### Hiding in Plain Sight

**Summary**

Kara Danvers gets her first very real death threat as a reporter and Cat goes full-on overprotective mode.

**Notes**
Merry X-Mas in July!

The prompts I received were so awesome I mashed them together. Hopefully, this works for you @TheLianKing

First Prompt
Kara gets her first death threat and Cat goes full-on overprotective mode.

Second Prompt
After Kara loses her powers, she finds herself stranded in a small remote town Cat happens to be staying at
Chapter Notes

Thanks to @ChupeyDupey for the betas and @findoutwhatilove for spaces and things ;)

Fair warning these first few chapters deal with serious threats and intentions towards bodily harm of another being. Including death threats, explosive devices and resulting explosions.

It is not beyond typical canon-level however it is worth the mention.

Tags will be added accordingly and additional warnings will also be in notes pre-chapter start for those that warrant it.

Cat looked at her warped and muted reflection along the elevator walls with disdain. There had only been two other times when she had been escorted by security to this part of the building and neither time had resulted in anything good.

Thankfully after the first, she had installed a vault for this expressed purpose, hoping she would never see its intended use. As the doors opened she noted how quiet the mail room was with no one inside it. Even though they had digitized most of their services, it was still an unwelcome sight.

All of the packing machinery was off, boxes were left half open and the latest print issue was still hovering on unmoving conveyor belts. It was as if someone had simply stopped time and she was free to move about in order to survey the moment. As CatCo security led her down a corridor, an officer in full gear met her midway, relieving her of her security complement.

“This is highly unusual ma’am.”

“While I appreciate your attention to manners right now, call me Miss Grant.” Cat stated with a stern edge, not at the moniker so much as to the situation. “I know it’s unusual, but it’s my business, my building, my rules.” Cat moved along, much to the chagrin of a few other officers.

It only demonstrated how much power Cat could wield, and in the long run, she knew some of them wouldn’t stop at the chance to mention how National City’s Media Queen was willing to put herself in such a dangerous position. It might be draped in arrogance and other callus descriptions towards her person, but it was free publicity all the same. Serving to remind any who might attempt such a thing again that whatever they tried, Cat Grant was not scared and would refuse to bend to acts that tried to provoke fear and irrationality.

“Has the F.B.I. been notified?” Cat felt the officer’s eyes on her with her question but paid him no mind as she stared ahead while they walked.

“They’re sending someone for retrieval, quietly. Right now your employees are under the impression there’s some kind of underground gas leak because of the fault line shifting from earlier.” Cat gave a nod, recalling the small earthquake that had complimented her breakfast before coming into work as the man continued.
“We’ve also confirmed the second location is clear.”

“Second location?”

“Yes, ma... Miss Grant, I thought your security team would have informed you.”

“Informed me of what?”

“We found the second threat, after notification of this one, at the target’s residence.”

Cat frowned as they stopped at the vault door. “There was no mention of any officer or federal agent at my penthouse.” Instantly she thought of Carter, his school and-

“You are not the intended target.” Cat made a full stop, forcing the officer to turn when he got ahead of her alone, and address her head on. “It’s one of your employees.”

“Who?”

The officer gestured towards the massive open door where another complement of officers waited along with the bomb technician. Knowing the bulk of her questions would be answered once she saw the evidence beyond the threshold, Cat stepped inside carefully. She took inventory of those around her before laying her eyes on the steel table in the center of the room. There was a standard cardboard box already wrapped and taped with the standard red evidence tamper warnings and just ahead of it was the object in question.

Cat eased across the space, keeping her hands in view as she looked at the crude, homemade object in front of her. It wasn’t the first explosive device she had ever encountered, given her line of work before her more executive tenure, and she was certain it wouldn’t be her last. What struck her wasn’t the object itself and its intention to drive ice into one’s veins, it was the picture haphazardly wrapped around it that made her blood run cold.

The photographed woman’s features were unaware. Given the candid composition of the shot, she had probably been stalked in order for the perpetrator to have acquired it. The words ‘Alien Sympathizer’ were painted with broad red strokes, obscuring the moment of the photo along with a steady stream of the word ‘lies’ scrawled in black ink. Cat noted the background, recognizing it from within CatCo plaza before her gaze settled firmly on the subject.

“Kara.” Her voice barely reached a whisper and Cat wondered if she had spoken at all as the image burned itself into her brain. A small commotion stole her attention, along with everyone else’s in the room before a panel of blue and a flutter of red made the vice around Cat’s chest tighten.

“The F.B.I. sent-” Supergirl stopped short, her bravado and confident air faltering momentarily. “Miss Grant? What are... why aren’t you outside with the others?”

Cat turned slowly, keeping her body between the object and Supergirl. Even if it was only for show. Just as she was about to respond she heard the commanding lilt of another woman in the hall.

“Agent Danvers, F.B.I.” the redhead also stopped shy of Supergirl before the caped woman stepped aside enough to let her through. “Miss Grant, you should have been evacuated. If you’ll-“

“I’ll only go with Supergirl,” Cat’s sudden rush of demand stopped Alex short and provoked a small shrug from Supergirl. Cat cleared her throat and stepped a little closer, pulling focus. “I have little doubt in your abilities and as far as protection goes you seem capable. In this case, I’d prefer the absolute highest level of that which only she can really offer with any absolute certainty.”
Supergirl glanced back to Alex, realizing this blatant threat on Cat's life must have really rattled her. Kara knew of one other time when someone had sent something through the mail to Cat, just before she started as her assistant. It was why she has been so adamant about checking Cat’s mail first at the time before it was mandated as a standard policy.

“If you’ll come with me then Miss Grant.” Supergirl turned her full attention on Cat, moving aside enough for her to lead the way before casting another knowing look at Alex as she passed.

Alex looked just as confused, waiting for both women to get further along the hallway before addressing the lead officer.

“What exactly do we have?”

Supergirl followed easily behind Cat, letting her carve the path towards the oversized service elevators before closing the steel doors and locking the grate. Cat pushed the button for the loading docks, her phone in hand, as she texted her driver before looking over at the other woman who stood tall and proud.

“Are you all right Miss Grant?”

Cat was anything but all right. She schooled her expression well as she studied the heroine in front of her. Suspicions still nagged at her as to the actual identity of the woman in front of her and Cat had never wished to be so wrong in all her life until now. If for no other reason than to hope whoever was targeting Kara Danvers would only find Kara Danvers and not discover that she might also be-

“Miss Grant?”

“I’m concerned.”

“We will find who’s targeting you.”

The promise held enough truth and vehemence to it that Cat nearly shuddered. She knew Supergirl could be fierce, cold even, but that response was sheer instinctive protection.

“I’m not concerned about me or my safety. Although, I don’t doubt I might eventually be lumped in, considering.”

“Lumped in?” The small lines that formulated the start of a frown pulled at Supergirl’s features, broadcasting to Cat just how little she, and probably the F.B.I., actually knew.

“I wasn’t the target and CatCo is just a matter of convenience when I consider it. Eventually, this individual may broaden their field of targets to me and others but that’s just an educated expectation.”

“So it’s one of your employees?”

Cat nodded as Kara lifted a finger to her ear and murmured for whoever was on the other end of her comms to hold on.

“Sorry,” Cat waved her off with a small shrug of her shoulder just as the elevator ground to a halt. Supergirl again opened the doors just as Cat’s driver pulled into one of the vacant loading bays.

“Please continue.”

“Yes, it’s one of my employees. Someone who I have to find right now.” Cat moved the second the
grate was clear, showing no signs of stopping.

Supergirl hurried after Cat as she crossed the loading floor at full tilt. “I need a name.”

“No,” Cat said and kept going, Supergirl trailing right behind. “The less anyone knows the better. Otherwise-”

“Cat wait, maybe I can find them, I can get them to safety until-“

“Supergirl now!” Alex’s voice brought the woman up short as she reached to her ear with a small growl knowing Cat wouldn’t wait.

“What Alex?! Hurry up Cat’s going to try to find-“

“Kara Danvers.”

Supergirl stopped completely, while Cat crossed the last few feet of the floor before slipping into her car.

“The target is Kara Danvers.”

No sooner did Cat’s car round the corner with the squeal of a tire did Kara feel a vibration against her leg. In an instant her phone was in her hand, Cat’s name glaring back at her across the caller ID.
"I can't just ignore her," Supergirl uttered rounding a corner with Alex through the corridors of the DEO. Alex had taken over the investigation right there, having delivered all evidence herself to the DEO labs. The biggest issue now was Cat trying to locate Kara.

"Has she called you since?"

"No, she called once and I didn't answer. She called again on the flight over here and I did answer, saying I was on my way to see a geologist about an earthquake."

"She actually bought that?"

Kara huffed, "I can be rather convincing sometimes."

Alex remained silent as they transversed the corridors and strode out into main ops.

"Danvers, Supergirl," Vasquez nodded as the two slowed to a stop. "The latest reports from NCPD and all the evidence they found. We have agents en route to Midvale now and we've notified your cousin just in case."

Kara looked struck, her defenses bristling. "What, why? This isn't-"

"That's smart."

"We've also got eyes on both of your apartments. Another set of agents were supposed to be stationed at CatCo but they're running into-"

"Cat." Kara supplied causing both women to look at her. "What? She has issues about things in her building she didn't ask for, but why-"

"Your cousin?" Vasquez finished for her before Alex was pulled aside by another agent.

"I can do this." Kara said quietly and Vasquez actually gave her an apologetic look.

"It's not that, we know you can. Kara Danvers on the other hand..." She let the implications linger between them as what she was actually saying registered in Kara's brain.

"You said my... her cousin Clark not-"

"Exactly." Vasquez offered, watching the understanding slide home. "As far as we can tell, that's who they're after and nothing beyond that. The more we create a divisive line between you and her."

"The less likely they are to..."

Vasquez gave a slow nod. If anything was working in their favor it was that by all accounts, whoever was behind these threats was only aware that Kara Danvers was a reporter for CatCo and not Supergirl at the same time. Although it was questionable how long that would last.

"Winn is still working on a crawler so that if anyone takes a particular interest in you, your family, your friends or tries to get more information than just surface level Google searches we can try and trace it back."
"And contain anything they might find that could be-"

"Used against this you."

Kara nodded, taking in a deep breath.

"Again the only real issue is Miss Grant right now."

"She saw Alex," Kara argued. "So she has to know-"

"Given Miss Grant’s ability to reason, it's safe to assume she hasn't attempted to contact anyone in Kara's emergency contacts for her exact whereabouts because of the knowledge that her sister is already on it."

"This is so weird."

"Tell me about it." Vasquez offered before pinching the bridge of her nose a bit. "We have to separate you and her as much as possible. The plan is to stage a relocation to this facility or some undisclosed one that people can see."

"Meaning we may need Hank's help on this."

Vasquez nodded. "It'll further solidify the divide if we have you and Alex bring Kara in. So to speak."

"Fantastic."

Kara set her hands on her hips and looked towards the ceiling until an outburst from Alex pulled their attention.

"Put it on the screen now!"

Winn tapped a few keys before a live feed from the Daily Planet was fed to the main ops monitors.

"I know she's still in National City and that she took a call from her boss less than an hour ago. Would you like me to play it for you? " The distorted voice of some caller relayed out over the air waves while Lois Lane and the two mid morning anchors listened cautiously.

"Why are you targeting that reporter?" Lois questioned. "There are plenty of us, myself included, who have written articles about aliens."

"She has the loudest voice for those creatures. She's been indoctrinated while you spout the exploits of a single alien Miss Lane. You know what they say about the squeakiest wheel... besides, who says I haven't targeted you?"

The sound of the line going dead was all anyone could hear while they watched the anchors look over at Lois who had sense enough to look shocked.

Winn appeared out of nowhere, scrambling in to Kara's boot with a loud protest before he waved her off and shoved her phone into some kind of pouch.

"What the-"

"It's a Faraday pouch. Meant to isolate your phone. Nothing in, nothing out."

"He has her phone?!" Alex shouted moving over.
"No... not exactly. My guess, he's been close to you, close enough to clone it or at the very least introduce some kind of spyware. I won't know until I've analyzed it."

Alex started to say something more when her cell phone went off. As Kara glanced over she immediately told her sister to answer it.

"Agent Danv- Miss Grant," Alex glared at her sister while Winn quickly moved away and Vasquez turned to her tablet suddenly enraptured with whatever was on the screen.

"No I do not have... she must be on her way back into work. Yes I saw the-no we don't have any new-Miss Grant... Miss Gra-CAT!" Alex's shout silenced the room and even Kara had to look away.

"She's my sister, I am worried about her but Kara is more capable than you think. If you would allow my two agents in they could... yes if she shows up they can get her transported as quickly- no. No. Just wait Miss-" Alex stared at her phone then shot a look to Kara then back to her phone. "She hung up on me."

Alarms sounded shortly thereafter, as monitors switched to some kind of attack just outside CatCo plaza.

"Oh God." Vasquez announced, moving closer. "That's the evac zone."

Before anyone could stop her, Kara was off and out of the building in a rush.

"Supergirl! Supergirl wait! Do not engage!" Alex shouted over the comms only to receive static in return.
"Get everybody down there that isn't already." Alex commanded heading for the aerial transport before engaging her comms again. "Supergirl don't do this, it's too convenient, this is a trap."

"I can't just do nothing," Supergirl responded, coming up short as she arrived at the scene. Some kind of scaled creature was terrorizing the crowds while also eating into the building. Throwing chunks of debris and other objects into the air haphazardly.

Supergirl cut inward, grabbing a car before it landed on a group of huddled civilians before setting the car back down and zooming off towards it. She cut two beams of her heat vision across its back pulling its attention but not slowing it down by any means.

The creature lunged for her, its large jaw snapping in the air with a thunderous force. She wove around its body, pelting it this way and that with no change other than to make it angrier and shift it's targeted intention to her.

She spun around behind it only to be slapped aside and across the plaza, kicking up dirt and concrete until she slid to a stop.

Agents from inside CatCo were outside after a few more seconds, raining a fire of bullets against the hardened scales. Out of nowhere, the creature took a running start for them before balling up. Supergirl pushed off the ground, barreling a few inches from the surface until she collided with two agents and yanked them clear of the deadly pinball before setting them down.

The creature changed directions on a dime, spinning back towards the civilian crowds until Supergirl slammed into its side, rolling it out towards a parking structure. The creature uncoiled again, spinning around and smacking at Supergirl with its tail, nearly sending her into the upper floors of CatCo until she caught herself just shy of the window.

She looked up with the singular shout of her name, seeing Cat's figure even higher above her against her balcony.

"Someone get a helicopter up to the roof Cat's still in her building."

A whistled scream pulled her attention back and with a growl Kara flew up, her body impacting with the thrown concrete headed for Cat, pulverizing the stone into tiny projectiles. She heard Cat directly behind her and turned mid-air to make sure she was alright.

"Get back inside!" Supergirl heard the next sound, larger this time and whirled around in time to catch the larger pillar of concrete that had been thrown like a javelin. The momentum arced her higher and over the building itself before she got a better grip on the thing and twirled around with it. She held onto the pillar-like a battering ram, headed straight for the creature who roared defiantly at her.

A few more seconds and she collided with the creature, feeling the concrete pillar obliterate in her grasp as she impacted with the back of it serving only to knock it forward and down onto its belly.

"Nothing is penetrating this thing!" Supergirl shouted into her comms before tornado-ing out of the way of the swipe of the tail of the creature. Cars rolled across the street, bouncing into other cars
from the swipe, as Supergirl hovered nearby.

"I have to get it away."

"Supergirl hold it, we're almost there."

"If I don't move that thing away it's going to kill someone or I will trying to stop it." She fired another round of heat vision at the thing as it slammed its tail into the ground sending a shockwave outward. Fire hydrants ruptured, spewing water into the air at high velocity as cars tumbled back onto the street from the quake.

"These people are going to need your help more than mine right now." Supergirl barked, sending round after round of heat vision after the creature before it rushed her swiping into the air. Knowing she had it's attention she flew just out of reach, blasting it at center mass before it roared at her once more.

Supergirl vaulted backwards away from it's grasp, landing on the ground and striking at it again. This time it took off towards her, curling up into a ball again before Supergirl pushed off the ground and barreled into the street. Thankfully she had angered the creature enough to focus it's full attention on her as it chased her along the streets.

Supergirl cut a path this way and that, avoiding more populated roads in favor of back streets and wide alleys. She flew backward blasting the armored hide over and over to keep it on track hurtling towards the harbor with fewer people and less city to surround them.

"I'm at the shipyards!" Supergirl relayed, circling around the creature as it pinballed into a concrete wall before chasing her.

Supergirl rose high in the air, watching the creature unfurl before inverting her body and rocketing down towards it. She dodged the swing of its arms, punching both fists into its center mass, knocking both of them to the ground. Supergirl pushed up along the softer skin of the creature's belly only to feel the world close in on her as it balled up again.

Supergirl punched and kicked, hearing the sounds of distress in response to her onslaught as the world tumbled around until she had a thought and grabbed at the under scales and threw all her weight into one direction. She felt the balance of the creature shift and a groaning protest as the thing tried to correct itself, which only made Supergirl push harder.

From the outside helicopters, both CatCo and DEO were trained on the creature seeming at war with itself while balled up. It pitched hard right back towards the city only to swerve left down an embankment. The momentum of the ship launch area carried the weight of the creature towards the water before the thing unfurled in a panic and scrambled to keep from going into the chilly Pacific waters.

Supergirl grunted and growled, drug across slippery concrete from underneath the creature until she got her legs up and with a shout pushed with all her might to send the creature backward into the air.

Supergirl set her hands against her ears as the thing screamed at her on a sonic level, driven by panic and terror. In some last-ditch effort, its giant maw opened wide and a burst of brackish fluid rained down across the slippery slope.

Everything went dark and her movement sluggish, the rushing wave of water over her sounding hollow and muffled from beneath whatever Supergirl was encased in.
She fought against the air, freeing her limbs before dragging herself up and grabbing at her face to free herself before the substance hardened. She shook off what she could before fighting to get off the ground and into the air.

Blackish green tethers pulled at her like vines before they snapped under the force of her efforts, sling-shoting her into the air before mercilessly stone skipping her across the water.

Alex was out of the SUV before it came to a full stop racing across the shipyards with a full complement of agents trailing behind her. The helicopters above had been cleared of the area while the DEO tried to contain and assess the area.

"Supergirl… Supergirl come in" Alex tried for the umpteenth time to contact the woman with no response.

"We've got her, she's headed to you, south side."

Supergirl emerged from the water struggling up the secondary ship launch, arms loaded down with a thick tail. She dug into the concrete, dragging her waterlogged attacker behind her. Other agents moved to help, grabbing for the creature who appeared half the size it was shortly before it plummeted into the water.

"Supergirl are you alright?" Alex grabbed for her sister, only to have Supergirl pull back before she could touch her.

"Don't. I have to get to the DEO, I'm still covered in whatever that thing spit at me. I can feel it."

Alex nodded, keeping her hands up before radioing into Vasquez that Supergirl was headed in and to get a containment area set up in the labs.

"Make sure whatever that is, is checked over." With Alex's confusing look Supergirl further explained. "It asked for help," Supergirl offered darkly, further solidifying that this had been one big setup, before pushing off into the sky.

Chapter End Notes

SO ... from here on out expect at least ONE chapter a week (most likely Friday/Saturday) until I can graduate to at least two a week :) ..... or just post the bulk of it :)

thank you, everyone, for reading and commenting and leaving kudos
Chapter 4

Cat sat stock still as Helen from HR finished cleaning around the superficial wounds across her features.

