Summary

Just another kid fic because Lena's probably my favorite character, and she deserves a lot better...

Basically, Lillian does some shady shit, and now Lena's a kid.

Kara's gotta take care of her until they can fix it.

It's cute. And sad.
this is my first work in this fandom, so i'd love any feedback!

See the end of the work for more notes
Lena was not having a good day—granted, in her life, good days had always been something of a rarity (in other words, they were more scarce than even Lillian's more backhanded shows of ‘approval’), but still—this one easily took the cake for one of the worst days she’d had in a long while.

(Speaking of, cake did sound rather tempting right now…)

Her eyelids had fluttered open about an hour ago, the cold and gloomy cage around her coming slowly into focus, her small pale hands struggling to move exactly the way she wished them to, her balance so incredibly hard to maintain when she finally managed to stand on shaky legs in the tiny space—she could feel her jet-black hair brushing against the hard unforgiving metal above her as tears burned in her wide green eyes and she cautiously observed her surroundings, unable to stop the occasional sniffle from escaping her terrified body.

There was a big dark-haired man sitting a short walk away, looking completely at ease as he leaned further back into his seat and took another oversized bite from the fast-food cheeseburger in his gloved hands, a big black gun strapped to his waist that shone in the dim lighting.

Lena bit her lip even as she could feel her stomach growl—she knew better than to want that kind of food, the ones she saw all the other kids her age eating: burgers and french fries and pizza and noodles. Lillian had strictly forbidden such things from her very first day at the Luthor Mansion, and she found out very quickly that Lillian was not the sort of person you disobeyed. Ever.

She remembers one day in particular, because it’d been one of her first days of American kindergarten, and by all accounts, the whole thing had ended rather poorly once Lillian had gotten involved. It had all begun when one of her new friends, Sam (her only friend, really), had offered to share some of her food during afternoon snack time.

After taking a quick look back at the lunch Lillian had had the staff at Luthor Mansion pack her for the day (celery sticks, a small bottle of water from some ridiculously expensive company, and a glass tupperware of something Lex had called ‘kale’ along with a spotless silver fork that probably cost more than Lena’s entire outfit), she’d readily agreed, already eyeing the grilled cheese and french fries and chocolate milk in Sam’s Superman lunchbox with eager anticipation.

They turned out to be some of the best things she’d ever tasted: the pre-melted cheese between two buttery slices of toasted bread, the crunchy fries practically exploding with flavor and the smallest hint of salt in her mouth, the bordering-on too-sweet flavor of the syrupy chocolate milk on her
tongue—she found herself wondering briefly if Lex had ever tried something like this, since it seemed Lillian would never allow such a thing at the Mansion, if he had even the slightest clue of just how good food could be.

After the school day ended, she’d been driven home in the same shiny black car that had dropped her off that morning, her tiny belly feeling full and warm even as the uneaten celery and kale shifted this way and that in her new sleek matte-painted lunchbox. She hadn’t been thinking about the fact that she’d have to set her lunchbox on the counter to be cleaned once she walked through the door, that Lillian might witness its entirely untouched contents (she’d been around quite a lot since Lena had moved in a few months ago—and not out of motherly care, like the young girl had originally hoped, but rather, out of unmitigated suspicion towards her), and then demand an answer as to why Lena hadn’t eaten her prepared lunch for the day.

But it was only Lena's first week at kindergarten (and her second month with the Luthors), so she was therefore none the wiser as she shuffled inside the house with a downturned gaze (careful not to show the giddiness blooming in her chest) and bit her bottom lip in concentration while getting on her tippie-toes to carefully place the metal container on the glossy marble countertop just next to the spotless white sink, which she knew would make it easiest for the nice chef (she didn’t know the tall man’s name yet, but she was determined to find out—he always smiled so kindly at her in a way that made his soft brown eyes crinkle at the edges) to see when he came to cook dinner in the next couple of hours.

Thankfully, Lillian was nowhere to be seen. Yet.

Satisfied, 4-year-old Lena, after slipping off her simple black ballet flats and placing them neatly next to the door (just how Lillian liked it), padded off towards the parlour to start her homework.

(To tell the truth, she’d already finished the addition and subtraction tables for tomorrow and the next day’s homework; but one of the very nice teachers, after seeing how quickly she’d finished the worksheets even while the other kids struggled, had given her multiplication and division while no one else was looking, winking at her secretively and telling her to bring them back once she’d finished.)

She breezed through the multiplication with her lucky No. 2 pencil (there was actually nothing all that special about the yellow wooden writing implement capped with a bright pink eraser, besides the fact that Lex had given it to her) and was nearly finished with the division (she was on $81 \div 9$) when Lillian came striding purposefully into the carpeted room, thin lips pursed and cold blue eyes blazing with disapproval even as she stood dressed impeccably in a perfectly-pressed black pencil skirt and matching long-sleeved coat over a starch white dress shirt, not a single strand of hair out of place in her immaculate no-nonsense bun.
In her white-knuckled grip she held Lena’s shiny black lunchbox.

Lena’s heart sank.

“Lena,” she said icily, her figure positively towering over the small girl where she sat cross-legged on the carpet.

Lena felt her lucky pencil beginning to tremble in her grip. “Yes, Ma’am?” she managed to squeak, shuddering involuntarily as memories of a bruising iron grip around her wrist began to surface from when she’d last made the mistake of forgetting to address Lillian by her proper title—Thank God she’d remembered this time.

Lillian scoffed, a deft hand moving swiftly to undo the latch of the container, features twisted in a scowl as she swung the lid open to present the perfectly intact contents within to a wide-eyed Lena. “What is the meaning of this?”

“I, um—” the girl stuttered, trying to gain control of her words as Lillian glared. “My friend Sam didn’t want all of her lunch today, so we shared,” she finished weakly, praying desperately she wouldn’t be punished even as Lillian’s frosty scowl deepened.

“What do you mean you ‘shared’?” Lillian sneered, practically spitting out the last word, her gaze narrowing even further.

Lena gulped. “We, uh—We—”

“Stop stuttering, you useless girl,” Lillian snapped.

“Y-Yes, Ma’am,” Lena replied meekly, her cheeks flushed. “It’s just that Sam gave me the other half of her sandwich, and some of her french fries—“

Lillian’s eyes flashed suddenly with rage, prompting Lena to immediately stop talking. “French fries?” the woman practically hissed, her gaze almost murderous.

“I only had two!” Lena scrambled to fix her slip, big green eyes practically pleading with Lillian
not to be angry. “I promise.”

“Your promises mean nothing to me,” she retorted coldly—Lena felt her shoulders hunch. “Now,” she continued after a brief pause. “What else?”

Lena’s fingers twitched. “What do you mean?”

“Don’t lie to me, girl,” Lillian practically growled, lurching menacingly forwards even as Lena flinched where she sat. “What else did you and this ‘Sam,’” she spat out her friend’s name with clear disdain, “‘share’ for lunch?”


Lillian’s regal jaw clenched. “Just chocolate milk,” she mocked, shaking her head with a scoff. “You’re even more of a disappointment than I originally thought.”

Lena felt tears beginning to burn in her eyes. “I’m sorry.”

“Oh, you’re ‘sorry,’ now, are you?” Lillian chuckled dangerously, her brow furrowing as a tear traced down Lena’s round pale cheek. “Luthors don’t cry, you mindless wench,” she said, coming quickly closer to Lena and yanking her upwards by the wrist despite the girl’s resultant yelp of discomfort. “And despite my very best efforts to convince Lionel otherwise, you are now one of us.” By then, she’d begun to violently drag a sniffling Lena towards the sculpted marble staircase, leaving the girl’s dark green backpack and unfinished division worksheets sitting messily on the floor of the parlour—then, after practically shoving the unbalanced girl up onto the stark marble steps and ignoring her cry of pain as her cheek connected sharply with the hard edges of the unforgiving alabaster stone, she finally spat: “Act like it.”

And with that, she turned promptly to leave, heels echoing loudly on the polished stone floor as 4-year-old Lena clutched her throbbing cheek with one hand and wiped helplessly at her tears with the other, the marble steps digging uncomfortably into her spine as she sobbed.

So no, Lena thought as she forcibly pulled herself from the painful memory, rolling her eyes at the man sitting lazily in his seat and wolfing down the last bite of his greasy burger just a handful of feet away from her cage, she wouldn’t be making that mistake again. Ever.
Food could wait.

And although she still didn't quite understand what was happening (she thinks she was 9 or maybe 10 years old, by the looks of things), she cursed herself for being so foolishly surprised when the rusty door of the abandoned warehouse (at least, she *thinks* that’s what that place was) swung open to reveal none other than her adoptive mother, her appearance as immaculate as ever (dressed in expensive black slacks without a single wrinkle and a tan knee-length trench coat) as she eyed Lena dismissively in her cage before striding purposefully over to address the sloppy man who’d only just finished his cheeseburger, having discarded the wrapping by throwing it somewhere over his shoulder into the shadowy darkness.

And yet, it was all rather confusing for Lena—because while yes, it *did* make quite a great deal of sense that Lillian would be behind her less-than-ideal situation, there also seemed to be something missing. Something *big*.

For starters, Lillian looked older. *Too* much older.

Lena had just seen her memories from kindergarten (as best as she could recall), and there was no way her adoptive mother had aged so quickly in 5 years (give or take), no matter how satisfying it was to speculate that maybe karma had finally caught up with her for all the hell she’d managed to put Lena through in the past decade or so.

No, there was no ‘karma’ in this life, and certainly not a ‘God’—at least, not as far as Lena was concerned.

Lena knows she’s not perfect, but she never understood what kind of God allows parents to make kids *bleed*, to call them ‘fat’ and ‘ugly’ and ‘stupid,’ to make them feel so unwanted that they wish for death even when their life has only just begun.

Sometimes, though, Lena thinks that that might just be *her* karma, because her real mother was strong and kind and warm and Lena, *stupid* Lena, just as good as killed her on that fateful day at the beach because she’d been so bloody *useless*.

So actually, Lena isn’t quite sure if there is a God—sometimes she catches herself thinking that maybe He (or She) really does exist, even as she knows very well that such a celestial being would stay as far away from her and the Luthors as possible… and for good reason, too.
So maybe God exists for other people, for good people—but Lena’s quite sure that God doesn’t exist for Luthors.

Consequently, Lillian’s unexplainable aging definitely couldn’t be karma, or a sort of divine intervention for her never-ending cruelty—no, the abundance of premature wrinkles and too-stiff movements must have meant something else, because Lena was absolutely certain that God abandoned the lot of them years ago.

Something was wrong, and it had nothing to do with a higher power; of that, Lena was certain.

And to further her suspicion, she didn’t understand why she was locked in a cage, and why that cage was trapped in a dark and creaky old warehouse.

Sure, Lillian had never liked her, but this—she didn’t do this.

She slapped Lena around the house occasionally, or banned her from the kitchens for meals, or mocked her relentlessly for every and any fault she could find with the young Irish-born girl, but there’d never been need for anything so drastic as an actual kidnapping.

Though, Lena thought briefly. Is it kidnapping if it’s your own family?

She wasn’t sure.

The point was, Lillian had never been this cruel, or this dramatic. What’s more, the timeline just didn’t quite add up.

And to make things even more puzzling, Lena felt strange… as if she shouldn’t have been a child.

But that was utterly preposterous, wasn’t it?

It’s not as if Lena could remember being an adult, or a teenager, or anything older than 8 or 9 years old… no, it made all the sense in the world that she was still an over-achieving and unnaturally intelligent child, because that was exactly how things should have been.
Except…

Except something in her brain was telling her that she hadn’t been that young for a very long time, even as she knew she was being positively absurd for even thinking it.

She missed Lex. She needed him right then—needed him to explain what was happening, to tell her everything was going to be okay, to smile that warm crooked smile of his down at her so she could finally breathe—

She was pulled away from her thoughts as the steady click of Lillian’s sleek black heels grew closer, and her scared green eyes locked with the cold blue of her approaching mother’s, who was looking at her with the faintest hint of a smile, the kind she only ever reserved for Lex.

Lena had never felt so lost in her life as she trembled under her adoptive mother’s familiar cutting gaze.

“Lena,” Lillian addressed her when she was standing just a foot or two away, looking down condescendingly at Lena over the bridge of her angular nose. “How are you feeling, darling?”

Am I dreaming? she thought. I have to be dreaming. This can’t be real, I—

Her thoughts were interrupted by a loud crash! that caused Lena to flinch violently in her cage, whimpering as her head collided painfully with the metal bars just above.

Shutting her eyes in fear, she vaguely registered the sound of Lillian hissing out a curse before the erratic clacking sound of her heels retreated somewhere off into the distance behind Lena’s crouched and shaking figure, presumably to make her hasty escape—Lena didn’t bother being offended that her adoptive mother hadn’t tried to take her with; honestly, she’d probably have been a heck of a lot more surprised if she had.

Meanwhile, Lena allowed herself to curl even further within herself, flinching with every loud clang! and the muffled grunts of pain (which she assumed were from the Burger Man), though she found her ears perking up somewhat when they heard a couple distinct whooshing noises as if someone was… flying?
Now Lena was sure she was imagining things.

Eyes squeezed tightly shut, she clutched her thin shaking arms around herself, the bars of the cage digging almost painfully into her back as the sounds of violence persisted through the abandoned space.

*Am I going to die now?* she wondered briefly—she didn’t know whether to be grateful or just sad that the thought didn’t scare her all that much.

She was pulled jarringly back to reality as the sounds of conflict raged on around her, only worsening the fear beginning to build in her chest.

“She was pulled jarringly back to reality as the sounds of conflict raged on around her, only worsening the fear beginning to build in her chest.

“Please,” she heard Burger Man say in a heavily strained tone after a sickening noise of skin hitting skin, like he’d just been sucker-punched.

The assailant (Lena assumed) just growled, the sound sending shivers down Lena’s spine. “Where is Lillian Luthor?” the steely voice demanded, distinctly feminine and very pissed off (Lillian had refused her meals for two days when she’s last used that “crass” phrase, but it felt good to defy her in the safety of Lena’s mind, where she knew Lillian would never see). “Where is Lena?” the woman snarled when Burger Man didn’t answer her first question.

*That settles it,* she thought faintly, not daring to open her eyes. *I’m definitely going to die now.*

She didn’t know how to feel about the relief that curled in her belly even amidst the paralyzing fear at the prospect of dying—kids weren’t supposed to want death, she knew; she was supposed to want to live.

Lena didn’t see it, obviously, but Burger Man must have pointed the woman in her direction, or at least gestured towards her somehow, because seconds later the girl’s ears were filled with a large *whoosh! as a wall of cool air washed over her, which only caused her full-body shuddering to worsen.*

*The next time the feminine voice spoke, it was inches from Lena’s cage.*

“Lena?” it asked her, suddenly soft and gentle (no trace of the untapped anger and aggression from before) even as she jumped at the sound.
There was a familiarity there, something like friendship delicately underlying those soft words—it almost seemed as if the woman knew her, even as Lena was sure that there was no possible way, because she’d never had a friend like that, a person who would save her and keep her safe.

“Lena,” the woman repeated again, a kind of sadness tinging her tone. “Please open your eyes?”

There was a voice in Lena’s brain telling her that she could trust the woman, which was stupid, because she was quite sure she’d never trusted anyone but her mom—her real mom—in her entire life.

No, people liked to hurt her, she’d found: Lillian, Lionel (though he was kind enough when he wasn’t drinking), even Lex, although her adoptive older brother had quickly become her favorite person on the planet.

Somehow, though, she couldn’t quite fight that voice within her saying that this was safe, that she didn’t have to be afraid right now, even as unforgiving memory carved deep into her bones positively screamed otherwise.

She opened her eyes.

The woman was crouched down, and not really a woman at all—she looked to be about 28 or so, with beautiful long curls of golden blonde hair and sea-blue eyes that glimmered like stars, a wide reassuring grin stretched across her pinkish lips.

Lena’s eyes widened when she took in the beautiful young woman’s attire: sturdy blue material closely hugging her well-built frame, a red skirt reaching about mid-thigh that matched crimson knee-high boots and a long flowing cape on her shoulders, and at the very center of it all, a diamond-shaped red insignia with an S-shaped crest displayed proudly on her chest, exactly like the ones Lex doodled all the time in his extensive research on Kryptonians—this woman was a Super.

“Hello,” the Super blonde woman said, her blue-eyed gaze soft and inviting even as every one of Lena’s better instincts screamed for her to run. “Do you remember me?”

Lena’s brow furrowed. Now she was even more confused.
Slowly, she shook her head.

At that, the Super looked... disappointed? There was a small crinkle formed between her brows, the tiniest hint of a pout on pert pink lips as she looked down at Lena in her cage.

“Uh—Okay,” the Super stuttered, then cleared her throat audibly, shaking her head as she recovered. “That’s okay. My name’s Kara. Let’s get you out of this cage, huh?”

Lena wasn’t quite sure what else to do, so she just nodded wordlessly, far too scared to speak.

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what is THAT doing here? (pov kara)

Chapter Summary

Kara takes mini Lena back to the DEO.

J’onn and Alex are not amused.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“What the hell happened?” Alex demanded almost as soon as Kara touched down at the DEO with a 6-year-old (7-year-old? 8? She wasn’t sure) Lena cradled securely against her chest, her older sister adopting a rather imposing stance in her all-black tactical suit with hands on her hips, short red locks inscrutably gelled and combed perfectly back above either buzz-cutted side of her head so as to effect maximum efficiency (and, Kara suspected, maximum ‘I’m a lesbian’ energy), both impeccably-manicured brows furrowed over a hard brown-eyed gaze to form her classic ‘What the hell, Kara?!’ look.

(It was a look Kara was rather familiar with, as she routinely found herself on the receiving end of it at least once a week.)

“Alex, I can explain,” she said as calmly as she could manage, wincing when a mini Lena let out a small noise of discontent in her arms at the raised voices—she also made it a point to ignore the various agents that had stopped to stare with mouths agape at the sight of Supergirl wrangling a kid under her cape, because really, she had more pressing matters to attend to at the current moment. “But no swearing. And lower your voice. She’s scared.”

Alex sighed, but dutifully softened her tone all the same. “Please tell me you didn’t adopt…” she paused, a rather queasy expression on her angular features, "that.”

Kara rolled her eyes. “Okay, first of all: she’s a she. And what makes you think I adopted her?”

“You tried to adopt three puppies last Monday before you realized you didn’t have the room or the money to support them.”

Kara opened her mouth to argue, then snapped it shut again, then opened it once more before quickly closing it as her features formed an indignant pout, because Crap, she had a point.
“So,” Alex prompted after a brief silence. “Did you?”

“Did I what?”

Alex rose a single brow. “Adopt this kid.”

“What? No!” At the sound of Kara’s flustered rebuttal, Lena immediately flinched in her arms with fear, wriggling as if she was trying to escape even as Kara rushed to whisper her sincerest apologies for talking so loudly—it took a couple seconds, but eventually Lena’s attempts to escape tapered off as the young girl (dressed in a simple but probably unreasonably expensive knee-length red dress) clutched her arms and knees to her chest in Kara’s embrace, a distrustful look in wide green eyes.

Letting out a relieved sigh at the small victory (although Lena clearly still didn’t trust her), she returned her attention back to her sister.

“Oh, thank God,” Alex breathed out, the creases of her brow fading as her next words came in a rush. “Because that would literally generate so much freaking paperwork I—"

“Supergirl!” called a deep voice that made Lena shudder again in Kara’s arms even as she did her best to whisper soothing words and reassure the young girl that everything was going to be okay.

Snapping her head up as a withdrawn Lena shook violently against her chest, she was met with the sight of J’onn approaching them in his all-black garb, a stern and almost fatherly look of disappointment on his features.

(Again, another displeased expression Kara was intimately familiar with.)

Oh, crap.

“What’s the meaning of this?” he demanded once he’d approached the pair, every authoritative word only serving to worsen Lena’s palpable fear; she could feel the small girl tensing her every muscle even as J’onn fixed Kara with a hard stare.
“Please lower your voice,” she pleaded for the second time that day, shielding the young girl almost protectively in her arms from either intimidating agent. “You’re scaring her.”

“Very well,” J’onn conceded with a sigh, his tone noticeably quieter than before, though his brow was still furrowed. “What is… that,” he made a vague gesture with his hands that had Alex snorting beside her, "doing here?"

Kara rolled her eyes, though she was careful not to jostle a preternaturally-still Lena curled in her grip. “Why is everyone calling her a ‘that’? Has no one ever seen a kid before?”

“Supergirl,” J’onn said with a warning in his voice, completely ignoring her questions, “why have you brought this tiny human to the DEO?”

“‘Tiny human’? Seriousl—“

“Kara,” Alex interjected, a vaguely exasperated look on her features.

Kara let out a slow breath, tuning into the erratic fluttering of Lena’s heartbeat to remind her she needed to be calm. “Well, J’onn,” she began pointedly, “I brought this child” Alex rolled her eyes at that, “because CADMUS had her locked up in a cage at an abandoned warehouse.”

J’onn nodded slowly. “Okay—"

“Oh!” Kara interrupted, suddenly remembering the most important part: “Also, this is Lena.” She dipped her shoulder towards them, affording them a clear view of the balled-up girl in her arms, who was watching the events unfold with heart-wrenching caution, her dark brows stitched tightly above scared green eyes.

“Lena Luthor ?” Alex asked in a strangled tone, practically choking on nothing as she stared in disbelief at the miniature Lena, who, clearly uncomfortable under the weight of Alex’s incredulous gaze (especially when combined with her frantic tone), tightened both tiny pale arms around her bent knees, small white teeth sinking into her full bottom lip with a small whimper.

Noticing Lena’s discomfort, Kara immediately reverted back to her earlier position, arms encircling
the small girl so as to safely hide her from view, mumbling comforting words to her all the while—then she shot Alex a half-hearted glare for scaring Lena, which her older sister promptly returned with raised brows and a “How is this my fault?” expression.

“What happened?” J’onn managed to ask after a brief silence, his mouth slightly agape.

Kara turned her gaze from her intense staring match with Alex to give J’onn a confounded shrug, feeling a wave of sadness wash over her at the memory of finding Lena in the warehouse. “I don’t know, J’onn,” she sighed. “She was like this when I got there.”

“And Lillian?” the man questioned.

“Gone,” Kara said before heaving another defeated sigh, turning her gaze downcast the scared girl trembling in her arms.

“Alright,” J’onn declared after taking a moment to gather himself, shaking his head even as the furrow in his brow deepened. “Let’s get her to the lab. Then we’ll figure out what to do.”

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Chapter End Notes

would love to hear your thoughts!
By all means, Alex’s day had been going fine. Normal, even. (And God knew ‘normal’ had been in fairly short supply ever since Kara first arrived at the Danvers’ doorstep in Midvale.)

She’d had to yell at an obnoxiously trigger-happy Winn again for engaging every agent that happened past his desk in an aggressive but entirely one-sided Nerf war (though to be fair, his aim was something atrocious, so it was somewhat rare for him to actually hit any of his unwitting targets); Brainy had come babbling to her for at least ten minutes straight about Nia Nal, how she’d said he was ‘cute,’ and he’d responded with ‘Your features are symmetrical and quite aesthetically pleasing’ and now she wouldn’t call him back and he couldn’t understand for the life of him what he’d done wrong; and for a good hour or two after lunch, she’d gotten in her workout by mercilessly pinning every new recruit to the mats in 0 seconds flat as she instructed their combat training, more or less ignoring the occasional complaint that she was being ‘too tough’ on those butter-fingered morons.

All that? That was normal.

And by all means, Alex was more than ready to stick it out for a couple more blissfully mundane hours before calling it a day. Maybe she’d head down to the bar, or give that girl Erica from last weekend a call, or possibly raid Kara’s fridge for any relatively untouched pints of Ben & Jerry’s ice cream (though those were rather rare, what with Kara’s never-ending appetite).

(She’d been craving their Phish Food flavor lately, even though she knows the name makes it sound positively gag-worthy.)

But she guessed the universe just couldn’t handle giving her even one normal day, because before she could even think about wrapping up the afternoon in a somewhat relaxed and civil manner, things got weird. Fast.

It all started when Kara flew in with a full-sized kid cradled protectively against her chest and a sunny smile on her face, which obviously prompted both J’onn and Alex to almost instantaneously ask some variation of: What the hell, Kara? because when and where and how had Kara managed to acquire a baby in her last hour of routine patrol through National City?
(Were this middle-school Kara, she might’ve been concerned that her overly-energetic sister had once again made the unfortunate mistake of grabbing some random toddler at the park and bringing the blubbering child home with her, which still confuses Alex to this day on so many different levels... but this was adult Kara, and as far as Alex knew, adult Kara had long since outgrown the rather unsavory habit of commandeering the occasional child for what she called ‘playtime,’ but most every other person on Earth just called ‘kidnapping,’ and which also conveniently happened to be a felony in America.

So, it inevitably begged the question: What the hell, Kara?!

It didn’t get better when Kara revealed the kid to be none other than Lena Luthor, who Alex thinks she’s only ever spoken to once in her life, even despite knowing she’s been Kara’s quote-unquote “best friend” (she really cannot emphasize the quotes enough there, because their friendship might’ve been just about the gayest thing she’d ever seen, and she had to look in the mirror every morning) for the past couple of months.

And to make the whole thing even more uncomfortable (which Alex had been sure wasn’t at all possible), she was then given the task of examining the youngest Luthor for any medical or physiological indication as to what the hell was happening to her.

(Which, fine, she guessed she understood that part of it, as neither Kara nor J’onn had PhDs in medicine, and there was no way Kara would trust some random DEO doc to run even the most routine check-up on her girlfriend—ahem, "friend," Alex had meant to say—when she was in this state.)

Resigned to her fate, Alex heaved a long sigh as a miniature Lena dutifully (though quite reluctantly) shuffled wordlessly behind her up to the labs.

When they reached the steps, Alex offered a hand to the young girl (she didn’t want her to fall on the way up—Kara would kill her), who in turn looked absolutely floored at the prospect of such unsolicited kindness from someone, even when the act itself was rather inconsequential as courteous gestures go.

Aw, hell, she thought to herself as little Lena cautiously slipped a tiny hand into hers, wide green eyes filled with precious vulnerability as the girl focused intently on the task ahead (the steps), her little pink tongue poked out in adorable concentration with every unbalanced movement. I’m starting to empathize with the kid.
“Hey, Lena,” she said when they’d finally entered the lab, taking care to keep her voice low and non-threatening as she shut the glass door behind them, successfully sealing them off from the bustling noises from below. “Can I get you anything? Maybe some water or a snack?”

When she turned back, Lena was standing stiffly just next to one of the microscopes and chewing nervously on her bottom lip, both hands clasped neatly behind her back in an overly formal stance, looking for all the world as if she were about to present her newest philanthropic project to the Board of Directors at L-Corp.

At Alex’s question, she just shook her head silently, her gaze downcast, as if afraid that daring to make eye contact would result in… well, result in what Alex didn’t quite know, but the sinking feeling in her gut told her it probably wasn’t good.

Alex had never been close to Lena, and honestly she still remained rather suspicious of the youngest Luthor’s intentions, but really, this was just indicative of a whole new level of cruelty towards children—she made a mental note to give Lillian Luthor a nice and shiny black eye for all of her asshole-ry the next time they were unfortunate enough to cross paths.

“Okay, well, first we’re gonna take some measurements. Height, weight, that sort of thing,” she informed the young girl gently, sighing inwardly when Lena still didn’t dare lift her trembling chin to make eye contact—instead, she just bobbed her head up and down once in an apprehensive nod, hands still clasped tidily behind her back.

Grabbing her tablet with a sigh, Alex gestured for Lena to stand with her back against the wall of the laboratory, then fought the urge to roll her eyes when there was no tape-measurer to be found—only an old wooden yardstick leaned haphazardly against one of the tables, its numbers and inch-markers faded, and in some cases, completely worn off.

“Wonderful,” she mumbled sarcastically to herself as she grabbed a black Sharpie to mark a line where the end of the yardstick reached just below Lena’s shoulder on the sleek white wall (if anyone had a problem with her marking up the walls of the lab with permanent ink, they should’ve just bought a goddamned tape-measurer in the first place so she didn’t have to), then drew another line where Lena’s head stood parallel with the 15-inch mark on the second yard.

Adding up the totals in her head, Lena was 51 inches. Wonderful—so just about 4’3”.

Was that normal? Alex hadn’t the faintest clue.
Then she whipped out the standard intake sheet while Lena remained almost preternaturally still against the wall and nearly imploded when she saw that it demanded the patient’s height in centimeters instead of inches, because, Seriously?

“What?” she hissed, squinting futilely at the paper’s instructions (as if expecting them to magically change in the next couple of seconds), completely unaware of Lena’s suddenly terrified expression where the young girl stood not two feet away from Alex. “They want me to convert this into centimeters?”

Sure, she could give an estimate—approximately 2.5 centimeters for every inch placed Lena at 127.5 centimeters (give or take a couple centimeters), but if Brainy happened across this information (which he always seemed wont to do, no matter how inconsequential the issue), she’d never hear the end of it.

Doing 2.54 times 51 in her head? Like hell.

(It was times like these that made her really resent the DEO policy that required agents to leave phones in their lockers while at HQ.)

“Um, Miss?” Lena asked hesitantly after a beat, her hand raised as if she were in school.

Alex’s head snapped up, confusion overtaking her at being called ‘Miss,’ like she was a middle-aged college professor or a holder of some ridiculously authoritative and all-powerful position that demanded the use of such a formal title from her little sister’s… ‘friend.’

“Lena, you can call me Alex,” she assured the girl gently, not all that surprised when Lena’s uncertain expression didn’t change, when the girl didn’t give a nod or any sort of indication to tell Alex she’d accepted and internalized her words—resisting the urge to sigh, Alex swiftly moved on: “What is it?”

Lena wrung her hands together anxiously, her big green eyes darting this way and that around the room, never staying in one place for very long. “There are .9441 meters in a yard,” she mumbled shyly, as if speaking to herself.

“Huh?”
“It’s just—if I’m 51 inches, or 4.25 feet, that translates to 1.416 yards with the 6 repeating,” the young girl paused her quiet spiel, her brow furrowed in concentration as a single tiny hand came up to absentmindedly stroke a lock of jet-black hair behind one ear—it was as relaxed as Alex had seen kid Lena since she’d been here, and of course it would be due to something as dry and child-prodigy-genius-esque as mentally calculating metric system conversions beyond the thousandth decimal place. “Which is 1.2954 meters, so 129.54 centimeters, which I suppose you can either leave at 129 or round up to 130. Most professionals would round up in that scenario,” she finished her musings, an almost distant look in those thoughtful emerald-green eyes, before she was quickly snapping them back down to the ground as a flush spread across her pale cheeks, seeming to suddenly remember where she was. “’M sorry,” she murmured eventually after a brief moment of silence, looking strangely ashamed of herself.

Alex, meanwhile, was just standing there with her jaw agape, the flimsy intake sheet entirely forgotten in her grasp because Holy shit.

“Um,” she said dumbly, before quickly recovering from her shock, her brows stitching together with concern for Lena’s undoubtedly scared and overly apologetic expression. “Hey, you definitely don’t need to be sorry for that; you just saved me from having to Google all of that just now.”

The rosy flush in Lena’s cheeks only deepened in response, which felt as close to a ‘win’ as she’d gotten thus far, causing Alex to quirk her lips hopefully.

Then, after quickly scribbling ‘130 cm’ in a messy scrawl under ‘Height,’ she eyed a visibly uncomfortable Lena with a kind gaze. “You’re a smart one, aren’t you?”

Lena just bowed her head even further at that, shrugging her shoulders noncommittally as she intently eyed her neat shoelaces with interest. Yep, Alex thought even as her heart positively ached for Lena, who was so withdrawn and nervous and timid in a way no child her age ever should be. I’m definitely committed to this now.

Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ
scary agent ladies with big guns (pov lena)

Chapter Summary

Lena’s experience of coming to the DEO and meeting Alex.

It’s sad. But also cute.

Chapter Notes

this chapter has basically no dialogue; next one will probably be more conversation-heavy

hope you like :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Lena didn’t think it was unreasonable to say that things had been going rather poorly for her since she’d awoken caged in that abandoned warehouse with palpable fear crawling up her throat—and unfortunately, it had only gone downhill from there.

Granted, it wasn’t exactly a surprise that her afternoon kept on a steady decline after that, because by no means was she expecting that it might magically get any better… but she also hadn’t expected for it all to get so much weirder.

Being kidnapped was definitely a new experience (and by Lillian, no less), so maybe ‘weird’ was something of a given from the very start… but still.

In the space of what felt like a minute (but was probably more like five), a flying Super blew a hole in the roof, punched Burger Man’s lights out, and hugged Lena tightly against her chest like it was second nature (a gesture that might’ve comforted any other kid, but just made her shake even harder with chill-inducing fear, because Luthors didn’t do hugs—she almost thought a smack across the face would’ve been more reassuring, because at least that was something Lena was familiar with).

But there was a part of her (one she couldn’t quite name) that lit up with warmth when the Super—Kara, Lena reminded herself—wrapped Lena in that strong but impossibly gentle embrace
It made her feel… safe. Protected—like maybe someone cared about her after all.

It was also one of the scariest moments of Lena’s life, because for the first time in a very long time, her serenity was bigger than the crushing self-doubt that resided so deeply within her very bones—for the first time in what felt like forever, something like security, like hope, was surfacing in her gut even as every ounce of her being practically screamed that she was a fool for thinking she’d ever deserve it.

Then the Super had asked if she could pick Lena up to fly her somewhere else; somewhere safe.

She’d never wanted to say “No” as badly as she did right then; she was so so scared of heights and flying, and she’d much rather have stayed locked in her cage if the alternative was falling from space and becoming a mashed potato on the streets of Metropolis. (Or, whichever city they were in; it certainly didn’t feel like Metropolis, even as she knew it was stupid to think such a thing, because where else could she possibly be?)

And yes, she absolutely knew it was irrational, that flying was statistically among the safest forms of travel (according to her extensive research)—but she would take violent punches from a hammered Lionel any day before ever willingly agreeing to anything involving high places and the possibility of falling.

(If her stomach hadn’t been growling at her and throbbing with horrible hunger pains for the past couple of hours, she’s quite certain she’d have puked as soon as Kara took to the air with her in tow.)

But she didn’t say “No”—she couldn’t, because all she could think was What if Kara gets mad and hurts me for saying ‘no’? and What if she realizes I’m not worth the trouble? and What if she leaves me here alone and Lillian comes back?

She was sure punches and kicks would hurt a lot worse from a super-powered Kryptonian—scratch that, actually, because “painful” would be a gross understatement; if Kara so much as nudged her without bothering to mind her inhuman strength, the impact on its own would more than likely shatter every bone in Lena’s body.

So, declining Kara’s “invitation” (she uses quotes there because she really hadn’t known if she was being presented with an actual kindness or just some sick kind of trap; past experience told her to assume the second one) was out of the question.
She felt dizzy, her heart pumping too fast in her chest, her legs and arms going numb—but despite it all, she knew there was a fair chance she'd recover from those horrible feelings, granted she appeased the unpredictable Kryptonian instead of resisting her (which she was pretty sure would result in a rage-filled Kara launching her directly into the sun)... So, she said yes.

Kara told her in a kind voice (which Lena maintained was most certainly some bizarre kind of trap) that they would be going to a government building—the DEO, she’d called it.

Lena was too shy to ask what the acronym stood for even as the feeling of curiosity burned in her chest amidst the panic—she didn’t like not knowing things, or feeling lost, especially not if she could help it.

That pursuit of knowledge in the absence of belonging was something she’d come to value over most anything else; fairly quickly after being adopted by the Luthors, she’d come to understand it as the only real thing that made her feel in control to some degree, because heaven knows Lillian kept most freedoms as far away from Lena as she could manage.

She’s aware it’s not exactly conventional, though.

She’s quite sure the other kids her age don’t read World Atlases for fun instead of Junie B. Jones (she’s currently trying to memorize the name of every African country, but Cote D’Ivoire and South Sudan keep slipping her mind, because a. her French isn’t great and b. if Sudan is directly to the north of South Sudan, why isn’t it North Sudan and South Sudan, like North Dakota and South Dakota in the States? It’s as if they’re trying to make things difficult just for the sake of it), or mindlessly sketch out comprehensive proofs of the Riemann hypothesis instead of cutesy doodles (though she gets a sort of thrill with every Greek Sigma she draws on the page, so maybe they’re not so different after all), and maybe it's strange that she’s been trying to teach herself Chinese since the age of 7—but regardless, it gives her a sort of comfort that she has yet to find anywhere else, and she’d be a fool to take that for granted.

(She thinks she might’ve felt a flicker of that same feeling when Kara pulled her oh-so-carefully into her arms, but God, she hopes she’s mistaken, because she’s been there before—she knows how it feels to make the mistake of placing her delicate trust in the first person to spare her a smile.

It hurts. A lot.)

Then, with Lena in her arms, Kara quickly took to the sky with an ease that seemed almost routine—which, for her, it probably was.
It was terrifying.

Lena thinks she might’ve passed out on the way, but her eyes were shut and her stomach was cramping and her head felt so dizzy that she really couldn’t be sure.

Less than a minute later, Kara was touching down at the DEO, and Lena wasn’t given the time of day to be grateful that she was alive and back on steady ground and alive, because there were voices everywhere. Loud voices.

Angry voices.

One of them was distinctly feminine and very annoyed; the other was a male’s, deep and stern and scary.

She shifted her body even further into Kara’s chest in response, having decided that the evil she knew (Kara the Kryptonian) was probably safer than the evil she didn’t (Scary Man and Very Annoyed Woman)—plus, Kara had been kind to her. Lena certainly didn’t expect it to last, but it meant something, and she was grateful for it just the same.

Black spots danced in her vision as Lena strained her ears to understand what was happening, what they were going to do to her there, but it was hard—God, it was hard.

She didn’t quite comprehend all of it, but the gist of it was: she was going to be examined somewhere (though examined for what she wasn’t sure), and then Scary Man said that afterwards, they would “figure out what to do” with her.

(... Which didn’t sound bad, she supposed—though it also didn’t necessarily sound good.)

She wasn’t sure what she would’ve preferred (given that her current options appeared to be Scary Man, Very Annoyed Woman, or a deceivingly smile-y Kryptonian with a temper), but she was just about ready to pee her pants when Kara put her carefully down on the floor next to Very Annoyed Woman, who was really tall and intimidating, and then proceeded to tell Lena that Very Annoyed Woman (Kara had called her Alex) would take her to get looked at in the labs.
And to make everything even more confusing, Very Annoyed Woman (aka Alex) wasn’t acting like she was Very Annoyed.

Instead, she was acting… nice.

(Lena thought the whole thing might’ve just about been the worst mind game she’d ever played in her life, because there was nothing about those scary brown eyes and the short no-nonsense hairstyle on her head that screamed ’nice’…

Not even to mention the two loaded pistols strapped to her sides or the all-black ’I’m-a-super-secret-spy’ combat suit she wore, which only served to strengthen the “If you look at me funny I will personally exterminate you” kind of vibe this ‘Alex’ woman positively radiated.

Lena really didn’t want to be exterminated.)

Lena almost fell flat on her face from shock when a slightly-less-grumpy-than-before Alex stretched out a hand to offer the young girl help climbing the daunting plain-grey staircase (rather than to hit or push Lena to make her go faster like she’d initially expected)—and as much as she told herself not to get used to the feeling of being cared for, of feeling a bigger hand gently cradling hers like she sometimes saw on TV (what little of it she could sneak in when Lillian wasn’t around), it still ached something awful when they reached the top of the stairs and Alex dropped Lena’s tiny hand, because it made the panic come straight back with a vengeance, feeling like a vice on Lena’s lungs even as she tried desperately to maintain a polite standing position with perfect posture and both hands folded neatly behind her back, just like Lillian had taught her.

(Though is it still teaching if she learned because Lillian would force her to stand for hours at a time, whacking her hard with Lionel’s favorite wooden staff after every mistake she made?

Is it still ’teaching’ if purple bruises begin to bloom on the arms of your 6-year-old “student”, if their tears are dripping steadily onto the carpet with every passing minute, if they’re begging and pleading for you to please stop, saying they promise they’ll be good but it just hurts so badly and please please please make it stop, they can’t take it anymore?

Is that how it’s supposed to feel to learn something new?

Lena doesn’t really think so—but whatever you call it, it’s effective: She doesn’t dare to slouch any more, ever, even when no one’s around to see it.
Sometimes she wonders if she’ll ever forget the things Lillian taught her.

She hopes one day she might.)

Standing with Alex in the lab, she’d been doing well so far—declining any snacks or water (the scary redhead still didn’t look very happy with the whole situation, and Lena really didn’t want to see Very Annoyed Alex from earlier make a reappearance), because as long as she didn’t upset the tall lady, she figured she’d be okay.

On a similar note, it had also crossed her mind that the offer was a test of some sort: to see if Lena was brash enough to request something—and if she was, she could likely expect to receive a swift and painful punishment for daring to ask an important person such as Alex to accommodate her stupid childish desires.

No, thank you, Lena had thought to herself—as far as she was concerned, things were already looking rather bleak to begin with; there was no sense in adding to it just because she hadn’t eaten in a few hours… Actually, from the way her stomach felt (she feared it was quite literally trying to rip itself to shreds), it’d probably been more like a few days—48 hours at least—but who was counting, right?

(Lena was.)

All that to say, things had been going well.

Okay, maybe not well, but—fine. They’d been going fine.

But then Alex was measuring her height, and getting frustrated over metric system conversions; rather quickly, it all became very not fine when Lena couldn’t stop herself from opening her big mouth and breaking down the math step-by-step for the tall scary agent lady with two guns and a take-no-crap attitude who had every right to smack Lena six ways from Sunday for displaying such outright insolence.

Lillian had always mocked and sneered at her for thinking she was “so smart” whenever she offered her knowledge on maths or geography or history (or anything, really)—her adoptive mother didn’t curse all that often, but at one point, Lena had made the unfortunate mistake of correcting Lillian's deeply flawed math on the Luthor Corp tax returns (she’d allocated 74.2% of the
company’s funds towards their offshore accounts in the Caribbean when they’d both heard Lionel specifically tell Lillian to set aside only 18.4% to avoid suspicion from the government—according to him, 18.5%, if rounded up to 19%, would be pushing their luck too far). She hadn’t previously known that ‘smartass’ was a commonly-used insult (because why would you call someone ‘smart’ if you were trying to insult them?), so she supposed that just served to illustrate that there was always something to learn from her exceptionally ill-tempered mother, even when she was being particularly nasty.

But Alex hadn’t called her a ‘smartass’ or gotten angry; no, instead she’d actually thanked Lena for helping her.

Lena had never been so confused in her life.

That, especially when combined with how drained and dizzy she felt, had her almost certain that she’d been dreaming the whole time… because, this? This was crazy, as far as Lena was concerned.

Unfortunately, she didn’t really get to further examine that particular hypothesis—because then Alex was leading her over to the scale, and somewhere along the way she took a funny step that made her knees immediately give out beneath her even as she begged the dizziness flooding her senses to abate; all of a sudden, the lab was tilting sideways in slow-motion and there was inky blackness around the edges of her vision and she was trying to speak but her mouth wouldn’t work so she just kept falling and falling and falling and there was nothing she could do to make it stop.

She doesn’t remember hitting the floor—she just remembers feeling weightless and confused and terrified because the ground was coming fast but the darkness came faster and she still couldn’t move and—

And then, there was nothing.

Nothing but darkness.

Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ
thanks for reading... any feedback would be much appreciated :)

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being a god isn't all it's cracked up to be (pov kara)

Chapter Summary

Kara's frustrated and sad because Lena's in medical and she can't do a thing to help.

She has a moment.

Chapter Notes

as always, would love to know your thoughts :)

Kara had been soaring through the skies of National City when she’d heard it—her sister’s voice, panicked and desperate, practically pleading, “Lena! Lena, wake up, honey, c’mon, open your eyes —”

(She’d campaigned long and hard for J’onn to let her stay on base while Lena was examined, because the young girl just looked so scared and lost and Rao, Kara wanted nothing more than to gather little Lena up in her arms and fly her far away, somewhere she’d be safe from every soul who’d ever dared to cause her harm.

But J’onn had stood firm in his edict, stating in no uncertain terms that she had a duty to the city, to its people—not a single person, even if that person was Lena.

She didn’t have the energy to argue.

She knew Supergirl was supposed to be a beacon of hope, a symbol that humans could do better than mindless thieving and slaughter—Supergirl was supposed to be better, period.

She didn’t feel better right now; she didn’t feel like a god living amongst mortals.

Instead, she just felt human—human, and angry.

Angry enough to find Lillian Luthor and kill her for every injustice she’d inflicted upon her
daughter, upon Lena, upon the woman Kara has grown to love—

Ahem, the woman Kara has grown to like, is what she’d meant.)

She’d turned around so fast in midair she’d nearly given herself whiplash.

(Which, okay, fine, so maybe what with her powers and all, getting whiplash wasn’t actually a possibility. Point is, she turned around pretty gosh darn fast, alright?)

Her heart felt as if it might just beat out her chest as she flew past skyscrapers and hordes of civilians on the ground in the space of a second, wind whistling in her ears, her vision turning red around the edges as she finally, finally caught the DEO in her sights.

The stone cracked beneath her feat when she landed at headquarters, ignoring J’onn’s disapproving look as she launched herself to the second level, leaving cracks in the glass door as she burst into the lab and—Oh.

Oh.

Nothing could've prepared her for the sight of a mini Lena slumped lifelessly in Alex’s arms, looking so defenseless and tiny, her cheeks sickeningly pale (no hint of the rosy pink blush from earlier), chest contracting weakly beneath her wrinkled red dress—meanwhile, Kara stood frozen amidst it all, every sound fading to white noise in the background, all of her attention focused on the steady rise and fall of Lena’s chest as if terrified it might stop the moment she tore her gaze away.

