Summary

Sara needed to find herself. In order to do that, she needed to not be dependent on anyone to save her or train her. She needed to not have anyone depend on her. She needed to not have expectations placed upon her. She needed to be close to the one person in the world that she ever felt really saw her. Sara knew that to Nyssa, she wasn’t the littler sister of a successful, driven woman. She wasn’t the girlfriend of Starling’s favorite son. She wasn’t someone’s last hope. She wasn’t someone’s troubled daughter.

Sara looked at the moon bouncing light off of the water one last time before making her way inside. She took a deep breath. She felt free for the first time.
Sara was standing on the deck, leaning on the railing. Despite all she’d been through on and in the ocean, the waves gently patting against the side of the boat as they moved along were calming. The sun had gone down a while ago, but she couldn’t seem to sleep. She wasn’t nervous or anxious. If Sara didn’t know any better, she would say that she was excited.

The door to the quarters closed with the scrape of old metal on old metal. Sara looked toward the noise and saw Nyssa. When Nyssa looked up and saw her, she reached back for the door, “I’m sorry. I didn’t know you were out here.” Nyssa opened the door to retreat inside when Sara called to her.

“You don’t have to go,” Sara turned around and leaned back on the railing.

Nyssa hesitated, but straightened up. She slowly moved to the railing next to Sara and leaned her forearms on it, looking out over the dark water. “It’s beautiful.”

Sara turned back around, “Yeah it is.” Her eyes caught the moon and held it, not feeling the need to speak.

Nyssa reached into her pocket and pulled out a small coin. She laid it flat in her palm and showed it to Sara. “I should give you this.”

“A whole quarter?” Sara picked it up, “You shouldn’t have.”

Nyssa smiled, “It has a tracking beacon inside of it. Your small blonde friend dropped it into my quiver before we departed.”

“She should have known that Nyssa, daughter of Ra’s Al Ghul, Heir to the Demon, wouldn’t carrying around such small American change,” Sara chuckled and managed to pop open the fake coin and see the beacon inside.

Nyssa smiled bashfully and looked down at the water hitting the side of the boat, “I was going to slip it in a tourist’s pocket in the first port we stop at.”

“Why would you do that?” Sara closed the coin and felt it in her hand. It was surprisingly accurate in weight. Or unsurprising once she remembered how detail oriented Felicity was.

“So that your friends would know that you made it to land safely,” Nyssa answered quietly. “But so that they won’t get themselves in any danger coming after you.”

Sara flipped the coin over in her hand and wet her lips. She looked over at Nyssa, “Our deal still stands?”

“You should know by now, I never go back on my word,” Nyssa stood up straighter. “You may leave anytime you wish. Even if you wish to part ways at the nearest port.” Nyssa tightened her stomach, knowing that the deal she made with Sara wasn’t one where she was likely to be pleased with the outcome. For a daughter of the Head of the Demon, Nyssa had become illogically and sentimentally attached to Sara Lance.

Sara looked over Nyssa’s face, seeing the thickly veiled and deeply buried fear. Sometimes she was sure that she was the only one who could see it. She was the only one who wasn’t blinded by fear of the daughter of Ra’s Al Ghul. Sara slid her forearm along the railing until she could take Nyssa’s
hand. She ran her thumb over Nyssa’s knuckles, but didn’t speak. She wished she had the words to comfort Nyssa. “Nyssa…”

Nyssa shook her head, “You don’t need to say anything. You’re free with all the assets of the League at your disposal.” Nyssa swallowed and pulled her hand back from Sara. She took a step back, “If you’ll excuse me, I am going to retire for the night.”

Sara’s eyes swept the ground. She wished that Nyssa wouldn’t be so guarded with her. It was like starting over. Sara heard Nyssa turn the latch on the door and looked up. Before Nyssa could disappear completely, Sara called to her, “I missed you.”

Nyssa stopped completely, a faint smile gracing her face. Her eyes flickered to Sara only to see the blue eyes sincere. Nyssa nodded, slowly, “I missed you as well.” Nyssa ducked through the doorway and closed it behind her.

Sara looked at the coin in her hand and put it in her pocket. She was going to do what Nyssa was going to do and dump it onto a tourist. Her friends would know she wasn’t involved in yet another ship disaster, but they wouldn’t be able to find her. Sara needed to find herself. In order to do that, she needed to not be dependent on anyone to save her or train her. She needed to not have anyone depend on her. She needed to not have expectations placed upon her. She needed to be close to the one person in the world that she ever felt really saw her. Sara knew that to Nyssa, she wasn’t the littler sister of a successful, driven woman. She wasn’t the girlfriend of Starling’s favorite son. She wasn’t someone’s last hope. She wasn’t someone’s troubled daughter.

Sara looked at the moon bouncing light off of the water one last time before making her way inside. She took a deep breath. She felt free for the first time.

Sara walked toward her quarters when she decided to take a detour. She stopped before getting to her room, seeing light coming out from under the door of the room next to hers. Sara softly knocked.

An equally soft, “C’min,” came from the other side of the door.

Sara opened the door and stepped inside the dimly lit room. Nyssa looked like she was in the middle of changing for bed. She was barefooted, but still in her combat pants. Her torso was only covered by a black tank top. Her hair was up in a loose ponytail. Nyssa looked expectantly up at Sara. She picked up a blanket at the end of her bed and offered it to Sara with a small smile. “I figured you’d need this.”

Sara smiled and took the blanket with a smile, “You remembered.”

“Every time we’re out to sea at night, you get cold,” Nyssa smiled softly and moved to the small dresser in her quarters. She opened the top drawer and picked out some sweatpants and a long sleeved Henley. She placed them on top of the blanket that Sara was holding, “Even when we’re in the Caribbean.”

Sara looked down at all the things that Nyssa gave her without asking. Sara looked back up at Nyssa. “Thank you.” She tucked some hair behind her ear, “This is not what I came in here for, but I’m glad you remembered. I would have just froze.”

Nyssa sat back down on her bed, “Do you need something else?”

Sara nodded. She stepped toward the bed. Nyssa’s first reaction was to stand so that she could defend herself against the oncoming attack, but it was Sara. She trusted Sara although most of the League told her she shouldn’t trust the deserter.
Sara leaned over, bending at her waist toward Nyssa. Nyssa looked up, carefully watching Sara. The blonde lightly dropped a kiss on Nyssa’s lips. It was short and sweet. Sara straightened up and looked at Nyssa whose eyes were still closed. The master assassin looked breathless when her eyes fluttered open. Sara smiled widely and tucked a stray strand of Nyssa’s hair behind her ear, “I just came to wish you goodnight.”

Nyssa watched Sara retreat to the door, “Sweet dreams.”

Sara turned around at the words, meeting Nyssa’s eyes and earning a smile from the Heir to the Demon.

Sara stepped out of the room and closed the door, knowing that after everything Nyssa still cared deeply for her. Sara made her way to the quarters, changed clothes and laid her extra blanket on top of her small bed. She turned off the lights, slid under the covers and let to lull of the boat’s motor usher her into a deep, peaceful sleep.

When Sara awoke, she heard the sound of a port outside of the ship. She quickly got dressed and visited the tiny bathroom that she shared with Nyssa. It was clean and unoccupied because the general rule was that the person in charge got their choice of quarters and their own bathroom. Sara knew that Nyssa wouldn’t mind.

However, if Sara thought that most of the crew was on board, she would have used the more public bathroom to show everyone else that she was not getting any special treatment. She’d been doing that the past few days at sea. Sara didn’t come back with the League to become resented by the other assassins for her relationship, former or present, with the third highest ranking member of the League. Everyone loved her before she left. Now it felt like they were a little hostile because of what she did to Nyssa. They were closing rank around her, protecting the princess of their kingdom.

Sara was excited to get to walk on dry land again. They had been in the middle of the ocean for days. There were ways to entertain themselves. They played cards and worked out in the gym on board. They had sparring matches and meditation sessions. They even stopped the day before so that everyone could go swimming in the crystal clear ocean water. Sara didn’t ask where they were going because at the moment she didn’t actually care.

After a stop in her quarters to get her jacket, Sara found a small stack of money on the built in metal desk tucked under a brand new cell phone. She smiled and pocketed the phone. She examined the money to find out where they were and then tucked it into her pocket as well. She exhaled and said to herself, “Welcome to the Philippines.”

Sara moved up to the top deck, nodded to the assassin assigned the guard the boat and then walked down the ramp onto the dock. Sara turned around and looked back up at the assassin guarding the boat. “Hey David, when are we leaving?”

“Nyssa said we’ll take a day,” David shrugged and ruffled his short blonde hair. “We’ll probably head out around noon tomorrow.”

“Thanks,” Sara nodded and turned back around toward the city. It was strange at first, but standing on dry land was like riding a bike. Sara looked at the port they were docked in and up past it. They weren’t at some little fishing village. They were in a major metro area. Sara walked down the dock and up the stairs to the street level.

Sara put her hands in her jacket pockets and was surprised to find something in the pocket. She wrapped her hand around the small silver, cylindrical device. It was one of her sonic scream devices. She looked at the back of it and smiled when she saw an inscription in Arabic. Canary Cry.
Sara couldn’t stop a smile when she put it back into her pocket. Sara caught a cab and asked him to take her to one of the only places she’d ever heard of in the city. Sara took out her phone and decided to get acquainted with it on the way to her destination.

She first looked through the contacts. It seemed that everyone in her old phone was in there. Her dad, Laurel, Felicity, Oliver… everyone that she had left in Starling City was at her fingertips. There was also a new number in the phone. It didn’t have a name to it, but Sara was sure she knew who it was. She put her phone to sleep and leaned back in the old vinyl seat.

When she got to the hotel, she paid the driver and went inside. The foyer was grand and beautiful. She immediately spotted the reception desk. It didn’t take her long to book a room. The first thing she wanted to do was shower. She didn’t mind being on the boat, but the showers left much to be desired. She didn’t have any luggage with her which was a point of confusion for the man who checked her in. She just smiled at him and made her way to the elevators.

In the hotel room, she looked out the window and saw the ocean laid out in front of her. She dropped her room key on the dresser and disrobed on the way to the bathroom. The hot water felt amazing on her skin. She stretched under the spray and used the hotel shampoo to wash away the humidity of the sea that seemed to stick to her skin.

The towel she used to dry off was so much fluffier than the one on the boat, but less comforting. Everything on the boat felt normal. She felt like she was home. Not that she was complaining about the hot water and fluffy towel.

Sara fell back on the bed wishing she had bought some pajamas or something before taking a shower. Now she had to put on the clothes that she was borrowing from Nyssa. She pulled on her own jeans and pulled Nyssa’s deep red tank top on. She left her jacket because it was balmy, yet humid outside. The sky looked like it was about to become clouded over. Sara wanted to get back before it started to rain. Maybe she could just sit on her balcony and enjoy the rain.

It was a short walk down the street to a small line of shops. She picked up a few things, leaving in under an hour. She didn’t need much. She took what she had with her in Starling, but that wasn’t much either. As she was walking back to her hotel, she spotted a familiar face. Well not really a face. Sara could pick Nyssa’s swagger out of a packed Olympic stadium full of people.

She didn’t try to follow her. Sara knew where Nyssa was going so she stopped at a flower vender with a cart across the street from the hotel. She pointed him in the direction of the assassin and gave him extra money to walk the flowers over to her. Then Sara took her purchases to a café down the street. She ate a light brunch and then ran through the rain, returning to her hotel room.

She couldn’t say that she was surprised when she found Nyssa sitting on the balcony. One of the flowers that Sara had sent Nyssa was sitting on the small table between the two chairs on the balcony.

Sara dropped off her purchases, then walked to the mini-bar and got out a few tiny bottles of liquor. She made her way out the screen door and sat down in the chair next to Nyssa. Sara put the liquor between them and no words were said.

Sara was the first one to down an entire whiskey. Nyssa chose the more familiar vodka. After a moment, Nyssa picked up the rose on the table and stood. She leaned on the railed and presented the rose to the rain. After the rose had gathered a few drops, Nyssa brought it to her nose and took a deep breath.
“You are a weakness I’m not allowed to have,” Nyssa whispered into the flower.

Sara frowned and stood up, “What do you mean?”

“I am Nyssa Al Ghul, daughter of Ra’s Al Ghul, heir to the demon,” Nyssa replied softly without the power and pride usually behind those words. “I cannot be vulnerable. Weakness is vulnerability. Vulnerability will get me killed.”

“That wasn’t a problem before,” Sara moved closer to Nyssa and tried to get Nyssa to look directly at her. Nyssa kept avoiding it. She looked out over the damp city and looked down at the rose in her hand.

Nyssa sighed heavily, “I’m starting to lead with my heart. The League has a battle brewing in Starling but it was not with Slade Wilson.”

“Are you saying that you don’t want to be with me?” Sara frowned, actually forcing Nyssa to look at her by pulling Nyssa’s shoulder back so they were facing each other.

“It is not I who left without saying goodbye,” Nyssa tried to make her words forceful, but her voice cracked. She swallowed it. “It was never that I didn’t want to be with you.” Nyssa tucked some hair behind Sara’s ear, “It was that I cannot have an ordinary life, especially romantically.” Nyssa started to tear up so she turned back toward the rain, “I cannot be someone deserving of such a beautiful heart.”

“What are you talking about?” Sara tilted her head, not understanding, or not wanting to understand what Nyssa was saying. Sara shook her head and blinked.

Nyssa tried to remain strong against the blue eyes that had sucked her in from the second they met. She opened her mouth to speak, but Sara interrupted her with a kiss. Nyssa was helpless against the emotional onslaught that Sara’s lips rained down on her.

“You can’t tell me that anything about kissing me feels wrong,” Sara whispered against Nyssa’s lips. Nyssa had to take a second to catch her breath, sharing the same air with Sara. “Nothing about it feels wrong.”

“I know,” Sara paused. She took both of Nyssa’s skilled hands and looked up at her. “Nyssa, I know that I hurt you. We were great and I just…I left. My family means the world to me, but you’re my moon and stars.” Sara looked down to regroup. “I know that it may take a while for you to trust me again, but I’ll wait.”

Nyssa held one of Sara’s hands and brought it to her lips. She dropped a kiss on the tops of Sara’s fingers, “You shouldn’t have to wait for me.”

“I should have to do more than wait for you,” Sara offered Nyssa a smile. She kissed Nyssa’s lips softly. “I missed you and I will do whatever you want me to do so that I can try to heal the wounds I left behind.”

Nyssa closed her eyes, a few tears slipping past her lashes. “Sara, I-”

Sara let go of Nyssa’s hands and gently caressed her face, “You don’t have to say anything. Unless you want me to go. I’ll leave and you’ll never see me again if that’s what you want.”

Nyssa’s eyes flew open. The tears were now flowing freely. She stepped into the hotel room and lowered her head. “I fear what you leaving again would do to me.” Nyssa wiped her eyes as Sara
stepped inside and closed the balcony door. “I barely survived the first time.”

Sara licked her lips and nodded, “Then I won’t leave.” Sara sat down on the foot of the bed, keeping to the side farthest from Nyssa. She folded her hands, “I, um, I still can’t sleep on your side of the bed…unless there was someone else in the bed. If there was someone else, I’d sleep in your spot because it was never right to let someone else have it.”

Nyssa clenched her fists and swallowed. Sara knew how to dig under her barriers and just exist inside of her sacred space. Nyssa moved to the bed and sat on the foot of the bed, not looking at Sara.

Sara ran a hand through her hair and let out a faint smile, “I know why you always pick the side of the bed closer to the door.”

“So I could escape quickly should something happen,” Nyssa chanced a glance at Sara and earned a loving grin.

“You and I both know that’s bullshit,” Sara ducked down, trying to catch Nyssa’s eyes. When Nyssa was looking at her, Sara offered, “You slept closest to the door so that you could protect me.”

Nyssa bashfully looked away, “You don’t need it.”

“Not anymore,” Sara shook her head. She turned toward Nyssa, “That first night after you rescued me…you took me to your personal cabin and let me sleep in the bed. I was terrified that something would happen while I was on the boat and you just sat in the chair, reading all night and watching over me. You put your chair right in front of the door.” Sara made sure she had Nyssa’s attention when she added, “We’ve saved each other’s lives more than a few times, but you always try to keep me safe.” She touched Nyssa’s face gently, “It’s my turn now. I have your back and I’ll protect your heart like I should have before.” She kissed Nyssa’s forehead.

Nyssa closed her eyes as Sara’s lips rested on her forehead. When Sara pulled away Nyssa stood and silently made her way toward the door. She opened it, but hesitated before she walked through. However, she didn’t turn around. The hesitation was only momentary and Nyssa disappeared.

Sara fell back on the bed. She knew she had a lot of making up to do with Nyssa. She just hoped that their relationship hadn’t degraded so far that reparations weren’t going to bring them back to where they were.

Sara rolled off of the bed and went to the balcony. She opened the balcony door so that she could hear the rain. She stood in the doorway just looking out over the city for a while before going to the bed. It had been a long couple of days, a tiring shopping trip, and an emotional hour. Sara was going to sleep on a queen sized bed and relax for the rest of her time in the Philippines.
Chapter 2

When Sara returned to the slip where their boat was, she found the old vessel they had been traveling in was gone. In its place was a massive yacht. It certainly wasn’t the biggest yacht in the harbor, but it had three levels and a large deck off the back of it.

Sara put her duffel bag over her shoulder wondering if she had misheard David and they were actually supposed to leave at dawn or something. A panic rose in her chest when the thought that Nyssa would think she left her again. Sara started to look around the docks, making sure that they didn’t just move slips.

“Sara!” a voice came from the direction of the yacht. When she looked at the yacht she saw one of the assassins, Rodney, called from the second floor balcony. He waved her on board, “You better hurry and pick your room before everyone else gets on board. There’s a room with bunk beds.”

Sara smiled and easily hopped onto the boat, “Who else is here?”

“I saw Shelly get on board,” Rodney shrugged. He ruffled his wavy jet black hair. “Onyx is staying in town. She has some business.” He waved his hand flippantly at the mainland, “Nyssa, Boone, Will, and Z are somewhere.”

“You’re a lot of help, Rodney,” Sara walked onto the back deck of the yacht, around a beautiful wooden table, and through glass sliding doors. In the massive living room, she found the small bag containing her old things that were on the previous boat. She grabbed it and made her way deeper into the ship.

Sara was used to the entire spectrum of opulence as a member of the League. Sometimes they took small boats with only one tiny engine and other times they slept on Egyptian cotton sheets in yachts. She’d stayed in small hovels in favelas and penthouses in Dubai. Most of it was for security and most of the time she didn’t question it. This time she decided not to look a gift horse in the mouth.

Sara looked around for a little while. She found the largest bedroom and took the room next to it. Obviously the largest bedroom would be Nyssa’s so being next to her was ideal.

Sara dropped her bags on the floor and jumped up on the bed. She laid down flat on her back and looked around. This palace would be her home for the next week and it was beautiful.

She decided to explore some more. Sara changed into her bikini top and some cut off shorts. She made her way up to the third level and was pleased to find a hot tub. Sara moved to the railing and saw a few more of her fellow assassins were getting on board. Nyssa was among them. She had sunglasses on and was talking on a phone. Sara smiled. It was almost alarming how normal she looked when she wasn’t wearing her battle armor.

Nyssa hung up her phone and looked up at the higher decks. She too had changed into a bikini, but didn’t bother with the shorts. She didn’t say anything and Sara couldn’t see anything behind her sunglasses. Nyssa just laid down on the lounge chair on the other
side of the hot tub from Sara and opened up the small book in her hand.

Sara could barely peer over the hot tub and still make it seem like she wasn’t actually looking. The book was in Arabic and it was old. Sara laid back down completely. She used to joke with Nyssa that Ra’s was the head of the demon, but Nyssa was the brain. No language barrier had ever stopped Nyssa from absorbing the knowledge in her precious books.

Sara looked back over the hot tub. There was something so sexy about Nyssa’s body laid out on the lounger with a book in her hand.

“You should be more careful with your leering,” Nyssa lifted up her glasses and looked directly at Sara.

Sara smiled, “I was just trying to see what you were reading.”

“Quite,” Nyssa knew Sara was lying.

Sara stood up and leaned on the railing, looking at her fellow assassins relaxing. Some were playing Pachisi at the long dining table. Some were watching the ocean zoom by. There were some assassins meditating. Sara always found it interesting what the members of the League did to relax. After a long trip, Sara could always find Nyssa curled up with a book until the late night and then meditating on the roof of their house in Nanda Parbat…what used to be their house. Now Sara wasn’t quite sure where she would be staying.

Sara turned back around and found that Nyssa was engrossed in her book. Whether it academic or literature, Nyssa would always get lost in a book when she really needed to. Sara understood that Nyssa needed some time to herself and made her way back downstairs.

Sara joined in on a game of poker that went on at the opposite end of the table from the game of Pachisi. She had retrieved her lucky hat after losing a few hands. She pulled her Starling City Rockets hat low over her brow and tossed in her call. The pot was made up of currency from all over the world. There had already been one argument as to the exchange value of some of it matching up to other currencies, but it didn’t get too heated.

After Sara won the hand, Rodney got up from the table, “Drinks?”

Sara put her hands behind her head and leaned back, “Scotch.”

The rest of the table told him what they wanted and started another hand.

“I hope he brings you a whole bottle of scotch,” David smiled slyly at Sara. “You get daring when you drink it.”

Sara grinned, “I’m daring all the time.”

As the hand started, Sara looked out over the back of the boat. She could see the warm colors shooting across the sky in wavy ribbons as the sun started to set. She wondered if she should go check on Nyssa when the bottle of scotch was set down beside her.

A few hands later, Sara made the excuse of going to the bathroom to go find Nyssa. She went right to Nyssa’s room and knocked softly on the door. “Nyssa?”

“Yes?” Nyssa called.

Sara opened the door and poked her head around. Nyssa had a length of her aerial silk looped
through the canopy over her bed and was tangled elegantly in the crimson fabric. Her hair fell in soft waves toward the floor before she disengaged and slid to the ground.

Sara realized she was leering again, but smiled it off, “I was just coming to see if you were okay.”

Nyssa let out a smile, “I am.” She gestured to Sara’s hat, “You’re playing poker.”

“Yes,” Sara nodded. She stood in the doorway, watching Nyssa stand in front of her in black tights and a black tank top. She licked her lips, but already started to withdraw from the room, “Come get me if you need anything.”

Nyssa nodded slowly, “Thank you.”

Sara stepped out and then poked her head back in, “Do you happen to know the exchange rate of krones to bahts?”

Nyssa waved her hand, “I believe it was about five point nine eight this morning.”

“Thanks,” Sara smiled and popped back out. It always blew her mind how much information Nyssa was able to retain. Sara knew it was all part of Nyssa trying to prove to her father that she was good enough for his approval. Nyssa had to be the fastest, the strongest, the best, and the smartest to even start to feel adequate.

Sara returned to the poker table and rejoined the game. The scotch didn’t make her any worse. It just made her prone to smiling, which wasn’t a tell because she smiled regardless of the hand she had.

After David went bankrupt, everyone decided to go to bed. Sara collected all her winnings into her hat and walked off with a half empty bottle of scotch toward her room. As she was drunkenly making her way to her room, she saw Nyssa’s door. She stopped with her hand on the knob to her door and looked to make sure that no one else had followed her down hers and Nyssa’s hallway.

Sara tried to sneak as quietly as possible to Nyssa’s room. She opened the door and found it dark in the bedroom. Sara quietly set her hat full of money on the table next to the door before sneaking back out. She took the rest of the scotch with her into her bedroom.

Sara fell into bed and rolled onto her back. She took another drink of her scotch and turned on the tv in her room. She flipped through the satellite channels and settled on a nature show. It was never too late and she was never too drunk to learn about things that may kill her on the job.

Sara was hugging her pillow, about to doze off when her door opened. She didn’t move to see who it was. She had a pretty good idea who it was.

The bed dipped down behind her and Sara slowly rolled over to see Nyssa sitting on her bed with her legs crossed. “I suppose the hat full of assorted currencies in my bedroom is a gift.”

“There aren’t any flower carts on the boat,” Sara struggled not to slur her words.

Nyssa smiled and patted Sara’s leg, “Just checking.” Nyssa rose and gracefully walked out of the room.

Sara laid on her bed for a moment before getting up. She entered Nyssa’s room again without knocking. Nyssa was back up in her aerial silk, the fabric wrapped around her body like a deadly red snake.

Sara could tell that Nyssa knew she was there because she had stopped moving. Sara swallowed,
“Can I watch?”

Coming from anyone else, Nyssa would have refused, but coming from Sara, she knew it wasn’t some weird attempt to check her out. Sara had always loved to watch Nyssa rise and fall, wrapped up in the silky material. Nyssa wasn’t sure what it was about it, but Sara was always rapt when given the chance to watch.

“Yes,” Nyssa answered and slid down a little ways before using one of her legs and her arms to push herself into a standing position.

Sara silently moved to the bed and laid down, watching Nyssa carefully. She was completely enchanted by Nyssa’s movements. She had been since the first day Nyssa introduced aerials to her. Sara wasn’t fond of the exercise and never used it in battle, but she could study Nyssa’s fluid dance with the material for days on end.

Sara watched Nyssa for at least an hour before Nyssa let herself freefall toward the floor before stopping an inch off of the ground. She slipped down and let her foot touch the ground as a feather would.

“You’re beautiful,” Sara put her hands behind her head and crossed her ankles, laid out on the bed and completely sober.

Nyssa ducked her head with a smile. Hundreds of people had told her that, but it only really affected her when Sara said it. Nyssa made her way to the bed and sat down, “How do you feel?”

“Sober,” Sara shrugged. “A little dehydrated.”

Nyssa got up and picked up a bottle of water off of the dresser. She walked back to the bed and handed it to Sara. Sara sat up and took the water. “Thanks.” She watched Nyssa sit down at the foot of the bed.

“Would you like to sleep here tonight?” Nyssa asked softly. It was almost timid how it came out of her mouth.

Sara sat up more and leaned back against the headboard, “I would like to, but would you be comfortable?”

“I wouldn’t ask, if I wasn’t comfortable with it,” Nyssa quietly answered. “You don’t have to stay.”

Sara made a small mountain of pillows behind herself and leaned back on them. Then she opened her arms for Nyssa.

The Princess of the League of Assassins had not seen a more warm sight than Sara laying down with her arms open. Nyssa crawled up the bed and rested her head on Sara’s shoulder, allowing the rest of her body to fall into place pressed against Sara’s body.

“I should probably take a shower,” Nyssa quietly let out, although it would be hard to pry her out of Sara’s arms at the moment.

Sara smiled and kissed the top of Nyssa’s head. “You’re fine.”

They laid like that on the bed, Sara on her back and Nyssa on her side with her arms encircling Sara’s torso. Sara softly stroked Nyssa’s hair. She closed her eyes and smiled. This was definitely something that she’d missed over the past few years. With Nyssa she could just be calm. Sara could hold Nyssa and know that Nyssa wasn’t thinking about being anywhere other than in her arms.
Sara opened her eyes and looked down at Nyssa. Everything about her was still. If Sara didn’t know any better, she’d think Nyssa was sleeping. Sara’s eyes drifted lazily around the room, taking in the opulence that Ra’s had made sure Nyssa became accustomed to. When there were no safety or stealthy concerns, Ra’s made sure that Nyssa had the finest of everything. The only time Nyssa refused his standards was in Nanda Parbat. Sara had fallen in love with an abandoned one room house right outside the League’s temple on her first stroll outside the temple gates. It took Nyssa less than an hour to acquire it and sent for repair supplies. They lived in the tiny house together with the breathtaking view and all the protection one house could ever need.

As her eyes drifted around, Sara spotted a familiar looking leather ledger. There were files sticking out of it. More than usual. “What are those?” Sara asked, stroking Nyssa’s hair again.

Nyssa barely glanced up to see what Sara was looking at. When she saw what it was, she knew that she had to explain so she sat up. Nyssa reached over and picked up the ledger. “Given your newfound vigilantism, I took the liberty of procuring a small list of a deep pool of unsavory individuals who are on the League’s radar in one way or another.” Nyssa opened the ledger and took out the files. She sorted through them, “Mass murderers, serial killers, human traffickers, drug lords.” Nyssa stacked the files back up. “All over the world. All with documented crimes against humanity.” Sara smiled, “You did this for me?”

Nyssa put the files back into the ledger and replaced it. “Their names are already in the ledger. I’m just giving you first stab at them, so to speak.”

Although Nyssa was trying to play off her accumulations of a small hit list for Sara, Sara knew that Nyssa had probably put a lot of work into it. Nyssa was striving to keep Sara around and trying to ease her back into the League with some of the more morally acceptable kills. Nyssa was being sweet in her own way and Sara understood it.

Once they were settled back into their previous position, Sara kissed Nyssa’s forehead, “Thank you.”

Nyssa didn’t answer. Acknowledging the thanks meant that she acknowledged that she went above and beyond anything she’d ever done for any other member of the League for someone who abandoned her in the middle of the night. Nyssa was still trying to hold her grudge against Sara while still being helplessly in love with her. It was a difficult balancing act that, at any point, could fall either way. Or so Nyssa told herself. She refused to accept that she had already essentially overlooked Sara’s betrayal.

They fell asleep in the positions that they were in and when Sara woke up, she was alone. Sara yawned and stretched. It’s not like she really expected Nyssa to be there when she woke up. She just wished it.

Sara went back to her room, took a shower, and got dressed in her bikini top and shorts. It was going to be another day at sea so she was going to enjoy it while she could. Sara stopped by the kitchen to grab an apple for breakfast, then made her way out to the second level deck. Rodney was setting up a rudimentary trebuchet machine, cradling three red balls in the basket.

“What’s going on?” Sara asked, taking a bite out of her apple. She noticed that the boat was not motoring through the water.

“Sara!” David called from the deck below, “Come retrieve with me.”

Sara looked down at him and then up at the deck above. Nyssa was standing on a chair, on the highest deck with her bow in hand. Her quiver was strapped across her deep red tank top and her
hair was blowing away from her face in the ocean wind. Sara grinned up at her. Nyssa tried to keep a straight face, but let out a small smile at the appearance of her favorite assassin.

After looking at the machine Rodney was manning and looking back up at Nyssa, Sara was starting to get a picture of what was going on. Sara shimmed out of her shorts and adjusted her bikini bottom. On the lowest deck, Sara stretched out her arms and looked over at David. “Ten thousand rubles says that I come back with more than you.”

“Deal,” David smiled, starting to stretch as well.

Money started changing hands on the middle deck. They were betting on how many of the balls Nyssa would hit and which one of the retrievers would get to the balls first and who would retrieve the most. Shelly even bet Rodney that his slapped together machine wouldn’t work more than once.

One the middle deck quieted down and Sara and David were done stretching, Nyssa adjusted her grip on her bow.

“Pull,” Nyssa called. Rodney pulled back the trigger on the machine, flinging the small red balls through the air. Nyssa raised her bow and let the first arrow fly before the balls reached their apex. The second arrow flew at the apex and the third sailed through the air, piercing the ball before it got within ten meters of the water.

Sara and David both ran toward the back of the boat. Sara did a sideways flip while David pulled a backflip and dove into the water. They both swam as hard as they could out toward the floating balls, all pierced with arrows. Sara grabbed one and David grabbed another. The farthest one out was the ball that would decide the winner. Sara laughed when she looked over and saw David looking at her. He smiled and they both swam toward it. Arriving at the same time, they both took hold of one side of the arrow.

There was a struggle in the water and soon both combatants were under water. Nyssa narrowed her eyes trying to find them in the water. A second later David popped up out of the water. He looked around, not seeing Sara anywhere. Nyssa’s stomach got tight when Sara didn’t surface a minute later. Nyssa was about to draw another arrow and sent it through David’s eye if he did anything to Sara.

Suddenly the ocean broke right next to the ladder attached to the back of the boat. Sara had three arrows secured between her teeth as she used the ladder to heave herself out of the water. Nyssa tried to hide a smile, but Sara met her eyes and shot Nyssa a wink. Then Sara turned around and waved the arrows at David.