“You got lucky you know.”

Cat cut her eyes up to the woman but remained silent. One eye narrowing as she felt her skin stretched and a small butterfly bandage set over the deepest cut along the curve of her cheek before dabbing around the edges.

“Any reports from-“

“Everyone that had scanned in today before the original evacuation is accounted for,” Helen assured. “I have a list of those who haven’t checked in and we’re calling them all now.”

Cat nodded and set back in her chair, looking towards the screens replaying Supergirl and that creature battling in CatCo plaza. She glanced to her phone one more time, the screen still devoid of any reply or call from Kara beyond that first one the two had prior.

“Give anyone who wants it time off. Full pay. No reason needed.”

Helen stopped short with Cat’s words, knowing the only other time she had made that exception was when the policy extended to herself.

“I’ll set it up in the HR interface then send a notice out.”

Cat nodded, waving Helen off who knew better than to take her time and linger. She glanced to the monitors once more, watching Supergirl take off from a distance once more before the feed looped back to the start of the encounter while anchors spoke over top of the scene.

Back at the DEO, Winn stepped into the medical bay where Kara sat in a D.E.O. issue uniform still strapped to all kinds of monitors while Alex worked away across the room.

“Heads up,” he tossed her phone to her watching her catch it easily before looking over at him. “Scrubbed it, and added a few other things to it just in case but it’s fine now. Luckily whatever he was using was crude and meant only to track phone calls and on-demand location data.”

“Does that mean-“

Winn shook his head. “We’ve got redirects and scramblers in here. Your signal bounced any time you were at the DEO off to a different relay tower across the city. Nothing to lead you back here. I promise.”

“Plenty of other places though.”

“Yeah, but we’ll get him.”

“This is incredible.” Alex breathed pulling Kara and Winn’s attention. “I’m surprised you’re still standing.”

“What is it?”

“Some kind of suppressant, would have killed any human and a few aliens at that.” Alex leaned
back from the microscope, headed back towards Kara. She checked the monitors and adjusted the sunlamps just in case before looking at her sister directly. “How do you feel?”

Kara gave a shrug. “Fine? No different from usual, glad all that gunk is off me.”

Alex nodded, doing another cursory check before she started unplugging the leads from Kara’s frame. “Your vitals are a little low but nothing different than after any other fight, really. I need to analyze the stuff further but it’s most likely the lack of an immediate bounce back is because of your powers still warding off the suppresi-toxin.”

"Is that what you're calling it?" Alex made a face before Kara simply nodded, rolling her shoulders a bit before looking at her phone. “Are we really going to do this whole 'pick up Kara Danvers' thing?”

“After everything else today, I’d say that’s a given.”

“Good luck convincing Cat.”

“She’s not going to have a choice. Taking you from CatCo tomorrow morning is the best and most public option.”

Kara let out a sigh just as her phone went off three times. She furrowed her brow, glancing to the text which was from HR informing all employees of paid time off allowance as ordered by Cat from a couple hours ago. It was the following set of texts that made her sit straighter as she saw who they were from.

The first one had been around the time of the broadcast in Metropolis, it was Lois telling her to turn off her phone. The second, however, was from Cat less than a few moments ago.

“Tell me you’re okay.”

Its simplicity and intent struck her the hardest, beyond the fact that it was a rarity for Cat to reach out at all. Much less to check on Kara’s well being.

“I need to call Miss Grant.”

Winn rose a high brow while Alex remained impassive for her own sake. She had long suspected Kara had feelings for her former boss but they hadn’t really discussed it in any sort of capacity.

“She caught the broadcast, and I know she saw Supergirl in that fight and neither have reached out to her since. Supergirl she understands, me on the other hand especially with all this-“

“Say no more.” Winn offered, glancing at Alex who squeezed her sister's shoulder.

“We’re working on it. We’ll find them. In the meantime, at least you’ll be on Supergirl duties full time for a little while. I know it’s not great, but it’s something.”

Kara nodded giving her sister a tight smile before the other woman slipped out of the medical area to leave Kara to her phone call.

She looked at the time on her phone, letting out a small sigh, knowing Cat would still be in the office even with it being close to the end of the day for just about everyone else.

Kara took a deep breath in, leaving her trust in Winn as she dialed Cat’s number, feeling it was safe to do so given his prior assurances.
“Kara.”

She swore the phone barely even made the first signal to ring when Cat picked up and spoke her name like a prayer.

“Miss Grant, I… I’m okay.” She heard relief flood over the phone line but stayed quiet just the same.

“Listen, I know your sister is all over this, and that agents are at your apartment if that’s where you are. Just trust me when I say you need to do what they say without arguing.”

Kara frowned, Cat had always been the one never to run from anything. Much less a threat or two, even when Livewire got free with help from Siobhan.

“I know… I know that’s not usually how this goes but this isn’t about me this time.”

Kara let out a small sigh, running a hand through her hair as she figured she might as well push the elaborate lie they were all going to tell by tomorrow.

“They… they want me to go in tomorrow like nothing happened.”

“What? Why?”

“So they can take me out a couple hours after. If it’s public enough, they hope the person behind this will know just who all he’s dealing with.”

“What does that even mean?”

“Uhm… Supergirl is going to be there to oversee it. Despite what happened today, they feel that’s the best option right now.”

Cat was silent for a long time and Kara almost thought she had hung up until she heard her breathing.

“How long?”

Kara felt the weight of the other woman's words like a lead weight, letting out a dark sigh as she continued. “I don’t, they haven’t said. Whenever they feel it’s safe I guess?”

"Give me fair warning before they take you away?"

Kara swallowed thickly with the request, unsure of what else to say other than she would.

"I promise."

There was another lengthy pause between them and Kara couldn't help but hold her breath for the duration.

"Do whatever you need to in order to stay safe. Do you understand?"

"Yes."

"Come straight here, wait in my office if you get there before I do."

"Oh... Okay."
"Do you have somewhere safe to stay tonight? Outside of your apartment? I could get you a room at the Seraphim or-"

"I... I'll be okay, I have a place." Kara felt her chest tighten with Cat's offer, she'd only ever heard that tone when Cat was speaking about Carter before now.

"If you need anything, Kara... Don't hesitate."

"I won't."

"I'll see you in the morning."
The next morning Kara arrived early, walking into work as if nothing from the day before had happened. The office was unusually quiet but that was to be expected after everything and the hour. She ambled across the main floor, sweeping her fingertips across the edge of her old desk as she passed it before standing in front of Cat’s office.

She shouldn’t be here, they shouldn’t be doing this. Those words had echoed in her mind since she had gotten ready this morning. Kara had initially pushed it off as nerves and apprehension from all that was going on but the closer she had gotten to CatCo, the more her stomach had turned into knots over it. Her instincts were trying to clue her in but she couldn’t pinpoint on what beyond the broad generality of it all.

Her eyes scanned the glass, running over the woman’s name before pushing the door forward and slipping inside. Kara turned on the main office lights along with the televisions along the office wall behind Cat’s desk out of habit. Kara smirked faintly, adjusting the top of Cat’s desk where her pen holder had moved out of place. That simple act and the space she was in seeming to ground her momentarily.

Kara pulled in a deep breath, taking another look around while she had the moment to do so before anyone else came in. Cat’s last question had reared up in her mind a few times and was right back to the forefront of her awareness now. They had no direct leads, other agents at the D.E.O. were still analyzing the device that had been delivered to CatCo and even Winn was having difficulty trying to filter through all the data he had gotten from her phone and footage from the Daily Planet.

She still didn’t have a more definitive answer for how long she would be away. Even knowing she would be around as Supergirl didn’t seem to ease the tension in her chest or explain the depths with which Cat’s concern for her had gone to. It made Kara honestly consider that Cat might genuinely believe the two to be separate people.

Her mind swirling with all manner of thoughts as she turned away from the desk, heading for the balcony. The morning was cool, a sign of the changing season, even if that change was mild here. As a result, she propped the door open, letting the fresh air into the space of Cat’s office to try to clear it of the weight of her own thoughts.

Kara stepped over to the railing, leaning over it on her forearms. Her brow furrowed as she took in the cordoned off areas from yesterday and the overall remnant of her fight and let out a sigh before turning her eyes up towards the brightening horizon.

Cat stepped off the elevator, her steps quick as she surveyed the room. Thankful for its vacant appearance for once as she headed into her office only to stop just before entering. Her lights were up and her screens on, already relaying the start of the morning shows across all stations.

A part of her sent warning signals throughout her body, mind turning towards whoever was behind the threats before her rational mind took over. Security wouldn’t have let anyone who wasn’t cleared beyond the front door. There wasn’t a chance it could be anyone but-

“Kara…” Her mind fired rapidly, sending a whole other wave of sensation through her as she pushed into her office and slowly stepped inside. She listened for any sign that Kara might be in her ensuite while glancing around before noting the balcony door was propped open. Slim chance this person was a courteous high rise scaler. She set her purse down on the nearest couch, walking closer to the balcony when Kara’s silhouette appeared.
Kara was framed against the rising sun, hair down, tucked against the railing and oddly relaxed, all things considered, looking towards the fading remnants of stars in the darker parts of the sky. The sky held a reddish hue, Cat’s mind supplying some old fisherman’s warning that was promptly shoved aside as Cat got a better look at her.

Her heart seized in her chest, the color scheme of Kara’s clothing doing little to deter her mind as she questioned herself on how the woman could be anyone but Supergirl.

Cat’s lips parted involuntarily as the reality of it slammed home, all suspicions fading away as Kara turned her head at such an angle that the sun washed out the line of her glasses.

Cat swallowed thickly, a part of her relieved while another was even more terrified. This kind of threat followed a person, even under protection. Cat knew that much first hand. News outlets and authorities would want everything they could find on Kara Danvers and with that she wondered how long it would take for someone to put the pieces together, compromising her identity. Not to mention how far Kara or those associated with her might go to keep that safe.

She wasn’t prepared for this, nor did she think Kara was either. What she did know was how quickly she decided she would do everything in her power to keep that identity safe. With or without confirmation of who Kara really was.

Cat caught the shift in Kara’s body and schooled her features with a well-practiced ease as she removed two coffee cups from the holder she had set down on her desk before casually walking into the balcony.

“Earlier than me as usual,” Cat said with what she hoped was an amused tone offering Kara her cup.

Kara smiled softly, the intent behind it genuine if not a little sad as she took the cup and put her back against the balcony wall. “I’m still not sure how you figured out my go-to.”

Cat smirked easily, taking a small sip of her own coffee. “I have my ways too, you know?”

“Never doubted that.” Kara nodded towards the nearby furniture as Cat followed her over to the couch wordlessly. “I’m sorry.”

Cat hesitated before taking her next sip, forgoing it in favor of looking at Kara directly. “You have nothing to be sorry for. These things happen, especially to those who have something to say that others find unpopular or threatening to their way of life.”

“You’ve done this before.”

Cat gave Kara a wry smile, leaning back into her seat and setting her coffee on the arm of her chair. “Once or twice. Been a while since it was this… life-altering though. Mostly it’s just letters here and there.”

“I remember.” Kara offered, having read a few and nearly going after each one thereafter.

Cat turned her cup in her fingertips, her mind drifting to the one time it changed everything in her life and prayed this wouldn’t end for Kara so similarly or worse.

“It’s how I lost Adam.”

Kara looked up at her sharply with that confession, the lines of her brow furrowing as she tried to recall all the things she had read about that.
“That… wasn’t in any-“

“I know.” Cat continued to look at her cup. “They sealed it in the original court hearing. It’s also the reason I never fought for him.”

Kara stared at the other woman, their eyes meeting briefly before Cat drew in a deeper breath.

“We… my first husband and I, determined it was better that way. It was encouraged by the F.B.I., then and they made it all happen. The public custody battle, the animosity between Bryce and myself, the publicity of it all was all to protect our son.”

“Why?”

Cat looked up with Kara’s question, taking in her expression and her quick apologetic glance when she realized she had just blurted out the word.

“They targeted me by using Adam. He was two, and I got a package, not unlike you. Only it wasn’t a bomb so much as his picture and one of his baby blankets.”

Kara sat stunned, watching the tension in Cat’s body grow. She didn’t say another word and wasn’t even sure why Cat was telling her this or continuing.

“We made it appear, exceedingly well I might add as if neither he nor his father were important enough to leverage against me. I shifted their target focus from him and my family directly to me. Then, when I knew he was safe… I published the articles I had been sitting on anyway.”

“The Kelly-O’Rourke trials.”

Cat smiled faintly, it would figure Kara had read up on her before ever applying for work as her assistant. She hadn’t figured it would be so in-depth but that would have been before now.

“That’s the one.”

Kara let out a slow breath. She had read up on those trials and the fact Cat’s name was all over it. She had almost single-handedly brought that mob family down and until now, Kara hadn’t realized how much of a price she had paid for it.

“Why... why are you telling me this?”

“All of this is your decision. No one else’s. I would tell you to stand up and not run. Face it all head-on. If I didn’t wonder every so often what would have happened if I hadn’t stood my ground.” Cat pushed forward easily, her cup set on the table as she leaned on her legs so she was eye level with Kara.

Kara looked down as Cat’s touch registered. It was firm but not overwhelming. Lithe fingers wrapped around her own, tangling between the digits before squeezing.

“You have to be absolutely certain of what you’re willing to sacrifice. No matter what you decide, because there will be sacrifices with whatever path you choose.”
Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

WARNING: This chapter includes elements of an intense nature involving explosive
devices and the intention to cause harm or death.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Kara sat in Cat's office, the pair of them working opposite each other. Cat had insisted she stay
there to further sell what was going to happen. The screens along the back wall had been inundated
with Supergirl's fight that day before and the cleanup efforts while very little was relayed
concerning the real reason behind the CatCo evacuation.

It was a blessing in disguise and for now, Kara was more than thankful for it. She was finishing up
another article, not willing to back down yet but she hadn't submitted it yet. Taking a page from
Cat's book to hold off before doing something too rash that she couldn't come back from.

They hadn't discussed the situation any further, there were deadlines to meet and other work to be
done. Instead, they had worked in comfortable silence amidst confused glances and quiet murmurs
from those who had shown up for work today.

All too soon Alex was in her ear, relaying the plan for a few moments from now. Supergirl would
be arriving any moment, or more J’onn disguised as Supergirl, to escort her with plenty of
witnesses. There would be three transport vehicles waiting for safety and appearances sake in the
street level parking garage. From there they would split up across the city and out of town before
switching Kara to another vehicle and doubling back to the DEO.

It was very elaborate, and Kara considered it to be utterly worthless. They could have just taken her
from her apartment for a show with press waiting outside. Cat could’ve helped make that happen
and she could have avoided the first-hand responses of her co-workers and Cat altogether.

The woman's words still rang out in her head as she closed her laptop and set it aside, knowing she
would have to leave it anyway. Cat glanced up with her shift in demeanor just as those outside her
office were pulled towards the main elevators.

"They're here," Kara uttered as Cat slid her work aside and stood up all too quickly. All at once
Kara didn't want to go, didn't want to put on this facade and it must have registered given the look
Cat settled into.

Before either woman could say anything the doors to her office opened as security and FBI agents
filtered in before Supergirl stepped inside.

"Miss Grant, good to see you again. Although I wish it was under better circumstances."

Cat nodded, although she never looked away from Kara, still impressed at how whoever she
worked with outside of CatCo could pull such an elaborate ruse off.

Kara stood slowly, adjusting the line of her shirt as she extended her hand on autopilot to Supergirl.
"Miss Danvers, a pleasure, again. It seems we need to get you out of here."
"I guess… yes, we do."

Cat noted her hesitation, brow furrowing slightly before she gathered a few small things before looking at the others.

"I'm coming with, if Kara doesn't mind. Just to be sure she's safe."

Supergirl straightened, glancing at Kara who gave a small nod before the heroine looked back at Cat. "I assure you she couldn't be safer but I understand."

"Thank you Supergirl."

"Anytime."

One of the agents gestured for them to follow as the three women moved towards the door. Cat and Kara first with Supergirl just behind. The entire office watched the trio as they made their way to the elevators. Some took snapshots with their phones while others murmured amongst themselves.

When they arrived at the parking garage that sense that something wasn't right hit Kara square in the chest again and she faltered in her step as agents filtered between each vehicle.

Supergirl was at her side instantly while Cat had hung back near the parking entrance, not trusting herself to be up close and personal when Kara eventually got in the car.

"What is it?" J'onn's polyphonic tones caught Kara even more off guard as she lingered behind the other agents.

"I don't know. Something doesn't feel right."

Supergirl looked around, not seeing anything out of the ordinary before looking back at Kara. "Maybe it's just nerves? No one's really targeted your human persona like this before."

Kara gave a small shake of her head, still not convinced. "Maybe… just, look I know this sounds weird but can you explain it to them? I'd like to come in on my own. I know this whole thing’s been set up otherwise but from here no one would know I'm not in one of those cars. There are no cameras facing them and everyone will think I'm being moved regardless."

"Kara…"

"Please, J'onn, let me have some control over this." Kara knew she was pushing it but her earlier conversation with Cat about this being her choice and her life was nagging at her still.

He stood there as her super persona for a long moment before giving a small nod, relaying that there was a slight change in the plan before giving her a firm hug. "Be careful" he murmured before stepping back.

It was odd seeing herself look so proud before she gave a nod while Cat looked on from afar. Supergirl stepped aside then, conversing with the agents before they all settled into the waiting vehicles.

Cat moved forward after another minute, her steps carrying her faster than intended as she met up with Kara halfway. "What're you doing?"

Kara had the barest of smiles up as her initial response before half turning to watch the cars as they started up and began to pull out. "My life my rules, right?"
"Kara..." the breathless intonation of her name barely left Cat's lips when she heard the high pitched squeal, wincing against the sound as she turned to look after the convoy. She caught the spark just under the second car, turning to grab for Cat before pushing her down to the ground and covering her up.

The explosion shook the whole block, sending debris, fire, and smoke everywhere. The cacophony of car alarms slowly registering as the high pitched ringing in Kara's ears subsided. She held Cat close to her, still covering the woman with the majority her body as she surveyed the area just beyond the parking garage entrance where the convoy had been just over her shoulder. She was covered in debris, black smoke filling the lower level and siphoning out of the garage toward the street.

One of the cars was completely flipped over, resting along the sidewalk across the street, the closest was pitched aside, it's front end twisted and mangled while the second was completely engulfed in fire. She started to move on instinct, drawing in a deep breath with the intent to freeze out the fire until Cat grabbed at her as she stood, yelling to get back just as another explosion tossed them backward.

Kara genuinely winced with the rough landing, her back having dug into the ground as she had grabbed Cat yet again as the concussive shockwave hit, thankful for her quick reflexes as the other woman remained sprawled out on top of her. Kara shook her head, clearing the fog of her brain before checking Cat over and asking if she was alright.

Cat pressed something into her hand once Kara righted them both and commanding she go right now. Kara held onto Cat's waist seeing the lack of strength in her legs before Cat pushed her away.

Kara waivered backward, looking at Cat behind a scene of chaos and fire a few yards away before looking at the objects in her hand and back up again. Just beyond Cat's frame, she could see movement from the middle of the inferno. J'on was still there, which meant she couldn't even circle back around as Supergirl. Everything had been compromised and suddenly the reality of what had happened, what was happening, caught up with her in real-time.

"Go now!" Cat waivered to the nearest wall closest to the elevator, pulling the fire alarm. Kara hesitated again, even as the flames and smoke were siphoned upward and away to starve the oxygen from the growing fire as J'on, still disguised as Supergirl, tried to mimic her abilities. "Kara!"