Then, sooner than she could comprehend for the life of her what was happening, Alex was taking Lena into her arms and moving to exit the lab—hazily, Kara registered her sister saying something about getting the girl to medical, watching frozen with shock as Alex brushed past her out the doorway, little Lena cradled gently in her arms, already barking verbal observations on the young girl’s pulse and breathing to the couple of DEO doctors straggling after her.

She’d never felt so useless in her life—she was Supergirl, for Rao’s sake.

She had super strength, X-ray vision, alien invulnerability; she was a god, and yet, none of that meant a single freaking thing when Lena was small and unconscious and in need of medical
attention even after enduring far more than a child should ever have to, far more than she’d ever deserved.

Floating down to the first level of the DEO, Kara aimlessly made her way into the locker rooms; she’d never divested herself of the red-and-blue costume with such haste like she did then, trading the suit promptly for standard DEO black training sweats, expression glassy and blank as if in a sort of trance.

Then, without warning, the tidal wave of emotion hit her like a train, compressing her lungs until it was very nearly impossible for her to breathe. She felt her eyes beginning to heat, a faint red glow reflected against the sleek black metal of the lockers; she didn’t understand the point of being Supergirl if she couldn’t help the person she loved.

*Liked.*

No, *loved.*

(She decided then and there that she has no reason to keep lying to herself, to keep running from the propensity of her feelings like a coward, not when Lena was hurt and a child and hanging desperately onto life and Kara didn’t know if she was going to be okay, if she was going to have to watch her world crumble to smoke and ash again.

She thought losing Lena might hurt worse than the death of Krypton, actually.)

She didn’t feel like Supergirl right then, because the woman she loved might not make it through the night.

She didn’t feel ‘super’ at all, really.

And suddenly, the red glow faded and she was crying, *sobbing,* hot desperate tears escaping her eyes as she crumpled against the wall of lockers in the empty changing rooms (there was going to be a Kara-shaped dent in at least four agents’ lockers afterwards, but she had more important things to worry about), because for one of the first times in her life, she didn’t care about being Supergirl or making Kal-El proud or saving an Earth full of humans that never asked to be saved in the first place.
Saving Lena would be enough for her—*one* person, *one* woman, that’s all she’d ever ask… and somehow, she couldn’t.

She spent a long time buried in those lockers, listening every other minute for Lena’s pulse in the medbay, weak and thready in her ears—but it was *there*, and it was the only thing that kept Kara from flying directly into the sun to see just how invincible Kryptonians really were.

Lena *had* to be okay.

She had to, because Kara didn’t know how she was going to continue if she wasn’t.
the big guy upstairs (pov alex)

Chapter Summary

Alex and Kara talk while Lena recovers.

Also, Alex Danvers is not religious. Like, at all.

Chapter Notes

ok first of all- i'm not religious (i grew up mormon, actually, and my parents are still super devout believers, but since then definitely not religious) and this deals with my interpretation of one character's belief (or lack thereof) in a god and deals with it kind of humorously.

a lot of it is based on my personal experience growing up mormon and not straight, but definitely do not take this as a 'christianity is bad' if you believe in that sort of thing.

definitely not trying to offend... but anyways. here's the new chapter; as always, would love to hear any feedback:)

All in all, Alex had been quite sure her day couldn’t possibly get any worse.

She thought the Big Guy Upstairs might have taken that as a personal challenge to his authority, because Lena had fainted, Kara had run off an hour ago in a zombie-like fashion and hasn’t been seen since (which, considering Alex was currently with one of Kara’s favorite people on the planet, who also just so happened to be both inexplicably kiddie-fied and severely malnourished, was definitely cause for concern), and to make the whole thing all the more unsavory, she thought she’d just unwittingly pledged her unconditional protection to one Lena Luthor. She couldn’t run from the small and ridiculously lovable child if she tried, because like it or not, she cared now, and she knew better than anyone that there was no going back from that.

(And she realizes that little Lena’s horror-show of a day makes hers look like a cakewalk in comparison, but give her a break, alright?)

Because it’s times like these that make her wish she was more like Maggie, that she didn’t have random kids she’d just met worming their way into her heart and carving out a place for themselves while Alex remained completely unable to turn them away.
Because then they leave, and a piece of her feels like it’s been literally ripped from her chest, even as she knows it’s fucking stupid, because those kids were never hers to begin with—so, why the hell is she crying like she’s just lost a part of herself?

She’d like to think she’s tough; she used to think she was tough—but it’s shit like this that proves she’s not, and never has been.

Maggie was tough. Maggie is tough.

She almost wishes she had Kara’s problem, where she doesn’t understand that kidnapping random children isn’t allowed on this Earth, because somehow, her younger sister’s raging attachment issues involving children could never hold a goddamned candle to hers on even the darkest of nights.

And excuse her for waxing poetic here, but she wouldn’t spout flowery crap like this if it didn’t have some merit: because if she hadn’t already seen the heart-wrenchingly beautiful side of caring, she’d probably think it was the worst kind of curse, because it really fucking hurt.

God, did it hurt.

And seriously—Lena?)

She wasn’t even friends with Lena, and yet, here she was—sitting vigil at her bedside with the EKG beeping somewhat steadily in the background, keeping herself distracted by imagining various scenarios in which she hunted Lillian Luthor down and killed her for being such a horrid mother, for daring to push her wide-eyed and innocent young child to the brink of utter devastation, for raising Lena Luthor to think her needs weren’t worth “bothering” Alex for even while she starved to the point of unconsciousness.

Daydreams of murder aren’t exactly what anyone would call honorable, she knew, and she was sure Kara wouldn’t approve, but fuck if it didn’t help, because she thought she’d go crazy if she let herself think about anything else.

And sure, she shouldn’t have been surprised when Kara showed up after a couple eerily-silent minutes to make a bee-line for the medbay, her sister’s eyes glowing a faint red as she rage-marched towards Alex (she wasn’t wearing her suit anymore, Alex noticed, which struck her as odd—especially since Kara seemed to have traded it for standard DEO training sweats), but it was
all Alex could do to stop herself from glaring at the heavens and demanding “Really?!”, because did she really have to deal with this right now?

Yes, it turns out. Yes, she did.

(If there really was a God up there, he was gonna have a hell of a lot to answer for when she finally managed a sit-down with that sadistic bastard.)

She was vaguely afraid that Kara might lose control of her powers as she approached her, those normally-blue eyes burning a vengeful crimson. She didn’t quite know how to feel about the fact that she just might end up having that sit-down with Jesus a couple decades earlier than she’d originally planned, because she was calling Kara’s name and placing a tentative hand on her iron-hard shoulder and still, all she saw in her sister’s eyes was a blinding luminescence of red.

Desperately, she tried a new tactic: “Kara, Lena’s fine, I promise. She’s going to be fine, okay?”

There was a noticeable flicker as the powerful cardinal-red in Kara’s infuriated gaze dimmed slightly, and Alex knew she was onto something.

“Kara,” she repeated again. “Lena’s perfectly okay—you can hear her breathing, right? Her heartbeat?”

Hesitantly, Kara nodded, the cerulean blue of her irises finally beginning to appear as the lasers faded away.

“That’s because she’s sleeping, and she’s gonna wake up soon, okay?” She paused, a wave of relief washing over her as the red faded entirely from view—still, just to be sure, she kept talking: “She’s safe, Kara. She just passed out because she hadn’t eaten in a while,” she thought she saw a dangerous flash of burgundy for a moment, so she was quick to gloss over the earlier details. “But we had her wake up half an hour ago to eat some fruit, and we have an IV going with nutrients and vitamins while she sleeps. She’s gonna be fine.”

A bit out of breath, Alex let out a sharp exhale, her gaze still nervously affixed on her sister’s expression, half anger, the other half utterly ruined—but the apocalyptic glow was gone from that blue-eyed gaze she knew so well, and inwardly she heaved a sigh of relief, because she was not going to die today.
(Plus, she thinks it’d be ridiculously embarrassing if she were to die as a result of her younger sister being literally too gay to function properly, and maybe she’s not exactly Gandhi or anything, but she’d definitely like a cooler death than that.)

“Alex,” Kara choked out eventually, her voice hoarse and broken. “We have to help her. We have to.”

Alex cursed herself at the tears beginning to burn in her eyes. “I know, Kar,” she replied as soothingly as she could. “We’re going to.”

They were both silent for a long moment.

“Can she… Can she stay with me?”

Alex sighed. “Winn and James both have keys to your apartment… I don’t know if that’s the best thing to do.”

“I know, I just—” Kara stopped herself, head slightly bowed, her teary bloodshot eyes filled with such unmitigated heartbreak it physically hurt Alex to witness. “I don’t want to make her stay here.”

Don’t do it, she told herself, even as she knew she wasn’t strong enough to fight it. Don’t you fucking dare—

“What if she stays with me?” Alex found herself blurting before she could think any better of it, and Goddammit.

Kara’s head snapped up, pink-tinged eyes searching Alex for a hint of insincerity. (Fuck Fuck Fuck Fuck F—) “Really?”

You absolute moron, her brain bemoaned even as she found herself saying: “Of course, Kar. You can stay there, too, until we figure this all out.”

A second later, there was a wide grin spreading across her sister’s tear-stained features and Alex
found herself hit with an armful of Kara that nearly knocked her to the floor, her arms reflexively coming up to hug her sister back even as she practically *screamed* at herself for being such a goddamned idiot.

“Thank you for doing this,” Kara mumbled into her shoulder with a sniffle.

Alex shut her eyes, a wave of emotion hitting her as she basked in Kara’s warmth.

*I can’t believe I’m doing this.*
Chapter Summary

Lena wakes up in the medbay at the DEO.
She's rather confused.
Also, Kara's sad, and Lena's not sure why, but it's making her sad, too.

Chapter Notes

hope you enjoy:)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Lena woke slowly, her senses unusually dull, as if she’d been sleeping for a very long time.

Her head felt heavy, there was a painful throbbing all throughout her body, and her mouth felt parched, like the driest of sandpapers.

Worse, she didn’t have the faintest clue as to where she was.

She didn’t dare open her eyes as she assessed the situation around her; no, everything felt unfamiliar, unknown, the farthest thing from safe (though, to be fair, it’d been a long time since Lena had felt ‘safe’), and she knew it’d be best to gather as much data as she could before opening her eyes, thereby alerting those around her to her change in consciousness.

For starters, she was lying down on something soft, like a mattress, which was strange—she couldn’t remember going to bed, or returning to Luthor Mansion, or ever shutting her eyes.

The last thing she could remember was… was…. Alex? It’s bleary, and it hurts her head to remember, but she knows she has to. Knowledge is power, she tells herself, repeating it over and over in her head like a mantra, its soothing effects washing over her like gentle waves lapping softly against the shore.
So, she remembers Alex. The tall lady, the one with two big guns and short red hair, the one that scared the ever-loving beJesus out of Lena—though, not as much as Lillian, which she guesses is something to be grateful for.

(She doesn’t think anyone could ever scare her as badly as Lillian does.)

She remembers… a polished laboratory, with microscopes and slides and an expensive-looking centrifuge sitting in the corner.

(Lena loves science; she’s loved it for as long as she can recall.

She remembers she’d been so excited when Alex led her to the labs, even as she was ever careful not to show it.

She remembers thinking it’d be so cool to play with their microscopes, or maybe take the centrifuge for a spin, even as she knew better than to ask for such things.

Especially from a grumpy-looking agent with guns.)

She remembers Alex recording her height, Lena having to help her with metric system conversions, then being beckoned over towards the scale, and then… nothing.

She must have passed out.

Or, there was always the possibility that they’d drugged her.

But she’d been careful, hadn’t she? Though, to be fair, this place was a government base; what’s more, it was the weaponized kind, too.

What was it Kara had called it? The.. D… DEO? Yes, that sounded right.

Well, whether they’d dosed her with something or not, there was nothing Lena could do about that now.
She could, however, further explore the first option: that she’d passed out.

Honestly, that conjecture made a great deal of sense, considering how long it’d been since she’d eaten.

(Which was rather comforting, especially when the alternative was that she’d been drugged against her will.)

Speaking of, her hunger pains were gone—at least, to a certain degree; and she felt stronger, like she’d eaten something.

She thinks she remembers waking up at one point and being fed fruit slices, but she’s sure that’s just her imagination playing tricks on her, because surely no one would bother themselves with getting little Lena sliced fruit, much less taking the time to feed them to her—no, they had better things to do, she was sure.

And even if they didn’t, it’s not as if they had any obligation to her. No, she was just some random child, and if her own adoptive parents didn’t care enough to do things like that, why should she expect anyone else to?

(She shouldn’t.)

She could hear something beeping steadily off to her side, like an EKG… was she in a hospital? Her heart clenched at the thought.

But then again, Lillian would never take her to a hospital, not when she could call an in-house doctor to treat Lena just as easily, thereby preventing the public from discovering the Luthors did indeed have another child besides Lex.

(There was also the matter of broken bones, of “accidents” that were far too violent in nature to be simple accidents—Lillian would never want the public to catch wind of that.

She remembers the time she’d up-shown Lex at their school’s science fair, easily snagging first place with her preliminary technology for synthetic skin grafts, while Lex’s alien detector had
blown a fuse before he could present, placing him firmly out of the running.

Lillian had been there, of course—not for Lena, but for Lex. He’d always been the Golden Boy, a fact that Lena had been more or less forced to accept since she’d first shown up on the steps of Luthor Mansion.

To keep up appearances, because truthfully that was one of the few thing Lillian seemed to care about, her adoptive mother clapped politely when Lena’s victory had been announced, and pasted a terrifyingly wide smile on her face as the young girl was bestowed a medal for winning the contest.

It wasn’t until they’d been driven back to the mansion, and Lillian had sent Lex to go continue his studies somewhere Lena couldn’t “corrupt” his brilliant mind, that she’d shown her displeasure.

Sensing what was coming, Lena made a half-hearted attempt to scurry into her room and hide—Lillian had stopped her with a cold hand on her forearm, wrapping her in a tight immobilizing grip at the top of the stairs.

She’d then accused Lena of sabotaging Lex’s tech to ensure he wouldn’t win the contest—no matter how vehemently Lena protested, how politely she’d promised she’d never ever do such a thing to him, Lillian had just snarled, saying she should know better than to lie.

Lena wasn’t lying. She’d adored Lex from the minute the Luthors adopted her—when they’d first met, she remembers that his eyes positively shone with unchecked charisma as he gave her that devastatingly charming crooked grin she would grow to love so much; she remembers he seemed to radiate the kind of light and hope she was desperate for after being stuck in the dark for so long, what with the pain of her mother’s death and the terror she felt when meeting Lillian and Lionel for the first time.

She didn’t understand for the life of her why Lillian might think she’d do such a thing to Lex; she loved him, more than she could remember loving anyone besides her biological mother before.

Regardless, Lillian was unswayed by Lena’s desperate attempts to right the narrative, to assure her cold adoptive mother that she didn’t, that she wouldn’t—after a moment or two, tired of her daughter’s pleas, Lillian abruptly threw her down the marble steps.

Lena broke her arm in three places; in one place, the bone had actually broken skin as she laid sobbing and bleeding at the foot of the stairs while the click of Lillian’s heels calmly approached
Lillian didn’t bother helping her up, just scolded in her icy tone, “Luthors don’t cry, you stupid girl.” After that, she’d strutted off, leaving Lena broken and sniffling on the atrium floor.

A discreet doctor of Lillian’s choosing had come later that night, ignoring Lena’s urgent sobs and resetting the bone without any anesthetic or painkillers. She’d never screamed so loud.

She kept her inventions to herself, from then on.)

So, that begged the question: what was she doing in a hospital?

Maybe Alex had taken her—but no, that didn’t make sense either, because why would Alex do that?

Alex had even less of an obligation to her than Lillian ever did…

Strange. It was all very strange.

Eyes still tightly shut, Lena could hear voices filtering in through the background—two of them, both female.

Her chest tightened when she identified one of the two as Alex, and it only tightened even further when she discerned the other to be the Kryptonian who’d flown her there.

They were whispering urgently back and forth, though no matter how hard she tried, Lena couldn’t make out the words; Kara sounded… worried? Upset? It was difficult for Lena to tell.

(Though, she wasn’t keen on waking herself to face an angry Super; that much was for sure.)

Alex’s voice just sounded tired, exhausted. Defeated, almost.
Lena didn’t really know what to make of that.

After staying silent and listening for another minute, having decided there was nothing more to learn from her predicament (at least, not without her sight), she allowed her eyes to flutter open.

The lights were off, the only light streaming in from outside through the floor-to-ceiling windows (Lena suspected they were most likely bulletproof), and despite her earlier suspicions, she wasn’t at a hospital.

No, she was still at the government base, the DEO, as far as she could tell—just in its medical wing.

She carefully shifted her head this way and that to assess her surroundings further, her body stiffening involuntarily as both voices promptly halted their conversation.

“Lena?” came Kara’s hesitant voice.

Hesitantly, Lena turned to look at her. She was no longer wearing her red-and-blue suit from earlier, which puzzled Lena. Instead, she had on black standard-issue sweats with a grey logo on the chest that read ‘D.E.O.’ as she stood only a handful of feet from Lena’s bed, her golden-blonde hair pulled up messily into a ponytail. Her brows were furrowed, a deep crinkle forming between her brow, and her eyes looked bloodshot, like she’d been crying.

(Lena didn’t know what to make of that, either. Luthors didn’t cry. What did people normally do when someone was crying?)

Alex was a few steps behind her, still dressed in the same all-black combat suit complete with both guns on either thigh from before, a wary but distinctly fatigued look on her angular features. She looked less grumpy, Lena noted, which was a good sign.

She didn’t understand it, though. Why wasn’t Alex angry?

Surely it hadn’t been helpful for Lena to faint, thereby preventing Alex from doing her job—and yet, the lady agent was acting disturbingly unbothered, like she didn’t care either way.
Was this a trick?

“Are you going to shoot me?” she found herself asking before she could stop it, her voice coming out strained and gravelly—she fought the urge to clamp a hand over her traitorous mouth as varying degrees of distaste broke out on either woman’s face in response to her question, because, Oh no.

Clearly, she’d underestimated the effect passing out from hunger would have on her normally perfectly-managed self control. And now, she was going to pay for it—of that, she was certain.

Tentatively, she watched the scene before her, waiting apprehensively for the imminent explosion: Kara looked completely stunned (and more than a little crestfallen, which only furthered Lena’s utter bewilderment), while Alex had a vaguely offended expression on her features—Alex was the first to recover of the two, clearing her throat as she slowly moved closer to stand beside Kara.

“No, of course not, Lena,” Alex assured her with a soft voice. (Since when had Scary Agent Lady’s voice been soft? ) “Why would you think that?”

Is this a test? Lena couldn’t help but wonder.

Alex’s troubled look only worsened at that, while Kara just looked as if she might cry, and Lena was hit with the sudden realization that she’d said that out loud.

Oh, God. She was really gonna get it now.

“I’m sorry,” she managed to squeak out, her throat still horribly dry. “I’m sorry, Ma’am,” she repeated, bowing her head, hoping desperately that she hadn’t made it any worse.

(She’d learned early on that when Lillian was displeased with her, keeping eye contact would only worsen her rage, as she often interpreted it as a direct challenge to her authority.

Though at other times, she’d deliver a hard slap across Lena’s cheek for daring to disrespect her by avoiding her gaze.
It was rather hit or miss, honestly.

But most times, Lillian seemed to be content when Lena bowed her head, keeping her eyes steadfastly on her shoes in an indisputably submissive stance—her still and straight posture ensured she was indeed paying attention to Lillian’s words, all while acknowledging and displaying her own inferiority.

It was as close to ‘safe’ as Lena ever got in the mansion.)

“Lena,” Kara managed, her voice sounding strained. “You have nothing to be sorry for, okay? I—I’m just glad you’re safe.”

“We’re not angry,” Alex’s voice came after Kara’s, her tone kind and steady. “There’s no test, and we would never hurt you. Ever.”

This felt like a test.

But Lena just nodded meekly, keeping her gaze downcast towards her hands folded neatly in her lap. “I’m sorry I messed up your exam.”

She flinched when Alex stepped closer, her heart suddenly feeling as if it might beat straight out of her chest.

(The monitor’s beeping grew faster, only serving to accelerate her panic—it was definitely an EKG beside her, she decided.)

“Lena, don’t apologize. You don’t need to.” A pause while Lena tried to comprehend those words, tried to make them make sense. They didn’t. “Do you remember the last time you ate?”

Lena bit her lip, trying to think, barely registering as the beeping began to steadily slow in the background. (Distraction was good; it gave no room for being afraid.) “Two days?”

Kara gasped audibly at her response, and Lena had to fight the urge not to jump at the sudden noise.
“Lena,” Alex said softly with a sigh. She sounded disappointed. “Why didn’t you tell me you were hungry when I asked?”

If this was a test, Lena was sure she was failing horribly.

“I’m sorry,” she mumbled out her reply. “I didn’t want to bother you.”

“Lena, sweetie, can you look at me please?”

A thrill of fear ran down Lena’s spine at Alex’s question. Was she going to hit her?

A million scenarios ran through Lena’s brain, none of them good—but she’d never been one to blatantly disobey, especially not with people who held such substantial authority over her. People like Alex. And Kara. And Lillian.

She raised her chin, obediently allowing her wide green eyes to meet brown, vaguely registering a silent Kara standing beside Alex.

(The Super still looked sad, she thought. And for some completely inexplicable reason, Lena felt sad, too, since Kara was sad.

It baffled her, because she’d only just met the Kryptonian—and yet, it seemed as if there was something pulling from within her, something almost magnetic saying that she knew Kara, that she could trust Kara, that Kara was important, period.

There was a lot about this that didn’t make sense, but Kara was the piece of it that had bothered her the most from the very start.

Lena just wanted this whole thing to end.)

“Good,” Alex cooed encouragingly when their eyes met. “Good; you’re doing so well.”
Lena had never felt so lost in her life—what was she meant to do with those words? With that… praise?

(She’d never heard Lillian say anything like that before. Ever.

Not even Lex had given her compliments like that—at least, not without a biting condescension or critique that immediately followed.

This was… unprecedented, and it was confusing, above all else.

Lena didn’t like being confused.)

“I want you to know something,” Alex stated, her intense gaze seeming to bore into Lena. “You never have to be afraid to ask for things, okay?”

Kara nodded beside her, her cerulean-blue eyes filled with sincerity. (Lena didn’t know why that made her feel so safe all of a sudden. She didn’t trust it, but somehow she was starting to trust Kara, and it was enough to make her feel dizzy all over again for reasons she couldn’t even begin to explain.) “I—we—are here because we care, and we want to help. You can ask us for anything, okay? Anything.”

Lena bit her lip, not quite wanting to agree (no matter what they said, she’d still never dare to bother them for something as trivial as her own wants and desires, because she wasn’t delusional enough to expect anything in return but a swift and painful punishment), but truly not knowing how else to go about appeasing the ardent pair before her.

“Okay,” she whispered eventually, something strange building in her chest as Kara broke out into the widest grin and Alex’s lips quirked into something like a smile beside her, something warm and entirely unfamiliar that surfaced amidst the fear and uncertainty and confusion she’d been drowning in for days.

Something that felt a heck of a lot like hope.

Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ
this week might end up being pretty crazy for me work-and-school-wise, so the next chapter might take a little longer than a couple days, but i’ll get it up as soon as i can manage!

hope you liked:)
After informing little Lena of the plan (that she’d be living in Alex’s apartment with both sisters until they could sort everything out), she almost immediately fell back asleep, wide green eyes hesitantly drifting shut and her tiny body curling itself drowsily into a ball around the standard-issue blankets on the medical bed (which was adorable, in Kara’s opinion)—figuring they could allow her a couple hours to recover, Kara and Alex left to find J’onn, needing to discuss the “finer details” of Lena’s living arrangements, according to Alex.

(Personally, Kara didn’t know what else there was to discuss: Lena was a kid, and the most precious kid in the entire world at that, and now she and Alex were going to protect her and love her and give her the best childhood ever like she’d always deserved until they could figure out how to get her back.

What was so complicated about that?)

“So,” J’onn announced as they (Kara, Alex, J’onn, and Winn) stood around the center console at the heart of mission operations in the DEO. “What do we know so far?”

“Besides the fact that she’s 9 years old and severely traumatized?” Alex virtually fumed, clenching her jaw. “A whole lot of nothing.”

J’onn sighed. “Best guess?”

“Oh!” Winn raised his hand awkwardly. “I, um—We think it was an alien weapon.”
Both Kara and Alex’s heads whipped around to fix the boy with burning stares. “How do you know that?” Kara felt herself ask.

“Well,” Winn began hesitantly, fiddling with the plastic Nerf gun in his grip, “I went and did some readings in the super creepy warehouse, which, so obvious—it’s like Lillian Luthor just looked up ‘sketchy hideouts’ in the Supervillain Handbook and—”

“Winn,” Alex interrupted firmly.

Kara tried her best not to glare at him; she knew the rambling was just how Winn tended to cope with his nerves.

“R-Right!” Winn squeaked, cheeks growing pink. “So there were some unusual readings, very high residues for various alien alloys that aren’t naturally found on Earth—”

“Like the kind used to make Lena a kid,” Kara supplied.

Winn nodded. “Bingo.”

There was silence for a moment, supplemented only by the bustling noises of the DEO filtering through the background—everyone was staring at Winn (waiting for more information), Kara included, even while the boy continued fiddling absentmindedly with the hair trigger on his Nerf revolver as if it were the most fascinating thing on the planet.

To him, it just might have been, but it was driving Kara crazy, because Lena was supposed to be her brilliant 26-year-old CEO best friend, the woman that she loves—not a small broken 9-year-old who fears horrible repercussions at the slightest perceived “offense.”

“Schott,” J’onn eventually barked, just as Kara was gearing up to deliver some biting remark she knew Winn didn’t deserve, but she couldn’t be bothered to stop herself right then, not when everything was so ridiculously upside-down and complicated and wrong.

(She just wanted Lena back.)
Winn’s entire body jumped abruptly, the boy’s head snapping up from his plastic toy and seeming to shrink in his place as he took in the three pairs of unamused stares boring into him. “W-What’s that, sir?” His voice was at least three octaves higher than normal.

Kara felt like punching something.

J’onn raised his eyebrows. “Agent Sch—”

“How can we fix it,” Kara practically growled; despite the wording, it really didn’t come out sounding like a question.

Winn’s eyes widened comically. “U-Uh y-yo—” he sputtered, his cheeks quickly tingling a rosy pink. “I mean—I—I—“

“Winn,” Alex hissed.

Winn let out another undignified squeak, and a stab of guilt penetrated Kara’s chest, because she knew he was trying to help—he was just nervous. “Well, it’s just that—You know, to reverse engineer the—I mean, it’s not impossible, exactly—"

“Winn,” Kara interrupted tiredly, heaving a long sigh. “Look, I’m sorry for snapping at you—take your time. Just, how can we fix this?”

Winn just nodded frantically, the tips of his ears quickly turning a bright red. “If I had the weapon, that would help.”

At that, Alex let out a sigh, a hand coming up to pinch at the bridge of her nose. “Otis Graves didn’t have any alien weapons on him when we brought him in.”

“Lillian,” Kara murmured, easily coming to the less-than-ideal conclusion at more or less the same time Alex did, their determined gazes locking over the missions console.
Alex pursed her lips. “We have to find her.”

(She’ll admit she felt a little spark of satisfaction when she came upon the realization that they’d need to hunt Lillian down in order to save Lena—she thinks she shouldn’t wear the cape while they hunt, that she doesn’t deserve to wear the symbol of hope and truth and good on her chest while she’s hell-bent on putting Lillian Luthor six feet under once Kara finds her, the laws of the American justice system be damned.

It’s a little scary, to be perfectly honest—she used to think she was good, that so long as she worked every day to be that beacon of hope for the people in her city, she could be the god-like guardian angel they’d always wished for.

She doesn’t feel ‘good’ right now; she feels as if the notions of truth and justice are steadily losing their meaning even as she grasps desperately at their remnants, but what’s worse is she doesn’t even care—because she’ll throw all of it away without a second glance if it means she gets Lena back in her arms, if she can make damn sure Lillian never lays a hand upon her ever again.

She’s not saying she’ll give up being a protector for National City; no, she doesn’t think she could do that if she tried.

But she can’t be Supergirl after this; she’s sure of that much.

She can’t be Supergirl when her first priority isn’t the people living in her city—and if she’s being honest with herself, they never really have been, not since the day she met Lena Luthor for the very first time.

She needs to get Lena better, because she thinks it’ll break her into a million tiny pieces if she fails—there’s nothing else in the world, in the universe, that matters more than that.)

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Chapter End Notes

i’m still in the middle of a shitstorm week, though, so i’ll get up the next bit as soon as i can!
like flowers in spring (pov alex)

Chapter Summary

Alex and Kara take Lena back to the apartment.

Alex has a lot of feelings, and so does Kara. It's sad (but also cute).

Chapter Notes

so i think the week from hell is over! i should start working on the next lena chapter soon (though i’m planning for it to be a longer one)... hope you like this bit:

Two hours later finds Kara and Alex positively desperate to bring little Lena Luthor out of DEO headquarters, away from all the combat-ready agents with guns (which she’s more than aware includes her—she’s planning on locking both pistols in the titanium-reinforced safe as soon as they reach her apartment), somewhere closer to a home where she can be warm and safe and (with luck) a hell of a lot less scared.

Neither of them have the heart to wake the young girl, who’s curled up on her side in a mess of bedsheets and blankets, letting out slow and even breaths, her brows serenely un-furrowed, adorable features relaxed for the first time since Kara had flown her there.

Alex watches as her sister gathered the tiny Luthor in her arms with so much care and sensitivity, like Kara is terrified she might break if she so much as nudges her the wrong way. (Honestly, Alex would do the same, because she thinks a sleeping 9-year-old Lena might just be the most precious thing she’s ever seen, and she’ll be damned before she ever does a single thing to jeopardize that.)

She leaves her motorcycle parked in the DEO garage, and instead swipes the keys for one of the standard federal-issue bulletproof armored SUVs, because she refuses to take a single risk right now—not when little Lena is entirely unbothered and sleeping soundly in Kara’s arms, and especially not when Lillian Luthor is still out there no doubt plotting something needlessly dramatic but undoubtedly nefarious; no, she’s going to protect this child in every way she knows how, no matter what it requires of her.

(She knows it makes her a damned fool, but she thinks she’ll cross continents for the fragile young green-eyed girl should she ever find herself in need of such a thing—all she has to do is say the word.)
She’s a hell of a lot more careful driving them back to her apartment (Kara still holding kid Lena with protective arms in the passenger’s seat), taking turns slowly enough (less than 15mph) that she’s sure the drivers behind her are fuming in their seats (she knows she’d have a litany of choice profanity spewing from her tongue if it was her), but she really doesn’t care, because Lena hasn’t stirred in Kara’s embrace, and the young girl has even begun to let out a gentle snore every now and again, and Goddammit those impatient assholes turning red-faced in her rearview mirror can wait just a second longer while she works to make their trip as smooth and safe as possible for Lena.

It’s slow going, but eventually they’ve parked in the garage of Alex’s apartment building, and Kara has carried Lena up the stairs and into the scarcely-cluttered space (the girl still fast asleep and mewling like a kitten against her sister’s chest)—after a moment’s hesitation (probably less, honestly), she’s ordering in a whisper for Kara to deposit an unconscious Lena on her neatly-made queen-sized bed, smiling to herself when the young girl burrows comfortably into the blankets with a small sigh of contentment, forming a small lump on her bed that causes Alex's heart to swell in her chest.

Then she’s wordlessly gesturing for Kara to sit at her counter before moving to grab two mugs and the half-full carton of OJ in the fridge—returning to sit beside her sister with juice in hand, Kara brightens visibly while Alex pours her a cup.

(One of these days, she swears Kara’s absolutely garbage diet will catch up with her.)

They’re silent for a while, side-by-side as they keep watch over the tiny bundle of Lena curled tightly upon Alex’s bed, occasionally bringing their respective mugs up for a swig of too-sweet orange juice in the comfortable quiet.

(Alex briefly feels a pang in her chest that demands a tumbler of whiskey in her grip, like, yesterday—but one more look at Lena ensures she wouldn’t, that she won’t, not until they can get her back.)

“She’s so small,” Kara says after a long moment, not taking her wide puppy-like blue eyes off Lena’s sleeping form. “So fragile.”

Alex just nods, swallowing thickly as little Lena takes another deep inhale, her tiny chest expanding and contracting with every breath. “Yeah,” she croaks.
“And she’s so,” Kara pauses then, her voice breaking, “scared.”

That makes her heart hurt, and the worst part of it all is that Kara isn’t wrong, that there’s no reassurance for Alex to give here, that describing Lena as “scared” is probably a massive understatement as understatements go.

“We have to give her stability,” she murmurs, even as she knows it’s a reach if there ever was one.

“What if we can’t?” Kara asks in little more than a whisper, like it’s a secret she’s afraid to share. (Alex thinks it just might be.) “She’s scared of us, Al. She thought you were going to shoot her.”

Alex winces at that, and feels a pang of misdirected anger at Kara for bringing it up because she knows, she fucking knows, and it’s like a white-hot knife to remember the terrified look on Lena’s face when it happened—she gets it under control quickly, though, because she also knows Kara’s scared, that she’s not intentionally placing any blame here, that her little sister is watching the person she loves go through something really fucking scary and it’s not her fault she doesn’t know what to do about it.

“Yeah,” she says, trying to keep her voice steady. “But we have to try anyways. We owe her that.”

Kara nods in response, her eyes bloodshot and tinged with pink—but there’s something there, Alex can see. Something like determination, like the steely resolve emphasized so liberally in her famous namesake, like she was rising to the challenge after having fallen so much harder and farther than she ever had before.

It makes pride bloom uncontrollably in Alex’s chest like something overtly and pathetically idyllic—like flowers in spring, maybe; but, she decides she doesn’t care, because it’s them against the world right now, them protecting Lena like one of their own from those who would see her hurt and broken, and fuck it all but Alex thinks there’s a special kind of beauty in that—and what’s more, she’s ready to do it.

She’s ready to rain hell on Lillian Luthor while at the same time surrounding kid Lena with warmth and affection unlike anything she’s never known; she’s ready to show the girl that family and love don’t have to mean pain and devastation, that it shouldn’t hurt so badly to love and be loved, that in fact it’s not really “love” at all if it breaks her down into a shell of who she used to be until she can’t remember what it’s like to walk the world without crushing doubt plaguing her every step; she’s ready to fight with everything she has to make this right, because Lena deserves that and she always had, whether Alex had been willing to see it or not.
Lillian Luthor is going to regret every harsh word, every elaborate manipulation, every hurt she’s brought upon her precious and entirely undeserving adoptive child, Alex decides—she'll see to that personally.

Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ
winning the lottery (pov lena)

Chapter Summary

Lena wakes to another unfamiliar place. She makes do.

(She always does.)

It doesn't go all that well.

Chapter Notes

please don't hate me for this ahhhh

See the end of the chapter for more notes

For the third time in less than 24 hours, Lena Luthor woke in a strange place.

Like before, she took precautions: didn’t open her eyes, kept her breathing long and slow (as if she were still asleep), and avoided making any sudden movements.

She was in another bed, she realized quickly—though this one was a lot softer than the medical bed at the DEO.

(She had the brief and terrifying thought that she might be back in Luthor Mansion, that Lillian had found her again.

Though, she did have to say: this comfy bed was a sizable step up from the cold and cramped cage—at least she’d be punished and ridiculed while surrounded by worldly comfort.)

What’s more, it smelled… homey, she thought, because she truly couldn’t find another adjective to describe it—not that she’d have any reason to know what ‘homey’ should smell like.

(With that, she quickly ruled out Luthor Mansion.
Luthor Mansion didn’t smell ‘homey’ or ‘warm’—instead, it often carried the faint scent of Lillian’s pretentious perfume, along with Lionel’s equally pretentious cologne, and little else.

She didn’t hear voices this time, but admittedly she was having a bit of trouble with discerning whether or not that was a bad thing—on the one hand, if she was alone, she wasn’t in any immediate danger beyond eventual starvation and losing herself in the vastness of the big scary world; on the other, if she wasn’t, then she could expect blows and insults to rain from the heavens at any given moment, and God if that didn’t hurt every single time.

She didn’t know which she preferred, honestly.

Having resigned herself to the fact that she wouldn’t know more until she opened her eyes, she heaved a small sigh before letting her lids flutter open.

It was dark; the lights were off, and faint moonlight shone through the single window off to the left—definitely not Luthor Mansion.

No, it looked to be an apartment of sorts—clean, nice, modest.

A quick look to the digital clock sitting on the nightstand to her right told her it was 1:04am as she took in the scent of the big comfortable bed she had sunken into—almost forest-y, with a hint of something like vanilla bean—Alex, her brain decided.

Yes, that sounded right—this all smelled like Alex, the tall scary lady in the DEO with guns who was dressed in all-black; Kara’s friend.

Where was Alex?

Slowly, still unsure as to who would be watching, she pulled herself upright, her body protesting greatly as she did.

(She remembered passing out at the DEO, but the only thing she’d eaten since then was apple slices in the medbay, and a granola bar she’d managed to swipe off one of the doctors who’d come around to check and record her vitals.)
She’d come to understand that being fed was most certainly not a guarantee—especially not under Lillian’s roof.

So, she kept a small stash of non-perishables under her bed in an old shoebox—whenever she could manage it without attracting Lillian’s ire, she would pocket something from the kitchens: a bag of nuts, a protein bar, a piece of candy with a shiny wrapper.

It wasn’t much, but when she was on her third consecutive day of a no-exceptions kitchen-and-food ban ordered by none other than Lillian, well… it certainly felt like a fair amount.

She was almost sad she wouldn’t be returning to Luthor Mansion, if only to retrieve her beloved shoebox—no, it seemed she’d be kept in a new place, now… which meant she would be needing a new shoebox, to start again on a stash of rations for when she was inevitably punished and banned from eating.

Oh, well, she supposed—she’d make do.

She always did.)

Gradually, her eyesight grew used to the darkness blanketing the room—enough that she could make out a person-shaped lump sprawled across the couch just twenty feet or so from the bed, and another at the foot of the couch, unconscious in what looked to be a makeshift bed constructed with a mess of blankets and pillows.

After squinting harder, she identified Alex as the lump on the couch, since Kara's golden-blonde hair peeking over the nest of blankets on the floor was something of a dead giveaway.

Suddenly, she felt guilt curling in her chest in the most unpleasant of ways—why hadn’t they woken her, made her sleep elsewhere? Clearly, this was Alex’s bed…

Oh no.

A thought hit her. More than one, actually.
(None of them were good.)

Were they doing this so that they could punish her in the morning?

Catch Lena on the bed when they woke and beat her for daring to sleep on Alex’s mattress? Or worse, starve her?

(She didn’t have her shoebox with her, and considering how little she’d eaten in the past 48+ hours, she didn’t know if she could *survive* it if they chose to deny her food.

She wasn’t afraid of dying, not anymore; but, she was afraid of dying if it happened by way of being starved until her body failed.

That’d be painful, she knew. Horribly so.

No, if death was coming for her, she wanted it to be quick. Painless—at least, relatively so.)

Mind made up, she carefully crawled to the edge of the bed, stepping down as quietly as she could manage—Kara was a Kryptonian, she remembered; that meant inhumanly far-reaching senses, hearing included.

She had to be vigilant.

(She always was.)

Taking small steps, she winced as the floorboard creaked beneath her weight, then held her breath when Kara shifted in her sleep—soon enough, the woman was burrowing back into her blankets with a contented sound, her body relaxing under the sheets.

*Good.*

Up ahead and past the couch was a kitchen area, with cupboards and a refrigerator and a long island with a sleek granite countertop—she had to get there.
It was torture, walking as softly as she could past the couch, stopping with a sharp intake of breath whenever either woman so much as twitched in their sleep—but a minute later and she’d done it, hiding herself safely between the square-shaped island in the kitchen and the rows of cabinets on the walls.

Tentatively, she opened a cabinet.

No creak. She let out a sigh of relief.

Peering inside, she saw stacks of Ziploc containers and bigger storage dishes made of glass—no food.

Cautiously, she shut the cupboard.

She shuffled over to the next cabinet, opening its wooden door with precise movements and—

_Creeeak._

She froze. _Shoot._

Paralyzed with fear, she strained her ears for any sound of either woman rousing from sleep—nothing.

She let out a slow breath through her nostrils, feeling her heartbeat hammering in her chest.

(God, she hoped Kara didn’t monitor heartbeats in her sleep, because Lena’s was beating at an almost terminal rate, even by the most lax of medical standards.

She wouldn’t do that, right?

The Kryptonian's body seemed to, by many accounts, mirror that of a human’s… unconsciousness
meant REM sleeping, in all likelihood, and there was no way the neural stem through her thalamus and cortex could somehow merge her sense of alertness with reality… right?

It hurt Lena’s head to think about it.)

Forcing herself to focus (and blinking back the dizziness in her brain), she eyed the contents of the second cabinet: plastic wrap, rolls of aluminum foil, glass bottles filled with alcohol.

Okay, so not that one. Conscientiously, she closed the cabinet.

God, her head hurt.

(She figured it was the whole ‘not eating’ thing—she’d grown intimately familiar with the signs of malnourishment: hunger pains, headaches, exhaustion…

That didn’t mean she was somehow immune to their effects, though.)

She padded over to the next cabinet, holding her breath in her chest as she pried opened its wooden door.

No creak.

Thank God.

And, in a rare stroke of luck (seriously, Lena didn’t have ‘luck’—she felt as if she’d won the lottery here), this cabinet was packed with snack foods—Nature Valley granola bars (But the crumbs! her brain practically screeched even as she scolded herself for having the audacity to be so picky), an opened bag of clementines (she’d have to eat those first if she added them to her new stash so they didn’t go bad), individually-wrapped 6-packs of Oreos (she wanted to cry with happiness when she spotted those), Goldfish (a carton, not individually-wrapped, she noticed with a pang of discontent), a box of strawberry-flavored Pop Tarts (Yes! her brain cheered), and little plastic packs of trail mix.

She’d never seen so many delicious-looking snacks in her whole life—and in one place, too.
Yeah, she thought. *This must be what it feels like to win the lottery.*

Still hyper-aware of the two women sleeping peacefully just ten feet away from her, she gripped the hem of her dress with slightly trembling hands, stretching it out in front of her to form something of a pouch—then, she filled it with snacks.

Only one or two of each, obviously, because she knew the consequences very well of failing to be subtle about the snacks she took for her stash—she shuddered involuntarily even as the pouch grew heavier in the hands.

(She really didn’t want to think about what had happened the last time she’d taken too many of Lillian’s healthy protein bars.

It hadn’t ended well for her.)

The packages of food made slight noises as they shifted in her makeshift pouch, but she listened for another long moment, and there was no sound from the two women—just long and deep breaths, in and out like clockwork.

She grinned to herself. Maybe she could do this, after all.

— —

She dreamed she was back at Luthor Mansion.

Lillian was shouting relentlessly, Lionel was black-out drunk (the rancid stench of whiskey seemed to roll off him in waves), and Lex was nowhere to be seen.

Lillian called her stupid, fat, *worthless*—each word cut through Lena like a knife.

Then Lionel was gripping her arm *hard*, yelling at her for… well, for *what*, she wasn’t quite sure, but what she did know was that it *hurt.*
God, did it hurt.

Afterwards, she was crying and sobbing on the polished marble of the floor, blood dripping steadily from her nose and mixing with the tears and snot escaping her in rivulets.

Then suddenly Lex was there, crouching down to eye her coldly on the floor as she whimpered—she almost didn’t recognize him with that callous and cold-blooded look sparkling in his almond-brown eyes, that crooked smile she loved so much twisting into a vicious sneer that chilled her to the bone.

(She could almost feel her heart splintering in her chest.)

“Poor little Lena,” he mocked, and Lena felt like breaking. (Lex was never so cruel to her—sure, he belittled her on the regular, and she’d grown to understand that that condescension was the way he showed his love, but he wasn’t… mean. He wasn’t cruel. Not like Lionel when he was drunk. Not like Lillian.) “Wanna know a secret?” he asked then as he leaned closer, mischief glinting amidst the savagery in his stare. He didn’t wait for a response: “I never loved you.”

Lena woke up screaming.

Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ

Chapter End Notes

hopefully should be able to get the next bit up soon! i prOmise its gonna get better for lena ok
pinky promise (pov kara)

Chapter Summary

Lena has a nightmare, but Kara's there to help.

It's really, really cute.

Chapter Notes

Ahh for some reason I loved writing Lena in this chapter, especially from the outside perspective... Also the dynamic between them is just so awesome to write

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Kara had never been a morning person, but the sound of Alex moving quietly around the kitchen at 6am had been more than enough to wake her from a somewhat restless sleep—so, she’d risen to bid Alex a safe jog (which, what is it with humans and exercise? It’s self-inflicted torture! ), then dragged herself groggily upright to dig around the kitchen; she was starving.

She was about three-fourths of the way through the rest of Alex’s strawberry Pop Tarts when she heard it—Lena’s heartbeat quickening to an alarming pace, small scared whimpers escaping the girl as she tossed and turned on… hold on—she wasn’t on the bed.

Where was she?

(The Pop Tart fell out of Kara’s mouth and onto the counter, but she couldn’t have possibly cared less as she literally flew over to Alex’s mattress.)

In under a second Kara was there, standing at the foot of the bed, not quite understanding wh—

There she was, sweat beaded at her pale temples, squirming with clear discomfort on the hardwood, incoherent pleas escaping small parted pink lips even while her lids remained tightly shut.

Why was she on the floor? Why didn’t she have any pillows, any blankets?
(The bed was perfectly made—not at all how they’d left things just last night.

No, Kara had tucked Lena in herself, smiling at the tiny girl as she burrowed herself instinctively
into the sheets, then began letting out tiny contented kitten-like whimpers on every exhale.

Now, she was curled in a tight ball against the hardwood floor, red dress thoroughly wrinkled, little
scared noises escaping her with every passing moment.