Sara walked the arrows up to the stairs from the bottom deck to the second one. She took the balls off of them as she walked and set both down separately on the dining table.

Rodney loaded the balls up again and Sara sat down, letting the next pair of assassins swim for the arrows.

A small wad of currency was dropped in front of Sara on the table. She looked up and saw David dripping dry next to her. “I’m all out of rubles, but there’s twenty-five thousand rupees.”

“You’re short,” Sara said teasingly. She picked up the money.

“We’ll be on this boat for another week,” he walked to the small cabinet against the interior wall of the living room to get a towel. “I’ll win it back.” He offered her a smile and walked back over to her. He touched her shoulder, “It’s good to have you back, Yellow Bird.”
She smiled up at him, “It’s definitely good to be back.’

“Pull,” Nyssa called.

Rodney unleashed his machine again. It only sent two balls flying out toward the ocean. He picked up the third one and threw it off to the side just to see if Nyssa would get it. Of course after the first two balls were speared, the third was impaled, accelerating its downward trajectory into the water.

Sara smiled. Of course, Nyssa didn’t miss.

Sara went back inside to see if she could scrounge up some kind of juice. She found some grapefruit juice and got a glass before joining everyone else outside. It was a beautiful day and she was going to enjoy the deep blue water and the sunshine.

After Nyssa ran out of arrows, the assassins just started jumping into the water. Of course the daredevils that they were, they all tried to find higher places on the boat to jump off of. Then they started racing up to the top of the boat, nimble, wet streaks through the hallways and up the sides of the boat.

Sara missed this. Everything in Starling was so serious. Oliver was always so serious. But Nyssa had been doing this sort of thing long before Oliver even thought about it. Nyssa understood that no one could handle the pressures of constant attack and defense without a little down time. Sara had a feeling that was why Nyssa stopped the boat. When they got back to Nanda Parbat it was back to training and back to assignments. Out in the sea, Nyssa was their only leader and she wanted everyone on the boat to relax.

The funny thing about putting a group of assassins on a boat together was that it started to seem like a cross between a frat house and a kindergarten class. They played drinking games and catch. Sparring matched happened at random and they pushed each other into the ocean. It might have been odd to outsiders, but it was home to Sara.
Chapter 3

As day was turning evening and the boat got going again, a few of the assassins tied their silks to the third floor balcony and practiced aerial. Shelly had tangled her legs in the silk and was doing sit ups. Z was doing pull ups with the silks tight in his fists.

Sara didn’t have any silks with her. Even if she did, it wasn’t her favorite thing so she decided to hit the gym that was on the lowest level and see if she could get a few miles in on the treadmill.

Sara was the only in the small gym for a while. She listened to the music on her phone that was useless as a phone in the middle of the ocean. When they got to land, she was going to call Laurel, but until then she was just going to keep using her phone as a music player.

Halfway through a 10k, the door to the gym opened. Nyssa stepped in wearing a bright yellow sports bra and black pants. Nyssa had her own music playing in her ears. She looked up from her music selection and spotted Sara, a little surprised.

“Oh,” Nyssa stopped in the doorway, “I’m sorry. I’ll come back.”

She started to leave when Sara pulled out an earbud without stopping her run. “You don’t have to go. I’m about to move to weights.”

Nyssa hesitated in staying, but she closed the door and moved to the weights. She sat down on the mat and started stretching. Nyssa put her feet in front of her and bent completely forward.

“You were a little off this morning,” Sara commented as she kept running.

Nyssa looked up, “Excuse me?”

Sara grinned, “You hit most of the balls right in the middle, but one of them was off center by at least a millimeter.”

Nyssa rolled her eyes and resumed her stretching, “I must have been distracted.”

“Yeah I probably should have gone inside earlier,” Sara turned the treadmill off and moved her feet to the sides. “So all this didn’t distract you.” Sara motioned to her torso.

Nyssa tried to hide a smile, but it was impossible, “Starling City has made you full of yourself.”

Sara took a drink of her water and picked up her towel. She shrugged, “Do you want to knock me down a peg?”

Nyssa leaned back and put her hands behind her on the mat, “Are you challenging me?”

“Yeah,” Sara smiled mischievously, “You and me. Right here, right now.”

Nyssa slowly rose, “I suppose it is my duty to remind you who trained you.”

Sara pushed the treadmill back against the wall as Nyssa moved the weight machine “Oh, so Ra’s is going to be here?”

Nyssa had missed many things about Sara. One of them was her playful nature. Sara was the only one that would dare push Nyssa’s buttons. Sara also understood there were limits. Nyssa would never hurt her, but she would become irritable and avoid Sara. Sara never wanted that so she only
pushed Nyssa to acceptable limits when it was to make Nyssa smile or make a point.

Now she was going to hope to do both. Sara put her phone to the side and loosened up. Nyssa was completely calm on her side of the gym. She knew that Nyssa would go out of her way not to hurt her so Sara wasn’t nervous at all.

Their sparring session was one long session of hits and blocks that ended in both of them on the ground, locked in a mutually detrimental hold of each other. Sara was starting to hurt, but she said, “Are you ready to give up yet?”

Nyssa flipped Sara onto her back and pressed her forearm against Sara’s collarbone, “Are you?”

Sara grinned, not able to hide her joy at being that close to Nyssa. She bent her legs up and caught Nyssa, pulling Nyssa onto her back and leaning forward over her. “Give?”

“Never,” Nyssa turned onto her side, tipping Sara over and catching Sara’s arm with her own, immobilizing her.

Sara valiantly tried a few more times to get away, but it seemed Nyssa had her pinned. Sara just laid on the ground, not saying a word. She was trying to think of how to get out of it.

“You’re not going to give up are you?” Nyssa asked, amused.

Sara looked around her and then rested her head back down, “There are seven ways to get away from you right now.” She struggled a little and then went limp, “I just haven’t figured out what they are yet.”

Nyssa finally let go and fell onto her back on the mat. “You’re just as stubborn as ever. You would have let me break your arm before you admit defeat.”

Sara rolled onto her back next to Nyssa and rolled her shoulder, “Damn right.” They laid like that on the floor of the gym for a few moments before Sara hopped up.

Sara moved to the treadmill and put it back into place. “I think I’m going to go get in the hot tub.” Sara mentioned. She looked over her shoulder at Nyssa while she moved the weight machine back into place, “Not because I’m injured or anything.”

Nyssa smiled adoringly at Sara, “Of course.”

Sara moved to the door while Nyssa didn’t make a move to get off of the floor, “I wouldn’t be opposed to company.” Sara shot one last smile Nyssa’s way and slipped out of the room.

Sara took her time changing back into her swimsuit and then ran by the kitchen for a quick bite to eat. Her fellow assassins tried to talk her into a poker game, but Sara declined. They told her she was a chicken and she told them that they’re masochists because they enjoyed losing money.

By the time Sara got up to the hot tub, there was already someone in it. Sara put her hand on the side of the hot tub and deftly leapt in, creating hardly any splash. She settled down against the side of the hot tub and smiled at her companion.

Nyssa smiled back. She was leaned back, neck deep in the water, admiring the starry sky. “Hello Sara.”

“Hey,” Sara duplicated Nyssa’s position and looked up at the sky.
They sat like that in silence for a long while, just relaxing and looking at the stars. The only sounds were the occasional roar of laughter from the deck below and a low puttering rumble of the yacht’s motor.

It was Nyssa who broke the near silence. “You know you’re my exception. When an assassin deserts they usually don’t get to live and even if we need them alive, their family dies,” Nyssa’s eyes stayed on the heavens, “I barely poisoned your sister. I wouldn’t call what happened with your mother an abduction because we talked about literature for two hours, had some tea, and she took a nap. I had to gag her because one of my team came in and talked about killing you then she started screaming her bloody head off.”

Sara looked at the water, glowing blue with the hot tub lights. She looked over at Nyssa, “I know all that.”

“It doesn’t excuse what I did,” Nyssa sighed, letting her eyes fall to Sara, “What I did was childish.”

“You had to do something,” Sara shrugged.

Nyssa’s eyes filled with tears and she shook her head, “For months I thought about the fact that you would rather kill yourself than come back to me.” Anger coated Nyssa’s face, betraying the tears, “When I got back, I was enraged. I went around the world, taking out targets, not caring about collateral damage. It was a bloody tirade.” Nyssa looked out over the ocean and gritted her teeth, trying not to completely crumble.

“It wasn’t that I didn’t want to come back to you,” Sara moved through the water toward Nyssa. She easily found both of Nyssa’s hands in the water, “It was never about not wanting to be with you.” The tears pooling in Nyssa’s eyes broke Sara’s heart. She knew that devastation that had befallen throughout Nyssa’s life. There was no much hurt that Nyssa was slow to trust and even slower to love, but something clicked with Sara and Sara knew it. “I wasn’t running away from you. I was running away from this life. I thought I was losing myself.”

“Why didn’t you tell me?” Nyssa looked up, trying to keep the tears in her eyes.

Sara shrugged, “I don’t know. I wasn’t thinking. I never should have left you in the middle of the night. I should have explained to you what was going on. I just freaked out.”

Nyssa looked down and shook her head, a single tear dropping into the water between them, “I shouldn’t have let you come back.”

“What?” Sara ducked her head, trying to catch Nyssa’s eyes, “What are you talking about?”

“This isn’t the life for you,” Nyssa whispered. “You’re a good person.”

Sara smiled softly. She pressed her forehead to Nyssa’s, “You’re a good person too. You’re the one that rescued that helpless little girl from that island. You nursed me back to health and watched over me. You trained me.” Sara closed her eyes and poured her heart out, “But this is the life for me. We don’t just kill random people. The people we kill aren’t good people.” Sara smiled, “Remember that time we helped liberate an entire country?” Sara’s voice grew serious again, “And now that you made me a list…” Sara paused, “A list that I can feel good about checking off…I get that and I get to be with you.” Sara pulled her hands away from Nyssa’s and out of the water to put on Nyssa’s face. Sara pulled back and looked into Nyssa’s eyes. Nyssa was completely vulnerable right in front of her. It wasn’t a state that Nyssa was used to, but Sara was the only one that could bring it out. “I love you. I want to be with you. No matter where we are or what we’re doing, I want to be with you.”
Nyssa put her hands on Sara’s wrists and tried to cobble together her emotional walls. Nyssa took a deep breath, at a loss for worlds.

Sara gently rose from the water and kissed Nyssa’s forehead, “I know that I hurt you. I know it was bad, but we’re together now and I’ll keep waiting until you’re ready. I don’t want us to rush into things. We have all the time in the world so I will wait until you’re ready.”

Sara stood in the hot tub for a moment, contemplating whether she should stay or go. In the end, she knew that the few words that they already spoke carried the emotional weight of millions more. Sara dropped another kiss on top of Nyssa’s head and hopped out of the hot tub. She grabbed a towel off of one of the lounge chairs and wrapped it around herself as she walked down the stairs to the middle deck.

Nyssa sunk back into the warm water and looked up at the sky. She took a deep breath to try to compose herself. She had a lot to think about and a lot of emotion to sort through.

Sara kept her distance from Nyssa for the rest of the trip. She wouldn’t go out of her way to stay away from her, but their conversations were light and shallow. They didn’t spar with each other and they only accidentally touched. They couldn’t stop themselves from seeking the other out with her eyes or sharing smiles. It was difficult for Sara, especially when Nyssa’s door was open in the evening and she could see Nyssa’s aerial silk fluttering around.

They arrived in Karachi in the early morning. There were staggered flights booked for the group to northern Pakistan. Nyssa was in the first group to leave and Sara was supposed to be in the last. She was a little worried because they didn’t talk about where Sara was going to live. She didn’t mind staying in the temple with the other assassins. The rooms were nothing to sneeze at. They were all large with king sized beds and personal bathrooms, but Sara would rather stay in a small, one room house with the queen sized bed she used to share with Nyssa.

Sara and the other two assassins she was traveling with took their time in the airport restaurant, exchanging stories and techniques. Their flight was the last to leave so the sun was going down as they boarded their flight.

Will looked behind himself at Sara as they got off of the plane a few hours later, “Good thing you took a nap. The ascent to Nanda Parbat is going to be hell since you haven’t done it in years.”

Sara playfully bumped shoulders with him, “How do you know it’ll be hell? I might be better at it now.”

Will dug around in his bag while Z picked up one of the reserve cars that League kept in the long term airport parking, “I doubt it.” He finally found what he was looking for and handed Sara a small handheld oxygen tank and a bag of coca leaves.

Sara rolled her eyes, but took the things Will was offering her. She stuffed them into her bag as Z pulled up with the car, “How did you get these through security?”

Will just smiled. All the assassins had their little tricks to get things through airport and train stations. He opened the door to the front seat for Sara and then got into the backseat.

From the airport, they drove out into the mountains. Sara watched the mountains grow taller and taller, smiling wider and wider as she got closer to the place the felt most like home.

The sun was coming up over the mountains when they drove as far as their current car would take them. They traded their car for a Jeep in a lower village that was mostly run by the League. It was
another two hours of driving until they got to a smaller village high up on the mountain. After that, it was an hour long hike. Sara used her oxygen periodically and Will and Z made fun of her for it.

“Look like home?” Z asked.

“Feels like it,” Sara smiled, looking up at the imposing temple surrounded by the tiny houses and buildings of the village only known by the mountain it sat on. The temple was large, built out of dark woods and stone, accented with green roofs. The entrance was grand in a style that suited Ra’s Al Ghul’s love of the finer things. The temple was deceptive in that it sunk a few hundred feet into the mountain, creating a secure underground space for the League.

It was the middle of the afternoon and Sara was ready for a nap. She still hadn’t quite figured out where she was going to stay. She figured she was wander around a little while and if Nyssa didn’t show up, she’d crash in one of the empty bedrooms.

Z and Will parted ways with Sara. They were going to go sleep off the trip. Sara put her bag over her shoulder and walked through the temple, taking it all in. She remembered making some of the marks in the stone practicing with a knife or arrow. She missed the sound of her boots in the cavernous hallways. Some of the assassins came out to greet her. She swung by the mediation room and poked her head inside. Nothing had changed about it. Sensei was seated at the highest point in the room – a space where he had laid boards between the rafters and created his own space in the peaceful room. Sara didn’t say anything, but she knew he knew that she was there. His eyes remained closed, but a smile spread itself restfully across his lips.

Sara smiled to herself and walked out. She took a long hallway out toward the back of the temple and looked out at the archery ranges set up in the back. A path wound away from the temple, past the archery range, across a wooden bridge that arced over a stream, ending at the singular house that she and Nyssa used to share. There were white sheets out on the clothesline outside of the house. The windows were open and the front door was ajar. The air was starting to get nippy, but Sara knew that Nyssa loved cooler weather.

Sara’s eyes moved to the houses down a path perpendicular to the one leading to Nyssa’s house. It led down a small hill to a gathering of houses. Some were abandoned and some were purchased by members of the League. The roofs of the small buildings were frequent scenes of rooftop footraces and meditations. Sara wondered if anything changed about those houses, maybe someone new moving in or someone who moved back into the temple, leaving another one abandoned.

“Do you need help with your bag?”

Sara turned around and saw Nyssa walking out of the temple toward her. Sara smiled widely, “No. I got it. I was just…wondering where I should take it.”

Nyssa put her hands in the pockets of her black trousers. Her long sleeved purple shirt clung to Nyssa’s torso and was crossed by the strap of Nyssa’s quiver and her bow. Nyssa took a moment before she jerked her head toward the small house across the stream. “I suppose since everyone is back and all the bedrooms are full, you should take your bag to the house.”

Sara looked across the stream at the house and then back at Nyssa, “Are you sure you’re okay with it?”

Nyssa took a deep breath, “There’s only one way to find out. I’ll let you know if anything becomes uncomfortable.”

“I can sleep on the couch,” Sara offered, staring to slowly walk to their house.
“It’s your home too,” Nyssa quietly replied, “You helped build the bed. You don’t have to sleep on the couch.”

“But I’m going to,” Sara answered, letting Nyssa cross the bridge first.
Chapter 4

Nyssa smiled and ducked her head. Sara was being extremely considerate during the transition in their relationship. She looked behind her and saw Sara carefully watching her. Nyssa told Sara what she was thinking and Sara smiled. “I meant what I said. Everything is going to be on your time. When you’re one hundred percent ready.”

Nyssa opened the door to the house and let Sara walk in first. Sara looked around. It was dusty for sure. It didn’t look lived in. The only thing that had been moved in a while was the sheet on the bed. Sara looked back at Nyssa, “You didn’t stay here after I left.”

Nyssa shook her head, “I couldn’t.” She looked around like it was almost foreign territory to her. “It’s…It invokes a lot of emotions that I have yet to reconcile.” Nyssa took off her bow and quiver, leaning them on the wall next to the fireplace. She saw that the clothes she requested were delivered, cleaned and folded, onto the couch. Her armor was probably already hanging in the armoire as well.

Sara put her bag down next to the door. “We’ll reconcile them together.” Sara walked to the cabinet under the small kitchenette sink. She pulled out a rag and closed the cabinet. She ran it under some water and wrung it out until it was only barely damp. Sara started with the bookshelf. It reached all the way to the ceiling and was attached to the wall. It wasn’t very wide, but it was crammed full with books.

Sara smiled, remembering when she built the bookcase. Nyssa kept stacking books all over the house, on the floor, next to the sink, under the bed, and Sara was tired of tripping over them. One day she went to the temple and borrowed some tools. She set up a little station in front of their house where she cut down the pieces of firewood they kept next to their house into usable boards. Then she nailed the boards to the wall, making the bookcase immovable and sturdy. Then she placed all the books in the bookshelf and returned the tools. When Nyssa returned home a few days later, she was joyfully surprised. She admired the bookcase and kissed Sara, thanking her thoroughly for her thoughtfulness.

Sara took her time cleaning the spines of each and every book as well as the shelves. She heard Nyssa behind her sweeping the wooden floor. Sara loved the feeling of both of them quietly cleaning their house – their house. It felt normal and this normal felt good.

Once the entire place was cleaned and their clothes were put away in the usual spots, Nyssa went outside to retrieve the sheets. “I asked Talia to wash these sheets. I think that she sent someone out here to do it.”

Sara took one end of the sheets and helped Nyssa make the bed. Then, Sara retrieved their blankets from the cabinet in the bathroom and placed two of them on the foot of the bed and one over the back of the couch.

Nyssa looked around the house and then moved to the bookshelf. “Bloody Talia rummaged through my books.”

Sara couldn’t help, but smile. As ferocious as Nyssa could be, she could still be petty with her sister. Sara put on a really bad British accent, “Bloody Talia.”

Nyssa rolled her eyes, “I can’t believe that you’re mocking me.”

Sara smiled and leaned on the back of their couch. Sara kept using the bad accent, “How dare
anyone mock Nyssa Al Ghul, daughter of Ra’s Al Ghul, Heir to the Demon.” Sara bit her bottom lip over a smile.

Nyssa tried to frown, but failed miserably. She rearranged some of the books then moved to the sink to look out the window. She had spent almost an entire day looking out that window when Sara left. The old wooden window frame was worn, but did something spectacular to the view. She took a deep breath. She was assailed with memories that did not conjure good emotions, “Sara.”

“Yeah?” Sara dropped the accent, realizing that Nyssa’s tone was no longer playful.

“You knew you were going to leave,” Nyssa softly spoke, remembering how she first looked out the window expecting Sara to be meditating on the roof of the adjacent house. But a quick glance around their shared house dwelling told Nyssa that Sara had left for good, “You made love to me the night before like it was the last.”

Sara’s heart felt like it was being squeezed out of her chest. She nodded, knowing that she owed Nyssa the truth. “I thought it might be.”

Nyssa looked down at the stone sink that housed their primitive wooden bowls. They could have had the finest china from anywhere in the world, but Sara loved the wooden bowls made in the village below. Nyssa licked her lips. “There’s going to be a blizzard coming in. I better go get some more firewood.”

“Nyssa,” Sara quietly called, trying to keep Nyssa in the house so that they could talk some more. When Nyssa didn’t turn around to look at her, Sara picked up her coat from where it was draped on top of her duffle bag, “I’m going with you.”

Nyssa picked up her coat off of a chair and then ducked her head to put her quiver and bow across her back. She was conflicted on if she wanted Sara to go or not, but eventually she gave in, “Then carry the axe.”

They walked a small mountain trail that would have been treacherous to anyone not accustomed to it. It took an hour to reach the edge of the small high mountain forest. Both women walked in silence, both watching out for the other’s safety without saying a word. Nyssa kept her bow in her hand and Sara was carrying an axe and some rope.

They walked through the forest for a hundred meters before Sara pointed out a tree, “This one.”

Nyssa nodded, put her bow across her chest, and held out her hand. She was waiting for the axe so that she could cut down the tree, but Sara took off her coat and dropped it onto Nyssa’s open hand. Sara put the axe on her shoulder and walked around the tree, trying to find the best angle.

Nyssa just smiled and shook her head. Even though they were together for years, she never felt as though she’d ever get the hang of Sara Lance.

Sara started swinging the axe with great precision and power. Nyssa stood watch, keeping an eye out for large mountain predators and the extremely venomous snakes that inhabited the area outside of the temple. However her eyes drifted to the way that Sara’s shoulder muscles flexed with every swing of the axe. She watched Sara’s boots swivel in the mud and how a trail of sweat was starting to form down her spine of her shirt.

All the lustful things clouding Nyssa’s mind almost made her miss the minute movement next to Sara’s boot. Nyssa quickly pulled off her bow, drew an arrow, and pierced a hole clean through the head of a pit viper as it lunged at Sara.
Sara saw Nyssa’s swift movements and turned around. Sara propped the axe up on the tree she was cutting and picked up the dead snake by the tail. “Ra’s doesn’t like it when you kill the pit vipers.”

“I will not let them live at the expense of your life,” Nyssa walked past Sara and pulled her arrow out of the moist ground at the base of a collateral tree. “I made a promise to your father.”

Sara knew it wasn’t the only reason, but she wasn’t going to say anything. Sara tossed the snake away from them and moved back to the tree.

“Would you like me to take over?” Nyssa asked, walking a perimeter around the tree Sara was cutting down.

“Nah, I got it,” Sara picked up the axe.

Nyssa was more vigilant in her watch over Sara. After Sara had cut her first notch in the tree, she moved to the other side. Sara swung the axe again. This time it only took a few powerful strikes before Sara pushed the hair out of her face. She met Nyssa’s eyes and spoke evenly, “Timber.”

Nyssa watched the tree fall between them. She watched as Sara stepped up on the tree and started hacking off the branches. Nyssa took the rope after Sara had cleared one side and tied the rope to the end of the tree, leaving both ends of the rope long enough to be pulled. She made sure to secure it well and then started picking up the branches Sara chopped off the tree and used a smaller length of rope to bundle the small branches. Nyssa secured the bundle of branches to her quiver and retrieved Sara’s coat from the tree she hung it on to keep it dry.

Sara finished chopping off the branches and wiped her forehead with the back of her hand. She saw Nyssa waiting for her and walked the length of the tree to her. Nyssa handed Sara her coat and then picked up both ends of the rope that was tied to the tree.

Nyssa started walking as Sara put her coat on. It took a little struggle to get the tree moving, but once she got it moving, it glided easily across the loose ground.

Sara trotted to catch up to Nyssa and found a place to rest the axe on top of the tree so that it wouldn’t fall off. Sara moved up next to Nyssa, “Here, let me help.”

“I’ve got it,” Nyssa answered.

Sara knew there was no arguing with Nyssa so she just walked next to her starting the hike back up to their house. Forty-five minutes into the hike back up to Nanda Parbat, Nyssa let Sara help her. A few minutes before Nanda Parbat came into view, it started to snow.

Both women were glad to arrive behind their house with their firewood. Of course it still had to be chopped into small enough pieces for the fireplace. Nyssa went into the house to put away her bow and her quiver. She also put some of the smaller branches into the fireplace and lit them, trying to get a fire started before it got too cold.

Nyssa walked back outside and found Sara chopping the tree into smaller parts. “Can I help?” Nyssa asked.

Sara finally had to let Nyssa help. Her back muscles were screaming for her to stop. Sara picked up what she had already chopped and started to make a pile right outside the front door. Then she took a few inside to add to the fire Nyssa started.

Sara opened the door to walk back outside when Nyssa was walking back inside. Sara looked behind Nyssa, “Done already?”
Nyssa nodded. “I’m just going to put the axe away and then stack up the wood.” Nyssa gestured inside the house. “Why don’t you take a shower? I’ll finish out here and get in after you.”

Sara looked at the wood Nyssa was going to have to stack alone, “Are you sure?”

“Of course,” Nyssa leaned closer to Sara, but instead of dropping a kiss like Sara hoped Nyssa would, Nyssa leaned to the side and placed the axe against the wall.

Nyssa disappeared outside and Sara sighed. She sat on the bed to take off her boots and then dropped her coat on the bed. Sara moved to the bathroom and pulled the curtain closed around the bathtub. She turned on the water and the showerhead sprayed into the claw foot tub. Sara felt a chill as she stripped down, but quickly warmed up in the shower. Sara wasn’t sure how Nyssa did it, but they always had hot water and it was amazing, especially because they lived up on a mountain.

Sara knew the longer she stayed in the shower, the harder it would be to get out so as soon as she was clean, Sara got out of the shower and dried off with a towel that came from a different part of the world. Sara stepped out of the bathroom and found Nyssa, sitting in her favorite chair, a book in hand, in front of the fire.

Sara quietly got dressed, not wanting to disturb Nyssa. She pulled on some sweatpants and a tank top. She ran a hand through her damp hair and padded her way to the bookshelf. It had been a while since she’d read a book. There wasn’t much time for it in Starling with actually having to have a job and being part of the Arrow Team.

Nothing felt really rushed in Nanda Parbat. It might have something to do with the fact that time was different in Nanda Parbat. Time went faster without actually seeming to move at all. It was a weird trip the first time Sara spent months in Nanda Parbat only to find that in the outside world only two weeks went by. Sara asked Nyssa what it was about Nanda Parbat, but Nyssa just smiled and shook her head. She told Sara that some things weren’t meant to be understood. Sara didn’t like that answer at the time, but knew that in her world as it was, with Nyssa - inside of the house - it was the answer that they had and they didn’t need a different one.

Sara picked up a well-worn book. It was one of Nyssa’s favorite and she had yet to read it. Sara walked over to the couch and sat down in the corner of it, cracking open the book.

“I’m going to go shower,” Nyssa announced and set her book down in her chair.

Sara nodded, not looking away from the book. She heard the shower start and smiled. It finally felt like she was home and everything was back to normal.

It had been a long day with all the cleaning and the wood chopping so she scooted across the couch to lie down. Sara pulled the blanket over herself and held the book over her head so she could continue to read it.

That didn’t mean that she didn’t hear Nyssa get out of the shower. Or that she wasn’t listening while Nyssa looked through the armoire for something to wear. After she was sure Nyssa was dressed, Sara got up off of the couch and put a few more pieces of wood on the fire. She knew it could get really cold at night. Their house wasn’t modern, but it was insulated enough so that they didn’t freeze to death at night.

The wind started to pick up as Sara laid down and she could hear rushing around the house in a ghostly whirl. It just made the night feel more like home though. The sound easily lulled Sara into sleep.
Sara slowly woke up. She stretched and sat up. A quick scan around her told her that Nyssa was already awake and out of the house. The fire was still roaring. Nyssa had put another log on the fire before leaving and Sara smiled at her thoughtfulness. She knew she hurt Nyssa, but this gave her hope that Nyssa still cared enough about her to make it work.

Sara got dressed into some of her newer clothes and grabbed a cloth sack out of the cabinet so that she could gather the clothes that needed to be washed. She wasn’t really excited about having to lug her laundry all the way to the temple to wash it, but that was the price she and Nyssa paid for the privacy of their own dwelling. However, when she went to get her dirty clothes out of the duffle bag in the bottom of the armoire she found that not only were the clothes gone, but so was the duffle bag.

Sara walked out of the house, finding everything coated in a blanket of snow. The walkway away from their house had already been cleared all the way to the temple, making a two foot tall valley for her to walk through. Sara stood by the front door, looking over the snowcapped steeples of the temple before she said, “You know, I was going to do our laundry.”

“David owes me,” Nyssa answered. She was sitting on the roof of their house, not exercising or stretching. She was just enjoying the view and the air. “There’s not much for him to do here to earn that kind of money, so he’s working it off.”

Sara turned around and looked up at Nyssa, “Have you eaten?”

Nyssa shook her head. She stood up and put her hands on her hips. “Shall we dine in the temple or forage in our kitchen?”

“Is there anything still good in the kitchen?” Sara asked, shielding her eyes from the sun bouncing off of the snow so that she could see Nyssa better.

Nyssa moved to the edge of the roof and jumped down, landing lightly on her feet in a small hill of snow, “It is doubtful.” She dusted the snow off of her boots and stepped onto the cleared path.

“The temple it is,” Sara smiled. “If you want to make a list, I’ll take it down to the village after breakfast.”

“I need to travel to the village as well,” Nyssa walked with her arms as her sides, tensely trying not to reach out and take Sara’s hand. “One of my bows requires a new string.”

“Your recurve?” Sara asked.

“How did you know?” Nyssa asked back, pausing so that Sara could cross the bridge across the stream first.

Sara smiled, “You’re always working on that thing.”

Nyssa smiled softly and followed Sara across the bridge. Everything was so comfortable with Sara. They knew everything about each other. Sara had watched Nyssa toil with her recurve bow hundreds of times. It was old and needed a lot of care, but Nyssa loved it so she tried to keep it in working condition.

Breakfast was anything, but an intimate affair. The other members of the League were all gathered a long table in what had become the dining room. They welcomed Nyssa and Sara into the group. The planning and the stories started almost immediately. Someone asked Nyssa for some advice and Sara was pulled into a conversation about planning a hit somewhere Sara was familiar with.

Sara’s pocket rang as she was putting her dishes in the massive communal sink in the dining hall.
She forgot she had a phone and forgot that cell service was actually a thing so high on the mountain. Sara pulled it out and saw her sister’s face on the screen. She stepped outside into a snow flurry. She smiled and answered, “Hey. Are you okay?”

There was a pause. Laurel stuttered, “Yeah. I mean…yeah. I sort of just wanted to see if you would answer.” Laurel let out a relieve sigh.

Sara laughed, “Yeah. Why wouldn’t I?”

“You’ve never gone off like this before where we were able to reach you,” Laurel replied. “Is everything going okay?”

“It’s going great,” Sara answered, “A little cold, but I’m happy.”

“Good,” Laurel paused. “So cold huh? Are you in Russia or something?”

Sara laughed, “You know I can’t tell you that. For your own safety.”

“I know,” Sara could hear the smile in Laurel’s voice. “I had to try. How’s…Nyssa?”

“She’s great.” Sara answered. She looked out over the small town below. “She’s great, but we’re…still on the rocks.”

“Really?” Laurel asked, confused, “You two aren’t back together? I thought that would be immediate.”

Sara kicked at the rocks under her feet, “No. I mean, I don’t think that I really understood how devastating me leaving was to her. I really hurt her.”

Laurel could sense the sadness in Sara’s voice. “Hey,” Laurel said softly in the phone, “You did what you needed to do. Your family needed you.”

“Yeah. I know,” Sara nodded, “And Nyssa knows that too. I just…I should have told her I was leaving. She would have let me go. She may have even come to Starling to help. I was just confused. Everything happened so fast.” Sara sighed, “I should have told her, you know?” Sara looked around to make sure no one followed her. “I hurt her and I have to make it up to her. I just don’t know how.”

“You’ll figure it out,” Laurel assured her, “You’ll work it all out and everything will be great. You have a good heart and if she knows you like I do, she knows that she’s lucky that you’re in her life.” Laurel paused, “Sometimes you just need time. Be patient with her.”

