swept into a hug by Lucy, who scrambles over the back of the couch to reach her.

“Kara! You made it.”

“Of course I did.” She can smell vodka on Lucy’s breath, her words a little slurred, and her eyes glassy. “You are drunk.”

“Maybe a little.” She grins and drags Kara to the kitchen to get a drink of her own. “I can’t believe you never told me about Cat!” Lucy smacks at her shoulder, hard enough to make Kara wince, her gin and tonic nearly sloshing over the side of her glass. “I asked you about her when you came to stay with us, and you revealed absolutely nothing. Since when could you lie?”

“I just didn’t want to talk about it,” Kara shrugs, leaning back against the kitchen counter and waving hello to James when she sees him looking over. “It wasn’t really… when I was staying with you guys, Cat and I weren’t in a good place.”

“Do I need to kick her ass?”

“I think Alex has that covered, thank you.”

Lucy’s lips twitch. “You’re okay now, though?”

“Yeah. Yeah, we’re…” Kara can’t help her giant smile, doesn’t care how dopey it makes her look – all she’s ever wanted is someone to hold, someone to love, someone to make her as happy as Maggie
and Alex, James and Lucy, Lois and Clark all are, and now she feels like she’s finally found it. “We’re great.”

“I’m happy for you, Kara. You finally got the girl.”

“Wasn’t easy,” Kara murmurs, taking a sip of her drink, “but it was worth it.”

“I want to know everything.”

Kara tells her, spends almost half an hour being grilled by Lucy before James comes to her rescue.

“Hey, Kara.”

“Hey.” She pulls him into a hug. “Congrats on the new job.”

“Thanks.” His smile is wide, and Kara knows he must be elated – it’s a huge promotion, but she can’t think of a more deserving person, knows he’ll pour his heart and soul into it. “I hear my new boss is your new girlfriend?”

“Kinda?”

“You can give me the lowdown on how not to piss her off, then.”

“Be good at your job, and you won’t have any issues,” Kara tells him, with a wry smile. “When do you start?”

“Two weeks – we’re going apartment hunting tomorrow, if you want to join us? I’m sure Lucy’s been too busy grilling you to ask.”

“I was getting there,” Lucy huffs, elbowing James in the ribs. “But yeah, you should come with. Point out the good and bad neighbourhoods.”

“You know I haven’t lived here that long, right? Are Alex and Maggie coming, too?”

“They’re boring and have to work.” Lucy sticks her tongue out at Alex when she flips her off from where she’s still sat on the couch. “I think we might be looking at a place in your apartment block.”

“Oh yeah? That’d be cool. And yeah, I’ll come.” She hasn’t made any plans with Cat for tomorrow, and it’d be nice to spend some more time with them before they have to go.

“Yay! Now come on, let’s play some games.” Lucy tugs Kara back to the couch, and Kara prepares herself, because she is competitive but Lucy is ten times worse, and when she and Alex get into it, things get serious.

James and Maggie exchange wary glances, all too aware of how crazy their girlfriends can get, and Kara surreptitiously steals Lucy’s drink, so that it doesn’t get thrown over anything or any one (there was a Monopoly incident one year, and they’re not allowed to play it together anymore).

They play late into the night, in-between sharing stories and catching up (and drinking a lot), and Kara decides to crash on the couch, Lucy and James already having claimed the guestroom.

Alex gives her a pile of blankets, and Kara makes sure she drinks plenty of water before she goes to sleep, because she definitely does not want to be dragged from apartment to apartment tomorrow with a killer hangover.

Once she’s curled up under the blankets she reaches for her phone, texts Cat to see if she’s still
awake, and when she replies a few seconds later Kara smiles and calls her, instead.

“Hi, beautiful.”

“You can’t even see me.” Cat’s voice is dry, and Kara smiles at the sound.

“Doesn’t matter – you’re always beautiful.”

“Mm, so you keep telling me. Have you had a good night?”

“Yeah, missing you though. You’d have loved it – have you ever played Taboo?”

“I don’t think so.”

“When you meet everyone, we’ll play it – I reckon we’d crush the others.” Kara thinks that they’d make a formidable team, considering how competitive they get when they’re playing against each other.

“Do you have plans for tomorrow night?”

“I don’t think so.” No-one had mentioned anything to her, anyway. “I’m helping James and Lucy look for apartments in the morning, though.”

“Would you like to invite them over tomorrow night? After Carter’s going to bed?”

“Is that… do you want to?”

“I told you that I wanted to meet them,” Cat says, voice soft, “and I… I’ve missed you this week.” She sounds vulnerable, and Kara knows that Cat isn’t used to this, to laying her emotions bare, knows that she’s trying because Kara had insisted that to do this, they needed to communicate.

“I’ve missed you, too.” It’s been weird, starting her mornings off on a bus instead of the subway, her days filled with lectures instead of spending time with Carter, weird not seeing Cat twice a day, and she knows Cat must be feeling the same – probably even more, because her routine isn’t any different, it’s just that Kara is no longer a part of it. “And I’d love to see you tomorrow.”

“You could come over earlier, have dinner with us. Carter’s been missing you, as well. Ella tells me he talks about you a lot.”

Her throat feels tight, and she hates that she’s had to leave him, even though she knows it was for the best for all of them – she’s sure Cat wouldn’t have pursued her while Kara still worked for her.

“What time do you want me?”

“Around six? Unless you end up with other plans.”

“I’ll let you know?”

“Alright.” Kara yawns, and Cat chuckles, low in the back of her throat. “Tired?”

“A little, but I’m okay for a bit.”

“Go to sleep, Kara,” Cat replies, “I don’t want you falling asleep during dinner.”

“Okay.” She’d like to keep talking to Cat, but she is getting pretty sleepy, has had her eyes closed for the past few minutes. “I’ll see you tomorrow.”
Cat leaves the door unlocked for Kara on Saturday night, and she’s alerted to her arrival by Carter hurtling to his feet and across the room, turns to find Kara scooping him up, laughing.

“Hey, kiddo.” She’s got flowers in her other hand, presents them to Cat with a shy smile that Cat longs to kiss away. “These are for you.”

“Thank you.” Cat can’t remember the last time someone bought her flowers, and she digs out a vase from one of her kitchen cupboards, fills it with some water and puts them on the coffee table. “How was apartment hunting?”

“Long.” Cat chuckles at the expression on Kara’s face. “We must’ve been to about twelve? And then they decided they wanted to first one that we went to.” Kara heaves out a dramatic sigh. “They’re going to be living two floors above me.”

“Well, I’m not going to volunteer to help them move in, not up all those stairs.”

“Fair. Maybe I’ll be busy that day, too.”

“Kara,” Carter tugs at Kara’s cardigan sleeve. “Can we go look at the stars?” Kara glances at Cat, who nods – she’s going to be in the kitchen anyway, so the two of them may as well spend some time together.

Kara leaves the balcony door open, and Cat can hear snippets of their conversation, and Carter’s happy giggling, carried in by the evening breeze.

They return after a little while, and Kara sets Carter down by his action figures, tries to distract him so that she can slip off to talk to Cat, but he refuses to let her go, and Cat tries not to laugh at the helpless look on Kara’s face as she glances between mother and son.

“It’s alright,” Cat tells her, “we can talk later.”

She finishes their food – chicken parmigiana for her and Kara, and pasta for Carter – and the three of them eat together, and Cat doesn’t miss Carter shooting suspicious glances between her and Kara throughout.

“Is there something you want to ask us, Carter?” Cat feels Kara stiffen beside her, but she rests a hand on Kara’s thigh and squeezes gently, because they’ve talked about this – Carter needs to find out, sooner rather than later, and the sooner they tell him, the more time they can spend together.

(The more often Kara can spend the night – Cat has already asked her to tonight, and it’s why she’d planned on telling Carter before he went to bed).

“You two have been acting weird.”

“Well, there’s something we want to talk to you about.” Carter narrows his eyes, and Cat takes a deep breath, takes her hand off of Kara’s thigh and takes her hand, resting on top of the table, instead, tangling their fingers together. “How would you feel if I told you that Kara and I are… in a relationship?”

“Like you and Dad were?”

“Yes, only…” Cat glances at Kara, who looks a little like a deer in the headlights, and squeezes her hand gently. “Only better than that. Your father and I… our relationship wasn’t exactly healthy, in
“Does this mean Kara will come live with us?”

“Maybe in the future, buddy.” Kara finds her voice when faced with Carter’s hopeful eyes. “But not right now. It does mean I’ll be here a lot, though, to hang out with your Mom – and you. Would that be okay?”

“Yeah!”

“Yeah?” He nods, and then he comes around the side of the table, tugs at Cat until she lifts him into her lap, and he hugs her and then Kara.

“Does this mean you’ll get married?”

“One day, maybe.” Kara says that quietly, looks at Cat nervously, but she smiles and leans over, presses a soft kiss to Kara’s lips and when she pulls back, Carter is looking at them with his nose wrinkled.

“Gross.”

Cat laughs, lets him wander back into the other room, back to his action figures, as she and Kara tidy up the table. “Well, I think that went well,” Cat murmurs, keeping one eye on Carter as Kara starts the dishes, Cat insisting on drying them.

“Yeah, it did. I’m glad he doesn’t disapprove.”

“He was never going to – he loves you too much.” Kara’s smile is soft, and when the dishes are finished, she dries her hands and kisses Cat, soft but with a little heat behind it, that leaves her wanting more.

The three of them curl up on the couch together to watch a movie, Kara with her arm around Cat’s back, Carter lying across both of their laps – he falls asleep halfway through, and Kara carefully carries him to his room, managing not to wake him, and Cat watches from the doorway as she tucks him in and presses a kiss to the top of his head.

“What time did you tell the others to get here?” Cat asks as they make their way back down the hall.

“Eight.” Cat glances at her watch, sees that they have almost fifteen minutes of valuable alone-time before then, fists her hand in the soft material of Kara’s shirt and pulls her close, kissing the surprised gasp off her lips.

Kara presses her against the nearest wall when Cat deepens the kiss, and she releases her hold of Kara’s shirt to slide her hand underneath, instead, palms skating over firm abs and she groans when she feels them tense under her fingertips, loves how much raw power is hiding just beneath Kara’s skin – as if she knows exactly what’s on Cat’s mind, Kara’s hands fall to Cat’s thighs, and she lifts her effortlessly, pins her against the wall with her hips as Cat’s legs wrap around Kara’s waist.

The change in position makes the kiss a little awkward, so Kara chooses to press heated kisses to the slope of Cat’s neck, instead, and Cat fists her hand in Kara’s hair, grinds her hips against her stomach, and wishes she could drag Kara to bed and make her forget her own name.

Kara’s mouth trails lower, tongue swirling in the hollow of Cat’s throat, over her collarbone and down, until she’s undoing the top two buttons of Cat’s blouse so she can get her mouth on more of Cat’s skin.
She tugs at the cup of her bra, kisses over her breast until she’s taking Cat’s nipple between her lips, teasing with teeth and tongue and Cat swears, closes her eyes and surrenders to the feeling of Kara’s mouth on her skin.

Kara pulls away and Cat drags her head up, kisses her deep and slow, tongue sliding over Kara’s as she tugs at her hair, and god, it’s so easy to lose herself in this woman, and she’s dizzy with want, knows she’s soaked beneath her jeans, and she already can’t wait to have Kara alone again later.

“We should stop,” Kara breathes against her lips, and Cat nods, because Kara’s friends will be there any minute – and sure enough, it’s only a few seconds when there’s a quiet knock on the door.

“Shit.”

Cat rarely hears Kara swear, chuckles and straightens out her clothing, redoing her blouse buttons and quickly trying to make Kara’s hair look a little less tousled. She doesn’t succeed, because the second Kara opens the door, the brunette at the front of the queue on the other side takes one look at Kara and smirks.

“Well, it’s pretty obvious what you’ve been up to, Miss Danvers.” Kara flushes the most delightful shade of pink. “Are we interrupting something? Should we come back later?”

“Shut up, Luce,” Kara mutters, but Lucy’s grin just widens. “Come on in.”

Cat eyes Alex warily as she crosses the threshold, but Kara’s sister looks a lot less murderous than the last time they’d been in the same room, even manages a small smile as she meets Cat’s eye. Maggie is more welcoming, her smile brighter, and James, behind her, looks a little uncomfortable as he steps into the home of his new boss.

“Cat, this is Lucy, Lucy, this is Cat.” Kara is prompted to make the introduction by Lucy clearing her throat loudly, and Cat is surprised when she’s pulled into an enthusiastic hug.

“I have heard so much about you.”

“Nothing too bad, I hope.”

“Not from Kara – plenty from my sister.” Cat feels a flutter of confusion, but then she puts it together – the name, the vague resemblance, the faint sense of recognition from a handful of photographs in an apartment she hasn’t visited in a long, long time.

“You’re Lois’ little sister, aren’t you?”

“Mm.” Lucy grimaces. “Although from what I hear from Kara, your feud is more superficial than it seems.”

“That doesn’t mean she doesn’t know how to get under my skin,” Cat replies, and Lucy looks like she can sympathise with that. “Would anyone like a drink?”

Cat fixes up everyone’s drink (she has a rather well-stocked bar in one corner of the room that she rarely uses), whilst the others settle down – James and Lucy take one couch, Alex and Maggie the other, and Kara sits on the chair, tugs Cat down into her lap once she’s finished handing everyone a glass.

“This apartment is incredible, Cat,” Lucy says, eyes fixed on the floor length windows she’s sitting opposite. “I mean, look at that view.”

“Thank you.” Cat knows she’s a little tense, feels Kara squeeze her to try and get her to calm down –
she’s just not used to doing this, meeting the friends of her partner, and she’s certainly never been so desperate to win their approval before.

She’s already gotten off to a bad start with the sister (although Alex isn’t shooting daggers at her, which she takes as a good sign), and she doesn’t want to make things worse, or get off on the wrong foot with any of Kara’s other friends, because she knows they’re important to Kara, knows that their opinion will matter, in the long run, if the two of them are going to be together.

“Let’s play something,” Kara suggests, sensing Cat’s discomfort. “Did you guys bring Taboo? We can finally be on equal teams – I’m not the fifth wheel anymore.”

Cat’s never played before, but she gets the gist very quickly. Kara had warned her about the competitive spirit of her sister and Lucy, but their trash talk still takes her a little by surprise, and she can’t help but glance down the hall to check that Carter’s still safely tucked up in bed.

She and Kara win by a very narrow margin, much to Lucy’s disgust, but it’s worth the death-glare from the youngest of the Lane siblings when Cat catches sight of Kara’s dazzling smile.

“Beginner’s luck,” Lucy decides. “Let’s play again.”

Maggie and Alex win their second game, and that just sours Lucy’s mood even more, much to everyone else’s amusement.

“Monopoly next?” Lucy suggests, when she catches a glimpse of Cat’s extensive game selection, and there’s a horrified chorus of ‘no!’ that startles Cat.

“She’s the worst when we play Monopoly,” Kara explains, voice quiet in Cat’s ear, “she nearly took my eye out once. And she threw a drink over the board once in a fit of rage.”

“They were both accidents!”

“They were not,” say Kara, James and Alex in unison, and Cat chuckles.

“We brought cards against humanity, if anyone wants to play that?”

Cat’s dry wit manages to clinch her a narrow victory over Lucy – Kara comes in last, and both Alex and Lucy tease her, saying it’s because she’s too innocent, and Cat catches Kara’s eye and smirks, because she’s the only one that knows that Kara is anything but.

They decide to call it a night soon after, and as Cat is clearing up everyone’s glasses she hears someone approaching the kitchen, and is surprised to find Alex joining her, picking up a towel and drying as Cat washes.

The silence stretches between them, thick and uncomfortable, and Cat waits for Alex to break it, knows she must’ve had a reason for coming over.

“I just wanted to say that… I’m sorry, for some of the things I said to you the other day.” Alex’s voice is quiet, and she doesn’t look at Cat as she speaks, stares down instead at the glass in her hands. “I was just… you’d hurt her, a lot, and when I saw you in her apartment I wasn’t happy about it.”

There had been vitriol in Alex’s eyes when Cat had stepped into Kara’s bedroom, but it hadn’t been enough to make her back down.

“But I… I’ve never seen her as happy as she has been in the past week, and that’s all down to you.”
Cat’s heart thuds painfully hard in her chest. “So I just want you to know that I’m not going to stand in the way or anything. That I’m happy for you two. But if you break her heart, Cat,” Alex’s eyes turn dangerous, and Cat gulps, “I swear to god, I’ll - ”

“I won’t,” Cat promises, “I won’t.”

“Okay. Good.” Alex sets down the glass and stalks off, and Cat blinks after her, still slightly stunned.

“Everything okay in here?” Kara asks, warily, looking at her sister’s retreating back as she steps into the kitchen, but Cat smiles and leans on her toes to brush a gentle kiss against her lips.