Kara startled enough to move, rushing towards the stairs leading to the lower level at a somewhat normal speed before she kicked her powers into gear and flew down to the lowest level. She was halfway across the private parking garage before she stopped, skidding across concrete before remotely unlocking the car with the keys Cat had pushed at her.

She dropped into the driver's seat, locking herself inside as she caught her breath. She waited a few seconds, glancing around the garage as yellow lights went off overhead from the alarms going off to signal that everyone needed to be out of the building.

As she looked out through the passenger window, half expecting Cat to show up she caught sight of the small bag waiting in the seat. She used her x-ray vision for only a moment before it seemed to fizzle out a bit. Caulking it up to adrenaline and the explosion she unzipped the bag and froze with what she saw.

Neatly wrapped stacks of money glared up at her, tucked into ziplock bags, along with another parcel with what looked like a couple of cell phones and various accessories for the devices. The edge of an envelope caught her attention next before she snagged it and turned it over finding her
name in Cat's handwriting staring back at her.

She split open the seal, pulling out the small handwritten note, her breath staggering behind the vice around her chest before she dropped it and zipped up the bag.

Kara sat for another minute, her mind racing before shaking hands pressed the ignition on the car.

Above ground at street level, no one noticed the modest sedan pulling out of an alleyway on the opposite side of CatCo plaza, nor the woman driving it as they were too focused on the efforts at the mouth of the public garage entrance.

Chapter End Notes

Breathe...
Cat leaned back against the hard edge of the inside of the ambulance she was in, oxygen mask held to her face as she searched the surrounding crowd held back by barricades and police officers. Paramedics moved around in a frenzy along with other emergency personnel until a flutter of red caught her attention.

Supergirl parted the chaos, and given her gait, Cat knew immediately that it wasn’t the actual heroine. Not to mention the lack of certain abilities that could have resulted in containing the fires that the woman should have had at her disposal. Her expression was a hard one, overlaid with a somber note that told Cat more than she needed to know.

“Miss Grant.” Her tone was hard, militant, and it made Cat immediately want to challenge her or whoever was playing at her.

“Yes?”

“It appears as if all of your people are safe.”

Cat gave a slight nod, letting the oxygen mask fall to her lap.

“Except Miss Danvers. We haven’t been able to locate her.”

Cat noted the touch of worry in the imposter’s tone, her head tilting to the side just enough to register that this individual honestly cared for Kara on some level. As Cat started to say more, she heard the defiant tone of none other than-

“Agent Danvers.” Supergirl’s tone was beyond commanding, like that of a superior questioning a given order. It was brazen and confident, and no sooner did Cat allow that thought to simmer, did Supergirl turn her head sharply to look at her. Cat rose a high brow before Supergirl looked away, back to the red-headed woman barreling towards them.

“What happened?”

“Another bomb, under one of the cars.”

“We cleared those, and they were under-“

“I know. We have someone on it.” Supergirl offered before bending her head towards Cat.

Alex looked at the other woman, the sparse char of her clothing and the cleaned away debris from her skin realizing Kara must have stayed behind to keep Cat safe.

“Where’s-“

“We don’t know.” As soon as the words were out of Supergirl’s mouth, she again turned to Cat with a pointed stare. With the accusatory look, Cat straightened slightly, her mind running over layouts and figures along with a legion of work-related scenarios until Supergirl narrowed her eyes at her.

“Miss Grant, do you have any ideas?” It was Alex who asked, which made the situation that much worse.

Cat squared herself up just a little, starting to take a deep breath that only resulted in a coughing fit.
Alex moved on instinct, finding the oxygen mask resting along Cat’s thigh, grappling with Cat for a panicked second before fitting the mouthpiece over her face once more.

“Slowly… just breathe slowly.” Alex’s entire demeanor changed with Cat’s sudden shift in well being. She knew deep down Kara could take care of herself and was most likely headed to the D.E.O. if anything else. Right now it was what she told herself in order to focus on Cat and her present state. Supergirl stepped away, a finger going towards her ear as she seemed to be listening intently to some invisible voice before glancing back at the two women. Their shoulders sagged with the new information and J’onn very nearly cursed in his own language before praising Winn’s efforts.

Alex looked over at him for a brief second, easily reading his body language before turning her attention back to Cat who finally seemed able to breathe easier.

“You should be in a hospital,” Alex advised while Cat shook her head.

“He’s escalating,” Cat stated with a hollow echo thanks to the mask over her face. “If he thinks he got her, it might be over. If he isn’t sure and can’t find her, he’ll try to get to her through her family and friends. You know this Alexandra.”

While the use of her full name threw her for a moment, Cat wasn’t wrong, frighteningly so in fact. The idea that Kara was just a step towards a larger threat made her chest tighten in apprehension.

“I’ll be fine.”

“Like Kara was today?”

Alex swallowed thickly, studying Cat’s features without remorse. “She wasn’t in that transport. If nothing else I know that as sure as I’m standing here.”

Cat shook her head after a minute, deciding that this protective vehemence was a learned Danvers family trait. “I told her to run, right after the second explosion.”

Supergirl cut over quickly making a motion for both women to stay silent. Alex frowned while Cat looked surprised until Supergirl made a gesture as if she were talking into her finger with her thumb as the earpiece.

“Where’s your phone?” She ordered silently as Alex’s heart started to pick up.

A second later Cat extracted it out of her jacket pocket. Alex pushed past her into the ambulance right after, scrambling around inside until she came back with a heavy leaded pad and a small silver bag. Before Cat could protest, Alex snagged the phone from the other women’s grasp and wrapped it up as best as she could before closing it up in what looked like a heat blanket and set it aside.

“You spoke with her,” Supergirl stated while Cat’s eyes narrowed with the implication in her approach.

Alex stepped closer, setting a hand on Supergirl’s arm to keep her back. “I was there when Kara called Miss Grant yesterday.”

Supergirl looked over at the agent. “So you knew and said nothing?”

“It didn’t seem important at the time.”

“That non-important information got four agents killed and three more sent to ICU.”
Alex shifted her jaw but didn’t remove her hand and Supergirl suddenly seemed more aware of herself as she murmured an apology.

“Please, just come out and say whatever it is,” Cat demanded, drawing her mask away again. Only to have Alex reach over and push it back into place.

“One of our people,” Supergirl emphasized the words, hoping Alex would understand they were referring to Winn. “Was able to trace a similar algorithm we found on Kara’s phone to yours.” Cat straightened slowly, her mind working ahead of itself as she braced herself for Supergirl’s next, undoubtedly damning statement. “He’s been close to both of you, maybe others. That’s how he knew about this today.”

“That doesn’t explain how he got any access to those vehicles.” Alex attempted as if trying to diffuse a would be escalating situation.

“The same agent is going over footage now. Regardless, he knew. Which means both of your lives are in equal danger to Kara’s.”

Alex drew in a deep breath, knowing her phone and everyone else’s at the DEO’s had been cleared.

“It’s also very possible, our suspect is someone who works for CatCo.”

“That’s not possible.” Cat asserted, provoking both women to look at her. “We have extensive background checks, additional personality evaluations, and other reviews and balances. We deal with the vital exchange of information I know plenty of people don’t see it that way but I require that all my people be of a particular mindset—“

“Could be a former employee who didn’t make the cut.” Supergirl countered, effectively ending Cat’s argument. “Either way, I need your permission to let my people in.”

“Your people?”

Alex squeezed hard at Supergirl’s arm before looking at Cat. “She means my people, my agency.”

“Do you have any idea what you’re asking?”

“Do you have any idea how many more lives it may cost you if you say no?” Supergirl argued, forcing Cat to stand up.

“I don’t know if you’ve hit your head or sucked in too many toxic fumes from that explosion but this,” Cat made an overarching gesture to Supergirl’s mass. “Is a joke.” She nudged past Alex, grabbing her cell phone before holding up a hand to Alex who tried to intercept her.

“I want nothing to do with you on this—“ Cat’s voice was a hoarse choke of a sound, praying her instincts were right and this was indeed just an imposter and not her—“-Supergirl.”

She cut her eyes to Alex then, thrusting the phone into her chest. “You, I’ll deal with, and I want that back in an hour.” Cat forced the phone a little harder into Alex’s frame making sure she took hold of it before shouldering past Supergirl.
Kara shifted in her seat as she pulled back onto the road from her first stop, having driven until the gas tank nearly read empty. She had filled up the tank and grabbed half an isle of snacks before continuing on. Not willing to take too much of a chance she had found a baseball cap somewhere inside the car and kept her features mostly hidden.

Her half-melted sweater was relegated to the trunk and she had managed what she could with her pants, making it appear as if she had simply spent a hard days work outside instead of shielding Cat from an explosion.

A part of Kara argued that she should have just gone to the D.E.O. Until she tracked over everything in her memory leading up to the explosion. Realizing that someone else was either compromised, and had inadvertently provided details of their initial plan to the perpetrator, or someone at CatCo and not the DEO was actually involved.

Either of which she couldn't be sure, honestly she wasn't sure of anything right now beyond the randomized set of locations at her disposal that Cat had provided her.

Currently, she was headed towards the second option, hidden somewhere between the run of National forests and mountain ranges along California's inner highway system. She had argued with herself about ditching the car and just flying but knew she was trackable through the D.E.O. that way.

That wasn't to say she wasn't trackable in her current mode of transportation, but it would be far less likely unless CatCo was where she had been compromised. Then again this was Cat she was dealing with. Kara hadn't taken the time to check the license plate or look for any kind of registration but knowing the other woman and her methods, this might actually be the safest option open to her or anyone she knew right now.

Kara checked the map folded across her lap where she had marked her location as she glanced up the road for her turn off. Thankfully she had looked up the address beforehand on one of the phones provided to her before turning the thing back off. Given how out of the way and secluded she was, getting lost with the sun already having dipped low along the horizon was not part of her plan.

She found her way along the main three-lane road, having passed a welcome sign a few miles back before she made her final turn off. The first few miles were paved and dotted with small neighborhoods and sprawling properties but with her next turn, the road graduated from dirt to gravel, hidden away by dense foliage.

"Leave it to Miss Grant," she thought idly as she slowed the car's approach to a large steel gate which forced her to get out in order to pass through it. She locked it behind herself easily enough before easing along the slight incline towards her final destination.
As her headlights crossed over the front of the house she was genuinely surprised at its modest size, until she followed the drive around it and realized the deception in the design. The house itself stretched back and into the surrounding forest as if it were a part of it.

Again she stepped out of the car, headlights reflecting off the garage door to the house while the driveway itself was illuminated by motion-sensing lights.

She reached back inside, shuffling through the bag in the passenger seat before locating a set of keys marked by the address tag attached to them. She looked them over noting their color-coded caps before trying the green-colored key. She couldn't help the small shake of her head or the smirk that came when the garage door unlocked with a satisfying click.

"This is something else…" Kara muttered to herself as she pushed the door up and overhead. There were a stack of storage bins, all labeled with their contents in the second spot while a fridge and a small workbench sat along the back wall.

All closed up and tucked away, she gathered what little was in the car and made her way inside. The stillness of the air was remedied with a small adjustment to the thermostat as she flipped on a lamp and surveyed her surroundings with proper light.

"By Rao…"

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Cat eased back into her lounger, looking out over National City's skyline from her penthouse. An untouched glass of wine and an open bottle set just off to her right. A part of her wondered if she called out right now if she would garner a visit from Kara or her imposter.

Seeing how everything had been shut down for the investigation on Alex's order, after returning Cat's phone, of course, Cat hazarded a guess it would actually be neither. At best, the impostor. She let out a ragged sigh, hoping Kara had at least followed through to some degree and actually left the city instead of staying around this circus.

As the brightest of stars began to show through the night sky she caught the rustle of fabric just behind her and sat up slowly before looking over.

"Miss Grant."

In place of Supergirl stood a much taller, much broader individual. The polyphonic tones of their voice made it difficult to discern if they were male or female. She studied the figure carefully as they moved closer, sharp, emerald features coming into view as she turned enough to sit comfortably without getting up.

"I know you," Cat began, watching the figure slow in their approach. "You're the one Olivia pardoned not too long ago after you outed yourself to save Agent Danvers from Supergirl."

"I had thought I was saving them both." He corrected, before gesturing towards the chair across from her. "May I sit?"

"Go ahead."
As he did so his form shimmered a brilliant, unearthly red before he settled into his usual human skin. Cat never took her eyes off him the entire time which visibly struck J'onn as impressive given how most individuals tended to look away. Then again this was Cat Grant.

"I take it that's more comfortable for you?"

Hank smiled faintly, wondering idly when that had happened. "In a way."

"Would you care for a glass of wine or?"

Hank held up a hand giving her a small thank you before declining. "Actually I came to apologize for my earlier behavior and disregard for your situation."

Cat actually raised an eyebrow at him, leaning back into her seat as she looked him over once more. "It was an intense situation, tensions running high and all that."

Hank shook his head slightly. "Still not an excuse. I tend to pride myself on remaining calm in most situations. My behavior, especially directed at you was not calm or considerate. It certainly wasn’t any reflection of Supergirl."

"Looks can only get one so far."

Hank laughed genuinely, mostly within the confines of his chest but it was there. "I hadn't honestly considered having to step into her skirt for that length of time, nor continue to wear it in order to handle that situation."

"You could have easily… shifted?"

Hank nodded, it was as good a word as any. "People saw her, you and her and I needed Kara to know I could handle that situation as her."

"Not as her, there's some work to be done there. Mimicry is not your talent apparently." Cat commented with a clinical flare.

Hank shook his head, understanding a little of what Kara referred to when it came to Cat. She wasn't so much insulting as she was direct, which was not something he minded. He preferred it over posturing and obfuscation. He just hoped she would continue given his next set of questions.

"You're here to see how much I know." Cat stated, knowing she wasn't far off given his look back at her. His shoulders were tense even if his posture appeared relaxed. The space between his shoulders seemed heavy as if he were lifting some great weight over his head even though his features were somewhat dismissive of any sentimentality towards the elephant in the room between them.

"I don't have to ask, but I don't like to use those talents without expressed consent unless I'm forced to." Hank allowed

"So you can read minds."

It was Hank's turn to raise an eyebrow at her and she only smiled in response before continuing.

"That talent has some level of passive occurrence with you when you're stressed or you've reached some kind of limit?"

His eyes narrowed wondering if Kara had mentioned him and his abilities, even offhandedly.
Cat merely gave a small shrug of a shoulder. "It happens to everyone. I get mean, or can, I lash out at easy targets. Most often the ones closest to me or who I've allowed to get close to me."

Cat had gotten better at that, taking her time, counting in her head or breathing deeply away from anything tangible in order to find her ground and rationalize before speaking. Kara was responsible for that in part. One more thing to thank her for she supposed.

"Why're you telling me this?" Hank questioned as she looked him over curiously.

"Because we have a common thread between us. Someone we care for, in our own private ways, who's already done so much to help us. Seems a shame not to be able to return the favor as much as we might like."

Hank drew in a deep breath at the truth of that statement, giving Cat a slow series of nods in affirmation.

"I… I want to know where she is, just as much as you" Cat confessed, "and I have no doubt that what options I did give her, you could filter out on your own with all your agents and resources and taxpayer money." Cat reached for her wine for the first time that night, her cell phone still a vacant black mirror on the table beside her ever since Alex had returned it.

"But maybe…” Cat said quietly after a hearty swallow. "Maybe Kara doesn't want that."

Hank stared over at her for a long moment, letting out that breath with the truth of her statement. Cat licked her lips, savoring the last bit of wine there before looking right back at him with her own kind of resignation.

"I know first hand the level of trouble she would be in were she not… what she is. She has a far bigger heart than I, and a consideration for other people one could fill an ocean with." Cat ran her fingertips over the rim of her glass, she knew what Kara was doing or thought she did, because she had done very similar things in her own situation years ago.

"Kara hasn't run away, she's not hiding exactly. She's removed herself from the equation so that the rest of us can focus on the real problem. Instead of her in the midst of the problem."

Hank studied Cat carefully, wondering if she didn't have her own vein of superpowers in her lineage somewhere. The two remained silent for another moment, letting Cat's words sink in just a bit further.

"Do you have a second glass?" Hank asked after a long pause between them. "That is, if you don't mind my staying for a little bit and just sitting here?"

"There's one in the small cabinet behind me against the wall."
Alex stood at the ops dais looking over the footage from earlier in the day amidst the change over of third to fourth shift. The complement of agents was thinner which left her relatively alone for the moment. She had analyzed the footage over and over, trying to find something, anything, that could point them in the right direction.

There were only entrance and exit cameras near each elevator, they had obscured the rest on that level at the time thanks to Winn for the transport. That way there wouldn’t be any definitive footage of which car Kara had gotten into. Hindsight was twenty-twenty and Alex wished they hadn’t opted for that route however brief it had been.

As it was, she had the footage from when the group exited the elevator until Cat was visible at the edge of the camera range and the pull out shot of the cars before the initial explosion had taken the feeds out completely.

She rewound the entrance cam footage one more time, glancing about and counting in her head until the time of the explosion. Alex rubbed at her mouth in frustration, playing it over again and again until she caught it out of the corner of her eye.

It was a spot just to the left of the entrance, a black splotch that was there one minute and gone by the time the cars began to pull ahead. With a few keystrokes, she pulled back the shot, rewinding before the point of Kara and the agents getting off the elevator when they were on standby. She ignored the elevator footage entirely as she focused on the main entrance.

That’s when she caught it, just inside and to the left of the entrance. The parking attendant station. There was a man in the booth, head down or turned in such a way that she couldn’t see his face. She forwarded the time, and as the elevator opened, he stepped out and edged around the entrance and on to the sidewalk before disappearing around the outer corner.

Alex rewound the shot again, to where they pulled into the garage only to see a different attendant greeting the agents. She watched as the cars pulled around along the main floor in order to set up the convoy. To her horror, she saw the figure step up into the booth while the cars were driving the length of the first level.

There was a sharp swing of motion and both figures in the booth disappeared momentarily before the man stood back into view, adjusting his vest before turning towards the agents. She glanced to the timestamp, trying to find the reason none of her agents would have noticed the change.

“Lunchtime…” she muttered. Realization flooding over her like ice. There was no doubt as she watched the cars come back around and square up that his excuse had been the initial attendant had gone to lunch and he was the replacement.

As the main complement of agents exited the vehicles he approached, meek and shy, keeping his features down and his posture non-threatening as he moved to hold open the door to one of the cars.
as any new attendant would. That’s when she saw it, the slight dip in his body before an agent ushered him aside. That must’ve been when he placed the explosive.

Supergirl landed shortly thereafter on the opposite side, pulling everyone’s attention except his as he bent down to what would look like a man tying his shoe, were it not for the stretch of an arm up under what she guessed was the wheel well of the car he was next to before he stood up.

He had the audacity to give a small wave and ironically Supergirl, or J’onn had paid him no attention.

“Sonofabitch!”

The nearest agent jumped at her outburst before she apologized and requested medical admittance records of CatCo employees. After a few minutes, someone handed her a tablet, skimming over the cursory records before landing on the parking attendant.

Female, twenty-three, concussion and a fractured arm. Found on scene amidst the mangled remnants of the attendant booth.

“Someone get me Henshaw, now.”

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Kara stretched out on one of the smaller beds she had found in the deceptively expansive cabin. She was showered and changed, even if the clothes were a little tight. She would have to be sure to find the nearest store and get something else to wear.

She glanced over at a nearby clock, unsure if she had crossed a time zone but didn’t think so, although this part of the state was a little odd that way. A part of her was thankful for the quiet while another took the opportunity to run a thousand miles a second with it.