Sara took a deep breath, “I will. I’ll wait forever if that’s what it takes.” Sara put her free hand in her pocket, “I love her, you know?”

“I know,” Laurel smiled on her end of the line, “And I saw the way that she looked at you while you were here. She loves you too. I don’t know what you two had, but it made you happy. That’s something worth fighting for.”

“I will,” Sara swore.

“And you two should come to Christmas,” Laurel offered, cheerfully, “It’ll be fun.”

Sara laughed, “I’ll think about it.” The crunching of rocks under boots, made Sara turn around. Nyssa was walking toward her. “I have to go, Laurel. I’ll call you later.”
“Okay. Say hi to Nyssa for me,” Laurel answered, “I love you.”

“Love you too,” Sara smiled and hung up. She tucked her phone into her back pocket and turned around. “Hey, are you ready to go to town?”

Nyssa nodded affirmatively. She had her coat zipped up and the hood pulled over her head.

Sara started to lead the way around the Temple and to the trail that led to the village. “Laurel says hi.”

“When you converse with her again, send her a sincere regard from me,” Nyssa replied evenly.

Sara smiled, “I’ll tell her you said hi.”
The people in the village were excited when they saw that Sara had returned. They maintained their healthy respect for Nyssa, but mostly ignored her to ask Sara where she’d been. Sara got the impression that most of them thought she was dead. An older woman that sold the bowls that Sara loved so much told Sara that Nyssa doesn’t do well without her.

Nyssa was in earshot, looking over some fruit. She didn’t say anything. She gritted her teeth. Her first reaction was anger, but it was true and, more embarrassingly, obvious that Nyssa didn’t do well without Sara. The woman told Sara that Nyssa missed her and she was glad that Sara was back. Sara told the woman that she missed Nyssa too.

Nyssa smiled to herself and wiped it away when she brought her purchases to the woman Sara was talking to. Nyssa paid for everything although Sara offered.

Nyssa was already walking away with their things when Sara subtly bought a flower. The woman refused her money and gave her the flower. Sara smiled, thanking her, and trotted off after Nyssa.

They walked a little while before Sara silently offered the flower to Nyssa.

Nyssa smiled brilliantly and accepted the flower, “Thank you.”

“So how much time do we have before we ship out?” Sara asked, putting her hands in her pockets.

Nyssa inhaled, “As much time as you’d like and we can go to whichever job you would like.” Nyssa looked at Sara. “If you don’t mind, I will accompany you.”

“Of course I don’t mind,” Sara smiled, “Besides, you promised my dad that you would make sure nothing happened to me. You can’t make sure of that if you’re here and I’m in Thailand.”

“Thailand is your first stop?” Nyssa asked.

Sara shrugged, “Not sure yet. I need to look over those files again.”

“Of course,” Nyssa nodded, “The files are in the house. If you would like, I’ll go over them with you. We can talk logistics and possibly hit as many targets in one trip as possible.”

“Absolutely,” Sara agreed, “Maybe over dinner?”

Nyssa smiled, “Perhaps. I have to go meet with a young woman that is the daughter of a friend of Mad Dog. Mad Dog believes that she may actually be his daughter.”

“Whoa what?” Sara was completely shocked, “Can I come?”

“Of course,” Nyssa nodded, “She wants to become part of the League. I suppose that you would be the best person to counsel with her as whether or not this is what she actually wants.” Nyssa stopped at the door of the temple. “I will put these away and meet you in my father’s lounge.”

Sara kissed Nyssa’s cheek, “Thank you.”

They parted ways and Sara made her way to Ra’s lounge. He never really used it. Nyssa liked to hold meetings there. Sara knew it was because it also contained her father’s library, a massive collection of rare and helpful books from around the world. Nyssa would always borrow a few after every meeting.
Sara spotted the young woman sitting nervously on the couch. Sara offered her a warm smile and stepped into the room, “Hey.”

The woman looked at Sara and nervously smiled back. She rose, “Hi, I’m Cassandra. Are you Nyssa Al Ghul?”

Sara chuckled, “No. I’m Sara Lance. Nyssa will be here soon.” Sara looked around and saw that absolutely nothing had changed about the lounge. It was still grand and decorated with all the antiques that Ra’s loved. “So, what brings you to the Nanda Parbat?”

“I kind of stumbled up on it, looking for my mother,” Cassandra ran some fingers through her black, short choppy hair, “It’s a beautiful place.”

Sara nodded. She walked over to the desk and sat down on the corner of it. Few dared to sit on any of Ra’s furniture, especially the furniture that wasn’t made for sitting. But Sara had sat on the desk hundreds of times and watched Nyssa and Ra’s discuss topics ranging from tactical maneuvers to ancient Greek mathematics. They were two of the smartest people that Sara had ever met and she learned a lot from just listening to them speak.

Sara saw some movement and knew that Nyssa was close. Sara gestured to the open door of the balcony, “The view is great too.”

Cassandra slowly stood up and walked over to the doorway. It was a second later that Nyssa seemed to drop from the sky and land on her feet in front of Cassandra. Cassandra threw a punch at her in reflex and Nyssa easily caught it with a wicked grin. Cassandra attacked again, Nyssa countering her in every skilled attack until Nyssa finally tripped Cassandra up and she stumbled backwards, “You must be Miss Cain.”

Cassandra took her hand back and took a step back, “Who are you?”

As Nyssa said the words Sara mouthed them with a grin, catching Nyssa’s eyes over Cassandra’s shoulder, almost breaking the terrifying façade that Nyssa was trying to hold up, “I am Nyssa Al Ghul, daughter of Ra’s Al Ghul, heir to the demon.” Nyssa motioned inside and Cassandra turned around and walked in. Sara couldn’t stop her smile when Nyssa looked at her. Nyssa rolled her eyes, knowing that Sara’s smile was always infectious.

“Why are you here?” Nyssa demanded as soon as Cassandra sat down.

“I came in search of my mother,” Cassandra looked up at Nyssa, “But this place…I want to stay and train. Mad Dog said that I had to ask you.”

Nyssa crossed her arms and looked at Sara. She quirked an eyebrow, silently asking Sara what she thought about it. Sara shrugged, knowing that Nyssa’s judgment about people was usually better than hers.

Nyssa looked the woman over, “Have you spoken to Sensei?”

“No,” Cassandra shook her head, “Just you and Mad Dog. And Sara.”

Nyssa looked over at Sara and grinned a wicked grin, “Well, since Sara here has been away from Nanda Parbat for quite some time, I believe that a journey is in order. You may join us in an ascent up to the peak of the mountain or you may descend the mountain yourself and never return.”

“Really?” Sara asked, her eyes bright with excitement. She loved ascending the mountain. It was so beautiful and peaceful. She didn’t actually mind sharing a one person tent with Nyssa either.
Nyssa nodded, “Since Mad Dog had decided to sponsor you,” Nyssa looked at Cassandra, “He will accompany us. If you survive the journey, you may train with us.”

Cassandra stood up solemnly and nodded, “Thank you. That is all I ask. You won’t regret this.”

“Find Mad Dog and tell him of our plan,” Nyssa instructed, “We’ll depart tomorrow afternoon.”

Cassandra thanked her again and walked out of the room. Nyssa turned to Sara, “I should have asked first, would you like to accompany me to the summit?”

“Of course,” Sara grinned, “It’s so much fun. Are there going to be surprises along the way?”

Nyssa grinned back, “If I told you they wouldn’t be surprises would they?”

Sara knew that ascending the mountain was always a training exercise, but it was one of Sara’s favorite things. Concealed viper pits, ambushes, explosives, and manmade avalanches were just a few of the things that they were set to encounter on the trip up. Everything was coordinated by Sensei so that even Nyssa didn’t know what was going to happen. Surprisingly, only one person ever died on an ascent and it wasn’t from any of the obstacles. He insulted Ra’s Al Ghul to his face. The entire party was shocked, especially when Ra’s didn’t do anything about it. Then the next morning when everyone woke up, the man who insulted Ra’s had disappeared, tent and all. No one asked any questions and everyone moved on like he had never been among them.

Sara was giddy. “We’re leaving tomorrow?”

“If you wish,” Nyssa started making her way toward the door.

Sara slid off of the desk and started walking with Nyssa out of the room and down the hall, “I don’t have any plans. Whenever you want to go, I’m ready.”

“You don’t need another day to rest?” Nyssa asked, guiding them through the temple.

Sara quirked an eyebrow, “I didn’t lay on a couch in Starling and eat potato chips for three years. I can go tomorrow.”

Nyssa smiled and looked down. She leveled her chin and answered, “I didn’t mean to offend you. I just thought that you might want to take some time to relax.”

“I am relaxed,” Sara stopped in front of the door to one of the training rooms, “Do you know where Talia is? I need a new bō.”

Nyssa sighed, “I’m sure she’s in her garden. She just got back from The States.” Nyssa stood in front of Sara, “I can get it for you.”

“Talia is the supposed to be the weapons curator,” Sara poked Nyssa’s stomach playfully, “You can’t do everything around here.” Sara bit her lip wishing that she could kiss Nyssa. She dropped her playful arm and tucked her hands into her back pockets, “I’m going to go talk to her before Dark asks for ten thousand throwing stars or whatever he’s into these days.”

“Fine,” Nyssa looked over Sara’s hair and wished to run her fingers through it, but kept her hands clenched at her sides. “I’ll see you later.”

“Maybe we could hit the archery range this afternoon,” Sara offered, “I may be a little rusty.”

Nyssa smiled softly, “I somehow doubt that, but I would enjoy it nonetheless.”
Sara wandered off to find Talia. Her garden was on one of the upper floors of the temple so Sara trotted up a few stone staircases and found herself on one of the floors that was mainly residential. She had lived in the temple only a few months before moving in with Nyssa, but she still had a lot of memories come back to her as she walked through the corridor.

Nyssa had come to check on her daily. Sometimes Nyssa would allow Sara to see her checking and sometimes Nyssa would be a ghost that Sara could only sense. But Sara knew that Nyssa was there every day. She became enchanted by Nyssa on the boat ride back to civilization. Nyssa was protective immediately and that had never changed.

“Hey Sara!”

Sara turned around and saw Pru stick her head out of one of the doors. She hopped over to Sara and pulled her into a hug, “No one told me you were back.”

“Hey!” Sara smiled, “I just got back. How’s it been going?”

Pru rubbed the top of her bald head, “You know, a couple hits. A guy in every town. A strong drink. It’s the life, man.”

“Right,” Sara nodded. She touched Pru’s shoulder. She was always like a little sister to Sara.

“Where are you heading?” Pru asked, looking down the hallways at some other people moving around.

“I’m going to see Talia,” Sara gestured to the other end of the hallway where the Al Ghuls’ rooms were housed. “See what I can get in the way of some weapons.”

“Where are you staying at?” Pru asked, “We’re pretty full up right now, but you can stay with me if you need to. I’m gonna head out with Owen and Z in a few weeks so you’ll have it to yourself.”

“Thanks, but I’m staying in the house,” Sara smiled, “Out by the archery range.”

“With Nyssa?” Pru asked, wide-eyed, “The way she stormed around here after you left, I swear she’d kill you the second she found you.”

Sara smiled, “Well, we’re not back together, but we’ve worked through enough to be friends.”

“And roomies,” Pru looked up and down the hall. She whistled, “Damn, you should have seen her after you left. Everyone stayed out of her way. Ra’s is scary when he’s mad, but Nyssa is…she was terrifying. I went with her on one of her hits and she ripped the dude to shreds.”

Sara looked down and rocked back onto her heels as she shoved her hands into her pockets, “Yeah. I did not handle that well.”

Pru grinned, “Next time you need a break let me know so I can vacate before Nyssa finds out.”

Sara shook her head, “Next time I’ll take her with me.”

Pru clapped Sara’s shoulder and gestured down the hall, “I have to get to the war room. I’ll see you around? Maybe we can get a drink?”

“Of course,” Sara agreed.

Pru ran off and Sara started walking back down the hallway. She passed the room that still remained Nyssa’s. The door was closed and there was no light coming from under the door. Across the
hallway, Talia’s door was open.

Sara cautiously stepped in, “Talia?”

“In the garden,” Talia called back.

Sara made her way through the large living room, past the closed bedroom door and out onto a balcony that had stairs leading to a small plateau on the mountain where Talia had cultivated a beautiful garden against the laws of nature that said nothing should have grown in the sub-zero temperatures. Talia turned around and smiled, “It’s so good to see you again, Sara.”

“You as well,” Sara nodded.

“I suppose you come to me for weapons,” Talia turned back to a rose bush that she was pruning.

“Yes,” Sara inhaled the clean mountain air, “A bō, maybe some tonfa.”

Talia chuckled melodically, “You are a creature of habit, Miss Lance.”

Sara moved to the edge of the balcony and looked over. Talia was much colder than Nyssa and much harder to talk to, at least for Sara. “I guess so.”

“Wooden or metal?” Talia asked.

“One of each,” Sara saw a few people walking around.

Talia walked down the stairs from her garden, “Lucky for you, I heard that my lovesick sister was coming to your rescue and anticipated your return.” She walked past Sara into her room. They walked to the living room and opened double doors to a small room. Inside, every weapon imaginable was kept in meticulous organization. Talia walked to the back of the room and picked up two bōs. As she walked back, she picked up two tonfas out of a small pile. She handed them off to Sara, “Enjoy.”

“Thank you,” Sara looked over her new toys with a bright grin.

Talia closed the doors and started walking back to the balcony. She paused with her back to Sara, but spoke firmly, “Let me be clear, my sister and I have a formal indifference toward each other, but if you ever leave her again I will personally rip your throat out.”

Sara licked her lips and swallowed hard, “Understood.”

Talia nodded and then disappeared outside.

Sara made her way out to the archery range. Nyssa wasn’t there yet so she decided to drop off her new weapons at their house. She could pick up a bow while she was there as well.

When she opened the door, Sara found Nyssa was looking through the bookcase. Nyssa looked over her shoulder and smiled, “I see you found Talia.”

Sara set down the tonfas on the coffee table and looked at her new bōs. She looked down the metal one and then smiled when she saw it was collapsible. “She was expecting me.” Sara whirled the bō around and smiled. “She also threatened to rip my throat out if I ever left you again.”

“She what?” Nyssa whirled around.

Sara turned to Nyssa, “That’s what it would take for someone to get me to leave you again in the first
place.” Sara studied Nyssa’s face and watched the anger melt away. She didn’t want Nyssa to feel like she had to say something so Sara offered, “Archery range?”

“Quite,” Nyssa nodded, thankful that Sara didn’t make her answer the unspoken question. Nyssa picked up her precious recurve bow and a compound one out of her armoire for Sara. Then she slung a quiver of arrows over her shoulder.

They walked the short path to the archery range and each took a target next to the other. There was really no reason for Nyssa to practice. She could hit tennis balls flying across the ocean and a fly from a hundred yards away. Sara was pretty effective as well, but her groupings weren’t as spot on as Nyssa’s, who seemed to be drawing shapes with the arrows on the target.

“You’re making me look bad,” Sara smiled and watched Nyssa not really even pay attention to the last arrow that completed a triangle.

Nyssa looked over at Sara, “I suppose if we battled with bōs, you may have the upper hand.”

Sara shrugged. “I don’t know about that.” Sara let another arrow fly and watched it hit the center of the target. She knew that Nyssa had grown up training with every weapon imaginable. She never dreamed that she’d be able to defeat Nyssa. Luckily, Nyssa had never made any hostile moves against her. Even when Nyssa was sent to kill Sara, she couldn’t do it. She couldn’t even draw her knife.

They continued shooting their bows for a long while before deciding to head home for dinner. Together they decided to start a soup for dinner. Sara was chopping vegetables while Nyssa started a fire so the house would be warm through the night.

Nyssa stood from the fireplace and saw Sara standing barefooted in the kitchen eating the vegetables that were supposed to go into the soup. Had it been five years ago, she would have walked up behind Sara and wrapped her arms around Sara’s waist. She would have kissed her neck while Sara leaned back into her.

Nyssa swallowed. She desperately wanted to get back to where they had been, but trusting Sara wasn’t coming as easily as she hoped.

So she made her way to the kitchen, “Is there any way I could help?”

“I think I got it,” Sara dropped the vegetables into the pot and put the lid on it, “It’ll be ready in a little while.” She kissed Nyssa’s cheek. “I’m going to go put some sweats on.”

Nyssa ducked her head and smiled. Even the smallest physical affection from Sara was always warmly accepted. She just wished that she was brave enough to show Sara some kind of affection. It was difficult on both her pride and her fragility to touch Sara in any way.

Nyssa wanted to trust Sara, but when Sara left it was the first time she’d ever truly felt broken. She did some unspeakable things after Sara left. It was all blood and fire. Nyssa didn’t know how to handle adverse emotions well. She’d never been taught that any emotions were acceptable. It took her a while to learn that loving Sara was okay. It took time and Sara’s reassurance that what they had was normal and special and something that should be explored.

Nyssa stood in the kitchen area until Sara got back. Sara furrowed her brow, “Are you okay?”

Nyssa shook out of her thoughts and nodded, “Of course.” She walked to the fireplace and pretended to stoke the fire as she thought.
Sara went to the couch where her blanket was and sat down. It was going to get chilly that night and since she was going to spend the next few nights in a tent moving up the mountain, Sara decided to spend the rest of the evening and into the night as warm as possible.

Nyssa put the fire poker back on the stand and turned to look at Sara. “Are you warm enough?”

Sara smiled and nodded, “Yes. Thank you.” She looked Nyssa over and asked, “Are you?”

Nyssa realized that she wasn’t actually that warm now that she was away from the fire. “I’m going to change.” Nyssa moved toward the bed and changed into a red thermal shirt and long flannel pants. She pulled on some warm socks and then moved to the fire. She was going to sit in the armchair and tinker with her recurve bow, but Sara lifted the blanket so that she could share.

Nyssa smiled and sat down next to Sara, pulling the blanket over herself as well. Nyssa leaned into her corner of the couch and looked at the fire. “We’re departing up the mountain in the late morning if that’s okay with you.”

“Yeah,” Sara nodded and joked. “I don’t have any plans.” She ran a hand through her hair. “Did you get our tent back from Kyle?”

“He took a villager up with him one night and suffice to say Kyle is a father now,” Nyssa put her arm on the back of the couch, “I bought us a new tent.”

Sara quirked an eyebrow, “Us?”

Nyssa sputtered, “I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have assumed that you would want to-”

Sara leaned over to her opposite side and onto Nyssa. She put her arms around Nyssa’s waist and rested her head on Nyssa’s shoulder, “How could you think that I would not want to share a tent with you?”

Nyssa was hesitant to put her arms around Sara, but she eased into it. She held Sara loosely, tucking Sara’s head under her chin. “I’d be honored to share a tent with you, Ta-er al-asfer.”

Sara was content in their embrace until she smelled something start to burn. Sara sat up quickly and bounded over the couch. She turned off the stove and pulled the pot off of the stove. She picked up the wooden spoon and stirred the soup, “You know, you should get a little less beautiful so that I’ll start remembering things.”

Nyssa tried to fight away a smile, but it was a fight that even she was going to lose. When Sara looked at her with bright blue eyes and a smile accented by her dimples and freckles, Nyssa just melted.

She moved to the kitchen and got the bowls down for them to eat out of. She held the bowls while Sara spooned the soup into them. They both returned to the couch with their meal.

“This is delicious,” Nyssa commented after her first few bites.

“Thanks,” Sara looked over her bowl at Nyssa, who had been thoughtfully eating. Not that it was much of a surprise. If Nyssa was doing anything, she was doing it thoughtfully. She was just usually more vocal about what she was thinking about.

They quietly finished their soup and cleaned up together. It was all so normal and domestic. Then they decided to go to bed. They turned off the lights and let the fire paint the room in a comfortable glow. Sara moved to the couch and started to lay down when she saw Nyssa standing next to the
bed.

“What’s wrong?” Sara asked, sitting back up.

Nyssa looked at the bed. “Since we are going to be sharing a very small tent tomorrow, perhaps we could share the bed tonight to prepare for it.” It didn’t sound convincing at all to Nyssa even as she said it. It just felt so wrong sleeping in that bed without Sara. She woke up multiple times the previous night to just to make sure that Sara was still in the house and okay. At least, if they slept in the same bed, Nyssa wouldn’t have to get up and walk across the house to make sure Sara was okay.

Sara was unsure about it. It wasn’t that she didn’t want to be with Nyssa. She just didn’t want things to move too quickly. “Are you sure?”

Nyssa was quick to dismiss the idea, “Never mind.”

Sara rose off of the couch and walked to the bed. “I didn’t mean that I didn’t want to. I just don’t want to do this if you’re not ready.”

It was dark and she couldn’t see Nyssa’s face well, but she could hear the shaking in her voice, “Please.”

Sara nodded. She moved to what was once her side of the bed and slid under the covers. Nyssa did the same next to her and moved close enough to Sara to feel her body heat. She was careful not to get too close, but was content in knowing that if she wanted to – if she was brave enough – she could reach out and touch Sara.
Chapter 6

It was a beautiful day to ascend the mountain. Nyssa had packed her backpack and put the tent she was going to share with Sara inside of it. Sara carried both of their sleeping bags so Nyssa argued she should carry their food. The rest of their equipment was divvied up evenly.

However, on ascensions with the League the most important things were weapons and clothing.

Sara brought her collapsible metal bō and black ski pants with a black and yellow ski jacket. Nyssa carried a bow, a quiver of arrows, and a hidden knife strapped to her ankle under her boot. Her battle armor was warm as well as protective. Her cape hung around her shoulders and her hood was over her hair, protecting her against the cold.

Nyssa was about to suggest that Cassandra was not serious about joining the League when the small woman appeared at the exit of the temple. She was in dark blue ski pants with a large parka, dark blue with yellow piping. Cassandra walked toward them carrying a small grappling hook that was attached to a length of thin, strong metal wire that was wound and hung on her shoulder. She was swinging it around effortlessly and didn’t speak as she stopped in front of Nyssa and Sara.

Mad Dog walked to the group with no visible weapons on him. He had a large backpack on his back, which Nyssa and Sara assumed held Cassandra’s things as well.

They all stopped in front of Nyssa and waited for instructions. She looked over the small group and looked up at the mountain. She inhaled and smiled, “Shall we?”

The hike was easy for the first few hours. There was a well-worn trail that they followed up the mountain. Cassandra didn’t say a word the entire journey, but continued to swing the grappling hook on the wire.

Sara was a little too concentrated on Nyssa’s backside when the leader of their parade stopped cold. Sara almost ran right into her. Cassandra stopped swinging the grappling hook and looked around. Nyssa’s eyes were focused farther up the mountain trail. She narrowed her eyes. Then a smile played on her lips, “Miss Cain. Would you like to try to decipher the danger ahead?”

Sara looked along the trail and then easily spotted the mines along the side of the trail. Cassandra wandered past the group and walked slowly toward the danger.

When Cassandra got close to the mines, Nyssa took her bow off of her back and drew an arrow. This may have been a training exercise and an assessment for Cassandra, but she wasn’t about to let Cassandra die.

Cassandra took one last fateful step. The telltale clicks of the mine signaled that it had been triggered. Nyssa pulled the arrow back, but before she could let it fly, Cassandra slung the grappling hook toward the mine, caught it with the hooks, and yanked it out of the ground, sending it flying down the mountain.

Nyssa didn’t want the mine landing down the mountain trigger an avalanche on top of the temple or worse, hers and Sara’s house. So she moved her aim and sent her arrow flying through the mine, making sure that it exploded in midair.

Cassandra then spotted the rest of the mines and pointed them out to Nyssa. Nyssa looked to Sara who was waiting for Nyssa to say the same words that Nyssa told her when they arrived at a mine trap. Granted, the mine trap Sara was supposed to find was farther up the mountain and it was in the
middle of a blizzard.

Sara found that Nyssa was waiting for her to speak so she smiled. She called the words that Nyssa said to her so many years ago, “What are you going to do about them?”

Cassandra looked at the group and then back at the mines that she had identified. Nyssa and Sara watched carefully. Mad Dog didn’t seem too interested in what she was doing. He sat down on a nearby rock and got out his water.

“Tired already, Mad Dog?” Nyssa asked, not taking her eyes off of Cassandra. She still had her bow in her hand in case she needed to intervene.

Mad Dog just mumbled incoherent, angry things back and went back to drinking.

Sara and Nyssa carefully watched Cassandra disarm the mines one by one with slow precision. Once there were ten disarmed mines in a line next to the path, an hour and a half had gone by. Nyssa looked at Sara who shrugged. Maybe Cassandra was going to work out after all.

Cassandra waited up the path for Nyssa, Sara, and Mad Dog to catch up to her. As they passed the mines, Sara looked down at them and smiled because some of them were dummy mines that Cassandra took her time disarming anyway. During Sara’s initial ascent, it was easy for her to decipher real mines from fake ones because of her work on Lian Yu and the Amazo. She was through her mine field, in a blizzard, in fifteen minutes.

Cassandra did better a few hours later with a covered pit of spikes. She didn’t even say anything. She just kicked the branches away letting the cover fall into the pit. Then she walked around it. Sara had to hand it to Cassandra. That was the one thing that Sara failed at dealing with on her ascent. In fact, the only reason she wasn’t skewered at the bottom of one of the pits was Nyssa grabbed into the back of her pants and pulling her back.

By the time they decided to make camp, it was already growing dark. Cassandra was sent out to gather firewood. Nyssa put her backpack down and stretched out her back. Sara looked at Mad Dog who was silently and was angrily trying to figure out how to put up his tent.

Sara dropped her backpack next to Nyssa’s. “If you put up the tent, I’ll take it down in the morning.”

Nyssa smirked, “Deal.” She took out the bag that contained their tent and pulled the tent out of it. It was a small roll of canary yellow tarp. That was until she shook it out. The tent popped open and Nyssa laid the one person tent gently on the ground.

Sara couldn’t help, but laugh and look over at Nyssa who was wearing a self-satisfied grin, “I feel cheated.”

“It was your deal,” Nyssa moved to Sara’s backpack and took the two sleeping bags out of it.

Sara wasn’t really upset. She smiled and started putting the stakes for the tent in the ground. She and Nyssa got their tent set up and all their things put away before Cassandra got back with a decent amount of firewood.

Mad Dog sat down on the ground and started stacking the firewood while Cassandra put up her tent. It was a one person tent as well, but it didn’t pop open like Nyssa’s. She didn’t seem to have much problem putting it up and disappeared into her tent for a while as Mad Dog started the fire.

They ate dinner together, but after that everyone parted ways. Cassandra shut herself in her tent and Mad Dog wandered off. Sara and Nyssa continued to sit by the fire.
“I have a question for you, Sara Lance,” Nyssa leaned back on her hands and looked up at the darkening sky.

Sara picked at a small twig and nodded, “Shoot.”

“Why do you like the ascension trips so much?” Nyssa had noticed how much Sara was enjoying the hike.

“Um,” Sara shrugged, “I don’t know. I guess it reminds me of my first time up. The first time you – well second time you saved my life. This was the first time that I was confident in my own abilities instead of relying on someone else. Except for falling into a spike pit of course.”

Nyssa smiled at the memory. She watched Sara walked up on the pit and knew that there was something special about this young woman. She couldn’t let her die so when Sara’s foot hit the false ceiling on the pit, she grabbed the back of Sara’s belt to keep her from falling in.

“But that’s the point of these things isn’t it?” Sara asked.

“My father found that these trips instill confidence not only in the new recruits, but also confidence with the other members of the league,” Nyssa agreed. She looked up as the sky started to reveal the beginnings of a starry night. Nyssa turned to Sara with an easy smile, “Of course, when you have an explosives expert as a recruit, confidence in inherent.”

Sara grinned. “I just had a lot of experience.”

Nyssa laid out completely on the ground and looked up at the sky. One of the things that she loved about Nanda Parbat was being able to see all the stars the sky had to offer.

Sara laid down next to her and put her hands behind her head. “You like these trips too.”

“I do,” Nyssa answered. There were a variety of reasons that she liked the ascent, but there was one very important reason at the top of the mountain. “This is my first ascent in two years.”

That meant that Nyssa hadn’t been on an ascent without Sara since they met. Sara looked over at Nyssa with a lazy smile. She always did feel like this was something special to them. They got to feel out the new recruits together and of course sharing a one person tent with Nyssa wasn’t every something she’d complain about.

They looked at the stars for a while before the fire started to die out and the chill got to seeping into their bones. Although it was a vastly intimate position to sleep in, Nyssa and Sara slept with their heads at the same end of the tent. It was dark and the wind was rattling the tent, but Sara was elated. She wished that things were like their last ascent where they zipped their sleeping bags together. They cuddled on the side of the mountain and kissed themselves warm.

However, this time was not like the last and Sara had to settle for just being in close proximity of Nyssa.

The next day, they climbed higher on the mountain. Cassandra used her grappling hook to collapse the top of a spike pit before anyone stepped on it and kicked a striking pit viper out of the air. She got grazed by a trap made to shoot arrows at whoever stepped on a particular rock, but she it was only a scrape on her arm.

The sun was just beginning to sink below the horizon when they neared the top of the mountain. Wooden steps announced their arrival at the final leg of their journey. A trail had been laid for them to make it to the summit. Nyssa took over the lead as there were no more traps or ambushes for the
rest of the journey. Sara sped up to walk right behind her because the top of the mountain was the most special place to Nyssa.

The top of the mountain was an almost completely flat plateau. Sara carefully watched Nyssa’s eyes. Nyssa always became tense at the top of the mountain because of a rounded rectangular stone at the far end of the mountain top. It was unmarked, but Sara knew it was a gravestone.

Whatever insanity went through Mad Dog’s head on a daily basis, seemed to subside. He respectfully walked to the far end of the mountaintop and knelt next to the gravestone. He bowed his head and said a prayer.

“Who is that?” Cassandra asked quietly.

Nyssa ignored her and moved to the gravestone. She touched the top of it and bowed her head in a moment of silence.

Sara stood still, watching. “Nyssa’s mother.”

“Did Ra’s bring her here?” Cassandra watched Nyssa leave her hand on the headstone and look out at all the beauty below them.

Sara shook her head, “Nyssa did. Her mother was killed right before her eyes and…” Sara inhaled a shaky breath, “Nyssa brought her here as a final resting place.”

“I’m – I’m sorry.” Cassandra looked away from Nyssa like she was watching some too personal. She looked out over all the mountains around them and the massive temple that looked so small below them.

“Ra’s speaks about her sometimes when he’s talking to Nyssa, but she has never said anything about her,” Sara watched Nyssa kneel down at the headstone. Mad Dog rose and moved down to a lower plateau a few steps off of the summit. He started setting up his tent, leaving Nyssa alone with her mother.

“I’m going to go set up my tent,” Cassandra stated reverently and followed Mad Dog.

Sara watched the wind blow back Nyssa’s hair and her cape. She saw Nyssa’s eyes, hard against the sky. She kept her distance, knowing that Nyssa needed some time. She just watched her carefully until Nyssa turned away from the simple grave marker.

She saw Sara looking and gave her a small nod. Then Sara knew it was okay to move. She watched Nyssa walk away and then took her turn paying her respects to Nyssa’s mother. Sara looked down at the gravestone. Now that she’d been back to Starling, she could see that Nyssa’s mother's headstone was close in shape to her own what was still standing in Starling.

She rubbed the top of it, silently thanking the woman under the ground for having and raising such a wonderful woman. Then she moved on, going to help Nyssa set up their tent.

“I don’t think we’ve ever made it up this mountain this quickly before,” Sara commented, “At least not using the trails.”

Nyssa nodded. “It was unusually fast. Perhaps Miss Cain won’t be as short-lived as I thought.”

The decent was quicker than the ascent. There were surprisingly few traps laid in front of them. In fact as they neared the bottom of the trail, there were none. Cassandra was on high alert because nothing happened for the past few hours.
It all changed with a gunshot. It was so close to Nyssa’s head, she heard it whiz by her ear. “Stand down!” Nyssa called. There was never any real danger supposed to happen.