“Everything’s fine.”

“Aw, you guys are adorable.” Cat turns to find Lucy watching them with a wide smile, and she ducks as Kara launches a towel at her head.

“Don’t be creepy!” Kara calls, and Cat chuckles, thinking that she wouldn’t mind having Lucy around more often – watching her and Kara together is amusing, and she can see why they’re such good friends.

They say their goodbyes, and when the door shuts behind her friends, Kara turns to Cat with heat in her eyes, steps close and tilts her head up to kiss her breathless.

“Now, were where we before we were interrupted?”
“You are so beautiful.” Kara looks at her with reverence in her eyes, her touch achingly soft as she slides her hands up Cat’s sides and over the soft planes of her stomach.

Kara’s spread out on her back underneath her, Cat straddling her hips, her blouse hanging open, the buttons undone by Kara’s eager hands.

Her eyes are dark and heated, her hair mussed from Cat’s fingers, and Cat leans down to kiss her again, open-mouthed and messy, shrugging out of her blouse completely when Kara pushes it off her shoulders.

Kara’s hands are everywhere – running over her back, sliding into her hair, grabbing her ass, palming at her breasts – and it’s driving her wild, her heart racing, need settling in her stomach and pulsing between her thighs.

She yanks Kara’s own shirt over her head, gets her hands on soft skin and sighs happily into Kara’s mouth. She cups Kara’s breasts in her hands, finds the clasp of her bra and at Kara’s ‘god, please’ whispered against her lips she flicks it open with a twist of her fingers.

Kara is beautiful, perfect, and Cat wants her mouth on her, kisses down her neck and lower until she can take a nipple between her teeth, biting and sucking until Kara is breathless and panting beneath her.

She drags her kisses lower, over Kara’s stomach, muscle tensing beneath her mouth, Kara’s hips fisted tight in Cat’s hair.

“Do you want to stop?” Cat asks, when her mouth reaches the waistband of Kara’s jeans, and she knows that if she takes them off, they’ll be past the point of no return – she won’t want to stop until Kara is spent and exhausted beneath her.

“God, no, I-I want you.” Kara’s voice is husky, her eyes dark with desire and Cat’s stomach flips, and she’s never wanted anything more than she wants this, to feel Kara come apart against her. “Please.”

Cat could get used to making her beg, but she doesn’t want to draw this out – not tonight. She’s too impatient, too worked up, and she’s quick to shuffle off the bed, her hands dragging Kara’s jeans down her legs and onto the floor, stepping out of her own pants whilst she’s there.

She crawls back up the length of Kara’s body, mouth pressing open-mouthed kisses to the inside of her thigh as she goes, and Kara whimpers, muscles twitching beneath her lips, and when Cat presses a bite against her skin, Kara says ‘fuck’, Cat like her name is a prayer.

Cat can smell her want, puts her mouth on Kara over her underwear, feels how soaked she is and groans, low in the back of her throat, Kara’s hips arching against her when she kisses at her clit.
“Cat, please.” Kara’s voice is needy, her fingers threaded through Cat’s hair, and Cat can’t deny her, lets her lift her hips so that she can slide her underwear down long legs.

Cat slides back up Kara’s body to kiss her as she finally glides her hand between Kara’s thighs – she’s soaked, her hips shifting as Cat’s fingers skate over her clit, her hands digging into the small of her back.

Cat kisses her as she slips inside her, first with one finger and then two, her thumb finding Kara’s clit and when her kisses become messy and un-coordinated, Cat leans back, takes in Kara’s face, her head thrown back against Cat’s pillows, her eyes closed and her teeth biting down on her bottom lip, and Cat thinks she’s never seen a more beautiful sight, wants to see this again and again and again, wants this image emblazoned on the back of her eyelids so she can never forget what Kara looks like this.

“Look at me,” she implores, fingers pressing deeper, thumb circling faster, and Kara whimpers, turns her head and opens her eyes and the look in them sets Cat aflame.

Kara holds her gaze for as long as she can, but her eyes fall closed when she tenses around Cat’s fingers, and Cat coaxes her through the aftershocks, already wants to do that all over again.

So she does – she slips her fingers free only to replace them with her mouth, Kara making a noise of surprise at the first touch of Cat’s tongue.

She feels amazing against her mouth, hot and slick, her thighs already shaking against Cat’s cheek, and Cat works her back up with long, slow strokes of her tongue, until Kara’s needy whimpers echo around the room.

She tips her over the edge for the second time, loves the feeling of Kara’s hips twitching against her, could stay there all night, but Kara’s hands are in her hair, urge her up so that she can kiss her, tasting herself on Cat’s tongue.

“You’re amazing,” Kara tells her, breathless and perfect, her eyes hooded and her fingers stroking Cat’s cheek.

“You’re not so bad yourself,” Cat tells her, brushing a few strands of hair away from Kara’s forehead, damp with sweat. “Come here.” Cat kisses her again, starts it slow but Kara is quick to deepen it, and Cat makes a noise of surprise when Kara flips them without warning, pressing Cat down against her mattress.

Kara’s weight is solid and strong against her, and the look in her eyes as she glances down the length of Cat’s body takes her breath away – she doesn’t think she’s ever been wanted like this, doesn’t think she’s ever seen such raw, unadulterated desire as Kara’s fingertips trail almost absentmindedly from her neck and down, until she’s pressing between Cat’s legs, moaning softly when she feels how wet Cat is, all because of her.

Kara touches her like she’s something special, looks at her with nothing but adoration written across her face, and she’s absolutely relentless, makes Cat come with her hands and then her mouth, over and over again until Cat has to beg her to stop.

She falls asleep with Kara’s forehead resting against the back of her head, her breathing soft in her ear and her arm slung across Cat’s waist, the pair of them sweaty and sated, and sleeps more soundly than she can remember doing in a long, long time.
Kara wakes up to the creak of the bedroom door the next morning, and when she turns to find a
sleep rumpled Carter hovering in the doorway, she’s relieved that she and Cat had had the sense to
slip into pyjamas before they’d gone to sleep last night.

The bedroom is still dim, the sun yet to rise, and Kara beckons Carter over, helps him clamber up
into the bed.

“You okay, kiddo?” She whispers, conscious of the fact that Cat is still fast asleep (Cat had told her
once that she’s a light sleeper, and Kara can’t help but be a little proud of the fact that she’d
apparently worn her out last night, tries hard not to let her mind think back to last night, to finally
having Cat beneath her, naked and sated, to finally getting to trace every inch of her skin like she’s
craved for so long, to knowing what she felt like beneath her mouth), and Carter shuffles closer,
burrows his head into her chest.

“I had a bad dream.”

“Another one?” She wraps an arm around his back, rubs gentle circles there until she feels him relax
against her. “What happened?”

“You and Mom had another fight and got divorced and then you left.”

“Oh, sweetheart.” Kara tightens her hold around him. “Is that something you’re worried about?” She
feels him nod, and she pulls back, urges his head up so that he’s looking up at her. “Look, I can’t
promise that your Mom and I will live happily ever after,” his face falls a little, “because sometimes
things don’t work out, no matter how much we might want them to.” And she does want that, more
than she’s ever wanted anything before in her life. “But I can promise you that, no matter what
happens, I’m never going to leave you, Carter. Even if your Mom and I broke up, I’d still visit.”

“You promise?”

“I promise.”

“I love you.” It’s not the first time he’s said it, but this time feels different, somehow, and it makes
her throat feel tight, and she hugs him close.

“I love you, too,” she whispers into his ear. “You want to try going back to sleep?”

“Okay.” He wiggles so that his back is against her front, and behind her, Cat shifts, turning and
sliding her arm across Kara’s waist so that she’s in a Grant sandwich, and Kara falls back asleep with
a content smile on her face.

When she next wakes, it’s to the sound of Cat and Carter talking in hushed voices, and when she
rolls over she finds Cat sitting with her back against the headboard and Carter curled up in her lap.

“Hey, sleepyhead.” Cat’s smile is beautiful, her eyes soft as she looks down at her, and Kara thinks
that she must be the luckiest girl in the whole damn world. “We were just wondering whether we
should wake you.”

“What time is it?” Cat’s bedroom is filled with sunlight, now, the other woman illuminated in a soft
glow.

“A little after ten. Carter’s getting hungry.”

“You want breakfast, buddy?” Kara perks up at the thought of food, blinking sleep out of her eyes as
Carter nods enthusiastically.
“I’ll go whip something up.” Cat leans down, presses a light kiss against Kara’s lips that has Carter making a face.

“Mind if I have a quick shower?”

“Of course not.” Cat slips into a silk robe and pads out of the room, Carter trailing in her wake, and Kara stretches out when she’s left alone, takes a minute to take stock of this moment, of waking up in Cat’s bed the morning after, muscles aching pleasantly from the previous night’s activities.

She showers quickly, even though she could spend hours in there, is eager to be back at Cat’s side, especially when she emerges from the bathroom to the smell of pancakes.

She puts her pyjamas back on and makes her way into the kitchen to find a stack of fluffy pancakes, and Cat and Carter, waiting for her, is flooded with warmth at the sight of them, welcoming her into their family and their lazy Sunday morning.

It’s not something she ever expected to have, this kind of domestic bliss, and she doesn’t know if she’s ever been as happy as she is right now, sandwiched between two of her favourite people and inhaling Cat’s cooking.

“Worked up quite an appetite, did we?” Cat asks, voice low in Kara’s ear, looking like she’s not sure whether she should be impressed or disgusted by the way Kara has dispatched almost the entire stack.

“Mhm.” Her mind flashes back to the previous night, and she already can’t wait to have Cat pressed against her once more, breathless and aching, shivers when Cat presses a kiss to the side of her neck, knows that she’s thinking the same thing.

But she can’t drag Cat back down the hall and into bed because they have an excitable three year old to contend with.

She spends the morning with the Grants, the three of them watching cartoons before taking Carter to the park down the street, and Kara bids them farewell around noon, having made lunch plans with James and Lucy before they leave.

“You totally got laid last night,” is the first thing Lucy says when Kara slides into the booth opposite the pair of them, James’ lips twitching in amusement as Kara’s cheeks tinge pink, giving her away. “Look, babe, she’s practically glowing.”

“I am not glowing,” Kara hisses, hiding behind her menu even though she already knows what she’s having, but Lucy’s fingers curl over the top of it and yank it down.

“I am not glowing,” Kara hisses, hiding behind her menu even though she already knows what she’s having, but Lucy’s fingers curl over the top of it and yank it down.

“Glowing!” Lucy says, singsong. “So, how was it?”

“We are not having this conversation,” Kara tells her, knows she’s probably as red as the shirt she’s wearing.

“Oh, we are,” Lucy counters, levelling Kara with a very serious stare. “You kept your relationship a secret – you owe me details.”

“Only for like a week!”

“Not the point.” Kara throws James a pleading glance, but he just holds up his hands, not getting involved. “Come on, Kara, this is the first relationship I’ve ever really seen you in.” Save for her sister, Kara had kept her relationship with Diana quiet until it was over. “And it’s with Cat freaking
Grant! I need details. Is she great in bed?” Lucy at least drops her voice to ask that question. “I bet she is.”

“No comment.”

“If you don’t tell me I’m going to assume it was terrible and I’ll tell Cat that, too.”

“You wouldn’t.”

“Oh, I would.”

“Fine, it was amazing, okay?”

“Best you’ve ever had?”

“Undoubtedly.” Lucy’s mouth opens, but Kara silences her by raising a single finger. “And that’s all the detail you’re getting.” Lucy pouts, but seems to accept it. “Did you guys put a deposit down for that place in my building?”

“Yes,” James answers with an easy smile, “we’re all ready to move in.”

“If you guys wanna ship anything over ahead of time, you can send it to me,” she offers, because having Alex in the city had been a big help when she’d been moving. “And I’ll be around to help you move everything in.”

She can’t wait to have them here for good, feels like everything is coming together – she’ll soon be surrounded by her best friends, has Cat at her side, and is embarking on her dream career.

They eat before they go their separate ways, Kara hugging both of them tightly and she’s glad that this time, the time apart won’t stretch over months, will instead just be for a couple of weeks.

She heads back to her own apartment, changes into sweats and sets up her Netflix queue as she finishes off any reading she didn’t get to the other night, makes sure she’s ready for her next week of classes before allowing herself to relax.

She likes being busy but she likes just chilling in-front of the TV, too, and it’s nice to just spend some time with herself. She orders a pizza and when she’s devoured it she sends Cat a photo of the box with the caption ‘this is how I cope when you’re not around’, and grins when she reads the response, can imagine perfectly the exasperation that would be in her tone if she was stood in-front of her.

I honestly can’t believe that a person can have your eating habits and still look the way you do.

You mean like this? Kara replies, snapping a quick photo of her abs, because she knows they look good and she also knows that they make Cat weak, if the way she likes to run her fingers over them is any indication.

I just spilled my drink all over myself, I hope you’re happy.

Very. Kara chuckles at the mental image, but her laughter dies in her throat at Cat’s reply, which is a photo of Cat in nothing but black lacy underwear that makes her mouth dry. You have no idea what you do to me, she sends back, knows she’ll be able to think of nothing but the image of Cat’s bare skin for the rest of the night.

Show me, comes the reply, and Kara thinks of Cat’s eyes, dark with desire, of how husky her voice
would be if it were in her ear and nearly whimpers, scrambles into her bedroom and calls Cat with shaking fingers.

“Where’s Carter?” She asks when Cat answers, because he should be in bed and she’s hoping that Cat is still half-naked but she doesn’t want to take any chances.

“In bed,” Cat confirms, and her voice is a little breathy and it makes Kara’s stomach twist. “And so am I.”

“Yeah?” Kara settles down on her bed, heart already racing, because she knows what’s about to happen but she’s never done anything like this before. “Me too. Are you, um, are you still in your underwear?”

“Nope.” Kara tries not to be disappointed. “I’m naked.”

“Fuck.” Cat chuckles, low in the back of her throat, and it makes Kara shiver. Her skin feels extra sensitive, her sheets cool against the bare skin of her arms. “I wish you were here.”

“I wish I was, too. But you can pretend that I’m there with you. Close your eyes.” Kara does just that, relaxes into the mattress and lets Cat’s voice wash over her. “Are you still wearing clothes?”

“Y-yes.”

“Take them off.” Kara rushes to comply. “Slowly,” Cat orders, and the tone of Cat’s voice sends a bolt of heat straight to her core. Her fingers tremble as she wriggles her way out of her shirt and her sweats, taking her underwear down along with them, her bra already removed long ago, almost the second she got home.

“Okay, I-I’m done.” She can’t help the tremble in her voice, knows it betrays how turned on she is (more than she thinks she might have ever been before in her life).

“Good.” Cat whispers, and god, the way that voice makes her feel… it’s a weapon, and Cat knows exactly how to use it. “Are you already wet for me, Kara?”

“Always,” she breathes.

“I still want you to check.” She does, hand slipping between her legs and encountering wet heat, her fingers sliding against her clit and making her groan.

“I’m soaked.” She’s already breathless, her fingers circling her clit and she knows she could come so easily already.

“Good,” Cat murmurs, and her voice has that husk that drives her wild. “But you’re not allowed to touch yourself yet.” Kara whimpers. “Can you do that for me?”

“I’d do anything for you,” she promises, mouth dry. “Anything.”

“Mm, I like the sound of that.” Kara’s still got her eyes closed, can only hear Cat’s soft breathing in her ear, the hitch of her breath as the sheets rustle on the other end of the line.

“A-are you touching yourself?”

“Yes.” Cat moans, soft and breathless, and Kara wants to hear her make that sound over and over again. “Thinking about you, and last night. The way you felt under my hands, the sounds you made, the way you taste. I can’t wait to have my mouth on you again. To make you come over and over
It’s torture, to lie still and not make any move to sate the throbbing between her thighs, when Cat’s whispering filthy things into her ear, when her mind is overrun by memories of the night before, and all she’s aware of is Cat’s breathing growing laboured.

“Fuck, Cat - ”

“I love it when you say my name like that. God, Kara, you have no idea what you do to me.” Kara wishes more than anything that she could see Cat right now, has to settle for imagining it instead, her hand working between her thighs, phone pressed to her ear and back arching off the bed.

“You can show me next time I see you,” Kara breathes, and she already can’t wait for that day, to have Cat beneath her once again. “Are you close?”

“So close.” She can hear it, in the hitch of Cat’s breathing, and it’s only a few moments later that she moans Kara’s name, and it’s a sound that Kara wants to hear over and over again.

“Cat,” she whimpers, and she didn’t know it was possible to be this affected by someone when they weren’t even touching her. “I need…”

“What do you need?” Cat’s voice is breathy, and Kara worries at her bottom lip, because she’s painfully inexperienced at this and talking about what she wants has never been one of her strong points.