She argued that it had to be her adrenaline and the chaos of the past two days that were making her seem tired when she knew well enough that she couldn’t possibly be. She thought of her sister and J’onn, Winn, James, her mother and the fact they’d all be safer if she as the target wasn’t so nearby. She might even do her own digging into whoever was behind all this if the office she had found was any indicator.

At least she wasn’t so disconnected from the world, despite her location. She wondered about the two other locations Cat had offered up. Wondering if they held the same hidden luxury this place did. She was well aware Cat had properties, but none of the three locations she had been made aware of today had ever been listed. At least not under Cat’s name nor had Kara ever booked a trip to any of them for the other woman.

She glanced toward the phone on her nightstand, chewing at her bottom lip as she toyed with her necklace absently. The only people who could relate were back in National City. Alex had done her stint as a fugitive, just as Hank had when Jeremiah saved him. While both were valid and had unique insights of their own, this wasn’t that kind of situation.

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Cat wrapped her arms around the plush weight of her pillow, tucking it under her body as she turned onto her stomach, again looking out over her view of the city.
Her mind was still fresh with the conversation, or more general company, with yet another alien within Kara’s orbit. It was to be expected, really, not so much with her being Supergirl although that undoubtedly pushed others to flock in her general direction. It was actually Kara Danvers who seemed to be the larger drawing force behind those would be associations. A sympathetic voice, supposedly human, gaining traction and sparking conversation with each new article Kara wrote.

It was a wonder Kara had garnered no viable threats prior to now. Cat was certain she had taken her fair share of them during her limited tenure as a reporter for CatCo, but nothing like what she was dealing with now. The situation only reminded Cat of her own brushes with the rougher element that most people were keen to ignore when it came to the press. There were a handful of current journalists she knew of that when combined with her own easily outweighed a few presidents in threat volume alone.

Cat was still trying to root out her own reasoning, beyond the nostalgia of being a reporter, as to why she had been so immediate in her attempts to aid Kara. The woman had always been capable, in and out of her suit and cape. She managed to put up with Cat herself long enough and only managed three outbursts the entire time. Ironically, all of which had occurred after she had donned the cape.

A part of her questioned if she would have helped at all if she knew without a doubt that Kara was Supergirl. Even now she still disputed the truth of it, if only because of her need to hear it come from the woman herself and not through second-hand means. Granted, J’onn J’onzz’s visitation to her balcony all but solidified the reality of Kara’s other identity.

Cat frowned slightly, hugging her pillow a little tighter as she contemplated the various scenarios she had worked out in her mind about how that revelation should have gone. None of which involved this particular set of circumstances. There was a small voice in the back of her mind that swore if she could go back and push harder to get Kara to tell her outright first she just might consider the option. The two of them were… friends, although that word seemed insufficient the more Cat rolled it around in her head. They cared about one another, had weathered a lifetime of storms in rather short order but again, this situation felt greater somehow. Planetary threats notwithstanding, the undercurrent of all this ran deep enough to genuinely scare her. For Kara, herself and a plethora of other factors that suddenly didn’t seem so solid and impenetrable anymore.

There was a complacency in believing that Kara was as untouchable as her heroic self. That the cardigan and oxfords carried the same shielding as her suit and cape. A complacency that Cat had allowed herself to slip into just as much as anyone else in Kara’s circle. For a fleeting moment, she wondered how many times Lois had faced a similar scenario. The duality of Clark and Superman and despite the invulnerability of one it only made the other more vulnerable while they existed in the same space.

Cat drew in a deep breath with that, trying to force her thoughts to stop spiraling in the quiet of her bedroom with her exhale. She nuzzled down further, finding the sweet spot of her position as she focused on the stars she could make out despite the city lights, lulling her inner voices to a low hum with the mundane ebb and flow of constellation names she could remember.

She felt the vague edge of sleep caressing her muscles before the vibrating whir of her phone pulled her head up. Cat reached over, the display vacant of any numbers as the name across it simply read ‘unknown’. There were two ways answering this call could go...

Cat let it ring a third time before hitting the accept button, waiting in utter silence.

“The second one.”
“No, sweetheart I’m fine, and Kara is fine too. I will tell her you asked.” Cat scribbled on a notepad, offering it to her driver before he pulled away from the curb. “I know it’s not ideal, but it’s better if you stay there. Maybe when this all blows over I’ll let Supergirl pick you up.”

Cat winced as she held the phone away from her ear, knowing now she’d have to hope Kara would indulge the request.

“Okay Carter, I… yes I love you too.” Cat drew in a deep breath, listening to the exchange of the phone before Adam’s voice sounded in her ear.

“I’m sorry.” She breathed before he could get another word in.

“It’s all right, just promise you’ll be safe okay?”

While their relationship wasn’t sunshine and rainbows it had improved significantly with enough time and effort on both their ends. Enough at least for her to leave Carter with his brother instead of having her youngest son return from his designated weekend with his father. Knowing the two of them were far enough away and safe together had strengthened her resolve with everything else going on.

“I will, I promise this time.” Cat meant it too, and it must have carried through enough for Adam to realize it.

“We both love you.”

Cat swallowed thickly, averting her own gaze as she pushed aside a tear with her fingertip.

“I know. I love you too.”

“Bye Mom.”

“Bye Adam.”

Cat hung up the phone before she or Adam could say anything else, taking a deep breath to settle herself when her phone rang again. Her eyes narrowed at the restricted label before she answered.

“I could follow you, you know.” The irritated tone of one Alex Danvers rang harshly against Cat’s ear.

“You won’t.”

“She’s my sister.”

“I know.” Cat swore she heard J’onn in the background but whatever advice he was offering was challenged given the muffled sound of Alex’s voice that barely registered over the line.

“Alexandra…”

“If you tell me to listen Cat, I swear to God.”

“Alex calm down.” Hank’s voice again rose through the phone
“You haven’t told me to stop,” Cat said after another long pause. “Or to bring her back.” When Alex remained silent Cat continued, even, quiet, and calm. “You’ve done this to her before now. On some kind of level, which is why you’re not asking questions, you’re not making demands… you need a favor.”

There was a huff on the other end of the line and Cat sat back easily, she could almost picture Alex standing in the middle of whatever agency she was actually a part of. Surrounded by colleagues and friends all focused on finding this person first, over getting Supergirl back. J’onn had that covered to a degree if needed, which left only one thing.

“Tell my sister we’re even.”

This wasn’t about Supergirl, not this. This was about Kara Danvers; sister, friend, the human facade to an alien god. Kara had almost lost that part of herself before and they had all suffered for it.

Cat drew in a slow breath, feeling that weight from last night growing heavier across her shoulders.

“You’re going to tell her that yourself, in person, when this is all over Alexandra.”

“I’m not so-“

“You are. Now go and do your job. Chop chop.”

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Kara absently munched on a mouthful of cereal from her place inside the kitchen leaning against the island. Her gaze tracking over the sunlit retreat, or so she had settled on for now, and its nuance. A cabin in the woods wasn’t exactly what she pictured for Cat Grant but given the brighter modern touches intermingled with the rustic charm and surrounding scenery she had warmed to the idea.

She still had no clue with what exactly this place was set aside for. There were plenty of rooms for guests or just Cat and Carter. An outdoor space she had only seen in magazines and a great room the size of CatCo’s bullpen.

As she spooned another bite, she realized it wasn’t that big but the lighter tones, grounded by wood and stone intermingling with the sunlight of midday made everything appear airy and expansive. One thing she had taken stock of was that the house was relatively stocked with dry and canned goods. Although the cereal she was eating was on the stale side.

The grounds were modestly kept, allowing just enough of the surrounding woodland to encroach but not overwhelm the structure and the house itself had been aired out at least within the past couple of months. No doubt Cat had a service, which meant there was some kind of life beyond the redwoods sufficient enough to sustain this place.

She flipped open the map she had bought the night before, realizing she was in the middle of tourist central but not anywhere near the heart of larger, natural attractions. There was a small town, no more than a dot on the map, really before more well-known areas populated the terrain.

Kara would venture there first, gather enough to keep her comfortable and try to find something to
occupy her time before she even attempted to get involved in rooting out the reason behind her current situation. She hadn’t expected to be in this kind of scenario so early on in her stint as a reporter but she thanked Rao just the same. However misplaced it might be.

She thought of Alex and J’onn and had almost contacted them directly were she not half worried her sister would have Winn at the ready to find her. She would have to find some other way unless one of them just showed up. Which was entirely possible given how she had contacted Cat. It wasn’t until morning that she realized the DEO might have had the woman’s phone locked in their system. Assuming Kara would eventually reach out to someone. When the helicopters and unmarked SUVs failed to show she actually let herself relax a little.

Kara cleaned her dishes, setting them out on a drying rack for later before snagging the keys from the counter and making her way back to the garage. No sooner had the door opened she heard the shuffle of gravel under someone feet and braced herself for trouble.

That was until a kind-looking gentleman leaned around the corner into view.

“How ya doing?” He offered easily, stepping further out so she could get a look at him. He was carrying a small cooler and a fishing pole and appeared otherwise harmless.

“I’m good. Didn’t hear you drive up.” Kara offered, taking the few short steps down into the garage as the man backed up so as not to appear as if he were encroaching on her space.

“I walked.” He said plainly. "Truck’s on the other side of the fence back there." He gestured towards the road where she came in the night before. “You a friend of Kitty’s?”

Kara tipped her head to the side, setting her hands on her waist while her expression settled between disbelief and amusement at the moniker. “Yeah, uh... a few years now?”

“Didn’t come loaded, or with a group so I figured as much.” He offered, looking her over. “Kitty-Kat usually lets me walk on through. She doesn’t fish much so her lake can get a little overstocked. Thought maybe it was her comin’ around. Otherwise, I would have come to the door and not just ‘round the back like I owned the place.”

Kara grinned with a breath of a laugh giving a small shake of her head. “No, it’s fine, maybe I’ll join you later of uh if that’s ok. Haven’t been fishing in a long time.”

“Oh, geeze, manners.” He took his cap off and put his pole under his opposite arm before offering her his hand. “Name’s Jacob.”

“Kara.” She shook his hand firmly watching as he gathered himself back to the state he was before.

“I’d love the company, lake’s full with them today. Although, it seems like I’ve caught you at the wrong time?”

“Oh, yeah I uh, I got in too late to stop so I was going to head into town, grab some things and all that for while I’m here.”

“You ever been out here before?”

“Flown by.”

“So no.” He nodded, rubbing at his face before turning and heading back towards the main gate. Kara looked after him a minute before he stopped and turned to her expectantly. “C’mon, suns gonna be down before we get back.”
“We… oh no it’s ok, I can-“

“Get lost, and all turned around? Melanie won’t keep the store open beyond a certain hour so even if y’made it back there, the place would be closed. Can’t have you go for two days with nothing to get by.” He shouldered his fishing pole and started back down the drive. “Get whatcha need, lock up and c’mon Miss Kara.”

Kara stared after him for a second before locking the door behind her and checking her wallet to be sure she had put enough cash in it. She closed the garage door and jogged after the man, catching up to him easily enough and offering to carry something.

“Thank you, Jacob. I’m sure I’m going to say that a few times, fair warning.”

“No worries. Any friend of Kitty’s is more than worth doing a favor for.”

Kara glanced over to him as they walked, wondering if she might get the story behind the other woman’s nickname along the way.

“Anything in particular beyond food stores that you’re after? I don’t mean to pry, old habits die hard.”

Kara looked confused as they reached his truck where he loaded his fishing gear into the bed of it before explaining.

“ Noticed the clothes aren’t the right fit and the shoes don’t really match. No other parties that I could see and that car’s not exactly long haul trip planning material.”

The incredulous expression on her face made him hold his hands up in surrender. “Don’t need details, just wanna be sure y’get everything you need Miss Kara.”

“You said old habits?”

Jacob nodded as they stood on opposite sides of the truck bed. “Retired detective, I tend to notice things others miss. Melanie says I’m nosy.” He gave a small shrug.

“You’ve asked my name, sort of, and what I needed with next to nothing in return. That’s not nosy.” Kara was serious in her tone, realizing he reminded her in equal parts of her Uncle Jor-El and Jonathan Kent.

Jacob smirked at her, nodding towards the front of the truck. “Let’s keep that between us. Someone like you telling someone like her she’s wrong?” He gave a low whistle. “Not good Miss Kara, not good.”
Alex leaned back against the ops console her back to the monitors, arms crossed over her chest as she stared idly at the round of her boots. Winn had been running whatever he could to try to clean up the images from the security footage and a couple of agents were already at the hospital guarding the CatCo parking attendants door. While no one figured he would go after her, seeing as she was still unconscious, it was a precaution seeing as she was the only person they had anywhere near available that had seen their suspect.

Vasquez had stopped momentarily to give her an update on the agents in ICU, both of which were scheduled for another round of surgeries before they could even be considered out of danger. Hank had seen to it to notify the families of other agents and act as a liaison between the DEO and the actual FBI to try and get this guy.

No new threats had come in, thankfully, but everyone was still on a razor’s edge. So far there were no demands, nothing definitive in the signature behind his devices and no common link beyond CatCo, Kara, and aliens. Other agents were running over former and current employee records with Helen Trayvor, CatCo’s head of HR, while others were still trying to find any evidence that might have been left behind anywhere on anything.

There was a slight commotion to her left followed by a quiet apology before Alex straightened. Within three steps Eliza had her arms around her, doing her best not to hug the life out of her.

“Mom, what’re you doing here?”

“J’onn’s idea. Something about Danvers women coming together in a crisis. Said you were down one. Better than hanging around in some random, undisclosed apartment.”

Alex let out a staggered breath before hugging her mom all over again just as Hank appeared from around a corner.

“I see she beat me to it.”


The trio watched Winn awkwardly hurry away before Eliza shook her head with a small smile. “He tries.”

“Too hard.” Alex offered before getting a small nudge from her mother. “What?”

“He’s yours and you know it.”

“Yeah, funny I never thought I’d have a little sister and a little brother.”

Hank smirked before crossing his arms over his chest. “Seems the FBI is just as lost as we are. They’ve got nothing pointing to anyone on their radar with this guy.”

Alex let out a sigh as her mother stepped aside to allow them room to talk comfortably.
“Of course not, he’s sub-basement level homegrown. No doubt he got nudged the wrong way, probably by Miss Grant and maybe not even first hand and then targeted Kara for what she’s been writing.”

“Your sister’s not exactly an advocate for alien rights Alex.” Eliza offered. “I’ve read her articles, she leans one way if you know her, but overall they cover both sides of the argument. Unless you count that one exposé and then the feature she did on President Marsdin. Why not target her?”

“She would be the bigger target.” Hank allowed, after all, even he had disagreed with the alien amnesty act initially. “More attention, certainly something the secret service and others would pick up on.”

“Which doesn’t mean he hasn’t. He said it himself, to Lois Lane. ‘What makes you think I haven’t gone after you already?’ What if he has? What if he tried but didn’t get anywhere?”

“With Lane?” Hank questioned as Alex nodded.

“She’s bigger than Kara, just like the President is. That’s not to say he hasn’t written or sent something to them or others.”

Eliza frowned, watching the wheels in her daughter’s head spin. “Alex, what is it?”

“What if we’ve been going about this all wrong?”

“How do you mean?”

Alex glanced at Hank while she considered it before looking at the two of them. “You said it, Mom, why not go after the president? Lois asked him the same thing on air, why not go after her?”

Hank shook his head while Eliza shrugged.

“What if he’s not trying to kill Kara?”

“I’d say that bomb pokes a hole in your theory,” Hank said.

“It depends on how you look at it. He knew through Cat’s phone what would happen. That we and Supergirl and essentially Cat would be right there. If he’s a CatCo employee, given what James and Winn have told me about the rumors there, let’s say he assumes Kara was Cat’s favorite assistant turned protege. She’d make sure to try and talk Kara out of it or something.”

“That’s a big if honey.”

Alex shook her head. “Cat never runs. Even when two murderous former employees were out to get her, she didn’t budge. It had Kara in knots the whole time and even when Kara tried, she told me Cat just… stayed. Said she’s never run and wasn’t about to start.”

“So you think the bomb was what? Just a ruse?”

“I think it was like the one that was mailed to their offices. To put attention on Kara.”

“Alex, that makes little sense.”

“Look, he hasn’t gone after the president, that we know of, he implied he might have gone after Lois but nothing that we could find and he said that Kara had the loudest voice. Just using those three as an example Kara has the smallest.”
Eliza shifted her weight a bit, her own wheels starting to turn. “You think, he’s trying to make her famous?”

Alex nodded. “Something like that. It’s why that first bomb wasn’t real, why he mentioned her apartment but we found anywhere nothing near it. I think if he had seen her in that car he wouldn’t have set off that bomb.”

“But why?”

“That... I don’t know, but to him, Kara’s got something to say, and he wants people to pay attention. We’ve tried to keep her out of it as much as possible but sales for the Tribune have gone up according to Winn and that’s just after one day.”

“If that’s true,” Hank cautioned, “and that’s a big if, he may do nothing until her next published article.”

“Or he’ll push to make sure he’s in her next article. Either way, we have some time. They rotate their features out. Kara’s not due for another for a few days and assuming she submits more than one article for review, her boss may have a backlog we can stall with.”

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Cat pulled the SUV up to the single-car garage door, she could always move it to the other side if Kara had taken the spot already.

She stepped out, bag in hand before looking around for any signs of life. Her eyes narrowed as she caught the sound of a solid crack from nearby followed by another as made for the side door. Hooking the strap over her head she moved cautiously as she heard another crack followed by an earthy round of thunks.

Cat hadn’t seen Jacob’s truck by the roadside or any other vehicles either. With a glance to her watch, and then to the treeline, she knew there was only about an hour left before the sun dipped low enough to make the sky dark. Given the hour no one would be out hunting, it might be a wayward group of teenagers were it not Thursday.

There was a much more solid whack of noise followed by a silence that pulled Cat from her thoughts. She gradually made her way around to the back of the house and beyond the outdoor entertainment space and stopped right in her tracks.

She saw Kara’s features in profile, hair pulled up in a haphazard bun, concentrating on some task from over the edge of a shrub only to realize she was squatting down. Kara seemed completely oblivious to the world around her beyond her task. Then again, this wasn’t National City and the possibility of anyone just showing up was slim to none the more Cat considered it. She caught a length of movement just beyond the edges of the greenery, her brow furrowed in confusion as she tried to make it out before her jaw fell slack.

Kara pushed to a stand, the entire length of de-branched tree braced across her shoulders and along the back of her neck, arms wrapped back behind her as she hoisted it into the air with little to no effort. It pitched slightly to one side and bare arms flexed to control the balance of it as Kara trudged back closer to the house. She cleared anything she might otherwise crush before releasing her hold with a thrust of her shoulders backward, letting the tree drop behind herself with a thud Cat
felt in her core.

Her body moved all on its own to get a more favorable vantage, steps diminishing to another stop as those same exposed arms grabbed for the handle of an ax, pulling it free of a larger trunk surrounded by a copious pile of split lumber. Kara squared herself easily at the head of the log, adjusting her grip and bringing the ax behind herself in a wide arc, using her entire body to carry her swing down into the wood.

The crackling sound of timber splitting under pressure was enough to make Cat nearly dive for cover as if the sound was from another tree that had finally given in to time and gravity. The log split in half completely and Kara shifted her stance, bringing the ax down again and again as she split the log into fourths.