Kara didn’t understand—and what’s more, it was breaking her heart to witness.)

Acting almost purely on impulse (she felt a physical pain in her chest at the sight of little Lena in
such clear distress), she gathered the whimpering girl into her arms, frowning to herself when Lena
immediately thrashed violently in protest, her helpless whines growing louder and louder as she
neared a state of complete hyperventilation.

“Lena,” Kara begged, her voice soft but earnest as she gently shook the still-unconscious child.
“Lena, wake up, sweetheart, you’re having a nightmare.” The thrashing had gone down somewhat,
but little Lena still squirmed uncomfortably in Kara’s embrace, cold sweat beaded at her temples as
she gasped for air. “Lena, honey,” Kara tried again, noting the way Lena’s eyes moved this way
and that under her eyelids in response, as if trying to make sense of the words she could hear.
“Lena? Lena, I need you to wake up, okay? I—"

The girl’s eyelids snapped suddenly open with an audible sob, wide green eyes instantly filling
with tears as she curled further into herself (and therefore further into Kara, as well), her tiny body
shuddering forcefully with every heaving inhale and exhale.

Kara, for her part, was entirely at a loss for a moment, but recovered quickly enough, whispering
soothing reassurances to the now-awake girl and rocking her steadily in her arms.

“Shhh, shhh,” she urged, smiling inwardly to herself when Lena’s sobs lessened while the girl
strained to listen and process Kara’s words. “You’re safe now. You’re safe now, Lena, and no
one’s going to hurt you, okay? You never have to worry when you’re with me.” She paused,
leaning down to plant a lingering kiss on Lena’s damp forehead, internally doing her favorite
happy dance (which Alex always said was “stupid” and “ridiculous,” while Kara insisted she was
just jealous she didn’t know how to happy dance—maybe she could teach little Lena her happy
dance! That would be so fun) when Lena didn’t shirk away from the contact. “You were just
having a nightmare, honey, but it’s over now, okay? It’s over, and you’re safe right here with me.”
Lena’s whimpers had abated somewhat into faint gasping breaths for air, wide emerald-green eyes watching Kara curiously above her, like she wasn’t quite sure what was happening. “K-Kara?” little Lena managed, worrying her tiny pink bottom lip with her teeth as she gazed distrustfully up at the Kryptonian.

Kara just hummed in response, keeping up the pacifying rocking movements as Lena’s body slowly relaxed against her. “Yes, Lena?”

“Is this a dream?” Lena asked then, her head slightly tilted, a thoughtful but guarded look in her eyes that reminded Kara painfully of adult Lena, of her Lena, of the times the 26-year-old CEO would look at her like she put the very stars in the sky (Kara would if she could) but still wouldn’t quite believe that Kara would do that for her, that Kara would care enough to play God like that, to rearrange the very heavens above to make Lena smile (which she would—in a heartbeat).

“No, Lena,” she replied gently, ignoring the painful splintering in her chest at Lena’s guarded and skeptical expression. (Many times, with adult Lena, with her Lena, she always found that skepticism undoubtedly adorable and ridiculously endearing—and she still did, she supposed, but it hurt, too; it hurt to know where it all came from, where she’d learned that such a thing was necessary with even the kindest of faces.) “It’s not a dream.”

Lena’s brows furrowed in visible confusion (again, adorable, though tragically so), her eyes darting down to her tiny hands curled in her lap. “Are you sure?”

Kara smiled even as a wave of sadness washed over her. “Yes, sweetheart, I’m sure.”

“Oh,” Lena murmured, her breaths slowly beginning to even out—then, she was looking back up at Kara with suspicion in her eyes, a single brow cocked (just like big Lena, Kara thought with a burst of affection)—though there was a vulnerability to it, an uncertainty in her features that made a stark contrast to the self-assured mask of confidence adult Lena so often wore (especially where the single raised eyebrow was concerned). “Do you promise?”

Kara felt something crumbling in her chest when Lena asked that. “Yes, Lena. I promise,” she answered carefully, watching as the girl consciously shifted herself to lean fully against Kara’s chest, her small hands coming hesitantly up to fiddle with the drawstrings of the DEO zip-up hoodie—a second later, little Lena was letting out a quiet suppressed yawn, eyelids fluttering adorably as she struggled to remain conscious. “You still look a little sleepy,” Kara spoke, conscientiously keeping any hint of an accusation out of her tone. “Is it alright if I go sit us down on the couch right now?”
(What Kara *really* wanted to do was ask about the nightmare, or maybe why Lena was sleeping on the cold uncomfortable floor instead of the bed—but another glance at the tired yawning girl in her arms, and she knew that that could wait.

For now, she would do her best to coax little Lena into another couple hours of sleep—there wasn’t much else that mattered.)

Lena, for her part, still looked uncertain—but there was an interested spark in her expressive green eyes, a spark that Kara could quite clearly see even as Lena chewed her bottom lip anxiously. After a moment, she ducked her head bashfully to mumble something incoherent into Kara’s chest, cheeks tinted a rosy pink.

“Hm?” Kara hummed. “I didn’t hear that, Lena, could you look at me and say that a little louder?”

Lena trembled at that but obeyed, her brows stitched in obvious concern. “Don’t wanna get in trouble,” she mumbled, blinking rapidly to keep the fresh tears welling in her wide green eyes at bay.

“Lena, honey, you won’t be in trouble. I’m not going to get angry,” Kara insisted, careful to keep her words unhurried and sincere, the anger towards Lillian swirling in her chest, only growing with every uneasy look from little Lena. “I just want to know what you said, in case you wanted something or if there’s anything I can do to help.”

Little Lena dropped her gaze to the grey DEO logo on the blonde’s hoodie, a preoccupied look in her eyes as she thought hard about Kara’s words. “Couch is g-good, I-I j-just wanted a pinky promise,” she stumbled shyly over her words, green eyes darting quickly up to meet blue.

Kara tilted her head. “For what?”

“That this isn’t a dream,” little Lena practically whispered, seeming to shrink even further into herself under Kara’s unwavering gaze.

(Kara thought she could literally hear her heart breaking in her chest.)
“Of course I’ll pinky promise you.” Kara shifted Lena’s weight into one arm while she held the other up close to the girl, pinky extended.

Lena just stared for a moment in utter awe, seeming to not quite believe Kara’s nearly instantaneous indulgence in her timid request—then she was tentatively releasing one of the hoodie’s drawstrings to reach out with her own hand, timidly wrapping her own pinky around Kara’s (who promptly reciprocated the action), the ghost of something like a smile curving upon tiny pink lips as their fingers intertwined.

(Kara knew Kryptonians were supposed to run hot, that realistically her body temperature would always render a human touch somewhat inferior to the heat within her own system—but this?

This was the farthest thing from inferior.

No, there was an inexplicable feeling of comfort, of warmth that Kara could feel with Lena’s pinky linked delicately with her own, with Lena’s small body curled comfortably in her arms, with Lena, period.

God, this girl was precious.)

Eventually, Kara was carrying the small girl to the couch, and sinking contentedly into its plush cushions (Lena still tucked happily in her arms, not looking as if she was intent on moving any time soon)—a minute or two later, and little Lena was breathing deeply against her chest, the creases in her forehead gone without a trace, both hands still clutching tightly to the drawstrings of Kara’s hoodie as if terrified they might disappear the second she let them go.

And as for Kara?

Well, Kara wasn’t tired—but she didn’t move a muscle (and she means that quite literally) as Lena dozed cutely against her, vaguely recalling the article she’d been assigned to type up, like, yesterday… but that didn’t matter, not right now.

She’d never known Snapper Carr to be a patient man, but for this? For little Lena mewling softly like a tiny kitten in her arms as she slept peacefully for what was probably the first time in days?

Yeah—for this, Snapper Carr could wait.
hope you liked! :)

Chapter End Notes
the lion king (pov alex)

Chapter Summary

Alex returns from her job to an empty apartment.

Kara and Lena get up to some shenanigans, and Alex might just have a heart attack.

Chapter Notes

for some reason, the idea for this chapter came to me fairly quickly cause i thought it was hilarious bahagahahga... hope you like:

So fine, maybe Alex has never been all that patient of a person to begin with.

But really—at the rate things were going with puppy-dog super-powered Kara and tiny traumatized 9-year-old Lena both living in her apartment, she's sure she’ll have grey hairs by Christmas.

Because this morning she’d been sure things might just settle into some semblance of normal—she went on her daily run at 6:00am, jogging through the chilly morning air of National City, her ever-persistent thoughts blissfully muted as the burn in her muscles took precedence, as one mile turned into two (and so on), as her heart beat dangerously fast in her chest with a ferocity that might have concerned her were it not just another part of her everyday routine.

All in all, when she was jogging the third-to-last block and slowing to a recovery walk for the last two, golden sunlight peeking boldly from behind the clouds above, she couldn’t help but think that, Yeah. Today’s gonna be a good day.

And she guesses, just fuck her for showing the tiniest smidge of optimism, right?

(Seriously, Alex didn’t do ‘optimism’ or ‘buoyancy’… no, that had always been Kara’s thing, an area Alex was always more than happy to let her adoptive sister own throughout the years.)

Because she gets back to her apartment, legs and hips burning with a pleasant soreness (though not the most pleasant kind of soreness, unfortunately), her breaths finally slowing from erratic heaving
gases to a markedly calmer rhythm—and her place is empty.

And no, she’s not fucking around—empty empty.

She checks everywhere, even the weirdest nooks and crannies she can think of (because with a particularly excitable Kryptonian plus a magically kiddie-fied Luthor, you never really could be sure)—and, nothing.

Gone.

Immediately, a throbbing stress-induced headache sets in and she’s positively aching to take out her cherished bottle of Jack Daniels from the cupboards, then just sit and drink until maybe something comes to her or Kara gives her a call—but unfortunately, that’s not an option right now; unfortunately, Alex isn’t that much of a disaster.

(Sometimes, she wishes she was.)

So, first order of business: she calls Kara.

Nothing; straight to voicemail.

Her heart beats faster in her chest but she pushes hard to make herself stay calm, knows that panicking won’t do a goddamned thing to help her right now, not with Kara gone and Lena too and Alex left alone in her apartment wondering what the hell happened.

She actually growls into the receiver when Kara’s pre-recorded message comes over the line, because Goddammit, how did she lose a full-sized adult Kryptonian and a baby, and how can Kara still sound so goddamned cheerful about it?

And more importantly, why won’t Kara pick up her goddamned phone?

(She pointedly ignores the fear and uncertainty building in her chest that says maybe Kara finally met her match, that maybe her pursuit for truth and justice and savior-hood finally got the best of her, that maybe she’s going to have to say goodbye to the only sister she’s ever had a hell of a lot
earlier than she originally planned—which was never, to be clear, since immortality and all that.

If anything, it was gonna be *Kara* crying at her bedside, begging Alex not to go while Alex just smirked and said something dumb but ultimately unforgettable before it all went black and Kara was left alone again.

But now?

Now, Alex wasn’t sure anymore.

She didn’t like that.)

After a moment of internal debate, she calls J’onn—he picks up on the third ring.

“J’onnz,” he barks into the phone; he sounds stressed, Alex thinks (though to be fair, that’s fairly normal for him).

“Hey, J’onn,” she says, trying (and failing) to keep the panic out of her voice. “Have you seen Kara lately?”

He heaves out a long sigh. “Turn on the news.”

Alex’s brow furrows. “Wh—"

*Click!*

He’s gone.

“Wonderful,” Alex grumbles to herself, fumbling through the mess of sheets on her couch for the remote she *knows* she’d seen just two days ago, and—
There.

Not bothering to sit (she’s far too sweaty, not to mention far too broke to buy a new couch if she taints this one), she anxiously points the remote at the monitor, pressing ‘PWR’ and quickly flipping to the National City News, which—

Jesus H. Christ.

Despite her earlier reservations about staying calm, she groans, smacking herself solidly in the forehead, because, Why me, Lord? Why?

There’s a pretty blonde reporter on the television (She really kind of looks like Eve, Alex thinks hazily) with a too-bright smile and bouncy golden curls, the bold black-on-white headline just below her desk reading: ‘Supergirl: Earth’s Champion, Girl of Steel, Superhero, and… Full-Time Mother?’

Dear God.

A second later the feed is flipping from pretty Eve-look-alike reporter to a calamitous scene downtown, auburn-yellowy flames engulfing an at least ten-story office building (a law firm, Alex realizes after a moment)—but that’s not the ‘Dear God’ part of it.

No, because a burning building? Not exactly news. Supergirl saving the screaming civilians from said burning building? Also not news.

But Supergirl floating around with a bright pink PowerPuff Girls backpack worn backwards on her chest while she plucks utterly distraught men and women out of the building, not even to mention the dark-haired green-eyed child sitting in the aforementioned backpack like a joey in a kangaroo pouch, her tiny head poking out the very top as she watches a spandex-wearing super-powered Kryptonian save the city with a deer-in-the-headlights look on her delicate features? Well, fuck me, Alex thinks—because that’s news.

Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ

Kara flies through the open window thirty minutes later, streaked in soot from head-to-toe, little Lena still proudly strapped to her chest in a well-singed PowerPuff Girls backpack, her grin
ridiculously wide as if she’s just secured a lifetime supply of pizza and potstickers, or something equally as momentous.

Alex has to resist the urge to throw something at her.

“Alex!” Kara exclaims, blue eyes twinkling starkly against her ash-streaked features.

Alex quirks a single brow. “What, exactly, is wrong with you?”

Kara frowns, and Lena’s head ducks further into the PowerPuff Girls backpack (immediately, Alex feels a stab of guilt in her chest). “What do you mean?”

Alex sighs defeatedly. “So you mean to tell me that there’s nothing wrong with this,” she gestures tiredly to Kara’s positively ragged appearance with a single hand, “picture?”

“Oh! There was a fire” Kara says brightly, like that explains everything.

(Alex really needs a drink.)

“And you decided to bring the 9-year-old child to the fire?”

Kara blushes at that, her gaze darting down to a shy Lena curled tightly in the backpack. “But we had fun!” She pauses then, leaning down to stage-whisper loudly to kid Lena: “We had fun, right?”

Bashfully, little Lena nods back to Kara, her green-eyed gaze cautious but vaguely amused.

(Idly, Alex notices a dash of soot across Lena’s forehead—it looks a bit like that scene from the Lion King, if she’s being perfectly honest.

It’s adorable.)
Alex rolls her eyes. “Oh, for the love of God.”

“But you don’t believe in God,” Kara pipes up unhelpfully.

Alex glowers at her beaming sister for a good thirty seconds before she realizes it’s not doing any good—a moment later, she’s collapsing onto the couch in utter defeat, groaning loudly into her hands because Christ.

(And no, she doesn’t care about ruining her couch anymore with the copious amount of sweat on her body—no, she has a hell of a lot more to worry about.

She decides she'll go to Ikea sometime next week.)

It’s going to be a long day.

Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ

Alex hadn’t quite noticed she’d been drifting off into sleep—but give her a break, okay?

It’d been a very stressful past hour, what with Kara strapping kid Lena to her chest and prancing around the city to fight crime, and then the National City News speculating that their beloved Supergirl was indeed the mother of a shy green-eyed Superbaby-in-training (who was actually an inexplicably kiddie-fied 9-year-old Lena Luthor), and Kara trotting back into Alex’s apartment covered in ash and soot like all of that was completely normal—yeah, Alex felt she deserved at least a small chunk of time in which she wasn’t well on her way into a violent bout of premature cardiac arrest due to the unequivocal shitstorm that had become her life as of late.

So yeah, maybe she's dozing off. Whatever, alright?

It’s not like she's sleeping, and plus, Kara has kid Lena—which probably means she’s out carrying the poor kid off to bust up an illicit drug cartel, or maybe save another kitten stuck up a tree (that would be the best case scenario), which, fine.

So, she’s taking a bit of a power nap—nothing wrong with that.
And truthfully, it’s glorious: the throbbing ache in her skull is slowly but surely fading to the background, her head is growing heavier by the minute as she oscillates to and fro over the line between consciousness and its tantalizing counterpart, her breaths growing long and even, h—

“NAAAAAANTS INGONYAMAAAAAAAAAAA BAGITHI BABAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!! SITHI UHM INGONYAMA....”

What the fuck?!

Alex bolts upright, ready to—

“NAAAAAAANTS INGONYAMAAAAAAAAAAAAA BAGITHI BABAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!! SITHI UHM INGONYAMA..... INGON—“

“KARA!” Alex practically screeches, whirling around to see—

Christ.

Kara is standing proudly upon the sleek granite countertop of the kitchen isle, still in her soot-stained red-and-blue suit, holding up a wide-eyed mini Lena like an offering to the gods (that Simba-like ashy streak remaining proudly on the girl’s smooth pale forehead), frowning as her enthusiastic role-play of the famous scene from the Lion King is cut short by a very unhappy Alex.

(Alex can’t be that angry she supposes, because little Lena is pursing her lips like she’s trying not to smile, like she can’t quite believe someone can be so…. so goofy—honestly, there are days where Alex can’t quite believe it either.

There’s still a substantial degree of distrust in Lena’s eyes, and Alex imagines she’s likely terrified Kara will decide to drop her—but the girl is almost smiling, and that’s a hell of a lot more progress than Alex reasonably thought they might make in their first day of impulsive cohabitation since the 26-year-old CEO of L-Corp got spontaneously turned into a 9-year-old.)

“Hey, Alex!” Kara calls cheerfully, unable to wave with baby Lena held up in her arms.
Alex’s eyes narrow. “Kara…” she trails off, wholly exhausted.

“We’re doing Lion King!” Kara babbles happily, like that wasn’t painfully obvious. “Lena is Simba, and I’m—”

“I know!” Alex interjects quickly, rubbing at her temples—her headache is back full force this time, and God, it aches. “Believe me, I know.”

Kara just nods, eyes hopeful. “Wanna hear the rest of it?”

“Not in a million years.”

Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ
who's rafiki? (pov lena)

Chapter Summary

Lena's... rather lost. She doesn't understand the Danvers sisters, with their concerned gazes and goofy grins and seemingly unconditional care.

She's getting better at it, though.

Chapter Notes

ok sorry there's been a delay- i'm currently on the other side of the country for my older brother's college graduation (which i'm super excited about cause i adore him), and i don't get back for another couple of days so the next chapter will in all likelihood be delayed (though i'm hoping i might be able to work on it on the plane ride home).

sorry for any mistakes, i didn't have time to really go through it and do a comprehensive proofread, so i'll come back and do that later on....

anyways, sorry for the wait - hope you like:)

‘Confused’ would be a massive understatement as a descriptor for what Lena’s feeling right now.

Though, at the beginning, things had been going fine. Well, even: She’d gotten her snack stash, stored the Oreos and Pop Tarts and trail mix carefully under one of the few loose floorboards she’d found next to Alex’s bed (the cement foundation beneath was dusty and littered with spider webs, but it’d have to do), then fallen asleep eventually on the hardwood flooring directly over her beloved snacks stockpile.

(It took a long time to get to sleep; her back and knees kept cramping, and she thinks she might have bruises now from sleeping on such a hard surface for so long—but ultimately, it was the best choice by her, and she knew she’d be thanking herself for it later.)

She’d woken herself with a nightmare eventually, and Kara had come to wake her—which was the first of what Lena’s sure will be many times she pats herself on the back for thinking to make up the bed and sleep on the floor instead, because Kara couldn’t tell Alex that Lena slept in her bed (because she didn’t) unless Kara lied to Alex to make sure Lena got punished for the sake of her own amusement.
(Which Lena wouldn’t necessarily place as an impossibility… but at the same time, Kara and Alex didn’t seem to be as sadistic and sneaky as Lillian was.

Though again, she could absolutely be wrong about that; she would just have to be careful.)

The nightmare itself was horrible, and Lex’s uncharacteristically cruel smirk flashed before her every time she closed her eyes, not to mention the shame she felt from Lillian and Lionel’s harsh words—but suddenly Kara was holding her tightly in her strong arms, and Lena found she didn’t really care that Kara could kill her with the slightest squeeze or that she didn’t trust the Kryptonian god not to exterminate her on the spot, because Lena was so tired and the cuddles felt amazing, and she couldn’t help but lean into them despite every ounce of her being screaming that she shouldn’t.

Despite all of her better instincts telling her not to, she’d fallen fast asleep in Kara’s arms—what’s more, she hadn’t seen Lillian’s disapproving sneer, or Lionel’s drunken stumble, or her own blood spilling over the marble floors; for the first time in a very long time, she didn’t have any nightmares.

(She refused to heed the voice in her brain saying it was just the effects of Kara and the utter radiance she possessed, the unconditional care she seemed to effortlessly exhibit in even the most trivial of interactions.

No, Lena couldn’t afford to open herself up like that. Not again.

Not after her mom—her real mom—died screaming in the freezing waters of Ireland’s Lough Gur lakelet because of Lena’s own chronic inability to ever be of any use.)

She didn’t know how long she’d slept, but she felt suspiciously well rested when Kara was gently shaking her awake with big apologetic blue eyes and informing Lena that “Alex isn’t back yet but there’s a big fire downtown and we gotta go save the city, okay?”

Lena, who’d been quite frankly terrified (what with waking up in such close proximity to the Super and the dawning realization that she’d actually fallen asleep in her arms), had just nodded, not quite knowing what else to do.

Kara had grinned so widely in response, then frowned quickly when she realized she didn’t have a way to transport Lena with her to this ‘big fire’ she spoke of.
(Vaguely, Lena had wondered if such a thing was normal for a child her age to be experiencing, since God knows Lillian hadn’t bothered with ‘normal’ since… well, since _forever_, as far as Lena knew.

Was it normal for flying superheroes to bring 9-year-old kids with them to fight crime?

Lena hadn’t the faintest clue.)

But sooner than she could blink, she was being flown down to… National City Pre-School?

(Okay, so she was in National City, she’d thought. Interesting. _Confusing._

And again, she was far too terrified to bother telling the Kryptonian ‘no,’ because sure, Lena was a bit glib on the whole ‘dying’ thing, but that didn’t mean she wanted to die by being thrown into the sun by an angry super-powered god.)

Then, Supergirl had dropped into a room of little pre-kindergarteners with a beaming smile on her face, offering her sincerest apologies for disturbing the class, then proceeding to ask if she could borrow someone’s backpack in order to go fight crime with Lena safely in tow.

(Lena’s positive she’d never felt so utterly perplexed in her entire life.)

Almost immediately, a little dark-skinned girl with pigtails and a gap-toothed grin was offering up her bright pink PowerPuff Girls backpack with awe in her eyes, practically squealing with delight when Kara graciously accepted the bag and proceeded to help Lena climb up to sit inside it, then strapped it snugly to her front.

Next, Kara patted the small pig-tailed girl on the head, and Lena gave the girl a shy smile (she smiled widely back) and a second later, the preschool was gone and they were whipping through the air, passing skyscrapers and tall buildings and _God_, Lena hated flying.

(She’d been rather glad she hadn’t had time to eat anything even though her stomach throbbed with hunger pains, because she’s sure she would have puked it all out onto Kara mid-flight.)
Then, before Lena could really process... well, *anything*, they were hovering high above a tall office building engulfed in roaring flames, burning heat radiating off the scene in waves. Lena remembered she’d been scared, so she’d curled even further into her backpack, which, luckily, Kara didn’t notice—the Kryptonian was too focused on entry points and the building’s integrity and saving all the people trapped inside.

Lena’s stomach turned when Kara swooped through the air, barely remembering to tell Lena to cover her head inside the backpack as they flew through the smoky building to grab various screaming men and women—at one point, Lena peeked out the zipper only to come face-to-face with Morgan Edge (one of Luthor Corp’s many unpleasant and rather pompous associates), who was shrieking at an octave at least three times higher than Lena thought was originally possible as Kara veered the three of them safely towards the ground at breakneck speed.

(It was one of the best things Lena had ever witnessed in her life.)

It took a long time, getting everyone out, and by the end of it, both Kara and Lena (even despite the protection of the pre-kindergartener’s PowerPuff Girls backpack) were covered head-to-toe in blackened ash and soot.

(Lena was sure she’d inhaled a fair amount of smoke, too, since her chest felt tighter than normal and her breaths came in soft strained wheezes—but she figured it’d go away soon, and there was frankly no point in bothering Kara over something so trivial.)

Then Kara flew them happily back to Alex’s apartment, whispering praises and thanks to Lena for being so helpful and patient and *brave* along the way (Lena had just blushed in response to Kara’s overwhelming kindness and ducked her head even further into the backpack—she really didn’t know how to respond).

Alex wasn’t happy, which made Lena’s chest feel even tighter for all the wrong reasons. She had that stern, angry look on her face (Lena was just glad she didn’t seem to have her guns with her), and was dressed in black leggings that cut off at the calf and a grey sweat-stained tank-top with black running shoes tightly laced up on either foot—in other words, she looked altogether furious and exercise-savvy enough to hunt Lena and Kara to the ends of the Earth and exterminate them. Permanently.

Alex intently interrogated Kara for a minute or two (in which Lena learned it was *not*, in fact, normal for a child her age to be tagging along with a flying super-powered Kryptonian on a mission to save the city), and then Kara exclaimed “But we had fun!” before leaning closer down to where Lena sat curled in the bag and loudly whispered, “We had fun, right?”
Truthfully, Lena had thought that the tightness in her chest didn’t feel like fun, and she was still sure she might need to go dry-heave in the bathroom sometime within the next hour in order to recover from their impromptu flight, but something about Kara’s enthusiastic grin that crinkled her ocean-blue eyes at the edges and the hopeful look etched into every inch of her features had Lena nodding shyly with the ghost of a grin, her chest filling with warmth when Kara’s smile subsequently widened with delight.

(Lena didn’t know how to feel about the fact that she was wanting to please Kara for reasons that went beyond avoiding a punishment, that when Kara smiled Lena felt safe and almost happy inside, that she was starting to trust Kara despite everything within her telling her she shouldn’t.

It was… unprecedented. Inexplicable. Illogical, above all else.

Lena didn’t like illogical things.)

And from there, Lena hadn’t thought it could get any weirder—but it did. It really, really did.

Alex had fallen to the couch in defeat (clearly exasperated with Kara’s unapologetic impulsivity), and within minutes, she was snoring lightly against the cushions—Lena was rather impressed by that, honestly.

But then Kara was practically bouncing on the balls of her feet, cerulean irises flashing with palpable excitement, blabbering on about “You look like Simba!!” (Lena didn’t know who ‘Simba’ was) and “Oh my God—We should act out the Lion King!” (Lena had never heard of this ‘Lion King’ before) and “I know all the words, so I’ll hold you up like we’re on Pride Rock and sing just like Rafiki!!” (Who? )

Again, Lena found it impossible to say ‘no’ to the ridiculously energetic blonde (though, she’s loathe to admit to herself that it had steadily become less out of fear, and more out of adoration than anything else)—a minute later, Kara was excitedly hopping up onto the counter with Lena in tow, thrusting Lena excitedly towards the ceiling as she sung loudly in… was that Zulu? It sounded like Zulu.

(Lena had read about the Zulu people in the south of Africa while on her spontaneous endeavor to memorize all its countries—so why exactly was a blonde Kryptonian wailing vociferously in the foreign dialect of the Bantu ethnic tribe?)
“NAAAAANTS INGONYAMAaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa BAGITHI BABAaaaaaaaaaaaaa!!!!!! SITHI UHM INGONYAMA…..” she’d shouted in the small space as Lena remained frozen in her grip mid-air.

Out of the corner of her eye, Lena had seen Alex bolting upright on the couch, a murderous look on her face—instinctively, Lena shrunk further into herself, though Kara’s gentle but steely grip made it impossible to get away completely.

Kara then took another deep breath, winding herself up to—

“NAAAAANTS INGONYAMAaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa BAGITHI BABaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!!!!!!” she howled. "SITHI UHM INGONYAMA….. INGON—“

“KARA!” Alex had screeched, and Lena had had to press her lips together hard to keep from giggling.

From there, Alex had been noticeably embittered (though there seemed to be little true malice behind it, which slightly confounded Lena)—when Kara had asked if Alex had wanted to hear the rest of it, she’d been very quick to say no (though Lena didn’t quite think she could blame her), then tiredly ordered Kara to “Put the child down, please.”

Kara did.

(Truthfully, Lena didn’t know if the emotion swirling in her chest as Kara obeyed was relief or disappointment at no longer being held in Kara’s strong arms.

She thinks it might’ve actually been an incomprehensible mix of the two, and that was more than enough to give her a headache.)

Then Kara had tilted her head like a puppy as if she’d heard something (though Lena didn’t know what), an apologetic look already on her features as she rambled something about “There’s a robbery and an illegal drug operation both happening on opposite sides of the city—I gotta go, like, now. Love you, bye!” before swiftly flying out the window, abruptly leaving Lena alone with a still somewhat grumpy agent Alex.

After a long moment of silence, a sweat-droplet-dotted Alex came slowly closer to Lena, then
crouched down to look at her with something like... concern in her wide brown eyes. (Lena felt her heartbeat quicken dangerously in her ribcage.)

“Hey, Lena,” she said quietly. “Are you alright?”

Lena didn’t respond, just did her best to regulate her breathing—she was terrified that Alex would notice the small wheezing noise escaping her on every exhale, and God, she didn’t want to see Alex get angry.

“I know flying with Kara can be scary. Do you not like flying?”

Lena’s heart beat faster in her chest—but she couldn’t afford to ignore another of Alex’s questions (she was sure that would earn her a swift backhand across the cheek at least); tentatively, she shook her head. “No, Ma’am,” she mumbled, looking down at her feet.

“You don’t need to call me ‘Ma’am.’”

“Sorry, Ma’—” Lena stopped herself, cheeks flushed, eyes still locked on the ground. “Sorry.”

“Don’t apologize,” Alex urged gently. “You don’t need to.”

(Is this another trick? Lena thought. It feels like another trick.)

“Okay,” she murmured.

Alex just hummed, allowing quiet to blanket them for a brief moment.

“I think we both need showers,” she spoke eventually, and Lena could feel her gaze burning into her. “What do you think?”

(This really felt like a trick. Or maybe a test.)
Lena bit her lip, not quite sure how to respond in such a way that would make her ‘pass’; safe. “Okay.”

“I know you’re a big girl,” Alex’s words suddenly sounded… hesitant, almost; unsure. “But are you okay to shower on your own? I’m worried you might pass out again.”

Lena nodded almost immediately. (No doubt Alex would punish her horribly if she showed herself to be too weak and pathetically dependent to shower on her own.) “Yes, Ma’a—” she coughed, halting herself. “Yes.”

Alex nodded, though she didn’t look all that convinced. (That made Lena nervous.)

“Okay. You go first,” she prompted, moving to the linen closet to crouch down and hand Lena a white fluffy towel (Lena didn’t know why she bothered to crouch to her level—Lillian always liked to tower over her; Lena thinks it was to emphasize that she was in charge... as if Lena would ever be foolish enough to challenge her authority). “There’s shampoo and conditioner inside, and you can use my hairbrush. I’m gonna be right outside the whole time, okay?”

She gestured with her free hand towards the bathroom just five paces away, its white-painted door slightly ajar.

Lena accepted the towel, praying Alex didn’t notice the slight tremble in her hands as she did. “Thank you,” she squeaked quietly, her eyes darting up to meet Alex’s for a brief second.

(Alex seemed to be legitimately concerned, both perfectly shaped brows stitched together over soft brown irises, even as Lena knew she was being ridiculous for even thinking such a thing.)

Steeling herself with a deep breath and clutching the fluffy towel tightly to her chest in soot-streaked hands, she forced herself to walk steadily across the hardwood and into the space, refusing to meet Alex’s worried gaze as she closed the door firmly behind her.

Once inside, she took another deep breath, her back pressed unsteadily against the door—her body ached from not eating, soreness settling deep into her very bones as the terror-induced adrenaline high from earlier finally abated; God, she just wanted to sleep, even though she knew she couldn’t.

You can do this, she told herself. (She didn’t quite believe it.) You can do this.
10 points for gryffindor (pov kara)

Chapter Summary

Kara has a run-in with Lillian.
It goes... not super well.

Chapter Notes

ok so a couple things - just got back in town, so hopefully i'll be back on track now
also, i'm famously poor at responding to things, ever, (comments, texts, any form of communication whatsoever), but just know that although i'm super short on time right now (so responding to things is a little hard), i literally get so happy when i see the number in my inbox go up and i promise i'll be coming to write back as soon as i'm able and i'm literally so appreciative to all of you for reading and commenting and bothering to keep up with this random half-baked story of mine bc it actually means the world to me

aaaand that's it. don't hate me for this chapter pls

Alright, so maybe Kara had been lying about the drug ring and the robbery, but it was for good reason, okay?

(She’d never leave Lena’s side for anything less.)

She was just being made to finish up her enthusiastic re-enactment of the Lion King by a very unamused Alex, when she heard it: a faint pulsing at an impossibly low frequency, only audible to Kryptonians (and possibly Daxamites, though she doesn’t quite know enough about their twin planet’s anatomy to confirm that), the likes of which were utterly impossible to recreate unless…

Unless someone with extensive knowledge of Krypton’s technology was emitting the rumbling signal on purpose.

Unless that someone was Lillian Luthor, and she was taunting Kara for her failure to protect the woman she loves.
Kara’s vision went red.

She rattled off a generic excuse to Alex as quickly as she could manage, glad that her adoptive sister seemed far too focused (and for good reason) on little Lena to bother seeing through Kara’s no doubt blatantly-transparent lie (Alex always knew when she tried to lie, always—all because of that stupid crinkle).

Then she was taking to the skies, quite nearly breaking the sound barrier again before she remembered that Alex was still only a couple miles away and might interrogate her about it later—cursing beneath her breath, she purposefully slowed her pace incrementally to chase after the muffled pulsing even as her veins burned with overpowering rage and she felt her eyes illuminate brightly with scarlet heat despite her best attempts at controlling it.

(She had to focus very hard to avoid forcibly uprooting an entire field of grazing cows on the outskirts of National City with the deadly lasers smoldering beneath her irises, which she felt slightly guilty about since she loves animals so much, but it didn’t last all that long because all she could think was Lena, and Rao, she loves Lena more than even the cutest of puppies on her Instagram feed—which, in case that was unclear, is a lot.)

A second later, she landed hard in the dirt (though she couldn’t have possibly cared less about the Kara-sized crater she left in her wake) outside a sleek over-sized building (she’d passed by Luthor Mansion just a couple miles earlier) that Kara imagined was probably another of Lex’s many pretentious real-estate investments, the modern three-story structure looking starkly out of place amidst the lush greenery and wildlife all around.

At that point, the dull patterned thumping had escalated to an absolutely ear-splitting roar that vividly assaulted Kara’s senses as she forced herself to walk towards the painful scary booming noises (because she’s not Kara Danvers if she doesn’t do at least one categorically inadvisable and unquestionably stupid thing every day—Alex’s words, not hers).

So, yeah, Kara thinks to herself as she eyes a window on the second story that Lillian had so kindly left open just for her (well, presumably). That’s how it’s all been going down up until now.

She’s still considerably weakened by the continuous low-frequency sonic whatever-they’re-called sounds threatening to tear her indestructible eardrums to shreds, but she stares determinedly up at the very nice structure before her and knows very well she’s not going to stop now—a half a second later, she’s winding up for an admittedly poor jump-slash-flight and flinging herself clear through the generous rectangular opening at the building’s front.
It’s a bit of a flop, because she quite nearly face-plants on the polished hardwood flooring of the interior at least three different times trying to right herself afterwards, but in case anyone forgot, there’s still the most obnoxious EDM concert in the world happening at a Kara-only frequency during the whole thing, and it’s not really helping that the rest of her already ridiculously scattered concentration is continuously bombarded with unrelenting thoughts of Lena and little Lena’s terrified demeanor and the way adult Lena’s beautiful green eyes crinkle when she smiles and Lena, period.

So, all things considered, she thinks she’s more than earned a little slack, okay?

A second later, ears still ringing like the worst case of spontaneous hearing loss in the world, she’s stumbling into a spacious and extravagant rectangular ballroom, the marble floors sleek and shiny, chandeliers hanging every few yards down the middle of the space—Kara’s attentions are rather quickly drawn from all that, though, as she catches sight of Lillian Luthor standing poised and elegant in the center of the room, looking for all the world as if she were simply lounging in wait for Kara to arrive dressed in a matching burgundy suit-skirt combo covered by a tan knee-length trench coat, shiny black four-inch heels on either foot.

(She probably had, Kara reasons.)

Almost immediately after Kara enters, Lillian’s icy smirk is widening across thin lips as she deftly slips a small all-black remote from her trench coat pocket, nonchalantly clicking the button before Kara has a chance to stop her (her mind is running through all the possibilities at an alarming pace, but there’s a voice in her brain screaming, “BOMB!” that easily takes precedence, because she really doesn’t want to ruin another suit today)—but a second later, and instead of the expected fiery implosion, the excruciating pounding is suddenly gone, leaving only blessed silence in its wake as Kara’s eardrums slowly begin to recover, still ringing and throbbing horribly.

(Whatever the device Lillian had been using to emit such a low and painful frequency on Kara’s wavelength, she’s just turned it off—though for what reason, Kara doesn’t quite know.

She just knows it’s making her nervous.)

“Supergirl,” she somewhat registers Lillian addressing her coolly, blue eyes flashing with something like amusement—instantly, the dull ache in her ears becomes secondary, replaced in spades by a dizzying wave of sheer unmitigated anger directed solely at the woman before her, the woman who hurt Lena more than Kara would ever know, the woman who still dares to call herself Lena’s mother. “So nice of you to show.”
Kara’s hands clench into fists at her sides. “Lillian.”

“Tell me, Supergirl,” she muses, “how is my favorite daughter? I did so hate to leave her behind.”

“Like you care,” Kara snarls before she can restrain herself, and her voice sounds completely foreign to her own smarting ears, but it’s not exactly something she bothers to focus on, not with Lillian here and taunting her and by all accounts displaying no remorse for what she’d done to Lena.

Lillian tsks at that, a look of mock offense on her angular features as she shakes her head disapprovingly, as if she's disappointed in Kara.

It makes Kara’s blood boil.

“Now, Supergirl, I mean this with the utmost respect,” Kara fights the urge to roll her eyes at that, "but what would you possibly know about the bond I share with my beloved daughter?”

Kara clenches her jaw. “I know you don’t have one.” She’s positively fuming now, nostrils flaring as she fixes a perfectly-composed Lillian with a biting glare. "You’ve never been there for Lena.”

At that, Lillian chuckles, as if Kara had just told a particularly funny joke.

“And you have?” she questions, bemusement and venom sharing equal parts in her tone. “Or, no, I suppose I should be asking, which one of you is always there for my lovely little Lena? Kara Danvers, or Supergirl?” She gestures mockingly to Kara’s regalia, and her gut twists painfully.

(Lillian had known for months, but that didn’t mean it ever got any easier to hear about it from someone she was rather quickly coming to despise.)

“Tell me, is it really devotion if you spend every passing day lying directly to the one you call ‘friend’? Does that make the ‘bond’” Lillian spits the word distastefully from her tongue, "you share stronger?”

“I lie because I care about her,” she manages to growl through gritted teeth. “And I—"
“Ah-ah-ah,” Lillian intones, wagging a thin finger in the air as she does, her expression turning more smug and knowing by the second. (Kara loathes it.) “No, you lie because you love her.”

That hits Kara like a sucker-punch to the gut (because Rao knows she hadn’t been expecting it, least of all from Lillian), and suddenly she’s reeling, panic clenching her chest, dangerous crimson hues seeping into her rapidly tunneling vision that she’s not sure she can hold back for much longer and—

“How does that feel? Lying to my Lena—“

“She’s not yours,” Kara practically spits even as she can feel her skull practically splitting from the sheer effort of grasping helplessly at what’s left of her rapidly dwindling self-control, to prove herself better like she’s supposed to be, to keep the promise she made long ago that she’d never purposefully end a life.

(There’s a part of her, too, that’s downright terrified that Lena might never forgive her if she killed Lillian—Kara wouldn’t be able to handle that, she knows.

She can take a lot, but not that. Never that.)

Lillian looks unashamedly amused. “Oh, and she’s not mine because she’s yours, is that it?”

Kara shakes her head vehemently, searing pain flaring behind her eyes, barely hanging onto what’s left of herself even as she feels it slipping from beneath her very fingertips because she can’t she can’t—

“NO, she—she’s not anyone’s,” she barks through strained and wheezing breaths—again, Lillian tsk’s in response, and the sound is like gallons of lighter fluid thrown carelessly onto the roaring flames of Kara’s anger.

“That’s all very bold and feminist of you, Ms. Danvers, but I think we both know that that’s not true. Truly, though, I’d love for you to tell me how that feels: lying to the person you love, the person you’re always moving heaven and Earth to save, the person with Luthor genes and a greater chance of despising you like the rest of us than ever returning even the slightest hint of your misguided affections.”
She’s no longer approaching the edge of insanity with every well-placed word, can’t fight it anymore because she’s there; it’s flaring deep within her bones and her arms and in her eyes… With what little is left of her consciousness, Kara can see the hovering red reflected in the sleek marble flooring beneath her, knows Lillian must be able to see it, too—but the woman doesn’t move, doesn’t blink, just curls her lips into a sneer and continues: “You think you have a chance with my daughter? You think my Lena could ever love someone like.. like you? You’re even more dense t—"

That does it: Kara lets loose a deafening scream as she snaps, her vision filled with nothing but blinding red as Lillian’s mocking taunts linger cruelly in her ears, releasing what feels like a decade’s worth of pent-up rage for Lena and the sweet little girl she used to be and the beautiful woman she’s become and the people that hurt her so irreversibly, so deeply, so unjustly it causes an unbearable ache to gather beneath Kara’s skin every time she’s reminded of it, because Lena deserves a hell of a lot better than that and dammit, she always has.

She doesn’t know how long the white-hot molten fury burns through her veins, doesn’t know where her powers end and she begins, doesn’t know anything beyond the unstoppable magnitude of cataclysmic shifts within her, a polarizing divide sawing into her very bones as her wailing sobs are swallowed by the un-negotiable destruction in the heat of her glare, leaving only an ever-deepening chasm of regret and anger and sadness and a billion other things she can’t possibly name carved deep in the core of her very being.

And Rao, it hurts so bad and it’s wrong and she knows it but she can’t stop, doesn’t think she ever will and that terrifies her more than anything because she loves her she loves her but somehow that’s not enough, never has been, since there isn’t a single part of all this that means a goddamned thing if she can’t protect her, if she can’t keep Le—

Lena.

Lena.

It’s the thought of Lena that ultimately brings her back amidst her frenzied spiral into hopelessness, the memories of the cute little girl that had smiled so shyly in her arms, of the 26-year-old CEO who gives hugs and smiles and affection to Kara like she’d never been hurt before, like she’d never known the meaning of the word ‘pain’ (which she does she does and it hurts Kara worse than anything to know she can’t ever change that)—it’s that that pulls her back from the edge of utter madness and devastation, the room dimming dramatically as her rage-filled gaze turns sentient again, smoke billowing through the oversized space as fear and horror clash violently in her chest because—
“Well, Supergirl—color me impressed. I didn’t think you had it in you,” comes Lillian’s chiding voice amidst the dark-grey clouds of smoke, crushing relief and confusion hitting Kara in equal parts at the sound, because *Huh*?—a moment later, the ash and smoke have subsided, and Lillian stands primly in the exact same stance, her appearance remaining perfectly untouched, not a hair out of place even as the rancid smell of the building’s sturdy materials burning, *melting*, fills the room.

Kara is just opening her mouth to furiously demand an answer, when she sees it—a trace of static at the woman’s regal jawline, a slight glimmer of glitching three-dimensional pixels in the burgundy fabric of her suit jacket, undetectable to the human eye (and *barely* detectable to her own), but now that Kara is well and truly looking, it’s painfully obvious, and she curses herself for being so pitifully distracted that she didn’t see it earlier.

“You’re a hologram,” she says numbly, her shoulders hunching, the untapped exhaustion hitting her in overpowering tidal waves as she clumsily staggers backwards under their crippling weight.

Lillian just nods condescendingly even while Kara struggles to breath in her disoriented haze.

“10 points for Gryffindor, dear,” she lauds with a twisted smirk. “Though truthfully, I would expect more from my daughter’s would-be suitor.”

Lillian tilts her head, pouting her lips in theatriic disappointment—at that, a vague spike of anger is resurfacing amongst the overwhelming dizziness, and Kara feels like punching something. (Preferably her.)

“Pity.. but I’ll admit my expectations were set fairly low to begin with. This was pleasant, Ms. Danvers,” she tells Kara with a detached smile, and it’s all Kara can do not to try her luck with lasering 1000° holes through her hologram again—but she doesn’t, and what’s more, she knows very well she won’t, because it hurts *so* badly and the anger is so big in her chest but the sadness is bigger and she can’t fight right now, not when she knows it’s a losing battle, not when she knows it won’t do a goddamned *thing* to stop the pain embedded deep in her gut from growing
exponentially with every passing second.

Not when it’s just now dawning on her that she might lose Lena for good this time.

“I expect I’ll be seeing more of you soon—and please, do take good care of Lena in my absence until I can bring her back home?” Lillian goads, but Kara can scarcely hear her. "I would hope that you and the hordes of bumbling agents at the DEO can manage that, at least.”

And with that final jab, she’s gone—vanished into thin air, leaving an empty ballroom and two rounded still-smoking chars in the opposite wall as Kara drops bonelessly to her knees on the marble, uncaring as it cracks beneath her weight, exhaustion and defeat sinking deep into every ounce of her very being—and for the first time in a very long time, she thinks, I don’t think I can do this.
Chapter Summary

Lena’s condition gets worse, and Alex rushes her to the hospital.

She meets an... interesting doctor there.

Chapter Notes

wasn't at all planning this crossover like at aLL but it just came into my head last night and idk i kinda just went with it...

you definitely don't need to have watched the show i borrowed the 'arizona' character from to understand the chapter, though.

hope you like:)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

To be clear: yes, it’s true Alex would like to be a mother some day (with a huge emphasis on the ‘some day’ part of it).