“I need you. Your hands on me.”

“Close your eyes.” Kara does. “Touch yourself and imagine that it’s me.” Kara slides a hand across her stomach and down, her skin tingling beneath her fingertips, and when she finally slips her fingers through wet heat she moans because she’s so wound up already, so close already, just from the sound of Cat’s voice.

“I wish I could feel your mouth on me,” Kara whispers, fingers circling her clit before pressing inside, one at first but she quickly adds a second, sighs at the feeling as her hips rock against her hand.

“You will soon,” Cat promises, and Kara already can’t wait.

“I’m close already,” she admits, breathing ragged, pressing her fingers deeper and groaning when her palm presses against her clit.

“That’s okay,” Cat tells her, sounding as affected by the sounds Kara making as Kara had been when Cat had been touching herself. “But I want to hear you.”

She calls out Cat’s name when she comes, shaking around her own fingers, and she’s breathless and spent when she falls back against the bed.

“God, that was amazing,” Kara breathes, sweat cooling on her skin. “ You’re amazing.”

They hang up soon after, and that night, Kara dreams of Cat, of pale skin and hands fisted in sheets and hips arching into her mouth, can’t wait until she can finally get her hands on her again.

//

Kara’s Mondays are quiet, with only two classes that have her back home by two.
She’s sipping a coffee and doing some work when her laptop rings with the familiar sound of Skype, and she starts at the sound of it, hits answer when she sees that it’s Eliza calling and smiles when her foster mother appears on the screen, sitting in the kitchen.

“Hi, sweetheart.”

“Hey.” At the sound of her voice, a furry face appears over Eliza’s elbow, Bella the husky blinking at the screen. “Hey Bells.” She wags her tail before trotting away. “Everything okay?” She asks, because Eliza usually calls, and Kara doesn’t remember the last time they’d Skyped.

“Everything’s fine here,” Eliza assures her. “I just got home from work and saw you were online and thought I’d call to see how your classes were going.” Eliza’s scrutinising her closely, and Kara wonders if she’d done this so she could see Kara’s face, see if she was still as heartbroken as she had been over the holidays.

“Classes are great.”

“You’re enjoying it, then?”

“Absolutely.” As much as she’d loved working for Cat, it was so different, doing what she was passionate about, getting to learn again.

“You look happy.”

“I am.” She thinks of Cat and can’t help but smile, and Eliza watches her closely.

“And is there any particular reason for that?” Eliza pushes, curiosity burning in her eyes, and Kara knew she’d have to come clean to her foster mom about her relationship sooner rather than later but she really hasn’t prepared for this.

It’s as good an opportunity as she’s ever going to get, though, and she knows she needs to tell Eliza before another paparazzi photo of her and Cat appears in the press, one in which she can be clearly identified, one that Eliza could recognise her in.

“Um, yeah, kinda.” She fiddles with her coffee mug, fingers drumming against the side of it. “I’ve, um, I’ve been seeing someone. It’s pretty new, but it’s been going really well.” Eliza raises an eyebrow but doesn’t say anything, waits patiently for the full story. “It, um, well… it’s Cat. Cat Grant.”

“I see.” It’s not really the response she was hoping for, and she knows her face falls, sees it in the tiny window in the corner of her screen that shows her face. “I assume that she was the reason you were so down at Christmas?”

“Yeah.” It still hurts to think about those few awful days in the aftermath of what had happened in London. “We weren’t together then, though. She didn’t think it would be… appropriate, if anything happened between us while I worked for her. I didn’t take hearing that so well.”

“That’s a bit of an understatement,” Eliza replies, and Kara grimaces. “I suppose it makes sense for her to say that, though. She has a reputation to protect.”

“I know. But I don’t work for her anymore, so…” She shrugs. “But I’m happy, Eliza, I really am.”

“I can tell.” Eliza’s smile is small, but it’s genuine.

“But?” Kara asks, because she feels like there’s one coming.
“I just want to make sure you’ve really thought this through. She has a son, Kara.”

“I have met him,” she grins, and Eliza shakes her head in exasperation. “Look, I know what you mean, I know it’s different, dating someone who’s older and who has a kid and all the stuff that comes along with that, but… I have thought this through, we both have, and I love that kid more than anything and I really want to make things work with the both of them.” Eliza lets her talk, and Kara takes a breath. “And it would be a lot easier to do that if we had your approval.”

“Oh, Kara, of course you do. If you’re happy, then I’m happy for you. I just want to make sure you’re being careful.”

“I am,” she promises. “I know she’d love to meet you, next time you’re in town.”

“And I would like to meet her. Perhaps I could make the trip down in the next few weeks.”

“I’d like that.”

She signs off with the promise of getting in touch soon to let Kara know when she can come to National City, and Kara waves goodbye and feels like a weight has been lifted, feels lighter than she can ever remember being, light enough to fly, if only she were able.
Another busy week flies by, with both Cat and Kara too busy to carve much time together save for one quick dinner in Cat’s office, but Kara is invited to spend the weekend with Cat and Carter in Cat’s sure-to-be-amazing beach house, and there’s a bounce in her step as she arrives outside of Cat’s apartment building on Friday night.

Cat herself is running late, had texted Kara to tell her so, but said that she was welcome to go up and spend some time with Carter, so she knocks on the door and smiles when it’s opened by a kindly-looking older woman that she can only assume is Ella.

“You must be the famous Kara I’ve heard so much about.” Her smile is warm, and Kara likes her already, is glad that her replacement is working out, that she hadn’t left Cat with a problem to solve, knowing how much trouble she’d had before she’d hired Kara.

“And you must be Ella. It’s so nice to finally meet you. I know Cat isn’t here, but she told me to come up anyway, I hope that’s okay.”

“Of course, of course, come on in.” Ella waves her inside, and Kara’s barely out of her coat before Carter bounds over to her.

“Kara!” She scoops him up, peppers kisses all over his face until he’s giggling, only stops when he shrieks for her to. “I missed you.”

“I missed you too, buddy.” She knows it’s hard for him, to have gone from seeing her every weekday to only at the weekends, and it’s been hard for her, too, but she’s glad he’s spending his days with someone that he gets along with. “Have you had a good day?”

“Yeah! I drew you a picture.” He wriggles until she sets him down, and darts off into the apartment to retrieve it.

She and Ella follow in his wake, and Kara grins when he presents her with his drawing, of her and Cat and Carter, she and Cat holding hands and a giant red heart scrawled above their heads.

“Do you like it?” He asks, chewing on his bottom lip, and Kara takes it from him gently and presses a kiss to the top of his head.

“I love it, Carter. I’ll add it to the collection.” She has a stack of them at home, slides the latest into her overnight bag.

“I hear you’re to thank for his artistic tendencies?” Ella asks, smiling down at the two of them.

“I take full responsibility,” Kara laughs, letting Carter tug her over to his action figures. “I’ll have to get a new sketchbook soon, you’ve nearly filled the last one.” She ruffles his hair, flooded with affection for him, more than she ever knew it was possible to feel. “You can get going, if you like.” Kara directs that at Ella. “Have yourself an early Friday night.”

“Well, I’m not much of a partier,” Ella replies with an easy smile, “but I might take you up on that offer. My daughter is in town with my grandchildren.”

“Oh, then you should definitely get going! We’ll be alright until your Mom gets here, won’t we, bud?”
“Yeah!” Carter’s response is enthusiastic.

“Okay, then. I’ll see you on Monday, Carter.” He clammers up to hug her goodbye, and Kara’s heart melts. “I hope you all have a good weekend.”

“You too, have fun with your family.” Kara waves her goodbye, and before the door has even closed Carter pounces on Kara’s back with a giggle. She lifts him up and piggybacks him around the apartment, much to his delight.

They end in his room, and Kara sets him down and packs him a bag for the weekend with him watching her closely. As she’s zipping it shut Cat texts that she’s on her way, and Kara makes her way to the kitchen, hunts through the refrigerator to find something to heat up for them to eat before they head out on the road.

There’s a pasta bake that looks pretty tasty, so Kara slides it into the oven and lets Carter drag her back over to his action figures. That’s where Cat finds them a little while later, draping her jacket over the back of the couch and looking down at them with tired eyes and a warm smile.

“How are my two favourite people?” She asks, as Carter greets her with a hug and Kara with a gentle kiss against lips she’s been missing – they talk every night, and more often than not, those conversations turn filthy, but absolutely nothing compares to having Cat back in her arms once more.

“We’re good. I sent Ella home, I hope that’s okay.”

“Of course.”

“And I put some food in the oven.”

“My god.” Cat presses a hand against her heart. “And you haven’t burned the whole place down.”

“Rude.” Kara nudges Cat with her hip, and she chuckles, entirely too pleased with herself. “I am perfectly capable of reheating food. It’s about the only thing I can do in the kitchen.”

“Give me time, and I’ll train you up.”

“So I can make you a good housewife?”

“We’re getting married, are we?” Cat’s eyes glitter with mirth, and Kara’s cheeks flush pink.

“I just… I mean… well, yeah,” Kara shrugs. “I’m not planning on ever letting you go, so yeah, I’d like to be your wife one day. If you’ll have me.”

“Mm, I’ll think about it.” Kara pouts, and Cat chuckles, leans up to wipe it away with a kiss. “I’m going to go change and get my things together – do you think you can handle serving up?”

“It’s risky, but I’ll try my best.” By the time Cat returns, dressed down in faded jeans and sweatshirt, Kara and Carter are settled at the kitchen counter with full plates in-front of them.

They eat quickly, and Kara does the dishes while Cat does one last check to make sure both she and Carter have everything they need for the weekend, before the three of them head for the parking garage underneath Cat’s building.

“I’ve never seen you drive before,” Kara muses when Cat leads her over to a sleek black Mercedes, unlocking the trunk and piling their bags inside.

“I don’t like to, in the city,” Cat informs her, shutting the trunk as Kara wrestles Carter into his car.
seat – his eyes are already starting to droop, and she knows he’ll be fast asleep by the time they’re down the street. “But there’s just something about driving down coastal roads.”

Kara slides into the passenger seat, relaxing back against the leather as Cat starts the engine. Cat tells her to put whatever she likes on the radio, so she plugs in her phone, queues up a playlist of songs that remind her of Cat, and settles her hand on Cat’s thigh.

Cat’s hand covers her own, their fingers tangling together as the lyrics ‘kiss me with adventure, until I forget my name’ echoes through the speakers. They’re on the highway and the night sky is clear, Cat’s profile lit up by the soft glow of the moonlight filtering into the car, the most breathtaking thing that Kara’s ever seen.

//

It takes a little over an hour to drive to the beach house, the roads relatively clear of traffic, considering it’s a Friday night.

Cat pulls into the driveway and brings the car to a stop, stretching her arms above her head and wincing as her joints crack, protesting at being in the same position for too long. She collects their bags and leaves Kara to carefully extract a fast asleep Carter from the backseat as she unlocks the front door.

The last time she was here was Christmas, a miserable and lonely affair, the house feeling cold and empty despite having Carter at her side, but now she has Kara there, too, to light up every room.

Kara’s eyes widen as she steps inside, taking in the grand interior, a low whistle escaping her lips, eyes darting around the room. “This place is amazing.” She’s whispering, but Cat’s fairly certain that Carter’s so far gone that even if they were yelling it wouldn’t wake him. “Like, your apartment is impressive, but this place... wow.”

“It’s a good home away from home,” Cat agrees, already feeling more relaxed as she sets their bags down in the foyer. “Come on, I’ll show you where his room is.”

She leads Kara up the stairs to Carter’s bedroom, and Kara grins when she sees the glow in the dark stars that litter the ceiling, and the spaceships that cover his duvet. He’s already in his pyjamas, so they just tuck him in, placing his favourite teddy bear next to him before retreating from the room.

“I’ll give you the tour.” She shows Kara their bedroom, lets her admire the view from the large windows of the beach below them, the sound of the waves crashing onto the shore muted by the thick glass windowpanes.

“This is beautiful. Reminds me of home.”

“I forgot that you grew up by the beach.”

“Quite the change from the big city life I had with my parents,” Kara confirms. “We lived in Chicago – Midvale took some getting used to.”

“I’ll bet.” It still amazes her, sometimes, how Kara could have been through so much at such a young age and be as happy and bubbly as she is now, to not have been overcome by grief and rage. “Want to see the rest of the house?”

They make their way back downstairs, finish their tour out on the deck out back, probably Cat’s favourite spot in the place. There’s an outdoor heater for nights like this, and Cat fires it up when she sees Kara shivering, snuggles into her side on one of the outdoor couches she has out there.
Above them, the stars shine brightly, and below them, the water glistens in the moonlight, the waves rippling and the smell of salt in the air. Cat feels completely at peace, with her head on Kara’s shoulder and their legs intertwined, and when Kara gently tilts her head up to capture her lips in a kiss, Cat can’t help but deepen it, tangling her fingers in Kara’s hair and holding her close.

They’ve been apart too long for it to remain chaste, and things quickly turned heated, Cat clambering into Kara’s lap, one knee on either side of her hips. Kara’s hands slide under her sweatshirt, nails dragging teasingly across her skin, and when she discovers that Cat isn’t wearing a bra Kara groans into her mouth, one that Cat echoes when Kara brushes her nipples with her thumbs.

“Should we move this inside?” Kara asks, mouth pressed against Cat’s ear, and she shivers when Kara’s teeth scrape against her earlobe, breath hot against her skin.

“Why?” Cat asks, leaning back and admiring Kara’s mussed hair and kiss-swollen lips. “There’s no-one else around.” Her nearest neighbour is over three miles away, and there are no roads or footpaths around the edge of her property – she’d paid an extortionate amount for her home away from home to be secluded. “And even if there was, we could give them a show.”

Kara’s eyes darken at that, and Cat wonders if she’s got an interest in getting into compromising positions in public spaces – vows that she’ll find out the answer to that, one day, but for now there are other things that she’d much rather be doing.

She ducks down to kiss Kara once more, hot and messy, tongues sliding together and groaning as Kara tugs at her nipples. It’s ridiculous, how turned on she is already, how Kara can reduce her to a hot mess with just a few kisses and deliberate touches, and she’s never felt this way with anyone before, knows that Kara makes her feel this way because she’s something so, so special.

“Touch me,” Cat pleads, because she’s already wet and aching, desperate for Kara’s hands on her skin. “I want your fingers inside of me.”

“Fuck, Cat.” If Cat has learned anything from her and Kara’s explicit late-night phonecalls, it’s that Kara loves it when she talks dirty.

Eager hands reach for the zipper of her jeans and tug it down, just enough for Kara to slide her hand into Cat’s underwear, and Cat sighs as Kara’s fingers slip across slick heat, circling her clit before pressing inside.

It’s an awkward angle, Cat’s jeans restrictive, but it still feels amazing, and Cat rolls her hips, smirks when she glances down to see Kara watching her, eyes wide and jaw slack, desire written across her face.

“God, you’re so hot,” Kara breathes, and when Cat rolls her hips again, her eyes follow the movement, and Cat decides to give her a show.

She shrugs out of her sweatshirt, feels the cool night air on her skin and the warmth of the heater against her back, tilts her head back and runs her fingers through her hair, Kara’s eyes on her the whole time, feeling like they’re burning through her skin.

She circles her hips, slowly and then quicker, sinks down to take Kara deeper and groans at how perfect she feels, rides Kara’s fingers, steadies herself by settling her other hand on Kara’s shoulders, nails digging into her skin.

She comes with Kara’s name on her lips, thighs shaking, and it’s a long time before she manages to open her eyes, finds Kara looking back at her with amazement, and she’s quickly drawn down into a
deep kiss.

Cat squeaks as she’s shifted without warning, Kara’s arms wrapping around her and setting her down on the couch. The leather is cold against her skin and she shivers, drawing Kara closer but Kara has other ideas, kissing a heated trail down Cat’s neck before dragging her lips lower, until she’s settling on her knees between Cat’s splayed thighs.

Cat lifts her hips to allow Kara to tug down her jeans and underwear, because Kara’s stupidly talented with her mouth, and she’s already shaking before Kara’s even touched her, runs her hand through her hair as Kara kisses the inside of her thigh.

Then Kara’s kissing her clit, and Cat sighs, manages to hook a leg over Kara’s shoulder, heel braced against the small of Kara’s back, and she uses it as leverage to grind against Kara’s mouth as her tongue slides across her clit.

She can hear the crash of the waves and the wet sound of Kara working between her thighs, and when Kara’s fingers slip back inside of her, pressing deeper than before as she sucks Cat’s clit between her lips, Cat’s head tilts back, and she sees the stars above behind her eyelids when her eyes slam shut as Kara tips her over the edge for the second time.

“You feel so good,” Kara tells her, wiping at the back of her mouth before she’s climbing onto Cat’s lap. “I’ve missed you.”