Cat watched as the round of the woman’s shoulders flexed in a cascade of tension that traveled down through the other contours of muscle along the extent of her arms. The tautness across the bared flat of Kara’s chest was framed by the suddenly prominent dip at the base of her throat and rise of her collarbones as she wound up for another full-bodied swing.

Kara’s torso elongated with her draw before coming alive beneath the sawdust and dirt-smudged tank top as she engaged her core muscles. While Cat had never been a fan of jeans, beyond the occasional designer variation, the way Kara’s contracted and formed around the breadth of her thighs and further stressed curves the woman was insistent about concealing at work with the bend of her downstroke made Cat want to buy majority stock in Levi’s.

Kara tossed her head back a bit, pulling errant strands of hair from her face before she continued to chip the logs down to manageable pieces. Stacking them on end before splitting them apart with more of a snap-drop of the maul as if the object were doing the bulk of the work now.

With a hearty swallow, Cat moved again, regaining her composure with a few more steps. Kara put a little more emphasis on her next swing, sticking the ax with the handle up. She bent down, gathering up her discarded pieces, stacking them neatly along her arm.

“Just when I think you can’t possibly surprise me.”

Cat’s voice seemed to have little effect on the other woman behind a warm smile as she continued her task until both of Kara’s arms were full.

“Says the one with a place like this no one knows about. Except for the locals.”

Cat dropped her bag on a nearby chair, stepping on to the uncovered portion of the extended patio as Kara piled the wood on the covered lumber reserve just off the house.

Her curiosity piqued with Kara’s lack of surprise to her presence. Had she already known Cat was there? Disregarding her secrets just to see if Cat would bring it up? Was it just because she had already completed the bulk of the work and by the time she noticed Cat’s approach she was already down to splitting small logs like any normal person? Or had Kara just assumed with everything else going on back in National City that Cat had already been made aware by some second-hand means? Cat also had no idea if Kara had been in contact with her sister or J’onn either which would have explained some of her glib nature at this moment.

“Who did we meet?” Cat said in a casual tone, leaning against a post as Kara gathered another armful, not that Cat would complain. Suddenly understanding the hype in certain circles around the latest Duluth catalog.
“Jacob,” Kara said with a bit of a strain as she grabbed the last piece at an odd angle before arranging her haul on the reserve. Watching her work, Cat idly contemplated if Kara had calculated the exact amount and size of wood she would need to fill it as she slotted in the last piece like a jigsaw puzzle.

“And Melanie.”

Cat hummed with knowing amusement, eyes trailing over sawdust and earth smudged skin. Meeting Melanie meant Kara had gone into town, most likely the store given how little the place had been stocked beyond non-perishables.

“Surprised you made it back before sunset. Did you purchase half the store at her urging?”

“I left enough for everyone else,” Kara confirmed Cat’s suspicions as she dusted off her hands with a clap of a sound before heading towards Cat.

The woman barely moved, eyes tracking the other woman’s movements until they were eye level with each other thanks to the added step of the patio. Cat rose an eyebrow at the woman after a moment of silence between them while Kara tipped her head a bit.

“I know you didn’t drive the whole way.” While her tone wasn’t completely chastising, it wasn’t exactly welcoming either.

Cat gave a small shrug, ignoring Kara’s tonal implications. “I know people.”

Kara set her hands on her hips in her atypical Supergirl pose as Cat prayed rather uselessly that the woman couldn’t hear the sudden rise in her heart rate because of it.

“I don’t like the reason, but I’m glad you came.” Kara’s admittance seemed melancholic, almost as if she were blaming herself for everything that had brought them both to this point.

“Can’t have you going stir crazy in the middle of nowhere.” Cat allowed after a moment. Her body tensed ever so slightly when Kara moved, bending close enough to touch until Cat registered the woman was merely reaching for her bag.

“Shall we get inside?”

Cat nodded. “If nothing else to take stock of what you did buy to make sure I don’t starve.”
Chapter 12

The world around CatCo continued on like any other day. The outlines of the street were accented with plastic yellow ribbon and bold black letters warning people away from the parking garage entrance further down the street. Anyone who could work remotely was encouraged to do so. Plenty had taken time off and he guessed a few were even shoring up their resumes and honestly no one would blame them.

CatCo had plenty of affiliates and having one’s foot in the door at the epicenter of that multimedia conglomerate was practically a free ticket to anywhere else. Assuming one wasn’t fired. Half the day was already gone and for the regular business fare, it meant the weekend was that much closer. It also meant there were at least three days before the next major feature.

Alex sat at the bar inside Noonan’s, looking over the lower third of the news crawl with the backdrop of the same street further down from where she was sitting. She took another sip of her coffee before a shoulder bag was set down beside her and a balding, middle-aged man saddled up beside her.

“Agent Danvers I presume.” His voice was gruff as if this meeting had already put him out and it was just another inconvenience to his day.

“Mister Carr.” Alex offered her hand while he eyeballed it before waving a barista over for his order. “Every bit as lovely as I was informed.”

“Been talking to an ex-wife or two?”

“No need, word gets around.”

“Having the blonde as your sister doesn’t hurt,” Snapper mentioned before tucking his hands around his cup.

Alex glanced at him again while he turned his cup around without taking a sip.

“Normally, you’d be the absolute last person I’d do this for. It insults my integrity as a newsman.”

Alex stayed quiet, letting the man process his words before giving them a voice.

“Little Miss Sunshine is annoying, but she’s got some good chops for these things. If she’d just learn to take advice and criticism the right way. You’d think working for Cat would’ve conditioned her ability for that.”

Alex could relate, giving a small series of nods of agreement to signal as much.

“I gathered all her articles pertaining to aliens and a few others of merit. Published and unpublished. Just tell me which one to run and it’ll be in the next Tribune front and center.” He rifled through his bag, pulling out a sealed envelope before sliding it over. “Given how Supergirl is her friend and source, I would have thought she’d be all over Kara on this.”

“Yeah well, like Supergirl, Kara has determined that everyone needs to focus on other things, not her. Something about being just one person in the bigger picture not making sense.”

Snapper nodded, shifting his jaw a bit. “Pain in the ass. She’s got guts I’ll give her that. I’ve got maybe two others who’d do the same in her shoes. The rest would sooner tuck tail and beg to be on
advice column or obituary duties.”

“Not Kara.” Alex allowed, taking another sip of her coffee.

“Right into the mouth of hell that one.”

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Kara was in hell. Or at least felt she should be. Dinner the night before had been pleasant enough, quiet and dare she say, comfortable, for the most part. She and Cat had skirted away from the elephant in the room, choosing to carry on with bits of mundane and otherwise harmless conversation around long periods of silence instead.

For her part, Kara wasn’t even sure what to say about any of what was going on, really. She was still trying to wrap her head around it as a whole. All the moving parts, all the uncertainties, questions without answers, motives without logic, all of it centering around her. Not as Supergirl that she was used to, but around her as Kara Danvers and CatCo. And despite it all, Cat had made her feel… normal, as if this were no more than some temporary stint they were both a part of for work; like the time Kara accompanied her to Metropolis for an awards dinner and subsequent late-night talk show interview.

Kara was quickly reminded however that this was not Metropolis, they were not on company time and there was no after party to attend for their efforts. They had parted amicably, with Kara suddenly thankful she hadn’t taken the master bedroom when she had arrived. As Cat had retreated there without a thought, somehow already knowing Kara hadn’t really ventured into that room beyond getting the layout of the house down.

Right this moment, however, was a different story. She had seen Cat plenty of times in all manner of dress and conditions from early morning just after a workout to red carpet glamour with degrees of everything in between. What she hadn’t seen was a makeup-free, robe draped, morning after body casually rummaging around in a kitchen like she was born to it.

Any other person, any other place she would have continued right on into the kitchen and made a beeline for the coffeemaker. Instead, she was standing just inside the mouth of the hall, stock still.

The sheer amount of skin crossing the kitchen in purposeful strides had caught her attention first until the woman turned further towards her and revealed a barely-there silk camisole. Cat’s robe was open, and untied, body bent over near the island as she retrieved something from underneath. Her hair was a mess of sleep tousled waves, features contorted into a dainty yawn. Kara felt her throat constrict and her chest warm at the exposed contours of the woman’s chest just as Cat started her way back up. Kara’s brain skipped a beat as she suddenly just announced herself, moving as if she had only now come into the room and not been staring at the sights in front of her.

“M-morning.” She offered, trying not to trip over herself as she made for the fridge and away from Cat directly. Cat straightened her robe with the greeting, pulling the ties and binding the surrounding edges thereafter.

“Sleep okay?” Cat’s voice was still sleep- addled, the deeper register turning Kara’s insides around.

“Quieter than I’m used to,” Kara put a new k-cup into the machine and pressed start, thankful for
something to do and the pull of her attention so that she might contain her expression a little better before Cat noticed. “But it was a nice change.”

Cat had slept little, wondering now if Kara had heard her tossing about all night long despite being across the house.

“I wasn’t sure what you wanted to eat…” A carton of eggs sat out already, along with a few bowls and other dry ingredients to make waffles by the look of it.

“Anything’s fine,” Kara swallowed, letting out a breath as she tried to push the image of Cat’s naked skin from her memory. “Just… uhm, fair warning?”

Cat rose an eyebrow, waiting patiently as Kara doctored her coffee before turning around and leaning against the far corner of the counter.

“I tend to eat a lot. High metabolism and uh good genes I guess? Just... pretend you’re cooking for a family of four.”

Cat eyed her cautiously, wondering if Kara was slipping on maintaining her super identity given how isolated they were or if that’s just what she told everyone the morning after. The thought of how many others had woken up and made the other woman breakfast crossed her mind briefly before Cat pushed any further contemplation of that aside.

“Mind helping?”

Kara was in the middle of a sip of coffee before shaking her head and setting her mug aside.

“What part?”

Cat smirked faintly, watching the apprehensive tension melt away as Kara came over, completely unaware of personal space looking over all the ingredients. She reached over, barely brushing past Kara and snagged a bowl before putting it in the other woman’s hands.

“Take this, and the eggs to the island and get them whisked up and grab the cook plate from underneath and put it on the stove.”

Kara scooped the carton of eggs up and made her way over, stopping to grab the cast iron flat top as she turned the heat on low.

“How many?”

“Whole thing,” Cat said absently, measuring out her own ingredients and doubling up as she put each one into her own larger bowl.

Kara cracked each egg, remembering how they were one of the first things Eliza and Jeremiah had used with her to control her tensile strength. She whisked in each one, making little golden waves until there was a touch at her side.

“Taste,” Cat requested, offering Kara a finger as casually as one would open a door. It was so spontaneous and in line with what they were each doing that Kara didn’t have time to think. She leaned aside and caught Cat’s finger, pulling the batter off it expertly. Cat curled her finger at the last second, pressing against the velvety texture of Kara’s tongue when her brain caught up with her body. Kara straightened and hummed before making an odd, abrupt little sound.

“The... that’s… uhm… s-savory and-“
“Too dark?” Cat went back to mixing with a fork, stepping away again before she did something else.

“Huh? Uh, I not… no, it’s good. Cinnamon-y” Kara’s shoulders dropped, and she cursed herself internally as she started whisking her bowl again.

“Easy there or you’ll make foam,” Cat said gently, adding a few more ingredients to her bowl. “Switch with me.”

Cat offered up her bowl as Kara stepped over, her own forgotten, as Cat traded spaces with her. Kara smiled politely as they came somewhat face to face again, taking Cat’s bowl easily and moving around her as the other woman edged up to the island and added spices and a touch of milk.

Cat curled her finger against her hand, rubbing at the end of the digit with her thumb and middle finger to provide some other sensation for her nerves to focus on. After another minute of gently whisking the eggs, she adjusted the heat, spooning out enough butter to coat the flat top side of the cooking plate.

“There’s a spoon by the iron, use that for each waffle. It should be hot enough now.”

“The red light is off.”

“Perfect,” Cat declared as she carefully emptied the eggs onto the searing griddle top. “One spoonful one waffle right in the middle.”

Kara folded the spoon over the mixture, careful to wipe the spoon underneath before the sizzle of batter onto the hot iron filled the air. She closed and latched the lid and flipped the device over. She turned slightly, watching Cat work a wooden spoon through the eggs as they started to cook.

With another glance around Kara noted the things that had been added for flavor. Only to realize almost nothing there was anything she would have brought Cat at work even on a day her mother was due in town. She chewed her bottom lip, readying her next spoonful of batter before casting another look over at Cat.

“Are… are you going to eat with me?”

Cat looked over at her sharply, not to scold but to check-in. Kara’s voice was far away with the question and her body language showed that tension slowly building across her shoulders again.

“Would you prefer-“

“No, God no. I… there’s just so much you wouldn’t normally-”

“You haven’t been my assistant for how long now?”

“A few months, but even I would notice. I’d smell food like this a mile away.”

Cat chuckled, cutting through the eggs as she continued to move them around. “Most of the things here are local so there’s one small exception to my usual rule. I know where things are coming from.”

Kara nodded, freeing a waffle and starting another in the meantime. Cat lowered the heat of one burner before the sharper crackle of bacon being set on the other side of the cooking plate filled the air.
“Nothing about this is normal.” Cat breathed, turning the burner for the eggs off before moving the meat around a bit. “In light of that, a little adventurous behavior, especially around food isn’t going to kill me.”

Kara set her back against the counter edge again, her mood shifting. “Cat... I’m-“

“Don’t apologize,” Cat’s tone was still soft, considerate, relaxed even. Her focus namely on the task of cooking. “I knew what I was doing when I came out here. Would’ve given just about anything for something like this when it was me.”

Kara watched Cat’s thoughts form fine lines across her features. Knowing now was not the time to ask Cat about those details. That would happen soon enough given their current setting and situation and she wanted to push it out of the way for just a little longer.

“I would… like to have breakfast with you Kara, but not if you’re going to feel self-conscious. You’re safe here and I’d like to think you’d feel safe with me enough to let me for once help you a little. Even if it’s just a good meal.”

“You help me all the time,” Kara admitted only to find Cat looking right at her. The two stared at each other for another moment until a resounding pop made Cat pull her hand back sharply.

Kara was at her side in an instant, fingers curled around Cat’s hand as she smudged hot grease away before bringing the limb close. Her lips barely brushed over the other woman’s skin as cool air rushed over the superficial burn. Cat felt her chest tighten and her throat warm before she gingerly extracted her hand, never looking away. Kara looked struck by her own actions, cheeks turning a dusty shade of pink before Cat pressed a utensil into her grasp.

“You finish this... I’ll take the waffles.”

All Kara could do was nod as Cat slipped away again, keeping her back to Kara who stood silent another minute more until another pop pulled her back to the realization her hand was on the hot plate. She drew it away easily, wiping her hand off on a nearby towel before focusing on the task she needed to pay attention to.
Chapter 13

Alex and Hank sat across from one another, scanning over each of Kara’s articles to try to find some connection or trigger point that could set someone off. So far there wasn’t one that didn’t have some element of alien sympathy despite the overall topic of the article. Raids on alien sanctuary areas, underground fighting rings, the exposure of an alien power trade on the digital black market, equal rights in word only, op-ed pieces on the president and other figures. There was even a piece on Superman. Hardly any article she had published or was intending to publish strayed from that central theme.

Hank couldn’t be prouder, although he had to wonder why it had taken so long for someone to try anything against Kara to get her to stop. Alex was somewhere in the middle, trying to find something they could publish ready by Sunday that wouldn’t incite their current perpetrator to lash out again.

What bothered her again was the image attached to the dud device at CatCo that had started this whole thing. Not so much the alien sympathizer part, that was evident in spades. It was the overlapping refrain of the word ‘lies’ scrawled all over it. Where was the lie? Kara had attempted in most of her articles to be somewhat objective, something she realized was probably because of Snapper Carr’s hand versus Kara’s own. But that coupled with the impromptu interview with Lois didn’t coalesce at all. Why call Kara a liar and then turn around and say she had a voice worth listening to?

It was almost as if it were two separate people.

Alex sat back with that thought, brow creasing together as she circled around the notion in her brain. Just as Hank looked up at her to ask what she was thinking Eliza knocked on the glass and waved them over.

“What d’you put her on?” Hank questioned as he stood along with Alex.

“The toxin from the Gahedran, it kept nagging at me. I was able to identify most of the properties regarding humans but then I got pulled into other things and knew she could finish it out.”

Hank held the door as Alex passed. “Why? Kara’s levels seemed fine and as far as we know. The Gahedran has been more than forthcoming with whatever we’ve asked of them too.”

Alex gave a shrug. “She was coated in the stuff. I know Kara’s mostly invulnerable but still, that stuff would’ve killed me, maybe even you. Her levels were slow to recover, but she seemed all right otherwise.”

Hank and Alex entered the lab, while Eliza readied another slide to verify her findings.

“What did you find?” Hank questioned, moving around the table across from the woman.

“Alex take a look.” Eliza stepped back letting her daughter take over. Alex leaned in, scanning over the cells on the slide before she changed the magnification.

“Keep watching,” Eliza warned, bringing a sun lamp over and holding it up enough to reach the cells but not blind Alex in the process. The cells shifted, almost as if creating a barrier against the light which the inside of the cell continued to try to break through the microscopic coating. After another moment Eliza touched a button on the side of the scope and Alex watched the injector press against the cell. It wasn’t until Eliza upped the tension that the needle broke through and with
its extraction, the cell failed to heal itself, instead still attacking the barrier.

“The hell am I looking at?”

“Kara’s blood.”

“That’s not possible.”

“It’s covered in that stuff you had me look at—“

“From the Gahedran?”

Eliza nodded as Alex straightened while Hank looked between the two women.

“What is it?”

“The excretion from that alien is creating a kind of semi-permeable, non-osmotic that coats and seals the cells to prevent yellow sunlight from penetrating it.”

Hank just stared a minute before glancing over at Alex.

“Kara will lose her powers.”

“What? How?”

“That stuff she was covered in, she absorbs things just like anyone else through her skin. She might not have gotten enough to do permanent damage, but that would explain the sluggish response to her recovery.”

“So what exactly are we looking at here?”

“It’ll be gradual, she has enough stores in her body not to completely blow her powers like when she created a solar flare but close enough. It won’t be instant either. If she doesn’t use her powers, she may not even notice, really. It looks like her cells can attack the alien barrier but again it’s gradual.” Eliza offered while Alex shook her head.

“It’s like she has a virus, only instead of getting sick, her powers are going to go into reserve mode to fight the infection until it’s purged. To do that, she’ll basically go dormant to some degree.”

“By how much?”

“I don’t know. Won’t until these samples process. But we’ll also have to know when she actually loses her powers to figure out a timetable.”

“You can’t tell from all this?”

“It’s not exact, no. This cell was intentionally infected. It’ll act quicker since we took it from a time when Kara’s powers were already blown. Could be a day or two, could be a week. As for the recovery after, again, I won’t know until we know when she loses her powers.”

“I don’t like those odds” Hank stated gruffly, “and I don’t like the fact someone manipulated the Gahedran into attacking Supergirl either. They have no memory of the incident beyond walking along the street one minute and the next they were drowning and asking Supergirl for help.”

“I think there’s more than one person behind all this. I think whoever is targeting Kara has been manipulated somehow. They’re a threat but there’s someone else behind it all, someone who
knows all too well about how to deal with a Kryptonian.”

Both Eliza and Hank looked at Alex with her theory, realizing however far-fetched it made the most sense.

“Get in touch with Superman, ask if he knows anything about this. Have Winn locate Kara or Miss Grant, quietly, away from our systems just in case. He’ll be able to do so quietly without being detected. This stays between us for now.” Hank’s tone left no room for argument. “I can double as Supergirl for a while which may throw this possible second entity off a bit. We’re feeling around in the dark here and I don’t like it one bit.”