But does that, in any way mean she’s prepared to take care of another living breathing tiny 9-year-old human? Absolutely not.

Because now she’s sitting on her couch and tapping her foot like crazy, wondering if it’s normal to be concerned about the light thump! she’d just heard (she’d knocked after that, calling out a tentative “You okay in there, honey?” to which she’d heard a weak and unconvincing “Yes, Ma’am” in response), because the girl had said she was fine, but was she really?

(Also, were they seriously back to the ’Ma’am’ thing again?)

Is Alex being ridiculous for sitting here agonizing over little Lena’s safety when it’s just as likely that the girl is in there using all of her bubble bath oils and sudsing it up while humming a cutesy Irish tune?

…Okay, fine, that’s probably not what she’s doing.
But maybe she’s just fine, right?

Sighing to herself, she turns to check the clock for what feels like the billionth time since Lena closed the bathroom door on her—9:13am (she’d gone in at 8:51).

Is that normal for a 9-year-old? A 20-minutes-and-counting shower?

Alex has no idea.

But she doesn’t want to encroach on the girl’s privacy—what with Lillian Luthor’s chronically unpleasant personality and the few things she’s managed to learn about Lena’s childhood (or lack thereof), she knows Lena had never known kindness, or privacy, or any of the safety and happiness and love that every child should know.

So, she wants to do everything in her power to ensure little Lena experiences these things, these quote-on-quote “luxuries” she never got to have under Lillian’s cruel tutelage… at least some of them, while they have the time.

But ten minutes pass, and then another ten, and Alex can’t take it anymore—she’s standing abruptly from the couch and giving the door another soft couple of knocks.

“Lena, honey?” she calls.

No response.

“Lena, honey, are you doing okay?” she asks, her voice cracking with worry.

No response.

Alex’s heart clenches.
Already leaning into a defensive stance to kick the door in (she’d heard the lock click after little Lena had closed the door), she warns, “Lena, I’m coming in, okay?”

Again, no response.

Heart beating rapidly in her chest, she bites her lip before gathering momentum and twisting her torso in a formless front kick, the door splintering off its hinges with a loud Crack! as the impact jars through Alex’s sore leg.

Immediately, hot steam is filtering out through the space between the tilted (broken) door and the doorway, and Alex bursts in frantically, because there’s no way that amount of heat can be good for a 9-year-old’s skin.

“Oh, God.”

Little Lena is naked and curled into a trembling ball on the shower floor, her back facing Alex, her pale skin a horrible shade of red under the assault of the too-hot shower stream—in seconds, Alex is wrenching at the knobs, anything to get it to stop, fear crawling up her throat even as the pouring water subsides into occasional drips onto the floor.

“Lena,” Alex repeats quietly, slowly maneuvering closer to the girl so she’s more or less facing her—Lena’s features are nearly covered by dripping wet locks of matte-black hair, but a pair of wide
scared green eyes lock with Alex’s between the strands, and it’s enough to make Alex want to break down and cry.

(She can’t—she knows that, because Lena needs her right now and she’ll never walk away from her, but—

God. Alex is not prepared for this.)

It takes Alex a good ten seconds to realize that little Lena is murmuring something through trembling lips that echoes faintly in the space, repeating it over and over like a mantra: “C-C-Cold. S-S-S-So c-c-old.”

Alex thinks that if she listens closely enough, she’ll be able to hear her own heart breaking.

But as it was…

*Think, Alex*, her brain commanded harshly.

*Cold. Why was she cold? The water was absolutely scalding.*

*Think.*

*Why would her systems be failing? Why would her body be weak enough not to conserve heat? Wh—*

*Fuck.*

She and Kara are such *idiots.*

“Lena,” she urges, pain stabbing at her insides when the girl’s terrified eyes darted to lock with hers. “Lena, sweetie, when was the last time you ate?”
Lena’s brows furrow as she gasps for air, clearly thinking about Alex’s question. “D-D-DEO.” It’s practically a whisper, and Alex can hear the faint sounds of teeth chattering in the girl’s mouth.

Fuck.

“Shit,” she curses, furious at herself and at Kara for being so goddamned stupid—but a second later Lena’s body is flinching violently in a decidedly negative (though also quite delayed) reaction to her utterance, and for a moment, Alex is terrified the poor girl might faint even as she scolds herself for being so careless.

Sighing, she reaches a tentative hand to stroke at Lena’s shivering shoulder—she most likely doesn’t notice, is far too distracted to care, because she doesn’t jerk away as Alex’s fingers stroke gently at the damp reddened skin there.

“Lena, honey, I’m not angry at you, okay? I promise,” she vows, keeping her tone gentle and non-threatening. “I’m just angry at myself and at Kara, because we forgot to feed you, okay? This is our fault, but we’re gonna make it better. Is it okay if I get you a towel and carry you out into bed?”

At that, the violent shudders increase, and Lena’s green eyes widen even further as her wheezed inhales and exhales become even more strained than before. “N-Not bed,” she manages fearfully, her words quite and broken.

Careful not to let the sheer confusion she feels in response show on her features, she just nods agreeably, watching the girl with attentive eyes.

“Okay, not the bed, then,” she assents soothingly. “Can I carry you out onto the sofa?”

Lena nods almost imperceptibly at that, and Alex practically jumps to grab her the fluffy white folded towel she’d given little Lena just forty minutes ago, spreading it in her arms and returning to her spot back inside the tub with the girl.

“Okay, Lena, I’m going to pick you up now. It might hurt because your body has been through a lot, and I’m sorry for that, but I’m gonna help you, okay? I’m gonna help.”

Little Lena doesn’t respond, just curls further into herself on the shower floor—Alex figures that that’s as close to a coherent response she’s going to get.
Slowly and deliberately, she gathers the shivering girl in the towel, wrapping her up in it tightly as she clutches little Lena securely to her chest, whispering soothing reassurances and praises while she walks them back towards the couch, leaving the steaming bathroom safely behind.

Her phone’s still there, she notices thankfully as kid Lena wheezes weakly against her chest, and she immediately snatches it up with one trembling hand, getting the fastest pizza delivery place on the line while she strokes soothing patterns up and down Lena’s towel-clad form.

“Lena, honey, I’m getting us a pizza,” she informs her as the device rings in her ear. “What kind do you like? Cheese, pepperoni, Hawaiian?”

Little Lena doesn’t reply, just shudders silently in Alex’s grip, wide green eyes darting this way and that as if on high alert for any signs of impending danger—it’s ripping Alex’s heart to shreds to witness.

Seconds later, she’s distracted by a soft click! on the line, and the generic ‘Hello, you’ve reached _________________. I am __________, may I take your order?’—Alex sighs. “Lena, hon, I’m just going to order us a cheese pizza; is that okay?”

Again, no response.

Alex fights the urge to heave another sigh.

Two minutes later, she’s ordered a large plain cheese pizza with breadsticks and marinara sauce on the side (it’s set to arrive in 20 minutes, and if it doesn’t, she’s going to write them an absolutely scathing Yelp! review)—Lena is still shaking fiercely against her, letting out little whimpers between every strained breath.

“Lena, sweetheart, will you tell me what’s wrong?” she pleads, tears burning in her eyes as she watches the girl shudder, feeling absolutely useless while Lena is in this much pain and wanting to help so so badly, but not knowing where to even start. “Please, hon, I’m worried… Talk to me?”

Lena’s wide teary green eyes dart up to hers for a split second, and she inhales another deep shuddering breath that makes Alex wince as she hears how horrifically unnatural it sounds. “M-M-Malnutrition, mild, n-not life th-threatening,” she stammers. “Sm-Smith i-i-inhalation, s-s-similarly mil-mild, n-not l-life thr-threatening.”
She lists her symptoms almost clinically, and God, Alex is torn between rage and wholehearted bewilderment, because *What the ever-loving fuck?*

“Not life threatening”? The *hell* does that matter when Lena’s so obviously in pain?

*Fuck the pizza*, she thinks. *Lena needs a hospital. Now.*

Tightening the towel resolutely around the weakened girl, she bolts from the seat, grabbing her keys and phone before practically flying out the door and down the steps (she passes a straight white couple in the stairwell, and she supposes she doesn’t necessarily blame them for staring with mouths agape at the crazy lady running frantically around and holding a sopping wet kid wearing only a towel in her arms, but she shoots them a formidable glare all the same, because she doesn’t have *time* for their bullshit)—what feels like hours later (but is probably only minutes), she’s strapping little Lena securely into the backseat of the DEO-standard-issue SUV (should she have a booster seat? Do 9-year-olds need those? *Fuck,* she doesn’t know) and peeling out of the parking garage, wheels screeching on the cement.

“Hang in there, hon,” she calls, sparing a glance every couple of seconds to the girl’s reflection in the rearview, but Lena’s droopy eyes have long since shut as her breath come in soft wheezes and *dammit*, that’s not a good sign—fainting after smoke inhalation is a *very* not good sign.

She presses harder on the gas, weaving through traffic and ignoring the various honks she gets from a fair number of *very* pissed-off drivers in passing.

“C’mon, Lena. Hang in there,” she begs, more to herself than anyone else. “Please, sweet girl. You can do this.”

Again, no response—it unsettles Alex (even though she damn well knew better than to expect one in the first place).

*Fuck.*

Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ
It’s a blur when she gets to the hospital—a real hospital, because she’s not willing to risk the DEO doctors fucking this up, fucking Lena up—with the unconscious girl in her arms and tears threatening to fall from her eyes; it feels something like a blessing straight from heaven when a pretty blonde-haired blue-eyed doctor in dark navy scrubs and a white coat immediately volunteers her help, guiding Alex over to an empty available room in the pediatrics ward and swiftly ordering her to lay little Lena down on the bed.

The next thirty minutes are like a dream—nurses bustling in and out, checking Lena’s vitals, changing her into a hospital gown, drawing blood, hooking the poor girl up to an IV, and Alex thinks it might just be one of the worst dreams she’s ever had in her life because Lena is utterly lifeless through it all, pale and cold and battered atop the bed.

Then, a moment later, the pretty blonde doctor—Dr. Arizona Robbins, PhD., the stitching on her white coat says—is gently asking, “Can I talk to you outside for a moment?” with a sunny smile and kind cerulean eyes; after shooting little unconscious Lena one last worried glance, Alex tentatively agrees, following the shorter blonde lady out into the halls, uneasiness and worry for Lena curling in her gut.

Instantly, Dr. Robbins’ pleasant smile is dropping from her features, her pretty blue eyes turning steely and cold. “What the hell is wrong with you?” she demands angrily, no trace of the earlier buoyancy in her unforgiving tone, and Alex’s brain is left reeling from the complete 180° this conversation has just taken.

“H-Huh?” she manages dumbly, and Dr. Robbins’ stormy expression only darkens.

“That girl,” Dr. Robbins fumes, gesturing emphatically towards where little Lena can be seen through the blinds lying weakly in the hospital bed, “is severely malnourished, suffering from acute smoke inhalation, and there’s a frankly inhumane amount of bruises and damaged skin all across her tiny little body,” she finishes, hardened blue-eyed gaze flashing dangerously, and all Alex can do is gape back at her. “So, I’m gonna ask you one more time: What the hell is wrong with you?”

This is kind of hot, actually, Alex thinks stupidly for a moment, still gobsmacked in the face of this undoubtedly daunting but downright gorgeous doctor with golden locks of hair and mesmerizing sea-blue eyes who’s glaring at her with such righteous fury it’s terrifying and arousing all in one. Is that weird? Yeah, that’s probably weird.

“I-I—Well, it’s—” she stammers, cheeks flushing red as she tries to find the words, because dammit, where does she even start? “S-She’s not mine,” is what she settles on, and she knows it’s a mistake almost immediately when Dr. Robbins’ icy blue eyes narrow suspiciously at her.
“I figured that out, thanks,” she quips, jaw clenching. “I can see very well you haven’t gone through a pregnancy,” she mumbles, more to herself than anyone else as her eyes distractedly trail up and down the length of Alex’s form for a brief moment, and, Huh? “Um, but—” she clears her throat, blinking rapidly to snap herself out of it, her brows furrowing as the fury from earlier makes a swift reappearance. “Do you think that excuses child abuse? Because you are very wrong—"

“What?” Alex practically squawks, eyes wide, alarm showing clearly on her features. “No—I—This is—I—I’m with the FBI.”

Dr. Robbins cocks a single brow, crossing both arms defiantly against her chest. “Is that supposed to impress me?”

*God, that’s hot.*

“Uh—I—I—” Alex struggles, and Dr. Robbins just tilts her head, clearly unsympathetic. “No! No, of course not, it’s just—I, um—When I say she isn’t mine, I mean she really, really isn’t mine. Like, really.”

“Yes, we’ve already established that you haven’t gone through a pregnancy,” Dr. Robbins answers, her tone growing more and more vexed by the second. “But that doesn’t change the fact that this adorable little child is under your care, and you—“

“I just got her yesterday!” Alex blurts out loudly before she can stop herself, causing a couple neighboring nurses and doctors to turn and stare for a brief moment as the flush in her cheeks deepens.

The crinkle in Dr. Robbins’ brow grows more pronounced.

“What is that supposed to mean? And come to think of it, why does that little girl look so familiar? You—"

“That’s Lena Luthor,” she mutters in a rush, her blush reaching the tips of her ears.

Dr. Robbins frowns. “I’m sorry, what?”
Alex takes a deep breath, steeling herself. “That’s… Lena Luthor, CEO of L-Corp.”

Dr. Robbins blinks. “Lena Luthor is in her 20’s.”

“I know.”

The lady doctor steps abruptly forward then, a threatening stare on her pretty feature—close enough that Alex can smell a hint of her citrusy perfume, along with the faintest scent of cinnamon —

“Do you think this is a game, Ms. Danvers?” she growls, her nose inches from Alex’s chin, and she’s a good two inches shorter than Alex but somehow she’s making it work, making Alex want to shrink in place under her uncompromising glower. “Because it’s not, and I’m just about ready to call Child Protective Services down here and have you arrested for child endangerment, your bosses at the FBI be damned.”

Alex blinks rapidly, before choking out, “No, I’m not—Arizona—” Dr. Robbins glares, and Alex hastens to correct herself. “Dr. Robbins, I’m—I’m really really not messing with you, I, I… “

Suddenly an idea is popping into her head, and she’s patting herself desperately for her phone (Arizo—Dr. Robbins just stares ruthlessly), cheeks burning as she finally fishes it out from her waistband; her hands shake horribly while she opens up a Safari tab on her phone, hastening to Google ‘Lena Luthr abe 9’ (Give her a break, alright? She’s nervous) under Dr. Robbins’ close inspection.

A second later, the pictures are loading—there’s only a few on Google Images sparingly interspersed in a barrage of photos of Lex (Lillian never did like admitting she had a daughter), but they’re more than high-quality enough to see that the wide-eyed raven-haired girl in the pictures, and the girl lying pale and weak in the hospital bed right now are most certainly the same person.

Alex shows her the screen desperately, then holds it up against the sight of little Lena sleeping through the blinds, watching the anger fade from Dr. Robbins’ features with a wave of relief as it’s replaced quickly by something like awe.

“You weren’t lying,” she remarks disbelievingly, blue eyes wide and lips slightly parted as Alex hastily tucks her phone securely back into the waistband of her leggings.
Alex heaves a short sigh in response, running a single hand through her short red hair as the stress within her finally begins to abate (plus, she catches Arizona staring for a second while she does it, so she thinks it was a good move on all fronts).

“No, Dr. Robbins, I wasn’t lying.”

“Arizona,” the woman corrects, her gaze filling with a new sort of empathy that threatens to bring Alex to tears because, thank God.

“Arizona,” Alex breathes out with the smallest hint of a grin, then holds out her hand for the doctor to shake. “I’m Alex.”

Arizona takes it with little hesitation, her smaller hand warm and soft in Alex’s, shooting a jolt of electricity straight through her bones.

“I still think you’re an idiot,” Arizona tells her, though there’s no anger behind it, just a bemused sort of exasperation.

Alex blushes when she takes her hand back, shyly trying to shove them both in her pockets before realizing she’s still wearing leggings—ultimately, she settles for fiddling with her hands at her waistline, cheeks still flaming.

“You’re right,” she admits. “I should’ve taken her to you earlier.”

Arizona just hums, looking at Alex thoughtfully even as she resists the urge to squirm under the woman’s examination. “You’re here now, though. I suppose that’s what matters—any later and there could have been permanent damage to her lungs and central nervous system.”

Alex’s eyes widen, and she nods solemnly before darting her gaze back over to Lena and tracking the movements of the girl’s tiny chest on every inhale and exhale, as if ensuring she’s still okay.

“Is she, um—Is she allowed to eat?” Alex finds herself asking after a long moment, brows stitched together with worry. “I ordered a pizza earlier, but then we came here, and I—She really needs to eat.”
Arizona smiles at that, bright and sunny, and Alex’s heart skips a beat. “Of course, Alex. She doesn’t need surgery, just an IV and close observation, and we’ve already drawn blood, so I think that’s a fantastic idea.”

“Okay,” Alex grins, already digging out her phone again from her waistband—then she stops, meeting the aquatic hues of Arizona’s eyes with her own. “Thank you, Arizona.”

She just nods. “Any time, Alex.”

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Chapter End Notes

again, definitely wasn't planning on arizona being a part of this, but she's one of my favorite grey's characters and idk it just sorta happened...
hospitals (pov lena)

Chapter Summary

Lena wakes up (yet again) in a strange place. It's becoming something of a pattern, one she's not sure she likes.

Also, she meets Arizona, and finally gets some food.

Chapter Notes

sorry - this one took a little longer, just cause i needed to take a sort of brain break over the past couple of days from writing

buut here it is! hope you like:)

Quite frankly, little Lena was beginning to lose track of the exact number of strange places she’d awoken in, and she was sure it’d drive her mad if it continued, because really, this was just becoming far too much for her admittedly rather exceptional IQ to be handling on the regular.

To make matters worse, this time she was sure it was a hospital, even without having opened her eyes—an EKG machine beeped steadily beside her, she was nested in an abundance of stiff papery bedding, and the air was wrought with an unquestionably sterile scent mixed generously with hints of rubbing alcohol.

Her left arm felt sore right at the crease of her elbow, tiny pinpricks of pain coursing through her along with a curiously cool sort of feeling, like ice being pumped into her very veins—an IV, she surmised.

Sighing quietly to herself, she allowed her eyelids to flutter open, wincing slightly at the bright lights above that threatened to blind her and—Yep, she thought. Definitely a hospital.

A thrill of fear ran down her spine, and she shivered in her bed as she observed her surroundings—an EKG to her left (as she’d suspected), a pitifully blank chart sitting at her feet, and the figures of Alex standing across a pretty blonde doctor just outside the room, visible to Lena through the blinds of a large square window to her right.
They smiled at each other as Lena watched, then Alex turned abruptly on her heel to leave—Why was she leaving? Did she finally get fed up with little Lena and all her issues?

Her heart clenched, fear coursing through her tiny weakened body in waves as she watched the pretty blonde doctor strike up a conversation with one of the male nurses in bright patterned scrubs, then proceed to walk off with him towards another patient (at least, Lena assumed).

She had to get out of there.

Looking down at her left arm, she saw that her earlier suspicion was correct—at the crease of her elbow, a needle was inserted in the midst of a tiny purplish bruise beginning to form upon the skin there, the plastic and metal contraption held fast to her skin with a nearly opaque white piece of sticky tape.

Taking a deep breath to steel herself (and in a rather flimsy attempt to fight the painful ache brewing in her skull), she hovered her shaking right hand over the tube, then exhaled sharply as she tugged it out of her skin—instantly, an acute pain shot up her arm and a tiny droplet of dark red blood began to pool at the insertion site, but little Lena fought the nausea curling in her stomach at the sight, instead moving to extract herself from the bed.

A moment later she was landing barefoot onto the white floors, the world spinning around her as she fought to maintain her balance—then she took note of the device (a pulse oximeter, she realized vaguely) around her left pointer finger, its wire connected to the steadily beeping EKG monitor.

Shoot.

She needed to find a way to turn it off; otherwise, she knew that as soon as she divested herself of the oximeter, the monitor would flatline to indicate a dead patient, automatically alerting the blonde doctor and hordes of nurses to enter her room screaming ‘CODE GREY!’ with a crash cart not far behind—squinting at the screen, she spotted a circular button along its thin plastic bottom, just barely out of her reach.

Crap.

Getting on her tippie-toes, she reached her right hand as far as she could in the air, fingertip coming just inches short of the button.
“Shit!” she cursed under her breath (another word Lillian would never allow her to say, but it felt really good to defy her when she couldn’t hear)—it made her feel big, swearing like that when she knew she wasn’t supposed to.

It made her feel… brave.

Taking another deep breath, she braced herself against the vertigo in her brain and crouched as low as her screaming muscles would let her—then she was launching herself into the air (about a quarter of a foot was all she could manage), relief pulsing in her chest as her pale finger nudged the button with a click! before she was falling to the floor hard, unable to catch herself from landing square on her butt.

Tears welled in her eyes while she sat throbbing in pain atop the cold unforgiving floor, but the beeping had stopped, and she could slide off the oximeter without being immediately attended to—all things considered, she’d done well.

You’ve done well, she assured herself, taking a small modicum of comfort from the self-awarded praise.

(It was a habit she’d grown into over the years—because maybe Lillian and Lex and Lionel didn’t want to tell her she’d done a good job, or congratulate her on her various accomplishments… and maybe they weren’t ever going to.

Still, that didn’t mean Lena couldn’t try giving herself the reassurance she’d been missing, try telling herself that maybe Lillian wasn’t telling her ‘Good job!’, but that didn’t necessarily mean that she hadn’t done a good job anyhow.

It was as close as she got to approval, and maybe it felt more than a little hollow that she had to provide it on her own time after time, but it was something, and something was certainly more than nothing.)

Next, she padded shakily over to the doorway to take a shy peek out into the bustling hallway, her heart beating rapidly in her chest as nurses walked briskly by and doctors gave strict orders with raised voices and people sobbed despairingly for their loved ones.

It was a lot for her to handle, what with her stomach smarting from acute hunger pains and her
skull pounding with an unrelenting ache, not to mention her breath catching in her throat at every sudden noise.

But she was not weak; she was strong—she could do this.

Scanning the busy area, she stumbled out of her room and turned to her right, not quite sure where she was headed but—

“Lena?” came a voice from down the hall that sounded suspiciously like Alex’s.

Lena instantly froze in place, briefly debating whether she should admit defeat or make a run for it, not sure how far she’d get with her head throbbing and the hunger ripping her apart and—

A hand was suddenly on her shoulder, a warm touch that might’ve typically caused her recoil violently upon contact, but didn’t at that moment because she was far too exhausted, far too weary to do anything but sway unsteadily in place on her bare feet.

Then the owner of the touch was circling around to crouch before her, and—

*Oh.* It was Alex, still dressed in leggings and a tight grey tank top (the sweat stains from earlier that morning had since faded).

“Lena, sweetie, where were you going?” she asked, concern filling kind brown eyes.

Lena fought the urge to squirm under her intense stare.

“N-Nowhere, Ma’am, I—” she stopped herself, tilting her head curiously at the redhead woman. “You came back,” she said, suspicion evident in her tone (she was far too drained to bother making it sound more polite, and she’d quite accepted by that point the inevitability of an upcoming punishment for being such a *stupid* little girl).

Alex’s brow furrowed. “Of course I came back, Lena. I’d never leave you—you know that, right?”
Lena bit her lip, nodding noncommittally—she wasn’t sure how Alex would react to the truth (which was ‘No’), that which would undoubtedly imply she didn’t trust Alex, something that Lena was sure would serve only offend her and endanger Lena.

Then she noticed a flat rectangular take-out carton in Alex’s other hand, the one that wasn’t rested on Lena’s trembling shoulder—Oh, she thought, feeling like an idiot. *She just went out to buy herself some food.*

“A-Are you mad at me, Ma’am?” she questioned tentatively after a long moment, trying desperately to make sense of Alex’s kind worried stare and the fact that she hadn’t been violently dragged back to her room yet. Or maybe shot, though it seemed that Alex didn’t have her guns with her at the moment.

(Lena was very thankful for that.)

Alex frowned. “I thought we agreed on not calling me ‘Ma’am’ anymore.”

Lena’s cheeks flushed, and she looked down at her toes, sure she’d finally pushed too far. “M sorry, Alex.”

“Hey, it’s okay,” she assured (Lena didn’t believe it), before moving her hand from Lena’s shoulder to place a finger beneath Lena’s chin, gently guiding her up to meet Alex’s sincere brown-eyed gaze. “You don’t need to be sorry. And to answer your question, no, I’m not angry. Okay?”

A flash of suspicion sparked through Lena’s chest at that, though she fought to keep it concealed.

“Okay,” she whispered.

Alex nodded, though her eyes were pensive and slightly disturbed, like she could tell Lena didn’t believe her—it was unsettling, to say the least.

“Alright, sweet girl—can we go back to your room now? I brought you some food,” she entreated, jerking her head towards the carton in her hand, which, *Huh?*
“T-That’s for me?” Lena inquired disbelievingly before she could help herself, eyes wide.

Alex blinked, then nodded again with an easy smile (though it looked rather strained—sad, almost).

“Yes, Lena, I got this for you.”

“But, um,” Lena faltered, knowing she was pushing it but unable to make sense of what was happening (something that frustrated her above anything else), “what about you?”

Alex broke out into a gentle grin, one that caused warmth to spread in Lena’s chest even as persistent bull-headed suspicion reared its stubborn head in her gut at the sight.

“I’m okay, sweet girl—I already ate. So,” she paused, her gaze playful but pleading. “Can we go back to your room so you can eat?”

Still feeling painfully hesitant yet curiously warmed by inexplicable affection, Lena nodded bashfully, the flush in her cheeks deepening by the second. “Okay.”

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“Lena, hon, why did you take out the IV?” The blonde doctor was back now, her eyes ridiculously blue (though not as blue as Kara’s, Lena’s brain reminded her for some unknown reason), brows creased in seemingly genuine concern (it set Lena on edge).

“M sorry, Ma’am,” she murmured, shifting uncomfortably atop her hospital bed.

The doctor’s frown worsened. “You don’t need to call me ‘Ma’am,’ sweetie. My name is Arizona.”

Lena quirked a single brow, her interest piqued. “L-Like the state?”

“Exactly like the state,” Arizona replied with a warm smile, and Lena felt her cheeks heat
reflexively.

Lena pursed her lips together after a moment, thinking hard—she still didn’t totally understand what exactly she was doing here, why this doctor was being so nice to her, why Alex had brought her carrot sticks and ranch dressing and a peanut butter sandwich and a chocolate pudding cup (the hospital cafeteria was out of pizza, she’d said).

(Lena thought she might pass out again when she’d eaten her first bite of the plain peanut butter sandwich—God, it was like the best thing she’d ever tasted, after going so long without any kind of real food.)

“Go on,” Alex said kindly from where she sat in the corner of the room, as if she could sense Lena’s dilemma. “Ask her whatever you need to, Lena.”

The flush in Lena’s cheeks deepened. “W-Why am I here, Ma’a—Arizona?”

“We’re treating you for smoke inhalation and malnourishment. Do you know what that means?” she asked slowly—not condescendingly, but rather as if she cared, as if she wanted to ensure Lena knew exactly what was happening, too.

(Lena was very confused by that.

The male doctor who’d reset her arm all those years ago after she’d broken it hadn’t stopped to tell her what was happening, hadn’t warned her before he twisted her limbs hard and she was overcome with the worst pain she’d ever felt in her life.

This was new. And strange.)


At that, Arizona’s eyes widened, and she turned her astonished gaze to a weary-looking Alex—at that, Alex stood, approaching Lena who sat upright on the bed with slow and deliberate steps.

“Lena, hon, just because it isn’t life-threatening, doesn’t mean it doesn’t need to be treated by
professionals.”

Lena bit her lip, nodding slowly at her words, guilt running rampant through her body at the realization that she’d been taken to hospital for something so trivial, so unnecessary. “I-I’m sorry, Alex.”

A strangled sound escaped Alex’s throat at that. “Why are you sorry, sweetheart?”

*Is this another test?* Lena thought.

“F-For being a bother,” Lena stuttered out, praying she got the answer right—though judging by the horrified look on the woman’s features (and the matching expression on Arizona’s), she most definitely hadn’t.

*Oh, no.*

She shut her eyes tight, bracing herself for a punch, or a slap, or a biting insult (the best-case scenario at this point, as far as Lena was concerned)—but all that came was a soft voice, Alex’s voice, pleading, “Lena, honey, can you open your eyes please?”

Trembling violently, Lena did, struggling to focus on Alex’s heartbroken gaze.

“You were *not* being a bother. I’m here because I care, and you’re not going to be punished for other people’s mistakes, okay?”

Lena stared blankly.

Alex just tilted her head. “Will you say that for me? ‘I’m not going to be punished for other people’s mistakes.’”

*Is she still testing me?*

“I-I’m not going t-to be punished f-for other people’s m-mistakes,” Lena whispered shakily under
her breath, confusion and something strangely content swirling in her chest when Alex beamed at
the admission.

“That was perfect, Lena,” she told her happily, brown eyes filled with sincerity. “I’m so, so proud
of you.”

Immediately, Lena’s cheeks flamed hotly at the words, at the praise. “T-Thank you, Alex,” she
mumbled.

Alex’s smile widened. “No problem, sweet girl.”
"your disguise sucks." (pov kara)

Chapter Summary

Kara meets Arizona, and talks to Lena again... it's sad. And also cute.

Chapter Notes

ok so i'm graduating today so today and this weekend will be kind of crazy for me (finally graduating high school which is wild), so the next chapter will probably be delayed, but i'll do my very best to not keep you waiting too long!!

that said, hope you like!!

Kara had been flying circles around Earth faster than the speed of light, rage burning in her chest when she heard it: a small cry of pain from National City—Lena, she realized immediately, scarcely managing to right herself and avoid a nasty mid-air collision with a military aircraft roaring over the Atlantic because Lena was in trouble; she was in pain and Kara needed to find her, now.

She broke the sound barrier getting back, tracking little Lena’s thready pulse across the continents and holding back a sigh of relief when she detected Alex’s heartbeat calm and steady beside hers—and fine, maybe that meant the impressively-sized crater she left on the sidewalks of National City General Hospital wasn’t exactly unavoidable (she’d be hearing all about it from J’onn later, no doubt), but really, she was having a very hard time finding it in herself to care.

Lena was in a hospital—why was Lena in a hospital?

Understandably, that eclipsed all else.

Seconds later, Kara was speeding inhumanly fast through the halls, barely remembering to swap her suit on the way for civilian clothes (a pink long-sleeved button-down and a pair of khaki slacks she knew Lena liked)—a moment later, she was there, standing in the doorway where little Lena lay, small and vulnerable and pale in the hospital bed, a pretty blonde-haired doctor just finishing up with inserting her IV while Alex sat comfortably in the corner.

(Kara had to fight the sudden urge to hurl the doctor lady into space at the pained look on little
Lena’s face even as she knew the IV was a necessary evil.)

“Lena,” she gasped out, and immediately three heads whirled around to face her—Lena’s gaze wide and curious, the doctor’s and Alex’s filled with venomous rage.

_Huh?_ Kara thought.

The blue-eyed doctor flitted her gaze from Alex to Kara and back again, her frown deepening by the second. “Is this her?” she asked Alex tightly, gesturing vaguely towards Kara as she did.

Alex sighed but nodded, and the blonde doctor’s expression (Arizona Robbins, PhD., according to the stitching on her white coat) grew positively stormy with disapproval and anger as she turned back to face the blonde.

“You,” Dr. Robbins jabbed a finger at Kara, who gulped reflexively at the aggressive action, “and you,” she turned to point at Alex, though she was gentler with her, “are coming with me. Outside,” she finished, her voice practically a growl.

Swallowing thickly, Kara nodded, wide-eyed and alarmed—a second later, the doctor was turning promptly on her heel and striding purposefully out of the room, not bothering to look behind her and see if the two sisters were following; rather hastily, Kara and Alex jolted into action, stumbling one after another to follow Dr. Robbins out the door.

“Karev,” she called self-assuredly as she walked them towards an empty room at the end of the hall.

A second later, a tired-looking and well-built man in dark-blue scrubs and a white coat was turning from the nurse’s counter to call back, “What?” in an irritated tone—Kara didn’t like him, she decided after a moment.

“Watch the kid in 401,” she ordered without sparing him a look, clearly undeterred by his lack of enthusiasm.

He sighed but nodded. “You owe me.”
Dr. Robbins rolled her eyes at this ‘Karev,’ standing just beside the doorway and gesturing for Kara and Alex to enter. “I’m your boss, Karev. Get moving.”

With that, she turned away, entering after them into the room, shutting the door and flicking on the light switch as more of an afterthought than anything else.

“Now,” she announced authoritatively, even though she was a good couple inches shorter than both Alex and Kara—and really, it worked for her, Kara thought as she suppressed a shudder. “We’re going to talk.” She paused for a moment, her blue-eyed gaze narrowing intimidatingly at Kara. “What exactly is your problem?”

Kara simply gaped, because, What?

“I—I—What?” she stuttered out, knowing she must look ridiculous but not for the life of her understanding what—

“You took a 9-year-old child to a fire?” Dr. Robbins queried incredulously, crossing her arms against her chest and glaring.

Kara blinked. “I—Well—"

“Oh, no no no no, you do not get to speak yet,” she fumed, and Kara promptly gulped down her excuses. “And you know what? I don’t even care that you’re Supergirl, because—“


“Your disguise sucks,” Dr. Robbins interjected flatly in a perfect deadpan as Alex snorted in the corner, and Kara felt a flush spreading across her cheeks.

“I… That’s not—"

“But again,” Dr. Robbins continued, heedless of Kara’s inner turmoil. “I. Don’t. Care. And you wanna know why I don’t care?”
Kara opened her mouth to speak, but Dr. Robbins abruptly cut her off with a hard glare.

“That was rhetorical.”

Kara’s flush deepened.

"The reason I don’t care is because it’s not my job to worry about the Girl of Steel and sing her stupid praises and thank you for saving our planet time and time again—which, fine, okay, thank you for that,” she admitted in a rambling tangent, and Kara felt a pulse of relief in her chest amidst the fear. “But! My job, my allegiance is to those tiny humans, alright? No one else. And this tiny human has been horrifically mistreated, and you, Supergirl, are not helping.”

“I—"

“Kara,” Alex stopped her, shaking her head solemnly in a silent warning not to go any further.

“Do you know, there is a whole lot of medical issues with that little girl in there—malnourishment, bruises and healed-over breaks that indicate horrific abuse,” Kara’s stomach churned, and tears gathered in her eyes, “and guess what else? Smoke inhalation from your impulsive trip to go save the city.” She paused to let out a frustrated huff of air. “So, I ask again: What exactly is the matter with you?”

“I—I—” she stammered out, voice trembling, eyes burning with tears of anger and sadness and anger.

Dr. Robbins cocked a brow, clearly unsympathetic to Kara’s plight.

“I-I’m so sorry,” she choked out eventually, barely aware of the tears tracing their way down her cheeks. “I-I didn’t m-mean to.”

A sob escaped her, a desperate sound she didn’t bother to be embarrassed about, and Dr. Robbins’ stony glower began to soften in her tear-blurred vision.
“Look,” Dr. Robbins said gently after a moment, taking a deep breath. “I know it has to be hard living as a super-powered individual amongst humans, especially the tiny ones.”

Kara let out a watery chuckle at that, and Dr. Robbins smiled.

“But I need you to think things through before you act, because it’s so much different when you have a scared little kid like that, one who’s been through horrible things and doesn’t know how to tell you ‘no.’”

Instantly, Kara’s gut clenched. “Oh Rao, did she want to say ‘no’?”

Dr. Robbins’ lips quirked upwards, though it was bitter. “Maybe, Ms. Danvers, but that’s not your fault. Lena, she’s… she’s been through a lot.”

Kara nodded along for a moment, then had the belated realization of what exactly the doctor had just said—eyes wide, she whirled to face Alex, shock written all across her features. “She knows?”

“You can trust her, Kar,” Alex answered with a nod, and Kara ignored the suspicion rearing its head in her chest, overtaken easily by the relief that they could talk openly there, without secrets or edited versions of the truth—Rao, it was exhausting sometimes, being Supergirl and spending every single day lying about something to someone she loved; she wholeheartedly cherished the moments in which she didn’t have to, because Rao knew they were far rarer than even the smallest of miracles.

It was silent for a moment, a question on the tip of Kara’s tongue that she knew she shouldn’t ask, knew would only break her worse if she did (and after Lillian, she was teetering on the edge of utter insanity)—but in typical Kara fashion, she lasted about two seconds before blurting out: “What did you mean about the bruises and the breaks?”

Dr. Robbins’ blue-eyed gaze softened. “She has some deep-skin bruising on her back and side—some of it looks recent, as in ‘yesterday’ recent.”

Kara inhaled sharply, remembering when she’d found little Lena tossing and turning in her sleep on the hardwood floor.
“And there’s some healed-over breaks and hairline fractures in various spots—there’s a particularly nasty one in her left arm; it looks like the ulna was broken in three different places, and she has a small scar where the bone penetrated the skin just beneath her elbow.”

Each word hit Kara like a crushing blow to the chest, and she feared she might stop breathing altogether as Dr. Robbins continued: “Hairline fractures along her right humerus bone and her left femur, though they’re fairly old so they’ve long since healed over… and what looks to be a radially torn meniscus in her left knee, though I don’t know how helpful it would be for you to have her do an MRI if she’s not going to remain a kid for very long.”

Kara took a deep shuddering breath, attempting to steel herself even as tears traced both cheeks. “I-Is that everything?”

“Well, like I said, an MRI would help us to check out any joint or ligament damage, but beyond the suspected meniscal tear, I think that that’s all,” she informed them, her voice gentle and rhythmic. “We’re going to keep her in observation overnight, but after that, you should be able to take her home.”

“But then she was talking again, and Kara really couldn’t have cared less about whatever was happening between Alex and the nice (but scary) lady doctor, not when Lena was the subject: “I’m gonna put Lena’s left forearm in a brace before she gets out of here; the medical care for her break definitely did the job but it wasn’t all that great, so she’ll need that to assist with any pain and the process of recorrecting her growth.”

Kara clenched her fists at her sides, concentrating hard to keep her eyes from glowing a dangerous fluorescent crimson even as horribly-intrusive thoughts of little Lena bombarded her relentlessly, of just how badly she’d messed up, of the fact that she’d put that adorable little girl in danger. (And Lillian—her, too.)

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(And Lillian—her, too.)

“Now, should we go back and say ‘hi’?” Dr. Robbins suggested with cautious optimism in her
voice, hands clasped at her naval.

In an instant, Kara shook her head vehemently, her face a mess of tears and hurt. “I-I can’t—Alex, you should g-go.”

She felt a hand on her shoulder a second later—Alex, she knew, rubbing soothing circles between her shoulder blades even as she knew she didn’t deserve it, didn’t deserve anything less than something horrible after hurting Lena like she did.

“Kara, you can. You screwed up, but that’s okay, alright? You didn’t know.”

Kara let loose a choked sob, her body trembling with the force of it. “Al, I-I hurt her.”

“Shh, Kar, it’s okay. I did, too, you know? I screwed up, too—we should have brought kid Lena here a hell of a lot sooner,” she intoned faintly, her other hand rubbing gently at Kara’s upper arm. “But we have a chance now, okay? We have a chance to make it right,” she finished firmly, her words sinking deeply into Kara even as she wiped uselessly at her tears.

“Okay,” she relented quietly after a long moment, sniffling and gathering herself.

Alex grinned. “Yeah?”

Kara chuckled hoarsely and nodded, her eyes watery and bloodshot. “Yeah.”

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“… they did what?” Kara could hear the man, Karev’s voice filtering out of the room as they drew near, his voice incredulous and rough. “The two ladies who brought you in?” he was asking as the three of them entered, the tall brunette man turning to face them with a formidable glare, animosity flashing in his hazel-brown eyes.

“What the hell is wrong with you people?” he demanded, brows furrowed upon his flat-sloped forehead, his features unamused and angry.
“Thas’ a bad word, Dr. Alex,” Lena chimed in a second later, her voice barely more than a whisper—but all the same, Kara and Alex stared at the child like she was a particularly rare exotic dinosaur walking the Earth again, because since when had she started talking and making jokes and talking?

Immediately, Dr. Alex’s infuriated glower turned kind and soft as he turned to eye the small girl up and down, squirming in place under the bedsheets.

“You’re right, kid,” he admitted, playful exasperation in his tone. “What’s gonna happen to me now?”

Lena blushed shyly, clearly feeling the weight of everyone’s stare upon her even as she looked thoughtfully up at Dr. Alex.

“Time out?” she asked after a short moment, her face screwed up in adorable concentration, and Rao, it was nothing short of precious.

“I’m an adult,” Dr. Alex protested, narrowing his gaze teasingly at her. “I don’t get time-outs, ’cause I’m a big boy. Nice try, kid,” he lauded her wryly, and little Lena’s blush deepened. “You almost had me there.”

Dr. Robbins cleared her throat then, and Dr. Alex and Lena turned from their good-natured banter to eye her expectantly.

“Karev, go sit on the steps outside and think about what you’ve done,” she commanded, her tone light and almost mocking, though the steel beneath her words made it rather clear that she wouldn’t tolerate disobedience.

Dr. Ale—Karev made an exaggerated pout, first towards Dr. Robbins and then towards Lena, causing the little girl to purse her lips cutely as she tried not to smile.

“This is your fault,” he grumbled, pointing at a bashful kid Lena even as he gave her a wink—Kara felt like punching him when Lena’s lips quirked upwards into a grin.
Then he was strutting over to face them, halting for a moment and eyeing Kara and Alex up and down with disdainful eyes—which, seriously, who did this guy think he was?

Kara took a deep breath to gather herself again under his stare, nostrils flaring.

He clenched his jaw. “I swear to God—”

“Alex,” Dr. Robbins interrupted sternly.

“What?” both Karev and Kara’s Alex said in unison, and Dr. Robbins rolled her eyes.

“Not you, Alex,” she mumbled to Kara’s Alex, then turned to look pointedly at Karev. “You, Alex. I already talked to them, okay?”

Karev raised a brow, evidently unconvinced. “You sure?”

Dr. Robbins smiled easily, patting him on the shoulder—it rather surprised Kara that the prickly ‘Karev’ man just nodded back in understanding at that; then, with one last baleful look towards Kara and Alex, slid between them and out into the halls, throwing little Lena an enthusiastic wave through the glass.

“She’s… nice,” Alex managed after a brief moment of silence, brows raised and eyes wide.

Dr. Robbins nodded distractedly as she approached little Lena’s bed, taking another look at the girl’s chart.

“He’s really protective of the kids—don’t take it personally,” she replied offhandedly, already scanning little Lena’s chart with intelligent bright-blue eyes. “Hey, Lena!” she greeted sunnily, thought she kept her voice low and non-threatening. “How are you doing?”

Little Lena bit her lower lip, painfully shy as she eyed Dr. Robbins. “Good,” she squeaked out, cheeks still flushed and rosy—then, she turned her wide-eyed gaze to Kara, and Kara felt her heart stop in her chest. “Hi, Miss Kara.”
Instantly, Kara broke out into a grin, the tear tracks still fading on her cheeks as she approached the bed, keeping her pace slow and deliberate so as not to frighten the poor girl.

“Hey, pretty girl. You don’t need to call me ‘Miss,’ okay? Just Kara.”

Lena nodded, still worrying her bottom lip between her teeth. “O-Okay, Mi—Kara. ‘M sorry.”

Kara’s grin widened, though it felt sad—forced. “You don’t have to apologize, Lena. I’m just glad you’re safe.”

She paused for a moment, then kneeled at Lena’s bedside, bringing her face-to-face with the small pale girl.

“And I’m very sorry I took you to that fire, sweetie. I didn’t—I didn’t know it would make you sick, but that’s still all on me, so I’m really, really sorry,” she apologized, genuine and wide-eyed. “Can you forgive me?”

Immediately, little Lena nodded, her emerald-green irises filled with childlike curiosity—it made Kara’s heart ache in her chest.

“B-But adults don’t have to ‘pologize… ” she trailed off, blinking owlishly at Kara, her words hoarse and strained.

Kara bit her lip hard at that, feeling the telltale burn of tears begin to well again in her eyes at Lena’s heartbreaking confusion concerning something so basic, so fundamental. “I—I—”

“Yes, they do, hon,” Alex’s voice came soft and gentle from behind, and Kara withheld a sigh of relief as her sister approached to kneel beside her at Lena’s bed. “Adults make mistakes, too, and we have to say sorry for them, just like everyone else.”

Lena’s brows furrowed in response, Alex’s answer clearly not matching up with the earlier frames of reference in her head—but all the same, she nodded, though a slightly troubled look remained on her pale features.
“‘Kay,” she agreed drowsily, then shifted to eye Kara. “Why are you sad?”

Kara froze in place, sniffling and wiping at her cheeks in an attempt to right herself (a rather counterproductive endeavor, given the tears still escaping her reddened eyes).

“I’m not sad, Lee,” she managed through the suppressed sobs that threatened to overtake her entirely. “I’m just—just happy. Happy that you’re okay.”

Little Lena furrowed her brow again, a suspicious look on her features that Kara might have found adorably precious in any other situation—but as it was, it only served to make her heart splinter further in her chest, assaulted by mountains of hurt and pain and anger for this little girl, for the little Lena who never got to know anything better than sadness and punishment when she’d deserved nothing but love and careful understanding since the very start.

“A-Are you sure, Mis—Kara?” she corrected herself, a sheepish expression on her features, and Kara jerked herself out of her thoughts, looking at little Lena with wide, attentive eyes.

“Yeah, sweetie,” she hummed, allowing the rhythmic beeping of Lena’s projected heart rate to lure her into serenity—or, as close as she could get at that particular moment. “I'm sure.”