“I missed you, too.” Cat cradles the side of her face, runs her thumb across her cheek and wonders how on earth she got to be so lucky. “Shall we head inside? Because I have grand plans for you, and by the time I’m through I’m confident that your legs will be shaking so much that you won’t be able to walk.”

“Oh yeah?”

“That’s a promise,” Cat whispers against Kara’s lips before she kisses her, tasting herself on Kara’s tongue. She pulls away, shrugging back into her clothes before she takes Kara’s hand and drags her back inside.

//

Cat is the first to wake up the next morning, stretches and allows herself to admire the glow of the early morning sun on the bare skin of Kara’s back. She’s lying on her front with her head turned towards Cat, one arm stretched under the pillow, still fast asleep.

She’s beautiful, and Cat wants this moment etched in her mind, never wants to forget what it’s like to wake up like this, to this amazing woman that she can’t quite believe is hers.

She reaches out a hand to run her fingertips across Kara’s skin, so light that she’s barely touching her, can’t help but lean forward to trace the same path with her lips, pressing a trail of gentle kisses along the length of Kara’s spine.

“Mm, this is a much better wake-up call than an alarm clock.” Kara’s eyes are still closed, her voice rough with sleep, but there’s a soft smile on her mouth. “What time is it?”

“Early,” Cat tells her, fingers drawing absentminded shapes on the small of Kara’s back. “You can go back to sleep, if you want. I’m going to shower and make breakfast before Carter wakes up.”

“I could join you?” Kara suggests, eyes blinking open.
“Only if you promise not to get too carried away.” The last thing she wants is for them to be a while and for Carter to come looking for them.

“I think I can manage that.”

“Come on then, sleepyhead.” Cat makes her way into her adjoining bathroom and turns the shower on, letting it run for a few moments to heat up. Kara joins her a few seconds later, strong arms wrapping around her waist and her chin settling on Cat’s shoulder.

“I could get used to waking up like this,” Kara murmurs, voice soft in Cat’s ear. “Waking up to you.”

“Me too.” She relaxes back in Kara’s arms, and this is something that she hasn’t had in so long – someone to go to sleep with, someone to wake up with, someone to spend her days with. “I’m already so crazy about you.” She says it so quietly that it’s almost carried away by the sound of the water hitting the bottom of the shower, but Kara’s arms tighten around her waist and she knows that the other woman heard her.

“I’m crazy about you, too.”

“It’s terrifying.”

“But it’s worth it,” Kara replies, voice soft in her ear, and Cat has to agree with her because everything that they’ve been through to get here, every night they spent apart desperately wishing to be together, it was all worth it, because it led them here, to what feels like paradise.

“It really is.” They step into the shower, the water hot on Cat’s skin, Kara still pressed against her back, and trade lazy kisses under the spray of the water.

It would be easy for things to turn heated but it never does, and there’s a deeper kind of intimacy between them as they wash one another’s hair and skin, Kara’s hands feeling amazing as they run across her back.

They wrap themselves in fluffy towels when they’re finished, Cat changing into sweats and a soft, worn flannel because she’s not planning on leaving the house anytime soon. She tasks Kara with waking Carter and pads downstairs into the kitchen, rustling up some eggs and bacon for breakfast, ready by the time they two of them join her.

“This smells amazing, thank you.” Kara presses a grateful kiss to her cheek as she settles at the kitchen table, and a still-sleepy Carter gives Cat a hug as she helps him into his seat.

Once they’d finished eating Carter demands to go down the beach, and neither she nor Kara can deny him, so Cat takes the two of them down the winding stone steps cut into the side of the cliff that lead down to the sand below.

It’s a secluded beach, just for them, and even though the air is a little chilly, Carter doesn’t seem to mind, bounds across the sand carrying his tiny bucket and spade, ready to build as many sandcastles as he possibly can.

He enlists Kara’s help, and Cat relaxes back on the towel she’d brought down with her and a book, although she doesn’t read much of it, is too busy stealing glances at Kara and her son, basking in the easy way that they get along.

Their laughter is infectious, carrying across the sand, and it doesn’t take them long to build an impressive array of elaborate sand structures, littered across the surf.
“You’re quite the architect, aren’t you?” Cat asks when Kara drops down beside her, Carter settling down between them.

“I did have a few years of my childhood to practice,” Kara points out, gaze fixed on the horizon. “I’d have brought my surfing stuff if I knew the waves would be this good.”

“You surf?” Cat doesn’t know why it surprises her – Kara seems to have a multitude of hobbies, and she’s excellent at all of them.

“Not so much anymore, but I used to. I was never as good as Alex – she did competitions and everything – but I usually managed to hold my own. How about you?”

“Never tried it.”

“I’ll teach you.”

“No, thank you.”

“Why not?”

“She can’t swim,” Carter supplies, and Cat frowns down at him, the little traitor.

“I can swim,” Cat corrects, “I just choose not to. Not in the ocean.”

“Scared?” Kara’s voice is teasing, and Cat narrows her eyes at her.

“Sensible, more like. The ocean is dangerous. You could get swept out, or pushed under, or hit rocks, or get eaten by a shark -”

“So you are scared.” Kara’s eyes are twinkling, and Cat huffs. “You’re cute.”

“I am not cute.”

Kara just chuckles, far too amused than Cat feels she has any right to be. “Yeah, you are.” Kara leans close, kisses at the corner of Cat’s mouth until she’s smiling instead of pouting. “I won’t take you surfing.”

“Can I go?” Carter asks, eyes eager as he looks up at them, and Cat is quick to shake her head.

“Absolutely not.” It’s Carter’s turn to pout, and Cat ruffles his hair. “You can start with swimming lessons, and we’ll go from there.”

“Now?”

“The water’s a little cold today, buddy,” Kara tells him, “and I don’t think you have any swimming trunks with you.”

“Perhaps Kara can take you when we get back home,” Cat suggests, because she doesn’t want a tantrum brewing, and thankfully that seems to satisfy him.

Cat makes them a picnic for lunch, while Kara takes Carter to explore the wildlife that’s collected in the rock pools in one corner of the bay. They spend their afternoon basking in the weak winter sunlight that filters through the wispy clouds above, and retire back the house just before it goes dark.

The sunsets from the top of the cliffs are always magnificent, and Cat wants Kara to see it, takes her and Carter along the path the winding path that leads to the cliff’s edge, just in time for the sun to
start its descent.

Kara brings her sketchbook, and Cat doesn’t know whether she should look at the sky, lit up in hues of red and orange, or at Kara, her face screwed up in concentration as she tries to replicate the view on paper.

Carter chooses the latter, peering over Kara’s shoulder to watch her work with a look of fascination on his face. Kara holds the drawing up for the two of them to admire when she’s done, and Cat can’t quite believe how talented she is, to have created something so beautiful in hardly any time at all.

“You could be a professional,” Cat tells her, snuggling into Kara’s side where they sit, Carter in Cat’s lap.

“Maybe in another life,” Kara murmurs, setting the sketchbook down, “but not this one.”

“Classes still going well?” Cat doesn’t understand half of the words Kara says when she tries to explain the things that she’s learning, but she still listens because it’s important to Kara, so it’s important to her, too.

“Yeah, they’re great. And I’ve not been swamped with too many assignments yet.” Carter clambers over to her, and Kara wraps him in a hug. “You still remember your constellations, kiddo?” He shakes his head, so Kara shifts so that she’s lying on her back, gazing up at the stars, Carter on her chest. “The sky is so clear out here, away from the city.”

“It’s beautiful.”

“So are you,” Kara quips, which makes Cat smile, and she allows herself to be tugged down so that she’s lying beside Kara, their shoulders pressed together.

Kara traces the patterns of the stars in the sky with one hand, her other tangled with Cat’s, resting by their side, a glint in her eye and the light of the moon on her face. It’s a perfect end to a perfect day, and Cat can’t wait for more nights like this, for a lifetime of this, of Kara by her side with her son (their son, because she knows he will be, one day, knows that Kara will accept him with open arms) curled up in her arms.

The thought of a future like this fills her with warmth, with happiness and hope, and as she turns to look at Kara, the three words that she’s been struggling to hold back every time they’re around one another lately finally slip free.

“I love you.” It’s quiet, but she knows Kara hears it, because she stops mid-sentence to glance at Cat with wide eyes, and Cat wonders if maybe she’s made a mistake, if maybe she’s said too much too soon.

“You do?” But Kara’s surprise quickly morphs into something like amazement, and Cat nods her head.

“I do. I know it’s soon, but I… I’m tired of holding myself back when it comes to you, and I’m not going to do it anymore.”

“I love you, too.” Cat’s heart thuds in her chest, and she didn’t know it was possible to feel this much euphoria until Kara Danvers walked into her life. “So much.”

“And I love both of you!” Carter chirps from between them, and they both chuckle, Cat kissing the top of his head before she kisses Kara, soft and slow, filled with more emotion than she knows what to do with.
“Oh, hey, you made it!” Lucy greets Cat as she steps through the open doorway of apartment 503, an easy smile on her face as she stands in the centre of the living room, surrounded by boxes. “Kara wasn’t convinced you’d actually show.”

“I said I wouldn’t carry anything up those godforsaken stairs,” Cat confirms, “but I’m more than happy to unpack.”

“A sensible woman,” Lucy replies, grinning. “Your girl is in there,” she stabs her thumb over shoulder in the direction of one of the bedrooms, “arguing with James over the best way to get a couch up here.”

“I’ll go say hi.” Lucy waves her away, and Cat steps into the bedroom, smiles at James and presses a kiss to Kara’s cheek. “Hey, you.”

“Hey.” Kara is wearing a tank top that leaves her arms bare and is tight enough to cling to the defined muscles of her abs, and Cat thinks that seeing her carrying heavy things around is going to leave her very hot and bothered. “You okay?”

“Mm, are you? I heard you’re arguing.”

“We’re politely disagreeing,” Kara corrects, and Cat chuckles.

“Well, I’ll leave you to it.”

“Yeah?” Kara glances towards the door, where Lucy waits, and Cat knows that she’s a little nervous about leaving the two of them alone – she’s been told that Lucy can be a lot, but she also knows that Kara is desperate for Cat to get along with her friends, and Cat wants that, too.

“We’ll be fine.” She leans up to give her a quick kiss before stepping back. “Nice to see you again, James.”

“You too, Cat. Thanks for helping out – you didn’t have to.”

“Oh, it’s fine.” It’s a strange dynamic, between the two of them, considering he’ll officially be her employee come Monday. When Kara had asked if Cat wanted to help her friends move in, she hadn’t been sure whether to accept, but she’d been assured that James was fine with it. “Just don’t let anyone at the office think that I’ll make a habit of helping any new employees relocate.”

“I wouldn’t dream of it,” James laughs, and Cat smiles as she ducks back into the living room to help Lucy.

She’s the one in charge, giving Kara and James their orders as they go to collect the next lot of boxes from the moving van downstairs. Cat is tasked with unpacking the kitchen supplies, and she piles everything onto the kitchen counter and lets Lucy put everything into its rightful place.

It’s quiet, for a while, the only sound the clink of plates or the rustle of cardboard, and the soft music playing from Lucy’s phone.

Kara returns before James, carrying a box so massive that she has to peer around the side of it in order to see where she’s going. It must be heavy, because there’s a thin sheen of sweat on her skin, and the muscles in her arms are straining, and Cat forgets, as Kara strides from the front door and
into the bedroom, what she’s supposed to be doing, can only blink after her, absolutely transfixed by how hot her girlfriend is.

“You okay there, Cat?” Lucy’s voice is filled with barely-suppressed laughter, and she looks positively gleeful as Cat spins to face her, cheeks turning pink at being caught staring. “Feeling a little hot under the collar?”

“She wore that shirt on purpose,” Cat grumbles, after Kara has disappeared back downstairs with a wave, and Lucy chuckles.

“Got a thing for arms?”

“Kara’s specifically,” Cat admits.

“You’re really far gone for her, aren’t you?” Lucy’s watching her closely, and usually a question like that would make her retreat, but Kara knows how Cat feels about her, and Cat doesn’t mind letting the whole world know, too.

“Totally and completely.”

“I’m glad. You guys are good together – I’m glad you worked everything out, in the end.” James walks through the door, his own arms straining, and Lucy sighs happily as she watches him go by. “We’ve done pretty well for ourselves, haven’t we?”

“We have,” Cat agrees. “How did you two meet?”

“At a bar,” Lucy replies, stacking plates at the bottom of an empty cupboard. “I was being hassled by a really persistent guy, so I made up a boyfriend and when the guy asked me who it was, I chose the tallest person the room. When I went over James played along perfectly. My knight in shining armour.” Lucy blows James a kiss as he remerges from the bedroom to make his next trip downstairs. “I very quickly realised that he was actual boyfriend material and was quick to snap him up. His only downside was the fact that my sister was dating his roommate, but I didn’t find that out until I was already in too deep.”

“You and Lois don’t get along?”

“Nope,” Lucy shakes her head. “We used to, when we were little we were really close but then our Mom died, and… well, things changed after that. Lois was my dad’s perfect little angel who could do no wrong, and I was the girl who’d never live up to the legacy of his first born.” There’s a bitter note in Lucy’s voice. “We fell out of touch when I moved out. When I ran into her at James’ apartment it was the first time I’d seen her in about three years. I thought I’d seen a ghost.”

“I can imagine.”

“We can be civil, for Clark and James’ sake, but that’s about it. She’s just… not easy to get along with, but I’m sure you know that better than most.”

“I do,” Cat confirms.

“I still can’t believe you’re actually friends.”

“Frenemies would probably be a more appropriate term.”

“You’re not going to be the maid of honour at her wedding, then?”
“I doubt she’s planning to ask,” Cat replies, emptying the last of the boxes marked ‘kitchen’ and leaning back against the counter as Lucy hurries to tidy things away, “but if she did, god, I’d give a good speech.”

“Now that would be something I’d love to hear.”

“Where do you want me next?” Cat asks once the kitchen is clear, and Lucy tasks her with shuffling the boxes in the living room around so that there’s space for the furniture that the others are bringing up.

James and Kara somehow manage to carry both a two and three seater couch and an armchair up all five flights of stairs, the last of the items from the moving van, and when Kara settles down to assemble some of the flatpack furniture Cat almost has to leave the room because she’s far too overwhelmed by watching Kara’s muscles ripple underneath her skin.

She helps Lucy unpack the things for the living room whilst trying to ignore Kara building a closet and sipping from a much-deserved bottle of beer, James busy putting together the bed so that he and Lucy don’t have to sleep on a mattress on the floor.

“Are Maggie and Alex working today?” Cat asks, as she and Lucy try to help with the carpentry, attempting to put together a bookcase and not being at all successful. The instructions are spread out on the floor in front of them, both she and Cat staring down at them with matching frowns, trying to figure out which piece is which.

“Uh-huh.” Lucy lines up two pieces of wood, and trusts Cat to hammer in the nails to hold them together. “Alex was supposed to be off, but she got called in cause someone else was ill. They should be by later, though. Where’s your little guy spending his Saturday?”

“His father wanted him for the weekend.” It was unusual for Chris to ask, so Cat had agreed, glad that she had Kara to keep her company.

“Kara said he was a bit of an asshole.”

“Kara is correct.” Cat glances over at her, knows she’s listening because she’s smirking, the closet nearly finished. “But he’s at least making more of an effort with Carter, now.”

“Must be hard, parenting a kid through a divorce.”

“It’s not easy,” Cat admits. “And I miss him when he’s gone, but I’d never keep him from his father, even if he is an asshole.”

Kara finishes both the closet she was working on and a second before Cat and Lucy have even half-finished their bookcase, and when Kara comes over to them, eyes sparkling, and asks if they need any help, both Cat and Lucy are only too happy to let her. Lucy disappears to fill her new closets with her extensive clothing collection, and Cat reclines back on the couch.

“Are you not gonna help?” Kara asks as she kneels on the floor, shaking her head when she sees the mess that Cat and Lucy have left for her to deal with. “On second thought, maybe that’s not such a good idea.”

“I’d rather just enjoy the view.” Kara grins, and Cat is certain that she’s flexing her muscles on purpose as she dismantles what Cat and Lucy had put together and starts again, assembling the whole thing in less than ten minutes. “God, you’re hot.”

“Why?” Kara asks, laughing as she climbs to her feet, standing the bookcase up and setting it back
against the wall. “Because I can follow instructions?”

“Well, I already knew that.” Cat’s voice is low, suggestive, thinking about all the times she’s had Kara breathless and aching on the phone late at night, desperate to touch herself but only doing so when Cat allows it, and Karaflushes pink, eyes darkening. “But no. There’s just something about a woman who’s so good with her hands.”

“But you already know that I’m good with my hands,” Kara fires back, and god, that confidence is hot, too, heat settling in the pit of Cat’s stomach.