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Cat sat across from Kara, hiding her expression behind another slow sip of coffee as she watched the woman finish up. She was voracious, her love of food showing through with every little noise of appreciation. She coated the last of her toast with egg and bacon remnants from her one plate only to fork another mouthful of her waffles.

“So good.” She muttered around her bite, already forking another and swirling it around the sticky pool of her syrup.

“I’m glad you like it.”

Kara suddenly remembered herself, swallowing her food heartily before chasing it down with a sip of coffee.

“Sorr-“

Cat shook her head, halting Kara’s apology. “It’s nice to see someone so appreciative.”

Kara slowed the consumption of her next bite, again chasing it with a fuller sip of coffee before pointing to the last bit of her waffles that were left. “Can I ask something?”

Cat nodded.

“What’s in these?”

“Like them?” Kara nodded emphatically before forking another, smaller bite. “It’s not quite fall so I didn’t have pumpkin but I seem to recall your penchant for cinnamon flavored things. That and a little brown sugar are the difference from regular waffles.”

“It tastes like cinnamon toast crunch but real.”

Cat wrinkled her nose as Kara spoke around her food, her smile hidden again behind another sip of coffee. “Again, I’m glad you like it, I’ll give you the recipe.”

Kara swallowed thickly, kicking the remnant of syrup from her lips before she sat back with a satisfied smile. “You should write a cookbook.”

Cat looked over at her a bit surprised. It wasn’t that she didn’t have recipes or things she had gathered in her time as a reporter in other places beyond Metropolis. She had plenty of five-star master chefs on speed dial even who could probably lend a hand but Cat Grant chef? It was almost
laughable.

“I’m not that good.”

Kara tipped her head at the other woman. “You knew the brown sugar and cinnamon thing, you put something in the eggs cause regular eggs don’t taste like that and that wasn’t just regular bacon.”

Cat rose an eyebrow at the praising lilt of Kara’s tone coupled with the undertone of trying to convince Cat not to sell herself short without directly voicing it. She gave a small shrug after another minute, setting her now empty mug down.

“So I know a few things when it comes to food. Carter’s been the benefactor of that, but I’ve only published a few through CatCo, none of my own. It reads a little trite don’t you think?”

Kara sat back again, her enjoyment around this particular topic waning with the mention of Carter. “Is he okay?”

The sudden shift in mood and focal point hit Cat oddly, the vacation-esque domesticity of their morning drifting away. She noted Kara’s more somber posture and the slight fidget of her body before letting out a noiseless sigh.

“He’s safe, with Adam.” Cat noticed the twitch in Kara’s shoulders with the mention. “Precautionary arrangement. His father was leaving the country after Carter’s visit and I didn’t want him to come back to…”

Kara gave a small nod as Cat’s words drifted into silence.

“He wanted me to say hello to Supergirl,” Cat cautioned after a minute or two. “Said I couldn’t be safer with either you or her.”

Kara glanced over at Cat directly, swallowing back her initial statement. She was under the assumption, given everything, that they had already exposed her identity for safety’s sake to the woman across from her, but now she wasn’t so sure. Sure she and Cat had teased and skirted around that truth but Kara had never outright told the other woman in her own words. She’d had plenty of chances and again figured Cat already knew. With all this, she thought they had robbed the chance from her, not having been witness to the aftermath of the explosion at CatCo and what Hank or Alex may have had to divulge. That was a constant battle between them, had been ever since she had tried so hard to convince the woman otherwise only to wish she hadn’t after. Then again, maybe she had put too little faith in her sister and Hank’s attempts to keep her identity safe even from Cat.

“Cat… I’m-“

“I’m going to get dressed.” Whatever was brimming on Kara’s lips Cat knew she wasn’t ready for it. Not now, not yet. “As easy as it is to lounge around in our pajamas, we’ve got some things to do.”

Kara nodded after a minute as Cat gathered their plates and made for the sink “I’m gonna grab a shower then.”
Chapter 14

Winn made his way back into the DEO, having done what he could to get word to Kara and Cat beyond sending them some kind of smoke signal. The last known signal he had that was solid enough was somewhere just outside National City about ten thousand feet in the air. Any others had bounced or been so fleeting before he had an opportunity to pinpoint them making any direct contact next to impossible.

He also noted that both women’s phones were off or so remote as to make any active signal impossible without amping up his attempts or redirecting satellites. Which would make that whole keep it quiet thing kind of moot. Instead, he had done the next best thing, hacking into the carrier site and pinpointing her account and associated devices to push a notice. It would come through as a carrier notification like a reminder to pay her bill or a feature update while generating the real warning that Cat or Kara needed to contact them. It would ensure some kind of anonymity for Kara and her alter ego if Cat didn’t already know for certain and maybe spark enough concern in his former boss to follow through instead of ignoring it for some kind of check-in. Assuming Kara hadn’t already lost her powers.

He had done the same with Kara’s phone, while actually relaying that her powers would flake out somehow and that she needed to either be prepared or contact her sister ASAP if it had already happened. Of course, if their phones were off it wouldn’t transmit until they were on again or if he were lucky, the moment they had a clear enough signal.

The moment he broke the threshold of the elevator to the ops floor Alex was there to meet him. Her stance easy to read and her look expectant.

“Whoa... geeze... get a bell or something Alex.”

Alex tipped her head at him, hands already on her hips. “Well?”

“I sent the messages.”

“But?”

“Their phones are off.”

“So you don’t actually know where they are?”

“Not without drawing a lot of attention, no.”

Alex let out a sigh and Winn genuinely felt sorry for her. Kara and Alex were the closest things he had to siblings, he worried enough about them when their lives were in only a moderate amount of danger and they were easy to locate. Not like this.

“I know... that’s not what you want to hear, but Alex they’re both plenty capable, even without powers Kara’s… I mean I’ve seen her do some incredible things without using her powers.”

“Not the point.”

“Neither is it to wish you could trade places with either of them Alex.” He ignores her glare, realizing it was all bravado for the other emotions she was fighting with right now. Alex had always been Kara’s protector, even as Supergirl to some extent. That was a hard self imposition to let go of. Especially when it was rooted in parental expectations. Sure Alex and her mother were on
a better footing since that Thanksgiving with Livewire but things like that ran impossibly deep. He would know.

“She’s going to be all right. It’s not ideal but Cat isn’t some lightweight either.”

“You know that how?”

“I worked with her longer than Kara did. I know plenty, and I’ve seen the way Cat can be around her. You’ve caught glimpses of it but don’t just write the woman off because you think you could do better.”

Alex rose a high brow at Winn’s little defensive outburst, realizing she was acting poorly all around and Kara would be the first to call her on it.

“Cat’s been in the same position Kara’s in now, only she had far more to lose and still managed. I’m not saying she’s you by any means, but trust me when it comes to Kara, outside of Superman she couldn’t be with anyone better… and that’s still a maybe on his part.”

Alex brow furrowed with that statement, already her mind working overtime with what she didn’t know that Winn did on the subject. She chalked it up to the firsthand experience of the day in and day out of CatCo although a part of her knew that couldn’t be the only reason for his stance on the matter.

“Has the guy done or said anything more?” Winn questioned, changing the subject. He had long known Kara’s feeling about Cat, especially when Kara made such a display at having lost everything she had with the woman at one point forever ago. What he hadn’t been so keen on was Cat’s feelings towards Kara, until all this started. It was all still suspect but his instincts told him otherwise.

“Not yet, but I have a feeling this isn’t just one guy anymore.”

“Oh?”

“The message isn’t clear. It’s not even all over the place. It’s made Kara this voice to be listened to while also being this whole stop what you’re saying.”

“Okay... I don’t follow.”

“That’s why I need you. I want you to try and break down the voice feed from Metropolis.”

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Kara squeezed her eyes shut, the super speed-driven search she had started a few hours ago easing off to nothing as she shook her hand out and let her head fall back against the wall with a small sigh from where she sat. Sometimes she could get hyper-focused on her tasks like anyone else. Although usually she just needed a short breather and a snack or twenty and she was good to go. Now she felt she needed half a restaurant worth of food and a nap.

Between that first call out to CatCo, through her fight in the bay and leading up to this moment, she hadn’t slept but more than an hour or two. Nor had she kept up with her usual calorie intake. She rubbed her hands over her face to clear the fog before stretching. Running on empty and pushing
herself to the brink would do no one any good.

With a glance to her watch, she realized it was later than she intended to spend on all this. If she were alone, it would be one thing. She’d load herself down with food and get back to it.

Kara pushed off the bed, sitting on the edge a moment as she tracked over the lines and notes and recall of everything she could remember from the start of her articles up to yesterday. Her network of possibilities and connections looked like a giant spider web spanning half the room. With no clear path or lead in sight to follow. Kara’s stomach made itself known, forcing her to break away from a seemingly fruitless endeavor for more bountiful pursuits.

Kara slipped out into the hall towards the kitchen coming to a slow stop just like earlier in the morning. Only instead of finding Cat in the kitchen, she was pacing slowly across the living room. Papers in hand, a mess of others strewn about various surfaces, it did not differ from walking into her office near the end of a workday.

Except instead of steel and reflective high rise glass, the vast depth of the forest surrounded her, highlighted by the rapidly diminishing sunlight. Instead of razor-sharp lines of to-die-for contour and the crack of staccato heels, Cat passed silently on bare feet, black leggings and an overly large cable-knit sweater that hung off a bare shoulder.

Set against glimmers of sunshine, hair loosely curled from air drying and glasses perched along the bridge of her nose, Kara was enraptured. Mind questioning vaguely, somewhere deep down, if Cat ever looked at her the way she was looking at the other woman now.

It wasn’t so out of character for Cat to be comfortable, especially so far away from the city where her reputation and outward appearance were paramount. It gave Kara a new appreciation for the woman, and her own well maintained persona. Kara could only hope on a wish that she carried herself like that outside of being Supergirl. Their present situation only seemed to point out how her current path towards that ideal was few and far between.

Kara watched Cat push up on the balls of her feet, barely missing a step as she pivoted around with the ease of a dancer, never losing her spatial awareness as she navigated back the other way across the room. Stepping around various stretches of furniture or paperwork in the process. She made a small noise to announce herself, watching some of those guarded walls slip back into place as Cat continued to pace under someone else’s gaze. Cat struck through a section of a paragraph before making a note in the margin before slowing to a stop on a pivot until she was facing Kara’s approach.

She took inventory of the other woman, the corner of her mouth quirking up as she hooked her glasses and took them off. Kara stepped closer, hands in the pocket of her jeans and Cat noted how she almost looked like she belonged in her white tank, rolled-up sleeves and half-buttoned overshirt.

“Was beginning to wonder if you were coming out at all.” Cat mused, dropping the stack of papers in her hands on a nearby surface.

Kara rubbed at the back of her neck sheepishly, scanning over what she thought had been review articles for CatCo. “Got a little involved, although I see I’m not the only one.”

She looked over various personnel files draped about, along with email correspondences and various other elements that had little to do with next month’s issue.

“Two heads are better than one, even on their own.” Cat allowed as her only explanation before
setting her glasses on a side table. “Figure anything out?”

Kara shook her head, leaning against a support beam. “Not really. You?”

Cat smiled faintly, looking at her explosion of papers and whatnot before mimicking Kara’s actions. “Nothing solid, yet.”

Kara gave a nod before pointing towards the disarray of paper. “Need help organizing all this? Makes it hard to sit down anywhere.”

Cat ran a hand through her hair, her other hand circling behind her hip as she looked around. “Might go faster with both of us.”

Kara pushed off the beam, nabbing papers casually left to the ground along her way as Cat moved a few stacks around to pull from later. The two made short work of the room before Kara was standing in front of the other woman offering her a stack.

“I was thinking I might start a fire or something outside, maybe grab something to eat?”

Cat arranged her stack near the others, leaving a hand on the bulk of one before studying the other woman as she crossed the room.

“Actually, I was thinking about going into town.” Cat offered, watching Kara stop in front of one of the floor to ceiling windows. Seeing her framed by the setting sun and the open woodland gave Cat a new appreciation for their current location choice. She had only ever seen Kara bracketed by high rises or suspended aloft just beyond her balcony. The only other time she had seen her out in nature was the time she left her on a cliff-side just outside the city during that first interview.

The questions that came to mind to ask the woman if she could redo that interview now.

She turned away easily enough, worried Kara might see something else in her expression even Cat wasn’t sure she was ready to admit.

“I know Jacob took you at least partway, no doubt with his homegrown dime store tour guide commentary.”

Kara smiled with a small laugh of a sound, turning to look at the other woman, noting the tension draped across her shoulders working its way down her back.

“Clock tower’s been there a hundred years.”

Cat grinned unseen, giving a nod.

“Said your lake has the best fish this side of the county line though.”

“That it does,” Cat affirmed before facing the woman again. “No one will know us here,” except for a few locals Cat thought to herself. “Not like back in the city, if you’re worried.”

Kara shook her head slowly, feeling that tension pawing at Cat’s shoulders coiling around her own chest.

“Let me get changed, you’re fine- good. I mean you’re dressed… you don’t have to change.”

Kara tipped her head with Cat’s misstep before putting her hands in her pockets to keep from fidgeting with her fingers further. “Okay, I’ll, I’ll wait here I guess.”
“Okay…” Cat watched her carefully, almost wanting to nix the idea before she stepped aside and made her way to her bedroom.
Chapter Notes

::WARNING:: This chapter contains a smidge of a situation that some people may find uncomfortable in the form of cat-calling and unwanted advances

Kara glanced over as Cat pulled off the access road. She had seen a sign a few miles back about some diner but no other evidence of life beyond a few expansive stretches of wood, or the occasional farm of some sort. She caught sight of the mentioned diner in all its nostalgic glory before they turned down the other way. Jacob had kept going along the access road and brought her in from another entry point and straight into the parking lot.

As the SUV ambled down the main drag Kara couldn’t help the pull of a smile to the corner of her mouth. The street itself was actually called Main Street, the buildings no taller than a few stories. Those that went above three floors were live-work. The diner was one thing, the street as a whole felt like something out of a movie. Large, hand-painted windows advertised each place of business. Little nuances in statues and trimmings that showcased the history of the town and even an old school marquee indicated a four screen theatre showing movies from at least a year ago while advertising specialty weekend showings. More people than she even thought possible walked around, each a little slice of their remote locale that came together in the perfect mosaic of a small town.

Cat continued down the road, hiding her smirk as she caught sight of Kara ogling their surroundings as she pulled the car into a space at the far end of the street. Cat slipped out of the car after Kara was already out, giving a small stretch before glancing to her watch as Kara stepped to the meter.

Before Kara could fish out enough change Cat put her hand up halting any further progress until she pointed to the sign just above. “Now we’re good.”

Kara followed the line to the parking times and smirked, looking back to Cat who had the barest inclination to look smug. “Leave it to you to time it right.”

“Always be prepared.” Cat mused before looking down the main drag. “I figured you would want to look around a bit before heading down to eat. Unless you’re starving?”

Kara was hungry but not so much that she couldn’t take a detour here and there. She took inventory of their surroundings from faded brick side paintings of what were once original storefronts or points of interest, to the old-style lamp posts and iron wrought embellishments pointing the way every ten feet. There were a few places with outside areas, A-frame chalkboards laying out hours or specials, planters filled with the seasons fare of flowers to one dollar or less bargain bins and nicknacks.

“I don’t even know where to start.”

“Well, there is a great ice cream shop and chocolatier a few buildings down. They have other confectionery as well.”
“Before dinner?” Kara looked at Cat wondering who this woman was in front of her.

“An adventure, remember?”

Kara rose an eyebrow at the other woman who mustered the most innocent of looks, were it not for the break of a smile pulling at the corner of her mouth “What else is there?”

“Well…” Cat started to move slowly, Kara moved quickly to get into step with her as she listened. “There are a few shops, the grocery, and main wherewithal is behind us but you know that.”

Kara nodded, stuffing her hands into her pockets for fear of suddenly reaching over and taking Cat’s hand or wrapping one around her arm. The abrupt desire to do so seemingly coming from too many B-quality movies and the à propos surrounding.

“There’s the standard hardware and housewares shops, a record store, a brewery which is really just the local bar, and a few other unique places.” Cat nodded towards the compounding pharmacy sandwiched between the local doctor’s office and vet. “Few gift items in there, or someone’s latest animal brood for sale.”

Kara glanced over, looking at the sawdust-filled window front and the large puppies bounding around at passersby before casting another curious glance at Cat.

“There’s the bookstore which is a glorified library but they have a gallery attached to it with a studio above that has a weekly Bob the Happy Painter workshop.”

Kara couldn’t help but laugh a bit as Cat nudged her.

“It’s a small town, stuck just out of the way between a few tourist spots. What do you want?”

Kara shook her head a bit, noticing a flower shop intermingled with a produce stand along with a town museum touting the lengthy history of settlement and mining that put the place on the map before modernization took hold. There was a bingo hall with a modest marquee and the local elk lodge. Weathered metal signs with bulb lights or neon rose above the single-story fronts to pull attention, while handmade signs hung just under awnings or from lamp posts elsewhere.

“I dunno, I just… this place doesn’t even seem real. Given how it’s just far enough off the map, but still manages to be a tourist stop if someone’s lost I guess. I’m just amazed it’s still-“

“Thriving?”

“Well… yeah, and-” Kara continued to glance around, trying to find any sign or moniker or name recognition noting how Cat and this place might be linked. Finding none, she turned her attention ahead of them again as they ambled down the sidewalk along with what seemed like a good three-quarter of the town’s population.

“And?” Cat pressed, knowing Kara was holding back some curiosity that she was trying to better define or suddenly unsure if she should even ask.

“How do you know so much about this place?” Kara side-eyed Cat for a second before getting caught and turned her attention back to the surrounding storefronts.

Cat kept her expression neutral, mostly, realizing Kara hadn’t been sure if she should ask the question. She drew in a deep breath, setting her hands behind her back easily as they walked.

“I’m not so otherworldly that I don’t know what’s in my own backyard you know.”
“It’s not that, I mean it is sort of? This isn’t exactly National City or just outside it.” Kara said, looking over at Cat once more to gauge her responses. “I just… I’m not making the connection?”

Cat hummed with a bit of a nod. Whether or not it was technically in her backyard, she knew plenty about this town, far more than she was letting on. Jacob was easy to explain as a caretaker of the property she owned, or more sort of owned. Donated was more like it, with specific stipulations, but still.

“My father made a lot of money in land deals, outside of his publishing house of course. It was more of an altruistic hobby, but he was good at it for being just a hobbyist.”

Kara studied Cat carefully, she had only heard the woman speak about her father one time before during an argument over the phone with her mother years ago.

“I was about thirteen maybe when he brought me out here. He wanted to show me the value of things.”

Kara raised an eyebrow, looking back over MainStreet again. Cat had always come from some element of money, even if her current wealth was moderately self-made. Kara had read in Cat’s own book how she was cut out and cut off from that fortune even if it left the in-depth details out. Recalling that particular chapter, the woman had skirted around her father’s death, and the few years in-between only to segue right into her graduation from college and forward onto the Daily Planet.

“Daddy always said we can’t take without giving something back. That we have to replenish the things that contribute to lifting us up.” Cat smiled with a melancholic nostalgia. “Of course at thirteen I didn’t get the point as well as I should have.”

“I can relate.” Kara offered, catching herself before expanding on that with Cat’s look in her direction. “The lessons our parents try to teach us when we think we have all the time in the world to figure them out.”