Little Lena’s lips curved into a tiny smile at that, and Kara felt like breaking as it seeped through her chest and into her very bones, both healing and devastating in juxtaposing nature—but Lena was safe, and smiling, and for now, that would have to be okay.

For now, that was okay.
Chapter Summary

Alex and Kara go over some house rules with Lena... also, Alex is frustrated.

Chapter Notes

so i’m currently in hawaii rn for a family reunion cause i essentially grew up here and our airbnb's wifi is kind of shit and plus its hawaii and everyone freaking loves hawaii including me so next chapter may be a bit delayed, but i will do my best as always :)

“Okay,” Alex announces with as much authority as she can muster, gesturing for Kara and Lena to sit across from her upon the neatly-made bed in her apartment, forming something of a triangle-like constellation as they each settle into their respective spots. “We’re going to go through some house rules.”

(It was a day since the hospital, kid Lena having been discharged just earlier that morning from National City General, and the car ride home had gone by in relative silence, what with Alex and Kara not quite knowing what to say in the wake of everything and mini Lena not being all that chatty to begin with.

But now, that's going to change; Alex has vowed to make their moronic selves communicate like healthy individuals if it kills her.)

Kara nods seriously, while the slightest trace of confusion flickers across little Lena’s neutral mask of indifference, and Alex sighs.

This is going to be hard, she thinks.

“Firstly—Lena, do you have any rules you want to put in place?”

Lena blinks rapidly, poorly-hidden alarm creeping its way into her uncertain expression as she squirms in the oversized black D.E.O. tee of Alex’s that swallows her tiny frame. “W-What?”
“Rules,” Alex clarifies, forcing herself not to look at Kara, who she knows will be wearing an absolutely heartbroken look on her features. “Rules that will make sure we can keep you safe.”

“I—I—No,” she stammers out, her voice trembling, and Alex wants to punch something. (Preferably Lillian Luthor.) “W-Whatever you decide is good.”

Alex sighs again. “Okay, but you’ll let us know if that changes?”

Little Lena still looks terrified, her feigned nonchalance from earlier entirely forgotten, but she bites her lip anxiously and nods—for now, that will have to suffice.

“Good. Thank you, Lena,” she lauds, and Lena’s cheeks flush. “Rule number one: no taking the 9-year-old to Supergirl duties.”

Kara hunches slightly, and a stab of guilt penetrates Alex’s chest even as she knows it had to be said.

“Rule number two,” she continues on, turning her gaze onto an attentive and wide-eyed Lena. “If you’re hungry, you need to tell one of us.”

Lena’s brow furrows. “I’m confused,” she admits quietly, looking embarrassed.

“That’s okay, hon,” Alex reassures her gently, taking care to keep her tone quiet and unassuming. “I’m just happy you told me. Which part confuses you?”

“Will I be punished for following rule number two?” the girl asks curiously without missing a beat, and Alex feels like she’s been sucker-punched, all the air leaving her lungs in a rush—Kara isn’t faring any better by the looks of it, an utterly crestfallen look on her features, ocean-blue eyes shiny with unshed tears.

“I—” Alex coughs, attempting to gather herself. “No, Lena, never,” she chokes out eventually, still rather taken aback.
Lena just nods, a thoughtful expression on her adorable features, seemingly oblivious to Alex and Kara’s inner turmoil. “Okay.”

Shaking her head to clear her thoughts, Alex fiddles with her hands in her lap nervously. “Rule number three: If you’re hurt, you need to tell one of us.” Lena’s confused expression only worsens at that, and Alex scrambles to amend herself: “And no, you will not be punished for following rule number three. Ever.”

Little Lena nods again, a glazed-over look in her eyes—Alex resists the urge to heave a long sigh.

“Rule number four,” she pauses, trying to think. “Is….. ”

“Sleep on the bed,” Kara offers, and immediately little Lena flushes a bright crimson in response—Alex furrows a brow, rather lost all of a sudden.

“What does that mean?”

Kara shrugs, a sad look in her cerulean blue eyes as she turns to address kid Lena. “It means we’re not trying to trick you into sleeping on the bed.”

Little Lena’s flush deepens. “‘M sorry.”

“Don’t be sorry, Lee,” Kara replies instantly, and Alex nods along, desperate for the girl to understand. “It’s not your fault.”

“Sweetheart, I’m giving you my bed because I want you to be comfortable, okay?”

Lena’s lower lip trembles, and Alex feels her heart clench in her chest. “B-But what about you?”

Alex breaks into a reluctant smile. “I’m gonna be okay on the couch. Kara, too.”

“B-But you’re adULTs... ”
“So?” Kara asks before Alex can respond.

Lena looks distinctly troubled. “Well you’re a government agent,” she says to Alex, then turns to eye Kara, “and you’re a superhero.”

Alex nods. “Yes, sweetie, that’s right.”

Lena ducks her head. “Y-You guys are important. I’m… n-not.”

“Lena,” Kara breathes sharply, eliciting a slight flinch from the girl—a second later, an apologetic look comes over her tanned features. “I’m sorry, hon, it’s just… You’re wrong about that, okay? You’re so important to me—to both of us.”

“Oh,” little Lena says in a small voice, still looking rather discontented sitting upon the bedsheets.

“I don’t care who told you you’re not important, kid,” Alex tells her, sentimentality crawling up in her throat and threatening to choke her entirely. “They’re wrong. You mean everything to us, and I wouldn’t say that if I didn’t mean it. Okay?”

Little Lena looks just a hair short of terrified, but she ducks her head shallowly up and down in a congruent gesture. “Okay,” she mumbles, barely audible, and Alex is torn between hugging her tightly and breaking down into wailing sobs.

She settles instead for a genuine smile that quirks at her lips, one that little Lena actually returns with one of her own after a brief moment, and for now, that’s okay.

For now, that’s enough.

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Things go relatively well for the next couple of hours—Lena takes a nap, nibbles on a banana, and actually smiles on three separate occasions… so, actually, ‘relatively well’ is a bit of an
understatement, as these things go.

Because really, things go incredibly freaking well, and as a result, Alex probably shouldn’t have been expecting for it to last for very long.

And maybe it’s all from taking care of kid Lena, from making her smile in that painfully shy way of hers, from watching her start to trust in her and Kara with every passing moment, but she’ll begrudgingly admit that yes, maybe she did catch herself hoping that it would last for longer than an afternoon.

As always, the universe was always more than happy to prove her wrong.

It’s not long before they’re both being called in to the D.E.O., and in the interest of not traumatizing poor Lena any further, they find themselves a last-minute babysitter: Brainy.

Was he their first option? Absolutely not.

Was he their only option? … Yeah.

So they’re here, gathered around the missions console with J’onn and Winn and Vasquez, and Alex feels like a newly anointed mother who’s just left their adorable toddler at daycare for the very first time and is struggling from overt separation anxiety as a result.

It’s awful.

But then Kara is announcing, “So, I had a sort of run-in with Lillian the other day… “ like it’s no big deal and Alex’s separation anxiety promptly takes something of a backseat in favor of a burning and poignantly incredulous anger at her sister, because—

“Kara, what the hell? “

Kara flushes pink, looking ashamed, which, yeah, Alex would hope she’s feeling some degree of remorse for not revealing this sooner. “I’m sorry, it—it didn’t go very well.”
J’onn nods like that makes perfect sense, and Alex wants to punch him. “Okay,” he says calmly. “We—

“I don’t care that it ‘didn’t go very well,’” she uses air quotes there, and pointedly ignores the hurt look on Kara’s features as she does. "Kara, why didn’t you tell me?"

“Look, Al, I’m sorry, it’s just—"

“What’d she say?” Alex cuts her off stiffly, and Kara looks crestfallen, like a kicked puppy—but Alex is too angry to bother feeling bad about that, not when they’re supposed to be doing this together and her sister is still hiding things like Alex is the enemy, which, to be clear, she’s not and she never has been.

“Not much,” Kara mumbles, ducking her head ruefully and shifting side to side on her feet. “She wasn’t actually there.”

Alex blinks, briefly taken aback before she feels her features quickly forming a hard glare. “What?"

“How does that work?” Winn asks, tilting his head and squinting off into the distance like it might tell him the answer if he stares hard enough.

J’onn is silent and stoic, arms crossed like he’s wishing to be anywhere but here, and really, Alex can’t find it in herself to blame him for that.

Vasquez just looks entirely out of her depth, and considering that’s fairly in-character for her, Alex doesn’t dwell too hard on it.

Kara scratches her head, cheeks flushed a vivid reddish hue. “She was a hologram,” she murmurs in an accelerated rush, and Alex resists the sudden urge to slam her head down on the console in sheer frustration.

“Kara,” she growls instead.
Kara sighs. “She was a hologram.”

“And let me guess,” Alex muses, her voice deadly calm. “You found this out by trying and failing to kill her.”

“What?” Winn squeaks.

They ignore him, and Kara’s flush deepens even further. “Maybe.”

“That’s illegal,” Vasquez chirps unhelpfully, before a confused look promptly crosses her features. “Wait, is it?”

“Which part?” Winn questions curiously, and Alex groans.

Kara furrows a brow. “What do you mean?”

Both Winn and Vasquez open their mouths to respond, and Alex rushes to cut them off: “Doesn’t matter.”

Winn pouts. “Doesn’t it, though?”

Alex shoots him a hard glare, and he shrivels on the spot.

“Nevermind,” he squeaks, blushing under Alex’s glower. “Nothing to see here.”

J’onn heaves a sigh, and they all turn to look at him. “Kara, did she give any hints as to where she might be operating out of?”

At that, Alex turns to fix her sister with a look of exaggerated apprehension, because she knows damn well Kara won’t have anything all that constructive to be offering to the discussion.
“Um… no,” Kara mutters bashfully, tugging anxiously at the collar of her pink button-down, and, 
Yep, Alex thinks. Called it.

“Wonderful,” Alex grumbles, unable to stop the venom from seeping into in her tone.

“Okay,” J’onn relents. “So, what’s our plan for the moment?”

Vasquez visibly brightens. “Ooh! Winn has something!”

Everyone’s head quickly turns to stare at the man in question, who flushes a bright red under their intense gazes. “I mean—” he stumbles over his words, clearly flustered, “—I-I wouldn’t say it’s something it’s just—I maybe kind of sort—“

Alex snarls, “Winn,” before he can get any further, and a quiet yelp escapes his throat in response.

“I, um—” his voice comes out an octave higher than usual, and stops himself to clear his throat loudly. “It’s just, I might have a way to track the weapon. Almost. Not quite. I mean, I—” he halts himself again, the tips of his ears pink. “Sorry.”

Vasquez silently rubs his back in soothing motions, and Alex feels a vague stab of guilt penetrating her insides.

“When will we be able to do that?” Kara asks with scarcely concealed urgency, and Alex instinctively leans forward, needing to hear his reply.

Winn scratches at his scalp. “It’d be done already if I had Lena, but… maybe a week?”

Alex clenches her jaw. “Dammit.”

“Hold on,” Kara interjects, a faraway look in her eyes. “What if Lena helped?” she asks no one in particular, and Alex takes a brief moment to wonder if her sister has lost her fucking mind, because what?!
“If you’re kidding, that isn’t funny,” Alex manages to snarl through gritted teeth, white-hot anger coursing through her veins and—

“I’m not,” Kara protests. “Lena’s always been a genius, right? What if she can help?”

Vasquez’s features twist into one that Alex thinks is meant to be confusion, but ends up looking rather like severe constipation instead. “She’s nine,” the short-haired agent says slowly.

Alex waves her hand wildly in the air, trying to emphasize Vasquez’s point. “Exactly. She’s nine.”

A self-satisfied grin spreads across Vasquez’s dopey features at Alex’s emphatic show of agreement, and Alex fights valiantly against the urge to roll her eyes.

Kara frowns. “So? She’s still the smartest person I’ve ever known.”

“Is this really our only plan?” J’onn inquires tiredly, rubbing at his temples.

Kara stubbornly sets her jaw. “Do you have a better idea?”

Alex wants to punch her, wants to knock that infuriating confidence out of her little sister’s self-righteous stance, but unfortunately, she can’t because no, she really really doesn’t.

“No,” she admits, and Kara gives a sharp nod in response that makes Alex want to throttle her.

“Okay, then,” Kara sums up decisively.

Winn nods eagerly, his head bobbing up and down so fast that Alex actually worries briefly for the structural integrity of the boy’s spine. “Project ‘Super Science Babysitting Bros’ is officially a go!”

Vasquez wrinkles her nose. “‘Super Science Babysitting Bros’?”
Winn flushes, shoulders hunched. “It’s a working title.”

“Where’s Lena now?” J’onn asks, his tone strict and business-like.

(Alex is grateful for that—she thinks it might just be the only thing keeping her sane.)

“With Brainy,” Kara responds cheerfully, and Alex exhales slowly through her nose to calm herself.

A crease forms between J’onn’s brows. “Is that wise?”

“Nothing about any of this is wise,” Alex grumbles, more to herself than anyone else, pinching exhaustedly at the bridge of her nose.

J’onn ignores her. “Should we give her today to rest, then start her here tomorrow?”

Kara nods immediately. “Okay!”

Alex fights against the stab of annoyance within her at the fact that Kara didn’t bother consulting her first, and instead manages a firm nod. “Yeah, that works. Can I go back and see Lena now?”

(She’s very purposeful to use ‘I’ and not ‘we’ in that context… as far as she’s concerned, Kara can fly laps around the Earth until Alex decides she’s not angry anymore.)

But J’onn just shakes his head regretfully, and Alex feels like screaming. “I want you to take another crack at Otis Graves in holding. And you,” he turns to address Kara, “the civil war in Ireland is turning ugly. We need you there.”

Kara huffs out a sigh, but nods. “Alright.”

Alex doesn’t reply, and what’s more, she’s far too angry to bother—instead she turns promptly on
her heel and strides away from the console, focusing intently on regulating her breathing with every step as unfettered rage courses through her body.

*Remember, you're doing this for Lena*, she tells herself. (It only kind of works.). *You’re doing this for Lena.*
brainiac 5 (pov lena)

Chapter Summary

Brainy babysits. It's interesting.

Also, Lena teaches him the meaning of a pinky promise.

Chapter Notes

ok so it turns out i had a weird amount of time today cause my older brother is super into sports (me too, sorta) and the nba finals were today so we took a break from hawaii stuff to watch that and i got to write during....

ALSO: i've started writing this high school au for lena x kara cause it just wouldn't leave me alone with jock kara and kinda angsty lena and all that... is that something you all would be interested in reading? i know it's very trope-y and there are a lot of those out there... idk. i have like two or three chapters written out already, so let me know!

aaand heres a new chapter.. hope you like :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Lena meets a new person. He’s tall, and sort of tan, and has black hair (like Lena’s!) that tickles his jawline.

He says his name is Brainy, but that kind of sounds more like a nickname than anything else; when Lena works up the nerve to ask about it, he tells her it’s short for ‘Brainiac 5.’

(After that, she decides she’s not going to bother asking anymore, because she’s not quite sure whether she should listen to the voice in her brain telling her it’s all a particularly elaborate scam meant primarily to confuse her, but she knows it hurts her head to ponder it for too long, and that’s more than enough to tell her she shouldn’t try.)

He talks a little funny, too—like what Lena imagines the male counterpart to Siri would sound like, and he always stands with his hands stiffly clasped in front of him, in a sort of overtly formal posture Lena thinks Lillian would most certainly approve of.

(In other words, she wouldn’t beat him bloody on the floors of Luthor Mansion like she did Lena.)
No, she’d leave him be. Maybe even praise him for holding such esteem.

But, that's all speculation, of course—Lena most certainly wouldn’t know.)

When they meet for the first time, he stands in Alex’s apartment (maintaining a noticeably consistent distance from Lena of at least five feet at all times) with impressively straight posture, hands clasped, and confidently announces: “Greetings, child. My true title is quite long, so I will spare you the trouble—you may call me Brainy. What is the title you would have me address you as?”

Lena just blinks, eyes wide—Brainy seems to take this as a sign of severely impaired mental faculties, and immediately bends down to address her again in an almost ear-splittingly loud voice:

“Greetings. I,” he practically shouts, gesturing to himself, “Brainy. Y—”

“Lena,” she manages to choke out in barely more than a whisper, but he hears her anyways and instantly halts his words, looking rather taken aback.

Then he’s drawing himself back up to his feet, suspicion gathered in his dark irises. “Agent Danvers did not inform me you were self-aware,” he observes in that ever-clinical tone, by all appearances speaking more to himself than to Lena.

Lena blinks again, not quite sure what she’s meant to say in response.

“Sorry, Sir,” she tries—it comes out sounding like more of a question than anything else; if at all possible, ‘Brainy’ looks even more confounded by that.

“Curious,” he muses, narrowing his gaze—Lena fights the urge to squirm under his meticulous inspection. “You are uncharacteristically non-verbal.”

‘Uncharacteristically’?
Lena bites her lip nervously, shifting from foot to foot—though, she keeps eye contact with the strange man; she’d never be so foolish as to show such a blatant sign of disrespect while so unmistakably at his mercy. “I’m sorry, Sir. Have we met before?”

He squints intently at her. “You tell me, young one.”

“If we have, I don’t remember,” Lena says carefully. “’M sorry, Sir.”

He waves away her apology with an unceremonious gesture. “’Sir’? Why do you bestow such a prefix upon one like unto myself?”

Lena furrows a brow. “What would you prefer me to call you?”

“Brainy.”

“Just ‘Brainy’?”

He nods, an inquisitive look in his dark eyes. “Just ‘Brainy.’”

Lena tilts her head, deep in thought—Brainy simply stares back, entirely unperturbed under her wide-eyed gaze.

“Are you an alien?” she asks after a long moment, now having more or less accepted that she isn’t in any immediate danger—and if she is, there’s very little to be done about it, so she might as well just lower her guard.

He nods again, the movement stiff and sharp. “Yes, child.”

“Oh. That’s cool,” Lena muses before she can stop herself, a rosy flush spreading across her cheeks when she realizes what she’s said.

“It pleases me that you think so,” Brainy responds without pause, seemingly oblivious to her inner turmoil.
Lena bites her lip. “Are you here ’cause I’ve been bad?”

Brainy visibly recoils, looking rather affronted.

“What? I—You—” he halts himself, then leans further down, wariness all across his features. “You are Lena Luthor, yes?”

Lena nods slowly. “Yes.. ?”

“Are you asking me or are you telling me?”

“I—telling you. Yes.”

He draws back up to his full height, stroking thoughtfully at his non-existent beard. “Interesting.”

Lena tilts her head. “Did my mother send you?”

“Most definitely not,” Brainy informs her, sounding rather upset at the notion.

“M sorry.”

Brain quirks a brow. “Why are you sorry, child?”

“I didn’t mean to upset you.”

“Why does everyone think I’m upset?” he asked no one in particular, his vision glossing over and staring straight through Lena—it quickly becomes rather apparent that this is not about Lena at all, but rather, about Brainy’s own personal dilemmas. “I am not upset; a 12th level intellect is what I am! I do not do ‘upset.’”
“And granted, yes, I am beginning to experience human ‘feelings,’” he uses air quotes there, sounding very indignant, and Lena does her best not to laugh, “for a certain very attractive brunette specimen with a knack for astral projection, but—” he pauses, looking suddenly confused. “Curious. It seems I have lost my train of thought. Personally, I blame Nia Nal.”

Lena blinks again. “Who?”

“The exquisite object of my affections, of course,” he answers dismissively, beginning to pace back and forth across the hardwood flooring, hands still impeccably clasped before him. “Keep up, child.”

“Oh,” Lena says, feeling rather at a loss but undoubtedly bemused as she watches him. “Okay. Is it a girl or a boy?”

“A delectably affectionate female.”

A smile quirks at Lena’s lips despite herself. “Do you love her?”

Brainy halts his movements, a strangled noise escaping his throat. “I—You—Love her?” he squawks, eyes bulging comically. “Wh—I—No, I am a 12th level intellect, I do not—"

“Oh,” Lena concedes, taking pity on him (though it’s clear he loves this 'Nia Nal,' whoever she is). “But you have feelings for her.”

“I—Yes.” He watches her with renewed cynicism. “You are quite observant.”

“Or maybe you’re just not as indecipherable as you think.”

Brainy squints at her. “Are you sure you are not self-aware, child?”

Lena frowns. “What does that mean?”
“Nothing,” Brainy straightens, though the curious look doesn’t fade from his features. “So, about my 'Nia Nal’ predicament…”

Lena raises a single brow. “What about it?”

Brainy huffs at that, clearly chagrined. “I require your assistance, infantile human.”

“Okay.” Lena giggles. This is going to be fun, she thinks (a thought she very rarely ever has). “What’s she like?”

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surprise; either way, Lena had been thrilled to find it, thrilled by the prospect of something familiar in a reality where everything seemed hopelessly foreign.

When she shyly asked Brainy if he would like to play, he’d accepted with little hesitation, declaring this to be amongst his favorites of Earthly games.

Lena was White, and he was Black; thus far, it’d been a fairly uneventful game… but Lena aimed to change that.)

“Pawn to F-3.” Lena moves the splintered piece, its snow-white paint peeling off in various places. “Still, humans often use few words to implicate a greater unspoken meaning—you have to read between the lines.”

Brainy hums, looking contemplative. “So… she did not want me to watch her sleeping at night in the comfort of her bed in apartment 3C? Pawn to B-5.”

Lena fights the urge to laugh, knowing it’d be rude. “No, I don’t believe that’s what she was trying to imply. Knight to E-2.”

“Interesting,” Brainy muses, and again he begins to stroke at his nonexistent beard, the golden ring on his fourth finger (emblazoned with a single ‘L’) glinting in the modest light. “Knight to D-7. I have another question.”

“Bishop to H-6,” Lena murmurs, her eyes fixed intently upon the board as she moves the worn piece. “What is it?”

Brainy furrows a brow. “There was one instance upon which I told her ‘Your features are symmetrical and quite aesthetically pleasing.’ She did not appreciate the sentiment. Bishop to H-6, take Bishop.”

A snort makes its way through Lena’s nostrils before she can stop it, and immediately Brainy flushes a rosy pink. “I’m sorry,” she tells him, and she means it. “It’s just—next time, maybe try something simpler. Queen to H-6, take Bishop.”

Brainy frowns. “‘Something simpler’? Bishop to B-7.”
Lena nods, her gaze still steadfastly upon the board. “Try something like ‘I find you quite beautiful, Nia,’ or ‘You look incredible.’ Pawn to A-3.”

Brainy hums, still stroking at his nonexistent beard with one hand. “You are very wise, Lena Luthor. Pawn to E-5.”


“I mean it,” Brainy insists, dropping his hand back into his lap, his expression eager. “Queen to E-7.”

Lena feels her cheeks beginning to heat. “King to B-1,” she says in lieu of response, unable to find a suitable response for that… that compliment.

He tilts his head at her in thought. “You do not believe my sincerity? Pawn to A-6.”

“No, it’s not—it’s not that,” she stumbles over her words, the pinkish flush in her face growing deeper by the second. “I just… Mother never said things like that about me. She said if people ever did, they were lying.” She bites her lip, suddenly feeling far too exposed under Brainy’s unrelenting gaze. “Knight to C-1.”

“Lena, that is not… She is wrong.”

Lena shrugs inconsequentially. “It’s your turn.”

Brainy shakes his head stubbornly, a determined fire in his eyes. “I do not understand why you will not believe me.”

Lena sighs. “It’s difficult to undo a lifetime of conditioning.”

At that, Brainy nods, jaw set, like he understands. Maybe he does. “But not impossible.”
“Brainy, I… “ she sighs, relenting to the various emotions swirling deep in her chest. "I don’t want to fight anymore.”

“But we have to,” he maintains, his tone pleading. “We cannot afford the alternative.”

Lena nods sadly—she doesn’t fight against the tears welling in her eyes, the hopelessness rising in her chest.

“I’m just… I’m just so tired,” she chokes out, her voice cracking on the last syllable (the chess match more or less forgotten), and a tear rolls down her cheek. “Do you understand? I don’t want to fight it anymore.”

“Lena, we have to,” Brainy repeats, and she feels like breaking. “There is more to it than this; you must know that.”

Lena bites her lip—it’s sore, painful, and she knows she’s close to breaking the skin. “Do you really believe that?”

“I did not used to,” Brainy admits, and Lena’s red-rimmed eyes widen.

“What?”

Brainy sighs. “I did not used to think there was more for me. Sometimes, I will admit I am still unsure. But… “

“Now, you have Nia,” Lena supplies through falling tears, and instantly, he nods, though there’s sadness in his eyes.

“Yes. Her, and Alex, and Winn, and Imra.”

Lena sniffles, the suppressed sobs in her chest beginning to abate. “And Kara?”

Brainy nods, the ghost of a smile pulling at his features. “Yes, child. And Kara.”
Lena nods to herself, thinking. “Do I still know Kara when I grow up?”

“What?” Brainy asks sharply, looking rather alarmed.

“I shouldn’t be a child right now, should I?”

Slowly, Brainy shakes his head. “No, you should not.” He pauses, the smile returning to his face. “I should have suspected you would figure it out.”

Lena blushes at that but doesn’t reply, still thinking of her question and wanting, no, needing an answer, needing—

“And yes, to your question. 26-year-old you and Kara are friends. Best friends.”

That hits Lena like a sucker punch to the gut. “She’s… She’s not going to leave me, is she?”

Brainy actually chuckles in response to that, and Lena consciously shrinks further into herself.

“I apologize for laughing,” he hurries to rectify the situation, brows stitched together with genuine worry. “It is just… No. Never. Kara loves you with everything she has, and the mere feasibility of her ever stopping is laughable at best.”

Warmth seeps through Lena’s body at that, but God, it sounds too good to be true; it can’t be true.

“Are you lying to me?”

Brainy doesn’t look offended or angry at that, and inwardly, Lena breathes a sigh of relief; instead, he just shakes his head from side to side, an almost wistful look on his angular features.

“No, child. I would never lie to you.”
At that, Lena quirks a brow, her interest piqued. “We’re friends, too, aren’t we?”

Brainy smiles—it’s warm, and inviting, and Lena smiles back. “Yes, Lena Luthor. Yes, we are. Now and forever.”

“You’ll be here when I’m back? You and…” she trails off, too scared to say it.

“And Kara?” Brainy supplies for her, and she flushes gratefully.

“Yes.”

“Yes, child. We will be here.”

Lena nods, biting her sore lip again. “Pinky promise?” she asks, already holding out her pinky with a slightly trembling arm.

Brainy blinks. “Of course, I promise. What is this ‘pinky’ allotment?”

Lena giggles. “Just hold out your pinky.”

“Humans,” Brainy grumbles under his breath, but he does as he’s told, his large hand dwarfing hers where they hover just over the timeworn chess board.

“And, there,” she chirps, wrapping her tiny pale pinky around his even while he watches her with a bewildered gaze. “This is a pinky promise. It’s the most unbreakable kind.”

“Statistically, that is not—” he stops himself, her finger curled tightly in his, blinking slowly at her. “The most unbreakable kind of promise, you say?”

Stifling a giggle, Lena nods, reveling in the warmth of his pinky around hers. “Yes.”
“Hm,” Brainy hums pensively, clinically eyeing their joined hands. “I like it.”

Lena smiles, wide and unrestrained for the first time in a very long time. “I do, too.”

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Chapter End Notes

ok so i had one person asking about me addressing the whole 'brace' issue, and i told them i was probably gonna bring it up in this chapter... but uh, totally didn't happen obviously since there's very little mobility in this chapter, and it's more of a bonding/intellectual chapter between brainy and lena

so, rest assured i am definitely planning on having that be a plot point very soon, though not quite yet :)

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“Are we friends?” little Lena asks carefully, eyes wide and scared, and Kara feels like breaking.

They’re back at the apartment now and watching Netflix (The Emperor’s New Groove, to be exact), Brainy having gone off to help Winn at the DEO, Kara having suspended the Catholic-Protestant civil war threatening the country of Ireland (for the moment, at least), Alex still in holding enduring a painstaking “chat” with an entirely unapologetic Otis Graves.

Furrowing her brow, Kara pauses the movie just before Yzma screeches “Wrong lever, Kronk!”, undeterred by missing her favorite part when Lena needs something that she can reasonably give her—as far as she’s concerned, Pacha and Emperor Kuzco can wait to solve the whole ‘I’m a llama!’ dilemma while Kara and Lena talk.

“Of course, we’re friends, Lena,” she tells her gently, though she’s still rather confused by—

“I meant, um… bigger Lena.”

Kara’s jaw drops, all thought screeching to a halt in her scattered brain, because, How does she know that? “What?”
“I’m, um… not supposed to be a kid, right?” she questions so quietly, so timidly—Kara feels a familiar sort of anger flaring deep in her chest at the sound.

After a moment of contemplation (because really, of course Lena would figure it out, even as a quiet traumatized 9-year-old), Kara sighs, turning to face the girl fully on the plush couch. “No. No, you’re not.”

Little Lena just nods at that, a crushing kind of sadness in her forest-green eyes that makes Kara want to cry. “Did—Did my mom do this?” she asks then, her voice cracking on each syllable.

“We think so,” Kara answers, hating the crestfallen look on the little girl’s features as she does. “But we’re trying to fix it, okay?”

Lena blinks, the devastation promptly falling away from her adorable features in favor of a thoughtful expression, nose scrunched and gaze distant.

“By scanning thoroughly for extrinsic residues on a geothermal level, right? Since it’s an alien weapon?” Kara just gapes, speechless as another thought seems to occur to the small child, her eyes lighting up with her newest revelation. “Oh! Have you equipped the scanner with remotely inclined infrared vision? Because faulty readings on a standard geothermal scanner, even the most well-evolved, are exceedingly—” she stops herself then, seeming to all of a sudden remember where she is as a deep blush overtakes her features. “Sorry.”

Kara works quickly to snap her jaw shut, scrambling for words, because, Holy Rao. “No! I—No!” she yelps, hating the slight flinch she sees Lena suppress as she shakes her head ruefully, still trying to right herself. “I mean—I’m sorry, Lena, it’s just—Rao, you’re smart. Like, really smart, you know that?”

Instantly, Lena’s flush deepens, and she averts her gaze, beginning to squirm in her seat. “T-Thank you, Miss Kara.” Kara opens her mouth to correct her, but Lena beats her to it: “Kara. Sorry. You… You are very kind.”

Kara shakes her head. “That’s just the truth, Lee.”

Little Lena frowns at that, looking rather conflicted. “Brainy said the same thing.”
“Hm?”

The girl begins to fiddle with the black Velcro-ed brace on her arm nervously at that, gaze darting up to meet Kara’s for a split second before returning to the burgundy couch cushions. “He said I was very wise.”

“He’s right about that.” Kara chuckles, then stops herself, looking curiously at a bashful Lena. “You don’t believe him?”

Lena ducks her head even further, cheeks flaming. “I… I don’t know.”

Kara’s heart breaks for her, and she fights to keep her tone steady as she asks, “Why don’t you think that’s true?”

“Mo—Lillian never said so,” she mumbles, and Kara has to concentrate hard to keep from breaking Alex’s couch beneath her as white-hot rage fills her being. “She said if people did, they were lying… but… but Brainy’s my friend, right? He wouldn’t lie to me, would he?”

Kara takes a deep breath to steel herself. “No, Lena. He wouldn’t lie to you.”

Lena nods to herself, her skeptical gaze coming up to meet Kara’s again. “Because the bigger me is his friend.”

“Yeah,” Kara concedes gratefully, though something tells her they’ve only scratched the surface of little Lena’s deep-seated insecurity. “Yeah, he is.”

Lena bites her lip then, eyes darting anxiously from Kara to the couch then back again to Kara. “And y—” she stops herself, looking conflicted.

“It’s okay, Lena,” Kara urges, her heart breaking all over again for the tentative and scared look on the girl’s features. “Ask me.”

Lena lets out a shaky breath. “Are you my friend, too? Bigger me?”
Instantly, Kara breaks into a grin, though there’s a sadness in it, a sort of despondency she can’t shake, because she loves Lena so freaking much and she hasn’t seen her in what feels like forever (not to mention, she’s not quite sure when or if she’s ever going to get her back) and she knows that Lena’s sitting right in front of her, but it’s not her, it’s not her, and Rao, Kara misses her best friend with everything she has.

“Yes, darling. We’re friends. Best friends.”

Lena blinks. “Really?” she asks incredulously, awe written all across her features, like she can’t quite believe it.

Kara nods, something she can’t name piercing her heart as she does, eyes burning with unshed tears. “Yeah. Really.”

They’re silent for a moment, a thoughtful look on Lena’s young features, a conflicted one on Kara’s—but a second later, little Lena is turning back to her with a question in her eyes, and scarcely-concealed hesitancy on her tiny features.

“Kara?” she inquires, her voice small and timid.

Despite the grief curling in her chest, Kara smiles, leaning almost imperceptibly forward to show the girl she has all of her attention—which, of course, she does. (She always has.)

“Yes, pretty girl?”

Lena ducks her head at that, cheeks flushing a rosy pink again, and Kara delights in it. “Am I, um...” she trails off, a hand coming up again to fiddle with the straps of her brace. “Am I a good person? You know, when I grow up?”

Knowing Lena as well as she does today, Kara probably shouldn’t be surprised by that question—she knows that’s all Lena’s ever cared about: helping people, saving those in need, being good... And that hasn’t changed, even with numerous assassination attempts, and more instances of unsolicited betrayal than any rational human could take, and a slew of people coming in and out of her life as if through a revolving door that refuse to tell her the truth (Kara included).
(Oftentimes, Kara’s rather certain that National City has been mistaken in bestowing the ‘Supergirl’ title upon her… Lena should have it, if anyone.

She’s nothing compared to Lena—she never has been.)

Still, it feels like a sucker punch to the gut.

“Yes, Lena,” she says, her voice trembling with the intent she’s trying to convey, the sincerity. “The best I’ve ever known.”

Little Lena looks doubtful at that. “B-But… you’re a superhero.”

Kara can’t help herself—she wiggles closer on the couch, inwardly breathing a sigh of relief when mini Lena doesn’t flinch away; though, she refrains from grasping the tiny girl’s hands in hers like she so desperately wants to, unwilling to be someone she fears, even if only for a second.

“Big Lena never believes me when I tell her that, either,” she tells her with a chuckle, then allows her features to grow more serious—genuine. “But it’s true, and it always has been. Okay?”

Little Lena bites her lip, looking conflicted—but after a long second she nods, a mindful look on her features, and it’s as if Kara can feel the weight of the things she’s not saying. And although it goes against her very instincts, she waits; she knows this Lena is drastically different from her own, more frightened, more vulnerable, a hell of a lot less healed than the Lena Kara has grown to love. “Okay.”

(It hurts to see what Lena’s been hiding; it hurts that she knows Lena hasn’t gotten over this pain, but rather, has grown so scarily adept at hiding it that Kara’s been entirely unaware this whole time.

It hurts like few things she’s ever known before, because Rao, so many things make sense now—a heck of a lot more than they ever did before.

It makes sense now why Lena drinks when she’s sad or when she’s angry or even when she’s happy; it makes sense now why she’d rather down a fifth of scotch rather than admit that she’s feeling something she can’t control, because control is something she covets like nothing else since it’d been ripped from her so young, and because deep down she’s still terrified her abusers will be
coming back to punish her for daring to feel anything beyond callous emptiness.

It makes sense why she cried the first time Kara bought her a birthday present, because it’s all too likely that no one had ever bothered before—it was a simple present, too, just a photo album with pictures of Lena and Kara and Alex and all the rest of them, and still, Lena broke down crying in a way Kara had never seen before. It gutted her, somehow, seeing Kara’s sincerity, and until now, Kara hadn’t the faintest clue as to why.

It makes sense that she’s nothing short of crushed by the prospect of Kara not trusting her, of Supergirl not trusting her, because she’s done nothing but prove herself since the moment she arrived in National City, and still, it seems that no one can see a lick of good within her, even those she’s come to call ‘friend.’

It makes sense that she’s so terrified of Kara leaving, but she won’t dare to tell her until she’s at least four shots deep and the room spins precariously around her and she’s not sure what makes sense anymore and what doesn’t, because she knows better than to tell anyone they might hurt her, knows all too well they’ll do it anyhow and laugh in her face for being so pathetic and desperate as to beg for reprieve in the first place.

And finally, it makes sense why she sacrifices herself at the slightest inclination, telling Kara to save the chemicals and not her, going through with dangerous plans that place her directly in the line of fire, because to her, she doesn’t matter enough to save, and she never has.

It makes sense, and Rao, Kara really wishes it didn’t.)

Kara’s crying now, tears streaming unyieldingly down her cheeks, little Lena watching her with the cutest crease in her brow and such confusion in wide green eyes that Kara yearns to wipe away, yearns to fix even as she knows she can’t.

“Mis—Kara?” she questions hesitantly, tilting her head to the side. “Why are you crying?”

Kara sniffles, attempting to gather herself—it doesn’t work. “I just—I just—" she stops herself, wiping uselessly at the tears and snot accumulating on her features. “I just… I miss you, you know? Bigger you.”

Lena looks almost contrite at that, frowning guiltily and fiddling with her arm brace again like she’s just done something wrong. “I’m sorry.”
Kara shakes her head, exhaustion claiming her in waves, far too tired to try for anything more than a weak, “Don’t be sorry, sweetheart. It’s not your fault.”

Lena nods slowly at that, though she doesn’t look fully convinced—but a moment later, her eyes are lighting up again like she’s just thought of something, her excited green eyes fixing onto Kara’s with contagious energy. “Do you want a hug?”

Kara nearly chokes on air. “I—You—I thought—Huh?” she asks dumbly—luckily, little Lena doesn’t seem all that discouraged by her less-than-positive reaction, and Kara can almost see the tiny gears turning in her genius brain as Kara sits dumbfounded across from her on the couch.

“Well, Brainy says humans like hugs, and he’s right ‘cause endorphins, you know, and I’ve seen you give a lot of people hugs and you seem to enjoy them a lot so—” she stops herself again and shakes her head, seeming to remember where she is. “But, um… It was just an idea. I’m sorry if I overstepped, I really really didn’t mean to I just—Please don’t make me—"

“I would love a hug,” Kara stops her before she can get any further, knowing very well she probably doesn’t want to hear where little Lena’s going with the rest of it—and anyways, it’s the truth; Lena always gave the best hugs, and she’s sure that here is no exception, even with everything upside down and horribly confusing and just outright wrong.

A shy grin spreads across Lena’s features as she halts her rambling, a single brow cocked in a way that’s so achingly familiar, it nearly derails Kara completely. “Yeah?”

Kara chuckles, opening her arms to the bashful child. “Yeah.”

She feels like crying with happiness when Lena crawls her tiny body into Kara’s arms then, curling up against her chest and letting out a tiny sigh of contentment that has sheer happiness blooming unbiden in Kara’s chest, her heart positively bursting with affection as she tightens her hold on little Lena in her lap—it’s perfect… or, as close as she can get when Lena’s still away.

(And, she’s right: Lena always gives the best hugs.)

The girl falls asleep after a minute or two, letting out tiny appeased mewls in Kara’s embrace, the worry lines in her face fading as she falls into a blissful sleep.
And, Rao, Kara loves her—in a different way from big Lena, of course, but it’s love just the same, and a strong one, at that.

So, maybe it’s not perfect, but it’s damn close, and that’s more than enough for now.

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Chapter End Notes

they make me so sofT im
strawberry yogurt (pov alex)

Chapter Summary

Alex talks to Lena about her arm brace... and then, Lena talks to Alex about science. (Or, tries to, anyhow.)

Chapter Notes

sorry for the wait!!

i can't guarantee the next one will have a shorter update time in between, just 'cause i think i'm suffering a bit from writer's block which is the wortT

but i'm really doing my best to make myself sit down and write when i can (plus i'm watching literally every world cup game that happens haha) and hopefully, i'll get back into it soon :)

hope you like this new update! (i'm aware it's a bit short, but i really wanted to get at least someTHing up by today)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It’s a new day, and Alex is feeling… well, she’s feeling fine, she supposes—that is, until she walks into the DEO labs, and sees tiny Lena Luthor chattering animatedly with Winn and Brainy about science things, both slender pale arms waving happily around in the air as she babbles on about physics-and-chemistry-related things Alex probably can’t even begin to fathom (with Winn and Brainy looking on wearing matching expressions of utter bewilderment mixed with almost comical reverence), her arm brace from the hospital visit nowhere to be seen.

Instantly, worry grips her chest, squeezing until she feels like she can’t breathe, and she has to stop herself for a moment, because she’s not sure she can go about handling this without scaring little Lena—not yet, not when sheer emotion is running rampant in her gut, threatening to tear her to pieces at the prospect of the adorable girl getting hurt, again.

Instead, she centers herself for a moment in the doorway of the labs, forcing herself to breathe—*in, out; in, and out.*

*In... Out.*
Christ, this is hard. A hell of a lot harder than she thought it would be.

Taking a deep breath to steel herself, she strides into the lab, greeting Winn and Brainy with a sharp nod before crouching to kneel right next to little Lena, tapping on the girl’s shoulder to get her attention.

“… ‘cause then you’d have to account for the momentary inertia of the compound and its resultant change in gravitational potential energy, which would be approxi—Oh! H-Hello, Miss Alex,” Lena suddenly stops herself to bashfully greet the redhead, smiling shyly, cheeks flushed, wearing one of Alex’s DEO T-shirts like a dress—Alex thinks her heart just might burst from the sight. “We were just doing science.”

A genuine smile curls its way onto Alex’s lips in spite of herself, her heart suddenly feeling ten times lighter. (She chooses to ignore the whole ‘Miss Alex’ thing. At least, for now.)

“‘Doing science,’ huh?” she questions wryly, and Lena’s rosy flush deepens.

“I like science,” she mumbles after a moment, fiddling adorably with her hands.

Alex nods, allowing her smile to widen. “I know you do, pretty girl.”

Lena positively beams at that (though she ducks her head in an attempt to hide it), cheeks flaming, and Alex is sure she’s never seen something so precious before in her life.

Inwardly sighing to herself, Alex decides to take the plunge—she doesn’t want to ruin this moment, where Lena is as close to ‘happy’ as Alex has ever seen her, smiling and flustered and smiling, but she knows she has to. For Lena, if not for anything else.

“Sweetheart, can I ask you something?” she prods gently, careful to keep any semblance of disapproval from her tone.

Little Lena’s smile fades at a heartbreakingly fast pace (it tears through Alex like a well-placed bullet), and she eyes Alex with cautious jade-green irises, anxiously biting her lower lip as she manages a jerky nod. “H-Have I done something wrong, Mis—Alex?”
“No, hon, of course you haven’t,” she tells her, maintaining eye contact so Lena can know she’s being truthful. “And I want you to know, I’m not angry, okay?”

Lena swallows thickly, looking just a hair short of terrified. “You’re not, um… You’re not, you know, tricking me or anything, right?”

That hits Alex like a punch to the gut, even as she knows it’s a sign of trust that mini Lena dared to verbalize that fear, that this is something like the progress she and Kara have been so desperately chasing since the day adult Lena turned little—still, it takes everything she has not to give into the nausea swirling in her stomach and start dry heaving on the spot.

“No, sweet girl, it’s not a test, and it’s not a trick. I wouldn’t do that,” she soothes her, doing her very best to be as soft as possible. “I promise.”

Lena squirms under Alex’s intent gaze. “Pinky promise?” she asks eventually, eyes sparkling with unfettered hope and heart-wrenching vulnerability, the girl already extending her tiny pinky across towards Alex in an action wrought with such longing, it almost hurts to witness.

Alex blinks, momentarily taken aback, but nods earnestly a second later (unwilling to miss this opportunity to show Lena she’s safe), grinning as she gently links Lena’s pinky in hers. “Pinky promise.”

Lena eyes their joined pinkies with visceral fascination and awe, almost transfixed—and a second later she’s loosening her hold on Alex’s much larger pinky, giggling cutely when Alex petulantly refuses to do the same, then gifting Alex a sheepish smile when the agent finally lets go.

“Okay,” the girl announces quietly, a look of wary hopefulness on her face. “I’m ready.”

Alex quirks her lips into a grin at that, even as trepidation rises in her chest. “Lena, hon, where’s your brace?”

Kid Lena tilts her head in thought, clearly confused—then, Alex watches as the realization dawns, Lena’s shoulders hunching, a look of terror overtaking her dainty features.
“I—I—I—” she stutters, her lower lip trembling, wide green eyes quickly beginning to fill with tears—as something of an afterthought, Alex gestures blindly for Brainy and Winn standing behind mini Lena to get out, feeling a modicum of respite when she hears their erratic footsteps stumbling over one another to follow her unspoken command.

“I—I’m so s-s-sorry, Miss Alex, she breaks eventually with a distressing sob, tears falling rapidly down either cheek, her entire body trembling in place across from Alex. “I—I’m sorry, I’m s-sorry, I’m s-s-sorry—"

“Lena,” Alex interjects in an effort to calm the girl, wincing to herself when tiny Lena flinches at that, clearly having expected a physical blow to follow. “Lena, hon, please, just breathe, okay? I’m not angry, remember? I pinky promised you, and Kara says those are—"

“T-The m-most unb-breakable k-kind,” Lena gasps out through a series of heart-rending sobs, and Alex thinks she can feel her own heart breaking inside her chest.

“Yes, sweet girl, they are,” she soothes despite the pain filling her gut, despite how she hurts for kid Lena when she’s this broken, despite how badly she wants to fix it even thought she knows she can’t—at least, not until she knows what the hell she’s trying to fix in the first place. “And, trust me, Kara would fling me right into the sun with all her super-strength if I broke one of my promises to you—what’s more, I’d let her, okay? I’d let her, because, we care about you… We love you.”

Lena’s sobs taper off at that, the girl sniffing intermittently even as her eyes widen and brows stitch together in evident confusion. “Y-You do?”

Alex smiles, feeling it crinkle the corners of her eyes. “Yes, Lena,” she whispers out, cursing herself when her voice wavers. “I do.”