“Damn, Kara, I didn’t know you had that in you.” Kara whirls around so fast that she nearly falls over, finds Lucy leaning in the bedroom doorway with a look of glee on her face, and Cat chuckles when Kara turns a deep shade of crimson. “Have you been hiding a dirty streak from me all this time?”

“I’m not… that’s not… I -”

“Cat, I think I broke your girlfriend.” Lucy looks positively delighted, while Kara looks absolutely mortified, drops down beside Cat on the couch and hides her head in Cat’s shoulder.

“I love your secret dirty streak,” Cat whispers in Kara’s ear when Lucy is distracted by something James asks her, and Kara emerges from her hiding place, cheeks still tinged pink.

Kara’s saved any further teasing by Lucy when there’s a knock on the door, Lucy opening it to find Maggie and Alex on the other side, bearing two huge pizzas and two six packs of beer.

“We felt bad that we couldn’t help you guys out today, so we thought we’d bring dinner, sustenance for all your hard work,” Alex says as she deposits the pizzas on the kitchen counter and shrugs out of her leather jacket.

“Mine and James’ hard work, more like,” Kara corrects. “We did all the heavy lifting.”

“But you both looked so good doing it,” Lucy defends, and Kara rolls her eyes. “Thank you, though, all of you. I’m glad we’re moving to a city where we’re already surrounded by so many friends.” Cat feels a little awkward, at that – she’s only met them all a handful of times, after all, and certainly doesn’t consider herself to be part of Kara’s little group, but Lucy’s eyes settle on her like she knows exactly what Cat’s thinking, throws her a reassuring smile that makes Cat thinks that she might be included, after all.

It’s not a feeling she’s used to, having friends. Lois is the closest thing she has, and she knows that their relationship isn’t exactly conventional. Cat knows that she’s not easy to get along with, that she keeps people at arm’s length and doesn’t let anyone get too close lest she get burned when they leave, but Kara had changed all of that, opened up her life to warmth and brightness, made her really feel again.

She spends her Saturday night eating greasy slices of pizza (Kara teases her about it, says she’s never seen someone eat pizza as delicately as Cat does) and sipping from bottles of Budweiser, squeezed into an armchair with Kara, not an inch of space between them.

Lucy coos at how cute they are together, even after they beat her and James at Taboo, and it’s so nice to have a night like this, full of light and laughter, surrounded by what she knows is Kara’s family, feels like one day they could be hers, too.
Kara wakes up to the smell of pancakes on Sunday morning, wafting in through her open bedroom door, and she’s quick to pull on some underwear and a loose-fitting t-shirt, pads into the kitchen to find Cat behind the stove.

“Have I told you lately that I love you?” Kara asks, arms sliding around Cat’s waist and pulling the other woman into her chest as she expertly flips the last pancake. “Because I do. A lot.” She doesn’t think telling Cat that will ever get old, makes sure she says it at least once a day.

“You’re only saying that because I made you breakfast,” Cat quips, adding the pancake to the stack of them that sit waiting on the kitchen counter.

“Incorrect,” Kara tells her, pressing a kiss to the slope of her neck. “That’s just one of the many reasons why I love you.”

“I love you, too,” Cat tells her, and Kara’s heart sings like it does whenever she hears Cat say those words. “Now, eat your pancakes.”

“Yes, boss.” Cat rolls her eyes, watches Kara with her usual level of amazement as she eats six in the same amount of time it takes Cat to eat two. “What do you want to do today?”

“I don’t mind. I’m happy doing anything as long as it’s with you.”

“What would the world say if they knew Cat Grant was such a softie?” Cat makes a face at her, swats at Kara’s shoulder, but she’s quick to dodge out of the way. “Hello? He’s what?” Kara turns at the sound of Cat’s voice, harsh and loud and filled with something that sounds a lot like worry, and when she gets a look at Cat’s face she sees that it’s drained, deathly pale. “Okay. Okay, I’ll meet you there.”

“What’s wrong?” Kara asks as soon as Cat’s let the phone drop back down to her side, because she knows something is.

“It’s Carter… he fell over, hurt himself. Chris thinks he might have broken his arm.”

“Oh, shit.” Kara lets the plates clatter into the sink, darts back to Cat’s side. “Is he taking him to the hospital?” Cat nods, and Kara runs a hand over her back. “Did he tell you which one?” Another nod. “Okay, then, let’s get dressed and we can go and meet them there.” That seems to snap Cat out of the spell she’s under, her eyes, which had been unfocused, meeting Kara’s.

“You don’t have to come.” Kara’s face must betray how wounded that makes her feel, because Cat is quick to elaborate. “I didn’t mean it like that, just… you probably didn’t imagine spending your Sunday in the emergency room.”

“No,” Kara concedes, “but I did imagine spending it with you, and if that’s where you’re going to be, I’m not leaving your side. Unless you don’t want me to.” Cat shakes her head. “Good. I want to be there for you, Cat, and for Carter, too. I know he’s not my kid, but I still care about him.”

“What did I ever do to deserve you?” Cat whispers, her eyes filled with wonder and, unless Kara is mistaken, the sheen of tears, and she leans down to press a gentle kiss to her lips.

“Come on,” Kara tugs Cat upright and towards the bedroom, using her other hand to call them a Lyft to the hospital, because Cat might not like public transport, but it was going to be the quickest way
for them to get there.

They’re in the emergency room less than thirty minutes after the initial phonecall, but Chris has already beaten them there, is sitting, leg bouncing impatiently, in-between a pale-faced Carter and a pretty blonde that Kara can only assume is his new girlfriend.

Cat drops to her knees immediately in-front of her son, fretting over him, smoothing his hair back and taking stock of his face. There’s no colour in his cheeks, but his eyes are ringed red, a telltale sign that he’s been crying. There’s an icepack on his left arm, but even so, Kara can tell that it’s bent at an unnatural angle.

“What’s she doing here?” Chris’ eyes are focused only on Kara, his eyebrows knitted into a frown, and she shifts awkwardly under the weight of his stare.

“She was with me when you called,” Cat replies, eyes never leaving Carter’s face, and she misses the way Chris sneers in response.

“She’s not family, she shouldn’t be here.”

“Neither is your latest flavour of the month,” Cat hisses, and Kara can tell that it’s taking every ounce of self-control she has not to scream at him, make a scene in-front of everyone else in the waiting room. “And Kara is family, to me, and to Carter.”

“Seriously?” Chris scoffs, and Cat’s eyes are furious, and Kara wonders if she’s going to strike him.

“Hey.” She runs a gentle hand down Cat’s back, feels her relax, just a little, at the touch, diffusing some of the building tension. “I’m going to go get a coffee, do you want one?” Cat nods, and Kara turns towards Carter. “How about you, little man? You want anything?” He shakes his head, and Kara doesn’t ask the other two, just wanders off to the nearest vending machine, and by the time she returns with two cups of steaming coffee, Cat seems to have calmed down.


“We were at the park.” It’s Chris who answers, not Carter. “He was playing, and then he just… he tripped over a rock, or something, and tried to catch himself and then all I could hear was him screaming.” Chris looks ill at the memory. “I swear I was watching him, Cat. I just couldn’t get there fast enough to catch him.”

“It’s not your fault.” Cat’s voice is quiet but steady, and Chris looks amazed at the words. “It could have happened to either one of us.”

Carter’s name is called a few moments later, a nurse coming over to send him for an x-ray, and only one of them is allowed to accompany him. Chris doesn’t protest as Cat lifts him into her arms, and Kara watches them disappear down the hall, filled with restless energy as soon as they’ve gone.

She’s always hated hospitals.

The first time she’d ever been in one it was with a broken arm of her own, rushed there in an ambulance after her house had burned down to the ground, Clark clutching her other hand the whole way there.

She’d been reeling from the loss of her parents, separated from her cousin as he was treated for injuries he’d also sustained, alone and terrified and in an unimaginable amount of pain, and ever since hospitals just reminded her of the worst day of her life.
The second time she’d been in one had been when Jeremiah had died. He’d had a heart attack, been rushed to the hospital in an ambulance of his own, and Kara remembers waiting in a room not dissimilar to this one, sandwiched between Alex and Eliza, remembers the doctor coming to tell them that he hadn’t made it, that he was gone, and only a few months after moving in with the Danvers’, Kara had lost another father figure, had her world crumble once again.

She feels anxious, the longer she waits, feels too hot, all of a sudden, excuses herself to the bathroom and splashes water on her face in an attempt to cool down, and to fight of the nausea she feels building in her stomach.

By the time she returns, Cat and Carter are back, and it eases her panic, to see Cat waiting there, Carter perched on her knee. “Are you okay?” Cat asks, frowning when she gets a look at Kara’s face. “You look a little pale.”

“I’m okay.” Cat just levels her with a look that screams she doesn’t believe her. “I just… I haven’t had such good experience with hospitals, that’s all. But I’m fine, really.” Cat looks like she wants to press, but doesn’t. “Did they say if it was broken?”

“Not yet, but it must be, considering the angle it’s at and how swollen it is under there.” Cat toys with the edge of Carter’s icepack.

“You know, buddy, I broke my arm once. My left one, too.”

“You did?”

“Uh-huh. Right here.” She taps the spot just below her wrist. “You can still feel where it healed.”

“Can I feel?” She takes his uninjured hand and runs it along where the bones had knitted together, letting him feel the notch beneath her skin. “Gross!” He scrunches up his nose and looks absolutely adorable, and Kara chuckles. “What did you do?”

“Oh, I, uh, fell over, too.” It’s not exactly accurate – she’d leapt off a roof to try and escape the flames – but she doesn’t think Carter needs to know all the gory details. “I was a bit older than you, though.” There’s a flash of recognition in Cat’s eyes, as though she’s realized why Kara might have a deep-rooted hatred of hospitals, and she rests a hand on Kara’s thigh, squeezing gently.

“It hurts.” His bottom lip trembles, and Kara’s heart breaks for him.

“Oh, I know, sweetheart.” She runs a hand through his hair. “But it won’t be for long. And hey, you’re gonna get a really cool cast that you can draw all over.”

“Really?”

“Uh-huh. I’ll help you decorate it.” He beams at the prospect, pain temporarily forgotten.

It doesn’t take long for his name to be called again, and when the nurse says that two people can come this time, Chris is quick to rise to his feet but Carter reaches for Kara, tugging at her jacket. “I want Kara to come.”

“Oh, um,” Kara feels awkward, to be in the middle of this family affair, wishes she could sink into the floor, “Carter, I really think that your Dad should - ”

“No, it’s okay.” Chris looks a little defeated, but he sinks back down into the chair. “If he wants you to go, you should go.” Cat looks just as surprised by Kara at her ex’s words, but there’s no time to dwell on it because the faster they get Carter seen to, the faster he can start feeling better.
The doctor shows them the x-ray, highlights the break in his tiny bones, and sends him for a plaster cast. He chooses his favourite colour, green, and he’s so good when they’re putting it on even though she can see how much it hurts him.

“You two have a very brave son,” the nurse who’s applying the cast tells them, and Kara opens her mouth to correct her, but Cat answers before she can, her eyes meeting Kara’s across the hospital bed.

“Yeah,” she says, her voice soft, “we do.”

Carter has to wear it for at least four weeks, and has weekly hospital appointments for Cat to juggle along with everything else, but it’s not a severe break, and they’re all relieved to hear that he’ll make a full recovery.

Kara hovers behind Cat as she relays all that information to Chris, and when he asks to speak to her as they’re heading for the parking lot, Kara eyes him warily, but slows her pace so that Cat, Carter and Chris’ girlfriend are a few steps ahead, out of earshot.

“I just wanted to apologize.” Chris runs a hand through his hair, looking haggard. “I shouldn’t have said what I did before, about you not being here. You’re really good with him, and it’s clear he’s crazy about you. And… Cat and I may not get along, but I don’t want her to be miserable, and ever since you came along… well, she seems to be happier with you than she ever was with me.”

“Um, thanks?” Kara isn’t really sure what her response to supposed to be to that, but that seems to be sufficient enough for Chris, who nods awkwardly at her before hurrying to catch up with his girlfriend, and Kara stares after him with bemusement.

Cat had called her driver to pick them up, settles Carter in the backseat whilst Kara retrieves his things from the back of Chris’ car before he bids them farewell.

“What was that all about?” Cat asks, once they’re on their way back to her apartment. “With Chris?”

“He apologized for the things he said before, about me not being welcome. Said he’s glad we’re happy.”

“Seriously?” Cat looks bewildered. “Chris said that to you? My ex-husband?”

“Uh-huh.”

“Wow.” Cat looks astounded. “Only you could win him over.” Kara smiles, carries Carter up the apartment when the car pulls up outside of Cat’s building. His pain meds and all the excitement have made him sleepy, and Kara settles him in bed for a well-deserved nap. Cat fusses over him for a few long moments until Kara gently pulls her away, taking her hand and leading her to the living room couch.

“Thank you for being there for us today,” Cat murmurs, lifting up one of Kara’s arms so that she can snuggle into her side, head resting on Kara’s shoulder. “I know it couldn’t have been easy. I should’ve realised that it wouldn’t bring back happy memories for you.”

“It’s okay,” Kara shrugs, but Cat shakes her head, turns her head to meet Kara’s gaze.

“It’s not. This morning, I just… I didn’t think. You broke your arm the night your parents died, didn’t you?”

“Yeah.” It’s been so many years, but thinking of them always makes her chest ache. “I’ve only ever
been to hospitals after someone’s died.”

“My own memories aren’t very fond, either.” Cat takes a breath, eyes fixed on the view of the city through the large windows. “Before giving birth, the first and only time I’d been in a hospital had been when my father died.”

“Were you close?” They must have been, because the pain in Cat’s eyes is still raw.

“We were. He was the best.” Cat’s smile is fond. “He raised me, whilst my mother was off building her career. I still don’t know what he saw in her, because he was everything she wasn’t – kind, smart, brave. When he died, she shipped me off to boarding school because she didn’t want to deal with me and my grief.”

“That’s awful, Cat.” Kara rubs a hand across the small of Cat’s back, can’t imagine what it would have been like, to be sent away to a new school, completely alone and reeling with loss, knows that, had that been her after either her parents or Jeremiah, she wouldn’t have survived it. “I’m so sorry. What happened to him?”

“Cancer. By the time they found it, it was incurable. My mother was too busy to take time out of her life to take care of him, so it mostly fell to me.” Cat’s voice wavers, and Kara squeezes her tighter. “It was less than a year after he was diagnosed that he passed away. Those last few weeks were awful.”

“You must have been so strong, to go through that and survive.”

“Says you.” Cat meets Kara’s gaze. “My loss turned me into a bitter cynic, but you? You’ve gone through so much, but you’re still such an optimist. You’re incredible.” Kara ducks her head, but Cat reaches for her chin, tilts her head back up. “I mean it, Kara. I can’t believe how lucky I am to have found you. Do you have any idea how much you’ve already changed my life?”

“Do you have any idea how much you’ve changed mine?” Kara counters. “I’ve never felt like this before, never had someone to wake up with or someone’s arms to fall asleep in, someone to come home to at the end of the day. I’ve never loved someone this much, and that goes for you and Carter.”

“I’ve never felt like this before either,” Cat admits, playing with a strand of Kara’s hair. “In all my life. Sometimes I can’t even believe you’re real.”

“But I am,” Kara murmurs, dropping her head to brush a kiss against Cat’s lips.

“You are,” Cat agrees, sighing against Kara’s mouth. “And you’re all mine.”
Chapter 28

Kara stays at Cat’s on Sunday night, both of them needing some comfort after the emotional toll the day had taken. Carter crawls into bed with them in the middle of the night, having trouble sleeping with his cast, and Kara wakes up sandwiched between the two of them, the best possible start to the day.

Kara gets Carter dressed while Cat’s in the shower, makes him up a bowl of cereal and it feels almost like old times, except when Cat comes into the kitchen she wraps her arms around Kara and presses a kiss against her lips, and things had been good before, before London, but god, they’re so much better now.

They eat breakfast together as a family before going their separate ways when Ella arrives (after she gets her instructions from Cat about what time Carter gets his pain meds, and what he is and isn’t allowed to do, and Ella listens attentively and Kara knows he’s in excellent hands), Cat heading for work and Kara back to her apartment, with a couple of hours to spare before her first class at eleven.

Her second class isn’t until three, and she spends the gap sipping coffee with some of her classmates down by the lake that Alex had taken her to when she’d shown Kara around campus. Her class sizes are small, which she likes, and everyone is friendly, which just makes the whole experience even more fun.

Eliza texts her as she’s packing her things away at the end of her final class of the day, letting her know that she’s thinking of coming to visit that weekend if that’s okay, and Kara smiles, replies that that would be great, is already excited.