Cat saw the shift in Kara’s demeanor, remembering how Kara had told her that her parents had died in a fire. Only to realize now, with striking clarity, what she actually meant given who Kara really was.

“You’re not far off.” Cat breathed, holding Kara’s gaze with a mutual sense of knowing before looking ahead of them again. “This place and a good portion of the land surrounding it were put up for sale by some landowner’s son who inherited it, and resolved to have it cleared. It was for this concept vanity project or something equally ridiculous, I don’t really remember. What I do remember, was that my father had the timber and water rights, while the town owned the mineral rights.”

Kara’s brow furrowed a bit as she considered that, not being one to know much about buying or selling land. However, land with no ownership of what’s in, on or beneath it wouldn’t benefit anyone seeking to develop it.

“So what happened?”

“The town got together at my father’s urging and they came to an agreement.”

Kara looked over at Cat, the anticipation written all over her features while the other woman remained calm and collected despite Kara’s eagerness to get to the resolution of Cat’s connection to the town.
“You’re going to make me ask, aren’t you?”

Cat chuckled softly, giving a small shrug. “I find your curiosity about it appealing that’s all. Although, I feel as if I’ve set your expectations too high here. It’s not *that* interesting.”

“It involves you and that’s very interesting to me,” Kara said without thinking, shouting at herself internally as Cat looked over at her more directly. Kara bit into her bottom lip a bit before giving an exaggerated shrug. “You… you’re such a secretive person about things like this and I, it- this... getting to know something almost no one else does...” Kara shifted her weight a bit. “I’ve never heard of this place or anything when it comes to you or CatCo or-“

Cat stopped and Kara stuttered a bit, half afraid her rambling on would shut the other woman up and that dinner would be redirected back to the house.

“You think I’m interesting?”

Kara curled her hands inside the depths of her pockets, rocking up on her feet a little.

“This part is-,” Kara saw the slightest shift in Cat’s features bordering on disappointment and rushed to correct herself. “I mean all parts of you are… interesting, and-“ The corner of Cat’s mouth twitched and Kara felt her throat redden as heat rushed to her cheeks. “I mean, the things that, wait okay, uhm-” Cat rose a high brow at her and Kara let out a self exasperated sigh.

“Yes.”

Cat tipped her head looking at Kara and her studious and straightforward answer.

“I do, but things like this, I uh, I don’t really know anything about those parts beyond second-hand knowledge that you’ve shared in your book or a few insight articles I’ve read.”

Cat seemed to straighten some while Kara continued to flounder. Cat had read everything she could on Supergirl that she hadn’t written or approved, delved into Kara’s past on her own in a very clinical, fact-finding way when she had attempted to force her identity reveal. So why was it so surprising to find that Kara had done the same with her to some degree? Or was the surprising part the fact that Kara wanted to know her beyond the CEO persona she lived and breathed in every day?

Kara took her expression and silence as a misstep, that she had pushed or crossed some line despite how many they had already flown clear over given where they were and why.

“Working with you, I know a lot about Cat Grant, Queen of All Media… and maybe I kind of like that you want to tell me more about you as just Cat.”

Cat swallowed thickly, watching Kara struggle to convey something she still had yet to put into words but was written all over her body. She stepped back a half step and Kara visibly winced with the action, as if it had confirmed her worst fears with her current stammering. Kara rubbed at the back of her neck, internally chastising herself before digging her fist back into her pocket.

“I… uhm, if you want to just get food and take it back or maybe just head back we can. I didn’t mean-” the weight of Cat’s hand against her silenced Kara. She looked down at the featherlight touches of Cat’s fingertips across the flat of her chest. A part of her realizing, were they back in National City the woman would undoubtedly feel her suit crest beneath her plain clothes. That idea made her breath catch a bit, as did the implication of what Cat’s touch signaled at this moment.

“Do you want to go back, Kara?” The woman shook her head in a short-lived series of motions.
“Do you really want to know about… this me?” With Kara’s second, slower nod Cat flexed her fingers slightly before drawing them away. Kara’s features showed no sign of doubt and Cat took a deep grounding breath because of it.

“I am a secretive person, and I’m also not very good at these things.”

Kara kept utterly still with Cat’s confession, afraid that even breathing might startle her into silence or disregard.

“You have no reason, especially now, to have some other intent or purpose behind your curiosity.” Cat sensed Kara’s almost immediate need to further that ideal with the depth of her next breath but kept her hand in place, as if she would reach out and touch Kara again, intending to ease her. “As much as I know that, I am definitely not used to it. Everybody wants something, typically with me, it’s never something good or even mutually beneficial.”

Cat stepped closer when Kara again made to interrupt, her hand lifting from the level of her chest to just in front of the other woman’s lips without making contact. “You’re an exception Kara, but old habits and self-preservation are hard things to get around sometimes. If I react poorly, please don’t take it personally?”

Kara gave a small nod as she tracked Cat’s hand while it drifted away again before drawing in a shallow breath. “Can I ask you something now?”

Cat nodded, bracing herself for the impact of what Kara might have to say.

“Cat…” Kara shifted her stance, turning slightly without directly moving closer in full on conspiratorial fashion. “Do you secretly own this town?”

Cat looked confused while Kara allowed a smile to bloom across her features. Her question was so disarming in the midst of the weight pulling at the both of them that all Cat could even come up with as a response was to laugh. Kara grinned with the reaction. She was thankful Cat had seen her question and posturing for what it was, as something to ease the tension and Cat’s own apprehension and not a dismissal of what she had been trying to convey to Kara.

Before Cat could respond there was a sharp whistle of a sound that pulled both women’s attention, followed by the undercurrent of lewd intentions as two men just outside the brewery stepped out of the doorway.

“You ladies looking for a good time?” A man in a flannel shirt and a red baseball cap spoke first while his friend hung back, but seemed equally infatuated by the two. “We’d be happy to show you around. Although I have to say those pants of yours,” He made a cluck of a sound with his tongue. “They’re doing the job for me just fine.”

Kara stepped just ahead of Cat as the two men drew closer, eyeing both of them up as if they were their last meals. She drew a breath to say something just as Cat wrapped an arm around Kara’s waist and nuzzled up beside her.

“Have all the good time we could ever need right here.” Cat gently urged Kara to continue forward with a small tug along her belt loop. The two men looked at each other with a knowing smirk before the one man nudged the brim of his cap up, edging around them again to stop their progress.

“What’s the rush? We’re just bein’ friendly. You’re a couple of out of towners and we’re a couple of out of towners. I’m sure there’s somewhere we can all have a good time together.” His friend
rounded the two of them a bit, eyes dragging across their bodies until Kara set a hand to his chest and ushered him back in front of her and into her eye line with little struggle at least on her part.

The man looked down at where Kara’s fingers pushed into his chest, ignoring the slight bit of pain that her forceful pressure applied before giving a small, snuff of a laugh. “I think this one wants to dance, whatcha think Reggie? She’s already trying to take the lead.”

The man in the hat snickered with a nod, still checking out Cat. “I’d love to dance with this one. Show you a thing or two you’re missin’ out on.”

“Here Blondie lemme show you how it’s done.” The younger of the two stated as he made to grab for Kara’s arm.

“I’m fairly certain the lady isn’t interested in dancing, son.” The deeper tone of another man from within the mouth of the bar doorway halted any further progress. “I’d suggest you keep your distance, for safety’s sake.” The flare of a match illuminated his sun-weathered skin as he lit a cigarette before lifting his head enough to regard the two men who had the sense enough to step back. Kara pulled Cat closer to her with the distraction, catching the glare of a badge fastened to the man’s hip as he shifted his weight to get more comfortable.

“Be a shame to have to scrape you boys up off the ground after she’s done with you. Whole lotta paperwork involved. Could take hours before you get out, not so sure that’d settle well with your delivery schedule.” The man sent a round of smoke towards the two just as the younger one caught sight of the badge and nudged his friend to step further back.

“You ladies have a nice night.”

Cat sent her silent thank you towards the man with a look before flexing her hand around Kara’s waist to get her moving before she face-planted both men into the ground just for existing.
Chapter 16

Kara ran a hand through her hair, while Cat excused herself to the bathroom. The pair had easily made their way across the street after their little encounter with the two less than savory gentlemen before Cat had pulled them into the aforementioned confectionery shop. After ensuring they weren’t followed she had released Kara, albeit reluctantly, before excusing herself. Kara took a deep breath while she waited, finally feeling some sense of calm. With another count to ten in her head in her native language, she idly wandered around the store, trying to take in all the sights and scents the place offered while also attempting to will her body’s hearty reaction to the vacancy that had been Cat’s body against her own.

Cat let out a deep breath, staring at her reflection in the small bathroom mirror. Her skin was a touch flush and not because of the hastened pace they had set to get across the street either. She wasn’t even sure why her initial reaction to those two men had been to wrap herself around Kara and lay claim to her instead of either ignoring the two or confounding them with some kind of underhanded comment about their hygiene and lack of respect while continuing to walk along unphased.

She rubbed just to the left of her sternum, feeling the thunder of her own heartbeat finally beginning to ease. The driving force of its rapid-fire pace being how good it felt to have Kara turn about and wrap protectively around her. Cat would be one of the first people to tell anyone she didn’t need saving, that white knights and chivalry were dead or so far misrepresented anymore they weren’t worth it.

Her body, on the other hand, betrayed that ideal. She could still feel the phantom weight of the other woman’s hand low around her waist, along with the solid structure of her body where Cat had pressed into the length of her without remorse. She shuddered belatedly at the sense memory of Kara’s torso tightening against her as she put her hand against that man’s chest and ushered him back like a child being moved away from a cookie jar.

This was not the time or place for such indulgences. Kara was still very much in danger and they were no closer to knowing who was behind it all so that they might return to their normal everyday lives.

Apart and alone.

Cat scowled at her own reflection and the little voice that had added that thought before running a hand through her hair and straightening her shirt.

“Knock it off,” she muttered to herself before making her way back out.

Kara carefully withdrew a small flower made of chocolate and candied sugar glass. Turning the clear container over as she marveled at the intricacies of the delectable edible only to shift her focus as Cat reappeared from the back. Cat glanced from the stargazer lily confection in Kara’s fingertips to the look leveled her way and swore to herself inside her head. Kara was equally careful in setting the object down before crossing the small space with a few creaks of the old wooden floor in Cat’s direction.

“Find anything you like?” Cat immediately regretted the question the second Kara’s eyes jumped up to hers swallowing visibly.

“Plenty,” Kara allowed after a moment before clearing her throat. “I could buy half this store, Alex
wouldn’t believe half of what’s in here.”

‘Good’, Cat thought, Kara bringing up her sister meant at least a part of her was still realistic about what they were supposed to be doing here. Although even that was a stretch given how Kara just kept looking at her despite their surroundings.

When Kara refused to say anything more Cat pinned her with a pointed look and a high eyebrow. “What?”

Kara tried and failed to contain her smile, fingers weaving about near her sides before she jammed them into her pockets. “Is this why you insisted on ordering your own cupcakes?” Kara gestured around the place before putting her hand back into her pocket “Why you never told me where they were from so I could have them waiting for you?”

Cat tipped her head a bit, as Kara nodded in another direction. Cat followed her gaze and swore yet again at herself as the signature pink boxes set across the top shelf behind the counter registered in Cat’s mind.

“Those boxes are manufactured for a multitude of different companies,” Cat said easily while crossing her arms over her chest.

Kara bit at her lips, tucking them in a little to stifle her ever-growing smile. “The woman behind the counter asked if you wanted your regular spread.”

Cat’s nose actually twitched with the effort to keep the rest of her expression impassive as she looked over at the staff behind the counter already busy with putting together an order.

“Not a word,” Cat uttered with a deadly seriousness as Kara merely gave a shrug.

“No idea what you’re talking about.”

“I’ll just bet.” Cat huffed, stepping away with Kara a few steps behind. She watched the other woman’s reflection in various panes of glass as they looked over every little thing the place had to offer.

“I… hope you added something to that order.” Cat mused before straightening away from a shelf full of various chocolates before Cat silently conveyed she’d have some to the nearest tender.

“I wasn’t sure if I could. I mean the only mon-“

Kara came up short as Cat stepped into her space again, arms still crossed which forced Kara to take a shallow breath so they didn’t rub against each other.

“Consider it hazard pay.” Cat allowed as Kara straightened a little further before giving a nod. “Not as if you haven’t earned it, Kara.”

Kara swallowed visibly, not sure what terrified her more, the tone of Cat’s voice or the fact that she kind of enjoyed being… doted on by the woman, if one could call it that. Cat stepped past her again as Kara let out the breath she’d been holding only to turn on her heel as Cat settled up near the ice cream display.

“Can I get you anything more?” The woman behind the counter asked while others on her staff finished their order.

Cat looked over at Kara before making a broad sweeping gesture towards the flavors laid out to
them. Kara stepped closer, looking up at the menu to gauge what was to be had, only to realize
nothing on the menu was anything close to what she was expecting. There were adult flavors
infused with a variety of alcohols, combinations she’d only see on restaurant menus as dinner
choices and other seasonal mixes that made her mouth water at the thought.

“Can I try one?” Kara asked looking to the woman behind the counter.

“Just point it out and I’ll hand you a spoonful.”

Kara pointed to the spices chocolate with red swirls already biting at her lip in anticipation.

“The Aztec is one of our favorites.” The woman handed over the spoon and Kara could practically
taste the cinnamon before she’d even tried it. With the glee of someone who truly appreciated
food, Kara turned the spoon and nearly inhaled the thing, while Cat looked on curiously.

Kara hummed with a bit of a laugh as chilies, dark chocolate and cinnamon-infused themselves
across her taste buds. She actually felt a bit of heat which was surprising enough to warrant getting
a scoop. Kara gave a satisfied nod and popped the spoon out clean as could be. “I’ll take that with
the salted carma-vanilla topper.”

“Cone or?”

“Waffle cone.”

Cat couldn’t help the smile that pulled at her face watching the other woman before she cleared her
throat and hid it away.

“I’ll have the bourbon,” Cat said without missing a beat. Kara looked at the menu again, reading
over Cat’s choice with a tip of her head. Bourbon infused caramel ice cream with brownie bits
mixed in and salted dark chocolate ribbons. “One scoop in a cup.”

When Kara made a noise Cat glanced over at her, seeing a streak of disappointment flutter across
her features before the woman mouthed the word adventure and Cat couldn’t help the sigh and
accompanying eye roll.

“Make it a waffle cup.” Cat amended, seeing Kara’s eyes light up a bit before Cat shook her head.
She knew she would pay for all of this with extra spin classes, and the worst part was there wasn’t
even any fun in dragging Kara along with her given her stamina. She quickly shoved the
threatening rabbit hole that single thought opened up as she turned back to the counter and made
her way to the register.

“Do you want anything else?” Cat questioned, wallet already open and out on the counter.

Kara spun, almost tripping in the process as Cat side-eyed her before Kara shook her head. “No, I, I
can get—”

“I’ve got it,” Cat stated, passing over a fan of cash. “You can get dinner.”

There was no argument in Cat’s tone, not that Kara would have made one. The shop owner pulled
her attention as she passed over Kara’s waffle cone and Cat’s bowl with a small wink. “Here you
are.”

The staff behind her was finishing up with the two boxes, one full of cupcakes and the other full of
chocolates and truffles. They were bound together before being placed in a larger bag to make it
easier for transport.
“Would you like us to deliver it somewhere? Seeing as you’re going to dinner.”

Cat took her change, as Kara eased up behind her, already clearing the edge of her cone to keep it from creating channels that would cause drippage soon enough. “We’re parked at the north end of the street. Black SUV.” Cat grabbed a pen and flipped over one of their business cards as she scrawled down the plate and the seven-digit code to the door lock. You can put it all in the back, just be sure to press the lock button on the panel when you’re done, Jenny.”

The woman smiled warmly, taking the card and setting it in her own pocket. “I’ll guard it with my life.”

Cat made an amused sound of agreement before stowing her wallet only to have Kara offer her the waffle cone bowl filled with her selection. “Come on trouble.”

Kara grinned behind her ice cream, telling Jenny and the others thank you before catching up to the other woman as they made their way back out onto the street. The sun had dipped lower in the sky since they had arrived, and with it the real beauty of the stretch of main street blossomed. Already a few storefronts were pulling up their display placards, while others set out iron wrought chairs and a few tables. Lights strung across the street and between each business came on in a cascade as the street lamps hummed to new life.

Kara stepped out onto the sidewalk, her ice cream nearly forgotten as she navigated towards the edge of the curb watching the town transition from day into night. She heard the fine-tune of instruments most likely from a live band striking up at the brewery and hoped that they might go there on another night to erase the initial taint of it from earlier. Neon signs buzzed brighter, while others flickered and flashed in slow succession to draw attention to the nightlife offered.

Already more people had filtered out than when they arrived, a line was forming at the theatre down the way and the elk lodge’s doors were now wide open as calls to get their seats early were overheard across a loudspeaker inside. Cat watched Kara with a knowing smile, savoring another bit of her ice cream as she leaned her shoulder against the doorway of the ice cream shop content with watching the other woman get lost in her surroundings.

For a solid few moments, Cat completely forgot why they were even in this place beyond being on some kind of unspoken date. That certainly wasn’t her motive by any means but a part of her wished it had been. If only she’d gotten out of her own way enough to consider the passing gazes and occasional lunch meetings disguised as an editing session and countless other found moments between the two of them as something more. As Kara turned to look back at her, Cat was hit with the sudden realization of how much time she had wasted, maybe how much time they had both wasted. Aside from a few misplaced expressions of affection across the workplace, from unworthy suitors in Cat’s opinion Cat hadn’t ever really seen or even heard of Kara going out on a date. Although she guessed the suit and cape would put a bit of a dampener on that prospect, yet Kara had found the time to seek Cat out with and without those elements.

The first day they met she had demanded devotion, but that had been on a strictly professional level. With the look Kara was giving her now she wondered if she hadn’t unintentionally cursed herself. As Kara’s smile broadened, and she luxuriated in another taste of her own ice cream, Cat decided cursed might not be so terrible.

“This place is amazing. Thank you for showing it to me.”

Cat plucked her spoon free of her mouth before pointing upward. “You haven’t seen anything yet.”

Kara’s brow furrowed in confusion before she followed the gesture and looked up only to have her
breath taken away.

“There’s no light for hundreds of miles out here,” Cat whispered, certain Kara heard her even if her head was thrown back and she appeared on the verge of tears. Kara could always see more than any human could especially when it came to the night sky, this was no exception. She hadn’t realized how much light the city actually obscured despite her abilities until she looked up now. Even with her glasses on, she could make out the rich expanse of the milky way and surrounding constellations against the backdrop of deep marble canyons and the silhouettes of huge trees and mountains across the horizon.

Without thinking Kara reached up, sliding her glasses off and feeling her chest ache as she tried to adjust her eyes to see even more. Her vision hazed and with a deeper breath, Kara figured the surrounding main street lights and the abrupt onslaught of her emotions were interfering with her ability to gain any further clarity. She let out an awestruck laugh despite the setback turning a bit as she mapped the skies.

Cat felt her chest tighten and her heart hammer away at the cage of her ribs as she just stared at the other woman and her sudden abandon to the night sky and everything it laid out above them. Kara was absolutely breathtaking. Cat gradually realized the other woman was someone who had literally traveled through those very stars. Experienced them and the wonders of space first hand. Things Cat could only ever witness through some poorly reproduced human idea in film, and yet, Kara still managed to be completely awestruck by it.