Lena observes Alex carefully, then begins to nod her head slowly, small pale hands coming up to wipe sloppily at the tear tracks wetting her soft cheeks. “Okay.”

“Now, hon, could you maybe talk to me about where your brace went?”

Little Lena sniffs, nodding as she wipes the remaining wetness from her reddened cheeks. “I—I spilled strawberry yogurt on it,” she whispers out solemnly, like she’s just admitted to a Class A
Felony and is dreading an inevitable arrest for her crimes.

Alex just nods, fighting valiantly against the bizarre urge to laugh rising in her chest. “Okay. Then, what happened?”

“I, um, I cleaned it!” she rushes to say, like she’s afraid of punishment if she doesn’t. “I made sure it was all clean, and I even used soap! ‘Cause I know it’s probably really, really expensive, and no one’s ever bought something like that for me before,” she murmurs out that fact as if it’s of little consequence, even as Alex struggles not to go down to the shooting ranges in a fit of rage and not emerge for a very long time.

"I—Well, it’s just, I, um—I used paper towels only and regular water, you know, ‘cause I didn’t want to get any stains on your nice towels, and then I just—Um, I put it in the sun, and it’s drying right now,” she finishes lamely, shifting nervously from foot to foot in a way that Alex really shouldn’t find as adorable as she does—but, alas.

Alex releases a relieved breath she hadn’t known she’d been holding, blessed reprieve pulsing in her chest—because, this? She can deal with this.

“Okay, sweetheart, that was really resourceful of you,” she says, and she means it.

Lena bites her lip, blushing slightly at the compliment but still looking rather tentative and scared. “But you’re angry, aren’t you?”

“No, honey, of course not,” she assures the small girl. “I’m just worried.”

Lena frowns, a vaguely bewildered expression on her childish features. “Worried?”

The word comes out sounding strange, off-key—it only furthers Alex’s long-held suspicion that Lena never had anyone to love her, to hold her, to care; it’s enough to make her positively livid with unbridled rage… but, not here.

Not when Lena's looking at her like she holds the girl’s very future in her palms (which, she supposes, she kind of does, in a way), bottom lip caught between her teeth in a way that makes Alex worried she’ll break skin if she’s not careful, watery green eyes filled with something inexplicably guarded but somehow devastatingly naïve at the same time—God, Alex loves her.
“Yes, Lena—Arizona told me you need to wear this brace around for the next six months—”
(Inwardly, she sends up another desperate prayer that little Lena wouldn’t be little for that long)
“—so that your bones can re-heal correctly. That’s why it worried me that you didn’t have it on.”

“Oh,” kid Lena says, more to herself than to Alex, a contemplative expression on her adorable features.

“And, sweetheart?”

She tilts her head curiously. “Yes, Alex?”

“I have a washing machine in the apartment, you know.”

Little Lena nods slowly, eyes wide. “I, um—" she shifts uncertainly on her feet, ducking her head in embarrassment. “I didn’t want to be a bother to you, Mis—Alex.”

Alex resists the urge to heave a deep sigh—she knows that’s not what Lena needs right now. “Lena, hon, will you look at me, please?”

Uneasiness rolling off her in waves, the girl dutifully obeys, lifting her chin and looking Alex in the eye, milky-white hands anxiously fiddling at her waist.

“You’re not a bother to me, or to Kara,” Alex tells her firmly whilst Lena stares blankly back, as if transfixed. “Ever. Your well-being will always come first with us, okay?”

“O.kay,” tiny Lena agrees after a long moment, and Alex knows they have a long way to go concerning the whole “We truly care about you” thing, but for now, this will have to suffice.

“Okay,” Alex breathes out, relief building in her gut as she turns to gesture mildly towards Lena and her science partners’ lab station, littered with lined sheets crammed full with notes (with child-like script on every single one, because Winn’s handwriting is something atrocious, and Brainy doesn’t do ‘notes’—if Alex had to guess, though, she’d put money on little Lena’s script being the neater of the two) and tablets and calculators, abandoned for the moment. “Now, you wanna tell me what you’re working on here?”
Instantly, Lena brightens, green eyes sparkling with newfound excitement. “Really?”

Alex chuckles. “I doubt I’ll understand it—but, yes, really.”

“Okay!” kid Lena agrees excitedly, practically bouncing on the balls of her feet as she drags Alex over to the black-top table, already launching into an impressive ramble about extraterrestrial ionization levels and something else Alex doesn’t quite catch: “—and—Oh! There’s a chance we can bypass all of the geothermal tracking entirely, ’cause I started thinking about microscopic seismic modules, right? ‘Cause every country around the world has to have at least one within each province in the event of an earthquake or seismic event, and we could easily utilize the network of…”

It’s not long before mini Lena loses Alex entirely, but she keeps listening, keeps nodding and smiling in response to all of it because it’s as passionate and enthusiastic as Alex has seen the small girl (even adult Lena would never dare to be this openly animated, a fact Kara herself can likely attest to), and that quite indubitably outweighs anything and everything else.

Because maybe Alex doesn’t love physics and chemistry and science like little Lena so obviously does, but she loves the tiny girl with everything she has—and really, maybe the two aren’t so far apart after all, because Alex is more than game to listen for hours on end about all of the stuff she hasn’t the faintest clue about, granted that kid Lena’s the one doing the talking.

God, she’s in deep—really deep.

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Chapter End Notes

lena getting excited over science makes me SO SOft ok don't even get me started she's so precious
nia nal (pov lena)

Chapter Summary

Lena's reached a bit of a crossroads within herself... and when no one else she knows is around to help, she meets someone new: Nia Nal.

Chapter Notes

ok so someone had requested sort that there be interactions between lena and nia? was not planning on it originally, but i actually decided it could be really awesome for lena and the development of both characters into a possible friendship once she's big again

also my best friend is a transgender woman and i'm constantly ready to kick anyone and everyone's ass who comes into contact with her because they're all so rude and horrible to her whether they intend to be or not, so writing this was definitely easy for me to do, drawing upon not first-hand experience, but second-hand experience and seeing how horrifically the transgender community is treated on a day to day basis in our community

ugh it makes me so mad don't even get me started

anyways

here it is:)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

As it turns out, the technological phenomenon of how exactly little Lena had become little is almost pitifully simple—Lena has it all figured out by lunchtime on her first day at the DEO.

And, that should make her happy… right?

That’s what she tells herself, anyway.

Because whoever big Lena is, whoever she’s become—she’s better now, healed, if Brainy and Kara and Alex are being as truthful as they say.

Heck, she has friends—that, in and of itself, tells her that big Lena’s life, whatever it looks like, is quite a bit better than it used to be.
But, she’s scared—terrified, really.

She knows it’s selfish, knows it makes her selfish, but she doesn’t want to leave. Not yet.

(Maybe not ever.)

She’s never had this—hugs from bigger people who care and real hospital visits ‘cause her health is somehow important to them and pinky promises with an awkward nerd who always agrees to play a match of chess when Lena asks simply because he’s just that nice.

She doesn’t know what'll happen if she shows them her findings—she doesn't know if big Lena will come back here while little Lena is transported right back to Luthor Mansion, back to crying silently through every strike of Lionel’s favorite wooden staff against her reddened thighs in Lillian’s unforgiving hands, back to bleeding at the foot of the marble steps with a broken arm and a breaking heart, back to feeling inadequate and stupid and ugly in everything she does just because Lillian tells her so.

And, meanwhile, big Lena gets to come here, to Kara and Alex and Brainy and all the people who love her—she knows that that’s what’s fair, knows that big Lena lived through the same hell she did to get here, but that doesn’t make it any easier to make the words come out, to tell them she’s found the solution; because to her, this isn’t a problem that needs solving anymore.

She knows that it's not the same for Kara, or Alex, or Brainy—they miss big Lena, more and more every day, and her nine-year-old self a long way off from the grown-up young woman they’ve all come to know and love.

But, she remembers telling Brainy she was tired of fighting over their first match of chess—and she meant it, meant it more than anything, because she is.

She’s so tired of trying to be better than the horrid insults Lillian hurls at her, of trying to get back up every time Lillian knocks her to the ground, of trying to be bigger than Lillian and Lionel and all the rest of them... because, she’s not. She’s a kid, not an adult, and she doesn’t know the first thing about being big no matter how insistent she is about faking like she does.

It takes a piece of her with it every time, leaving her less and less of the person she used to be until she can’t for the life of her remember who in the world that was, who that little girl thought she’d
be when she approached the steps of Luthor Mansion for the very first time—because, whoever
that was, it’s gone now, and it has been for longer than she’d care to admit.

At the heart of it all, she doesn’t know if she can do it—she doesn’t know if she can go back and
live without *breaking* like she always swore she never would.

Because, big Lena didn’t have this when she was nine—she didn’t have Alex and Kara and Brainy,
and now that she does, she doesn’t know how she’s going to let it all go.

There’s something inside her screaming she never deserved their kindness in the first place, a voice
that sounds a hell of a lot like Lillian—but, it’s quieter now; she can scarcely remember the last
time she saw Lillian, the last time she pleaded with her, “Mom, I’m *sorry*” or desperately insisted,
“I didn’t mean to,” or begged, “Please don’t hurt me, I’m sorry, I didn’t mean it, *please*.”

Lillian’s stern voice is fading in her brain, replaced by Kara telling her “It’s not your fault” and
“You’re important to me”, overlaid generously with Alex calling her “sweetheart” and “hon” and
“darling” until she isn’t sure whether to cry or laugh at the polarizing juxtaposition of hateful words
and flowery commentary swirling around her tiny brain.

But, above all else, she’s a scientist—she knows very well that the longer she prolongs the
inevitable, the more dire the consequences will be when it comes.

It’s like… flying in a hot-air balloon—the higher you get, the prettier it is and the more your chest
swells with something dangerously akin to contentment; and yet, with every foot you climb in
elevation, the farther you stray from the ground.

And, when you fall… well.

Let’s just say that Lena would take a 100-foot drop over a 2,300-foot fall any day.

Logically, she knows it’s better for her… for everyone, really: better for Kara, better for Alex,
better for big Lena, who probably just wants to come back and live the life little Lena has
unintentionally stolen from her, the one little Lena has been living for the past week even though
she hasn’t done a single thing to deserve it.

That doesn’t change the fact that it’s hard—quite possibly the hardest thing she’s ever done, and
it’s vaguely disappointing but not at all unexpected when she bursts unceremoniously into a fit of silent tears on the floors of the DEO, with Alex off questioning a suspect in interrogation and Kara on the other side of the city attending to Supergirl “things.”

No, instead, she just has J’onn, who looks down at her with a pained expression like he doesn’t know what he’s meant to do with a nine-year-old sobbing at his feet—and, really, Lena thinks as a fresh wave of tears wracks her tiny body, she can’t quite find it in herself to blame him for that.

(Because, what exactly about “I figured out how to get big Lena back” is supposed to be tear-inducing?)

There’s agents bustling all around, official-looking coordinates on the array of screens in mission control, the room devoid of either Danvers sister, and last of all, a crying Lena with wet cheeks and lungs that feel like they’re collapsing in her ribcage whilst J’onn merely stands there, entirely at a loss as to what he should be doing about it.

Luckily, it doesn’t last for long—about a minute later, there’s a pretty woman kneeling before her in a blue-and-grey suit-slash-hero-costume with long, pretty brown hair and a friendly smile.

“Hi, Lena,” she greets amidst Lena’s quiet sobs, and Lena fights the urge to shrink further into herself.

Instead she manages to stutter out: “A-Are y-you a f-friend of K-K-Kara?”

Her smile widens, and she nods, seemingly oblivious to Lena’s teary eyes or the agents milling about through the space. “I am. My name’s Nia.”

At that, Lena’s sobs begin to abate, her panic quickly overtaken by a burning curiosity rising steadily in her chest that quickly takes precedence over everything else. “Nia… Nal?”

Nia’s brow furrows slightly, but her smile doesn’t fade. “Yes… did Kara tell you that?”

Shyly, Lena shakes her head. “B-Brainy did.”
A slight blush tinges Nia’s high cheekbones, brown eyes widening. “H-He did?”

Lena allows a bashful grin to tug at her lips. “He’s very fond of you.”

Nia blinks, clearly taken aback.

“C’mon,” Nia Nal says eventually once she’s gathered herself, drawing up to her full height and extending her blue-and-grey-clad hand down to little Lena, smiling gently at her when the girl takes it after a moment’s hesitation. “Let’s go somewhere quieter, hm?”

Biting her lip with a familiar sensation of nervousness swirling in her gut, Lena simply nods, pattering quickly next to Nia (she doesn’t want to slow her down) as the pretty woman opens an unmarked door, gesture kindly for Lena to enter.

She does.

It’s like a conference room, she thinks, with a sleek and long oval-ish wooden table and black cushioned business-like chairs on either side.

Humming something to herself, Nia strides happily over to a single chair, pulling it out for Lena (who shyly takes a seat in the proffered chair, her cheeks flaming hotly all the while) before turning to sit adjacent from the girl at the head of the table, her brown eyes kind and soft.

“Is this better?” she asks, a genuine and caring note to her tone that Lena’s only just starting to familiarize herself with.

Lena nods, still feeling painfully apprehensive under the woman's gentle gaze, cheeks hot and wet with a dizzying combination of embarrassment and leftover tears. “T-Thank you.”

(She internally lauds herself when she manages to withhold the ‘Ma’am’ from the end of her thanks.)

Nia just smiles, appearing more or less undeterred in the face of Lena’s palpable trepidation. “Good. It’s nice to meet you, Lena.”
Lena’s blush, if at all possible, only deepens further at that. “Nice to meet you, too,” she mumbles out, and Nia’s smile only widens.

“Now, I know you don’t know me, Lena, so you definitely don’t have to tell me what’s wrong…” she trails off, a sort of gentleness sparkling in her eye. “But, just know, I’m here, okay? Whatever you need.”

Lena bites her lip nervously. “A-Are you friends with bigger Lena?”

A flicker of regret appears briefly on Nia’s pretty features.

“No… No, unfortunately, I’m not.” She chuckles self-deprecatingly, her gaze turning distant. “She always scared me a little, you know? I’ve wanted to meet her for the longest time, talk to her about the incredible things she’s done for National City, for women in the world of business… I guess I just got scared.” She pauses, eyeing Lena with the ghost of a smile pulling at her lips. “But, I guess I’ll get my chance soon enough, right?”

Instantly, the guilt from before rears its head in Lena’s guts, sadness and desperation crawling up in her throat until fresh tears burn in her eyes—because here’s another person who knows big Lena, who wants her back, even while all little Lena can do is sit here and agonize selfishly over the things she might lose, the wrath she’ll no doubt face back in that cold, unwelcoming place she could never call ‘home.’

“Y-You will,” Lena manages to choke out, her wavering voice muffled with sobs. “I-I promise.”

Nia frowns, leaning forward in her seat, concern radiating off of her in waves. “Oh, G—I mean—Did I say something wrong? I’m really sorry; I didn’t mean to, it’s just—”

“No,” Lena gasps out, slightly unnerved by the woman’s rambling, so like unto her own—but different, clearly; not born out of fear, or damage, but more out of a genuine and adorable air of awkwardness, an undoubtedly endearing uncertainty about her that has warmth blooming in Lena’s small chest despite herself. “I-I… I found a way to get her back.”

Nia just tilts her head at that, no doubt suppressing her relief at little Lena’s words. “But this, um… it scares you.” It isn’t a question.
Lena nods shakily, lower lip trembling. “I—It’s selfish, and I—I—I know it is, bu—"

“Lena,” Nia interrupts, shaking her head. “It’s not selfish, okay? It’s human—that’s a difference."

“B-But I do-don’t belong here…”

“Sure, you do—there’s a reason you live here when you’re older. You’ve made a home here, Lena; that’s no small thing.”

Lena sniffles, gaze miserably downcast. “Big Lena made a h-home here.”

“But big Lena and you are one and the same, wouldn’t you agree?”

“Yes, I just—” she halts herself, choking back a sob. “I-I don’t want to go back there.”

“I know,” Nia acquiesces gently, a sadness in her tone.

They’re silent for a moment, then—a miserable look on Lena’s face, a thoughtful one on Nia’s.

But, eventually, Nia breaks the silence: “Can I tell you something, Lena?”

Blinking owlishly, Lena manages a nod.

“I’m a transgender woman,” she states carefully, though her words are instilled with a sort of confidence that has a sense of awe settling over Lena as she sits there. "Do you know what that means?"

Slowly, Lena shakes her head.
Nia doesn’t seem at all perturbed by Lena’s response.

“It means I was born a boy—my parents gave me a different name, dressed me in basketball shorts and T-shirts, referred to me as ‘he’ and ‘him’… but, the whole time, it felt wrong—I felt wrong.” She pauses, fiddling with the material of her suit. “And, eventually, I told them—they were actually not too bad about it, even if they didn’t quite understand. They called me ‘Nia’ just like I asked, bought the dresses and skirts I wanted to wear, referred to me as ‘she’ and ‘her’ as best as they could, even if they didn’t always get it right.”

“Th-They sound very nice,” Lena offers quietly, not quite sure what else she’s meant to say.

Nia nods, sadness in her eyes. “Yes. They were,” she mumbles, more to herself than to Lena, and Lena’s chest aches for her. “But, um—the rest of the kids… they didn’t quite understand. They called me ‘tranny’ and ‘faggot’; they bullied me online for the longest time; I identified as a straight woman, and I liked boys, but none of them would come near me, because they all thought I was disgusting. Some of them even told me that to my face, too.”

Lena bites her lip hard as a tear slides down her cheek.

“I still have nightmares about that sometimes—about going back, and being the one kid that didn’t fit in, and doing it all over again. And it scares me, you know? It scares me so bad,” she admits, her voice cracking on the final syllable. “B-But sometimes I think about it, about the life I’ve found here: the people I’ve met, the kindness I’ve received… and I know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that I’d do it all again. I’d go through that loneliness, that self-hatred, that cruelty all over again, every single time, so long as I know I’ll have the chance to end up here.”

Her chocolate-brown eyes are shiny with tears, her cheeks flushed with emotion—and, still, she looks at Lena with nothing but warmth in her gaze, with a kind of burning sincerity that cuts little Lena to her very core.

“That’s what you need to focus on, okay? It’s not going to be easy—actually, it’s probably going to be the hardest thing you’ve ever done.” She bites her lip, brow furrowed, a solemn look on her features.

“Sometimes I wonder who I’d be now if I didn’t have to go through all that—if I didn’t have to lose my only friends and gain so many enemies just for being who I was. It broke me, I think, in a lot of different ways—I don’t know if I’m anything like who I was at the start of it. But I’m starting to think that… that maybe that’s okay, you know? That… maybe it’s not fair, and maybe there’s a really small portion of the world who will ever understand what it’s like to hurt so much
at such a young age, but still—maybe it’s okay.”

Lena’s crying now, full-on, salty wetness streaming down both cheeks, her vision blurry with tears.

“C-Can I hug you?” she asks in a hoarse tone before she can think better of it, her words wracked with sheer emotion and sadness—sadness for the kind superhero lady before her with soft smiles and softer eyes who never deserved the hatred and prejudice, who never deserved anything but happiness and love from the very start.

(Lena thinks Nia Nal might just be the bravest person she’s ever met.)

Nia smiles widely as another tear traces her flushed cheeks, giving Lena a shaky nod. “I would love that, Lena.”

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Chapter End Notes

nia and lena is the friendship i never knew i needed :’)}
"at home" (pov kara)

Chapter Summary

J'onn doesn't understand children.

Brainy's still head-over-heels in love with Nia.

And, Kara? Kara's just trying to get through the day.

Chapter Notes

ok sorry for the long time between updating - i was running super low on inspiration on the supergirl front

but! i finally sat my ass down and wrote this out

and now, i think i'm starting to get more ideas and all that ... like i know little lena turning big is gonna be really really soon (like in one or two chapters), and i'm excited to start writing that

so hopefully the next update won't be too far off?? we'll see.....

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Kara returns to the DEO to find a dumbfounded J’onn faced with a troubled Brainy monologuing relentlessly at the man (probably about something Nia-related), and little Lena nowhere to be found.

Resisting the panic and irritation rising in her gut, Kara stalks over (and maybe it’s more like a superhuman run, since she uses a little bit of super-speed in her concern—but, whatever, okay?), careful to school her expression into something placid as she taps on Brainy’s shoulder, thereby interrupting his impressively involved re-telling of his current dilemma.

“Hey, J’onn!” Kara greets cheerfully even as J’onn stares blankly back, before turning to Brainy. “Hi, Brainy.”

“Supergirl,” Brainy booms, his speech as loud and stilted as ever, a few passerby agents stopping to stare peculiarly at him in response. “Hello.”
Kara ignores him in favor of squinting suspiciously at J’onn, who still has yet to move a single muscle since Kara’s arrival—on something of an impulse, she waves her hand up and down before him, frowning to herself when his vacant expression stubbornly remains.

Kara turns to Brainy again, not bothering to whisper when she asks, “What’s wrong with him?”

Brainy opens his mouth to respond, hands clasped neatly before him—but, surprisingly enough, J’onn beats him to it, his brown-eyed gaze still faraway and unfocused.

“Human children are… strange,” he manages, carefully pronouncing each word as he stares off into the distance.

Kara blinks. “What?”

“I agree,” Brainy offers up oh-so-helpfully, before quickly snapping his jaw closed as Kara sends him a biting glare.

J’onn begins shaking his head, muttering incoherently to himself, and Kara fights the urge to roll her eyes—she doesn’t have time for this.

“J’onn,” she snaps firmly, putting all the authoritativeness she can manage into her tone.

His head snaps up, wide brown eyes coming to meet Kara’s unimpressed gaze. “Yes?”

Kara sighs. “You said ‘human children are strange.’ Were you talking about Lena?”

J’onn hesitates for a moment, neither confirming nor denying, before solemnly asking, “Why do they weep so often?”

Kara’s stomach drops. “What? She was crying? Wh—"

“One moment, she’s telling me she’s found a solution,” J’onn continues in something of an agitated ramble, entirely oblivious to Kara’s sudden discontent. “And, the next? Devastation. What
am I supposed to do? Go find her a gun to play with? Get her some coffee? What is it that children do? I—"

“J’onn,” Kara interrupts sternly, a headache beginning to form. “Where is she?”

J’onn blinks, then squints off into the distance, as if trying to remember.

“Ms. Nal has her,” he answers eventually—Kara sees Brainy visibly brighten out of her periphery. “Though, I am not sure where—"

“Wonderful,” Kara interjects decisively, already turning on her heel t—

“K—Supergirl!” Brainy calls after her, practically tripping over his feet to join her. “I think that I—Well, it would be prudent, I believe, given my meticulous calculations, that it would be beneficial for me to accompany you in this quest to find Nia Na—"

“You mean, to find Lena.”

Brainy sputters for a moment, facial muscles spasming in a way that Kara thinks resembles a low-grade seizure, or maybe that one neurological disorder Lena had been talking excitedly to Kara a couple weeks back about curing with L-Corp’s newest cutting-edge technology—Torte Syndrome (?), or something along those lines.

“Y-Yes, of course, Supergirl—Is that not what I said?”

Kara merely raises a brow as a slight flush overtakes Brainy’s features.

“Whatever,” she relents, deciding right then and there she doesn’t care nearly enough to figure out what’s making Brainy act so strangely at the current moment (Rao, is this what it’s like to be Alex?). "Let’s just go find them.”

Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ
An hour later finds Kara seeing a fresh-faced Nia off to a brewery downtown (where her final interview for the op-ed piece on next month’s print will be taking place), a motor-mouthed Brainy giving her a running commentary on all the things he loves about Nia Nal whilst she silently prays she’ll be able to go home soon, and a tiny Lena beside her tightly gripping her hand and giggling intermittently at Brainy’s never-ending dialogue (much to his dismay).

A minute later, though, J’onn gives her the all-clear to take off for the day—though, not without an awkward smile in little Lena’s direction followed by a very uncomfortable patting of the young girl’s head (who merely stood there with a blank expression, eyebrows furrowed in slight concern), an absolutely hysterical sight that nearly has Kara bursting into laughter on the spot.

Then, one super-quick-change later (she ultimately decides upon the light-blue long-sleeved button down that adult Lena had once said made her eyes pop, and a pair of slim-fitting khakis that adult Lena had also expressed her distinct appreciation for in the past), she and little Lena find themselves striding easily down the sidewalks of National City, the sun only just beginning to set on the horizon, leaving beautiful streaks of violet and pink hues spanning across the sky.

(She knew if she took Alex’s car, she’d never hear the end of it; flying was out, too, since it seemed to terrify little Lena; so, they were walking... which was fun, right?

Not to mention, environmentally-friendly.

Two pigeons with one... rock?

Whatever. Human figures of speech were weird.)

Little Lena was fairly quiet (which was to be expected), not to mention the faint tear-tracks visible on rosy-flushed cheeks (which had Kara’s heart clenching in her chest even as she forced herself not to pester Lena about it), but Kara did her best to engage the young girl in small talk and light-hearted conversation—anything to ensure she felt safe.

“So, how was your day?” she asks, then cringes internally—because, really, ‘How was your day?’ She sounds like Eliza—not that Eliza isn’t incredible, obviously, and one of Kara’s favorite people in the entire universe... Point is, she sounds like a mom.

Either way, Lena just hums and squeezes Kara’s hand a little tighter, seemingly oblivious to Kara’s internal conflict. “It was okay. How was yours?”
For what feels like the millionth time, Kara takes a moment to be awed at the girl’s impeccable manners—she knew from the very beginning to expect politeness, of course, because adult Lena was nothing if not incredibly gracious at every turn, but, really… she’s 9, and Kara’s quite sure that this has got to be some sort of record.

Still, Kara smiles down at her, pushing away that particular train of thought for later.

“Mine? Mine was good… Thanks for asking.” Lena ducks her head and blushes at that, and Kara thinks it might just be the most precious thing she’s ever seen. “And, if you don’t mind me asking… Why was yours just ‘okay’?”

Little Lena bites her lip and furrows her brow, green-eyed gaze still steadily downcast as they continue walking down the (relatively) empty sidewalks.

“I, um—” she stops herself, looking up to eye Kara with wide, pleading eyes. “C-Can we talk about it at home?”

Despite the sadness in little Lena’s words, the desperation in her eyes, Kara can’t help but feel a prickle of warmth blooming in her chest at the tiny girl’s request—to talk about it “at home.”

“Sure, hon,” she agrees easily, a stupidly big grin spreading across her features to match the powerful sense of elation in her heart (which only swells uncontrollably when little Lena’s pale cheeks flush at the term of endearment). “We can talk about it at home.”

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Chapter End Notes

kara and little lena interacting i CANT
It’s late when Alex gets home—well, later than usual, anyhow.

Okay, fine, so maybe 8:04pm isn’t all that late, and maybe it just feels like it is because she’s getting old—but, whatever, alright? She can still kick people’s asses six ways from Sunday on even her worst of days, so, she doesn’t want to hear it.

Kara had already taken little Lena home ("Of course I didn’t make her fly with me—we walked, Alex, I promise!") a couple hours earlier, so Alex drove back to the apartment alone, Halestorm playing quietly over the speakers, a million thoughts racing through her head.

According to J’onn, little Lena has found a solution; according to J’onn, they’re going to be testing out said solution tomorrow.

According to J’onn, Alex isn’t going to have a cute little 9-year-old Lena Luthor to come home to at the end of tomorrow, when everything is said and done and (fingers crossed) adult Lena is back and well with the rest of them.

(And, really—she may be 9 years old at the current moment, but she’s still Lena Luthor.

Realistically, there’s no ‘if’ about it; by tomorrow, Lena Luthor will finally be her 26-year-old self again, and Alex doesn’t quite know how the fuck she’s meant to feel about that.)
She wants to be happy about it.

She *is* happy about it.

But… there’s something else, too: she’s *sad*, she realizes, not to mention *angry* with herself for having the gall to be sad about it in the first place.

God, she knew she was going to regret this. She knew this was going to be hard, that she never had a goddamned chance of walking out of this unscathed.

But, that knowledge can’t hold a candle to how it feels right now, because Alex is sitting alone in her car, the apartment complex’s parking garage silent and eerily dark around her, and she thinks she can quite literally feel her heart breaking in its chest at the knowledge of what tomorrow will bring.

It doesn’t really help that Halestorm’s “Here’s to Us” is playing softly through the speakers, because it’s like someone *knows* she’s breaking, like someone can *see* the internal anguish swirling deep in her chest that threatens to overcome her entirely, the bitter taste of caring and nostalgia and a final ‘goodbye’ on the tip of her tongue.

“*Stuck it out this far together*  
*Put our dreams through the shredder*  
*Let’s toast ‘cause thinks got better*”

Lizzy Hale sings in that mesmerizing smoky voice of hers… And, Alex can’t help but think: they really did, didn’t they? It wasn’t pretty at that start (—actually, it was kind of a nightmare, to be honest); but, it didn’t stay like that, because they got *better*.

They got better all the while with every careful smile, every whispered compliment, every hug and pinky promise and stolen moment where tiny little traumatized Lena Luthor began to understand that she didn’t have to be afraid of living anymore, not when she had Alex and Kara and Brainy and people who *cared*.

"*And everything could change like that*  
*And all these years go by so fast but*  
*Nothing lasts forever*"
She feels tears sliding down her cheek at that, at the unforgiving reminder that this life is so unobtrusively intransigent in its omnipresent nature—because, she knew this wouldn’t be forever. She knew that from the minute they met, from the second she watched little Lena Luthor do algebraic math calculations to the ten-thousandth decimal place on the spot like it was nothing, from the first time she cradled that tiny shivering girl in her arms and she knew without a doubt that she never wanted to let her go.

She knew that, but that doesn’t mean it isn’t still hurting like a bitch right now, like a kind of heart-wrenching loss she never had the chance to prepare herself for, like there’s a little (big) piece of her family—of herself—that’s slowly leaving her all alone as each agonizing second passes, even when Kara and Eliza are safe and healthy and here on Earth with her just the same.

She shuts off the music and calls Arizona on a whim, tears blurring her vision as she scrolls through her contacts (her chest lurches at the absence of a certain Luthor in the ‘L’ section to get to the ‘R’s), a strangled sob leaving her when she clicks the ‘call’ button—and, she gets her voicemail.

“Hey, person who just tried to call me!” Arizona’s perky voice comes across the line, bright and sunny even as the protrusive darkness seems to shroud Alex in spades. “I’m probably at work right now helping the tiny humans, but leave me a message and—”

She hangs up there, frustration and sadness overtaking her in waves, choking on sobs and desperate tears until she’s leaning her forehead against the steering wheel in some last-ditch attempt to breathe, lungs burning with the weight of just how freaking much it all hurts, because Arizona’s not there, and little Lena won’t be either come tomorrow, and Alex isn’t quite sure how the fuck she’s meant to keep it together with that knowledge sitting heavily atop her chest like a metric ton of molten steel.

She stays like that for a while—alone and sad and alone, wishing more than anything that things could be different.

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It’s 10:03pm by the time she walks up to her door, unlocking and pushing it open ever-so-carefully so as not to make any noise—little Lena should be asleep by now, she knows. Kara, as well, if the two of them ended up cuddling again.
It’s dark when she walks in, and her suspicions are confirmed as she’s setting her keys and black messenger bag upon the kitchen isle—Kara and Lena lie motionless atop her bed, the snug pair illuminated by the faint glow of moonlight streaming in from the glass balcony doors, pressed tightly together beneath the cream-colored sheets.

Kara lies solidly on her back (Alex had always told her she slept like a starfish) in rumpled CatCo work clothes (a light-blue button-down and khakis), golden hair sprawled unceremoniously across the eggshell-white pillows, light snores escaping her on every deep exhale; little Lena is curled squarely atop her like a baby koala around Kara’s larger form and letting out tiny little mewls every now and again to supplement Kara’s snoring breaths, her cute features blessedly relaxed and serene as she dozes.

They breathe in sync as Alex watches—in, out. In, out. In… Out.

It’s downright , and Alex thinks she feels her heart breaking in her chest all over again at the mere sight of it.

She slips off her boots, stripping down and finding the first decent pair of pajamas she can inside her closet—she knows there’s likely mascara streaking pathetically down either cheek, that her eye makeup is probably smudged beyond believe, which both serve only to have her bearing a remarkable resemblance to the Wicked Witch of the West as she melts in the Wizard of Oz.

But, Alex doesn’t care about that right now.

She doesn’t care about James’ half-piped dream to become a National City vigilante, or Ben Lockwood’s infuriating anti-alien rhetoric taking the news coverage by storm; she only cares about Lena, about Kara, about her family cuddled together securely in her bed, sleeping peacefully without a care in the world for what tomorrow will bring.

Alex slides to join them in the bed feeling a maddening mix of anger and despondency and all-encompassing adoration all in one, and she fucking breaks all over again when little Lena’s fingers curl unconsciously around her hand once she’s settled, the young girl reaching out for her even in sleep—Alex thinks she’s never loved someone (sans Kara and Eliza and Jeremiah) so intently before in her life.

She falls asleep with Lena’s small fingers wrapped loosely in hers, apprehension building queasily in her stomach even in the safety of her apartment, and a final wish resting delicately on the tip of her tongue: that tomorrow won’t ever come.
alex danvers deserving better? always

also am i obsessed with halestorm's 'here's to us'? unquestionably
welcome back (pov lena)

Chapter Summary

They've finally arrived at the day upon which they're going to get big Lena back. For good.

It's not as joyful of an occasion as one might imagine.

Chapter Notes

idk man i just had inspiration so. two chapters in less than 24 hours! how bout that

plus this one got pretty long so

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It’s early when little Lena wakes—early enough that Alex is still asleep beside her; Kara, too.

(Though, Kara sleeps like a rock, Lena’s learned, so that’s less surprising.)

She’s bleary-eyed but well-rested, and when she looks down at Kara beneath her taking up over half of the queen-sized bed with a rather quaint impersonation of a starfish (not to mention an entirely impressive pattern of audible snores), and Alex dozing peacefully beside her with her stern features squished adorably against the pillow, she’s sure she’s never witnessed something so… so comforting in her whole entire life (even if nine total years isn’t much to go on).

Golden sunlight streams through the balcony doors, illuminating the gentle and wholeheartedly domestic scene that fills little Lena with such tranquility and tenderness and longing, and, really, she thinks she might cry at the sheer loveliness of it all, at the inherent sense of felicity it brings her.

(She’s never cried for something like that before, for joy or happiness or that feeling of serenity that wells so powerfully within her she doesn’t know what else she can do if not cry for the unadulterated momentousness buried so deep within her that simply demands to be felt.

She supposes that that’s been something of a theme since the day she awoke in her cage with Burger Man chomping down on his greasy fast-food off in the distance, since blonde-haired blue-
eyed Kara knelt down next to her cage with an extraordinarily caring expression on her features that left Lena dizzy with its potential implications, since Alex Danvers called her 'smart' and 'pretty girl' and 'sweetheart' and she knew without a doubt that she would never ever be the same.

Through it all, there’s one thing that remains constant—a terrifying unfamiliarity with nearly everything she encounters… but, in the best possible way she could have imagined.

She slips gently off of Kara (who merely wrinkles her nose in response to the action but otherwise remains unconscious) and sits herself cross-legged in the small vaguely-diamond-shaped space between the two of them, thoughts racing around too quickly in her brain, feelings of serenity and apprehension and dread swirling around in her chest until she has desperate tears welling in her eyes and she’s biting her lower lip hard in a headstrong attempt to keep them from falling.

She’s not sure how long she stays there, just sitting atop the mattress and fiddling with her trembling hands in her lap, silent tears streaming down her cheeks, unable to decide if the palpable warmth radiating off of the only two adults she’s ever come to love is reassuring or just downright unsettling.

And, most of all, she doesn’t want to leave. Not now.

(Maybe not ever.)

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She wipes her tears by the time she feels Alex and Kara rousing—well, Alex is rousing, anyhow, and soon enough, she’ll be screaming at Kara to get up, too.

She gives Alex the best smile she can manage (even if it is a little bit shaky), and, by the time the redhead agent has returned with a steaming mug of coffee and a look of semi-alertness in her brown eyes, she’s giving Lena a curious look that tells her she didn’t do all that well to hide her distress.

Either way, there’s (thankfully) no time to address it right now, and a second later, Alex is yelling, “Where’s the fire!” to finally awaken a loudly snoring Kara… who merely grunts and sighs, turning unconsciously on her side and continuing to sleep. Loudly.
Alex heaves a sigh at that, grumbling, “For Christ’s sake,” under her breath as Lena does her best to stifle a giggle.

“Lena, hon, get dressed, okay?” Alex tells her, still fixing her narrowed gaze at an entirely oblivious Kara sprawled across the sheets. “I’ll wake Kara.”

Biting back a wide grin, she immediately obeys, scampering off the bed and picking up the neatly folded pile of clothes set out atop the coffee table for her before padding into the bathroom and sleepily closing the door behind her.

“I ATE ALL YOUR POTSTICKERS!” she hears Alex’s muffled shouting whilst hopping on one foot into a pair of Alex’s knee-length athletic shorts that fit Lena like pants—she almost falls over onto the tiled flooring as a laugh bubbles up in her throat at the sound.

And, evidently, that phrase didn’t quite do the trick, because a moment later, Lena’s moved on to wrestling with the too-large black DEO T-shirt that reaches down to her calves when she hears a loud “LENA’S IN DANGER!!!”

_Huh?

Not a split second passes before there’s a shrieked, “What?! ” and quite a great deal of more yelling from both parties in question (though Kara’s end of the dialogue is more of a slurred and entirely incoherent babble of shouted gibberish), followed promptly by the unmistakable sound of shattered glass and Alex’s loud exasperated groan.

After brushing her teeth and flattening out her mussed-up hair, little Lena wrenches open the door and traipses back in to see: a very grumpy Alex downing the rest of her coffee and typing furiously on her phone with one hand, an abundance of glass shards littering the carpet where the glass balcony doors had been so unceremoniously shattered, and, last of all, no sign of Kara.

Alex flips on the news next with a murmured curse, barely sparing little Lena a glance as she places call after call (all of which appear to reach voicemail), the two of them settling comfortably on opposite ends of the plush couch before the television—and, a moment later, they’re presented with a wonderfully peculiar headline on the National City News: “A One-Woman Pajama Party for National City’s Girl of Steel” along with a slightly blurred digital photograph of none other than Kara flying barefoot through the air in bright blue pajama pants dotted with pepperoni pizza slices and a shirt that reads ‘Just keep swimming!’ under a freckled sea-blue fish with bulging and rather lively violet-colored eyes, golden-blonde hair sticking up in various places and what looks to be a half-eaten sprinkled chocolate-glazed donut clutched firmly in one hand.
“Alex? How has no one figured out she’s Supergirl?” Lena asks once she’s finally gotten her silent laughter under control, her wide grin beginning to make her cheeks feel rather sore with every passing moment.

Alex sighs heavily and shakes her head, rubbing exhaustedly at her temples even as the news feed cuts to a live clip of Kara narrowly avoiding a head-on collision with Lord Technologies in her sleep-impaired flying endeavor.

“Beats me, little Luthor,” she grumbles, turning off her phone and setting it face-down atop the coffee table, focusing her glare fastidiously towards the blonde pajama-clad superhero hovering above the city on screen. “Beats me.”

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It’s around 8:30am when they finally leave for the DEO, Kara having eventually returned through the empty frames of the former balcony doors to receive a merciless reaming from a very pissed-off Alex, then promptly super-speeding herself around the apartment to get dressed and brush her teeth and straighten herself out whilst Alex continued her long-winded lecture.

(It was almost impressive, really, how Alex managed to stay angry and yell furiously at a whizzing blur of color that Lena couldn’t for the life of her bother to keep track of as Kara’s agile figure flitted erratically this way and that throughout the modest space.

Impressive, indeed.)

But, eventually, they’re ready—Alex in her combat suit (though she’d taken to leaving her scary guns back at the DEO, which always put Lena a little more at ease), Kara in full-bodied Supergirl regalia (she’s promised emphatically to fly away the second she sees a sign of anyone else in the building to protect her identity), matching scowls on either sister’s face as they trudge sluggishly down to the parking garage.

Alex and Kara bicker for the first five minutes or so of the car ride over, which Lena can’t help but find greatly amusing in every sense—but, all too soon, there’s a tense sort of hush that falls across them as they near the DEO, as they near the end of their time together. For good.
It’s… unsettling, to say the least.

By the time they’ve parked, they’re all entirely silent—even Kara’s strained attempts at small talk and cheerful conversation have long since died off, and it’s rather jarring when Alex ultimately cuts the engine, and they’re all blanketed in a silence even more absolute than before (something little Lena hadn’t known was at all possible).

“Are you ready?” Alex asks after a long moment, brown eyes finding Lena’s verdant green in the rearview mirror.

Lena bites her lip, because no, no she’s really really not—but, she nods anyhow, doing her best to maintain a brave face as her hands absentmindedly fiddle with the seatbelt pulled securely over her chest.

Alex lifts a skeptical brow, and Lena can feel Kara’s worried gaze seeming to burn through her. “Are you sure?”

Lena flushes, struggling to remain eye contact. “N-No.”

Kara’s hand reaches back, and Lena takes it without hesitation, curling her small fingers around Kara’s bigger ones and smiling despite the tears she can feel building in her chest, again.

“It’s okay if you’re scared, Lee,” Kara tells her so gently, and Lena feels like breaking.

“I-I… I want you to get your friend back,” she stutters out eventually, lower lip trembling, fresh tears blurring her vision.

Kara just turns to look at her with a genuine smile, but Lena can see the sadness in it, and it hits her like a sucker punch to the gut. “You’re our friend, too, you know.”

Alex turns back to face her, too, with an expression of such softness on her features that Lena’s sure she couldn’t have stopped the tears from escaping her if she tried.
“We always have been, honey,” she agrees quietly, brows stitched together in unmistakable sincerity, and Lena feels a fresh wave of tears streaming down her flushed cheeks.

“I, um—” she stops herself, anticipation and a debilitating fear of rejection roiling in her chest. “I… I love you. B-Both of you,” she chokingly murmurs out, quiet and unsure, her blush reaching the tips of her ears as she forcibly casts her gaze downward, suddenly feeling positively overcome with sheer embarrassment at her admission.

But, a moment later, she feels a gentle finger (Alex’s finger, she realizes with a start) beneath her chin, guiding her oh-so-slowly back up to see the two of them wearing matching grins, their eyes bloodshot and glossy with tears.

Lena fights the hope building in her chest that maybe they aren’t going to reject her—that maybe, just maybe, they love her right back, even if Lillian and Lionel and all the rest of them never did.

(She’ll admit she doesn’t quite know why they would.)

“I love you so much, sweet girl,” Alex whispers out, voice thick with tears, and Lena has to swallow the shameful sob that threatens to escape her at that.

Kara nods at that, a single tear tracing her cheek—Lena thinks she looks beautiful. “I don’t know that I can put it into words, Lee, but the best I can do is this: I love you, okay?” her voice cracks, and Lena is overcome with adoration, with affection, with love in these moments that mean more to her than anything else ever has. “I love you, more than I can say, and I’ll always protect you. No matter what.” Then, she’s looking over to make eye contact with Alex, and the two of them are sharing a watery nod, and before Lena can figure out what any of it means, they’re turning back to face her, matching determination upon their tear-stained features.

“We both will,” Kara says with finality, and Lena breaks into an ugly sob, barely registering the feeling of Alex’s hand reaching back to grip hers and Kara’s fingers squeezing hers tightly and the fact that she’s breaking down in a parking garage under the Department of Extra-Normal Operations as a nine-year-old girl displaced 17 years into her (apparent) future.

There’s little else that matters here, Lena thinks—and, likely, little else that will ever matter more than this: right here, right now, surrounded by the people she loves, the people she knows love her right back, crying because their time didn’t last forever even if they vehemently prayed on their knees under the resplendent pitch-black darkness of nightfall that it might.
Adult Lena is the luckiest girl in the whole world—and, right now, little Lena is, too:

Right now, little Lena is loved; right now, little Lena finally feels like she *belongs*.

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Lena herself contrived the means by which they’d be getting her back—so, she knew well in advance that she’d be facing down a hypodermic needle containing exactly 2.25 mL of florid green fluid with anthropological accelerated-growth qualities that would then be injected into a vein (specifically one at the neck, for maximum efficacy) in order to successfully effect the re-aging, as it were… but, still, she’s a nine-year-old, and needles mean pain, and that terrifies her.

It certainly doesn’t help, either, that Kara had a Supergirl emergency and that Alex is there but can’t be in the quarantined room with her anyhow, because the molecular-level radiation and alien biological components that little Lena will likely release during her transformation would (by her meticulous calculations) prove to be undoubtedly lethal to humans.

So, instead, she’s just left with Winn in a matte-silver-colored hazmat suit and herself down in what Lena now knows to be the holding cells for rogue aliens, but that Alex has assured her a million times over that she is in no danger of being trapped within them.

It’s a rather small space, maybe 4’ x 6’, all-white and equipped with a rectangular bench against the wall with light-grey padding upon which to sit. There’s a nearly floor-to-ceiling rectangular viewing glass, though, which Lena guesses is probably bulletproof, not to mention hermetically sealed to keep even the more violent rogue aliens well-contained.

Alex stands motionless outside the glass, her features ashy, pretty catlike brown eyes rimmed with redness—Lena gives her a tiny little wave as Winn generously dabs rubbing alcohol at the crook of her neck, and she returns it with a watery smile that has Lena’s chest feeling all warm and fuzzy despite the chill of the air around her and the dread that seems to grow exponentially within her gut by the second.

Winn’s bluish-green eyes keep darting from Lena’s face to the needle and back again, nervous energy rolling off of him in waves—it doesn’t help Lena’s anxiety all that much, but it does well to remind her that she’s not alone… for that, she’s grateful.

“I—” Winn starts then stops, clearing his throat. “Are you, um… ready?”
His voices sounds strange coming from beneath the suit—there’s an almost tinny quality to it; robotic, almost.