She can’t wait for Eliza to meet Cat, for all parts of her life to finally come together, although she knows that the thought makes Cat nervous, that she’s terrified of making the wrong impression. Insecurity isn’t a thing she ever expected to associate with Cat Grant, but the fact that she’s so worried about making a good impression only makes Kara love her even more.

She decides to swing by CatCo on her way home, grabs a coffee on the way in-case Cat’s having a crappy day, and picks one up for James, too, because she knows he’d been nervous for his first day even though she knows he’ll have done great.

“Hey, Eve.” She pauses at her desk, and Eve grins back at her. “How are you?”

“Good, thank you.” Kara can see Cat within her office, squinting at her computer screen, look of deep concentration on her face. “You?”

“Really great.”

“Glad to hear it. You can go in, if you like. She said she didn’t want to be disturbed, but I know that doesn’t apply to you.” Kara still knocks before she steps inside, watches as Cat’s frown morphs into
a tired smile as Kara crosses the threshold.

“Need a pick me up?” Kara asks, depositing the latte she’d brought on Cat’s desk, receives a grateful smile in response.

“Thank you.”

“Been busy?”

“Yep.” Cat pushes her glasses up to the top of her head and rubs at her temples. “I’m not getting out of here anytime soon, so Ella is in for another late night.”

“I could go and take over for her, if you want?” Her only plans for that night had been curling up on her couch with Netflix, but hanging out with Carter would be much more fun.

“You don’t have to do that.”

“I know, but I’d like to. Besides, I promised him that I’d help him decorate his cast.” They hadn’t done it yesterday because he was still a little tender.

“Are you sure?” Kara nods. “I’ll let Ella know.”

“Cool.” Kara had come over here to let Cat know about Eliza’s visit, but now that she knows that she isn’t having the best day, maybe it isn’t the right time. It can wait until later, so she’s about to leave Cat to get back to her work when the other woman speaks.

“What’s on your mind? And don’t say nothing, because I know you too well for that. You didn’t come over here just to give coffee, did you?”

“Busted.” Kara smiles. “Um, Eliza texted me before to let me know that she’s going to come visit this weekend.” Cat stills, sits up a little straighter in her chair. “You don’t have to meet her this time, if you don’t want to.” She knows that it’s a big step, doesn’t want to push Cat too far too soon. “I just wanted to let you know that she’d be around.”

“Of course I’d like to meet her,” Cat replies, voice soft. “Terrifying as the thought may be.”

“I already told you, you don’t need to be scared. She already gave us her seal of approval.” She’d told Cat about the conversation she’d had with Eliza the same night that she’d called. “You don’t have anything to worry about.”

“She could rescind that approval when she meets me.” Cat is fretting, and Kara thinks it’s adorable. “I’ve never made a good impression when meeting the parents.”

“Well, this time is going to be different,” Kara assures her, because she knows that Eliza is going to love her. “I promise.”

“Okay.” Cat doesn’t look convinced, but she appears to accept it, for now. “I actually have an invitation of my own to extend.”

“Oh yeah?”

“Mm. There’s an awards show coming up, in Metropolis. I was wondering if you’d like to go with me? You don’t have to.” Cat looks nervous, taps her fingers against the side of her mouse. “It’s a public event, and we’ll definitely be photographed together and have to deal with the media shitstorm that’ll come along with it, but - ”
“Cat.” Kara cuts her off, already smiling. “I’d love to.”

“You would?”

“Of course. I want the whole world to know that you’re mine.” Cat smiles, looks like she wants to kiss her, and Kara would dip down to press their lips together if not for the whole bullpen probably looking their way. “I should probably let you get back to work, huh?”

“Unfortunately.” Cat grimaces. “Hopefully I won’t be back too late, but no promises.”

“Okay,” Kara picks up the coffee she’d gotten for James, hopes it hasn’t gone cold. “Could you point me towards James’ office? I want to make sure he had a good first day.”

“You’re a good friend,” Cat smiles, before pointing. “It’s just around that corner.”

“I’ll see you later.” Kara risks ducking down to kiss Cat’s cheek. “I love you.”

“I love you, too.” There’s a spring in her step as she returns to the bullpen, ignoring the whispers and stares that follow her as she goes in search of James. She finds his office easily enough, his name written on the door that she knocks on.

“Hey!” He grins when he looks up and sees her, waves her in and stands to wrap her up in a hug. “What are you doing here?”

“Thought I’d come see how your first day was going. Bring you some coffee.” She hands him the cup. “I saw Cat on my way here though, so I’m not sure how hot it is, sorry.”

“It’s fine,” he assures her, taking a sip. “And my day’s been spent mostly in HR signing things, but this office is definitely a step up from the one I shared at the Daily Planet.”

“Missing Clark, though?” She asks, because they two of them have been inseparable since the day they met.

“A little,” he admits. “But this was the right move for me, and for Lucy. She got that job she applied for with the DA.” Kara makes a mental note to send her a congratulatory text later. “And who knows, maybe we can persuade him and Lois to join us out here.”

“I think having Cat Grant and Lois Lane in the same city at the same time might be too much for the universe to bear.”

“Good point,” James chuckles.

Someone knocks on his door, then, and Kara bids him farewell, takes the subway over to Cat’s place and is greeted by an ecstatic Carter, looking much perkier than he had that morning.

“Hey, kiddo.”

“You’re back!”

“I am.” She ruffles his hair and turns towards Ella. “How’s he been?”

“He’s been fine. In a little pain, but it hasn’t affected him too much.” Kara’s glad to hear it, and once Ella’s gone they settle down to make his cast look a little brighter whilst watching some of his favourite cartoons.

Kara draws whatever he asks for, and by the time they’re done his arm is covered in a mishmash of
different things that he loves, from the Batman symbol to spaceships to very badly sketched
dinosaurs and even her, his and Cat’s star sign in the form of the constellations.

“You like it?” She asks him when she’s done, leaning back to survey her work, and he nods so
vigorously it’s a wonder he doesn’t strain something. “Just make sure you don’t sleep like this,” she
leans her cheek on her arm, “or you’ll end up with all of that tattooed on your face, and your Mom
would not be happy.” He giggles at the thought before snuggling into her chest, and she squeezes
him gently.

They whittle away the hours watching TV or reading his latest comic book, and Cat comes home
just in time to put him to bed, finds them both on the couch, Carter half-asleep, kisses them both in
greeting and Kara thinks that this is the kind of life she could get used to.

//

Eliza arrives in National City on Friday evening, but Cat’s hellish work week means she won’t be
done at the office until late, so she declines Kara’s dinner invitation, lets the woman spend some time
with her daughters before she’s introduced to Cat.

She doesn’t sleep well that night, without Kara there to hold, although she gets regular texts
throughout the evening, assuring her that everything tomorrow will work out fine.

Cat’s not so sure, though she desperately wants them to be. She’s never made a good first impression
(Chris’ mother-in-law had almost not come to the wedding, she’d disapproved so vehemently), but
she knows that family is important to Kara, more important than it has been to any of her previous
partners, and Cat knows that it needs to go well.

She shouldn’t be nervous – she’s built a company from the ground up, given more speeches than she
can count, met dozens of important people (hell, she’s met nine different presidents from all over the
world over the years, met royalty), but somehow, when she’s outside of Kara’s door on Saturday
afternoon she feels like a teenager all over again, meeting her first girlfriend’s parents for the first
time.

“Hey.” Maggie is on the other side of the door, looks surprised to see her. “You’re early.”


“Makes sense.” Maggie steps aside, lets her in. “Eliza isn’t here, and neither’s Kara. They just
popped out to pick up a couple of things.”

“Oh, that’s okay.” Cat shrugs out of her coat, nods towards Alex who’s reclining on Kara’s couch, is
glad that she and Maggie are joining them today, that there’ll be more of a buffer between her and
Eliza. “How are you both?”

“Probably better than you.” Alex is eyeing her closely. “Kara said you were nervous.”

“I remember that feeling,” Maggie says, eyes full of sympathy. “I was a basket case the first time I
met Eliza.”

“Any tips?” Cat asks, because Maggie had clearly won her over, but then again, that’s hardly
surprising considering how nice and easy to get along with she is.

“Just be yourself,” Maggie says kindly, reaching out to squeeze Cat’s shoulder, “and you’ll be fine.”

Cat isn’t so sure, but she nods anyway, tries to relax but freezes up when she hears the door click
open, Kara chattering away excitedly, pausing mid-sentence when she sees Cat leaning against the back of her couch, face breaking into a wide smile that immediately sets Cat at ease.

“Eliza, this is Cat,” Kara is quick to do the introductions, even though it’s obvious who they both are, and Cat appraises the blonde hovering behind Kara’s shoulder as Eliza does the same to her, and is surprised when Eliza reaches out and pulls her into a hug.

“Cat, it’s so nice to finally meet you.”

“It’s nice to meet you too.”

“I can’t wait to find out more about you.” Cat isn’t sure whether she’s about to be interrogated, feels a flutter of apprehension, but Kara eases her nerves when she leans into her side, pressing a kiss against her temple. “Shall we head out?”

They go for lunch at a restaurant a couple of blocks over, and Cat finds herself sandwiched between Eliza and Kara in their booth, Kara’s hand resting on her thigh under the table, thumb running calming circles against the fabric of Cat’s jeans.

She orders a water and a salad, her stomach too delicate for anything else considering the butterflies swarming within it, foot tapping a nervous rhythm on the floor.

“So, Cat.” Eliza turns to her when their waiter has disappeared. “Where’s your little boy today?”

“He’s with his nanny.” Talking about Carter she can do, feels herself start to relax, just a little. “I would’ve brought him, but he’s a bit shy around new people, and I wanted to get to know you first.” She hadn’t wanted him to pick up on any nerves from her, either.

“And how is he? Kara said he’d broken his arm?”

“He did?” Maggie asks, frowning. “What happened?”

“He had a fall.” Getting that phonecall, Chris telling her that their son was hurt… Cat’s stomach had dropped, and she’s never felt panic like it before. “But he’s fine, he had his second hospital appointment yesterday and his x-rays were good.”

Kara had offered to come with them, but Cat knew she had classes and didn’t want her education to suffer so told her not to, but her support at their initial appointment and everything since has meant so much to her.

She’s never had someone to really lean on like that before, but Kara has been there whenever she’s needed her, has spent more time than ever with Carter this week, trying to keep him distracted, and Cat loves her all the more for it.

“Do you have any pictures of him?” Eliza asks. “I’ve heard so much about him that I’d like to see him.”

“Of course.” Cat has hundreds on her phone, knows that Eliza could have asked Kara but has waited, presumably to put Cat at ease, and she’s starting to see why Kara had been so certain that this was going to work out fine.

“So, what is it that you do up in Midvale?” Cat asks after Eliza has flicked through her camera reel, feeling a little guilty for spending so much time talking about her son when she’s supposed to be getting to know Eliza. “Kara said that you’re a scientist?”
“I work in a research lab,” Eliza confirms, “as a bio-engineer. I won’t bore you with the details, though – it sounds a lot more interesting than it actually is. I’d ask what you do, but I think that’s pretty obvious.” Cat’s lips twitch. “It’s very impressive, what you’ve achieved.”

“Thank you.”

Their food comes arrives a few moments later, giving Cat a brief reprieve from trying to think of something else to ask Eliza, and she’s happy to listen to Kara, Alex and Maggie chattering away, the three of them content to have their own conversation and give Cat and Eliza a little space.

Cat feels a little better, as they leave the restaurant, because lunch hadn’t been a disaster and she doesn’t get the impression that Eliza hates her, although her stomach still does a flip when Eliza calls her name as they begin walking back to Kara’s apartment, the two of them falling a few paces behind the other three.

“Kara told me that you were a little nervous about today.”

“Has she told everyone that?” Cat’s tone is exasperated enough to make Eliza chuckle.

“She just wanted me to go easy on you.” Cat supposes that’s fair. “But I don’t want you to worry. I’m not stupid enough to stand in the way of what she wants, and what she wants is you.”

“You don’t have your doubts?”

“Perhaps a few.” Eliza’s face is thoughtful. “You are older than her.” Cat had felt ill when Kara had admitted that there was only a year in age between her and Eliza. “Which comes with its own set of issues – different stages of life, experience etcetera. And Kara, bless her heart, she can be naive, sometimes. Optimistic. Idealistic.” Cat knows that only too well. “But perhaps those things together create a balance that makes things work. Or it seems to for the two of you, anyway.” Eliza turns to her, eyes bright and her smile warm. “I’ve never seen her so happy, and I know that’s all down to you, and I can see how happy she makes you, too.”

“She’s been good for me,” Cat admits, eyes on the ground. “I wasn’t… she came into my life at a time where I wasn’t coping particularly well, and she turned everything upside down, made me feel alive again. I don’t know where I’d be without her.”

“I’m glad you found one another. And I hope that you and I can become friends, too.”

“I’d like that.”

“Kara mentioned that you don’t get along very well with your own mother?”

“She’s the devil incarnate.”

“Well,” Eliza replies, lips twitching, “you’re more than welcome in Midvale for all the holidays, along with Carter, of course.”

“I’d like that,” Cat says, meaning it – she can imagine a house full of light and warmth, something that she hasn’t experienced since she was a little girl and her father was still alive, can imagine Kara in hideous holiday sweaters, gleeful as a child.

“Everything okay back here?” Kara asks, turning back to look at them and slowing her pace until Cat and Eliza catch up, looking relieved when Cat nods. “So, Maggie and I have decided that we want to go to minigolf later, do you guys want to come?”
Cat has never been, but she knows she doesn’t have a chance in hell of saying no to those pleading blue eyes, and when she says yes it’s worth it just seeing Kara’s face light up in excitement.

“I could go and get Carter?” Cat suggests, because she’s sure he’d enjoy it, too.

“If you want? Will he be alright?”

“He’ll be fine.” He loves Kara and she knows he has a soft spot for Maggie and Alex, too, and Eliza already seems enamoured with him. “He’ll just need a little help, considering he’s an arm down.”

“I can do that,” Kara assures her. “Do you want to bring him over to mine or meet us there?”

“I’ll meet you there?”

“Okay.” Cat calls her driver, has him meet her outside of Kara’s apartment block, kisses Kara goodbye with the promise she’ll see her again in an hour, breathes out a long, slow breath once the car door has shut behind her.

Well, it hadn’t been a disaster, and had even gone pretty well, much to her amazement. Eliza was lovely, and Cat is grateful that Kara had found herself with such a wonderful foster family, that after so much tragedy, she found some source of light.

Carter is elated when she gets home and tells him he gets to see Kara, doesn’t seem fazed at all by the fact that it’ll be a slightly larger group than he’s used to, and Cat can’t help but think that that’s Kara’s influence, bringing him out of his shell and putting him at ease around others, because she’d never seen him open up as much as he has these past few months.

Kara and the others are already waiting when Cat pulls up in the parking lot, opting to drive herself and giving her driver the rest of the night off, and as soon as she’s gotten Carter out of his car seat he’s racing over to Kara, and she scoops him up and spins him around until he’s shrieking for her to stop.

“Carter, do you want to say hi to my foster mom, Eliza?” Kara asks him when he’s stopped giggling, and he peers up at Eliza shyly.

“Hi.”

“Hi, Carter.” Eliza looks like she’s already in love with him. “It’s very nice to meet you.” He ducks his head, and Kara ruffles his hair.

“And you remember Maggie and Alex, right?” Kara says, to get him to stop hiding.

“Maggie!” He says when he spots her, reaches out his arms and she takes him from Kara carefully, balances him on her hip.

“Hey, kiddo.”

“I missed you,” he tells her. “Can we handcuff Kara again?”

“I don’t have them with me, I’m afraid,” she says, laughing, and Carter pouts. “Next time, though.”

That seems to placate him, and Cat leaves him with Maggie as they make their way inside, Kara sliding her hand into Cat’s.

“You okay?” She asks, leaning in close to speak into Cat’s ear.
“More than okay,” she replies, squeezing Kara’s hand gently.

“Yeah? Not as bad as you thought it would be?”

“Nowhere near.” But then she’s handed a golf club. “Until now. I’m going to be awful at this.”

“I’ll help you,” Kara assures her, with a wide grin.

She goes first on the first hole, and gets a hole-in-one, and Cat really shouldn’t be surprised that Kara is good at this, because she’s good at everything that she does, but she still is, blinks in amazement as she celebrates.

Alex and Eliza are both pretty good, too, needing only two shots to pot the ball. They let Carter go next, and Kara helps him out, stands over him and guides his hand, makes sure that it goes in on the first shot, and his face of amazement is priceless.

Maggie makes it in three shots, grumbles that she hates this game because Alex always wins, and Alex grins, presses a kiss to her cheek and tells her not to be such a sore loser that earns Alex the finger when Carter’s not looking.

Cat is up next, and she’s a disaster, taking five shots and she does not understand how Kara had managed to make it look so easy.