There was a group of masked men with guns all pointed at them. None of them were men that Nyssa had ever seen before. She could tell even though their faces were covered. They were semi-militaristic and moving up the mountain.

Sara dropped her backpack and pulled out her bō and expanded it to its full length. She knew that the men weren’t part of the plan. Cassandra seemed to know that. She started swinging her grappling hook, readying it for a strike.

“What’s going on?” Mad Dog asked quietly. He pulled two automatic pistols out of the back of his pants.

Nyssa looked over the mercenaries and demanded, “Who sent you?”

They just kept advancing without a word. Nyssa could see the men’s fingers move to their triggers as they got closer. She looked to her side and saw Sara waiting for her move. She looked to her other side and found Cassandra and Mad Dog doing the same.

“Cassandra,” Nyssa evenly stated as she slowly took her bow off of her back, “Remember that fun trick you did with the mines a few days ago?” She didn’t wait for an answer, “Do you think it works on guns?”

Cassandra didn’t answer, but her grappling hook started swinging faster answering Nyssa’s question.

Nyssa waited until the men got close enough and then said in a conversational voice, “Now.”

The grappling hook flew straight for the man at the end of the advancing line. Before anyone could fire, the grappling hook grabbed onto and wrapped itself around the gun barrel. Then Cassandra yanked the gun away sending it flying into the next man, forcing him to drop his gun.

Mad Dog opened fire and Nyssa quickly let a few arrows fly. Sara easily used her bō to sweep the legs out from under the last man standing, knocked his gun out of his hand with the other end, and then positioned the end of the bō at the man’s throat.

Nyssa marched toward the man, “Who sent you?”

Sara applied pressure to the man’s neck when he seemed to refuse to answer. He squirmed, “You weren’t supposed be to back down for two more days.” He made a gasping noise as his feet tried to find purchase on the loose dirt and rocks under his heels, “They hired us yesterday to start an avalanche, make it look like an accident.” Both his hands were trying to get the bō out of his throat, “C’mon! Let me go!”

“Who sent you?” Nyssa demanded putting her boot on the man’s forearms to use his own hands to push the bō harder against his neck.

“I don’t know! They just said they had to kill some guy and his daughters!” the man was becoming frantic. “Let me go!”

Sara took the bō away. The second she did, the man reached behind him and pulled out a gun. He fired a shot toward the temple, showing that it was a flare gun. Mad Dog shot the man on the ground as the red flare arced in the sky.

It was only a second later that Nyssa took off running down the mountain. Sara, Cassandra, and Mad
Nyssa was the first one that came into view of the temple and saw that it was under siege. A fire had broken out and small battles were taking place all over the grounds. It wasn’t much of the fight. The mercenaries were no match for a lot of half mad assassins.

However, Nyssa’s main concern wasn’t the fights happening in the hallways as she ran past. Her concern was for her father and her sister still inside of the temple somewhere. Nyssa and Sara had lost Cassandra and Mad Dog running down the hallways.

Sara spotted Pru attack one of the mercenaries from a high perch in the rafters like a tiny bald spider monkey and laugh manically as she killed him unceremoniously with several knives. Sara called to her, “Where’s Talia and Ra’s?”

Pru hopped off the toppling man to her feet and pointed down the hallway. “I think Talia’s still in her room. Ra’s went that way too.”

Nyssa and Sara took off in the direction Pru pointed them in before she attacked some other unsuspecting mercenary. They ran straight into Talia’s room where they found Ebeneezer Darrk pointing loaded bow at the back of a tied up Talia. Two other mercenaries stood on either side of her, ready to watch her execution.

Nyssa fired her bow before any guns were drawn and both mercenaries were down. Darrk spun his bow around and pointed it at Nyssa. Then his eyes flickered for a moment to the area right next to Nyssa. The area occupied by Sara Lance.

He adjusted his aim and let go of the end of the arrow. The arrow was pointed directly at Sara. Nyssa saw the adjustment the second Darrk moved and stepped in front of Sara. The arrow pierced the lower abdomen of Nyssa’s armor. The armor slowed the arrow down enough so that it only lodged itself into her stomach about an inch.

“Nyssa!” Sara screamed, catching Nyssa as she was knocked backwards.

Nyssa pulled the arrow out and tossed it to the side. She was running on adrenaline when she pulled an arrow out of her quiver and sent it flying toward Darrk who could not move out of the way fast enough.

“Where’s Father?” Talia asked, urgently. She turned around although her hands were still bound behind her back.

“I’ll find him,” Nyssa stated, her bow in her hand. She pointed to Talia and addressed Sara, “Untie her and get her out of here.”

Sara watched Nyssa walk out the door, asking, “But are you okay? You-“

Nyssa cut her off, “Get her out of here.” Her order was harsh and commanding as she marched out the door.

Sara knew that she couldn’t change Nyssa’s mind. She could just help Talia and then find Nyssa.

Nyssa was in such a hurry to get away from Sara because she could already feel the pit viper venom that coated the arrow start to surge through her veins. She didn’t need Sara to be worried about her. She needed Sara to take care of Talia.

Her Father’s study was the next stop and when Nyssa kicked in the door, she found Sensei standing
over the unconscious body of Ra’s Al Ghul. Ra’s was bleeding from his head, but Nyssa could see he was still breathing.

“Let him go!” Nyssa yelled, reaching for an arrow in her quiver and finding none. Instead she advanced close enough to her father to see for sure he was breathing.

“You foolish child,” Sensei sneered at Nyssa, who was wavering as she stood in front of her father, “I knew you would do anything to protect her – the deserter. Ebenezer agreed with me that any confrontation with you should be directed at Miss Lance.” He smiled darkly.

“Stand down,” Nyssa commanded even though Sensei was starting to become blurry. “And your death with be less agonizing.”

Sensei shook his head, “Your confidence is hollow, girl. I shall enjoy killing you and your father.” He grinned wickedly, “And your Canary. I’ll take my time with her, plucking all of her feathers out until she begs for death.”

Nyssa knew this tactic. Sensei was provoking her. He was trying to get her to make a rash move that would be her demise. Nyssa narrowed her eyes and used the same tactic against him, “You are a coward. You attack us while we’re separated.”

Nyssa’s statement only elicited an evil grin, “I am a strategist.”

“You are a dead man,” were Nyssa’s last words before she attacked.

The man that had helped train Nyssa in the art of hand to hand combat was finding himself barely able to keep up with her. For every punch there was a block and for every kick there was a parry. Nyssa was finding herself growing weaker and knew that she needed to get the fight over with or her father would die.

Nyssa knew that there were many weapons hid around the study, but they were always moving and always different. Nyssa took a punch square to the jaw was contemplating exactly where they could be. It sent her stumbling backwards until her back hit a bookshelf. Nyssa grabbed a heavy book end and threw it at Sensei who easily blocked it. However, it was just a distraction for Nyssa to advance. She picked up her bow that had fallen on the ground and used it to hit Sensei across the face and then as he was stunned, she brought handle of the bow to his throat.

It was getting harder and harder for her weakening muscles to hold the bow hard enough to choke Sensei.

“The pit viper venom is already taking effect,” Sensei coughed out, struggling to get free, “You will be dead within the hour and so will your father.” Sensei drew a dagger out of his belt and rose it in front of him to thrust back into Nyssa. Nyssa screamed when the knife caught her under her armor, but didn’t let go. Sensei yanked the knife out and held it up for another, more powerful thrust.

Suddenly it was knocked out of his hands by a throwing knife sailing through the air. Nyssa couldn’t hold on any longer. Her muscles went limp, sending Sensei crumbling to the ground and gasping for breath. Nyssa’s vision started to go black and she began to fall backwards Sara was running into the door when she saw Nyssa falling. She sprinted to catch her before she hit the ground.

“Sara,” Nyssa softly whispered.

“No,” Sara could feel her own breaths growing shallower with Nyssa’s. She looked into Nyssa eyes and saw the venom take hold. “Nyssa.”
Ra’s knelt down next to her and took his daughter’s face in his hands. He was at a loss for words. His impervious warrior daughter was dying before his eyes.

Sara kissed Nyssa’s forehead and transferred her weight to Ra’s, “I can save her.” Sara stood up and started backing toward the door, “Just make sure she keeps breathing and stop the bleeding.”

Sara took off in a dead sprint through the halls of the temple. She pushed people out of the way and jumped over tables. She’d never run that fast before in her life, but she wasn’t running for herself. She was running for Nyssa’s life.

Sara’s feet barely touched the bridge of the stream as she neared their house. She didn’t stop to open the door, instead kicking through it without losing any momentum. She made her way to the armoire and threw the doors open. Down on the bottom shelf, Sara found one of her bags from Starling. She dumped it out on the floor, searching for the one thing that she needed.

The second she saw it, she snatched up the small leather pouch and took off running back into the temple. Sara hurdled over dead mercenary bodies and slid to the stop outside of the study. She found Ra’s pressing gauze to Nyssa’s wound. Talia was standing behind him sorting through a first aid kit.

“Here,” Sara opened the small pouch and knelt down next to Nyssa. She opened Nyssa’s mouth and dumped the contents into her mouth. She massaged Nyssa’s throat so that the herbs would go down. “C’mon, babe.” She watched Nyssa’s still face for a moment. She was worried that she was too late. Nyssa didn’t tell her when she was shot with the venom arrow. She thought it was just stuck in Nyssa’s armor. She couldn’t believe she didn’t see it.

Nyssa gasping for breath and her eyes shot open. She started coughing and sputtering, sitting up and turning to her side.

Ra’s scooped Nyssa up in his arms and held her muttered Arabic affections. It was quite a shocking thing to see since Sara had never seen Ra’s give Nyssa or Talia anything more than a pat on the back.

When he was done, they moved Nyssa to the table in Talia’s room and laid her down. Sara held Nyssa’s hand while Talia sewed up Nyssa’s abdomen.

Ra’s stood behind Sara and watched carefully. He’d never really thought about his daughters’ mortality before. Talia had less courageous interests and spent most of her time in Gotham City with that billionaire whatever his name was. And Nyssa was the perfect warrior. Nyssa was proficient in every weapon available to her and had taken down small armies on her own. He never thought about her mortality because most people should be concerned about theirs when they were around her.

“You both must leave immediately,” Ra’s stated with his arms crossed as soon as Nyssa was stitched.

Nyssa didn’t speak. She was remarkably tired and it was still a little difficult to focus. Sara looked up at Ra’s and spoke for Nyssa, “Why?”

Ra’s addressed her, “Because Sensei is still at large and he will try again.” He put his hand on Sara’s shoulder, “You will take Nyssa away from here. You will take her somewhere safe. She’s in no condition to fight right now.”

Sara took the words. She slowly nodded. “When do we leave?”

“I’ll set up a convoy to leave tonight,” Ra’s walked to the door of the room and stuck his head out. He called the nearest League members and told two of them to go pack Sara and Nyssa’s things.
Then he told another few to go get some cars together.

Nyssa slowly sat up and pushed her tank top down. “Where are you going?”

“I will stay here,” Ra’s stated. “Sensei wants a fight and he shall have one.”

Nyssa shook her head, “I’m not leaving.”

“The rest of the League is here and we are ready,” Ra’s knelt down next to Nyssa, “I cannot fight this battle well if I don’t know that you’re safe.” He touched her shoulder, “You’re strong like your mother. No matter what happens, you’ll be oaky.”

Talia was already packing her bags. She stepped into the hallway and called a League member to her. She handed him a key and told him that the entire armory needed to be moved to Ra’s wing of the temple.

Nyssa weakly tried to stay, but between her body recovering from the venom and the massive gash in her side, she wasn’t going to win any battles even if they were just verbal. Sara put their bags in the back of a jeep in the village. She looked behind her at the temple. She wanted to stay and fight. Sensei and his hired army were attacking her home, but more important than her home was the woman laying on the backseat of the jeep.

They managed to pass Nyssa off as excessively tired through the airports. They used fake passports and parted ways with Talia in London. She was heading back to Gotham and Sara was taking Nyssa to the only place where she had friends that could help protect Nyssa.

Sara walked up to the airline counter with Nyssa moving slowly behind her, “Two to Starling City.”
Chapter 7

After sleeping on the plane and in the car on the way to their destination, Sara thought that Nyssa couldn’t possibly sleep anymore, but Nyssa stayed asleep when Sara pulled to a stop where she was hoping they could stay.

Sara kicked in the back door of the vacant Queen Mansion. She checked all the records on the plane and no one had bought the place. It was just sitting empty. Sara easily moved into the mud room behind the kitchen. She had to manually disengage the garage door and push it open.

When it was all the way up, she found Nyssa sitting on the hood of the car. “The Queen Mansion?”

Sara shrugged with a smile. “It’s empty. It’ll be a good safe house until we decide what to do next.” Sara walked to the car and got in the driver’s seat. Nyssa didn’t move from the hood when Sara started the car and slowly pulled it into the garage.

Sara turned off the car and pulled the garage door down behind them. Nyssa found an old rake and jammed it into the garage door tracks to keep anyone from opening it from the outside.

Sara grabbed both of their bags and walked into the house. Nyssa followed quietly and found Sara leading her up a staircase to a grand hallway. Sara looked in a few rooms before settling on a guest room. She set their bags down on the still made bed and turned to Nyssa.

“Now that we’re here,” Sara put her hands on Nyssa’s hips and guided her to sit on the bed, “I want to take a look at you.”

“What?” Nyssa asked, looking up at Sara, “Why?”

“You didn’t tell me about the pit viper venom,” Sara narrowed her eyes at Nyssa, “I want to see what else you’re hiding.”

Nyssa rolled her eyes, “I’m not hiding anything else.”

Sara put her hands on her hips, “Prove it.”

Nyssa stood from the bed and pulled her shirt over her head. She held her arms out for inspection. Sara found a few more scratches and bruises that weren’t there before. Then she looked over Nyssa’s face and found a cut on top of a bruise that was hidden under the sunglasses she was wearing.

Sara ran her thumb gently over the bruise that she was sure was caused by a punch. “I’m so glad you’re okay.”

“Always,” Nyssa smiled softly trying to reassure Sara. She put her hand on top of Sara’s.

Sara took a chance. She kissed Nyssa’s forehead and let her lips linger. It was the first time in a long time that she’d been truly scared for Nyssa’s life. Nyssa was always the strong, solid one. She was always thinking tactically and always on her mark. But this time…Sara was going over it in her head again. “You saved me.”

“Always,” Nyssa repeated. She smiled wryly, “Your father will be happy to know that I was near death.”

Sara chuckled quietly. She stroked Nyssa’s face and then dropped her hand, “Well I was not happy.”
Sara turned away from Nyssa and pulled out her phone, “How about we go get something to eat?”

“What’s the plan?” Nyssa asked, “Am I allowed out in the daylight or am I a shadow? Since you are in charge of my wellbeing.”

“For now,” Sara could see the mocking in Nyssa’s words. Nyssa wasn’t used to not being in charge so she was as combative as she could be without feeling like she was pushing Sara too much. Sara squared up to Nyssa, “You are injured and your father asked me to take care of you.”

Nyssa crossed her arms immediately becoming defensive. “I don’t need you to take care of me.”

“But you need someone to watch your back,” Sara tried to keep her tone even. She didn’t want to upset Nyssa any more than she already was. “Sensei trained you. He trained both of us. He was going to kill you and make it look like an accident. Then I’m sure he would have done the same to Talia and Ra’s. You’re hurt and if you want me to leave, I’ll leave. But I’ll follow you.”

Nyssa inhaled and exhaled slowly. She knew Sara was right. Nyssa shrugged, “We can stay here, but what money are we going to survive on? I have to say that your capitalist country is not too kind to the financially unstable.”

Sara opened her bag and gestured to it, “I picked up a drop at our layover in London. You were still out of it, but Talia watched you.”

Nyssa stepped to the bag and saw there was a large amount of cash in the bag. Neatly bundled hundred dollar bills were stacked just as neatly in the bag.

Sara put her hands in her pockets, “Why don’t you stay here? I’ll go get some food and some candles for when it gets dark. Take a nap.”

“Is than an order?” Nyssa quirked an eyebrow.

Sara sighed. “I’m not going to order you around.”

Nyssa sighed and dropped her head, knowing that she was just being a pain partially because she was in pain and partially because she was scared that she couldn’t defend herself or Sara anymore. Also there was the possibility that Sara could get hurt because Sensei was trying to kill her and her family. “I’m sorry. I’m being petty.” Nyssa walked to the window and looked out at the sunset.

Sara moved to stand next to Nyssa. She took Nyssa’s hand while looking out the window and gave it a gentle squeeze, “It’s okay. All of this is crazy.” Sara looked to Nyssa and turned to face her, “I will go get some food and some other things and we can talk about it or not talk about it. Whatever you want to do.”

“Thank you,” Nyssa smiled gratefully.

Sara smiled back. She kissed Nyssa’s cheek and then walked out of the room.

Nyssa explored the massive house while Sara was gone. She found that part of the house had been packed up with sheets placed over the larger furniture. Other parts of the house looked like someone left in a hurry. Other parts of the house looked like the owner walked out of the house and never walked back in.

Nyssa went into the kitchen and found some knives. She picked the one that was most balanced to keep in the back of her belt and hid the rest of the knives around the house. She gathered all the blankets in the house and placed them in the study that was adjacent to the room Sara left her in.
Nyssa stood in the guest room that Sara chose and looked around. She tried to figure out what to do to bide her time until Sara returned.

The car Sara just bought with cash and fake paperwork rumbled into the garage. She cut off the engine and pulled the garage door down. It was late and Sara didn’t think she got all the things that they needed but she got some water and religious candles at the drug store after going to Big Belly Burger. She stood outside for a little while, making sure no one that would recognize her was inside. It wasn’t Nyssa’s usual diet, but extreme circumstances called for deviation.

When Sara walked through the house, she listened closely. There were no signs of struggle so she took that as a good sign. As she was ascending the stairs to the guest room she left Nyssa in, she spotted something out of place. Some of the drapes that used to hang in one of the living rooms were tied to the railing of the second floor so that the expensive drapes almost grazed the first floor carpet.

“You have stitches,” Sara called, “No Aerials.”

The audible huff Sara heard from the guest room cause her to giggle. Nyssa was a master assassin and a natural leader, but sometimes she was petulant like a child. Sara walked into the room and found Nyssa. She had removed her jacket and her shoes and looked to be stretching.

“You’ll rip your stitches out,” Sara stated. She set the food down on the nightstand and pulled a lighter out of her pocket. Sara got the candles out of the plastic bag and lit all the ones that she bought. They were in a small grouping on the floor that she sat down beside. She grabbed the food and started divvying it out.

Nyssa sat down across the candles from Sara. Nyssa examined the candles and turned them around. “You bought Catholic candles.”

“I bought the only candles they had at the drug store that didn’t smell like feet,” Sara opened her burger and took a bite.

Nyssa smiled and opened her burger. She looked it over and decided that it didn’t look too bad. She took a bite and thoughtfully chewed it over. “I’ve had this before.”

“I don’t think so,” Sara picked up her drink and took a sip, smiling around the straw, “This is one of the best burgers in existence.”

Nyssa briefly raised her eyebrows. “Well, then I shall savor it.”

Sara found Nyssa’s wording amusing. As horrible as the entire situation was and as scary as it was to see Nyssa almost die in front of her eyes, Sara loved that she got to spend time with Nyssa alone. Neither one of them had any duties anymore except to each other.

“Did you find anything interesting while I was gone besides that knife?” Sara asked, picked up a fry and popping it into her mouth.

Nyssa should have known Sara would easily spot the knife barely visible under her shirt. She shrugged, “Not really. It was growing dark. I’m sure there are other weapons hidden around the house seeing as how this is your ex boyfriend’s house.”

Sara smiled at the bitterness in Nyssa’s voice. It meant she was jealous and it meant that she still cared, “He moved out first. I’m pretty sure he got all of his weapons.”

“Are you going to contact your friends?” Nyssa asked.
Sara shrugged, “Not unless we need help.”

Nyssa put down her food, “What about your family?” Nyssa clenched her jaw, but didn’t wait for Sara to answer, “I think you should see them.”

“Why?” Sara asked.

Nyssa’s eyes dropped to the floor, “Family is important.”

Sara scooted closer to Nyssa and put her hand on Nyssa’s arm, “I’m sure Ra’s and Talia are fine.”

“Of course they are,” Nyssa forced a smile, “He’s the head of the demon and Talia’s… too much of a bitch to die.”

Sara laughed. Nyssa and Talia did usually have a formal indifference to each other, but they loved each other and it showed when Sensei attacked and Nyssa charged headlong into battle to protect her sister. Sara also saw it at the airport in London when Talia let her exhausted and drugged up sister lean on her. Talia stroked Nyssa’s hair and made sure she was comfortable.

After they finished eating, Sara suggested that they sleep. Nyssa laid down on the bed more than ready to comply. Sara hesitated at the foot of the bed. She wasn’t sure how Nyssa would feel about them sharing a sleeping space again.

Nyssa moved over to the left side of the bed and patted the space next to her. Sara tried not to seem too excited about it. Sara moved the candles to the nightstands and then took off her jacket. It was getting chilly in the house since the sun disappeared so she grabbed a blanket out of the closet. After covering Nyssa, Sara laid down as well.

Nyssa used her arm to pushed the blanket toward Sara and let it fall softly on top of the blonde.

While they laid next to each other, Nyssa’s eyes mapped Sara’s face. She loved all the freckles that dotted Sara’s skin and the wrinkles by her eyes when she smiled. The first time she saw Sara smile, Nyssa herself couldn’t help, but smile as well. Then every time Sara smiled since they met, it was basically went the same.

However, Sara was oblivious to Nyssa’s study. She was staring at the window behind Nyssa, watching for any kind of shadow or movement. They were in the back part of the house facing the pool and the woods so the light from the candles wouldn’t be visible to anyone from the street. The room was on the second floor so no one could easily crawl through the window, especially because of the overgrown bushes near the first floor. Sara had strategically picked out this room because it was in the middle of the house, on the second floor, didn’t have a balcony, and was facing away from the street.

When Sara looked back at Nyssa, she softly asked, “Do you want me to look at your stitches for you before we go to sleep?”

“You can do it tomorrow,” Nyssa whispered back.

Sara crossed her arms around herself to keep them from making their way around Nyssa. They were on the run, but that didn’t change the fact that she was going to respect Nyssa’s boundaries.

Nyssa could see what Sara was doing and she wished she felt less conflicted about being with Sara. She wanted to trust Sara completely, but there was something about being back in Starling that was unsettling. Nyssa looked over Sara’s shoulder at the bedroom door. She watched for anything out of the ordinary.
So instead of holding each other in their sleep, they floated into the dreaming world on opposite sides of the bed, but still watching each other’s backs.
When Sara woke up, Nyssa was gone. She was out of the bed in a second, looking around for any sign of Nyssa or any kind of struggle.

She saw something moving outside and went to the window. Sara started breathing again when she saw Nyssa standing outside by the pool. The pool had turned green from lack of care, but Nyssa was holding a pool skimmer and getting all the leaves out.

Sara stood at the window and watched Nyssa, wearing jeans, barefooted with just a tank top on, walking around the pool. She watched Nyssa’s biceps and triceps flex elegantly with each movement of the skimmer. Sara had to purposefully avert her eyes. Of course her averted eyes moved to where the back pockets of the jeans rested while Nyssa leaned over at catch an errant leaf.

Finally Sara opened the window and called, “I didn’t know that the hot pool girl was supposed to get here today.”

Nyssa smiled before she looked up at Sara. She set the net of the skimmer down on the bottom of the pool and looked up at Sara. “I’m sorry I didn’t get the uniform yet.”

“Mmm,” Sara leaned on the window sill, “Just a string bikini will be fine.”

Nyssa laughed and leaned on the skimmer, “I have procured breakfast for you, Miss Lance, if you would like to join me by the pool.”

“Be right down,” Sara started to walk away from the window to go downstairs but decided against it. She hopped out the window and grabbed the ledge. Then she dropped to a lower ledge then to the ground.

“You sure know how to make an entrance,” Nyssa picked up the skimmer with both hands and resumed what she was doing.

Sara saw that Nyssa had cleaned off the poolside furniture and set out a rather extensive breakfast.

“Where’d you get all of this?” Sara asked, sitting down at the table.

“I went to the market,” Nyssa answered.

“Did anyone see you?” Sara picked up an orange and started cutting into it with a plastic knife.

Nyssa looked over at Sara with a quirked eyebrow, “No, the cashier was quiet confused when an invisible apparition wished to purchase food.”

Sara continued cutting the orange with a smile, “No wonder you’re in charge all the time. No one can stand how snarky you get when you’re not giving orders.”

“I’m working on it,” Nyssa answered seeing Sara’s smile so knowing not to take the comment too seriously. She dumped out the leaves in the skimmer and started collecting more. After a moment of silence, Nyssa asked, “When are you going to see your family?”

“Who says I’m going to?” Sara asked, “There’s no one here to order me to.”

“You’re pushing it,” Nyssa glared across the pool, but when Sara smiled she saw that it held no weight. Nyssa rolled her eyes. Of course she was stuck with the only person in the entire world who
she couldn’t intimidate with a look.

Sara continued to eat for a minute before she called, “Why aren’t you eating?”

“I will,” Nyssa replied. Once she finished getting the leaves floating on the surface, she put the skimmer down and moved to sit with Sara.

“Are you going to swim in that?” Sara asked, gesturing with a mini bagel to the murky water in the pool.

Nyssa shrugged, “Eventually.” She picked up a strawberry. “There are chemicals to clear out the water in the shed over there once I get all of the organic matter out of it.”

Sara leaned back in her chair. She watched Nyssa eat for a little while before asking, “Why don’t you come with me to see my family?”

Nyssa raised her eyebrows, “Your father detests me.”

“The only way I’ll go see them is if you’re there. You don’t have to engage in conversation, but I’m not leaving you alone for that long.” The blonde was worried that her words would not be received well by Nyssa. Nyssa wasn’t used to not taking care of herself or being in charge. It was a change in dynamic and Sara wasn’t sure it was a change that Nyssa would be okay with for long.

Nyssa was quiet. She ate in silence for a few minutes before she spoke again, “Where do you propose you meet them where I can sit far enough away to be out of earshot, but you can still see me?”

Sara shrugged, “Anywhere really. We could go to the mall.” She grinned at the groan that Nyssa let out. The only malls that Nyssa liked were outdoor ones in Asia and even then the only went when she had to. Sara took a sip of the tea on the table, “Or we could go to a restaurant or café. Whatever you want.”

“I’m not as familiar with Starling as you,” Nyssa put her hands behind her head and leaned back, “You decide.”

Sara took out her phone, “I’ll see if Dad and Laurel can meet for lunch.” She set it on the table and called her dad on speaker phone.

“Hey sweetheart,” he answered almost immediately.

“Hey,” Sara smiled. She loved hearing her father’s voice. “Are you busy?”

“Nah,” he answered. “It’s my day off. I’m still at home. What’s up?”

Sara watched Nyssa sip some tea and asked, “Do you feel like putting on some pants and meeting me for lunch?”

“You’re in town?” he asked. “Already? Did something happen with Nyssa?”

Nyssa’s eyes shot to Sara at the mention of her name. Sara just leaned back in her chair. She forgot about the difference in time speed again between Nanda Parbat and the rest of the world. “No. Nothing’s wrong. Nyssa and I are fine. I’m just…visiting.”

“Well you can tell me the truth over lunch,” Quentin replied. “How about Chinese?”

Once the plans were finalized, Nyssa looked over the table at Sara, “What are you going to tell
“I don’t know,” Sara looked at her phone. “Probably that I’m just visiting on my way to somewhere else.”

Nyssa agreed that would be a good course of action. After they finished breakfast, consuming everything that Nyssa bought, Nyssa stared measuring and pouring chemicals into the pool the clear the water up. She took meticulous measure of everything and silently took care of the pool.

Sara stayed in the chair outside and watched Nyssa. She worried about Nyssa. She knew that the pool was just something to keep herself busy and keep her mind off of the danger her family was in. Sara also knew that Nyssa wasn’t worried about herself. She was worried for Talia and Ra’s even though they were the safest they were going to get being where they were.

When Nyssa announced that she was going to have to let the pool sit for a few hours, Sara suggested that they leave the house and find somewhere to buy clothes.

“I’d much rather find somewhere to buy weapons,” Nyssa said from the passenger’s seat.

Sara took her eyes off of the road for a second to look at Nyssa. “What kind of weapons?”

“Anything that I use,” Nyssa offered, “It’s not fair that I was barely conscious when we left Nanda Parbat because you have your bō and my armor and all my weapons are back in the temple.”

“I also have my Canary Scream. But there was an arrow sizes hole in your armor,” Sara reminded Nyssa. “And remind me when we get back to check on the arrow sized hole in your stomach.”

Nyssa waved her off, pouting like a spoiled child, “It’s fine.”

Sara smiled and continued driving through Starling. She wasn’t going to tease Nyssa about it. She just quietly thought Nyssa’s petulance was adorable.

When they pulled to a stop in the parking lot of a sporting goods store, Sara reached behind the seat and grabbed her Starling City Rockets hat. She hooked it on the back of Nyssa’s head and pulled it down. Nyssa smiled, adjusting the hat after Sara let go of it. She secretly loved wearing that hat because it was one of Sara’s favorite things.

They walked inside together. Sara followed Nyssa to the archery section. Nyssa frowned and moved around the section with a look of distaste, “All of these are of inferior quality.”

Sara put her hands in her pockets, “There’s only one place in town to get the kind of bows that you want.”

Nyssa looked at the most expensive bow present in the store, but didn’t even bother to pick it up, “I’m not breaking into the Arrow Lair to steal a bow.”

“Felicity calls it the Arrow Cave,” Sara corrected Nyssa.

Nyssa rolled her eyes. Vigilantes always had strange names for things.

“Do you want to order one?” Sara asked. “Then you can modify it?”

“It seems that that will have to do,” Nyssa walked to the knife second and found no throwing knives. She grumbled all the way back out to the car about the inferior weaponry at Starling Sports & Outdoor.
On the way to lunch, Sara stopped by an electronic store and bought Nyssa a tablet so that she could order a bow while she was having lunch in the booth next to Sara’s. Sara sat facing the booth that Nyssa was in, but Nyssa’s back was to Sara’s so that Quentin couldn’t see her face.

When Quentin arrived, Nyssa turned her attention temporarily to the booth behind her. “I tried to get a hold of your sister, but she’s been in court all morning.”

“It’s fine,” Sara replied, “I’m glad that you could make it.”

They both sat down after a hug and Nyssa listened.

Quentin asked, “What brings you back to Starling?”

“I’m just passing through on the way somewhere else,” Sara offered lightly.

“Where are you headed?” Quentin asked back.

Sara leaned back against the booth, “I can’t say.”

Quentin paused, “Are you on a mission or something?”

“You could say that,” Sara replied then added, “Of my own choosing.”

“Is Nyssa taking care of you like she promised?” Quentin leaned on the table.

Sara smiled and nodded, “She is.”

Quentin wanted to disapprove of Nyssa so badly, but that smile on Sara’s face was melting him. He inhaled through his nose, “Are you two back together? Am I going to have to get her a Christmas present this year?”

Sara chuckled, “Um, we’re not back together yet. But buying her a Christmas present would probably be a safe bet.”

Nyssa wanted to scoff at Sara’s assumption that they would be back together soon. But she also knew that her resistance to the relationship was slowly fraying. There were only a few small strands of doubt that were about to snap making her fall headlong into a relationship with the most wonderful woman she’d ever met.

“How have you been doing, sweetheart?” Quentin asked. “I worry about you a lot.”

The waiter came and took their order, interrupting Sara’s answer. When the waiter walked away she said, “Nothing exciting has happened lately. I’ve just been working out and hiking in the mountains.”

“The mountains in…Canada?” Quentin asked.

Sara laughed, “I can’t tell you.”