(It reminds her of Brainy.)

Thoughts still racing, she manages a shaky nod, meeting his eyes for a fleeting moment to let him know she’s okay (even if she doesn’t quite feel like she is).

She shuts her eyes tightly as his hazmat-suit-clad hand lightly grips her clothed shoulder, as she senses his towering figure getting closer and closer until he’s mere inches away, his nervous breaths coming in time with her erratic heartbeat; she bites her lower lip hard as a painful pinch erupts at the base of her neck, as Winn presses steadily down and she feels the slightly cooler liquid entering her bloodstream.

She has one last thought as the darkness seems to swallow her, as a hazy cloud settles heavily over her brain, as her consciousness fades with startling brevity—that finally, at last, she’s done something right.

Finally, big Lena’s gonna come right back.

(She hopes that big Lena’s alright, wherever she is… even if little Lena won’t be.

She hopes that big Lena knows she’s loved beyond words can say from the very second she wakes up… even if little Lena might not.

She hopes that big Lena will remember what happened here, even if little Lena can’t.)

All too soon, the darkness swallows her… and then, there’s nothing. Nothing but emptiness.

Lena wakes slowly—like a gradual trek through the darkness to reach the light; a crushing weight
that pulls vigorously upon her very being, begging her to stay just a little while longer; an innate knowledge deep in her gut that tells her she’ll never leave if she stays, that she has to go even if it hurts her terribly to do so.

Her limbs feel immeasurably heavy, her head pounds with a prominent ache that makes her college hangovers look like a walk in the bloody park, and there’s a persistent stinging at the crook of her neck along with a ghost of a memory that tells her about needles and flying high above the city with Kara Danvers and a young green-eyed girl that looks a hell of a lot like her telling her “Welcome back.”

“Welcome back?”

God, she needs a drink.

Her eyelids flutter open (which is no small task, by the way, when considering every slight movement thus far has taken a quite frankly ridiculous amount of willpower on her part) to witness bright LED lighting practically searing itself into her brain; and, interestingly enough, she feels… taller. Bigger.

That doesn’t make any sense.

But… at the same time, somehow it does; somehow, it makes perfect sense, because she feels strange and unfamiliar and wrong in this body, like she’d gone to sleep one night as a child and awoken as a full-grown adult.

Which… Shit.

Shit.

Shit.

She did do that, didn’t she?

The memories come flooding back in a cataclysmic downpour that leaves her reeling in its
Supergirl. Supergirl, who has blonde hair and blue eyes and pouty pink lips and an appetite that quite literally never seems to end; Supergirl, who has the same smile and that same adorable little scar between her brows as… as Kara Danvers.

*Oh my God.*

*Oh my God.*

O—

There’s a loud *thud!* on the glass, and Lena starts in place, frantic green eyes coming up to see… Agent Danvers? She’s dressed in her combat suit, guns strapped to her thighs, short red hair (shaved on the sides) impeccably styled, brows creased in worry.

Kara’s older sister breathes out a sigh of something that appears to be relief when she manages to catch Lena’s attention (though, through the thick glass between them it’s rather hard to tell), a single bare hand pressed solidly against the glass, and, all of the sudden, Lena realizes where she is: the *DEO*.

More specifically, the DEO’s *holding cells*.

What the *hell* happened to her?

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Chapter End Notes

finallY ok i felt such a sense of relief at finally writing her coming back jfc
welcome back pt. 2 (pov lena)

Chapter Summary

Lena’s struggling to understand just exactly what’s happened. J’onn and Alex do their best to explain it.

Chapter Notes

soooo decided to do a part two with little lena, just to get a better look at her mindset and what she remembers yada yada yada

let me know what you think?

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Lena’s locked up in a containment cell at the DEO of all places, and, to make matters worse, she thinks she might actually be losing her mind… which, when considering that her formidable intellect had proven time and time again to be the only thing she could truly rely upon throughout every shortcoming and failure and betrayal, it’s nothing short of fucking terrifying that it’s failing her now.

And, all she has is Winn in a shiny silver hazmat suit taking her blood and babbling endlessly about his most recent technological epiphany—that, and an utterly baffling jumble of conflicting narratives battling within her exhausted brain, showing her convoluted things like Kara flying high above the city with Lena in tow and a pretty blonde doctor flirting with a rather flustered Alex Danvers and a feeling of paradoxical belonging that settles comfortably within her very being as if it might never leave even as she knows that that’s preposterous.

And, on top of it all, no one will bloody talk to her—Alex ran off ages ago, face deadly pale as if she’d seen a ghost, and, when Lena asks Winn what the hell she’s doing here, he stumbles through an entirely incoherent mess of jumbled speech that Lena’s sure isn’t even English, the only words she can isolate being “9-year-old” and “adorable” and “so awesome,” which, obviously, doesn’t exactly give her much to go on.

Instead, she sits and waits as an unexplainably ecstatic Winn shuffles out of the cell, bolts the door securely behind him with an apologetic frown, then promptly walks off with a vial filled with her blood in hand, leaving her alone. Again.
She thinks she hears some disturbing noises off to the right, where one of her alien cell buddies is (presumably) throwing a reasonably-sized temper tantrum at having been detained in solitary by the DEO.

*Me, too, buddy*, she thinks absentmindedly as another ear-splitting shriek sounds off, and then: *The DEO really should soundproof their cells.*

She spends the next couple of minutes formulating preliminary blueprints for soundproofing tungsten-alloyed antechambers—it’s fairly simple, and merely a recreation of the most common practices used in everyday insulation maintenance, but it keeps her engaged, and that’s more than enough for right now… because, her memories are a mess, and the delicate line between reality and its rather unsavory counterpart is blurred beyond all recognition, and she doesn’t know what the *hell* she’s meant to do if she gives in and starts believing the absolutely inane things her mind is currently trying to tell her.

And, really, that’s what they are: utterly inane, because there isn’t a single part of Kara being Supergirl or Alex smiling kindly at her or Lena feeling like she truly belongs that makes even an iota of sense, and the juxtaposition of that when combined with the dizzying amount of gaps and lost time she’s cataloguing is more than enough to make her want to scream under the sheer unadulterated weight of it all.

But, perhaps the most terrifying thought, is this: What if she’s not the crazy one? What if it’s all just pieces of a wholeheartedly bewildering sequence of events that really occurred?

What if it’s *not* a truckload of unequivocal nonsense?

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Eventually, she’s taken up out of holding by a very stern-faced J’onn J’onnzz and subsequently escorted to the conference room on the highest floor of the complex—the very same one in which she’d defended herself and her experimentations upon the Harun-El before a painfully self-righteous committee (Kara, Alex, James, J’onn, etc.) who spent more time taking cheap shots at her and examining her moral esteem as if she wasn’t even there, rather than actually discussing anything of even vague importance concerning her Harun-El and synthetic Kryptonite trials.

God, it feels to her like a lifetime ago as she enters, shifting uncomfortably in athletic shorts and a matching black T-shirt emblazoned with the DEO’s logo in grey (which, *Yikes*), both of which are positively ripe with Alex’s forest-y scent, though she doesn’t have a single clue why the hell she would know what Alex Danvers smells like, or why it’s so inexplicably comforting to inhale as she
settles in a seat at the head of the table just adjacent to J’onn and a stony-faced Alex Danvers.

“Where’s K—Supergirl?” she asks hoarsely on something of a whim, even if the title sounds strange coming off her tongue, especially when she knows saying ‘Kara’ would be so much simpler.

J’onn and Alex share a tense look over the table, and Lena fights the urge to roll her eyes.

“There’s a robbery downtown,” Alex answers eventually, wide brown eyes settling cautiously upon Lena—she almost looks… afraid, Lena thinks, even as she knows that that’s ridiculous. “She’s dealing with… that.”

Lena nods slowly, fighting to keep a neutral expression upon her features as the polarizing feeling of familiarity and alienness war violently within her, like something’s telling her she’s been here before, even when she knows damn well she hasn’t.

“What happened?” she questions then, and she doesn’t miss the way Alex winces at the query.

J’onn, too, looks distinctly uncomfortable, shifting wordlessly in his seat and eyeing Lena like she’s a ticking time bomb, and, really, Lena’s just about ready to storm out to L-Corp (or maybe her penthouse), where she has wine and scotch and whiskey and—

“You were de-aged… into a 9-year-old,” J’onn tells her, as casually as if they were conferring about the weather, and Lena’s brain suddenly feels as if it’s quite literally collapsing in on itself.

“I-I’m sorry, what?”

J’onn and Alex share another meaningful look, before they’re both turning back to her with solemn expressions, and J’onn is slowly repeating, “You were de-aged into a 9-year-old,” in an infuriatingly condescending tone, as if she’s an unruly toddler who can’t quite grasp the fairly rudimentary concept that ‘No’ means ‘No.’

(On a semi-related note, it’s rather interesting how full-grown men walk around laboring under that same quandary, and are then vindicated upon using the indefensible mindset of an infant in order to rationalize their heinous crimes.)
Interesting, indeed.)

Instead of snapping back with a clever quip like she so desperately wants to, she merely gives a curt nod. “For how long?”

“A little over a week,” J’onn inputs, and, yet again, Lena feels like she’s been run over by a freight train.

A week? With her 9-year-old self? In front of them?

She didn’t learn to be truly quiet and evasive until... well, until the age of 11, at least. No, she was still mucking up on the daily: saying things she shouldn’t have been saying, talking back to Lillian at the worst of times, and, just in general, being a hell of a lot more honest than she ever should have been about the bruises and the broken bones and all the unpleasant ramifications that occurred when she fell victim to Lillian’s cold-hearted fury as she so often did.

God, she can’t even imagine what she must’ve told them, told Kara—and, if the faint remnants of phantom memories are to be believed, it was a fair amount... enough that she can remember Alex calling her ‘sweetheart’ and Kara helping her undo the brace for the arm she broke years ago, and Brainy telling her that she was ‘very wise’ over a rather cordial match of chess.

Those have to be her imagination; those have to be false... And, yet, there’s a part of her that can’t help but know that they’re true—that somewhere deep, deep, down, she knows she’s fighting vainly against the inevitable, that those memories are as real as planet Earth and oxygen and gravity no matter what that tiny, terrified piece inside of her wants to believe to the contrary.

A second passes, and she belatedly notices that both J’onn and Alex are giving her curious looks as she forcibly pulls herself from her thoughts—clearing her throat, and straightening her already-impeccable posture, she eyes them both as inconsequentially as she can manage, ensuring that she’s exuding a hell of a lot more confidence than she’s feeling at the moment.

“Who cared for me while I was... de-aged?” It sounds strange rolling off her tongue; foreign.

Alex swallows awkwardly, leaning slightly forward in her seat. “I did,” she admits quietly, an unreadable look in her chocolate-brown eyes, and Lena feels like crawling under the table and hiding until she’s alone again—which, she has to remind herself, is not what adult Lena would do,
and not what kid Lena should do, in any sense. “Me and… And Kara.”

Lena raises a single brow, desperate to keep the attention off of her. “Who is also Supergirl.”

Alex freezes for a moment, then heaves an almost imperceptible sigh. “Yes.”

“So, you do remember,” J’onn observes with clear interest, his gaze narrowing.

Lena blinks, feeling lost and scared all of a sudden under the combined weight of their stares, like she’s de-aging yet again before their very eyes—and, God, she really wants to crawl under the table and hide until the mean people go away, until she doesn’t have to act so big any longer, until Lex comes and gets her with that lopsided grin of his, telling her that everything’s okay now because he's going to look after her.

“Bits and pieces,” she murmurs out, every particle of her being practically screaming for her to get down and hide, hide like her life depends on it until Lex comes back and makes everything okay again. “Can I… Can I go home now?” she asks quietly, putting all her concentration into formulating her words like a big kid, and not slipping on her syllables like she used to when she was younger.

J’onn and Alex give each other another look, but when they turn back to her, they’re both nodding, and Lena thinks that she’s never felt such all-powerful relief permeating her chest so dynamically like it is now.

“Sure,” Alex acquiesces with a subtle quirk of her lips. “We’ll let Kara know when she gets back.”

Lena nods distractedly to that, but her mind is elsewhere, wanting to go home and isolate herself and call Lex so that he’ll come and smile at her and, if she's really really lucky, he'll even give her a hug, too.

His hugs were always the most special hugs in the world—though, Alex and Kara’s rank pretty high up there, too.

(Sh’e’s too far gone to bother questioning why in the world she knows what Alex Danvers’ hugs feel like.)
She hopes she’ll be lucky enough to get one when he comes back.

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Chapter End Notes

ok and i knoW there hasn't been much kara lately.... but, i decided to do a second lena chapter because i want them to have a scene alone at lena's penthouse where they catch up and have a bunch of emotions and all of that.... so, that's coming for the next chapter in kara's pov!!
growing crooked (pov kara)

Chapter Summary

Finally, Kara and Lena have their talk.

It goes... better than expected, actually.

(Also, Kara's smitten. Like, seriously.)

Chapter Notes

ok guys i'm so sorry it's been a while since the last update... i've just had a sort of rough time mentally, not to mention i've been working and trying to get all my shit together for college (i leave in like. a week) and so i've kind of had to put my other stuff on the back burner

(that said, since imma be starting college soon, i definitely can't guarantee the updates are gonna get any quicker)

but uh. i'm back and i haven't done a word count on this one but i know it's on the longer side... plus, what with it being kara and lena's reunion i definitely couldn't be slighting you guys

(i also haven't done edits yet, so sorry for any mistakes - i just wanted to get something out sooner rather than later)

so uh. enjoy?

See the end of the chapter for more notes

To tell the truth, Kara probably could have flown back across the city in time to catch a now re-aged Lena before the woman in question gathered her things and called for her driver to “apologize for my absence, and would you mind swinging by downtown whenever you’re available, please; I’d like to visit my apartment”—which, fine, maybe Kara had been listening in all the while… But, whatever, okay? She was worried—is worried.

Because, not only has Lena just gone through something entirely unprecedented, not to mention downright strange in every sense of the word—but, there’s more to this, too.

What if she’s scared? What if she thinks she’s alone? What if it hurts?
It can’t be easy, Kara knows: becoming small (9 years old, to be exact), then 17 years older at the (apparent) push of a button—not to mention the toll it must take upon one so painfully fragile and 
human.

(Because, yes, Lena may be just about the strongest person Kara’s ever known—but, that doesn’t change the fact that she’s mortal, just like Alex and Eliza and Jeremiah.

She’s not bulletproof; she can’t fly or shoot lasers from those gorgeous green eyes; and, she’s made of something a heck of a lot softer than steel: flesh and bone.)

Kara’s only ever seen Lena cry once (like, really, truly cry—the single tear Lena shed for Jack after Biomax fell doesn’t quite count, even if Kara knows very well that Lena cried herself to sleep for weeks following that particular incident) since the day they met: that blessedly sunny day out on the balcony at CatCo, where Lena’s frail body wracked itself violently with heart-wrenching sobs, where the woman Kara loves called herself weak in that trembling tone that had Kara lunging instantly forward to wrap her in an all-encompassing hug before she could really think for a second about what she was doing.

(But, she most certainly doesn’t regret it—because, right there, right then, with Lena crying and desperate and broken before her in a way she’d never seen before, Kara could literally feel her heart splintering in her chest at the sight of it.)

And, unfortunately, that particular remembrance brings about an altogether new dilemma— because, Lena had been so unbelievably crushed when she’d told Kara that “I’m the one keeping secrets” and “I’ll never forgive myself” and “I can’t imagine what you must think of me, Kara,” her words wrought with such a degree of guilt, of shame, and hitting Kara so ridiculously hard that she truly might’ve been utterly convinced there was weaponized Kryptonite around had she not already known the true reason behind the molten regret she felt curling painfully in her stomach: because, Rao, but Lena didn’t have the slightest clue what Kara was hiding, what subversive truth she’d been harboring for far too long that made Lena’s brief stint working with Lex (and she uses the term ‘working with ’ rather loosely here, because the man was dying, for Rao’s sake, and it’s not Lena’s fault that she actually has the biggest freaking heart out of everyone in the galaxy) seem nearly (majorly) inconsequential in comparison.

After all of it—the lunch dates, the late-night confessions, the hugs and cuddles with a younger Lena that reminded Kara so much of her Lena that it made her physically ache at times to witness —what if she remembers?

That’s a terrifying thought… And yet, perhaps even more terrifying is the possibility that she doesn’t.
Because, what is she meant to say when a possibly amnesiac (?) Lena asks her what happened during the week she spent de-aged down to the 9-year-old version of herself whilst simultaneously being cared for largely by Kara and Alex (and Brainy, on occasion)?

She doesn’t want to lie, not anymore—she knows Lena deserves the truth, knows that Lena’s been more than deserving of the truth this entire time, but, really… How does she tell her all of that?

How does she tell her that she crashed through an abandoned warehouse and found a tiny green-eyed girl in a steel cage who told her terrible things a bigger Lena never would and eyed the very ground beneath her as if terrified it might try to cause her harm?

How does she tell Lena that she now knows a heck of a lot more about her train wreck of a childhood and the people who hurt her than Lena would ever be comfortable with? How does she say that she fell in love (a different kind of ‘love,’ of course) with a 9-year-old version of Lena that broke her heart with every stolen moment, and yet, at the same time, healed some unexplainable piece entombed deeply within her she’d never known was broken to begin with?

How does she explain that everything has changed, that the very groundworks of who they’ve become has shifted on its very axis whether Lena knows it or not?

Really, she doesn’t know; she doesn’t know, but Lena’s long since arrived back at her penthouse in the city and Kara hears the telltale clink! of liquor bottles and glass tumblers being retrieved with unsteady hands, not to mention the muffled sniffs as a clinically overwhelmed Lena tries desperately to hold back tears—Kara’s run out of time to come up with a solution, because she knows it’ll kill her if she listens to Lena breaking for a second longer, knowing that the woman she loves is hurting all the while she intentionally stops herself from doing anything about it.

She’s run out of time, and maybe she doesn’t need a game plan here—maybe just being there and figuring it out will be enough, even if it’s messy and fractured and infuriating; maybe what matters above all else is that they’re together despite everything, because that’s how they’d started, and Kara doesn’t think she wants to see the end of it all if Lena’s not there right beside her anyhow.

So, she drops off Brad Jennings, the latest criminal of the week, on the doorstep of the National City Police Department and pointedly ignores his indignant (and rather crass) complaints as a pair of officers come out almost instantly to apprehend him with a shiny pair of steel handcuffs—because, really, she thinks as she blasts off from the ground, eyeing the fiery orange and lurid pinkish hues streaking across the afternoon sky: she’s got bigger things to be worrying about.
She touches down gently (or, as gently as she can manage, anyhow) upon the polished granite balcony of Lena’s penthouse, already having swapped her suit for civilian clothes mid-flight (khaki slacks and a pink button down Lena had once said was amongst her favorites), fiddling with her sleeves until they’re neatly rolled halfway up either arm before she’s knocking mildly upon the reinforced glass of the sliding door.

(She’d decided upon this course of action only a couple minutes earlier, then had forced herself to fly directly over before she lost her nerve. She figured this way was best: showing Lena that she’s Supergirl by landing in civilian clothes upon her balcony before well and truly telling her with words… she’d never been all that good with words, anyhow.)

It’s tinted, so she can’t quite see a tipsy Lena Luthor padding over on bare feet (even if her trained ear catches every slight shift and suppressed sigh), and she figures there’s no reason to employ her X-ray vision, even with her glasses tucked away safely at home in the top drawer of her nightstand.

She hears a bit of fiddling and muffled curse as Lena wrestles with the lock, but a second later, there’s a light *click!* and the door is sliding open with a *whoosh!* to reveal—

*Rao.*

She is *not* prepared for this.

What’s more, she doesn’t quite know why it’s all coming as such a surprise, either, because she might’ve known it would feel indubitably strange to see Lena after roughly a week of dealing with the 9-year-old version of her; she might’ve known that that starstruck sensation she always felt upon seeing Lena in any capacity would return in full force to hit her like a Kryptonite-laced bullet to the chest, that that urge she felt near constantly to sweep Lena into her arms and kiss her senseless would cripple her more poignantly than ever before, that it’d feel near impossible to speak with the woman she loves standing just before her after a week of missing her like a piece of Kara’s heart she wasn’t quite sure she’d ever get back.

She looks positively angelic, too—well, she always does, of course; but, golden radiance from the falling sun seems to set those jade-green eyes ablaze like nothing else ever could, her pouting lips full and red with the bittersweet remembrance of the crimson lipstick she’d always worn like armor into conferences at L-Corp and impromptu interventions at the DEO, her gloriously curved figure clad in uncharacteristically casual clothing (Kara thinks they’re likely Alex’s): athletic shorts that nearly reach mid-thigh, and an oversized black T-shirt with the DEO logo emblazoned proudly in
slate grey upon the left breast that’s more than long enough to have made Kara think at first that she wasn’t wearing any pants.

(Which, it’s both shamefully disappointing and reasonably relief-inducing that she is, in fact, wearing pants at the current moment, because Kara thinks her brain would spontaneously implode if the opposite were true, and then she’d never get around to telling Lena… well, whatever it is she’s about to tell her.

Honestly, she hasn’t quite decided exactly what that’s going to be yet.)

But, either way, Lena (adult Lena) looks drop-dead gorgeous (truly, Kara’s never understood that figure of speech up until now, because, really, she thinks she might actually be in danger of fainting right about now), and then she’s quirking a single impeccably-shaped eyebrow as the silence persists, and Kara thinks her brain, quite literally, collapses in on itself.

Holy Rao.

“Hello, Kara,” Lena greets cautiously when (evidently) it becomes clear that Kara’s not in any state to be forming even vaguely coherent sentences, her voice low and rough, beautiful features pinched with exhaustion.

Rao, Kara loves her.

“Uh—” she coughs awkwardly as Lena’s mesmerizing lips form a small pout, desperately searching for the words. “L-Lena! You, um… I… You’re back!”

... Yikes.

And, by the way Lena’s single eyebrow creeps even further towards her hairline, she’s having the exact same thought. “I am,” she acquiesces eventually, though there’s a teasing lilt to her tone that makes Kara’s heart flutter—maybe her tendency to ramble wasn’t quite so bad, after all… especially not if it made Lena smirk like that.

“I, uh, you—Um,” she hacks out another cough, nervously clearing her throat even as a bemused twinkle appears in Lena’s evergreen irises. “You look… good.”
Lena gives her the ghost of a smile at that, though there’s a sadness that overtakes her regal features, too—one that threatens to break Kara’s heart in two. “Would you like to come in?” she asks simply then, stepping deftly to the side with an outstretched arm, and Kara notices the deflection but accepts it gratefully all the same, blushing and nodding shyly in response.

“I—I’d like that.”

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“J’onn tells me that you and Alex were the ones to look after me while I was… ” Lena trails off, looking briefly unsure for the slightest of moments before she’s pushing it away with a practiced air of composure, allowing her lips to quirk marginally as she sinks onto her polished black leather couch just feet from where Kara sits. “Thank you,” she concludes eventually, her strong green-eyed gaze meeting Kara’s for a second or two in the dim lighting before she’s reaching forward to pluck her half-filled wine glass off the coffee table, taking a generous sip as Kara watches.

“Um… What—What do you remember?” Kara stammers out dumbly, hating the way Lena’s shoulders tense in response to the question, the way she swirls her wine instinctually in one hand and takes another gulp, discomfort rolling off of her in waves.

She’s silent as she leans to place the now nearly empty wine glass back atop the lowered table, and when she’s finally turning to meet Kara’s deliberately gentle expression with a disturbingly blank one of her own, Kara fights the urge to flinch at the coldness she sees there, feigned or not.

“Why?” Lena questions curtly, turning to place her elbow atop the sofa back and resting her head comfortably against her hand—despite the frigid indifference to her tone, there remains something softer in her eyes, a tenderness that Kara latches onto like a refuge in a storm; it’s in this juxtaposition that Kara knows Lena’s struggling, knows that she’s nowhere near well enough to hide it as well as she normally does… she can’t decide if that’s conducive or just unsettling. (Honestly, she thinks it might be a little bit of both.) “Trying to suss out whether or not your secret is safe?”

Kara gulps. “Lena, I—"

“I won’t tell anyone, Kara,” Lena interrupts swiftly, though there’s an underlying gentleness to her words. “I promise… You have a right to your anonymity, to a life outside of,” she pauses briefly then, and Kara knows why, knows exactly what it’ll mean when she finally says it aloud, when it
becomes real, “Supergirl.”

And, there it is—her voice doesn’t waver, but Kara’s heart beats about three times faster, and she knows without a shadow of a doubt that everything has changed.

She tries to catch Lena’s eye, tries to get a read on what exactly she’s thinking up there in that big, beautiful brain of hers—but, the woman averts her gaze, subtly posturing herself in such a way that Kara can tell she’s placing as much distance as she can manage between the two of them… which, considering how far apart they’d started, only serves to make Kara feel all the more disconnected and lost without her best friend, without the woman she’s grown to love more than she ever thought possible to love another who wasn’t family.

“I—Thank you.”

Lena sighs almost imperceptibly at that, reaching again for her wine glass, gaze still fixed steadfastly on the blood-red wine, the sleek leather cushion between them, anything and everything that isn’t Kara—it feels like a sucker punch to the gut.

“Is that all?” Lena asks coolly after a spell, and Kara blinks, her mind reeling at the sudden shift in gears.

“Wh-What?” Kara stutters out like an idiot, and Lena’s jaw tightens even whilst she swirls the glass almost absentmindedly in hand, seemingly undeterred by Kara’s befuddlement.

“Well,” Lena says, turning to fix Kara with a penetrating stare that seems to quite literally burn through her with every passing moment, “that’s what you came here for, isn’t it?”

Kara, for her part, merely stares, utterly flabbergasted—and, to make matters worse, all she can seem to focus on in even the vaguest of senses is the way the soft yellowy light falls so gently upon Lena’s alabaster skin, the way it makes her intelligent green eyes sparkle in the most enchanting of ways, the way each shadow traces the elegant lines of her features. Each sculpted dip and curve is like a work of art Kara would be happy to spend the remainder of her life observing, studying each hollow and tender edge, memorizing every inch of the beauty before her until she’s satisfied she’ll never forget, not in this life or the next or the next after that.

But, she’s getting distracted, she knows (Can you blame her?), because Lena’s heartbeat is quickening in her ears and she’s biting her lower lip—not in the sexy way (though Kara still can’t
help but find it insanely attractive), but in the sense such that Kara knows she’s doing her very best not to cry, and the glassy sheen in her eyes is only further confirmation of that.

She has to fix this—fast.

“L-Lena, I—No. Rao, no, that’s not why I came,” she gets out in an inelegant rush, stumbling over her words—but she doesn’t care, she doesn’t care, she doesn’t care, not when Lena is here and Kara can feel her breaking, shattering all over again like the 9-year-old child she met just days ago who wholeheartedly believed through good times and bad that no one would ever want her by their side, not as a friend and most certainly not as anything more.

(Kara knows it’s going to be hard, knows that Lena’s going to be angry and sad and insecure in the wake of everything that’s happened—but, that’s okay. It’s okay, because Kara’s never leaving her again, not so long as Lena will have her.

She’s seen a piece of Lena’s hurt, even if it is just a fraction of the overwhelming emotion Kara knows Lena hides deep inside—she’s seen it, and she’s not leaving.

She thinks, throughout everything, that that’s all that Lena’s ever really been afraid of, little or not: someone seeing who she’d been, who she’s become, the sheer dysfunction she’d been born into since the age of 4, and deciding that it isn’t worth it. That she isn’t worth it.

Well, Kara decides, she can be scared all she wants—she can hide and lash out and doubt herself at every turn, because Kara knows she can’t help that; Kara knows she’s not going to fix that by telling Lena she trusts her, or that she wants her, or even that she loves her.

Lena had to grow a little crooked in order to grow at all, because Lillian and the rest of them made damn sure she couldn’t just love and be loved like all the other kids who got parents that cared, even if they weren’t perfect; they made damn sure that it’d be a million times harder to give love and receive it in return, that Lena wouldn’t quite know where or how to begin on either front, that even the prospect of affection would be so profoundly unfamiliar, she’d learn to avoid it altogether out of a fear that wasn’t even hers to begin with.

And, that’s okay, even if Lena thinks it’s actually the farthest thing from it… because, Kara’s starting to understand now.

She’s starting to understand the little ways Lena shows that she cares, the things she won’t say and
the things she will that have to be translated a million times over because her “Thank you”s and “I miss you”s and “Please”s mean a great deal more than everyone else will ever realize… she’s just gotten that freaking good at hiding herself, Kara supposes.

But, with her, it’s going to be different. They’re going to be different.

Kara will see to that.)

“I came because I care about you,” Kara tells her even as the devotion she feels for Lena threatens to swallow her whole, feelings of adoration and affection and love swelling in her chest until she physically aches with the magnitude of it all. “Okay? Because I care, and I haven’t been able to focus all day ‘cause I’ve been so worried about you. Lena, the truth is, you could tell the world my secret tomorrow and I’d still be here, checking in and making sure that you’re okay.”

Lena quirks a single brow at that, blinking rapidly to combat the tears, wine glass still firmly in hand. “You wouldn’t be mad?”

Kara chuckles, leaning further into the couch and just staring at the way Lena’s mussed jet-black hair falls so breathtakingly atop her shoulders, the tired yet amused twinkle in her ridiculously green irises, the overarching beauty of someone who’s not even trying to be pretty (even if Lena does that incomparably well) or demure or gentle but is just the same… and, truly, that’s the way Kara loves her; it just is, and she’s not sure there’s any sequence of words in any language that would say it better.

“I’d be hurt, probably, and maybe even a little upset,” Kara admits, giving Lena the softest of smiles and reveling in the wide-eyed consideration she gets in return. “Rao knows I’d probably have to track down Alex and make sure she didn’t do anything stupid in retaliation.” That makes Lena’s lips quirk upwards slightly, and Kara’s smile instantly widens at the sight of it. “But, I’d still care about you, you know? I’d still want to know that you’re okay, even if you didn’t want to be close anymore.”

“I do,” Lena mumbles hoarsely without a moment’s hesitation, her eyes coming up to meet Kara’s, pale cheeks slightly flushed—Kara feels her heart skip a beat. “I don’t… I don’t wan’ you to go,” she finishes quietly, sounding so young all of a sudden in the way she doesn’t quite articulate the ‘t’ in ‘want,’ and Kara wonders briefly if she’s still feeling little sometimes, if there’s a bit of adult Lena still subconsciously clinging to the 9-year-old version of her who took her place not too long ago.

Either way, that’s a conversation for another day.
“You should get some sleep,” she entreats (even if it is only quarter to 8), her voice scarcely above a whisper.

Lena nods blearily, ducking her head and rubbing at her eyes with her free hand—she doesn’t flinch when Kara deftly takes the near-empty wine glass from her and settles it mildly upon the coffee table; that’s more than enough to let her know just how tired Lena is, just how well she’s managed to hide it up until now.

(Rao, she can’t help wanting to reach a point where Lena’s not so scared anymore, where she doesn’t think she has to hide… because, really, she doesn’t. Not with Kara.)

“Will ’ou stay?” Lena mumbles out, eyelids droopy as she sinks even further into the cushions, not making a single move to get up. “Jus’… Jus’ for the nigh’?”

“Always,” she murmurs back on instinct, her breath catching in her throat as Lena lets out an adorable yawn. “You gonna get up, Lee? Or, are you too sleepy?”

Lena exhales slowly, eyelids fluttering shut, her body growing limp against the sofa cushions. “’oo far,” she grumbles with the slightest crinkle of her nose, already burrowing her face comfortably into her arm—Kara thinks she’s never seen (nor will she ever see) something so thoroughly precious in her entire life.

Kara huffs out a soft laugh, already getting to her feet and approaching the nearly-sleeping figure of her best friend with quiet steps.

“Can I carry you?” she questions gently, but Lena just makes the most darling sound that’s halfway between a mewl and a purr, her breaths gradual and heavy as she slumps further into the couch —Rao, she’s adorable, Kara thinks.

Smiling widely to herself, she curls an arm beneath Lena’s bare knees and her back as considerately as she can manage, taking the unconscious woman's pliable body into her arms with scant difficulty; her heart seems to burst within her chest as Lena unwittingly settles in Kara’s embrace with the faintest of contented sighs, her body warm and docile against Kara’s, the two of them fitting so perfectly together in every sense of the word.

Kara didn’t used to believe in soulmates—and, honestly, she’s still not so sure that she does.
But, there’s something about the way Lena breathes out another of those adorable unconscious purrs as Kara’s placing her gently in her bed, as she brings up the eggshell-white duvet to cover Lena’s slender body fully in benevolent warmth, as she soundlessly slides beneath the covers to join her and Lena sighs so happily when Kara pulls her kindly into her arms—it feels too perfect; pre-destined, in a way.

Kara can’t help but think that maybe they were meant for this—that maybe, just maybe, she has a soulmate, and that that soulmate’s name is Lena Luthor.

She doesn’t think she’s ever wanted to believe something so desperately in her entire life.

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Chapter End Notes

tyen're so soft and i just sldfkjsdlkfjdlkfd
a feeling of discontent (pov alex)

Chapter Summary

Just a little update on how Alex is doing in the wake of everything.

(Hint: not super well, understandably.)

Chapter Notes

just a short update - thanks for all the comments on the last chapter!! life has been absolutely insaNe so i haven't really had the time to look thru and respond to them quite yet but just know they literally mean the world to me and i'm gonna try and get around to doing that as soon as possible

i'm in the start of orientation at my college rn, so things are still really really crazy, but i did wanna get this update out

hope you like:)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Things feel strange back at the DEO… or, really, perhaps more accurately, Alex feels strange.

Lena Luthor’s back to her relatively stoic 26-year-old self; she’s fixed, for lack of a better term.

But, still, there’s something Alex can’t shake.

She’d hoped (perhaps foolishly so) that she could distance the two within her mind, little Lena and bigger Lena, so that if (when) bigger Lena came back, she wouldn’t be left feeling like… like… like little Lena isn’t gone, because she sees a larger piece than she’d like to admit of that 9-year-old little girl in the pale-faced and shell-shocked woman who took her place.

It also doesn’t quite help that 26-year-old Lena walked off still wearing Alex’s clothes, even if said clothes are just a run-of-the-mill pair of athletic shorts and a standard DEO T-shirt she probably has a dozen more of within her closet at home.

But, she thinks that the very worst of it comes in those eyes—ridiculously green, bearing an
intelligent gleam that’s just as impressive as it is daunting, and yet still filled with a remarkable sense of sadness and devastation far beyond her years.

Before, Alex didn’t see it—couldn’t see it, really.

She didn’t know that the darkened tint in jade-green irises represented a lifetime’s worth of unsolicited insults and backhanded compliments and far more abuse (physical and otherwise) than any child should ever have to endure. Ever.

She didn’t know that Lena’s endless snark, the infuriating aura of confidence she positively radiated, even that deadly red-painted smirk of hers—she didn’t know that it was all a front, a well-constructed facade of determined resoluteness that did a rather thorough job of concealing the sheer brokenness and long-suffering resilience sequestered so innately within the very core of her being.

She didn’t know, because she didn’t have a reason to—but, now, whether she likes it or not, she’ll never be blind to it ever again.

She picks up on every tell of little Lena’s that have only become increasingly obscure with time—the slight tremble in her lower lip, the uncertainty and doubt lingering in those impossibly green eyes, the ramrod-straight posture that Alex can only guess came from a lifetime of wicked conditioning under Lillian Luthor’s heavy-handed “supervision.”

Lena sits there, wearing nothing more than a brave face and a pair of Alex’s DEO-symbol-emblazoned pajamas, and it almost physically hurts Alex to notice her pain, to well and truly see her ingrained discomfort for exactly what it is, to know that she’s hurting and not be able to do a goddammed thing about it.

She knows it’s been a while since Lena’s eaten, but she doesn't ask for food, and Alex knows why.

She sees the poorly-concealed flash of utter panic that overtakes Lena’s chilly features when J’onn tells her she’s spent the past week de-aged into the nine-year-old version of herself—and, she knows that Lena’s terrified of what she told them while she was little, scared beyond words can say of just how much she’d unwittingly revealed, and God, but Alex just wants to wrap her in a tight hug so she knows that she’s okay now, that she’s safe, that things are better and she never has to be alone ever again.

But, she can’t—she can’t because 26-year-old Lena Luthor has never been a friend of hers, has
never been someone Alex spared the time of day for, not like the little nine-year-old Lena Luthor who stole Alex’s battered heart and still has yet to give it back. (Alex still isn’t sure she ever will.)

She hasn’t earned the right to be Lena’s friend, her protector—she was a callous dick before she knew how much pain Lena carried through it all, suspicious and cold for all the wrong reasons because she’s always let her protective instincts towards Kara dictate most (if not all) her demeanor towards others.

She loves Kara more than anything, more than life—but, she loves Lena now, too, more than she ever thought she could, and Lena deserves a hell of a lot better than what Alex gave her.

For that, she needs to atone in some way, comport herself in such a way that openly seeks forgiveness, even if big Lena can’t remember why in the world Alex would entreat such a thing from her in the first place.

No, she has to do right by Lena—God knows no one else ever even made an effort to.

And, as for herself?

Well, that doesn’t matter quite so much—maybe she’ll be forgiven, maybe she won’t.

Either way, she looks after her family above all else, and, whatever else she’s feeling right now, Lena Luthor is her family.

(I mean, not to mention, it’s only a matter of time before Kara finally pulls her head out of her ass and tells Lena she’s in love with her… and then, there’ll be dates and anniversaries and probably a wedding, so Alex is pretty sure she’s going to be calling Lena Luthor ‘sister’ a lot sooner than she thinks.)

Alex will never abandon her again.

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“She’s back, huh?” Winn questions gently as the two of them stand side-by-side at the DEO
balcony overlooking the city, and Alex hates that she can feel his overbearingly-worried stare upon her all the while.

(Seriously, she’d come out here for a bout of self-deprecating brooding; she didn’t ask for Santa’s favorite Little Helper to come out poking her endlessly about her feelings.)

“Yeah,” Alex sighs out shortly between gritted teeth, silently praying that Winn will just take the hint and leave.

He doesn’t. (Obviously.)

“Well, shit—maybe miracles really do happen.

Alex feels her anger dissolve like darkness under the far-flung light of dawn, and she promised herself she wouldn’t cry (at least, not today, not until she locked herself in the safety of her home with a bottle of whiskey and a slew of vaguely unsettling documentaries queued up on Netflix to last her well into the early morning) but she feels hot frustrated tears stinging at her eyes all the same because, Fuck.

“I… I miss her, too,” Alex admits softly, hating the way her voice trembles around each word.

“As do I,” comes a stilted voice from behind as a contemplative-looking Brainy steps up to stand on Alex’s other side—and, she can’t help but think that: Seriously, does no one have any respect these days for privacy?

(On the other hand, she’s grateful, in a way—because there’s something admittedly comforting about having the two of them by her side, even if they’re both unequivocal morons who constantly test Alex’s fairly limited self-control in every capacity.)

She’d never admit such a thing, of course.)
“She was a cute kid,” Winn muses next, something like a smile quirking at the edge of his lips, and Alex can’t help but grin a little, too, even in spite of herself.

“The cutest,” she whispers back, and Winn turns to beam at her even as her morose gaze remains fixed upon the well-populated skyline of National City.

“Does she… Does she remember?” Brainy inquires shrewdly, and Alex sighs.

“I’m not sure.”

She sees Winn frown slightly out of her periphery. “What do we do?”

“I am not certain that there is anything to do, in a reasonable sense.”

“But, I… I thought—"

“What? What did you think, Winn?” Alex interjects piercingly before she can stop herself, her frustration threatening to overtake her as it rears its ugly in her chest, incensing her with such a sense of grief and loss and anger she’s sure she’s dangerously nearing complete insanity if it persists for a moment longer—God, it hurts. “Did you think she was gonna stay, become a ward of the DEO?”

Winn’s face falls. “Alex, I—“

“No, Winn, tell me,” she spews furiously, white-hot rage flashing in her eyes as she whirls around to face a scared-shitless-looking Winn. “What exactly was it that you thought? That we were just gonna have a nine-year-old version of Lena fucking Luthor waddling around, running L-Corp and sucking binkies in her spare time—"

“Alex,” Brainy interrupts, a note of warning in his even tone. “Perhaps you should—"

“No, you know, Brainy, you’re right,” Alex quips back without a moment’s hesitation, clenching
and unclenching her fists at her sides in some desperate attempt to quell the rampant fury threatening to swallow her whole. (It doesn't quite work.) “I’m gonna go and do my job,” she spits out towards a forlorn Winn, feeling instant guilt at the visible pain upon his features (though not nearly enough to swallow her pride and apologize), “while you two sit here feeling sorry for yourselves. Let me know when you’re ready to do the same.”

The words taste sour and bitter and wrong coming off her tongue; she knows she’s overstepped, knows she’s crossed a line here but she really really can’t find it in herself to care in any sense, not when big Lena walked off hours ago and left Alex broken and grief-ridden and feeling like a piece of her has been forcibly ripped from her very being—so, she doesn’t turn back, doesn’t allow a hint of indecision show upon her face as she turns sharply on her heel and strides back into the mindless foray of chattering DEO agents and projected mission-efficiency calculations and everything else she can’t be bothered to care about right now, leaving a speechless Brainy and a crestfallen Winn in her wake.

God, she needs a drink.

Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ

Chapter End Notes

*sigh* the ANGST
love, kara (pov lena)

Chapter Summary

Lena wakes to an empty bed.

Things devolve from there.

Chapter Notes

ok i knoW this is a super short update and i apologize for that buT i wanted to have kara’s pov for when lena finds out about lex sooooo

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Lena wakes feeling strange—untethered. Small. Too small.

Which, perhaps the feeling itself is not all that unfamiliar to begin with, because she’d always felt tiny and cold and alone within the scarcely decorated bedroom of hers that had always housed a truly massive California King with flawless fleece-white sheets and a billowy $3,000 dollar comforter to match… and yet, still, there’s something more about it. Something unprecedented.

Something that scares the ever-living shit out of her.

It’s as if… it’s as if she doesn’t quite fit, in some way (even as she knows that that’s among the most ridiculous thoughts she’s ever deigned to have), because she knows she’s not small anymore, knows that she is big and alive and here—she knows all this, because it’s inhabiting the forefront of her mind like a self-sustaining migraine unlike any other she’s ever known, and yet somehow, the sorrow is stronger.

Somehow, it doesn’t matter that she’s not at Luthor Mansion in Metropolis anymore, or that she hasn’t seen Lex in what feels like forever; it doesn’t matter now that she’s big because her worries are bigger, and that’s more than enough to leave her feeling small and inconsequential and diminutive beyond her years.

Really, she’d probably have lain there just shy of forever, merely basking in the distress and turmoil and unrest taking her discombobulated body by storm—but, something brings her back; Kara brings her back.
Well, not Kara exactly—but, the scent of her, anyhow.

It’s difficult to describe, that feeling of purpose and obstinance and urgency that descends like a prayer from on high, smelling of peaches and spearmint and evergreen trees and pulling her oh-so-gently back down to Earth, to the reality that now seems so impossibly foreign to her after what feels like years of preternatural purgatory trapped thoroughly amidst the undergrowth.

What’s more, she can’t decide whether or not the feeling itself is heavenly or just indubitably cruel, because she finds herself reaching out on more of an instinct than anything else, spanning the cool sheets beside her and weakening her limbs inexplicably when she finds nothing but emptiness.

Kara was here, she knows; she’s not simply imagining things. (Though, truthfully, she wouldn’t put it past herself, at this point.)

Kara was here, and endlessly warm, and larger than life in that way that only Kara ever seems to be—and now she’s gone.

(Lena doesn’t know why she’s surprised.)

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She finds a post-it note taped haphazardly to the fridge later on; it reads ‘Hey, Lee—Sorry I had to go. Chemical fire downtown. Wait for me? Love, Kara.’

(She doesn’t know if it’s the familiarity that gets her, or maybe Kara’s ever-flippant use of the world ‘love’—either way, it rips through Lena’s heart like a bullet to the chest.)

And, yet, she waits—she settles down upon the firm seat cushions of her leather couch with a generous glass of Moscato wine (even if it is 10:04 in the morning, and even if her stomach clenches painfully with every minute she spends unrepentantly denying herself any kind of solid sustenance), and, she waits.

And waits.
She checks her phone a couple of times, an all-too-familiar feeling of profound *shame* curling in her gut as she scrolls through an entirely overwhelming barrage of notifications from the past week, which includes multiple very insistent (and rather unprofessional) e-mails from an exhaustively ill-mannered Morgan Edge—and, maybe it’s the shock, or the post-traumatic stress of it all, but she can’t brush it all off. Not like she used to.

(Though, heaven knows she didn’t do all that great a job of ‘brushing it off’ in the first place—the trail of empty wine bottles she always left trailing behind her are proof of that.)

No, this time, it just *hurts*.

It hurts like the glazed-over look in Lionel’s eye as Lena begged him to love her when no one else would, like the sting of Lillian’s wedding ring tearing through the skin of her cheek as a punishment for daring to exist, like a sordid nightmare she scarcely remembers having where Lex didn’t love her anymore.

(Because, really, she can lose everything—she can lose Lillian, and Lionel, and every trace of the familial love she’d craved since the very start from those who would never spare her the barest hint of it… but, not him. *Never* him.)

It’s that final thought that breaks her, that shatters her into a million tiny little pieces until she’s reaching for her phone and finding Lex’s contact and hitting the highlighted blue ‘call’ button before she can think better of it—because Kara’s gone and Lena’s waiting and Kara’s *gone* and she’s not quite sure how else to keep some semblance of control without something she knows, someone she *loves* on the other end of the line telling her it’s all going to be okay (even if she doesn’t quite believe it).

(It’s probably for the best that Kara’s gone, if she’s being honest with herself—it’s not as if she’d ever love Lena back in the first place.)