Kara only takes one or two shots at each and every hole, and when Cat complains she chuckles, steps close behind her and rests her hands over Cat’s, mouth close to her ear.

“It’s all about the angles,” Kara murmurs, breath hot against her skin, and Cat knows that she’s supposed to be listening but it is extremely hard to concentrate when her hot girlfriend is pressed so tight against her. “You’ve just got to line it up.”

“But how?”

Kara attempts to show her, but Cat still doesn’t really get it, requests Kara’s help on all the subsequent holes, partly because she’s terrible without her but also because she likes how she feels pressed against her.

Kara fluffs the last two holes so that she comes second and Carter wins, lifts him onto her shoulders for a victory lap when the ball goes in, Carter cheering away the whole time, having the time of his life. With Kara’s help, Cat finishes fourth behind Alex. Maggie is in last place, much to her dismay, jokingly calls Cat a traitor for getting assistance because she thought she’d finally found someone she’d be on even footing with.

Cat buys her a beer in the adjoining café to make up for it. It’s quiet in there considering it’s a Saturday night, only a few other people sat at the other tables, and Cat relaxes back in a red plastic chair, Carter settled on her lap, as they watch Alex and Maggie play a game of pool.

It’s not a place she’d usually frequent, with harsh fluorescent lighting and brightly coloured walls, a TV high on the wall playing some kind of telenovela, but it has a certain charm, and the windows give a view of the minigolf course below, Cat watching a family of four that are much better than she thinks she will ever be.

Her life has been full of new experiences since Kara had come into it, has her doing things that she’d never dream of but god, she loves it, feels like she’s young again.

Alex beats Maggie in the game of pool, and when Alex asks Cat if she wants to play she’s surprised
but accepts the offer, Carter now perched on Kara’s lip as Eliza tries to coax him out of his shell.

She’s much better at pool than she is at minigolf, and Alex’s eyebrows hike up when Cat breaks and pots two balls with ease.

“Expect me to be terrible?” Cat asks, dispatching another two balls before she scuffs whilst aiming for the third.

“Not terrible,” Alex replies, concentrating on her own shot. “Just not great.” She makes four shots in a row, putting them on even footing, before it’s Cat’s turn again. “I can’t exactly see Cat Grant taking time out of her busy schedule to play pool.”

“I played a lot when I was younger.” Her father has taught her when she was just a girl, lifting her up so that she could reach the table, showing her the correct way to hold the cue, and the angles to pot pool balls are ones that she can easily calculate. “I was on a team in college.”

“No way.” Alex looks amazed at that knowledge. “You any good?”

“We won a few competitions.” Cat swears under her breath as she misses the final striped ball on the table, it bouncing back off the edge of the pocket. “I play every now and again, so I don’t get too rusty.”

“I don’t think there’s any danger of that.” Alex misses her next shot, and Cat is quick to dispatch her last ball and the black. “Best two out of three?” Alex asks. “Loser buys the other a drink?”

“Sure.”

Alex wins the second with a few lucky breaks, but Cat comes up on top in the third, Alex buying her a congratulatory beer. “We should do this again sometime,” Alex says when they’re leaning up against the bar. “You’re pretty good. We could join a doubles team.”

“Maggie’s pretty good, too,” Cat comments, because the game between the two of them had been pretty close. “Why don’t you play with her?”

“Yeah, she taught me to play. She won’t be in a team with me, though. Says I’m too competitive.”

“And are you?”

“You threaten a guy one time.” Cat chuckles, grabs her beer and makes her way back to their table. “Seriously, though, if you ever wanna play, just let me know.”

“I will.” The offer means a lot to her, considering the rocky start she and Alex had had, and when Kara overhears them, her smile is radiant, and she reaches out to pull Cat down into her lap, wrapping her arms around Cat’s waist.

Carter is back with Maggie, chattering away with both her and Eliza, and Cat is relieved to see him so animated, so at ease around the family that Cat very much hopes to be a part of one day.

It’s a wonderful end to a fantastic day, and they decide to call it a night after grabbing some food in the café, when Carter starts to struggle to keep his eyes open. Eliza’s returning to Midvale early the next morning, and Kara tells Cat that she’ll drop by in the afternoon so they can spend some time together.

Before she leaves, Eliza draws Cat into another warm hug and tells her that she hopes to see her again soon, and as she pulls out of the parking space, she waves goodbye to the four of them feels
lighter than she can remember being in a long, long time.
Three weeks pass in a haze, a mix of classes and assignments and trying to carve out time for Cat, Carter, her sister and her friends, and Kara is glad for a reprieve, though brief, when February 22nd comes around, the night of the awards show Cat had invited her to in Metropolis.

Cat finishes in the late morning, picks Kara up from campus after her final class and she gets a few curious glances from her classmates as she slips into the backseat of the sleek Sedan – they know that she’s dating an older woman with a son, but she hasn’t told them that it’s Cat Grant, has been keeping that information close to her chest.

“Hey.” Cat had been tapping away on her phone, but when Kara sits next to her she puts it away and draws her into a kiss.

“Hi.” Cat’s eyes are bright, the prospect of a night away making her happier than Kara’s seen her the past couple of days after a stressful week at work. “How was your class?”

“Good.” Kara takes Cat’s hand and laces their fingers together. “But how about we agree not to talk about work until we’re back in National City?”

“You’ve got yourself a deal.”

Cat had decided to use the CatCo jet to make the trip across the country, and as their car pulls into the private airfield where it’s kept, Kara looks around with wide eyes, feeling like she’s just entered another world.

She forgets, sometimes, now that she knows her so well and sees her so often, how much money Cat has, and how wildly different their lifestyles are, even though Cat is always careful not to let Kara feel like she’s too out of her depth.

But as she’s led up the steps of a very fancy private jet, it’s very hard for her not to feel like a fish out of water, and she wonders if that’s how she’s going to be feeling for the remainder of the day, knows that tonight she’s going to be surrounded by a lot of important people, when she is anything but.

She is important to Cat, though, wants Cat to share her life with Kara the way Kara has shared her own with Cat, and if that means she has to put on a fancy dress and go to a fancy dinner in a fancy building then she’ll do it, because she can do anything so long as Cat is by her side.

She takes the opportunity to explore the plane’s interior as Cat talks to the pilot, waiting just inside the doors, as her driver brings their bags into the cabin.

Kara’s only been on two planes before, to and from London, but this one is a world away from that, all open space and leather seats that recline, huge television screens everywhere and there’s even what appears to be a fully stocked bar.

Even the bathroom is fancy, and Kara can’t quite believe that she’s inside something as magnificent as this, dreads to think how much the thing had cost.

“You okay?” Cat asks, appearing by her side as she’s exploring the well-stocked kitchen.
“Slightly overwhelmed?” She answers honestly. “It’s so fancy.”

“I like to travel in style,” Cat quips, and Kara chuckles.

“How come we didn’t use this to fly to London?”

“I only tend to use it for shorter flights, mostly domestic. Things get a little more complicated to arrange when you’re travelling internationally.”

“Makes sense.” Kara wouldn’t even know how to go about arranging any kind of private travel at all.

“Ready to go, Ms Grant?” The pilot asks, and Cat nods, leading Kara over to one of the leather seats as he and his co-pilot, emerging from the cockpit, ensuring that everything’s safe to fly.

This plane is a lot quieter than the last as it glides down the runway, but Kara still feels a little anxious, is glad that Cat is there, drawing patterns on the back of her hand and keeping her talking to try and distract her.

Kara watches out of the window until they’re high up in the clouds and the ground below is obscured from view, feels her nerves settle once she’s allowed to move around freely.

“Drink?” Cat asks, making her way over to the bar to fix herself one.

“Just water, please.”

Cat brings her one, settling back down next to her. “It’s a five hour flight, so we should be at the hotel with a couple of hours to spare before we need to be at the ceremony.”

“Do I get to see what I’m wearing yet?” Kara asks, and Cat shakes her head.

“Not yet.” Kara had been panicking about not having anything to wear for the occasion, so Cat had insisted Kara let her get something for her to wear for the night, but she’s yet to see what Cat’s selected. “But I can’t wait to see you in it.”

“Oh yeah?”

“Mhm.” Cat’s voice is low, her eyes dark, and it makes Kara’s mouth dry. “And I can’t wait to peel it off you.” Cat sets her glass down with a clink against the wooden table in-front of where they’re sitting before leaning into Kara’s space, claiming her lips in a kiss that leaves her breathless.

When Cat’s hands start to wander, plucking at the buttons of Kara’s shirt she freezes, pulling back.

“What if one of them walks in?” She asks, eyes skittering towards the cockpit.

“They won’t,” Cat assures her. “They have their own private quarters up there, and I’ve given strict instructions that we’re not to be disturbed.”

“Yeah?” Kara starts to relax, runs a hand over Cat’s thigh. “Did you plan this?”

“Well, I have always wanted to join the mile high club.”

“You have a private jet at your disposal but you’ve never fucked anyone on it? I find that very hard to believe.”

“It’s true,” Cat murmurs, fingers sliding under the collar of Kara’s shirt, tugging her in for another kiss. “But I’d very much like to see how many times I can fuck you before we land.”
The answer is a *lot*, and Kara’s knees are a little shaky as she steps off the plane and onto the tarmac at an airfield in Metropolis.

Her hair is a mess and her clothes are askew, Cat looking very pleased with herself and she’s pretty sure that it’s obvious what they’ve been up to but she’s filled with too many endorphins to care.

There’s a car waiting for them, and Kara stares out of the window as they drive into the city. The sky is already darkening, the buildings in the distance twinkling with bright lights, a beautiful sight that Kara immediately want to sketch.

The hotel they have for the night is as fancy as the one that they’d stayed in in London, all high ceilings and sparkling chandeliers, and Kara feels out of place as she follows Cat up to the front desk.

They have the penthouse suite, and the few from the balcony is outstanding, although Kara thinks that the view of National City from Cat’s apartment is still superior as she steps in close behind Cat, surveying the city that she’d used to call home.

“What do you ever miss it?” She asks, arms wrapping around Cat’s waist and drawing her back against Kara’s chest.

“Sometimes,” Cat admits. “I grew up here, and it’s where I got my first big break and started building my career, so there’s a lot of fond memories in these streets.” Kara thinks she’d feel the same way about Chicago, but she hasn’t been back there since her parents had died, the pain still raw. “But I have a lot of fond memories of National City, too.” Cat leans her head back on Kara’s shoulder, kisses her cheek. “It brought me to you.”

“And thank god it did.” Kara murmurs, because she can’t imagine a different life than this one, one where she can’t cradle Cat in her arms.

“Thank god indeed.” Cat turns her head to capture Kara’s lips in a kiss that quickly turns heated, and Kara lets her hands run across Cat’s body, eases Cat’s skirt so that it sits high on her thighs, and when Kara’s hands slide beneath she groans when she discovers that Cat isn’t wearing any underwear.

She’s desperate to touch Cat in the way that Cat hadn’t permitted whilst they’d been on the jet, sighs when she feels how wet Cat is, Kara’s fingers slip sliding through her folds, and Cat braces herself against the balcony railing, fingers wrapping around the wrought iron, knuckles flashing white as Kara presses inside of her with two fingers.

“You feel so good,” Kara tells her, leaning forward to kiss at the back of Cat’s neck, free hand diving under Cat’s shirt and nudging her bra aside to tease at a nipple. “So fucking good.” She knows Cat loves it when she swears, hears her groan in response, and again, louder, when Kara nips at her neck.

“Kara.” Cat leans back against her, and Kara thrusts her fingers faster, uses her hips to press deeper every time, Cat’s hips rocking against her, and when Cat’s own hand slides down to touch her clit, Kara whimpers because Cat is the hottest thing she’s ever seen.

She tips Cat over the edge with her fingers, and then drops down to her knees, the balcony railing pressed against her back, kisses at the inside of Cat’s thighs and then higher, moaning at the taste of Cat on her tongue, at the wetness that coats her cheeks.
“Fuck, Kara.” Cat’s hand slides into Kara’s hair, nails scratching against her scalp and tugging gently, and Kara sighs against her skin.

She works Cat up with slow strokes of her tongue until Cat’s grinding against her mouth, brings her hands up to Cat’s ass to hold her steady and encourage the rock of her hips, lets Cat fuck herself against Kara’s mouth until she comes again, shaking all around her, and Kara wants to do that over and over again, only stops circling Cat’s clit with her tongue when she’s gently pushed away.

The second she’s back on her feet Cat practically pounces on her, kissing her hot and deep and doing things with her tongue that make Kara’s toes curl, and when she pulls back Cat’s eyes are dark and she looks like she wants to absolutely ravage her.

But it’s getting late, and it’s with some reluctance (and a promise to pick this up again later) that they part, Kara the first to head for a cold shower.

When she emerges from the bathroom there’s a gorgeous cerulean dress splayed across the bed waiting for her, and Kara traces her fingers over the soft silken material, breathless.

“Is this for me?” She asks, and Cat, perched on the edge of the bed, nods. “It’s beautiful.”

“You like it?”

“I love it.” It’s the most gorgeous dress she’s ever seen, and she can’t believe that she’s going to be wearing it – she might feel out of place later, but at least she’ll look the part. “Thank you.”

“I can’t wait to see you in it.” Cat slips past her and into the bathroom, pausing briefly for a kiss, and Kara slips into some underwear and a fluffy robe, because Cat has a team of stylists coming to make them over for the night.

They arrive just as Cat steps out of the bathroom, and Kara feels like a Disney princess, as her hair is styled and her make-up is applied by an expert hand, and later, when she’s in her dress and looks at herself in the room’s floor-length mirror, she barely recognises herself.

She looks good, though, the dress clinging in all the right places. It’s backless and Cat’s fingertips rest on the small of her back as she comes to stand beside her.

They made a striking pair, Cat in a scarlet dress that shows off the delicate planes of her collarbones, and Kara knows that she’s not going to be able to keep her eyes off of Cat all night, because her girlfriend is going to be the hottest person in the room.

“You look amazing,” Kara tells her, and she wants to kiss Cat senseless but she doesn’t want to ruin Cat’s perfectly applied lipstick, vows to save it for later, instead.

“So do you,” Cat replies, fingers dancing over her skin, and Kara knows that Cat’s going to be driving her crazy with light touches like that all night. “And I get to show you off.” Cat looks immensely pleased by the thought. “Shall we go?”

The car is already waiting outside of the hotel, and once they’re inside and moving, Kara’s nerves return full-force, her leg bouncing up and down until Cat stills her with a splayed hand on her thigh.

“Are you okay?”

“It’s just a bit nerve-wracking,” Kara admits. “I’ve never done anything like this before.”

“I won’t leave your side,” Cat promises. “And if you don’t want to come, we can go back to the
hotel.” Kara knows that she would, as well, that she’d drop everything for Kara without question.

“No, no, it’s fine.” Kara slots her fingers in-between Cat’s and links their hands together. “I want the whole world to know you’re mine.”

Cat lifts Kara’s hands to her lips, risks her lipstick to press a kiss to the back of her hand, and Cat doesn’t let her go when the car pulls to a stop.

The ceremony is being held in a museum that looks like it’s styled off the Met, with stone steps leading up to the doors, a red carpet draped over them to mark the occasion, and photographers lined up along the edges of it, flashes of light brightening up the night every few seconds.

It’s intimidating, but Cat keeps hold of her hand as they exit the car, sticks close by her side as the photographers yell her name, and poses for a few of them, her arm wrapped tightly around Kara’s waist, fingertips tracing gentle patterns on her skin to keep her calm, and Kara breathes a sigh of relief once they’re inside.

“Oh, okay?” Cat checks, ducking behind a pillar to avoid any curious eyes, and Kara nods, feeling better already.

The museum is opened to its guests for the night, and she and Cat take the time to wander around some of the exhibits, hand-in-hand, before they have to enter the fray of the main foyer.

Kara’s admiring a set of beautiful paintings when she hears her name called, turns to find her cousin and Lois behind them, lets Clark wrap her up in a bear hug, squeezing her tight.

“Hey, little one.”

“Hey.” She’d known they were going to be there tonight, that knowledge soothing some of her nerves because at least she’d know two of the people in attendance. “How are you guys?”

“We’re good.” Lois sweeps Kara up in a hug of her own after air kissing Cat’s cheeks. “You two lovebirds look like you’re doing well.”

“We are,” Kara confirms, leaning back into Cat’s side.

“I’m glad you two worked everything out. It only took a little gentle encouragement.” Lois’ eyes are glittering with mirth, and Kara realises that, aside from that one night where they’d both been very drunk, she’s never really seen her and Cat together, is curious to see how they interact. “You can buy me a drink to say thank you for singlehandedly making Cat get her shit together.”

“That is not true,” Cat scoffs, but Lois just grins.