He sighed, “It drives me crazy not knowing where you are, you know that right?”

“I do,” Sara nodded, “But I can’t tell you for your own safety. You know that.”

“Hey, if the wackos in this town can’t kill me,” Quentin took a sip of the tea that was just put before him, “No one can.”
Sara smiled at her father. She wished that were true. But for his safety she had to keep her mouth shut. She’d already failed in protecting Nyssa during the attack in Nanda Parbat. She would be damned if anyone else she loved got hurt.

“Yeah, yeah I know,” Quentin gestured with his hand, “I’m sure you have a code of silence or something. Or they’re cut out your tongue.”

Sara’s first thought was that Nyssa would never cut out her tongue because she liked it too much and she almost choked on her tea. Sara shook her head, “No code of silence. Just a code of safety. People I love keep getting hurt because of me and…I’m not gonna let it happen anymore.”

“Who keeps getting hurt?” Quentin asked. “I’m fine. Your mother is fine. Laurel is fine. Here’s hoping that something happens to that Nyssa character—”

Sara cut him off, “Nyssa took an arrow for me a few days ago,” Sara quietly told him, hoping that Nyssa wasn’t actually listening, “A poisoned arrow.” She leaned forward on the table needing her father to understand, “Some people attacked us where we lived and they targeted me because they know that she’d do anything to protect me. She almost died.”

Quentin swallowed. He looked away and then back at Sara, “I’m sorry.”

“I just wanted you to know,” Sara shrugged, “She’s always been like that.”

Quentin was quiet for a moment. She looked over at his daughter, “I’m glad you had someone like her. I’m glad you have someone like her. I hope she’s okay.”

The rest of the lunch was less intense and more casual. Nyssa was casually sitting on the other side of the booth perusing bows, looking at new material to make some new armor, and hacking into the Starling City utility grid so that she could get power and water the Queen Mansion without anyone knowing someone was there.

Nyssa kept drinking tea for the rest of the lunch. She heard Quentin make Sara promise to visit her. When the ticket came, they found it was already paid. Nyssa gave the woman an extra hundred not to tell them who paid it.

Quentin asked Sara if she was doing anything after lunch. Sara told him that she had to meet someone.

“Is Nyssa in town?” Quentin asked.

Nyssa listened for the answer, but Sara was silent.

Quentin chuckled. “Well if she is in town, invite her to dinner tonight at my place. I’ll call Laurel.” Quentin took a moment to hug his daughter, “I want to thank her for keeping my baby girl safe.”

“I’ll make sure she knows,” Sara hugged her father. “Don’t tell anyone else I’m here okay? Just Laurel. Make sure she doesn’t say anything.”

“Are you in trouble?” Quentin asked.

“No,” Sara smiled at her father, “Just keeping a low profile for a while.”

After Quentin left, Sara looked at the booth behind her to find that Nyssa was gone. She smiled to herself and walked out to the car where she found that Nyssa was already in the driver’s seat.
Sara got into the car and adjusted Nyssa’s baseball cap for her, “Did you hear what my dad said?”

“I did,” Nyssa nodded. “I appreciate that he recognizes what I do, but that is not why I do it.” Nyssa looked over at Sara.

Sara grinned, “I love you.” She leaned over and kissed Nyssa’s cheek. She sat back in her seat and put her seatbelt on, “Did you find anywhere to get a bow? There used to be a place across town, but I’m pretty sure it burned down during the earthquakes.”

Nyssa took a deep breath, “I suppose I’ll have to order one.” Nyssa turned on the car, “But we do have electricity and running water now.”

“See? Pru teaching you to hack into municipal systems was useful,” Sara put her feet up on the dashboard.

When they got back to the Queen Mansion, Nyssa went right back to the pool. It was already significantly clearer and Nyssa was pleased.

Sara stuck her head out one of the windows, “Since we have water, I’m going to take a shower.”

Nyssa reached down to pick up a lawn chair to move it and then dropped it. She grabbed her side. Sara saw it and called, “Are you okay?”

“I may have ripped my stitches,” Nyssa winced. She felt a sharp pain in her side.

Sara exited the house from the window and landed with a roll on the ground to soften her landing. She ran to Nyssa and knelt down in front of her. Nyssa pulled up her shirt and let Sara look over her wound.

“It opened a little bit,” Sara looked up at Nyssa, “It’s bleeding again.”

Nyssa sighed liked it was a mild inconvenience.

“I got some gauze,” Sara gestured toward the house. “C’mon. I’ll put it on and you need to rest.”

Nyssa huffed.

Sara rolled her eyes. “Get up stairs.”

Nyssa trudged up the stairs, took off her shirt, and laid down on the bed. Still petulant as ever, Nyssa didn’t move to accommodate Sara in any way so Sara had to kneel on the ground next to the bed to dress the wound.

As she cleaned the fresh blood off of the wound, Sara asked, “Did you hear my dad invite you to dinner?”

“I did,” Nyssa confessed.

“You don’t have to go,” Sara told her, “But it wouldn’t be terrible if you did.”

Nyssa looked over at Sara, “No one is supposed to know where I am.”

Sara looked over Nyssa’s face, “I know. But he won’t tell anyone.” She got out the gauze and taped it all the way around.

“If you want to have dinner with your father, I will be fine here by myself,” Nyssa assured Sara. She
saw the concern in Sara’s eyes and smiled.

Sara hopped over Nyssa and laid down next to her. She opened her arms and after a moment of hesitation, Nyssa moved into Sara. She rested her head on Sara’s shoulder and closed her eyes.

Nyssa swallowed, “I don’t want to keep you from your family.”

Sara knew that she was hearing Nyssa’s guilt from the first time she was part of the League and felt that she had to sneak away to see her family. Sara shook her head, “I know and you’re not.”

They laid in silence for a long time. Sara was sure the Nyssa fell asleep until Nyssa took her hand. She threaded her fingers through Sara’s and just held it on top of her stomach. Nyssa slowly let out the words that were so hard to confess. “I’m trying.”

Sara smiled wistfully and kissed the top of Nyssa’s head, “I know.” She knew that Nyssa was trying. She was trying to be better. She was trying to be more understanding. She was trying to overcome an upbringing that taught her mistrust. She was trying to learn how to trust Sara. She was trying to allow herself to fully love again.
Chapter 9

It grew dark outside and Sara knew she needed to call her dad to let him know if they were coming. She was about to ask Nyssa if she wanted to go when she thought she heard something. Nyssa heard it too and tensed up under Sara’s arms.

There was another slight noise coming from down the hallway. Sara was the first one out of bed and Nyssa was quick behind her, grabbing the knife that she kept on the nightstand. They moved in perfect synchronization, having fought together for years. Nyssa covered her ears as the figure appeared in the doorway.

Sara set off the Canary Scream and it stunned the attacker for a moment before the shadow kicked Sara in the stomach causing her to stumble backwards and drop the device.

But Nyssa was in action a second later. She had a sharp butcher knife to the throat of the intruder as Sara turned on the lamp next to the bed.

Sara recognized the figure before he realized who was attacking him. Oliver elbowed Nyssa in the stomach right on top of her wound. Nyssa recoiled, only for a moment before she retaliated by punching Oliver in the face with the butt of the knife.

“Hey!” Sara yelled, “Stop!”

Oliver’s fist was raised when she realized who just punched him. He looked behind himself, his green hood falling off of his head, “Sara? What are you doing here?”

“Hiding out,” Sara walked to Nyssa who was starting to visibly bleed through her shirt. “Shit. The stitches are probably ripped.”

Oliver followed Sara’s eyes. He spotted the damage that he did, “You need to get to a hospital.”

Nyssa watched Sara examine the wound and she saw it was much worse than before, a second before Sara did, “We can’t go to the hospital.”

“Then come back to the Cave with me,” Oliver offered, pulling his hood back up, “Felicity is there. She can help.”

Sara looked up at Nyssa, “We should go.”

Nyssa bit the inside of her cheek. She sighed, “Now the whole town knows we’re here.”

Sara and Nyssa got in their car and followed Oliver all the way back to the foundry. He called ahead and Felicity was waiting with latex gloves on when they walked in. Diggle looked less than thrilled when Sara helped Nyssa down the stairs.

Felicity wanted to be happy to see Sara, but she was worried with getting Nyssa sewed up. Sara and Oliver helped Nyssa get onto the sterile metal table that Felicity directed her to. Sara helped Nyssa peel off her bloody shirt, then lay back down. Sara was hovering over Felicity’s shoulder watching carefully as Felicity tended to the wounds.

“Whoever did this the first time, did it in a hurry,” Felicity commented, leaning closer to see what she was going to need to do.
“That would be my bloody sister,” Nyssa put her arm over her eyes as Felicity sprayed antiseptic into the wounds. It stung almost unbearably. It hurt less to get shot with the arrow. It was about on par with getting stabbed with the knife.

Sara moved to Nyssa’s head and softly stroked her hair, trying to take her mind off of the pain. She slipped her fingers into Nyssa’s hair and slowly started massaging her scalp.

“This one was a knife for sure,” Felicity’s eyes examined the larger wound that was placed next to a smaller one. “Was this an arrow?”

“Yes,” Nyssa answered with gritted teeth.

“Poisoned arrow,” Sara sighed. She looked up at Oliver, “Then an elbow.”

Diggle stood behind Felicity and crossed his arms, “Who did you piss off?”

Sara shot him a glare and he backed down with his hands up.

“There’s a lot of dead skin in here from the poison,” Felicity commented and looked up at Sara, “I’m going to have to scrap a lot of it out.”

Sara took one of Nyssa’s hands and nodded to Felicity. Nyssa’s eyes were closed. She knew that Nyssa was trying to meditate the pain away.

“Bloody fucking Talia,” Nyssa tensed up as Felicity started scraping the inside of the wound with a scalpel.

“What are you doing here?” Oliver asked, putting his bow away.

Sara looked away from Nyssa to answer, “Someone attacked the Nyssa, her sister, and her father. They had to split up and I’m in charge of keeping Nyssa safe.” She turned to Nyssa, “Which I apparently suck at.”

“I’m impressed with whichever one of you hacked into the city computers, but I have security protocols set up all over the place,” Felicity stated. “I got an alert when you started hacking.”

Nyssa nodded slowly, “MIT class of ’09.”

Felicity smiled at the fact that Nyssa remembered. She tried to get the dead skin out as gently as she could. Felicity never enjoyed hurting people and even if she had any animosity toward Nyssa, she wouldn’t be trying to hurt her.

“Do you want some painkillers?” Oliver asked, concerned because of the look on Sara’s face. He didn’t know Nyssa enough to know her pain tolerance, but he knew what Felicity was doing was excruciating and he knew the look of worry on Sara’s face.

Nyssa shook her head, “I’m fine.”

“I’m sorry,” Felicity apologized as she finished scraping off the dead skin. She got out the suture kit and used the sutures for the large knife wound, finishing off the smaller wound with liquid stitches.

Sara bent down and kissed Nyssa’s forehead. “She’s almost done.”

Diggle sat back quietly while Oliver changed back into his normal clothes. When Felicity tied off the stitches, she got out some gauze and covered it up. “You’re going to be out of commission for a while.”
Sara helped Nyssa slowly sit up. When Nyssa was upright, she nodded slowly to Felicity, “I am in your debt Ms. Smoak.”

Felicity blushed slightly. No one really thanked her much anymore for doing the things that she did all the time. “It was… no problem. It’s been a while since I got to clean an arrow wound.”

Sara crossed her arms and flexed her jaw. “No one can know that she’s here.”

Oliver nodded. He understood the seriousness of secrecy in the lives that they led, “No problem.” He looked Sara over, “Are you hurt?”

She shook her head and shot him a smile, “You don’t kick that hard.”

Oliver ducked his head with a smile, “Do you two need anything?”

“Where do you get your bows?” Sara asked. “Nyssa was barely conscious when we left Nanda Parbat. She doesn’t have any weapons. I only have a staff.”

“I make most of my bows,” Oliver walked toward the back of the cave. “I can make one to your specifications.”

Nyssa was a little wary of people who used to hate her, one who specifically tried to kill her once, being nice to her.

“Do you have the parts?” Sara asked for Nyssa. She knew that Nyssa wouldn’t be too keen on using a bow made by anyone, but herself. “We don’t really have anything to do during the day. Nyssa can make it.”

Oliver nodded. “Definitely.” He gestured to Nyssa to the back of the cave, “Let’s go see if we have anything you want. If we don’t have it, I can order it and it can be here tomorrow.”

Oliver and Nyssa walked to the back of the cave and started going through the left over parts.

Sara turned to Felicity and touched her arm, “Thank you so much.”

Felicity stepped up to Sara and gave her a hug, “Of course.” She looked Sara over, “I’m glad you’re back.”

“I wish it were under nicer circumstances,” Sara crossed her arms and leaned back on one of the desks. Sara looked to Diggle and opened her arms, “C’mon Dig. You missed me.”

He smiled and stood up, giving Sara a hug. “You came back awfully quick.”

Sara opened her mouth about to tell him that she’d been gone for a while, but it wasn’t really a while outside of Nanda Parbat. Sara knew she couldn’t spill the beans about the magical place where the temple was so she shrugged, “I can’t stay away.” Suddenly Sara remembered that she was supposed to be somewhere. “Oh shit.” She grabbed her phone out of her jacket pocket and saw that she had a missed call from her dad.

“What is it?” Felicity asked.

“We’re supposed to be at dinner with my dad.” Sara looked over her shoulder at Nyssa who had moved with Oliver over to his favorite bow. Nyssa was explaining something about a small part in the middle of it. Oliver handed her a screwdriver. Nyssa gently adjusted some part that Sara couldn’t see. Then she handed the bow to Oliver. He pulled back the string and nodded.
Sara called to Nyssa, “Do you want to go to dinner with my dad and Laurel?”

Nyssa looked at Sara trying to gather what she wanted to do from the look on her face. When she found what Sara wished, she nodded, “It would be my pleasure.”

Sara smiled. She knew what Nyssa did and that she was going to sit through an uncomfortable dinner for her. Sara texted her dad and told him that they were on the way.

“I’m about to call it a night too,” Felicity looked over at the computer.

Oliver walked over to the group and Nyssa slid up next to Sara. Oliver put his hands on his hips, “I’ll order that part you need tonight and it’ll be here tomorrow morning if you want to drop by and get started.”

“I shall be here,” Nyssa nodded, graciously.

Sara poked John’s arm, “Are you going to be here tomorrow? Maybe we can get out the rattan sticks again.”

John smiled, “That sounds like a plan.”

Nyssa said goodbye to Oliver and then nodded to Felicity with a sly smile, “Ms. Smoak.” Nyssa just nodded to Diggle as she walked past him to get to the door.

“Thanks for doing this,” Sara told Nyssa on the way to her dad’s house.

Nyssa forced a smile, “My pleasure.”

Sara could see how tense Nyssa was so she took her hand as she pulled to a stop in front of her dad’s house, “We can leave if you get uncomfortable.”

“I’ll be fine,” Nyssa gave Sara a grateful smile. “I’ve handled more hostile situations.”

They were parked across the street from the house when Sara finally got them moving to get out and go inside. There were some cars driving by so before they crossed, Nyssa put her hand on the small of Sara’s back to guide her through the traffic. Sara was sure that Nyssa wasn’t even doing it on purpose. It was just a natural reaction.

Nyssa dropped her hand when they got to the porch. She slid her hands into the pockets of one of Sara’s jackets that she was borrowing because most of her clothes were left in Nanda Parbat along with her weapons. Sara knocked on the front door and then opened it, “Dad?”

Quentin and Laurel walked out of the kitchen to greet them. Quentin let Laurel hug her sister first since he saw her at lunch. He stepped around the sisters to Nyssa. He put his hand out and Nyssa took it in a handshake. “It’s a pleasure to see you again, Quentin.”

“Yeah.” He nodded, “You too.” He looked over his shoulder at his daughters then asked Nyssa, “How are you holding up?”

“ Quite well considering,” Nyssa answered with a polite smile. “You have a lovely home.”

Quentin withdrew his hand and gestured vaguely around the living room, “This was mostly my ex-wife’s doing.” He saw that Sara and Laurel were done so he stepped over to Sara and hugged her, “Hey sweetheart.”

Laurel smiled to Nyssa and moved in for a brief, polite hug, “How are you, Nyssa?”
“I’m well,” Nyssa answered.

Sara kept close to her dad, but listened to Laurel and Nyssa. She wanted to butt in and correct Nyssa, reminding her that there was a row of stitches holding her abdomen together and no one on earth would really consider that ‘well’.

“The roast is done,” Quentin told everyone, gesturing to the kitchen. “If you ladies are ready to eat.”

“I’m starving,” Sara bounced on her toes with a smile. She was excited to have some of her dad’s cooking. It had been a while.

Nyssa pulled out Sara’s chair and then Laurel’s. Laurel shared an amused look with Sara. Sara was used to that kind of treatment around Nyssa and found it funny that her sister thought it was so amusing.

Quentin brought the roast out and set it on the table, along with some vegetables. Everyone started serving themselves and dinner got started quietly.

“You got a nice tan,” Laurel commented to Sara. “Go somewhere tropical?”

Sara grinned at her sister’s attempt to get her to talk about where she’d been. “Maybe.”

Nyssa quietly ate her dinner and didn’t attempt to break into the conversation. She wanted the dinner to go smoothly so she elected to keep quiet.

Quentin noticed though. He had been keeping an eye on her. He didn’t like that she was quiet.

“How’s the roast, Nyssa?”

“It’s quite wonderful,” Nyssa smiled at him, trying to be civil.

He nodded to her. “Thanks. I’ve been working on the recipe for a while.”

“Like twenty years,” Laurel smiled across the table to Nyssa.

Nyssa nodded, “It shows.”

Sara asked Nyssa quietly and in Arabic if it was better than the capybara they ate in Colombia after a hit a few years ago. Nyssa chuckled and told her that it definitely was.

“You know you could get a nice job in town being bilingual like that,” Quentin commented, glancing up at Sara.

As she speared a green bean, Nyssa commented offhandedly, “Sara is quadrilingual.”

“Really?” Laurel asked looking at her sister, “And I thought I was good minoring in French in college.”

“Remember how you used to come home from school and complain that there was no one to practice talking in French to?” Sara used her fork to gesture at Nyssa.

Laurel put her fork down and asked Nyssa in French if she spoke French.

Nyssa nodded. She told Laurel that she had spoken it since she was a child reading first editions of Voltaire. Laurel was impressed and asked Nyssa how many languages she knew.

Nyssa furrowed her brow and answered in English, “Um, ten languages fluently. I understand a few
more.”

“I suppose it’s useful in your,” Quentin paused, “line of work.”

“Quite,” Nyssa took a bite of her food signaling that she was done speaking.

Nyssa helped Laurel clean up the dinner mess while Quentin and Sara went to the living room. They sat on the couch together and Sara leaned into her father.

“Are you still happy with your arrangement?” he asked, putting his arm around his daughter.

Sara smiled, “Very happy.”

As much as he didn’t want to hear that, he inhaled through his nose and replied, “Good. I’m glad you’re happy.”

“She almost died protecting me,” Sara turned a little toward her father, “When are you going to cut her some slack?”

“It’s hard,” Quentin explained. “After what she did to your mother…”

Sara thought about what her leaving did to Nyssa. From all the stories that she’d heard and from Nyssa herself, she did some things that she wasn’t proud of. “We’ve both made mistakes,” Sara shrugged.

“You and me or you and Nyssa?” Quentin asked.

Sara smiled and leaned into him, “All of us. Nyssa’s just more resourceful with her mistakes than most people.”

In the kitchen, Nyssa was rinsing the dishes while Laurel put them in the dishwasher. Laurel decided to start a conversation, “Do you have dinner with your family often?”

Nyssa shrugged, “It was never a regular occurrence growing up. My father traveled a lot and my mother died when I was a child. Now I travel as well and even when we’re at the same place at the same time, we don’t eat together. But the League is also my family. I dine with them often.”

Laurel nodded. She had no idea what it was like to fend for herself at such a young age. She had both of her parents and her dad was always around when she needed him. Her mom was just a phone call away. “It’s nice that you made a family in the League.”

Nyssa smiled, remembering her League family fondly. She knew they would all protect her father with their lives, yet she still worried about him. “They are a loyal family.”

After the kitchen and dining table was clean, Nyssa and Laurel joined Quentin and Sara in the living room. Nyssa sat regally in the arm chair and Laurel flopped down on the love seat.

“How was court today?” Sara asked her sister.

Laurel shrugged, “Oh you know, explaining the same thing over and over to twelve people who would rather be somewhere else than in the jury for a boring white collar trial that’s all numbers and spreadsheets.”

“But she’s fighting the good fight,” Quentin nodded to his eldest daughter. “Because in this town one disgruntled accountant will blow up the building and kidnap a boardroom full of people.”

Quentin rolled his neck. “It’s just getting worse.”
“We’re trying,” Laurel told her father, looking over the group. She smiled at her sister, “We always have the Arrow and his friends.” Laurel’s eyes moved to Nyssa and she gestured gratefully, “And the friends of the Arrow’s friends.”

Nyssa smiled, glad that someone acknowledged her contribution to the saving of the Starling City from an army of Mirakuru soldiers. She did place the League’s faith in her sanity on the line when she followed Sara headlong into a war with monsters on a moment’s notice, only after an hour of discussion.

They all spoke of funny happenings during the fight. Laurel didn’t have much to add because she wasn’t part of the assault, but she enjoyed hearing different sides to the fight. The more they talked though, the more Sara realized that no matter what, Nyssa always had her back. There were not a second during that fight when she thought her life was in danger as long as Nyssa was still standing.

At the end of the night, Sara felt that Quentin and Nyssa had reached a respectable understanding. They had both confessed concern for Sara and one of them was sitting in an armchair with an arrow wound proving her loyalty. Laurel asked to see the arrow wound that Sara casually mentioned. Nyssa had no qualms about showing wounds or scars. She stood and lifted up her shirt. Sara peeled off the bandage and went to the kitchen to get the first aid kit. She needed to change the bandage anyway.

Laurel and Quentin were used to looking at crime scenes, both in reality and in photographs so that grotesqueness of the wound did not faze either one of them. Quentin looked at the wounds, “The knife wound looks deep.”

“Did someone in The League stitch it up for you?” Laurel asked, leaning in for a closer look.

Nyssa looked to Sara who was back into the room. She wasn’t sure to what extend that the Lances knew about Team Arrow so she deferred the question to Sara.

Sara walked over to Nyssa and bent over in front of her to dress the wound, “At first, Nyssa’s sister stitched it, but the Arrow attacked us, thinking that we were trespassing.” She placed the gauze over the wound, ending the examination of it. “He ripped the stitches before he realized who we were so Felicity scraped out some dead skin around the arrow wound and redid the stitches.”

Quentin commented that Felicity was getting good at it before Laurel asked, “Why didn’t you go to a hospital?”

“No one can know that we are in Starling City,” Nyssa explained as Sara finished taping the gauze on, “For the safety of myself as well as Sara.”

“Is someone after you too?” Quentin leaned forward with his forearms on his knees.

Sara stood up straight and let Nyssa sit down, “No. But I’m not going to let someone try to kill Nyssa. They’ll have to kill me first.” She looked her father in the eye so he knew she was serious. She loved Nyssa and she was going to protect her by any means necessary.

Quentin got the warning and nodded to his daughter.

After that Sara decided to call it a night. Nyssa needed to rest. They parted with hugs and a promise to at least say goodbye if they skipped town.

In the Queen Mansion, Nyssa checked all the exterior doors. It took a while, but it was worth it to ensure protections. She found Sara in the bedroom they slept in the night before, looking out over the pool. It was dark in the back part of the Queen Compound, but she wasn’t looking. The window was
open and she was listening.

Nyssa silently moved into the room and began undressing.

Sara knew Nyssa entered the room, but she didn’t turn around. She closed her eyes and remembered how, if it had been a few years earlier, Nyssa would walk up behind her and whisper beautiful Arabic words in her ear. She remembered how Nyssa would wrap her arms around her waist and rest her chin on Sara’s shoulder so they could admire the same thing. Sara missed those moments the most. She missed just being with Nyssa in the calm, when there was no one around them.

Sara turned around in time to see Nyssa, in her underwear and one of Sara’s spare t-shirts start to climb into bed. Nyssa put her knees on the end of the bed and then put her hands on the bed before sliding her hands forward, stretching like a cat before laying completely down. Sara smiled. Nyssa had done that before, usually when she was exhausted and sore.

Nyssa’s face was in the pillow, her hair falling elegantly around her. She moved her head to the side, with her arms still under her pillow and looked at Sara. She knew she had been caught doing a strange cat-like stretch. She smiled a little shyly and then buried her face in the pillow again.

Sara walked over to the bed and shucked off her own pants. She crawled into the bed, turned the lamp off that was illuminating the room, and then shimmied under the blankets.

Nyssa spoke in Arabic when she told Sara goodnight. Sara smiled into the dark. That was Nyssa’s private language. She rarely spoke it to anyone whom she didn’t consider herself close to. It was mostly the language she used to address her father and her sister. Now she spoke it to Sara.

Sara echoes the sentiment in the same language and let herself fall asleep, knowing that she and Nyssa were getting closer with each passing day.
Chapter 10

“She’s not going to shoot me if I actually hit you, is she?” John asked, adjusting his grip on the sticks.

Sara smiled and looked over her shoulder at Nyssa. Nyssa was covertly watching them from her work bench. She noticed that there was a quiver of arrows and a spare, green bow close by that hadn’t been there before. She wasn’t sure if it was for the standard protection that the Princess of the League of Assassins required constantly or in case Diggle did accidentally hit her.

“I don’t think so,” Sara shrugged. She twirled her staff around and then moved into a ready position, “There’s only one way to find out.”

Nyssa kept sharp eyes out for the pair that were sparring across the Arrow Cave from her. The workbench she was at was adequate. It wasn’t anything like home, but it would do. She was assembling a bow from the ground up and in front of her were only parts. Nyssa found it the only acceptable way to create a bow worth using.

Sara and John sparred until Sara tripped him up and held the end of her staff to his neck. She grinned and took the staff away, helping him up. “Don’t tell me it’s because you’re afraid of being shot.”

John looked over at Nyssa, “It didn’t help my concentration any.”

Felicity walked into the Arrow Cave and went straight to her computer, saying a quick hello to Sara and Diggle. She started a program and swiveled in her chair to look at Nyssa who was toiling away at the work bench mere feet from Felicity’s desk, “Did you get everything you needed?”

“I did,” Nyssa smiled gratefully, “Thank you, Ms. Smoak.”

“Please,” Felicity smiled back, “Call me Felicity.”

Nyssa nodded. “As you wish.”

Felicity watched Nyssa work with delicate intricacy while she was waiting for her program to run all the way through. She bit the inside of her cheek before asking, “Nyssa?”

“Yes?” Nyssa looked up from her work.

“You need new armor right?” Felicity leaned back in her chair.

Nyssa nodded, “I suppose so.”

“So I’ve started using this design program on my computer,” Felicity ran her fingers over her keyboard, “For clothing design and stuff like that. I’ve messed around with Oliver’s costume, but I don’t think he’ll ever change it. Do you think maybe I could take a shot at designing you something?”

Nyssa smiled. She could see that Felicity was nervous in asking. Sara was right. Felicity was cute. Nyssa bowed her head, but kept her eyes on Felicity, “I would be honored.”

“Really?” Felicity smiled brightly, “Thank you. I kind of already came up with some ideas last night. It’s sort of based on your old one, but with a kind of Kevlar material that is knife, bullet, and…well arrow resistant.” She turned to her computer and pulled up a few designs she was messing around
with.

Nyssa got up from her workbench and stood behind Felicity to see what she had done. Felicity looked up at Nyssa, “I can modify one of Oliver’s quivers and I ordered red arrow feathers when I ordered your bow parts.” Felicity pointed to the screen, “From what I remember your leather armor chest plate thing, didn’t offer much abdominal protection so I did with yours what I did with Sara’s. The bottom layer is Kevlar. It’s thin and tight, but offers the most mobility with the most protection.” Felicity looked up at Nyssa, “And I left the cloak and veil exactly the same because those are really cool.”

Nyssa chuckled, amused with Felicity enthusiasm. “This is very impressive, Felicity. How may I help you construct it?”

“I can send it to a few different manufacturers across the city in inconspicuous pieces and measurements. It can be ready in a few hours,” Felicity explained as Sara and John walked over.

“That’s incredible,” Sara leaned over to look at the screen. “It’s very Nyssa.” She turned to smile at Nyssa who smiled back.

“How come you never design me anything like that?” John asked, picking up a gym towel and wiping his face.

Felicity smirked, “Would you wear it?”

“No,” John chuckled. He pulled his shirt off over his head. “I’m going to go pick up Oliver from his meeting.” He picked up a spare shirt out of a duffel bag under the table.

“How’s the bow building going?” Sara asked Nyssa.

Nyssa gestured to the table, “It’s going well.”

“Sorry I didn’t grab your recurve on the way out,” Sara leaned back on one of the tables and looked at Nyssa, “I wasn’t even thinking about it.”

“It’s understandable,” Nyssa told Sara. She walked back to the work bench. She picked up her tools and resumed working.

“Are you ready for lunch, Felicity?” Sara asked, pulling out her phone, “I’m starving.”

Felicity swiveled around in her chair to address Sara, “I could eat. Ooh, you know what sounds good? Tapas.”

“Done,” Sara smiled and started looking up where to get the best tapas in the city. She ordered their lunch and lingered around for a little before she went to pick it up.

Sara walked over to the desk where they usually kept the keys to the vehicles. She smiled when she saw the keys to her motorcycle still in the drawer. She picked them up and looked behind her at Felicity, “Oliver hasn’t totaled my motorcycle yet?”

“Nope,” Felicity smiled, “He totaled his motorcycle, one car, and a moped, but no one has driven your motorcycle.” Felicity’s smile turned mischievous, “When I ordered the pieces for Nyssa’s armor, I ordered you a new leather jacket. You can go pick it up now.” Felicity wrote down an address and handed it to Sara.

“Thank you,” Sara smiled and hugged Felicity, “This place would not run without you.”
“I know,” Felicity pushed her glasses back into place after Sara let go.

When Sara left, Felicity and Nyssa were left alone together. Nyssa worked quietly on her bow, trying to tweak it so it would meet her high standards and be a weapon she would be confident wielding.

Felicity thought it was kind of nice how Nyssa was quietly tinkering a few feet away. She usually had to be alone to work in the quiet, but with Nyssa she wasn’t alone and no one was talking about strategies or hitting a giant tire with a sledgehammer because they were frustrated. She could hear her thoughts, but she didn’t jump at every noise because she had a skilled fighter in the room.

Nyssa was enjoying having something to do. She was never one to sit still, unless it was a practice in meditation. She finished her bow, leaving the entire weapon black from top to bottom. Felicity seemed to have a flair for aesthetics so if Felicity wanted to paint it, Nyssa wouldn’t stop her. It was just not one of Nyssa’s priorities.

She quietly rose and moved to the back of the Arrow Cave where she found the arrows shafts, feathers, and arrowheads. She carried what she needed back to her workbench and set the bow aside to start assembling the arrows that had been procured for her. It seemed that Felicity decided Nyssa’s official colors were red and black. Nyssa smiled to herself as she assembled the arrows. She didn’t mind.

The door to the Arrow Cave opened with a bang. Nyssa was quick to pick up her bow and thread one of her newly assembled arrows on the string. She knew that she could hit whoever was at the door with a quick shot so she didn’t stand. She just watched the entryway.

Sara stepped around the corner with a dimpled smile, a paper bag of food, and a new leather jacket. Nyssa set down her bow and went back to assembling arrows.

“This jacket is amazing,” Sara put the food down next to Felicity. The outside was black, but on the inside lining was canary yellow. As she wore it Sara was finding all kinds of hidden pockets of all different sizes. “I love it.”

Felicity smiled, “Good.” She picked up the bag of food and started going through it, “I’m starving.”