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Chapter End Notes

lena n lex rlly coulda been those iconic binches huh
lex (pov kara)

Chapter Summary

Kara comes back to a distraught Lena... they talk it out (sort of).

Chapter Notes

shEEsh ok so we back after a hot minute

super super sorry and like. definitely can't guarantee that that won't be happening again

i just started college and had like a spectacularly shitty time (seriously, i could probably publish a book series titled 'a series of unfortunate events' detailing exactly what's gone down, and mr. lemony snicket himself wouldn't even bother to sue my ass for copyrighting.. he'd prolly just hand me a tissue instead and be like "u good ?")

and then all of that was followed promptly by various mental breakdowns 'cause i'm having trouble getting access to my antidepressants and a whooole lotta other stuff

buT i made myself sit down and do this and plus i wanted to get back into the whole writing thing so

here we are

hope u like?

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The chemical fire turns out to be significantly less problematic than Kara had originally feared—blessedly devoid of any notably pissed off rogue aliens, already contained to a certain degree courtesy of the ever-hardworking National City Fire Department, and only really requiring Supergirl’s help in the sense that her freeze breath and flight capabilities did the job to quell the fire a great deal quicker than any human resource could otherwise.

On the whole, it takes about 10-20 minutes, and another half hour or so for Kara to check in with J’onn at the DEO (though she takes note of the fact that Alex isn’t there to greet her as she usually is)—then, satisfied with the current relative safety of her city, she flies back to Lena’s.

It’s a route she knows like the back of her hand (though she’ll never admit it to anyone who isn’t Alex, Eliza, or possibly Lena herself), and she instinctually checks out along the way, choosing instead to focus in on the erratic beat of Lena’s heart, the soft trill of her phone, the voice-automated AI that informs her “We’re sorry. Lex Luthor is not available for call at this time.
Please try your call again, or leave a—“

Lex Luthor.

Kara nearly falls out of the sky upon the realization that Lena is currently attempting to call him, the one who’d tried to have her assassinated on countless different occasions, the one Kara knew damn well didn’t deserve even an iota of forgiveness from Lena after everything he’d done to spite her—What in Rao’s name is Lena doing calling him right now?

She lands upon the familiar minimalistic-styled stone balcony with a resounding crack!—she’ll apologize later, she thinks, and maybe try to fix it (though she knows Lena will never accept her money), but in the space of less than a second she’s booking it inside (with a slight burst of superspeed) and zeroing in on an unrepentantly drunk Lena Luthor slumped haphazardly upon her scarcely-used matte-black leather sofa, something strange stealing the very breath from Kara’s lungs at the sight of it—at the sight of her.

She’s changed since they saw each other last: gone is the charcoal-black oversized DEO tee and running shorts, replaced instead by a burgundy sweatshirt emblazoned with the letters ‘MIT’ in all white across the chest and tiny grey cotton shorts that has Kara’s fingers twitching at her sides in some desperate desire to touch, to feel Lena’s warmth beneath her fingertips, to take the woman she’s loved since the very start of it all in her arms and hold her close, so close that neither of them will ever want for anything more—because, maybe it’s taken the two of them a while, and maybe they’ve spent too long missing each other for all the wrong reasons but Rao, they’re here now and heck if it isn’t beyond magical and really, Kara never could’ve imagined a better reconciliation.

Lena has her phone clutched loosely in her hand, its dimly-lit screen illuminating the sharp lines of her angular features, bare knees curled up to her sweater-clad chest—Rao, she’s ethereal, Kara thinks.

“Lena,” Kara calls out softly as she approaches, terrified to startle her—Lena doesn’t twitch, doesn’t move in response, just stares listlessly off ahead in the distance like she’s not quite there, like she never has been.

The sight of it has Kara’s heart dropping nauseatingly into her stomach.

“Lena,” she repeats again when she’s a couple paces closer, close enough that she could reach out and touch Lena if she wanted to, and every fibre of her being practically itches for her to do just that—still, Lena doesn’t move a single muscle, and Kara’s sure she’s never felt so useless in her entire life.
It seems like it takes just short of forever, seems like Kara’s left waiting on the precipice of utter inanity for far longer than she can bear, but eventually, Lena speaks: “Lex won’t pick up.” (It breaks Kara’s heart.)

And, to that, Kara’s not sure how to respond—really, she doesn’t know quite where she’d even begin, and she can’t decide if it’s a relief or just an unequivocal sign of further trouble when Lena continues on anyhow without waiting for a reply on Kara’s part.

“He always picked up for me, even when he was angry. *Always,* I—“ she stops herself then, her voice crackling audibly with heart wrenching tears as she turns to look at Kara beneath the low light with wide desperation-filled eyes. “Why won’t he answer?”

“Lena… “ Kara trails off, swallowing her despair with a muted gulp! and praying she doesn’t choke on it.

“I need him, Kara—do you understand?” Lena’s voice wavers even more noticeably then, and Kara thinks she can literally *feel* her own heart splintering further in her chest at the sound of it. "I can’t *do* this without him.”

The room is silent for a protracted, wholly heartbreakingly moment—really, Kara isn’t quite sure that she’s ever been so thoroughly at a loss in her entire life.

“Y-You can do this, Lena,” she assures as forcefully as she can… but it feels weak, half-hearted, even to her own ears. “You don’t *need* him—“

“The hell I don’t,” Lena snaps with tear-filled eyes, unpainted lower lip trembling, desperation roiling off her inelegantly slumped figure in cumbrous waves. “I want him *back,* Kar. I *need* him, *so damnit,* where *is* he?”

Kara just stares blankly back in response to that, jaw slack, wholeheartedly taken aback—and, something interesting happens: Lena *falters.*

The frustration fades (if only slightly) from her regal features, shoulders shrinking—suddenly, she looks almost… scared, and Kara can’t for the life of her understand why.
“I—I’m sorry, I—“ Lena fumbles uncharacteristically over her words, her posture wrought with a palpable degree of novel uncertainty. “I know I’m not meant to swear, and I’m sorry, I just—I just miss him, okay?” she entreats—pleads, almost, watery green eyes wide as they look beseechingly up at a flabbergasted Kara in the low light—and Rao, they’re a mere inches away, but here, now, in this moment, Kara swears they’ve never been so far apart. “I… I’m sorry, an-and I promise I’ll never do it again, I—“

“Lena, you… why are you apologizing?” Kara is asking before she can think better of it in a blatantly dumbfounded tone of voice, her brain struggling to comprehend what exactly is happening right now, how Lena can be wine drunk and frowning and so indubitably Lena but also so inexplicably young at the same time, like maybe the traumatized 9-year-old kid who’d seen a heck of a lot more suffering than she should have and apologized for everything and cuddled snugly into Kara’s chest to fall asleep wasn’t quite so far gone as Kara initially thought.

“Wh-What?” Lena questions cautiously, a far-away look in wide evergreen eyes that births the strangest sense of déjà vu so deep in the pit of her stomach she fears it may never leave—and, still, Lena looks up at her with a certain childlike naïveté that’s so terribly far removed from the snarky and endlessly confident woman she knows…

And Kara loves everything about her, loves her—wholly, exhaustively, unconditionally.

(She doesn’t quite know what she’s meant to do with that particular culmination.)

She’s so lost in that—in that feeling of complete and utter adoration swelling uncontrollably in her chest, spreading warmly through her veins like the most pleasant kind of fire, whispering to her everything she’s long since known (but had been so far from ready to accept) from the very start: that Lena is it for her, now and forever; that Kara will spend a lifetime waiting for her if that’s what she needs; that Rao help her but she’ll move freaking mountains for the chance to love Lena the way she’s always deserved since long before her brilliant mind even knew the meaning of the word, because Lena’s happiness means more to her than any permutation of words in any language could ever reasonably articulate, and she’s quite certain that little else will ever come even remotely close in its intrinsic grandeur.

She’s so lost in it that she doesn’t register the way Lena’s looking at her, all lost and forlorn and the barest hint expectant, like she’s waiting for Kara to tell her that she’s not alone anymore, that she never has been since the day she came to National City for the very first time.

“Kara?” she questions, so quietly that even Kara’s preternatural ears strain to hear it, a single tear tracing down her alabaster cheek, and Kara can’t help but internally kick herself a million times for being so freaking stupid.
“Yes, Lee?” she hums while slowly inching nearer and nearer towards Lena’s seated figure, telegraphing each and every movement and focusing intently on Lena’s wrecked features for even the slightest hint of discomfort as she carefully lowers herself atop the cushions, placing herself in position with an even foot or so of space betwixt herself and Lena.

Lena sniffles, biting her lower lip and eyeing Kara with a nervous, tear-filled gaze.

“He’s gone, isn’t he?” she whispers out after a long, protracted moment of silence, and Kara thinks she can feel her heart breaking in her chest all over again for the woman she loves, for the cataclysmic nature of Lena’s past, for the tragedy-ridden child that loved her elder brother so much more intensely than he ever deserved. “And he isn’t coming back.”

Kara swallows hard, hating the dread she feels blooming unbidden beneath her ribcage at what she’s about to say, about the magnitude of what it’ll mean. “Yeah, Lee,” she manages, her voice rough and strained. “He’s not gonna come back.”

Lena doesn’t respond but simply nods slowly as Kara’s words settle in the charged space between them, tears sliding down both pale cheeks, lower lip trembling like a lone tree in a devastating thunderstorm—Kara aches for her, for the 9-year-old Lena that didn’t have a single clue how much freaking worse things would get, for the altogether wounded way adult Lena clings to each fractured piece of herself in the wake of personal tragedy.

“I miss him,” Lena admits, quiet and hesitant, ducking her head ever so slightly as a slight pinkish tinge spreads across her pale tear-stained cheeks. (Kara can’t help but find it absolutely adorable.)

“I know.”

“But… But it’s gonna be okay,” Lena murmurs, lifting her tentative watery gaze to meet Kara’s own, “right?”

“Yeah,” Kara acquiesces. (She’s never felt like such a liar.) “Yea, it is.”

“Promise?”
Kara nearly chokes on her reply: “Promise.”

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Chapter End Notes

pls dont hate me for this slkdfjffslkdfjl
pinky promise pt. 2 (pov alex)

Chapter Summary

Alex drinks, talks with Lena, and humors the possibility that maybe, just maybe, she might have a bit of an alcohol problem.

Chapter Notes

things went reeeaaaaal shitty at home (which is kind of impressive considering i had only been here for like 22hours before things took a nosedive), but i guess that's probably a good thing for my writing, cause it means that i'll be doing a lot more of it! so yay for that, i guess?

also my best friend told me that i bore a remarkably close resemblance to the soft-shelled turtle (complete with picture references, because she's thoughtful like that), and now i dont know what to do with this information now that i have it

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Alex is beginning to think that maybe, just maybe, J’onn and Kara and every other goddamned person who plucked up the nerve to tell her “You kind of have a drinking problem” might have been just the tiniest bit (or a lot a bit) right… But, as it is, she’s alone in her apartment and more than halfway through a moderately expensive bottle of Breckenridge bourbon she’d been saving for a rainy day (which, now seems as good a time as ever), and the dense veracity of that rather loaded claim is somewhat lost on her amidst the heavy haze of intoxication currently clouding her frenzied thoughts.

Her conscious train of thought flows freely now (albeit quite nonsensically so), and that makes everything appear just the tiniest bit softer around the edges, even if what precious little remainder of control she’s managed to retain throughout it all feels as if it's slipping through her trembling fingers far too quickly for her to have the remotest fucking chance of getting it back.

She knows this, though—that she can’t have both. She always has.

She can’t exist within that euphoric (yet oh-so-uniquely depressing) state of incoherency dangling from her oscillating consciousness by a proverbial thread, where the lights blur and the room spins and her body sways treacherously amidst it all but she’s not scared to fall anymore, not so long as she can’t remember for the life of her why she ever was.
She can’t exist there, where things are murky and light and yet somehow impossibly heavy at the same goddamned time—not without sacrificing that carefully-constructed illusion of control she clings to so desperately throughout every passing day, because quite honestly, she’s becoming increasingly afraid it's something she won’t be able to live without.

(Well, that, and alcohol. A lot of alcohol.)

But temporarily, even if only for the most fleeting of moments, she can exist here, where one thing bleeds inexplicably into another and reality seems to loosen its iron-clad hold… where she doesn’t have to suspend her grief any longer under the actuality that she’s grieving for someone she never held any claim over in the corporeal sense; someone who was never hers to grieve in the first place.

Here she can be upset—despondent, even, and maybe it’s delusional but it doesn’t feel quite so uncalled for any longer; that’s worth more to Alex than any semblance of sensibility she’s managed to retain throughout the years, no matter how dire.

So, she’s sitting there: alone in her apartment, sprawled across the sofa cushions, lights switched off save for a single lamp sitting atop her bedside table that casts a mild amber haze over everything… and, her phone rings—her personal phone, not the antiquated device she uses for any and all DEO emergencies.

It buzzes and buzzes and buzzes until she’s become far too irate to just let it go to voicemail, if not for her own sanity then for the sake of the possibility that this person (whoever they were) might see fit to call again despite Alex’s decidedly sour mood; letting out a frustrated huff of air, she grabs the phone with noticeably less proficient hands (undoubtedly impaired by the alcohol) and holds it up to her ear, growling out a grumpy “What do you want?” when she’s answered the call.

The audible hesitancy in the broken voice on the other end instantaneously has her regretting it: “A-A-Alex?”

Lena.

Alex not-so-politely entreats her Uber driver (a friendly and soft-spoken man named Namaan who
most certainly didn’t ask for this) to break a million different traffic laws in her haste to get to Lena’s penthouse as soon as humanly possible (according to a near hysterical Lena, Kara had flown off to take care of the latest Supergirl emergency downtown, so calling Kara to assist her wasn’t an option)—but, really, she can’t be bothered with politeness, not when all her greater inhibitions are so exquisitely dulled by a perhaps inadvisable amount of bourbon, not when Lena’s all alone and desperate for her help, not when Alex has a chance to comfort the adorable little girl who’s become family to her since everything fell apart and they all scattered so impossibly far apart.

She passes Lena’s doorman in the lobby, sparing him a nod as she speed-walks briskly into the elevator, hitting the button emblazoned with the letters ‘PH’ in golden font; it lets her out on the top floor, two silver doors parting to allow Alex to sprint out upon the marble floors of the ornate hall and thump her fists frantically against the single door of Lena’s apartment.

She pauses her frenzied blows when she hears Lena’s defeated voice coming through the wooden door, telling her “It’s open”—she pauses for a split second before clawing at the door handle and wrenching it open with a firm grip, marching resolutely through to see—

Lena.

She’s there, crumpled defeatedly upon the plush back leather cushions of her unquestionably overpriced ottoman (much like Alex herself had been not longer than an hour ago) in an oversized burgundy ‘MIT’ sweatshirt, short grey cotton shorts and bare feet, gazing listlessly off into the distance as if she’s… lost, almost. Overcome.

(Alex’s heart breaks for her.)

“Lena?” she questions, approaching with hesitant steps, her boots sounding rhythmically upon the hardwood.

Lena doesn’t turn to acknowledge her presence.

“Lena, honey?” she tries again (she scarcely notices the term of endearment as it falls from her lips), her voice a hair’s breadth above a whisper, unwilling to take the chance that she might startle the poor girl, especially as she draws ever closer. “Lena?”

She’s careful as she sits just beside the indifferent girl upon the sofa, wincing internally when Lena flinches at the sudden change; but, she doesn’t make a move to get up, doesn’t try and escape—
Alex supposes that that’s as good a sign as any.

“Lena, darling, can you talk to me?” Alex pleads, the hysteria rising in her chest and crawling into her throat until she’s terrified it’ll choke her if she’s not careful. (She notices it this time—the tender familiarity in that whispered ‘darling’ as it escaped her like second nature; she’s not quite sure how to feel about it, honestly, even as she isn’t quite sure she’ll be able to stop herself from doing it all over again if it means she has the chance to make Lena smile again, to make her laugh, to set those familiar green eyes alight with joy just as Alex had managed to do amidst those painfully fleeting moments while Lena was a child.) “Can you tell me what’s wrong?”

Lena seems to come to herself, then, a brief flicker of awareness sparking in lifeless verdant eyes as she turns to look at Alex, something entirely unreadable settling in her broken gaze all the while. “A-Alex?”

“Yes, Lena?”

Lena blinks, wide green eyes glimmering with unshed tears—God, she looks young, Alex thinks. Young enough to be the same terrified little girl who curled herself so comfortably against Alex’s chest in the dark of night, the same terrified little girl that Alex had grown to love far sooner than she’d ever expected despite everything within her very being screaming that she shouldn’t. “Is it really you?”

Alex swallows thickly, willing herself not to cry, trying desperately to tell herself that this isn’t the Lena she knew, that this isn’t the same 9-year-old girl she lost just days ago whose absence grates on her like a fucking hole in her heart, one she’s scared won’t ever mend itself before she goes. “Yes, darling girl, it’s really me.”

“W-Why’d you leave?” Lena asks then, lower lip trembling, watery green eyes glimmering in the low light, and Alex thinks she can feel her heart breaking all over again in her chest. “And—And why do you smell like that?”

Alex’s stomach drops. “Like what?”

Lena leans ever-so-slightly closer until she’s inches away, sniffing delicately around Alex, brows furrowed. “Like… Like that brownish stuff Daddy used to drink.” Is she regressing? Alex wonders incredulously, practically hitting herself internally for not having seen it before. “It always made him so grumpy and… and mean.”
“I—I’m so, so sorry, honey,” Alex manages to get out, her words thick as her eyes burn with tears.
“I—I didn’t mean to leave you alone, I—I promise.”

(She doesn’t acknowledge the other part, the part where Lena could smell the alcohol on her; she
prays that Lena will be kind enough let it go.)

Lena nods at that, eyes wide with a vulnerability Alex would recognize anywhere in little Lena, so
she supposes it isn’t all that surprising that she’s recognizing it here, now—even after that smaller,
more fragile Lena left with a not-so-small piece of Alex’s heart (whatever’s left of it, anyhow), and
Alex knows damn well she isn’t ever coming back.

(She sort of is, though, right now—back, that is.

Alex wonders if that’s a permanent development.)

“I believe you,” she murmurs out in a voice that’s so unmistakably small and young, it makes
Alex’s chest clench with pain—God, this hurts. “But, um… A-Alex?”

Alex tilts her head, eyeing the girl curiously beside her. “What is it, sweetie?”

“I—I—” Lena hesitates for a moment then, ducking her head and worrying her bottom lip between
her teeth. (Alex thinks she’s never seen anything quite so precious.) “I don’t want you to leave
again.”


“Will you promise me, Alex?” she asks, lifting her chin to catch Alex’s gaze as a tear traces her
pale cheek.

“Sure, honey,” Alex concedes. “I promise.”

“You gotta pinky promise, silly,” Lena informs her as if it’s the most obvious thing on the planet,
already extending her pinky out to a slack-jawed Alex.
“I—Okay.”

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Chapter End Notes

does cute idiots
**reconciliation (pov lena)**

Chapter Summary

Lena talks with both Danvers sisters... sort of.

Chapter Notes

christmas without snow is weird

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Things feel strange when Lena wakes—which isn’t all that unusual a feat, she supposes, considering recent events... but it’s unsettling, nonetheless.

There’s golden sunlight streaming through the floor-to-ceiling windows of her master bedroom and an agonizing hole in her heart she can’t quite remember getting; she can’t help thinking it’s much too early to be feeling this pain, surrounded by heavenly amber luminescence and yet still feeling a powerful ache in her chest far beyond her years, one she’s not sure any force upon this earth will ever manage to mend no matter how vehemently she tries.

There’s something else missing, too—her memories, she thinks, because every semblance of last night is nonexistent when she thinks back to it, and she can’t help the way her chest clenches in fear of what exactly that implies.

She thought she was done with this—forgetting, that is. Existing in a state that seems only semi corporeal in its unapologetically transient nature, oscillating between the woman she’s become (if she can even call herself such a thing) and that terrified little girl she’s sure as all hell she doesn’t want to be any longer because God, she doesn’t want to live like that anymore; she promised herself she’d never have to, not again.

(She’s finding herself increasingly less sure with every passing day that she’ll manage to make good on that promise.)

She feels big now, she thinks. (For some reason—one Lena can’t quite begin to fathom—it’s rather hard for her to tell the difference.) Small, too, of course... but, that’s not anything new.
She’s never felt well and truly *big* as if she fit into this utterly mystifying body of hers, with its smooth curves and gentle hollows and graceful edges that, when conglomerated into the strange being she sees reflected back at herself in the bathroom mirror, doesn’t really feel like hers at all.

She thinks that maybe it never really will, as she crawls out of bed and pads out into the hallway leading to the master suite. She wonders when (or if, more realistically) she’ll begin to make peace with that.

She nearly has a heart attack upon meandering out to the kitchen only to pass by a lightly snoring Alex Danvers passed out in the living room on her way, the older woman’s cheek squished adorably against the leather couch cushions, her trademark scuffed combat boots strewn haphazardly across the hardwood flooring beneath.

Lena finds she really doesn’t have the heart to wake her.

Instead, she patters quietly around the kitchen, allowing her body to run itself through the blessedly mundane routine of putting a pot of coffee on medium heat for later, tidying up the polished marble countertops until they’re spotless once again save for her tablet and a couple loose billing statements for L-Corp’s finances (Lena makes a mental note to sort them out later), cooking a handful of over-easy eggs on the stovetop for the lanky redheaded agent currently snoring upon her sofa.

About midway through scooping coffee grinds into the likely unreasonably expensive coffee-maker machine of hers, she notes that she doesn’t have her phone with her—she must’ve left it back in her room atop the bedside table.

She debates turning back to get it for a moment or two, but ultimately decides it isn’t worth it, not when she knows damn well it’ll only remind her of the brother she lost and the future that could have been and the beautiful golden-haired Super she’s not quite sure she recognizes any longer… no, she’s better off without that. At least, for now.

It’s a little while before Alex Danvers awakens—the golden sun has risen higher in the morning sky amidst the wispy clouds, the fragrant scent of brewing coffee permeates the penthouse, and Lena (unsure of what exactly compels her) can’t stop herself from watching in something of a daze as the agent’s deep exhales grow irregular, consciousness misting over her in gentle currents, eyelids fluttering open in disoriented cognizance to take in her surroundings.

“Morning, Sleeping Beauty,” Lena quips drolly, unable to resist when greeted with the sight of a disheveled Alex Danvers rising to stand unsteadily upon socked feet in her living room, looking for
“Lena,” Alex says, her voice wrought with an uncharacteristic tenderness and something Lena can’t quite place, something that sounds a hell of a lot like… suspicion? Hesitance? “You’re… You’re here.”

“Well, it is my penthouse.”

Alex frowns at that, brown eyes alight with that same indiscernible gleam as she approaches Lena with tentative steps. “How long was I out?”

Lena shrugs. “A while.”

“You were… Are you alright?”

“What is that supposed to mean?”

“I… ” Alex falters, then (so unlike her). “… Nothing.”

“Doesn’t sound like nothing.”

Alex sighs defeatedly, crossing her arms and coming to lean her hip against the countertop. “It doesn’t matter now,” she asserts firmly, breaking Lena’s gaze to affix somewhere off behind her. “Is there enough coffee in that pot for two?”

Lena blinks, thrown for a moment. “Um…. Yes. I—Yes. More than enough.”

Alex gives her a crooked grin, brown-eyed gaze coming up to meet Lena’s (—and for a moment there, it’s like… reconciliation, almost. Like… home). “Good.”
Alex doesn’t stay for long, citing that she should probably be at the DEO helping out with… whatever alien threat was threatening their collective existence this week—Lena acquiesces and lets her go with a tentative smile and a murmured “Be safe,” secretly somewhat grateful for the looming prospect of solitude, affording her time to ponder on…. well, everything, really.

So Alex leaves, then, the only lingering sign she’d stayed the night being the empty coffee mug in the sink and a confusing feeling roiling deep in Lena’s chest that she can’t quite discern… It’s bitter rather than sweet, the overarching sensation of it all, though Lena doesn’t for the life of her understand why.

Fortunately (or unfortunately—she really can’t decide), she’s not left to ponder on it for very long; Kara arrives back only moments later to shake her from her thoughts, touching down upon the balcony with a suppressed thud, the royal blues and reds of her Supergirl garb all too visible through the tinted-glass sliding doors just beyond the living room space.

Then she’s turning to knock awkwardly upon the glass (ever the gentleman) before clasping her hands gawkily at her waist and stilling her clumsy movements in a show of something like patience as Lena looks bemusedly on, unable to keep a begrudging smile off her face at the sight of her.

Lena can’t help the way her heart rate quickens as she draws closer, as Kara’s angelic features gradually come into focus, as they fill Lena’s vision in such a way that it’d be a near impossibility for her to ignore behind tinted one-way glass—God, she really is nothing short of a goddess: standing proud beneath the fiery light of day, all lean muscles and impossibly blue eyes and flowing golden hair set ablaze by the idling sun overhead.

(It’s all more than enough to render Lena feeling rather underdressed, still in her old MIT sweatshirt and cotton grey pajama shorts.)

She’s barely disengaged the lock and begun to slide the glass door open before Kara’s embarking upon a rather impressive ramble (even by her standards), stumbling over her words even as Lena blinks owlishly at her in return, feeling somewhat at a loss when greeted with… well, this.

“Lena! Hi! It’s me, Kara—Well, duh, obviously it’s Kara, ‘cause it’s not like I’d be anyone else, ‘cause that’d be weird, but, like—Shoot, I’m getting off-track here, it’s just—Well, I mean, I guess I-I just kinda wanted to see you again, if that—OhmyRao, is that weird? I didn’t mean that to be weird, I really hope it’s not weird, I just—“
“Kara,” Lena stops her before she can get any further, unable to keep the sheer amusement from showing upon her features. “It’s not weird. I wanted to see you again, too.”

“Oh, thank Rao,” Kara breathes out, heaving a dramatic sigh of relief, cheeks flushed with adrenaline. “I—"

"Why would it be?"

Kara’s brow furrows. “Why would it be what?”

“Weird. You—You said it’d be weird.”

The reddish blush coloring Kara’s cheeks deepens. “Oh. Well, I—I mean, I don’t know, it’s just—Well, I—You… I just missed you, Lee, you know? I missed you… a lot.”

Lena feels a lump building in her throat. “I… I missed you, too, Kara. Would you, um… Would you like to come in?”

“I’d like that.”

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Kara nods slowly at that, looking troubled. “R-Right.”

“She didn’t tell you?”

“She, um… She’s been taking the whole thing pretty hard,” Kara replies distractedly whilst fiddling anxiously with her hands in her lap. “You—well, little you—leaving.” When Lena doesn’t move to remark upon that, Kara steamrolls on, “She took care of you, you know? We both did—”

“I remember,” Lena interrupts flatly, immediately regretting the coldness in her tone the second she sees the lost and almost hurt way Kara looks at her in response. God, she feels like she’s just kicked a puppy. “I—Sorry.”

“It’s okay, Lee. I get it. You’ve been through a lot,” Kara reassures her, lips twitching into something like a smile for the briefest of seconds. (It only serves to make Lena feel all the more guilty.) “Was she, um…. Was she okay? Did you talk to her?”

“I did,” Lena speaks carefully, wrangling internally with just how much she should say even as a not-so-small piece of her yearns to jump at the prospect of redeeming herself in Kara’s eyes, of showing her that she’s trying her very best at a chance for reconciliation, no matter how contorted things have become as of late. “She smelled of alcohol.”

Kara’s eyes flash with something like… regret? Sadness? Enmity? Lena isn’t quite sure. “She was drunk.”

“I didn’t say that, Kar. She was just… I don’t know.”

“Unfocused? Abrasive? Mean?”

Lena shakes her head at that, tamping down upon the sudden urge to reach over and entangle her hand in Kara’s, to feel her warmth and solidity and strength and know beyond a shadow of a doubt that she isn’t going anywhere, not so long as Lena wills her to stay. “No, no… none of those things.”

“Then, what?”
“I can’t remember.”

Kara tilts her head, looking at Lena curiously. “What do you mean, you can’t remember?”

“You know better than anyone that I’m not overly fond of repeating myself, Kara.”

“Right,” Kara acquiesces, a contrite look upon her face. *(God, she’s precious.)* “I’m just thinking… that’s—um, that’s weird, right?”

Lena shrugs. “I think ‘weird’ has rather lost its meaning these days, darling.”

A pinkish flush creeps up Kara’s neck at the term of endearment, and Lena can’t help the way her chest warms at the sight of it. “R-R-R-Right, yes. That.”

“Now, tell me,” Lena hastens to change the topic, desperate to dispel the nervous feeling gathering in her gut, “how are you doing?”

Kara chuckles awkwardly, ducking her head and sheepishly rubbing at the back of her neck—Lena finds herself rather entranced by the sight of lean muscles flexing beneath durable navy blue fabric as she does so, and *God, you need to pull yourself together.* “I, um… I feel like I should be asking you that.”

Lena *tsks*, feeling a familiar ease settling in her bones as a genuine smile curves her lips. “I asked first.”

Kara’s scarlet blush deepens. “Fair enough.”

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Chapter End Notes

hMMmmm so im not sure how i feel about this chapter caus ehhonestly like
should i even write more of this while i still am waiting to binge the most recent season? im not sure tbh

we shall see
“El mayarah,” Lena murmurs then, eyelids sliding shut as she nuzzles her face into the crook of Kara’s neck, her warm breath ghosting across Kara’s collarbone in the most heavenly of ways.

Kara blinks, not quite believing what she’s just heard. “What?”

Lena scoffs quietly… or, attempts to—the exhaustion is clearly taking its toll on her, and it’s more like a weak huff of air than anything else. “You heard me, Supergirl.”

It’s a beautiful day in National City, Kara notes as she flies over Edge Global’s many-storied headquarters (and simultaneously employs a not insignificant amount of willpower to keep from blasting the company’s logo, a bold silver ‘E,’ straight off the hinges from where it sits emblazoned proudly across the upper levels on the southernmost side of the structure)—clear skies, shining sun, a cool breeze… something that, on any other day, might’ve given Kara all the more reason to smile and laugh and stuff her face with all the pizza and potstickers and ice cream she can manage.

Well today, it certainly doesn’t feel like a time for smiling or laughing or eating up all of her favorite foods until she drops. No; today, those cloudless blue skies overhead and pretty rays of warm golden sunlight feel more like some big cosmic joke being played upon her than anything else, the kind of planetary trick that’s the absolute farthest thing from funny because instead, it just hurts. A lot.
It’s misdirected, she knows, but she’s angry with the heavens above for enacting such an audacious ploy; she’s furious with the skies for being clear, with the breeze for blowing so pleasantly, for the very sun overhead which has the nerve to shine like a dazzling beacon without a single cloud to obscure its radiance… that somehow, some way, the world is still turning despite it all, even with everything upside down and screwed up and wrong in a way Kara can scarcely remember enduring since the day upon which she came to Earth for the very first time.

Everything was wrong, then—the skies were blue, the sun was an absolutely blinding effulgence of yellow light (rather than red) in the heavens, and Kara was alone.

And now… well. Now, it’s all the same.

Or—no, perhaps that’s not true: things are not the same.

Thing is, to Kara, right here right now, they certainly feel as if they are.

The skies are blue, Earth’s yellowed sun beams bright overhead more brilliantly than Kara remembers, and the people she loves are hurting so horrifically it seems to have shifted her very world off its axis. And this, too: Kara is alone.

It’s like before, though in many ways it’s entirely new and unfamiliar.

Where before her perceived solitude was a direct byproduct of her ignorance to the existence of those whom she would soon proudly call her family—Eliza, Jeremiah, Alex (and later Winn, James, Lucy, Barry, Lena)—now, that devastating sense of isolation comes as a swift result of this soul-crushing chasmic divide she feels between herself and those she loves, the one that aches inside her as if it might rip her steel heart to shreds at any given moment.

Where before she wasn’t aware of any family she may have to miss (well, beyond the obvious—her mother, her father, Kal-El), she can’t help but be hyperaware of it now—tortured in the knowledge that she has family here, people she’s grown to love more deeply than she ever thought possible in the wake of Krypton’s apocalyptic end, and yet, they may as well be galaxies away, because Kara can’t seem to reach them no matter what she tries.

A click followed by a familiar voice—J’onn—on the D.E.O.-issued comm device in her right ear brings her back: “Supergirl, there’s a situation back at HQ—we could certainly use your help.”
She shuts her eyes, gritting her teeth even as the stiff winds rush soothingly against her skin—it kind of tickles, almost. “Is Alex on her way?”

There’s a brief pause on the other end. “.. Well, yes, she answered the call, but we—"

“Can you make do without me?” she questions urgently, wind whistling in her uncovered left ear.

J’onn’s next response comes more quickly, though it’s wrought with hesitance. “I suppose we could… Are you alright, Supergirl? You—“

“Good,” she interjects tersely, then shuts off her comms with a swift double-tap to the device resting in her inner ear, her attentions somewhat divided as she nears a familiar structure from the skies—Lena’s penthouse on the uppermost floor of her many-storied apartment building, a set of tinted-glass bulletproof doors overlooking its fortified stone balcony, the once-smooth concrete foundation of aforementioned balcony marred with web-like cracks around a circular point of impact: two Supergirl-sized footprints, quite literally etched in stone.

(She hates the borderline-possessive thrill she feels in her chest at the sight of it, at the knowledge that those are her footprints on Lena’s veranda—that every time Lena lays eyes on them, she’ll think of Kara, because they are…

Well. And that’s the very crux of the issue, isn’t it?

Kara doesn’t know what they are—friends? People who used to know each other? … Something more?

Kara knows what she’d like them to be, knows the Lena she sees in her head every time she closes her eyes—the one that curls up in a bed they share asking Kara to hold her, the one that trusts Kara to handle the darkness when she’s a little too lost to do it herself, the one that melts into their embrace like it’s home and nuzzles her face into Kara’s neck like there’s nobody else around and shares every last jagged piece of herself like she isn’t afraid any longer, because she knows that Kara will love her anyways.

She can only hope and pray that Lena wants the same.)

She lands (gently, this time) atop the balcony with bated breath (though not before listening in for
Lena’s heartbeat, each pulse slightly accelerated but overall strong, matching her boots to the prints she left fracturing the cement (she makes it something of a game on her way down, aiming for those twin impressions and internally lauding herself when she manages it with relative ease).

She knows that Lena’s there, on the other side of the glass—she can hear her heart beating from the kitchen, can smell the fresh coffee on the counter, can feel the overarching stillness of Lena’s suite in the air upon her fingertips (especially in contrast to the flurry of domestic activity in the floors below).

Inhaling deeply to herself, she awkwardly clears her throat and turns to face the reflection of herself in tinted glass, taking it in with skeptical eyes: the royal reds and blues adorning her slim figure, the crest of El emblazoned proudly upon her chest, the wavy beach-blonde curls tumbling across either shoulder… a beacon of hope (or so she’s told).

(She doesn’t much feel like a beacon of anything at the moment.)

She worries her lower lip anxiously between her teeth as she watches her reflection lift a fist and rap her knuckles gently on the glass, puissant uncertainty filling her chest—moments later, she hears trembling fingers fiddling with the lock and eventually disengaging it with an audible click, then the door is gliding open before her with a quiet whoosh and—

 Here goes nothing.

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So, she’ll save you the explicit details on what exactly started flying out of her mouth as soon as the tinted-glass door slides open and she quite suddenly finds herself met with a truly drool-worthy sight: a gentle-eyed Lena Luthor dressed in a blessedly small pair of cotton grey pajama shorts and a large oversized burgundy-red MIT sweatshirt (that almost reaches low enough to give the illusion that she is in fact not wearing anything on her lower half), her shiny locks of raven-black hair piled haphazardly atop her head in a messy bun, delicate olive-green irises seemingly set ablaze in the blinding afternoon sun… because, yeah, she’ll be the first to admit that it was kind of a mess.

Can you really blame her, though?

Whatever.
Anyways, they’re on the couch in Lena’s living room now (the expensive black leather squeaks when Kara collapses on it), side-by-side overlooking a sleek glass coffee table and unlit fireplace composed near entirely out of Italian marble—she wishes she could revel in it without pause, wishes she could bask in this moment where Lena is at her side and Kara doesn’t feel quite so alone even if only for a moment or two, but Lena’s couch positively reeks of the ocean and patchouli and gun-smoke scent that follows Alex in everything she does, and somehow Kara can’t help but feel betrayed by that (as if she ever had any right to it in the first place).

It’s a deplorably caveman way of thinking about it, but that realization doesn’t stop that horribly jealous place Kara’s head goes at the knowledge that Alex’s mark (her powerful aroma clinging to the leather) is here, too, just like the indentation of Kara’s boots out on the balcony—Rao, it’s stupid and toxic and repulsive but it’s there just the same, building its home deep in Kara’s chest where she fears it might never leave and wow, how she wishes Lena were hers.

(Well, except that Lena doesn’t belong to anyone, and women aren’t property to be owned and even the mere suggestion that Lena could be hers or anyone’s, really, is an inherently flawed and problematic principle rooted in blatantly misogynistic values but—

Look, Kara doesn’t mean it like that, okay? She would never.

Rao, she hopes Lena knows that.)

Still, it isn’t like she’s known for her subtlety (or restraint, for that matter), and it’s really only a matter of time before she finds herself blurting out, “Alex was here,” to an ever-patient Lena as if Lena’s dynamic with Alex is any of her business, adoptive sister or not.

And yet, Lena is nothing but patient, yielding (although the almost guilty expression upon her pretty features has a twinge of raw envy twisting painfully in Kara’s gut). “Yes. She stayed here last night.”

Kara forces herself to nod acquiescently at that, as if it doesn’t bother her. (It kinda does.) “R-Right.”

“She didn’t tell you?”

That hits Kara like a wall of kryptonite, stealing the very breath from her lungs and effecting a borderline painful amount of nervous energy to race throughout her body—she fiddles idly with
her fingers in an attempt to calm her nerves. “She’s, um… She’s been taking the whole thing pretty hard.” She pauses herself then, ducking her head shyly as she continues on: “You—well, little you—leaving. She took care of you, you know? We both did—"

“I remember,” Lena interjects sharply, ice in her tone. (Kara feels like a kryptonite-dipped blade driving through her heart—she does her best not to show it, gritting her teeth and blinking rapidly to stop the tears before they can start and swallowing back the acrid despair threatening to work its way up her throat… but she’s never been all that good at hiding her feelings, particularly where Lena is concerned, and resultanty, she doesn’t think she doesn’t all that well.) “I—Sorry,” she amends hastily (probably in response to the clear show of hurt emotion written all across Kara’s features even despite her best efforts to conceal it), a rare kind of softness creeping into her tone, the very same one Kara hasn’t heard since before Lena became little and then turned herself big again and everything got so horribly complicated along the way.

“It’s okay, Lee. I get it. You’ve been through a lot,” Kara tells her, wringing her hands together nervously in her lap as she pointedly resists the urge to reach out and take Lena’s hand in hers—anything to show her that Kara really means it when she says it’s alright, means it in a way she isn’t quite sure words would ever be enough to articulate no matter how vehemently she tries. (And Rao, how she’ll try. Now and forever, until she knows for damn sure that Lena believes her.) “Was she, um… Was she okay? Did you talk to her?”

Lena hesitates for a moment, then—subtly enough that Kara probably wouldn’t have caught it were she not a) a superpowered alien from space and b) pitifully hypersensitive to Lena’s every word and movement at all times (something she’s long since given up with denying, particularly when she’s never been all that good at lying to begin with).

“I did,” she says, pinkish lips carefully forming each word with notable deliberation—she’s choosing her words carefully, Kara can tell. Even more so than she usually does (because Lena is nothing if not meticulous in most everything she does and says, even with Kara. Even when it’s safe.) “She smelled of alcohol.”

“She was drunk,” Kara murmurs out defeatedly, more a statement than a question.

Lena purses her lips. “I didn’t say that, Kar.” Kara’s heart skips a beat at the shortened form of her name, a sure sign that Lena’s beginning to let her guard down—something of a rarity, even before. “She was just… I don’t know.”

Kara thinks back to every time she played audience to Alex’s decidedly more unpleasant bouts of drunkenness, then guesses the first words that come to mind: “Unfocused? Abrasive? Mean?”
Lena immediately shakes her head at that, and Kara’s chest floods with relief. “No, no… none of those things.”

“Then, what?”

Lena’s brow furrows at that and shakes her head as if to clear it, a faraway look in her beautiful jade-green eyes all the while. “I don’t remember,” she says eventually, sounding indubitably frustrated with herself.

(Kara’s heart aches for her.)

“What do you mean, you can’t remember?”

Lena’s next response is swift and devoid of warmth, even as a curious progression of unreadable emotions flicker across her regal features: “You know better than anyone that I’m not overly fond of repeating myself, Kara.”

“Right.” Kara feels her face flush. “I’m just thinking… that’s—um, that’s weird, right?”

Lena shrugs, leaning back into the couch with a suppressed sigh. “I think ‘weird’ has rather lost its meaning these days, darling.”

(Kara can’t help but feel rather awestruck for a long moment or two at the near celestial way the sunlight streaming in from the balcony backlights her graceful silhouette, softening every edge with a xanthous-amber phosphorescence and causing the stray strands of raven-black hair to appear almost golden in the light—Rao, she’s a sight.)

It hits her then what Lena’s said, the way that glorious term of endearment sounded coming off her angelic tongue—“darling.”

"Darling."

Holy Rao.
She doesn’t regain a coherent train of thought until at least half a minute later, when her cheeks are tomato-red and Lena’s half-expectant, half-bemused gaze has developed an edge of unmistakable concern as she waits for Kara’s reply, which—

“R-R-Right, yes,” Kara stammers out, sure by now that her face is moments from bursting into flames. “That.”

Lena just grins, easily changing the topic with a melodious, “Now, tell me: how are you doing?”

Kara chuckles awkwardly, bowing her head and rubbing nervously at the back of her neck even as her brain scrambles to come up with a suitable response. “I, um… I feel like I should be asking you that.”

Lena shakes her head wryly, *tsking* Kara playfully with a gentle smile upon pinkish lips that widens to bare a row of straight white teeth unto Kara’s gaze—Rao, she’s missed this. “I asked first.”

Kara feels her cheeks flood with a new resurgence of heat. “Fair enough.”

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“I’m worried… I’m worried that the, um… the,” Lena pauses herself then, hesitance clouding her gorgeous features, “the little me isn’t quite… gone.”

(It’s taken them quite a while to get here, to this level of honesty, to Lena tip-toeing her way through a proverbial minefield of conditional vulnerability and an inexplicably raw level of intense emotion that Kara can *feel* with every word Lena utters and a million other things Kara knows very well she’d much rather keep locked away for eternity…

Kara doesn’t quite know how long they’ve been here, just sitting and talking atop the couch, but she’s sure it’s over two hours at the very least, and she can’t quite help the irrational hope taking root in her gut that this doesn’t end, that it never has to—not with Lena being so honest, so open and exposed and *vulnerable* as she places this fragile and debilitated piece of herself that bleeds like an open wound in Kara’s hands, trusting in Kara not to forsake it… not to forsake her.)
“What do you mean, Lee?” Kara asks, giving the arm around Lena’s shoulders a comforting squeeze and rubbing the pad of her thumb soothingly against Lena’s wrist with her free hand, waiting patiently for her to find the words.

“I mean… I can feel her, Kar,” Lena manages in a trembling tone, then shakes her head as if trying to ground herself. “No, this is… That’s stupid. That doesn’t—"

“It’s not stupid, honey,” Kara whispers, quiet but firm.

Lena turns to face her then, their faces a hair’s breadth apart, tears sparkling in red-rimmed eyes of beauteous evergreen. “She’s scared, the little me. She’s so, so scared, and I can’t do a damned thing to help her because I’m absolutely terrified, too.” A tear works its way down Lena’s cheek, one Kara doesn’t hesitate to catch with a gentle brush of her thumb—she can’t help reveling in the smoothness of the skin beneath her touch as she does, even whilst her heart breaks in her chest for the sheer measure of pain in Lena’s words, for the wetness of her tears, for the truly desperately look in her tragedy-stricken eyes. “How am I supposed to help her, Kar? I can’t—I can’t even help myself, and I—I—"

“Hey, hey, hey,” Kara interjects quietly, urging her turmoil to ease with gentle strokes against her skin and a note of conviction injected into her tone that she’s not quite sure is warranted, much less prudent—still, Lena’s thudding heart rate lessens ever so slightly at Kara’s words; her panicked breathing slows and Kara can literally feel the way she allows herself to melt readily into Kara’s embrace the very moment she’s offered up some semblance of assuagement, all the fight draining expeditiously from her exhausted body in a rush of something like defeated respite that tugs at the fractured pieces of Kara’s part like little (if anything) else ever could. “We’re gonna figure it out, okay? Me and you, together.”

“El mayarah,” Lena murmurs then, eyelids sliding shut as she nuzzles her face into the crook of Kara’s neck, her warm breath ghosting across Kara’s collarbone in the most heavenly of ways.

Kara blinks, not quite believing what she’s just heard. “What?”

Lena scoffs quietly… or, attempts to—the exhaustion is clearly taking its toll on her, and it’s more like a weak huff of air than anything else. “You heard me, Supergirl.”

Kara can’t help the stupidly large grin that spreads across her face then, nor the way her battered heart seems to burst with the purest form of joy in her ribcage, filling her chest with warmth and her head with a lightheaded euphoria that only ever seems to emerge where Lena is involved (not that Kara much blames it)—it’s like belonging, there, even if only for a moment.
It’s like *home*.

(El mayarah, indeed.)

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End Notes

would love to know your thoughts!

got the title 'i wish i was younger' from the song younger by a great big world, and uh, is it grammatically incorrect? ...mayhaps. does the song still slap? unquestionably.

(my [tumblr](https://tumblr.com) or just look up @ultralightdumbass to come talk to me there cause i’m definitely more reliable about responding on there!)

Please [drop by the archive and comment](https://example.com) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!