“That is not - ”

“Yes, it is - ”

“No, it’s - ”

“We should probably leave them to it,” Clark suggests, as Kara looks between Cat and Lois with wide eyes. “They could be at this for a while.” He slots his arm through Kara’s and pulls her away to look at some more of the room’s paintings, leaving Cat and Lois’ bickering behind. “You look nice.”

“Thank you.” She smooths a hand down the skirt of her dress. “I feel very out of place.”
“You shouldn’t,” he tells her, voice kind. “You don’t look it.”

“Promise?”

“I promise. You’re already the topic of the night – everyone is wondering who Cat’s gorgeous new girlfriend is.”

“Really?”

“Uh-huh. I’d say prepare yourself to field off a load of questions, but I’m pretty sure Cat won’t let anyone get close enough to try.” Kara glances back at Cat, and while she’s still talking to Lois, her eyes keep straying back to Kara, and she knows that Cat’s making sure that she’s okay. “You guys are doing good?”

“Yeah. Really good.” Kara knows her smile is gigantic, but she can’t help it. They’d been through so much to get together, so much pain and pining and heartache, but god, it was all so worth it. And things aren’t perfect, because Kara would love for them to be able to spend more time together, but they’re both busy with their respective careers and it just makes the time that they do manage to carve out of their schedules to spend together that much more special. “Better than I ever imagined.”

“So, when’s the wedding?” He teases, and Kara shoulder checks him.

“I could ask you the same thing,” she points out, and he grins. “How’s that going?”

“Pretty good. We think we’ve found a venue, it’s just a case of narrowing down a date with them. We’re aiming for summer next year. I’ll let you know as soon as we book it, though, so you and Cat can get it down in your calendar.”

“James gonna be your best man?”

“Actually…” He pauses, spins Kara around so that she’s facing him, an almost shy look in his eyes that takes her back to when they were kids, always inseparable. “I was kinda hoping you would be my best man? Or woman, I guess.” His words are earnest and Kara’s flooded with shock, feels tears sting at the back of her eyes.

“Really?” Her voice cracks, and Clark grins.

“Yeah. You’re my little cousin, I’ve known you longer than anyone. Of course I want you by my side on my big day, welcoming Lois into our tiny family.”

“Your parents would be so proud of you, you know.” It’s Clark’s turn to tear up, now. “They’d love Lois. And of course I’ll be your best woman.” He scoops her into a hug, lifts her clean off the ground and spins her around and around.

“Your parents would be proud of you, too,” he tells her once he lets her go. “I’m proud of you. And I know your parents would be so happy that you’ve found someone that you love, someone as wonderful as Cat.” A tear slides down her cheek, and Clark is quick to wipe it away. “Hey, don’t cry. You’ll ruin your make-up and Cat will yell at me for upsetting you.” Kara laughs, and Clark peers anxiously over Kara’s shoulder. “Oh, man, she’s coming over here.”

“Are you scared of her?”

“She’s Cat Grant Kara, of course I’m scared of her.”

Cat’s smirking when she reaches them, and Kara knows she overheard that, but she has the grace not
to tease Clark about it. “Everything okay?” She asks when she reaches Kara’s side, Lois a couple of steps behind.

“Everything’s fine. More than fine. Clark just asked me to be his best woman.”

“You could’ve waited until after,” Lois berates him, swatting at his arm, “instead of making her cry before the ceremony.”

“She asked me if James was going to be my best man!” He defends. “What was I supposed to say?”

“Okay, I guess that’s acceptable,” Lois replies, before her attention turns back to Cat, her gaze thoughtful.

“What?”

“Just wondering what you’d say if I asked you to be my maid of honour.”

“Seriously?” Cat’s eyebrows skyrocket.


“You want to risk letting me give a speech to a room full of your family and closest friends?”

“Oh, there’s no way in hell I’m giving you a microphone,” Lois is quick to reply. “There will be no speeches of any kind from you.”

“We’ll see,” Cat murmurs, eyes sparkling with mischief, and Lois narrows her own eyes at Cat.

“Is that a yes, then?”

“It is.”

“But no tears from you? God. I’m disappointed.” Cat rolls her eyes. “I hope there’s tears from at least one you,” she glances around at the three of them, “when I walk down that aisle.”

“Oh, don’t worry, Clark will definitely cry,” Kara assures her. “He’s a big softie.”

“Am not,” he protests, but it’s weak. “We should probably start heading towards the main hall,” he changes the subject after a glance at his watch. “Things will be getting started soon.”

There’s a dinner before the main ceremony, of many courses of tiny portions of very fancy food that Kara can eat in a single bite. She doesn’t mind, though, because she’s sandwiched between Cat and her cousin, the both of them putting her at ease and making her forget where she is.

CatCo wins an award that Cat accepts, and Kara is surprised because Cat hadn’t told her that she was up for an award – and her earlier offer to take them back to the hotel becomes even more meaningful as Cat turns to press a chaste kiss against Kara’s lips before she rises and walks to the stage.

She’s a vision, and every eye in the room follows her as she makes her way up the steps and shakes hands with her old boss Perry White as she’s handed the glass plaque.

Her speech is captivating, and when she thanks Kara in it she turns the same shade of red as Cat’s dress as curious eyes turn towards her, but she doesn’t duck her head, keeps her eyes focused on Cat, who’s looking her way, eyes soft and smile radiant, and Kara’s glad that there are photographers
snapping pictures of Cat because Kara doesn’t want to ever forget how beautiful she looks in that moment, her eyes only for Kara in a room full of her peers.

She kisses Kara again when she returns to their table, a little deeper, this time, and Kara’s fingers land on Cat’s thigh, trace the soft skin that’s left bare by the split that runs almost to her hip, can’t wait for them to be alone later, to worship Cat’s body with her hands and mouth and make her feel like the goddess that she is.

They leave almost as soon as the last award is announced, with plans to meet Lois and Clark for breakfast in the morning before they head back to National City, and more photographs are taken of them, hand-in-hand, as Cat pulls her down the steps outside the museum and into their waiting car.

They’ll be in the papers tomorrow, splashed across the front pages, and there will be countless cruel words said about the both of them – that Kara is a golddigger, or an escort, only in it for the money, that Cat is having a midlife crisis, that things between them won’t possibly last – but as Cat draws Kara into a desperate kiss that smudges Cat’s lipstick all across her mouth almost as soon as the car door is closed behind them, Kara doesn’t care.

There will probably be an angry voicemail on Cat’s phone from her mother come morning, but she doesn’t care about that, either, and she knows Cat feels the same.

She doesn’t care because it doesn’t matter what anyone else thinks, only what they do, and as Cat straddles her hips, Kara pressing open-mouthed kisses to Cat’s neck that have her rocking her hips, all Kara can think is that she’s the luckiest person in the whole damn world.

Chapter End Notes

I can’t believe we're up to the penultimate chapter!! I hope you guys have enjoyed the ride. The epilogue is up next, I hope you're all ready for a little time jump!
Epilogue

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Eighteen months later...

“Wake up, sleepyhead.” Kara groans at the words, burrowing deeper into her pillow in an attempt to block out the sunlight filtering through the blinds of the bedroom.

“What time is it?” She asks, voice rough with sleep.

“Eight.” Kara groans again, and Cat chuckles, pressing kisses to the back of Kara’s shoulder. “You need to get up or you’re going to be late.”

“I can be late,” Kara decides, rolling onto her back and blinking her eyes open, smiling when the first thing she sees is Cat’s gorgeous face staring down at her.

“You cannot be late to your own graduation.”

“But -”

“No buts,” Cat cuts her off by pressing a finger to Kara’s lips, which Kara pretends to bite. “Get up.”

“I’ll get up if you join me in the shower,” Kara suggests, but Cat shakes her head with a smile.

“Then you’ll definitely be late.” She’s right, but Kara still pouts, and Cat wipes it away with a gentle kiss. “I love you.”

“I love you, too.” It’s been nearly two years but those words still send a thrill through her, and she doesn’t think she’ll ever tire of hearing them, or of saying them, to the woman of her dreams.

She rises from bed reluctantly, feels Cat’s eyes on her bare ass as she makes her way to the bathroom – their bathroom, since Kara had moved in almost a year ago – and into the shower, feeling more human when she emerges a few minutes later.

Cat is nowhere to be seen, but she can hear the radio playing in the kitchen, sits in-front of Cat’s vanity to sort her hair and make-up for her big day.

She can’t believe that she’s about to get her master’s degree, that all the hard work she’d done the past two years was finally going to pay off. It had been hard, but it was all worth it, and through it all she’d had Cat by her side.

Their relationship was stronger than ever, especially now that they got to wake up and go to sleep together every single night in the bed that was now theirs. Kara had been overjoyed when Cat had asked her to move in, hadn’t even hesitated before saying an enthusiastic yes, and sometimes she still can’t quite believe that she’s lucky enough to be able to call Cat Grant her girlfriend.

She gets ready and tugs on the dress she’d chosen for the occasion – the blue one Cat had gotten her for that awards ceremony – and feels very overdressed when she goes in search of Cat, finding her behind the stove in a fluffy white robe and her pyjamas.

“You look beautiful,” Cat tells her, eyes shining, and Kara is pretty sure that when she looks out for her family when she’s on that stage, she’s going to see Cat, Eliza, Alex and Maggie all crying in a
“Thank you.” She presses a kiss to Cat’s cheek, accepts a cup of coffee and settles into a stool on the other side of the kitchen counter. “You already get Carter up?”

“Mhm.” Sure enough, a few moments later he bounds into view, also in his pyjamas, scrambles up so that he’s sitting next to Kara at the counter.

“You look nice,” he tells her, and Kara smiles, reaches out to ruffle his hair.

“Thanks, little man.” And he is a little man, now, five years old and growing each and every day and Kara’s so glad that she’s here to see it.

He’s starting school next month, and neither Cat nor Kara can quite believe it, that their little boy isn’t quite so little anymore.

Kara eyes the pancakes that Cat sets down in-front of Carter a little forlornly – she loves Cat’s pancakes, but she’s supposed to be meeting Eliza, Alex and Maggie for breakfast before they head to the ceremony, so she behaves and doesn’t steal one.

“I’ll see you guys later?” She asks before she leaves, and Cat nods, draws her close and into a kiss that has Carter making a disgruntled noise from somewhere behind them.

“I’ll let you know when we get there. I’m so proud of you.”

“Stop it,” Kara tells her, voice wavering, “or you’re going to make me cry.”

“We can cry together,” Cat tells her, and Kara chuckles, gives her one last kiss and dropping one on Carter’s head as she passes him, too.

“See you later, buddy.”

Cat calls a car to take her downtown, and she meets her family at a little diner around the corner from Alex and Maggie’s apartment.

The two of them had gotten married a couple of months ago and were still very much in the newlywed stage – their hands are clasped ontop of the table when Kara slides into the booth opposite them, next to Eliza, who draws her into a hug.

“You look beautiful, sweetheart.”

“Thank you.”

Eliza gushes over how proud she is for the entirety of breakfast, and the only thing that keeps Kara from exploding with embarrassment is the looks that Alex trades with her across the table when Eliza isn’t looking.

Once they’ve finished eating they catch a cab to campus, and Kara gets a brief reprieve when she has to go and collect her robes.

When she returns to her family, Cat and Carter have joined them, Cat looking stunning in a green dress but it’s Carter that makes Kara tear up because he’s wearing a tiny little suit and even a tie and he looks so smart.

Eliza makes them pose for about three million photos – first Cat and Kara, and then Cat, Kara and Carter, then Kara and Alex, Kara and Eliza, and every combination possible and Kara’s eyes are
stinging from the flash of the camera by the time Eliza is satisfied that she’s gotten enough good shots.

When she gets up on stage her family cheers loud, and sure enough, after Kara’s gotten her diploma and risks a glance over to them, every single one of them is bawling, clapping so hard that their hands must ache, and Kara has never loved them more.

“//

“Well, I am definitely glad to be out of those robes,” Kara says, a couple of hours later when they’re in a car on the way back to their apartment, her hand resting on Cat’s thigh. “Those things are warm.”

“And that dress shouldn’t be obscured,” Cat tells her, ensuring she keeps her voice quiet enough so that no-one else around them can hear, and Kara chuckles.

They all plan to celebrate Kara’s graduation at their home (Cat still sometimes can’t believe that it’s their home now, had been overjoyed when Kara had agreed to move in), with James and Lucy, who hadn’t been able to make the ceremony.

Cat’s jittering with nervous energy, though, because there’s something else she hopes that they’ll be celebrating tonight.

She’s known that Kara was the only one she wanted for the rest of her life for a long, long, time, but two months ago she’d finally bought a ring (with Alex and Lucy’s help, and with how excited they’d both been, Cat is honestly a little amazed that they hadn’t let it slip).

They all know of Cat’s plans. She’d asked Eliza, to get her blessing which had been immediately granted, and she’d made sure to sit down with Carter to ensure that he would be okay with it, too, even though she knew he’d over the moon, has been pestering the two of them about marriage since before they’d even gotten together.

She knows that Kara’s going to say yes, but she’s still nervous, her stomach in knots as they get closer and closer to the apartment, and she doesn’t realise that it shows on her face until Kara squeezes her thigh, frowning.

“Are you okay?”

“I’m fine,” she assures her, but she doesn’t think it’s terribly convincing. Thankfully Maggie (who had been the one to propose to Alex and knows exactly how Cat is currently feeling) intervenes before Kara can press, drawing her into conversation.

Lucy and James arrive only a few minutes after they all get back to their apartment, and Cat pops open a bottle of champagne to toast Kara and her success, and hopes that Kara misses the way that her fingers are shaking.

The ring is in the bag that she’s clutching like a lifeline, and it feels like it weighs a tonne, with the weight of her expectations, even though she knows that that’s ridiculous.

She’s been married several times but she’d never proposed, and she’s built up a whole media empire but she’s pretty sure that this is the most daunting, nerve-wracking thing that she’s ever done, and if she doesn’t do it soon then she thinks she might pass out, and she wants to enjoy this evening, not feel a deep sense of dread in the pit of her stomach.

“So, you look like you’re gonna be sick,” Lucy appears at her side, voice cheerful, and Cat rolls her
eyes – she’d never expected to become as close to Kara’s friends as she has, but they are her friends, too, and she doesn’t know where she’d be without them. “Need me to distract her so you can get into position?”

“Okay.” Cat takes a deep breath to try and calm her nerves, but her heart feels like it’s about to beat out of her chest, and she downs the remainder of her champagne and sets the glass down as Lucy grabs Kara’s arms and spins her around, so that her back is to Cat.

Cat has thought about this moment a thousand times, and now that it’s here, time seems to slow. She had fretted about how to do it, whether Kara would want it to be behind closed doors, a moment just for them, but she knows that her family and friends are hugely important to her, that she’d love to share this moment with them.

And Cat would, too – they’ve become so important to her, these past couple of years, and she’d never thought that she and Carter could ever have a large family but now they do, and it’s all because of the love of Cat’s life.

Carter, out of Kara’s sight, gives her a thumbs up that makes Cat smile, and she reaches for the little black box with a shaking hand, manages to open it and get down on one knee behind Kara without her noticing.

“Kara?” She calls, and when Kara turns around her eyes widen and her mouth drops open and god, she’s the most beautiful thing that Cat has ever seen.

And though they’re in-front of their family and friends this still feels like it’s a moment just for them, because with Kara’s eyes boring into hers, it doesn’t feel like there’s anyone else in the room.

“You’ve changed my life, you amaze me every single day, and I can’t believe that, even after everything I put you through, you agreed to give me a chance. I hope that every day since, I’ve made you glad that you did, and that I make you as happy as you make me.

“I want to spend the rest of my life with you, if you’ll have me. I can’t promise that it’ll be an easy ride, because things with me rarely are, but I can promise to love you until my last breath, that I’ll try and make every day special, to make every effort to show you just how much I love you.

“So, what I’m trying to say, is – Kara Danvers, will you marry me?”

Cat had cried earlier, when Kara had been up on that stage, filled with pride, but it’s Kara who’s a wreck now, tears sliding down her face, and she drops to her knees beside Cat and wraps her up in a hug so fierce that for several long moments, Cat can’t breathe.

“Yes, yes, a thousand times yes,” Kara says, right into her ear, and then Cat is crying, too, and she can hear a few sniffles from behind them, leans away to slide the ring into Kara’s finger.

They’re swept up into a giant hug by everyone else in the room as soon as they’re upright, and in the centre of them all, Cat holds onto Kara, onto her fiancée, tight, and knows that no matter what the future throws at them, she will never let her go.
And so the journey comes to an end!

This story is so, so close to my heart and I'm so glad I got to share it with you guys - I can't thank you all enough for the love you've shown me and this fic, it means more than I could ever possibly say. Thank you for coming on this wild ride with me.

If you wanna come chat to me about this story, feel free to hit me up on tumblr (I'm ofendlesswonder there, too).

Thank you again <3

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!