The women all gathered around an empty table. Felicity wheeled her chair over to the table and Sara sat on it. Nyssa elected to eat as she worked so she walked back to the workbench with her food.

“How are the stitches holding up?” Felicity asked after they’d been eating for a while.

“Very well thank you,” Nyssa nodded to her, “You’re very talented, Felicity.”

Sara smiled at Felicity and nudged Felicity’s knee with her foot, “My dad and Laurel were impressed with your work.”

“You saw them last night?” Felicity asked, her eyes moved to Nyssa, “How was that?”

“Actually really nice,” Sara shrugged. She picked at her food and looked right into it as she spoke, “My dad and Laurel were nice to Nyssa. No one pulled a gun on anyone.” She nodded to herself, “It was nice.”

“How sad is it that our idea of a good time is no one pulling a gun?” Felicity leaned back in her chair and swiveled from side to side, “I went on a date last week. It was so boring. Instead of splitting the check, I paid because he,” Felicity used air quotes, “forgot his wallet.” Felicity rolled her eyes, “I’m pretty sure he checked out the waiter and on my way home I thought ‘at least he’s not a
supervillain’.

“I do not understand men like that,” Nyssa spoke as she focused intensely on attaching an arrowhead to the shaft. “Whose eyes wander when they are on a date with a beautiful woman.”

Felicity immediately blushed. She ducked her head and adjusted her glasses, “Um, thanks.” She picked up some of her food, “Maybe I should start dating assassins.” Felicity put her head back against the headrest and asked Sara, “What was it like dating her?”

“I don’t think we ever actually went on a date,” Sara scratched her head, “I mean, at least not one that wasn’t just some extension of a hit.” She looked over at Nyssa, “Did we ever go on an actual date?”

Nyssa thought it over and furrowed her brow, “I suppose not. We were just…together.”

“We moved in together only a few months after we met,” Sara explained to Felicity, “I guess it’s not really something we ever thought about it because we worked and lived together.”

Felicity rested her head against her hand, “It’s still lucky though. You know how hard it is to meet people when my free time is spent in a secret cave under an abandoned foundry?”

“You are a woman of many desirable qualities,” Nyssa assured Felicity, “And as Sara has said on many occasions, you’re cute. I believe she means to assess that term to certain personality traits you have. I, however, find you beautiful in both body and mind. Any person should consider themselves lucky to have the honor of being in your presence, especially on a date.”

Felicity’s eyes flickered to Sara. She was a little worried about what the showering of compliments was going to do to Sara, but Sara just nodded, agreeing with Nyssa.

“What happened to…” Sara started to ask, “Um, Barry?”

Felicity shrugged, “He came out of his coma and went off the radar.”

Nyssa knew more about what happened to Barry and some abilities that he had gained, but she wasn’t going to say anything to Felicity because it was not the kind of thing that would make Felicity any less anxious about Barry’s condition.

Sara rubbed the back of Felicity’s shoulders, “There’s a great person out there for you somewhere. Probably closer than you think.”

The door to the Arrow Cave opened again and again Nyssa treaded an arrow with lightning fast speed in case the intruder had malicious intentions.

Lucky for the intruders, it was Oliver and John. They walked down into the Arrow Cave together, Oliver taking off his suit jacket as he walked in. “Good afternoon, ladies.”

“Good afternoon,” Felicity echoed with a smile, “How did the board meeting go?”

“Well,” Oliver nodded and draped his jacket over a vacant chair. He turned his gaze to Sara, “All quiet at the Queen Estate last night?”

“Very quiet,” Sara answered, taking another bite of her tapas.

Nyssa just finished assembling her arrows and put them all in the quiver that Felicity gave her. She noticed a thin wavy red line down the side of the black quiver and smiled again at Felicity’s attention
to detail and her assignment of colors.

Sara saw Nyssa put the quiver across her chest and had an idea. She picked up the empty paper bag that the food came in and wadded it up. She called, “Nyssa,” and then threw it toward the far end of the room.

Nyssa turned and saw that flying paper ball. It took her less than a second to pull an arrow out of her quiver, thread it on her bow, and let it fly. The paper ball was hit in the center and nailed to the back wall in the midst of thousands of arrow holes.

“Good?” Sara asked Nyssa.

Nyssa looked at the bow, “It’s a little off balance.” She moved back to the workbench and picked up the tools again.

“That was off balance?” Felicity asked, watching Oliver walk to the arrow and pull it out of the wall.

“That was impressive,” Oliver took the paper ball off of the arrow and walked it back over to Nyssa.

“Thank you,” Nyssa took the arrow and put it back into her quiver.

“Have you two ever done the William Tell thing?” Felicity asked, “When you put an apple on your head and let the other one shoot it off?”

Sara laughed, “We’ve done it a few times.”

Nyssa laughed as well and shook her head, “Sara is endlessly amused by my ability to quarter apples with arrows.”

“From on top of my head,” Sara grinned. “It’s fun.” She couldn’t believe that Nyssa didn’t find it as fun as she did. She trusted Nyssa completely not to hit her. She pretty much trusted Nyssa to cut her hair with the arrows at fifty meters. She just smiled over at Nyssa and then rolled her eyes over to Felicity, “It’s fun.”

Felicity picked up a piece of paper and crumpled it up. “Nyssa? May I?” Felicity made a tossing motion with the paper ball.

Nyssa smiled and nodded.

Felicity threw the paper in the general direction of the one Sara threw and Nyssa shot it straight out of the air again without really blinking an eye.

“Care to make it interesting?” Oliver went to the back and pulled two canisters of tennis balls out of a box.

Sara smiled. He’d have to throw all of the tennis balls directly at Nyssa at sixty miles per hour to make it even remotely interesting for Nyssa, but Nyssa was politely game.

Sara took a seat next to Felicity and they watched John and Oliver test Nyssa with tennis balls and generally anything they could put a hole through without completely ruining.

“She did this when she was six didn’t she?” Felicity asked, watching how Nyssa nailed every object with ease.

Sara grinned, “Oh yeah. Right after we left Starling, we switched boats. She stood up on the top deck with her bow and we used a small trebuchet to launch smaller balls over the ocean three at a
time. She always got them before they hit the water.” Sara watched carefully as she muscles in Nyssa’s back flexed with every shot. Her shoulders were strong and defined, peeking out from under the tank top she was wearing. There wasn’t anything overtly sexual about Nyssa’s stance as she shot, but it always managed to do something to Sara.

Felicity pulled her out of her trance, “You got a little drool there.”

Sara knew she wasn’t drooling. Maybe she was metaphorically. She scratched her head and bashfully smiled, “Whoops.”

Felicity was amused, “I’m going to go pick up some of Nyssa’s armor from Queen Consolidated. Wanna come?”

“Yeah,” Sara nodded, “Can we stop in The Glades on the way back? I have someone to check on.”

“Of course,” Felicity nodded. She grabbed her keys and stood up. She picked up one last paper ball and threw it toward Nyssa. She saw it coming out of the corner of her eye and whipped an arrow out of the quiver. She sliced the paper in half with the tip of the arrow and then shot the arrow at a ball that Oliver threw.

“That’s fun,” Felicity grinned as she walked toward the door.

Sara made sure it was okay with Nyssa if she left and invited her to come. She declined stating that she and Oliver had already decided to climb up onto the roof and really test their accuracy. John was going to head out to see Lyla for a few hours before night fell and crime descended like a cloak over the city.
Nyssa and Oliver exited the Arrow Cave and climbed up onto the tall roof of the warehouse. It overlooked the darkening bay. There was a light wind blowing off of the water.

Nyssa was the first one to throw targets out over the water. She was impressed with Oliver’s skills based on how long he’d been shooting. When she took her turn shooting, he was just as impressed.

“I underestimated you,” Oliver told Nyssa after they had exhausted their target supply up on the roof. They both sat down facing the bay with their legs dangling toward the ground.

Nyssa looked down, “Well you haven’t really seen me at my best.”

Oliver looked out over the harbor, “When we fought at the docks…I thought that was your best.”

“I wasn’t going to kill you when I needed you to kill me,” Nyssa’s eyes followed the water under the pier out to the horizon, “I didn’t want to live if Sara… I was angry and upset. I wanted you to kill me. Suicide of a League member is dishonorable. My father would have…he would have been disgraced, but if I died in battle, I wouldn’t have to live in a world where Sara would rather die than be with me.”

There was a dense silence between them for a moment. Oliver looked out onto the horizon as well, “What happened after you left?”

“The bloodiest rampage in the history of the League,” Nyssa’s jaw clenched as she spoke. “I didn’t stop for months. I ran a little sleep and little nourishment. It was an embarrassing tantrum.”

Oliver nodded, “I’ve been there.” Oliver shook his head realizing that during his first days as the Arrow, he was no better than Nyssa. He looked over at her, “Why aren’t you with her now? You two seem…close.”

Nyssa paused. She didn’t have to think of the answer. She just didn’t like to say it out loud. She looked away from Oliver and watched a fishing boat sail off into the fog, “I fear what losing her again would do to me.”

“So you’ll deny yourself happiness while you can have her?” Oliver asked, putting his hand on his leg so that he could turn more toward Nyssa.

Nyssa smiled humorlessly, “Believe me, I have told myself that I should be happy while I can. Especially when someone is hunting me down to kill me and my family, but I can’t bring myself to let go of the fear. I cannot be weak and Sara makes me weak.”

Oliver shook his head, “Sara makes you strong. And she makes you happy. I’ve seen you two together. I’ve seen you fight together. You’re more in sync than anyone I’ve ever met.” Oliver smiled and bumped his shoulder with Nyssa’s, “You have fun with her.”

Nyssa ducked her head and broke out a genuine smile, “I do.”

“See?” Oliver smiled wider at the presence of Nyssa’s smile, “If she can make you smile when she’s not even here…” he blew out a stream of air and shook his head, “You’ve got it bad.”

“I have what bad?” Nyssa asked, looking quizzically over at Oliver.
Oliver scratched the scruff on his cheek, “It means, um, your feelings for Sara are really strong.”

Nyssa nodded, “Then you are right. I have it bad.”

Across town, Sara dropped onto a balcony in The Glades. The occupant of small apartment reached for the nearest weapon, a metal bat. Then she stopped when she saw who it was on the balcony.

Sin ran to Sara and put her arms around her, “Jesus, why do you have to scare me like that?”

“How else am I supposed to get my kicks?” Sara hugged Sin tightly.

Sin pulled back and looked at Sara, “What are you doing in town?”

“Just passing through,” Sara pulled back and looked Sin over. She didn’t look much different. There was just some new color in her hair and some new ink on her arm. “How are you?”

“Great,” Sin smiled, “How long as you in town for?”

Sara shrugged, “No idea.” She put her hands in her back pockets, “Do you need anything?”

Sin shook her head, “Nah. I can take care of myself.”

“I know,” Sara looked around the apartment. “It looks like you’re doing well.”

The younger woman shrugged with a shy smile, “Yeah. I mean, I got a job at a bookstore down the street. Sometimes I pick up shifts at Verdant if Roy needs me to. It’s quiet, but…you know quiet in this neighborhood is good.” Sin grabbed her jacket, “I’m actually on my way to work now.”

“Do you mind if I walk you?” Sara asked.

“As long as we don’t have to jump out the window,” Sin smiled as Sara put her arm around her shoulders.

Felicity returned to the Arrow Cave alone. Sara decided to stick around the bookstore and hang out with Sin for a little while. She told Felicity to let Nyssa know.

And Nyssa was the only one that Felicity found in the Arrow Cave when she returned. “Hey,” Felicity smiled, seeing Nyssa stretch on the floor.

Nyssa turned and smiled back, “Hello Felicity.”

“Sara is hanging out in The Glades for a while,” Felicity walked toward the back of the Arrow Cave, “Your armor is coming down the dumbwaiter.”

“I didn’t know there was a dumbwaiter back here,” Nyssa followed Felicity to the back of the warehouse where she slid open a large metal door, revealing different sized and color boxes.

Felicity grinned, “It’s not like I carried all those servers down the stairs.” She pulled out the first box. She carried it over to the nearest table and then pulled a mannequin out from the storage area. Nyssa started moving the boxes over to Felicity’s area.

They started unpacking the boxes, laying the armor out and then began to dress the mannequin. Felicity asked Nyssa to try on a tight Kevlar shirt. Nyssa had to take off her current tank top and then changed right in front of Felicity. Felicity examined the shirt closely, running her hand up Nyssa’s back to feel how tight it was, and then nodded, “Looks good. How does it feel?”
Nyssa flexed her shoulders, “Very flexible.”

“Good,” Felicity moved to another box.

Nyssa took off her shirt and turned around to place it back on the mannequin.

As Nyssa was picking up her tank top, Felicity looked at her. She noticed that much like Oliver and Sara, Nyssa’s body was littered with scars. Felicity covertly surveyed the map they drew on Nyssa’s skin. One scar stood out to her and Felicity had to ask, “What was that from?” When Nyssa looked at her, wondering what the blonde was inquiring about, she saw Felicity pointing to a scar on Nyssa’s lower back.

Nyssa reached around her body and ran her fingers over the scar like it would help her remember, “A grenade in Algiers.”

“The same grenade that got Sara’s ankle?” Felicity asked, remembering when Sara, Oliver, and John were comparing scars and Felicity didn’t have the bullet wound in her shoulder to compare with them.

Nyssa let out a smile and nodded, “Yes.” She always found Felicity’s command of memory recall impressive.

“Do you have any spear scars?” Felicity asked, guessing that since whatever Sara did Nyssa did as well, they would have some of the same scars. “Or swords?”

Nyssa pulled up her pant leg to show a burn scar, “This was from the incident Sara had with a spear. We were on opposite ends of a boat that was attacked by pirates.” Then Nyssa turned to the side and showed Felicity a thin scar down her side with a smaller scar crossing it. “These were from training. Sara is actually responsible for the long one.”

“What am I responsible for?” Sara asked, walking into the Arrow Cave. She was interested to see what had Nyssa’s shirt off and the black workout bra stretching so that Nyssa could show Felicity her side.

“Stabbing your girlfriend,” Felicity shook her head with a playful grin, “What is wrong with you?”

Sara saw that Nyssa was smiling and added, “It was an accident. We were fencing…with actual swords.”

Felicity looked from Sara to Nyssa. Felicity shook her head. Her friends had dangerous hobbies. Then she smiled, realizing that she considered the women in the room her friends. Going through school she didn’t have a lot of female friends. Not because she didn’t want them. It was because she was one of two women in her MIT classes and the other woman in her class saw her as competition and didn’t want to be friends.

Now she had brilliant, badass women all around her. She had the fearless Lance sisters and the infamous Nyssa Al Ghul. It more than made up for an undergraduate era of only male friends.

“Oh,” Sara walked over to the half-dressed mannequin, trying to keep her eyes off the half-dressed assassin Princess. “This is gorgeous.” There were subtle red highlights in the black armor. The interior lining of the cape was a deep crimson red. There were thin almost imperceptible red waves in the leather straps holding the dragon scale like pauldron in place.

“It is,” Nyssa agreed. “Thank you so much, Felicity. It seems I am in your debt again.”
“Just, no using it for a while,” Sara waggled her finger at Nyssa. “You’re still healing.” Sara walked over to Nyssa and paused in front of her. She gestured vaguely to the bandage that was still stuck to Nyssa’s abdomen.

Nyssa nodded slowly, allowing Sara to proceed. Felicity moved over to the pair because she wanted to see how Nyssa’s stitches were holding up.

There was a little blood on the inside of the bandage when Sara peeled it off. Sara muttered, “It was probably too soon for you to use a bow like that.”

Felicity retrieved the rather large medical bag that she had curated over the past few years. She set it on her desk and opened it up to retrieve some gauze and medical tape.

Nyssa crossed her arms and watched the two blondes discuss covering her wound with a different kind of material or if they should let it breathe for a little while after some antiseptic. She wasn’t used to being fussed over like that and it was both annoying and endearing.

Eventually, Felicity sprayed it with antiseptic and Sara put the gauze back in the bag. Nyssa wished she had been paying more attention so that she could have prepared herself for the sting of the spray.

“Sorry,” Felicity apologized after she saw the look of pain on Nyssa’s face.

Nyssa exhaled and uncrossed her arms, “It’s fine.”

“Did you have fun with Oliver?” Sara asked, leaning back on Felicity’s desk.

Nyssa nodded and reached for her shirt. “I did.”

“No shirt,” Sara grinned, “Just for a little while. We’re going to let your wound breathe.”

Nyssa could see a little twinkle in Sara’s eyes that meant she was enjoying the no shirt rule a little too much. Nyssa just smiled at Sara’s interest in her and put her shirt back down.

“What did you two do?” Felicity asked, “You kept his attention for over an hour which is nearly impossible,” she sat down at her desk and woke the screen up, “Unless you’re a supervillain.”

Felicity quickly whirled around in her chair to look at Nyssa, “I don’t think you’re a supervillain.”

Nyssa grinned, “I’ve been called worse, Ms. Smoak.”

“Felicity,” Felicity corrected Nyssa.

“My apologies,” Nyssa bowed her head. She could see that Sara was waiting for her answer to Felicity’s question so she answered it, “We tested our skills on top of the warehouse. He is quite a skilled archer.” Nyssa shrugged, “When we ran out of arrows, we talked. Then we retrieved as many arrows as possible as not to give away his Arrow Lair’s secret location should someone stumble across them.”

Felicity smiled at the name Nyssa gave the Arrow Cave. It was probably a better name than the Arrow Cave, but that was just what Felicity always called it. She typed on her computer as she added, “You’re cute.”

Nyssa looked to Sara and raised an eyebrow. No one in their right mind had ever called Nyssa Al Ghul, daughter of Ra’s Al Ghul, heir to the Demon, cute.

Sara chuckled, “She’s not wrong.”
When there was nothing else to do in the Arrow Cave/Lair, the women decided to go get some dinner. They went to a small restaurant down the street where Felicity assured Sara that no one would notice them.

It was a tiny Italian restaurant with a beautifully lit outdoor patio. The soft lights strung in the trees made the small table for three seem exceptionally intimate. They all shared a lovely meal filled with laughter. Like most things she attempted, Nyssa was a phenomenal storyteller. Felicity was entranced in all the stories as she sipped her wine. Sara was present during most of the adventures Nyssa was speaking of, but she felt like she was back in time, seeing the whole scenarios from an entirely new perspective.

Felicity did contribute to the storytelling regaling the assassins around her with hilarious antics that Felicity took part in during college.

After dinner, Nyssa paid and insisted on walking Felicity to her car. She watched Felicity’s gait to make sure that the one glass of wine she had didn’t impair her. She was rewarded with a surprise hug from Felicity. Then Felicity hugged Sara and got into her car.

Sara and Nyssa had a little way to walk to get to the car and decided to take their time. Sara kept a vigilant eye out around them, making sure that they were really alone.

“How is Sin?” Nyssa asked after a few steps of silence.

Sara smiled. “She’s good. She has a job that she loves.” Sara put her hands in her back pockets, “I slipped her a couple hundred dollars when she wasn’t looking and she sent me an angry text message threatening to punch me if I ever do that again.”

“There are some peculiarly violent, strong willed people in this town,” Nyssa commented. She quirked an eyebrow and grinned, “Present company included.”

“Nah,” Sara hooked her arm through Nyssa’s, “I’m not violent anymore unless provoked.”

Nyssa grew quiet, just enjoying the walk. She let her arm hang limply to her side as Sara held onto it. After a few steps, she pulled her arm up. Sara was worried that the arm would be taken away from her, making her feel that their relationship was taking a step back, but all those fears were dismissed when Nyssa took her hand.

Sara threaded her fingers through Nyssa’s. She wanted to do so much more than just hold Nyssa’s hand, but holding hands was leaps and bounds from sleeping on separate sides of the room like they did in Nanda Parbat.

Sara bit her tongue to keep from telling Nyssa that she loved her. It seemed far too intimate a gesture when they were walking alone at night. She sincerely hoped that Nyssa knew.

Nyssa ran her teeth over her bottom lip in a rare sign of uncertainty. She gripped Sara’s hand tighter as they walked. She didn’t want to let go, but there was something in the back of her head telling her that it was a bad idea. If Nyssa knew how to silence that voice she would do it in a second and with all the ferocity in her.

“How’s the wound?” Sara asked, as they neared the foundry.

“Healing quite nicely,” Nyssa inhaled, “Nothing to go to a Lazarus Pit over.”

Sara smiled. “I wish you’d tell me where one of them is so if it was something to go to a Lazarus Pit over, I could get you there.”
Nyssa found the statement to be rather hard hitting. She swallowed some guilt and then licked her lips. “I wish to take you somewhere.” She moved to the passenger door of the car and opened it for Sara.

Sara was slightly confused as she stood next to the door of the car. The tone in Nyssa’s voice was no longer playful. “Look, I didn’t mean-”

Nyssa just gestured for Sara to get into the car. Sara looked over Nyssa’s face for some clue as to what changed, but couldn’t find anything. She sighed and dropped down into the car.

Nyssa walked to the driver’s side and took the wheel.

There was silence in the car until they arrived at the cemetery. Sara wasn’t sure what exactly Nyssa was going to show her, but when Nyssa got out of the car, she followed.

They walked the winding path until they got to an all too familiar patch of grass that led up to a gravestone that read Sara Lance 1987-2007 Loving daughter and sister.

Sara slowly crossed the manicured grass and stood at the foot of her own grave. Nyssa didn’t look up or away from the grave marker. It was always a stunning reminder of Sara’s mortality even though she was one of the few people that never believed Sara was actually dead. Nyssa placed a small stone on top of the grave marker before taking a step back.

“You know that this grave should have been removed a long time ago,” Nyssa looked up at the stars and said to the sky.

Sara nodded, “Yeah. I don’t think it’s really been on anyone’s mind though.”

Nyssa shook her head, “It won’t be moved. There is something buried down there besides an empty casket.” Her eyes moved back to Sara.

Sara frowned. She moved closer to Nyssa. “What are you talking about?”

“In the event that something should happen to me,” Nyssa looked back at the headstone, “There is five million dollars under my feet. There are blank passports, new identities, bank codes, keys to safe houses around the world, and a .38 revolver. There is a notebook with the location of every known Lazarus Pit in the world.” Nyssa looked Sara dead in the eyes, “In the event of my death, you and only you were to be informed of this cache.”

“Why?” Sara asked, completely confused, “Why are you telling me this now?”

“I think the question is why didn’t I tell you about it before,” Nyssa looked away from Sara. She saw movement behind her, but found it was only a tree swaying in the breeze.

Sara knew how Nyssa thought. She looked down at the grass to go through Nyssa’s thought process and looked back up at Nyssa, “Because you didn’t trust me. But you trust me now?”

Nyssa inhaled deeply, “I do.”

Sara didn’t hesitate to throw her arms around Nyssa’s neck. She needed Nyssa to know that she knew this was huge. Nyssa had just given Sara the ability to disappear forever and trusted her not to leave. But she still wanted to know, “Why?”

There was not really a clear answered. Nyssa continued to hold Sara, “I…you’ve put yourself at great personal risk bringing me back here. Sensei will not be easily deterred and you have done
nothing but try to protect me.” Nyssa took a step back so that she could look at Sara, “It’s not something I’m used to, but I’ve found it…comforting.”

Sara smiled softly. She reached up and gently placed her hand on Nyssa’s face. “I’m glad I get to protect you. At least I get to try.” Sara moved her hand from Nyssa’s face to the place over her wound.

“None of this was your fault,” Nyssa touched Sara’s face. She dipped her head down and kissed Sara’s forehead. “I have many enemies and many scars from my enemies.”

Sara closed her eyes and took a moment to just revel in the kiss that was dropped on her head. “I love you.” Sara slowly opened her eyes to look up at Nyssa, “I won’t let anything happen to you.”

Nyssa swore solemnly. “And I shall not let anything happen to you.”

They stood in each other’s arms for a few minutes before Nyssa took a step back. She looked at the grave marker and sighed deeply. She didn’t look at Sara when she finally admitted, “I love you too.”

Sara couldn’t stop the grin from spreading across her face. She looked back toward her grave and waited for Nyssa.

Finally, Nyssa was done. She turned away from the headstone and started the slow leisurely walk back to the car.

“How was I supposed to dig up all of that stuff by myself?” Sara asked as they walked to the car.

Nyssa knew that it was innocent curiosity and not fiendish plans of escape so she answered with a smirk, “Knock out the security guard and dig up the grave with a backhoe.” She clasped her hands together behind her back, “The top of the coffin may have a few scratches on it as it was my first time using such machinery.”

Sara laughed and put her hands around Nyssa’s upper arm. She leaned into Nyssa as they walked, “You can show me when we dig it up to go on vacation.”

Nyssa opened the passenger’s door for Sara again and then closed it after Sara got in. They drove back to the Queen Estate talking about the most beautiful beaches they’d ever been too and the most stunning mountains.

“You were the only one in the caravan that actually liked being in the desert,” Sara accused as they walked into the mansion.

Nyssa held the door open for Sara and smiled at her as she walked past, “It was beautiful.”

“You got the only camel that didn’t try to eat you,” Sara led the way up the stairs. “Pru got thrown off her camel three times.” Sara shook her head, “Of course you have a way with animals. You fed a desert fox from your hand.”

Nyssa shrugged off Sara’s leather jacket and tossed it onto the chair by the door as they entered their guestroom. “Animals are more respectable than most people.”

Sara couldn’t say that she disagreed. She reached into her duffle bag and pulled out a loose tank top to wear to bed.

Nyssa took a shower while Sara lurked around the house looking for anything that seemed out of place. When she returned to the bedroom, Nyssa was brushing out her damp hair, clothes in shorts
and a Starling Rockets t-shirt.

Nyssa felt two skilled hands start to braid her hair down the back. She contently closed her eyes and let Sara braid her hair. When Sara tied it off, Nyssa laid down on the bed, “Thank you.”

Sara moved to the door and peeked out before she closed the door. “Are you ready for the lights out?”

“Yes, darling,” Nyssa let the affectionate name slip, but let it hang in the air.

Sara turned off the lights before she smiled because she was sure it was the smile of a punch drunk fool. She crawled into bed next to Nyssa and stretched out.
Chapter 12

The night was wrought with nightmares for Nyssa. When her eyes jerked open, she found morning light flowing through the windows. She took a moment to catch her breath and assess the area around her. Sara was slowly waking up next to her.

A crash outside the window had Nyssa grabbing the bow and quiver out from under the bed. She hooked the quiver over her shoulder and drew an arrow as she approached the window. Sara was quick behind her with a knife. They both stood to the side of the window and peered out. They saw who was outside at the same time.

Nyssa let out a sigh and turned away from the window. Sara opened the window and smiled down at the other blonde, “Good morning.”

“I almost got shot didn’t I?” Felicity asked, looking up at Sara. Her long coat swept the ground as she dripped down to pick up the patio chair that she knocked over.

Sara looked behind herself and saw that Nyssa’s bow and quiver was on the bed and Nyssa was gone. Sara nodded, “Yeah.”

“I was trying to be sneaky,” Felicity winced and looked up at Sara. She put her hands in her pockets, “I brought breakfast.”

Sara saw the paper bag and tray of coffees behind her on the table. She smiled, “Thank you. We’ll be right down.”

Nyssa emerged from the bathroom with some of Sara’s sweatpants on, “I really must get some clothes of my own.”

Sara laughed when she saw her sweatpants two inches too short on Nyssa. Nyssa pulled the bottom of the pants up to her knees so that they resembled long shorts. Nyssa picked up her quiver and crossed the strap over her chest. Then she crossed the bow over her chest.

Sara wondered what she was doing before she saw Nyssa effortlessly hop out the window. She heard Felicity gasp before telling Nyssa that she thought she was going to break her neck. Sara peaked out the window and saw Felicity hug Nyssa.

She went to change before hopping out the window herself.

“I guess there aren’t a lot of stairs where you two live,” Felicity joked.

Sara hugged Felicity, “Thanks for bringing breakfast.”

Nyssa pulled out Felicity and Sara’s chairs for them to sit down at the patio table. When they both sat down, Nyssa took a seat herself.

The coffees were passed around and pastries were divvied out.

“Are you going in to work today?” Sara asked Felicity, taking a chomp out of a croissant.

Felicity nodded, “But I’m going to go hide out in the IT department and work there. Oliver doesn’t need me today. He’s got meetings from nine until two.”

“I’m glad you get to go back down there and…,” Sara smiled, “Mess with the servers and reboot
Felicity chuckled, “Yeah, I’ll do something like that.” She took a sip of her coffee, “What are you two going to do today?”

Sara looked to Nyssa. Nyssa looked out over the clear pool, “Perhaps go to a clothing store.”

“Oh yeah,” Sara nodded. She turned to Felicity and explained that her pants don’t fit Nyssa.

Felicity looked over at Nyssa, “You should go to the Plaza. They just opened up like four new stores.”

Nyssa looked to Sara, unsure of this Plaza thing. She wasn’t a huge fan of American consumerism. She didn’t like malls. They were always very crowded, smelled like chemicals, and most of them were tactically unsound.

Sara smiled softly and nodded to Nyssa, knowing of her concerns. She told Felicity, “I don’t think that Nyssa is ready for the Plaza. We’ll go somewhere smaller. If I left her to buying her own clothes she would only have red cocktail dresses, black trench coats, and a lot of hats.” When Nyssa looked slightly offended, Sara added, “You have great taste in shoes.”

Nyssa couldn’t be mad at Sara when she saw the dimpled smile. Sara was right though. Nyssa didn’t really have much use for practical casual westernized clothes, but blending in in Starling City meant conforming to the societal norms.

“Oh well shoes,” Felicity grinned, “The best shoe store in the city is two blocks from Queen Consolidated. I frequently spend my lunch breaks there because being the all-seeing Oracle for The Arrow doesn’t give me much time after work.” Felicity shifted her jaw from one side to the other and offered, “Maybe we could meet there around noon?” She loved hanging out with Sara and Nyssa. It was nice to be around other women. She just didn’t want to crowd them. She had female friends before joining Team Arrow, but it was hard to keep up with them when she couldn’t be totally honest about where she disappeared to.

Sara agreed. She knew Felicity’s propensity for an obsession with shoes was probably on par with Nyssa’s. She was just going to turn them loose and sit in a chair.

And that’s exactly where she found herself five hours later. After dragging Nyssa around, forcing her to try on things and listening to her complain about the confining nature of the clothing that women were given, Sara was sitting in the shoe store. She had lost track of both Nyssa and Felicity in the store. She was just so tired. She actually got Nyssa to buy clothes so she felt that she had done her job.

Sara was leaned back in a chair near the front door because there was still a threat over Nyssa. When a coffee appeared in front of her, Sara looked up and saw Oliver offering her a large cup from the coffee shop inside of Queen Consolidated.

“Thanks,” Sara scooted over on her bench so that Oliver could sit down, “Are you here to watch the show? Because, I have no idea where either of them are.”

“I thought I’d come over and see how you are doing,” Oliver took a sip of his down coffee, “Between my marathon meetings.”

“Felicity told us,” Sara rested her head back against the wall behind the bench and lulled it over to look at Oliver, “Sounds rough.”
Oliver blew a stream of air out of his mouth and leaned back, “I would rather take on ten insane terrorists than going back in there.”

Sara smiled, “If I could take your place…” She paused and then added, “I wouldn’t.”

Oliver chuckled, “Thanks a lot.”

Nyssa walked toward them with a smile on her face. Sara loved the way Nyssa’s new black leggings and baggy taupe sweater looked on her. “Find something?”

“Something for you,” Nyssa handed Sara a box. “Hello Oliver.”

“Hey,” Oliver smiled.

Nyssa called behind her, “Felicity.”

Felicity appeared at the end of the aisle and spotted Oliver. “Oh you’re here.” She disappeared down an aisle again and walked back toward the group with three boxes of shoes. “You need new shoes.” Felicity put them down and walked back into the aisle.

“There’s nothing wrong with my shoes,” Oliver looked down at the ones he was wearing.

“The stitching is tearing on the right one,” Felicity called back from the large abyss of shoes.

Oliver looked at his right shoe and found that Felicity was right, “Huh.”

Sara peeked under the lid of the shoebox Nyssa brought her as Nyssa followed Felicity. “Oh wow,” Sara put the coffee down and picked up the boots. “I love these.”

Oliver had on one pair of the shoes that Felicity brought him. “Do you ever feel married?”

Sara looked down at the boots in her hand and back at Nyssa who was now a few aisles away helping Felicity look for her size. “Yeah.” She smiled.

“I don’t really know her that well,” Oliver leaned toward Sara to tell her quietly, “But I know she’s a good person because I know she loves you.” He swallowed, “It’s just hard to give yourself to someone when you believe you’re a monster.”

The tone in Oliver’s voice led Sara to believe that he was talking from personal, on-going experience. She saw his eyes flicker to Felicity and knew he had the same fear toward Felicity that Nyssa had toward her. Sara rubbed Oliver’s shoulder, “You’re both better people than you think.”

Oliver ducked his head and licked his lips thinking about how to put what he wanted to say. “The point is…” He looked down at the shoes on his feet, “Don’t give up on her.”

“I never will,” Sara looked back toward Nyssa, “And Felicity won’t either.”

There was a wisp of a smile on Oliver’s lips. It was all he needed to do to convey his gratitude for her understanding of the things he didn’t like to talk about.

“Felicity,” Nyssa had been looking at the same pair of boots for a long time and grew quiet while Felicity kept browsing.

“Hmm?” Felicity asked, picking up a pair of knee high boots.

Nyssa looked away from the shoes in her hand and found Felicity patiently waiting for her inquiry.
“I know I am deeply in your debt, but may I ask another favor of you?”

Felicity let out a kind smile, “Of course. That’s what friends are for.”

Nyssa was touched that Felicity openly referred to her as a friend. She didn’t have many of those in her lifetime. People feared Nyssa, few were brave enough to be her friend.

“It’s for Sara…” Nyssa started to explain.

Nyssa and Felicity walked back over to the blonde duo sitting on the bench were talking about the Rockets. Nyssa picked up the shoebox that used to contain the boots that she picked out for Sara. The new shoes were actually already on Sara’s feet and her old shoes were in the box. Nyssa paid for everyone’s new shoes. Oliver was about to offer when Felicity took him to the side and whispered something in to his ear.

Oliver cleared his throat as they walked out the door. “Nyssa, I was wondering if you would like to try out a simulator this afternoon that Felicity and Diggle have been working on under Verdant.”

Nyssa looked to Sara, seeing if it was okay with her.

“I’ll take Sara for a while,” Felicity assured Nyssa. “Oh!” Felicity looked at Sara, “We can go see that magician that I’ve been dying to see. What was her name?..um Zatanna the Great. She’s only in town for a few more days.”

“Sounds fun,” Sara agreed, although she had really spent a lot of time away from Nyssa the day before and didn’t really want to part ways with her. But she knew that Oliver would help Nyssa fight should something happen.

Felicity and Oliver had to go back to work so Sara offered to drop of Felicity’s shoes in her apartment. Felicity thanked her and disappeared down the street with Oliver.

Nyssa pulled her new burner phone out of her back pocket. They had to buy one for Nyssa because all of her phones were still in Nanda Parbat. She tapped around on the phone as she and Sara walked toward the parking garage where their car was.

“What are you doing?” Sara asked, when they made it to the parking garage and Nyssa hadn’t looked up from the phone the whole time.

“Felicity put a program on my phone while I was looking at Manolos,” Nyssa looked up and at Sara, “It disables all security cameras in the immediate area of the phone. It’s brilliant.”

“Sounds like you two need to go on a date,” Sara was half-joking and a slightly jealous.

Nyssa detected the jealousy immediately and quirked an eyebrow. “Perhaps.”

When Sara’s head snapped in Nyssa’s directions, she found that Nyssa was teasing her. Nyssa rolled her eyes. “How could you possibly believe that I would rather date Felicity? She is beautiful and highly intelligent and kind, but I am not interesting in her romantically.” She added in Arabic, “You, Ta-er al-asfer, have my heart. You know that.”

Sara sighed sheepishly, “I know. I’m sorry.” When she realized exactly that Nyssa said and that she said it in Arabic, Sara smiled. Arabic was Nyssa’s favorite language. She used it at her most serious and during her most intimate moments. Nyssa wanted Sara to know that she was completely earnest. She sighed again, but contently.
When they arrived at Felicity’s apartment, Sara dropped the shoes by the door and left. She wanted to get in some Nyssa time before Oliver stole her again.

Sara figured that Verdant would be a safe place to go because Felicity and John were in charge of setting up security. They had to bring their own food, but being at the Queen Mansion was getting old.

Sara opened the door to Verdant for Nyssa, but stopped outside, “Oh, I forgot my phone.” When Nyssa turned around, Sara told her, “Go sit down. I’ll be right in.”

Nyssa nodded and carried the sandwiches into the club. As she walked, she looked around. She knew this place inside and out from the schematics that she had studied before she came to retrieve Sara from Starling, but she’d never actually been inside.

Nyssa picked out a tall table with a view of the front door and the back entrance. The club was empty except for a few people working. One of them approached Nyssa immediately.

The young woman asked, “What can I get you to drink?”

Nyssa looked the woman over, knowing exactly who she was. She smiled charmingly, “I don’t suppose you have a wine list?”

The woman chuckled and ruffled her short hair, “I’m sorry, we don’t have wine.”

Nyssa supposed that a good cognac was probably more than she could ask for as well. She briefly wondered if there was a Queen Mansion wine cellar and if there was, if there was anything in it. When Nyssa saw Sara walking toward them, she pointed, “I’ll have what she’s having.”

The woman turned and saw Sara. A smile broke out on her face, “What are you doing here?”

“Came by for a drink,” Sara grinned back at Sin. She hugged her and stood in front of her, “I see you’ve met Nyssa.”

“You’re Nyssa?” Sin turned to Nyssa with wide eyes, “You are way hotter than Sara said.”

Nyssa smiled modestly, “Thank you.” When Sara looked at her, she quirked an eyebrow in question.

Sara defended herself, “I didn’t really tell her a lot about you. Just about you and your import-export business.”

“Ah yes,” Nyssa was keen to play along with Sara. It had been a while since she had to pretend that she was someone that she wasn’t, but she had to admit that it was fun. She offered her hand to Sin, “I’m Nyssa.”

Sin completely bypassed Nyssa’s extended hand and hugged her. “I’m glad you’re here.”

Nyssa again looked to Sara for answers over Sin’s shoulder. Sara just smiled contently so Nyssa just went with the hug.

When Sin pulled away, she grinned, “I’ll go grab your drinks. You two enjoy your date.”

“It’s lunch,” Sara corrected Sin.

“Enjoy your lunch date,” Sin gave Sara a goofy grin and walked off.

Sara sat down at the table, “Sorry about that.”
“No need to apologize,” Nyssa took the lid off of her salad, “She’s charming.”

The blonde nodded in agreement, “She is.”

“Why is she glad that I’m here?” Nyssa asked innocently, “We never met.”

“I think she meant she’s glad you’re back for me,” Sara shrugged and unwrapped her sandwich.

Nyssa cocked her head in question. Sara didn’t look up because she knew that Nyssa wanted to know more and if she met Nyssa’s eyes she would have to explain her own dark things that she dealt with just after leaving her.

“Two beers from the brewery down the street,” Sin walked over with their drinks. She set them on the table and stood there with a smile.

Nyssa was a little shocked. She usually expected a little more refinery in her alcohol, but she swallowed it with a polite smile.

“You don’t have to drink it,” Sara offered across the table, seeing Nyssa hesitate.

Nyssa picked the beer up, “At least let me try it before you dismiss my taste.” She smelled it and decided that that was a mistake right away. However, being the brave soul that she was, she took a sip. Sara and Sin were both looking at Nyssa for a moment as she swallowed the drink.

Sara looked over at Sin with a smile, “You should probably just go get her an Old Fashioned and make it with that really expensive bourbon that no one ever orders.”

“I can drink this,” Nyssa protested. She took another sip of it before setting it down. She swallowed and sighed, “Just make the bourbon neat.”

Sin smiled and walked off, “Expensive bourbon neat coming up.”

Sara laughed, “I knew it.”

Nyssa conceded that Sara was right and leaned on the table, “Perhaps beer is an acquired taste.”

Sara picked up her beer and took a sip, “Perhaps.”

When Sin came back, Nyssa pulled her up a chair and asked Sin to sit with them since the club wasn’t busy. Sara shared her sandwich and Sin asked Nyssa all about herself. Luckily, Nyssa was always quick on her feet, explaining in great, believable detail how she came into the import/export business and why she was in Starling.

Sin listened intently, loving Nyssa’s tall tales of her adventures trying to find the finest of foods, wines, and other goods for her clients. Sara knew that Nyssa was drawing on some of her own experiences because some of the details were familiar.

“How did you two meet?” Sin asked with a smile.

Nyssa looked at Sara. The memory of their meeting always haunted her. Sara was floating face down in a swamp of debris. Nyssa was in the area and had gotten word of a ship that had sunken a few days before. She ordered her ship into the direction of the crash. Sara was the first body that she saw and she was sure that the young woman in the water was dead until Sara picked her head up out of the water. Her cheeks were hollow and her eyes weren’t quite focused.

Nyssa was the first one in the water. She dove in head first and swam to the drifting woman. Nyssa
pulled Sara to the ship and looped the rescue rope around her shoulders so that the crew could pull her up. Another rope was lowered with a small loop in the bottom for Nyssa. Sara had a hazy memory of Nyssa rising from the water, her foot in the loop and one of her hands holding onto the rope to keep her in a standing position. Even soaking wet, Sara thought that Nyssa was angelic looking. Nyssa was pulled up more quickly than Sara and when Nyssa slowly passed Sara, she reassured Sara that everyone would be okay.

“I actually saved her,” Nyssa told Sin. Sara was surprised that Nyssa was going with the truth, but was interested in the spin Nyssa was going to put on it. Nyssa smiled, “She was in a market in Thailand and she was going to overpay for a hideous rug.” Nyssa grinned. “I pointed her in a better direction and negotiated the price for her.”

Sara smiled. That story was actually a truth. One of her first outings as a member of the League was to Thailand. They had some down time before an assault so Nyssa took Sara out to take in some of the local culture. Nyssa did stop Sara from overpaying for a hideous rug. “Yeah. Then I asked her to dinner to thank her.”

“Sara regaled me with her exciting tales of a globetrotting relief worker,” Nyssa rested her chin on the tops of her fingers, so glad then more than ever that she pulled Sara out of the water.

Sin looked from Nyssa to Sara. Sara raised her eyebrows in indication that Nyssa didn’t know what she really did. Sin nodded and told Nyssa, “She’s the saint of Starling.”

That was not something that Nyssa could argue with even knowing the truth, “She is.”

Their lunch ran a little long and Sin stuck around, but it didn’t matter because Roy arrived to help out. He stopped by their table to hug Sara and stand awkwardly out of arm’s reach of Nyssa. Nyssa greeted him with a menacing smile. Roy cleared his throat and said that he had to go take care of some customers.

Sin went to tell Roy about a supplier call that she got earlier, leaving Sara to ask Nyssa why Roy was scared of her. Nyssa picked up her drink and took a sip before answering, “In the process of transporting your mother, on my first visit to Starling, Mr. Harper and I had an altercation that didn’t end in his favor.”

“He was still hopped up on mirakuru then,” Sara gesture toward the bar and shook her head, forgetting who she was talking to, “Why am I not surprised?”

“You may give children their toys, but they’re no match for an experienced hand,” Nyssa smiled around her glass as she finished off her drink.

Sara knew that Nyssa was right. When they were in Starling, as far as combat, Nyssa was the top dog. Oliver had training and tricks, but Nyssa had a lifetime of war.

Oliver walked into the club in his business suit with Felicity at his side. They made their way over to the table. “Hello ladies.”

“Hey Ollie,” Sara smiled. She saw Felicity next to him, looking really excited, “Is it time for the show?”

Felicity nodded. “I got two tickets front row. There’s a two drink minimum and I see you’ve already started.” She looked at the table and saw two empty beer glasses and one small, empty tumbler.

“I’m fine,” Sara slid off of her chair. Sara looked back at Nyssa with a smile and then patted Oliver’s chest, “Take care of her.”
“She does not need it,” Oliver put his hands in his pockets at Sara and Felicity walked out of the club.

Oliver took Sara’s seat and gestured to Roy for a round for the table.

“You don’t have to help me,” Nyssa told Oliver as Roy poured their drinks.

Oliver nodded, “I know.” He smiled, “but what can I say? I’m a romantic.” When Roy walked over with their drinks, Oliver thanked him.

Roy leaned close to Oliver and asked quietly if he’d heard anything from Thea. Nyssa heard and watched Oliver shake his head. Roy just nodded solemnly and walked away.

Nyssa leaned back in her chair and picked up her drink, “I can find your sister.”

“How?” Oliver asked. He knew that Nyssa was capable of many things. He just didn’t want Thea to be put in any danger.

Nyssa put both of her hands around her glass and explained, “The League keeps track of all of it’s members.”

“Thea is not a member of the League of Assassins,” Oliver countered.

Nyssa could sense the anger in his voice and smiled, “You are correct. However, she is the offspring of a member.”

Oliver frowned, “Malcolm Merlyn.”

Nyssa nodded. “If you give me twenty-four hours, I can tell you whether or not she’s okay.”

“And where she is,” Oliver leaned forward.

She shook her head, “I will not give you her location so that you can force her to return. She’ll come back when she’s ready. A daughter losing her mother is a dreadful thing and finding out your father isn’t what you thought he was…” Nyssa trailed off trying not to relate too much to a stranger. “She’s going to need time.”

Oliver rubbed his chin, “Can I at least give you some money to give to her?”

“I will make sure that she is taken care of,” Nyssa told him with a promise behind her words.

“Give me all your money!” came from the bar area. Oliver and Nyssa quickly looked toward the area and found a man holding a knife toward Roy with a mask over his face.

Oliver caught Roy’s eyes over the man’s shoulder and they both smiled. Nyssa laughed out loud.

When the man who was attempting to rob the most secure club in Starling, turned to look at Nyssa, she shook her head at him, “You can’t be serious.”

The man turned to her with his knife pointed at her. “Excuse me.”

“May I?” Nyssa asked looking at Oliver.

“No killing,” he warned her.

Nyssa smirked, “I won’t even touch him.” She stood up and walked toward the man with the knife. She tilted her head, “Are you going to stab me?”
“If you don’t stay away from me,” the man told her, but his voice was shaking.

“Have you ever stabbed anyone?” she asked, “Felt their flesh part for your blade?” When he didn’t answer she went on, “I have. I have had men bleed on my boots pleading for their lives.” She growled, “I am what nightmares are made of. I am the Heir to the Demon.” When she was done speaking, she was within inches of the man.

A second later, her dropped his knife and ran out of the room.

“I have to admit, I was a little scared for him,” Oliver said from the table. He took a drink and put the glass down.

“I thought he was going to burst into flames,” Roy rubbed the top of his head.

Nyssa turned with a smile to Oliver, “Shall we?”

“You’re not really an importer are you?” Sin asked, stepping out of the back of the club with a new bottle of liquor in her hand.

Nyssa turned her smile upon Sin and took some money out of her pocket, “I am whatever Sara says that I am.” She placed the money on the bar, “Thank you for your services.” With that, she walked out of the club with Oliver behind her.

Sin walked to the bar and picked up the money. She looked in disbelief at Roy, “This is five hundred dollars.”

“You know the house gets ten percent right?” Roy joked with Sin. She punched his arm before they got back to work.
“That was real magic,” Felicity excitedly gestured back at the theatre she and Sara just walked out of, “I’ve gone over it in my head a million times and there’s no conceivable way she could phase a piano through the floor.”

Sara didn’t really need convincing. She’d seen things in the world that were beyond comprehension. The time difference in Nanda Parbat and the Lazarus Pits were just the tip of the iceberg.

Felicity hooked her arm through Sara’s and they walked to the car together. Sara kept an eye out around them, watching for some of the more common street criminals.

“Are you hungry?” Sara asked Felicity. Felicity had accepted the challenge of drinking their two drink minimum by herself. Sara didn’t want to drink too much just in case Sensei decided to attack.

Felicity smiled and shook her head, “No. I have to get your home.”

“Home for what?” Sara asked, unlocking the passenger’s side door of her car for Felicity.

Felicity paused, “To check on Nyssa.”

Sara didn’t quite believe Felicity, but she wasn’t sure if Felicity being tipsy was making her truthful answers more hesitant or her deceitful answers less convincing.

Felicity looked out the window and talked on and on about Zatanna the Great. She talked about her different theories and the different physics laws that would have made it impossible to actually complete the tricks.

When they got back to Queen Manor, Felicity was fully lucid again. Felicity gestured to the door, “Do you mind if I say hi to Nyssa?”

“Go ahead,” Sara shrugged. She followed Felicity into the house and pondered her strange behavior.

They walked up the stairs together and Felicity checked her phone. As they walked, Felicity asked, “How has that app I put on Nyssa’s phone been working?”

“Great as far as we can tell,” Sara put her keys in her pocket. She didn’t hear anything and called through the house, “Nyssa?”

She faintly heard Nyssa call back, “Outside by the pool.”

Felicity covertly turned on the video recorder on her phone and followed Sara into the bedroom that she and Nyssa had been sharing. The window was open and Sara walked over to it.

When she looked down at the pool area she was genuinely surprised. There were tea lights lit and floating in the pool. Nyssa was dressed in a deep red cocktail dress, standing in front of the table which had been set for two with a table cloth and more candles. There was a glass of wine open on the table, surrounded by beautifully plated food. Outdoor string lights were hanging high over the table between the trees.

“What’s going on?” Sara asked although as she looked around, a smile grew on her face.

Nyssa folded her hands in front of herself, “We’ve never been on a proper date. I wasn’t sure how to make one…I hope this is okay.”
Sara hopped out of the window and dropped to the lower ledge before walking over to Nyssa.

Felicity was still standing in the room, recording Sara’s reaction when she heard a whisper behind her, “Felicity.”

She turned around and found Oliver. She turned off her recording and walked to the door, knowing that she wasn’t needed anymore. He put his hand out and she took it, leaving the mansion so that the two women could have their first date.

Sara looked more closely at the table and found her favorite Italian food and from the look of it, it was from her favorite restaurant in town. “How did you know this was my favorite?”

“I called your sister,” Nyssa answered moving to one of the chairs and pulling it out.

Sara kissed Nyssa’s cheek before sitting down. Nyssa smiled softly, cherishing her reward.

“This is amazing,” Sara told Nyssa who had taken to pouring the wine. “So you and Oliver weren’t really using the new simulator.”

“Oh we did,” Nyssa assured Sara with a playful grin, “However, we only stayed for an hour. I couldn’t have done this without the help of Felicity and Oliver.”

Sara picked up her wine and offered it up to Nyssa, “Cheers.”

“Cheers,” Nyssa tapped her glass to Sara’s.

Sara kept looking at Nyssa with a wide smile on her face as they ate. Nyssa had done many sweet things for her, but the candlelit dinner by the twinkling pool was near the top of the list. Sara couldn’t get over how perfect everything was. “This is the best first date ever.”

“I’m glad you believe so,” Nyssa was visibly pleased, “I swear that if you grant me permission to take you on more dates after this one, I will take you on a more traditional date at a restaurant in public after Sensei is dealt with.”

Sara reached across the table and took Nyssa’s hand, “This is amazing. I love everything about this date.” She licked her lips and ran her thumb over Nyssa’s knuckles, “Does this mean that…you’re ready for…?” Sara wasn’t exactly sure how to word what she was thinking, “us?”

Nyssa put both of her hands on Sara’s hand, “I’m ready to try again. I understand that a relationship comes with inherent dangers, be it emotional or physical, as you face being in a relationship with an infamous woman.” That elicited a smile from Sara. Nyssa returned it and went on, “You make me unbearably happy, Sara Lance. I want to make you happy as well.”

Sara stood up and dropped a sweet kiss on Nyssa’s lips, “Well, this is a great start.”

They ate dinner in the light of the trees overhead. Sara couldn’t wipe a smile off of her face and Nyssa couldn’t because of Sara’s joy.

They stayed at the table and talked long after the meal was gone. They brought up old stories of long travels and fun memories they had around the world. They finished the wine about an hour after they sat down.

Sara looked over to the pool and saw that all the candles that were floating were nothing more that tiny tin boats that had flamed out long ago. They were deep into the night and Sara didn’t feel it. She felt like she could stay up for many more days just speaking with Nyssa.
Nyssa smiled across the table at Sara. She felt lucky. Lucky that Sara decided to forgive her for the things she did in anguish. Lucky that Sara still wanted to be with her. Lucky that Sara was willing to wait for her to be ready.

“This has been the best date of my life,” Sara confessed.

“I imagine a beautiful, intelligent woman such as yourself has been on many dates,” Nyssa smiled gently across the table.

Sara nodded, “I have had my fair share of dates, but this one is the best. In terms of the date,” she gestured to everything around her and then pointed to Nyssa, “and my date.”

“I’m glad you’re enjoying it,” Nyssa inhaled, “To be honest, I was a little nervous.”

That brought the brightest smile to Sara’s lips because Nyssa was so confident all of the time. The fact that Nyssa’s need to please Sara was making her nervous, made her so happy. Nyssa really cared about her happiness and didn’t want to be inadequate. “You could have ordered pizza and we could have watched bad movies in out pajamas and it would have been the best date because it’s a date with you.”

They both smiled at each other. They crept slowly toward the edge of laughter. Nyssa was the first one to fall off, with Sara quick behind her. As their laughter subsided, Nyssa added, “We’re a couple of sentimental fools, aren’t we?”

“Only with each other,” Sara looked up at the sky and then looked back down at Nyssa. “I think we should go inside, find a bedroom with a fireplace, and hit the hay.”

Nyssa stood up first and offered her hand to Sara. Sara took it and let Nyssa help her up even though she didn’t need it. Sara used her momentum to kiss Nyssa properly. She pressed her lips to Nyssa’s and let herself melt into it. She could feel Nyssa letting her guard down as well. She could feel Nyssa soften and move deeper into the kiss.

Sara fell back on her heels, breaking the kiss with an airy smile. When she opened her eyes, Nyssa’s eyes were just opening as well.

“To bed?” Nyssa asked.

“Are you tired?” Sara countered.

Nyssa shook her head. “Not at all.”

Sara grinned mischievously, “Then can we take a quick field trip?”

“Help!” came a piercing scream through the night.

They had left the Queen Mansion and were out and about in the Starling night. Sara started moving before Nyssa. She was more accustomed to running toward cries for help while Nyssa was more accustomed to causing them.

They ran along the road until they came to an alleyway. There was a man with his arms around a young woman trying to wrestle her into a dark van. Sara felt in her pocket for her mask, but found it wasn’t there. Nyssa took her scarf from around her neck and handed it to Sara, knowing what she was looking for.

Then Sara started scaling the building next to them while Nyssa walked casually into the alley.
“Excuse me.”

The man stopped what he was doing and looked at Nyssa, “You better get out of here lady.”

“Lady,” Nyssa laughed humorlessly, “You must have me confused with someone else.” She continued her stroll over to the man and the woman. “I suggest you let her go because I have a very angry friend on her way and she will not be polite.”

“She?” the man mocked Nyssa, “The Black Canary died. Brick said that he killed her himself.”

“Well,” Nyssa put her hands behind her back, “I have some bad news for Mr. Brick.”

A loud bang scared the evil man and his victim. When he turned around he could see a dark silhouette that struck fear into his heart. He stuttered, “Y-y-you’re dead.”

Sara looked fearsome standing on top of the van with the black scarf around her nose and mouth, and her hair waving behind her in the wind. “Guess again.” She stepped to the edge of the van, “Let her go.”

The man automatically let go of the young woman who Nyssa escorted out of the alley. She looked her over, “Are you alright?”

The woman sniffled and nodded, “Who was that?”

“The Black Canary,” Nyssa answered. “She never died. She just had to take care of some things out of town.”

The woman nodded, “Can you tell her thank you?”

“I shall,” Nyssa glanced back toward the alley where the man was certainly getting a thrashing. “Would you like me to walk you home or call someone for you?”

The woman smiled softly, “I think I can make it from here. It’s nice to know that she’s back you know. The Arrow doesn’t really look out for the small stuff, but when she’s around I feel safe.”

Nyssa nodded thoughtfully, “I do as well.”

“Thank you too,” the woman pulled Nyssa into a surprise hug and then stepped away. “Whoever you are.”

Nyssa nodded politely and watched the woman start walking down the street. Nyssa followed her discretely until she stepped into a townhouse and then wandered back to the area where she left Sara. The man that attacked the young woman was bound in the alley when Nyssa got back. She could hear police sirens coming their direction so Nyssa scaled the nearest building and found Sara sitting on top of it.

“Did she make it home okay?” Sara asked, taking the scarf off of her mouth.

Nyssa nodded. “She wanted me to thank you. She told me that you were missed and that she feels safe now that you’re back in the city.”

Sara looked down in the alley and saw that the police had found the man. He wasn’t as bloody as Sara used to leave predators of women, but he was bad enough to be taken to the hospital. She turned away from the alley and walked over to Nyssa, taking her hand, “I didn’t get a lot of sleep when I came back to Starling the first time.” She tangled her fingers in Nyssa’s and smiled at her, “I
missed my girl.”

Nyssa grinned. She dipped her head down and kissed Sara, “You’re very noble Sara. Much more than I.”

“You’re pretty noble yourself,” Sara pushed up on her toes and kissed Nyssa again. “Wanna go find some more bad guys?”

“Something tells me that you do,” Nyssa chuckled.

“Let’s go get my mask first,” Sara grinned, “It’s time to shake up Starling.”

When they were in the Arrow Cave, Nyssa decided that that night was a great one to test out her new outfit that Felicity ordered for her. Sara went to the back of the Cave to see if she could dig up another knife.

The door to the Arrow Cave opened and Nyssa pulled her knife out of her thigh holster because no matter how much fun she had scaring street criminals, the fact that Sensei was hunting her was still in the back of her mind. When she saw Diggle walking down the stairs, she holstered her knife and returned to putting on her armor.

“What are you doing here?” Diggle asked gruffly. He was in a suit, walking toward Felicity’s desk.

“Sara and I came back to retrieve her Canary mask,” Nyssa explained, watching how suspicious Diggle seemed of her. He kept watching her out of the corner of his eye as he retrieved his watch from the top drawer of the desk.

Nyssa narrowed her eyes, “You don’t like me.” She didn’t ask it as a question. She stated it as a challenge.

“You tried to kill Oliver. You kidnapped Sara’s mother,” Diggle crossed his arms, “No, I don’t like you.”

“Mr. Queen bears me no ill will and Sara has forgiven me for my indiscretions. It seems that the grudges you hold are not your own Mr. Diggle,” Nyssa narrowed her eyes.

“They’re my own when you hurt my friends,” Diggle squared up to Nyssa.

“Hey, whoa,” Sara walked into view in full costume, including her mask. “What’s going on?”

“We were having a discussion,” Nyssa turned to Sara and left her potential quarrel with Diggle. Nyssa turned back to her armor and pulled on her gloves.

Sara looked from Diggle to Nyssa and knew that neither one would admit to starting the tiff and that neither one would say that the other one started it. Sara sighed.

“Date, Diggle?” Sara asked trying to lighten the mood.

“Charity dinner,” John elaborated. “Hunting for more sorry excuses for men?”

“A girl’s gotta have fun somehow,” Sara smiled. “Have fun. Tell Ollie I said hi.”

Diggle nodded to Sara, “Will do.” He threw a glanced toward Nyssa and a civil nod of his head before walking out.

Once Nyssa was all dressed she turned to Sara, “So? Better or worse than the original?”
“Better,” Sara smiled, looking Nyssa over. “You look amazing. And it looks like you can move around a little better.”

“Perhaps,” Nyssa looked down. She flexed her shoulders, “There’s only one way to find out.”

It wasn’t ten minutes later when they were running across rooftops, chasing a man that was running along the street. “Would you like a lift, darling?” Nyssa asked as they ran.

“I thought you’d never ask,” Sara ran next to Nyssa with ease.

Nyssa pulled a special arrow out of her quiver and shot it toward a telephone pole at an approaching corner. Nyssa stuck the stake attached to the other end of the rope to the building they were standing on. Sara didn’t stop running. Nyssa held out her bow as Sara leapt off the edge of the building. As she fell, Sara hooked the bow onto the rope and used it to slide down to street level. As she was descending, Sara kicked the man in the back and he fell down. Sara dropped from the rope and used the bow to hit the man as he was standing up.

“Party’s over,” Sara stood tall over the odious man on the ground.

Nyssa watched from the roof. This was Sara’s hobby and her passion. Nyssa had no investment in chasing down ordinary people in a city she’d only visited on occasion. However, she was happy to watch Sara do what she loved.

Through the night, they caught more and more criminals and turned them over to the police.

It was nearing dawn when they arrived back at the Arrow Cave to drop off their things before going back to the Queen Mansion to go to bed.

Just before they fell asleep, Nyssa snuggled into Sara’s arms. The blonde kissed Nyssa’s lips with her eyes closed and rested her head on her pillow, “Thank you for coming with me.”

“You are the Saint of Starling City,” Nyssa smiled with her eyes closed, “Sweet dreams, my darling.”
Chapter 14

Sara surprised Nyssa with breakfast in bed. They kissed languidly between sips of tea and bites of parfait. The sun was pouring in the window so they knew it was late morning or early afternoon.

Sara hummed into a kiss and then pulled back with a blissful smile, “This is nice.”

“It is,” Nyssa laid on her side with her head on her pillows. She was deeply content in that moment with Sara. She loved the way Sara’s hair glowed in the light coming in from the window. She loved the way Sara would smile at her after they kissed, like she’d just tasted the greatest taste in the world.

“I should check on your stitches,” Sara placed her hand on Nyssa’s side, tenderly stroking the skin under her shirt.

Nyssa propped her head up and rolled onto her back, “I’m sure it’s fine. You did most of the work last night.”

“I did,” Sara grinned. “You’d think that would earn a girl a massage or something.”

Nyssa watched Sara push up her shirt, “I supposed you did earn a massage.”

Sara inspected the wounds and saw they weren’t ripped or even bleeding again, “I think you earned one too. It’s your first day without pulling open your stitches.”

Nyssa grinned, “I was just the assistant last night. I hardly moved at all.”

“Thank you for that,” Sara pulled Nyssa’s shirt down.

“It was my pleasure,” Nyssa pushed Sara’s hair out of her face and then put her hands behind her head. “However, in my haste to get to bed, I may have left my phone in my armor.”

“We can go pick it up,” Sara shrugged. “Then we can go to the Rockets game.”

Nyssa continued to smile although she found the sport of baseball agonizingly boring. “I’ll buy a Rockets hat on the way.”

Sara knew that Nyssa hated baseball and didn’t actually plan to make her go. She kissed Nyssa, “We’re not going to a baseball game.”

“We can if you’d like,” Nyssa offered, “I’m sure I can find a way to bide my time in a stadium full of people.”

The blonde rolled onto her side next to Nyssa and stretched, “I guess we could do what we did last time we were stuck at a baseball game.”

“I don’t think it would look good on your father if you were caught pickpocketing people just to get a look at the year they were born,” Nyssa turned on her side as well to face Sara.

Sara chuckled, “Can you just admit that I’m better at guessing people’s age?”

“I’ll admit nothing,” Nyssa playfully narrowed her eyes, “We didn’t get to finish deciding who was better because you got caught.”

“And you left me in a Mexican jail for seven hours,” Sara laughed.
“It would have been less time had you not tried to pickpocket the police chief,” Nyssa countered and poked Sara’s stomach.

Sara sat up in the bed and looked down at Nyssa. She put her arms on either side of Nyssa’s torso and then slid her hands up the bed until they were under Nyssa’s should. She let her elbows gently touch the bed so that her torso was laying partially on Nyssa’s and her hair was tickling Nyssa’s shoulders. “You know wouldn’t have known he was the police chief either.”

Nyssa tucked some hair behind Sara’s ear, her smile fading to a wisp of a content grin, “I know.”

Sara loved the look on Nyssa’s face. It made her heart feel like it was about to come out of her chest. She loved that Nyssa had let her guard down and she felt like they were almost back to where they were at the peak of their romance. She wanted nothing more than to get back to that place and stay there for the rest of their lives.

Nyssa saw Sara’s eyes stay on her, but her thoughts drift away. Nyssa’s eyebrows furrowed only faintly, but Sara knew it meant Nyssa’s mind was on something troubling her.

“What’s wrong?” Sara asked, gently running her fingers up and down the back of Nyssa’s shoulders.

Nyssa bit the side of her bottom lip between her teeth for a moment before answered, “I haven’t heard from my father.”

“Sensei isn’t stupid enough to go back to Nanda Parbat to fight Ra’s fairly. He’s probably running for his life.”

Nyssa inhaled and exhaled slowly, “You’re probably right. Sensei will not win if he fights fairly.”

Nyssa bit the inside of her cheek, “Do you think there’s a way that I can contact Talia?”

Sara smiled. Nyssa’s caring for her sister was always covert, but still there. Sara nodded, “I’m sure that Felicity can figure something out.” She kissed Nyssa. She started to pull away when she found Nyssa’s lips following her. Sara smiled against Nyssa’s lips and pushed Nyssa back into her pillow. She was trying to ease away Nyssa’s worries, but she knew she would never be able to completely until Sensei was dealt with.

When Nyssa finally did let Sara go, Sara touched Nyssa’s face and held her eyes as she said, “Let’s go see if Felicity is in the Cave yet and we’ll check on Talia.”

Nyssa nodded. She smiled, silently thanking Sara for her thoughtfulness.

They got dressed in their new clothes, taking their time. Sara wore the boots that Nyssa bought her and Nyssa looked at her new clothes until Sara walked into the closet and pointed out three pieces of clothes that Nyssa shoulder wear. Nyssa got them out and wore what Sara suggested.

As they left, Sara picked up her phone and was surprised to find that it was a lot later than she thought. It was almost sunset by the time they got in the car.

They walked into the Arrow Cave together and found Felicity already hard at work. Sara walked straight to her while Nyssa stopped by the bow table to put away her bow that she was too tired to put away the night before. Once it was secured on the rack and out of the way.

“I’m glad you’re here,” Felicity told Sara and tapped Nyssa as she walked pasted, indicating that she was supposed to follow.

They all walked to Felicity’s computer terminal and the computer whiz sat in her seat while the
assassins stood behind her. “Unfortunately, it’s not good news.” She typed in a few things and then looked up at Nyssa and Sara for their reaction to the image on the screen. “Look familiar?”

Nyssa’s fists clenched. She growled, “Sensei.” She studied the picture, seeing her enemy walking into a door, being held open by some kind of doorman. Nyssa narrowed her eyes and asked, “Where was this taken?”

“Across town,” Felicity told her. She resumed typing on the computer, “I’ve been tracking him since the computer told me he was here. As far as I know, he’s still at the Starling Regency.”

Nyssa walked over to where her armor was resting on a mannequin. She took off her shirt and picked up the Kevlar undershirt Felicity purchased for her.

“I’m sorry,” Felicity stood up from her computer, “What are you doing?”

“I’m ending this,” Nyssa yanked the shirt over her head, “Before anyone else gets hurt.”

“Nyssa, this isn’t the time to stand on the mountain and yelled at him to come get you,” Sara pleaded with Nyssa. She grabbed Nyssa’s arm to stop her from picking up her veil, “Let’s just go somewhere else. We’ll dig up my grave and disappear.”

“If he doesn’t come after me, he comes after my family,” Nyssa turned to Sara and tried to make her understand, “This is my family. You cannot tell me that you wouldn’t do the same for Laurel and your father.”

“Why would you dig up a grave?” Felicity asked the first of many questions she was getting from their conversation.

Sara took Nyssa’s hand, “Nyssa…”

“I can’t hide anymore,” Nyssa shook her head, “I can’t run.”

A loud beeping filled the room. Felicity quickly moved to her computer and her finger started flying over the keyboard. “Oh no,” she breathed out.

“What?” Sara moved behind her to look at the screen, “What’s happening?”

Felicity pulled up live video footage of a series of explosions rocking the Starling Regency Hotel. Sara squinted at the screen. She couldn’t really articulate exactly why, but she knew that Sensei was behind the explosions. There was something about them that screamed evil mastermind. He was calling Nyssa out.

When Sara turned back around, Nyssa and her armor were gone. She quickly grabbed her stuff and pulled Felicity out of her chair, “I need you to drive me to the Regency while I change.”

Felicity grabbed her tablet and followed Sara. “I’ll call Oliver too.”

Nyssa flew through the streets of Starling on Sara’s motorcycle. She knew what she was going into. She was ready. She was ready for everything to be over.

“Nyssa!”

Nyssa almost swerved off of the road when she heard the voice. “What the bloody hell?”

“I put a comm device in your cloak,” Felicity told her, “When your veil is up it transmit the sound through her jaw bone so no one else can hear it.”
Nyssa could see the smoke rising from the crippled building. She scanned the horizon for any sign of Sensei.

“Where are you-” Felicity started saying in Nyssa’s ear. “Sara! What’s that?”

“It’s Darrk!” Sara called, “He’s alive! Nyssa -”

There was an explosion in her ear. “Sara,” Nyssa quickly pulled a u-turn and sped in the direction in which she came. They were doing it again. They were targeting Sara to get to her.

“Felicity!” Nyssa heard Oliver yell in her ear. She spotted another small pillar of smoke rising into the sky and knew that was what she was looking for. She sped around the corner and found the car that Sara bought mere days ago, upside down. Oliver was dressed as the Arrow and was helping a bloodied Sara crawl out of the window.

“He’s still around here,” Sara told both Oliver and Nyssa who was walking up to the car.

Nyssa moved to the other side of the car and found that Felicity was alert and laying sideways on the roof of the car, trying to get her tablet back in working order. Nyssa offered her hand to Felicity who finally got out of the car. Felicity stood up and looked at her tablet, “My taps on the city cameras are glitching out.”

Sara looked up at the tops of the buildings around them for where Darrk went, “I thought Darrk was dead.”

“Apparently not,” Nyssa joined Sara and surveying their surroundings. She turned to Sara when she didn’t see anything, “You have to leave. They’re going to keep coming after you to get to me.”

“I’m not leaving you to fight them alone,” Sara looked at Nyssa. She looked into Nyssa’s eyes and knew that more than anything Nyssa wanted to keep her safe. “If something happened to you… I couldn’t live with myself either.”

Nyssa marveled at Sara’s ability to articulate exactly what she was thinking. Nyssa used her sleeve to wipe the blood away from a cut on Sara’s forehead. Then she smiled lovingly, “If you don’t say here, I’ll tie you to a streetlamp.”

“Incoming,” Felicity interrupted the moment when a hummer turned the corner and started driving toward them.

Nyssa looked and saw Oliver with his bow in his hand. Sara pulled out her staff. Felicity tapped around on her and looked at Nyssa, “I can get you cover.”

Nyssa nodded to her, “Do it.”

Felicity pressed the last button and the streetlamps around them all went dark. Oliver moved Felicity away from the street and told her to stay put before joining Nyssa and Sara in the middle of the street, in the headlights of the approaching vehicle.

Nyssa readjusted her grip on her bow before quickly shooting out the headlights of the vehicle. They were plunged back into the darkness once more.

Nyssa and Oliver each drew another arrow, readying themselves for the fight that was surely ahead. Sara watched a large group of men getting out of the hummer. The last one to get out was Ebeneezer Darrk. He straightened out his suit jacket and held a shiny gun in his hand.
“You should give up now Nyssa Al Ghul,” he called into the darkened side of the block. “Your family’s reign over the League of Assassins is over. If you surrender now, your Canary’s death will be painless.”

“Get ready guys,” Felicity told the team of warriors on the street. “Shield your eyes.”

There was a brief second before all the lights on the street came on. They kept growing brighter until everyone on the street had to cover their eyes. Then all the lights broke and the street was dark again. The sound of flying arrows filled the air. Gun muzzles blasts started flashing in the street.

“Cover your ears,” Sara yelled into the comm piece. She had lost track of Nyssa and Oliver in the dark and had taken cover behind a stoop to keep from getting shot. A second later she stuck her hand out from her cover and set off the Canary Scream.

The gunfire stopped and the men started screaming in pain. Nyssa had snuck behind the hummer and crawled on top of it before the canary scream. She took the opportunity of the scream to drop on Darrk. She knew he was the most skilled fighter in the bunch.

However, he was anticipating her. He moved out of the way and hit her as she fell.

“Foolish child,” he scoffed at Nyssa. She swung her bow at him and hit him in the face. He retaliated by punching at her. Nyssa dodged it and swept his feet out from under him.

“Foolish old man,” Nyssa returned the insult. She didn’t have time to gloat because the men had found her behind them and attacked her.

Sara had launched her own attack against three of the mercenaries with her staff. Oliver was sweeping up a few of the men who were running away and keeping them away from the alley Felicity was hiding in.

A scream pierced the night and Nyssa threw a man off of her, “Sara?” She ran toward the scream, “Sara?”

“I’m fine,” Sara winced. “I-”

Nyssa continued moving toward the voice when she saw Sara on her knees with two guns pointed at her, one held by Darrk.

Darrk smiled wickedly. “Checkmate, Princess. Put down your bow. We’ll go to Gotham and pick up your sister so that we can draw your cowardly father out of hiding.”

Nyssa looked at Sara and at the guns pointed at her head. Behind them, she saw Oliver and Felicity had been captured as well.

There were sirens sounding down the road. Nyssa could see the flashing lights approaching. If she, Sara, Felicity, and Oliver couldn’t take down the men, the police of Starling didn’t have a chance.

Nyssa slowly moved her bow to the ground and surveyed the situation again.

“Nyssa you can’t give up,” Sara told her. She caught Nyssa’s eyes and used them to point to her right. Nyssa looked to the right and knew what Sara was going to do. It was risky, but was their only chance.

Sara thrust her entire body against Darrk, sending Nyssa into motion. Nyssa shot three arrows in rapid succession, one on the only other gun that was trained on Sara and one in each person that was
holding onto Felicity. Oliver escaped his guard and disarmed them with a burst of energy.

A gun went off as Nyssa shot an arrow in Darrk’s neck. Sara cried out and Nyssa’s heart sank. She ran to Sara and saw that she’d been shot in the leg by a man who was now bleeding out on the street.

“I’m okay,” Sara told Nyssa, grabbing onto Nyssa’s armor with one hand and the bleeding hole in her leg with the other one. She looked over and saw the approaching police cars. “We have to get out of here.”

Nyssa and Oliver carried Sara to her motorcycle and Nyssa slipped on in front of her. They sped off just as the police sirens arrived. Nyssa could feel Sara breathing heavily behind her. She knew that there was only one place she could take Sara.

Nyssa stripped her armor down to her pants, shirt, and boots and helped Sara do the same. They handed off their clothes to Oliver and Felicity in an alley by the hospital. Then Nyssa carried Sara into the hospital. They were able to pass it off as part of the events that happened after the explosion.

“I’m sorry,” Nyssa sat on the stool next to Sara and held her hand while the ER doctor extracted the bullet from her leg.

“I’m fine,” Sara kissed Nyssa’s hand.

“I’m fairly certain that you’re in shock,” Nyssa told her. She looked down at Sara’s leg and knew that it wasn’t the worst injury that Sara had ever sustained, but it still hurt Nyssa to see it.

Sara laid back in the bed and winced when the bullet was pulled from her leg, “Shock or not, you know I’ve had worse.”

Oliver, Felicity, and Quentin came into the triaged ER.

“Dad, what are you doing here?” Sara looked away from her leg when she saw the group arrive.

Quentin waved his phone in the air, “The ER nurse called, you know, the one we met several times when you were younger.” Nyssa stood so that Quentin could take her seat. He saw down and asked, “What happened?”

“Just…,” Sara looked at the doctor cleaning her wound. Then she eyed her dad, “The usual stuff.”

“You’ve got to stop scaring me like this,” Quentin took her hand.

Sara smiled at her dad and patted his hand, “I’ve been through much worse with much less medical care.”

“That worries me,” Quentin shook his head.

Sara leaned back on the bed and leisurely watched the doctor start to sew up her wound. She lulled her head back toward her father, “I just hope that – wait. Where’s Nyssa?”

Oliver and Felicity looked around. “She was right here,” Felicity looked at the spot next to her.

Nyssa was walking out into the night when she heard a familiar voice yell at her to stop. Then he yelled at her to freeze. Nyssa knew there was a gun pointed at her back, but she kept walking knowing that he would not shoot her.

“Hey! I don’t know if you’ve forgotten, but I’ve saved your life,” Quentin yelled as Nyssa walked toward a dark alley next to the hospital, “You owe me.”
Nyssa turned around and narrowed her eyes, “Had you not stuck an arrow in that soldier’s neck, I would have been fine. I have been fighting since before I was born. I have seen unspeakable things, a lot worse that you could ever dream of in this criminal kiddie box you call a city. I do not need your help. I do not want your help. I will avenge Sara and I will not leave anyone standing. Then I will disappear forever because my presence is what endangers her.”

“Sara endangers herself,” Quentin put his gun down. He put it into the holster and put his hands up, “She does it because she loves this city and she loves you.” Quentin swallowed, “She thinks this is her fault and if she thinks that she caused your death, it would crush her because if you go into this fight alone, and then you disappear, she’ll think that you’re dead and that I’m lying to make her feel better.” He took a step forward, “I’ve seen you fight. You don’t need me. I’d probably hurt you more than help. At least, call the Arrow. Call his friends. Felicity’s inside. She can get a hold of him. Don’t go on a suicide mission for Sara. Sara would rather have you than whatever honor you’re trying to show her.”

Nyssa looked at the ground near Quentin’s feet as she thought. She swallowed. Tears filled her eyes and she angrily bit her lip looking up at Quentin, “I let her down.”

The words really struck Quentin. He took a few steps toward Nyssa and stood in front of her, “I’m sure you didn’t.”

Nyssa nodded, “I never wanted anything to happen to her. I swore to her. I swore to you.”

“Hey, Sara’s mother and I learned a long time ago that the only way Sara wasn’t going to get hurt at all was if we locked her in her room.” He offered Nyssa a hopeful smile, “I mean, after she turned ten that didn’t work anymore because she just climbed out her window.”

Nyssa took in Quentin’s gaze and licked her lips. “What do I do?”

“Get your head on right,” Quentin put his hand on Nyssa’s shoulder. “Go back in there. Make sure Sara knows that you have a plan. Then get Felicity to call the Arrow and his friends. If there’s anything I can do, let me know.”

Nyssa nodded and was thankful for Quentin’s fatherly advice. Her father’s advice would have been the complete opposite, but Nyssa knew Quentin was right.

They walked back toward the hospital together only to find Sara moving quickly out the door on crutches while Felicity and Oliver tried to slow her down.

Quentin flashed his phone at Sara, “I gotta get back to the explosion site. Love you.” He kissed her cheek and then pointed at Nyssa, “You take care of her. Make sure she gets somewhere safe.”

Nyssa bowed her head in acquiescence.

Quentin ran off leaving Sara, Oliver, and Felicity standing outside the crowded ER. Nyssa’s attention was stolen by a quick pain in her shin. She looked up and saw that Sara had just whacked her in the shin with her crutches. “Don’t run off like that.”

Nyssa bend down and rubbed her shin, “I’m sorry. It was rash. I wasn’t thinking.”

“Oh,” Sara was sure she was going to have to at least yell at Nyssa to get her point across.

“How are you feeling, my darling?” Nyssa moved to Sara to look her over. She was wearing scrub pants with one of the legs cut off.
“Hobbled,” Sara looked down at her leg. “If I walk, it’ll rip the stitches.”

Nyssa nodded. She was thankful that Sara wouldn’t be participating in the last fight she had again Sensei. She knew it was going to be hard and bloody. She didn’t want Sara to be part of any of it. “Let’s get you home.”

“I’m not going home,” Sara started moving through the parking lot. “You’re going to take me to the Cave.”

Nyssa wasn’t used to Sara being that forceful and looked to Oliver and Felicity who were just snickering with each other.

Nyssa tried to talk Sara into riding with Oliver and Felicity in a car, but she insisted on riding on the back of the motorcycle with Nyssa so she couldn’t run off. Felicity took her crutches to Oliver’s car.

As they drove, Nyssa could feel Sara burying her face in her neck and wondered what was wrong. She asked at a stop light and Sara rested her chin on Nyssa’s shoulder answering, “I was scared when you left.”

“I failed you,” Nyssa could barely choke out.

“You didn’t fail me,” Sara shook her head, “I shouldn’t have been so easy to trap. They’re going after me because I’m the weak link.”

Nyssa drove slowly so that they could talk. “They’re going after you because I love you.”

“What are we going to do?” Sara asked as they drove up to the Foundry.

“You are going to stay safe in the Arrow Cave,” Nyssa stated pulling to a stop. She put the kickstand down and dismounted the bike.

Sara dismounted the bike and stood on one leg, “You can’t just expect me to sit around while you-”

Nyssa smiled and gestured to Sara’s leg, “Unless you can produce an artificial leg, you’re staying here.”

Sara tried to put weight on her leg and found the pain excruciating. She huff. “Come here and carry me downstairs.”

Petulant Sara was really one of Nyssa’s favorite incarnations of Sara. She walked around the bike and turned around, offering her back to Sara. The blonde easily hopped up using one leg and Nyssa carried her into the secret entrance and down the stairs.
Chapter 15

Felicity handed Sara her crutches when they got down into the Arrow Cave. “Do you want me to look at your stitches? The doctor looked like she did that really quickly.”

“I’m fine,” Sara waved her off as Nyssa walked to the table and leaned back so Sara could sit down. Sara took the crutches and immediately stood, “Where’s Sensei?”

Felicity moved to the computer and tapped it awake. It only took a few keystrokes to find him. “He’s at the docks. It’s not more than a few miles from here.”

Nyssa was in action moving to the armor that had been draped over the table. She started pulling it on as Oliver shrugged on his Arrow outfit.

“Wait, what are you doing?” Sara asked, turning to the pair, “You’re just going to go out there?”

“They’re coming this way,” Nyssa answered, “If they get close enough, they will find this liar. You know that. It’s time, Ta-er Al-Asfer.”

Sara shook her head, pleading desperately, “We can just leave.”

“Sara,” Felicity touched Sara’s arm and carefully moved to Sara’s side. “You can help from here. I can see everything, but you can tell Nyssa exactly what she needs to do.”

“Mirakuru isn’t looking so bad right now,” Sara hobbled toward Nyssa and grumbled to herself. Sara ditched her crutches next to Nyssa and helped her put her armor on.

Sara set Nyssa’s pauldron on her shoulder and reached around her torso to buckle it in place. She looked Nyssa in the face, “You know if you don’t come back from this fight, I’m going to kill you.”

Nyssa smiled fondly at Sara, “I know, my darling.”

“Remember that he favors his left side after that explosion in Walvis Bay,” Sara added, picking up Nyssa’s cape. There was a rip in the back of it and she looked it over in her hands.

“They’re getting closer!” Felicity called.

“I love you,” Nyssa quickly dipped down and captures Sara’s lips. Sara sighed softly into Nyssa. However when her hands moved forward to touch Nyssa, she found that Nyssa was gone. Sara opened her eyes finding that she and Felicity were alone in the Arrow Cave.

Sara quickly moved over to Felicity’s station. Felicity pulled up all of the security cameras in the area and found Nyssa and Oliver on the roof of the adjacent building looking toward an approaching mob. Sensei was leading the charge toward them.

He was the first one to see Nyssa and Oliver on top of the building.

Sensei called up in Arabic, “This is your end, Child of the Demon.”

Nyssa just stood quietly watching him. It was not going to be a battle of the word. It was going to be a battle of bodies. Blood would be shed and only one of them would be left standing. Nyssa preferred not to waste her words.
“Very well,” Sensei nodded. He drew a sword and then told his soldiers, “Fire.”

Gunfire erupted.

Nyssa threw down a smoke bomb and she and Oliver were engulfed in a cloud of dark grey smoke. As the smoke cleared Sensei saw that they were gone.

“This is how your father taught you to fight?” Sensei asked, “Will cowardice?”

“With skill,” a menacing voice behind Sensei stated.

He whirled around and deflected the swinging bow with his sword. A few of the men turned toward Nyssa while Oliver took on a few of the cronies.

Oliver was grabbed by two of the men and another punched him in the stomach. After the second punch, he jumped up, wrapped his legs around the head of the man who was punching him and drove him into the ground. Then he yanked away from the men holding him. He was about to pick up his bow when arrows took both men out.

He looked behind him and found Nyssa locked in a battle with five men, including Sensei. Then he turned in the other directions. He saw a blonde wig and black mask in the shadows down the street. He should have known that Sara wouldn’t stay away.

“You will not win,” Sensei told Nyssa as she fought off his men. She was picking them off one by one until he was the only one left.

“You’re alone,” Nyssa drew an arrow and pointed at him, “You’re done.”

Sensei looked up at the sky and let out a wicked smile, “Not yet.”

Nyssa’s eyes flickered up to the sky in time to see the mortar sailing toward her. Sensei used that moment to knock the arrow from Nyssa’s hand and grab the bow in her hand. He held onto the handled and pivoted around Nyssa’s body, hooking the string around her neck.

“Nyssa!” Sara called. She was ignoring the intense pain in her leg and ran toward Nyssa. She tossed her a knife when they got close.

Nyssa grabbed the knife in midair and brought it down hard into Sensei’s thigh. That gave her enough slack to slip out of the noose he had made her bow into and kick him away. Nyssa took off running toward Sara. She knew that no matter what happened she had to get Sara out of the line of fire.

“There’s a boat in the bay shooting mortars at you guys,” Felicity said in Nyssa’s earpiece.

“Any way that you can help with that?” Nyssa called back pulling Sara down an alley.

Felicity’s fingers flew across the keyboard, “I deployed the coast guard. Their ETA is two minutes.”

A blast near the opening of the alley threw Nyssa toward Sara. Sara grabbed onto Nyssa and fell backwards. Nyssa used her arms to brace their fall onto the pavement.

“Are you alright?” Nyssa asked Sara, looking down into her eyes.

Sara nodded. She saw a look of pain flash across Nyssa’s face only for a moment. She reached around Nyssa and ran her hands up Nyssa’s back, finding that the back of her armor was littered with shrapnel. Her eyes grew wide, “Nyssa,” Sara looked at her hands over Nyssa’s shoulders. They
were bloody.

“I’m okay,” Nyssa looked over Sara’s face. “I love you.” She dropped her head to share a kiss with Sara before pushing up off of the blonde.

“What are you doing?” Sara asked, scrambling up as well, hopping on one leg to steady herself.

Nyssa unhooked the clasp across her chest. Her cape and quiver fell to the ground. Then she unbuckled her chest plate and pauldron. They joined her cape on the ground. She was left wearing only her pants and a black tank top.

“What are you doing?” Sara repeated.

“I’m ending this,” Nyssa stated. She turned around and walked away from Sara. The back of her shoulders were visibly bleeding from many cuts and scrapes.

Sara quickly ran after her, grasping her thigh in pain when she got close, “Nyssa.”

Nyssa could hear the pain in Sara’s voice. She turned around and touched Sara’s face, “Stay here. You’ll be safe.”

The blonde shook her head, “No. I’m not letting you go out there alone.”

The sound of sirens neared. Nyssa told Sara, “If I don’t do this now, many innocent people will be hurt.” Nyssa turned around and ran off, leaving Sara where she stood. Sara knew she couldn’t follow Sara. The only thing she could do was tap on her earpiece, “Ollie, where are you?”

“I’m on the roof,” Oliver answered, “My bow is gone. I lost it in the first mortar attack. Nyssa’s walking right toward Sensei. There are three guys running at her…two…they’re all down. It’s just Nyssa and Sensei.”

“We have to help her,” Sara walked back to Nyssa’s things on the ground and picked up Nyssa’s quiver. She slung it over her shoulder and limped out of the alley.

Oliver looked around for a quick way down the building.

Sensei took a hit from Nyssa before delivering his own. Nyssa jumped and roundhouse kicked him, sending him stumbling backwards. When Nyssa advanced he hit her again.

Sensei spotted an arrow flying his way and ducks his head as it sailed over his head. Sara limped closer with Oliver’s bow and Nyssa’s arrows. She threaded another arrow and took aim. She didn’t let go until she was sure it wouldn’t hit Nyssa.

However, Sensei snatched the arrow out of the air and thrust it at Nyssa. Nyssa saw it coming and batted away the strike answering by grabbing his other arm. She pulled Sensei around and kicked the back of his knee. His knee hit the ground hard. He threw the arrow back at Sara who was expecting it. She hit it away with the bow and threaded another bow.

Sensei grabbed switched the hold Nyssa had on his arm and yanked her over his shoulder sending her crashing onto her already injured back. She screamed in pain as the debris that was embedded in her back sunk deeper.

Sara sent another arrow flying. That arrow was followed quickly by one shot by Oliver who found Nyssa’s bow and his arrows.
When Sensei was distracted by dodging the arrows, Nyssa trust her legs into the air over her head and wrapping them around Sensei’s waist. She used her body weight to pull him down onto the ground and roll herself on top of him.

Sara shot an arrow in the general direction of Nyssa. The Heir to the Demon snatched the arrow out of the air, twirled it around in her fingers and then buried it in Sensei’s neck. There was a brief struggle before Sensei’s body went limp.

Nyssa fell back into a sitting position on the dock next to Sensei’s body. Although he tried to kill Nyssa, Talia, Ra’s, and Sara, Nyssa felt a sense of loss. She inhaled slowly.

Oliver flexed his back and sat down on a piling near the dock, taking a mental assessment of his body.

Sara bent over to give her leg a rest. She hopped on one leg for a moment before managing to stand still. Nyssa walked over to Sara and gently put Sara’s arm around her neck. Oliver moved to Sara’s other side and they all started walking back to the Foundry.

“I don’t know where to start,” Felicity was wearing latex gloves as the three hobbled in.

“Start with Nyssa,” Sara let go of Nyssa and hopped to one of the tables. She took her leather pants off and looked to see what kind of damage she had done to her wound. “She has shrapnel in her back.”

“What about you?” Nyssa asked Oliver.

He took off his hood, “Just a little banged up.” However when he pulled off his shirt, his torso was black and blue.

“Lay down,” Felicity looked at Nyssa and pointed to the empty metal table.

“But I’m-” was as far as Nyssa got before Felicity’s glare made her lay down on her stomach. “It’s like having another sister.”

Felicity smiled and picked up some tweezers, “This is going to take a while.”

“How’s your leg?” Oliver asked Sara who was rewrapping her bandage.

Sara nodded, “It’s fine.” She hobbled over to the computer and picked up the keyboard. She made a few keystrokes and plugged her phone into the computer. Then after she finished adding a few files to her phone she stayed in the chair and wheeled over to Nyssa.

“Who is it?” Nyssa asked, taking the phone from Sara and pressing it to her ear.

She hear the voice of her father answer and smiled knowing that he was okay. She was also glad that she was the one that was getting to tell her father about that happened.

After a brief discussion he told her that he was proud of her and that he would call to inform Talia. When Nyssa was done talking, Ra’s asked to talk to Sara. Sara nodded a few times and smiled widely.

“What did he say?” Felicity asked when Sara hung up.

“He thanked me for making sure that his daughter was safe and told me to make sure that she rests for a while,” Sara put the phone on the desk and wheeled the chair to the table Nyssa was laying on,
“What do you think? Can you relax?”

“You better,” Felicity warned as she pulled a shard of metal out of Nyssa’s lower back. “If you keep this up, you’ll take a drink of water and it’ll just come out of the holes in your body like in cartoons.”

Nyssa smiled. She picked her head up to look at Sara, “I think I can. And I think we should relax in Starling. At least for a few months.”

“Really?” Sara grinned.

Nyssa nodded. “I was hoping to inquire about buying a house after this ordeal is over.” She winced when Felicity pulled out a jagged piece of wood out of her back.

Sara’s eyes widened, “A house? In Starling?”

The Heir to the Demon knew that moving permanently back to Starling would make Sara the happiest person in the world. They would make Starling their home, but still travel. Nyssa nodded.

“Are you sure?” Sara took Nyssa’s hand, “You love Nanda Parbat.”

“We can go back whenever we like,” Nyssa kissed the back of Sara’s hand, “But right now we need Starling.”

“And Starling needs you,” Oliver added. Sara looked at him over her shoulder and saw that he had already changed, but he was moving stiffly around.

Sara looked back at Nyssa, “Really?”

Nyssa laughed, “Yes, really.”

“Where do you want to live?” the blonde dipped down and kissed Nyssa’s lips.

“Well,” Nyssa’s eyes moved past Sara to find Oliver, “How much would it take to acquire the Queen Mansion?”

About a month of squatting at the Queen Mansion later, they had the keys. A quiet rumor was flying around that what was now the Lance Mansion was purchased by an oil baroness as a place to stay when sailing around the world. Nyssa may have started the oil baroness rumor herself, but she figured it was better that Starling City think of her as a nameless oil baroness than Nyssa Al Ghul, heir to the demon.

Oliver used the money from the mansion to fund the upgrade of some of the Arrow’s assets. He used the rest of the money go in with a nameless oil baroness to start a quiet corporate takeover of Queen Consolidated. Oliver used his first paycheck from Queen Consolidated to buy an apartment in the same building as Felicity’s.

Things were going well. Almost too well. Nyssa leaned against one of the walls of the east wing of the Lance Mansion. She could hear creaking. The light squeak of boots on the wooden floor. Nyssa silently took an arrow out of her quiver and hooked the back of it to the string of her bow.

When there was another creak, she pivoted around the corner and let the arrow fly. The intruder jumped over the balcony, swung from a chandelier and hopped onto the balcony across the room. Nyssa pulled another arrow out and shot it at the hooded figure. It ran down the hallway and disappeared around the corner. Nyssa hopped to the chandelier and followed the person.
She carefully walked down the hallway with an arrow drawn. She knew she was getting close to the person. She could feel it.

A second later she heard an arrow sail past her ear. She turned around and shot back, barely clipping the boot of the person.

“I got you!” Nyssa stood up straight and triumphantly.

Sara yanked the hood off of her head and looked down at her black boot. It had orange powder on it, “ Barely!”

“It still counts,” Nyssa sashayed over to Sara with a grin on her face.

Sara picked up the special arrows that they had manufactured specifically for this game. She tapped the blunt foam end of it to Nyssa’s nose, leaving a light orange powder on her face. “I could have survived an arrow shot to the foot.”

Nyssa dusted off her nose and chuckled, “You’re such a sore loser.”

“You’re a cheater,” Sara crossed her arms and grumbled.

Nyssa stole a kiss and then started walking to the other end of the hallway, “I didn’t make the rules.”

“Actually you did,” Sara turned around to see what Nyssa was doing. She watched Nyssa rub the two missed shots off of the wall and pick up her arrows. She put them back into her quiver that was lined with the orange powder.

Nyssa rolled her eyes, “You did too.”

“Go again?” Sara asked, a twinkle in her blue eyes.

Nyssa paused at the end of the hallway. She looked over her shoulder at Sara and shot her a mischievous smile. Then like a shot she took off in a dead sprint around the corner.

Sara smiled and pulled her hood up. She readjusted her grip on her bow.

Yeah, things were still going great.

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