Cat heard the barest whisper of Kara’s voice in a language she knew wasn’t from any stretch of this planet, hanging on every syllable she could make out. Kara sensed movement near her, pulling her gaze away from the stars to find Cat less than an arm’s length from her. Cat felt her heart stop for a second of eternity, wondering if she would always react so viscerally when faced with this version of Kara. While a small voice reminded her she had never seen this Kara, not even Supergirl could hold a candle to the woman standing in front of her now.
Chapter 17

Chapter Notes

:WARNING: The end of this chapter involves aggression stemmed from sexual harassment and refusing to take no for an answer that leads to additional violence. This can be very triggering for people to read and while it may seem fleeting for some and it doesn't go beyond verbal, the intent is there and I would be remiss if I didn't warn ahead of time.

It is nothing beyond canon-typical but it is still a violent encounter. Reminiscent of original Superman 2 diner fight.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The two women had stopped on a bench just to watch people pass by and soak in the idea of just being strangers in a forgotten town for a little longer.

Kara made comments here and there about people she saw, making up their life histories while Cat either embellished or clarified, Kara wasn’t sure which. It was nothing short of amazing seeing Cat like this. Someone beyond the right scheduled sharp tongued CEO. A part of Kara wondered how much bourbon might genuinely be in her ice cream. She decided it didn’t matter and turned her thoughts to how she might make it a point to push Cat on taking more sabbaticals if this was the result. Kara herself felt the weight of the world lift from her shoulders, idly wondering if this might be her life if she hadn’t taken up the family mantle. Although another part of her realized eventually, she would have slipped into it regardless of where she was.

For now, she lingered in that fantasy, thankful for the distraction and the pleasant company provided. If this kind of good could come from something so horrible, she almost wouldn’t trade it. Almost being the key word. There was a whole other life back in National City in full motion with the intent on rooting out the threat to her human persona. It forced a sliver of guilt to take hold, like a splinter she couldn’t quite get a hold of to remove.

Cat gave a small smile, her guard down and her pre-dinner treat practically gone as she toyed with her spoon while Kara went on about another handful of people. She heard the slight shift of her tone waver at the end of some descriptor and pulled herself out of her own swirl of thoughts and back to the now. Cat looked over at the other woman for a long moment. She didn’t think about what expression might be written on her features for the other woman to read, until she visually caught the barest glimpse of something forcing Kara back to the ground. She noted how her hands were empty, having finished her ice cream amidst their dalliance. As a gesture to keep the woman’s mood aloft, Cat offered her slightly nibbled waffle cup.

Kara tipped her head curiously, the waning corners of her smile lifting once more as she snagged the cup before taking an exaggerated bite out of it. Cat couldn’t help the laugh that escaped her as she shifted her weight so she was turned towards Kara, her knee brushing up against the other woman’s thigh where she sat crossed legged.

Kara grinned like an idiot before covering her mouth a bit as she munched with a small hum of amusement and apology.
“At least I know if I did write a cookbook someone would enjoy it.”

“Maybe I’m hoping I’d have firsthand knowledge of it.” Kara muttered around another bite, making an odd noise of excitement before hop-turning towards Cat.

“Careful or you’ll choke.”

Kara shook her head, finishing up her bite hastily before wiping at her mouth with what was left of her napkin. “I was thinking, if you wrote one, I could write the foreword. Expounding on all the nuances and little known secrets of Cat Grant, Kitchen Mogul.”

Cat rolled her eyes with a smile as Kara munched on another bite. “I think you’re on a sugar high.”

“No possible.” Kara stated, popping the last bit into her mouth with a crunch and a pleasant hum. “High metabolism remember, processes too fast.”

“Oh huh, I know sugar high when I see it.” She was teasing but Kara seemed a little more talkative and animated than usual. Although Cat kept any further response to herself, not wanting to rob Kara of the little pleasures she had allowed herself to indulge in with their surroundings. It would be hypocritical of her given how at ease and indulgent she herself was.

It was… nice, for lack of a better word, to just relax a bit and be able to touch upon the person she might have been if she hadn’t been so driven to ambition. Then again, she supposed if she had settled down in a place like this she’d still end up running something, if not the whole town as it’s mayor. She wondered, however, if that would have included Kara in the mix or if they would have never met. Which only made her rethink the whole what if scenario running rampant.

“Hey Cat?”

“Yes Kara?”

“Do you think, maybe when we actually have a choice in the matter, we might do this again or something?”

The boldness of the question made Cat pause a minute to study the woman who was now pulling at her own shoe string as if it were the most interesting thing in the world. She chanced a look up with those impossibly blue eyes sending Cat’s heart into a flutter.

Cat flexed her fingers against her own arm for a moment before reaching over to pluck Kara’s fingers away from her shoe and into her grasp. “I think… I might like that.”

Kara widened her fingers, allowing Cat to thread her own between them before she closed their hands around one another. Her stomach dropped out like when she free fell from the atmosphere for a split second while heat rushed up her throat and out across her cheeks.

Cat drew in a weighted breath as Kara wavered a little closer. She tightened her hold on the other woman’s hand while remaining where she was, not backing away but not drifting closer either. Kara uncurled a leg from the bench, putting the two of them even closer and Cat knew the second she let her eyes fall to the other woman’s mouth she would be done for.

The two women were suddenly the only two people in the world for countless seconds and Cat swore she could just will Kara closer with a sharp inhale.

“Kitty?”
Cat’s body had already started to melt into the other woman when Kara’s body drew back, her lungs burning with the effort to stay calm and not take the lack of Kara’s follow through as a rejection.

“JJ,” Cat breathed, doing well to hide her disappointment, keeping her hold on Kara’s hand despite the interruption. At least Melanie had sense enough to look apologetic.

“I thought I saw your car back there when we left the store.” He gave a low whistle. “Fanciest thing in town.” He reached up and offered his hat up giving a nod to the both of them. “Miss Kara, I’m still holding you to that fishing excursion you know.”

Kara smiled warmly, her thumb rubbing across the back of Cat’s hand to let her know she wasn’t about to let go. “I know, just give me a little more warning than that.”

Jacob chuckled a bit, reseating his hat as Melanie have another apologetic look to the both of them.

“Enjoying a night out?” Cat questioned, leaning against the bench and Kara in the process.

“Something like that.” Melanie offered giving Jacob a gentle tug. “You know this one, never in a hurry even when we have plans for something.”

“You ladies wanna come along? They’re playing The Quiet Man tonight.”

Kara looked over at Cat, not wanting to be rude while Cat gave a warm smile to the both of them before Melanie had the chance to scold him.

“Another night, maybe. Especially if you two are going to be responsible for dinner or something with this whole fishing thing, I can already see a night that’s just Melanie and I to make up for it.”

Jacob laughed while Kara bit at her bottom lip to contain her own. “You know I only catch what I can eat.”

“You’re about to catch the wrath of your wife if you don’t get on now.”

Melanie winked and mouthed a thank you as Jacob shook his head and allowed himself to be directed elsewhere. “We’ll catch up later!”

“Looking forward to it!” Cat offered back before looking over at Kara who could barely contain herself any longer.

“Get on now?” Kara’s melodic laughter filled the space between them while Cat grinned. “Who are you?”

“Stick around and find out.” Cat challenged before picking herself up and pulling Kara along. “Now come on, I’m hungry which means you’ve got to be starving.”

Kara relaxed her grip enough to let Cat slip free if she wanted, only to find her arm pulled closer and around behind Cat’s own back as they walked the final distance to the diner.

Kara held the door open allowing Cat to enter first with a small chime of a bell, as the entire wait staff greeted the two women despite what they were tending to.

The place was every bit of what Kara could make out from the outside. It was almost as if she had stepped back in time. From the high-polished chrome accents across the open kitchen, to the red-
topped bar stools complete with a jukebox along the far wall. Metal coca-cola signs and other weathered photographs were tacked up on the walls and a huge hand written menu in chalk was set above the counter.

“Welcome to Jane’s, take a seat anywhere and someone’ll be with you shortly.”

Kara cut a look at Cat who shook her head.

“Don’t look at me in that tone of voice, this place was already called that before I ever got here,” Cat defended.

“Uh huh…” Kara wasn’t so convinced but the smell of flat top cooked food and warming desserts pulled her attention before she could expand further. “I’m gonna head to the restroom,”

“T’ll wait here then.” Cat offered, leaning against the counter as Kara wandered away, stopping only to put a few dollars in the jukebox, making a few selections easily before pushing off and heading that way.

Cat smirked watching the other woman walk away, absently searching the empty space of the air as the music drifted out before one of Kara’s choices came on.

She heard the first rhythmic strings of a guitar before a woman’s voice settled in around the diner. Cat tipped her head slightly, allowing the words to register with a casual attention until she caught up to the picture they were painting as the chorus filtered through the din of patrons and waitstaff.

“...And everyone is running, and I come to find a refuge in the easy silence that you make for me...”

Kara stood in the bathroom, the first song she had chosen echo smoothly in the single occupant space. She wasn’t much of a country song aficionado but this particular one held more weight than she could put words to, especially now regarding Cat. She looked at herself in the mirror; the lyrics drifting around her as she quietly sung along out of habit before giving a small shake of her head at herself.

“What in Rao’s name are you doing…” she muttered, half expecting her reflection to answer back. She studied herself in the mirror a little longer, brow furrowing slightly as she noted that she actually looked a little tired around the edges. The sensation seeming to take root with the thought until she realized all she had eaten with respect to actual food had been breakfast hours ago.

The small grumble of her stomach signalled the undeniable truth of that and as the final chorus settled in she took a deep breath, for all she knew Cat wasn’t even paying attention and just lost in her own thoughts waiting.

Cat swallowed heavily, leaning her weight into the counter as the song lyrics infused themselves into her. Her next breath felt tighter than the last and a slow heat crept up from her chest, turning her eyes glassy. She reached up casually so as not to draw attention to herself. The curve of a finger sweeping away any evidence as the song switched over to something more fitting for a small town diner in the middle of nowhere.

She heard the creak of the back door opening, signalling Kara’s return and with it Cat put on a soft smile and pretended not to notice the woman trailing her way around the far end of the diner back towards her.

The two women hadn’t bothered to take notice of the surrounding patrons, most certainly not the man in the red hat nudged in the side by his friend as they approached the counter from the booth.
they had previously been eating in on the opposite side of the place.

“Just leaving that thing out there like that,” the man in the ball cap whistled low. “Forget that piece of pie Shelly. I’m gonna take me a slice of this to go instead.” The man’s arm swung back, his hand already poised to smack and grab hold of Cat’s ass to emphasize his point. The resounding crack of skin on skin was a thunderclap that pulled everyone’s attention.

“Dessert’s off the menu,” Kara growled, twisting the man’s wrist before flinging the guy aside towards the nearest booth. The man’s friend sized her up, figuring his friend had simply mistepped and tripped over something. He easily stood over Kara by half a foot as he shoved at her shoulders.

“Ain’t no sheriff here to help you now.”

Cat slid back with the pull of Kara’s arm around her waist behind herself as she barely moved with the shove.

“I think it’s time you fellas left.” The nearby waitress stated as Cat pulled Kara around a bit by telling her they should just head out the back.

Someone shouted and just as Kara started to turn back an arm connected with her upper back. What surprised her wasn’t the impact but the actual sharp drill of pain across her spine. Her momentum pitched her forward, but she caught herself on the counter edge so as not to barrel into Cat.

Cat slipped from her grasp a second after, pulled hard and wrapped up by the man who had tried to smack her ass.

“C’mon darlin’, all we wanted was to show you two a real good time, few drinks, a little dance. Your friend’ll get a chance too I promise. Ain’t that right Johnny?”

Cat struggled against him, pushing against the floor to throw him off to no avail. Kara started after them only to have her shoulder grabbed roughly. She felt another lance of pain along her brachial nerve and turned on instinct, following through with the motion as she landed a punch right into the younger man’s throat.

Johnny went down like a sack of lead into a group of other patrons wheezing away. Kara shook her hand out before turning back towards the one named Reggie who had Cat while others started to stand to try to intervene. Cat elbowed him in the gut before stomping on his foot and as he bent over, she broke away. Another patron grabbed her, pulling her aside to act as a barrier until the man started back for her.

“Now listen, these ladies-“

Reggie landed one punch against the patron trying to shield Cat, sending him into the counter as plates, napkin holders and other objects scattered. Other patrons made to help him while others started for the man in the ball cap with little success.

He grabbed for Cat again, circling her bicep until Kara grabbed for his forearm. Without hesitation he struck her side hard with the point of his elbow causing Kara to double over. He made some comment about her not being so tough under his breath before she head-butted him in the chin and swung in an upward arc until her fist collided with his jaw.

Arms wrapped around her from behind in the next second, hauling Kara off the ground despite her struggle. Cat pushed past enough to drive her heel into the guy’s knee, yelling at him to let go of her while the waitstaff behind the counter tried to grab for Cat in an attempt to pull her up and over out of harm’s way.
With a bark of pain and a stumble, Kara threw the younger man’s arms off her as he went down again. Twisting sharply and driving her own knee into his chest sending him sprawling across the floor into another couple of patrons.

“Stay down!”

“Look out!” Someone yelled as a glass shattered against the nearest wall, barely missing Kara’s head. With the distraction, Reggie bull rushed Kara, wrapping her up at the waist until he slammed her into a booth. Kara swore loudly, ignoring the starbursts of pain across her body and drove her elbows down into the juncture of his neck and shoulders while he landed another blow to her ribs and across her face as others tried to grab either of them to pull the two apart.

Somehow she got a foot between them in the scramble and shoved him away enough before hitting him again and again until the surrounding defenders backed away. In a matter of seconds the man was on his knees, held up by a fistful of shirt primed for another punch to the face when Cat yanked herself free and pushed through the throng enough to grab for Kara’s arm.

“Kara!” Cat was against her back, holding a hand up to someone who tried to step closer while her other arm wrapped under Kara’s opposite limb. She was ready to follow through on sympathetic motion alone if Kara kept going despite her next statement. “He’s not worth it.”

Kara twisted her hand further around his shirt, fist poised and shaking to hit him again until she let him drop with a small shove before she staggered back with another earnest pull from Cat.

Several patrons moved at once putting themselves between the women and the two men as they started to get up again for another round until the sound of a shotgun being engaged made everyone halt.

“Your next steps better be to get out.” An older man, no doubt the owner, demanded. His voice was even and held zero room for argument on the matter. Both barrels leveled on the two men picking each other up from the floor. “You show up within ten miles of this town and I’ll pull this trigger before asking any questions.”

Reggie yanked his baseball cap back on, wiping at his nose with a sneer before spitting towards Kara and Cat. Johnny tugged on his shirt, pulling the other man back towards the door before the owner made good on his promise.

Those inside watched the two men stumble across the lot, heading back towards the road and the rig they had climbed out of. The roar of the engine shook the windows before they locked in the gears and the truck pulled away with a rumble.

Kara held herself up for a little longer, heat and pain screaming through her body like lightning across her nerves. When she was sure the truck wasn’t doubling back she let herself fall. Cat grabbed her around the waist only to relax her hold when Kara made a muffled cry. The pair stumbled a bit as Kara settled into a booth and Cat eased down in front of her.

The waitress from earlier came by shortly after, handing a cold wet rag and Kara’s glasses. Cat took them with a quiet thank you, never taking her eyes of Kara. She was trying not to panic, she could see the inflammation under her skin that would surely discolor any minute, the blood already starting to dry and the discomfort she was clearly in just trying to breathe. Something was very wrong, either those guys were aliens or Kara had no powers.

“Everyone sit back down, she’s all right.” Even if she wasn’t, the waitress figured she would be under Cat’s care and ultimately they could call an ambulance if requested.
Kara blinked bleary-eyed, shifting with a wince as Cat set her hands on Kara’s thighs.

“Talk to me Midvale.”

Kara looked up at that, giving a small shake of her head. “Take me home, please… before I seize up.”

Cat gave a small nod, biting at her bottom lip to keep from saying anything more. She pushed to a stand, feeling the strain of her own body after being hauled around as she helped Kara stand.

“We’re still parked down the street.” Cat whispered and Kara put on a brave front, an arm around her own midsection as she tried to straighten enough and amble across the diner.

They had barely made it out the door when Jacob came rushing up, Melanie hot on his heels. Kara went on the defensive with the sharp motion giving a small grunt against the protests of her body until Cat told her it was ok.

“What the hell happened?!?!”

“You should see the other guys.” Kara joked before leaning into Cat.

Jacob moved forward to Kara’s other side while Melanie went around them at someone waving at her from inside the diner.

“Get them in the truck.”

Kara made a noise, remembering how much she had jostled about in his truck without being injured the day before.

“I can walk, we’re just down the street.”

“Ok so we’ll get you there. You’re not walkin’ far hon.” Jacob was gentle and easy, letting her set the pace as Cat stayed at her other side.

Chapter End Notes

Kara’s first song pick on the jukebox: Easy Silence by the Dixie Chicks

Also enjoy fanfic friday :)
Chapter 18

Cat finished saying her goodnights to Jacob and Melanie, promising to make it up to them for ruining their night out before closing the door behind them.

Kara sat on the couch, leaning back against the cushions, a bag of ice on her knuckles while another smaller pack rested on her face. She was sore all over and still felt the throbbing from each hit she had taken.

Her mind was racing as to what had happened. She hadn’t used her powers except partly in the fight and they had just seemed to drain out of her near the end. Even now with the adrenaline wearing thin she didn’t feel the bounce back of her abilities. They had to have been there in some aspects, otherwise that first hit would have sent her to the ground. She needed to find her phone, risk turning it on and maybe calling Alex. That might also mean telling her sister where she was and a larger part of her rationalized that would not be a good idea if the reason behind her even being so isolated was watching, followed and surprised them and her with no way to combat it or protect anyone.

Cat slowly walked back towards the woman, taking her time to observe her in a more private setting. There was an undeniable tension strung through and pulled taut across Kara’s body even with her eyes closed and her breathing slow and even. It was almost as if she were meditating on the concept of willing away the pain with little result. She had cleaned Kara up as much as the other woman allowed in the car but knew she needed to get a better look at her and her injuries. There was no way Kara was without them, not with the tenderness and involuntary pull away from Cat’s hold, or the wince of her features when Cat had cleaned the worst of the blood from the side of her face with a sanitizer wipe. There was a whole level of curiosity and conversation swirling in Cat’s mind around just how much tolerance for pain the woman had coupled with how unaccustomed to it she might be.

Now was not the time. Instead, she rounded Kara’s knees carefully before sitting down on the coffee table just in front of her.

“Can I get you anything?” Cat offered, she had over-the-counter medications and her own round of important prescription strength options but Kara had refused them all based on them not working right. It was the closest so far to an outright admittance of who she was than anything else in the past few hours.

Kara puffed out a breath of air, regretting the action with the immediate ache in her face. She reached up and grabbed the ice bag from her cheek, carefully sitting up and trying not to show her discomfort any more than was already obvious.

“No, I’m fine.”

“You are far from fine and we both know it Kara.”

Kara let out a sigh, leaving the one bag on a nearby tray on the table only to stop moving altogether when Cat’s fingers curled around the underside of her other hand. Thumbs delicately smoothed across the back of her wrist before Cat pulled the other bag away, setting it aside as she took in the sight of Kara’s knuckles.

They were swollen and angry, although the ice had undoubtedly helped some but she could see the
darker discoloration around the middlemost joints and how they looked out of place. She tipped her head as she continued to observe Kara’s hand before edging the press of her thumbs against the woman’s skin provoking a sharp hiss from her and an immediate tension across her arm. Cat didn’t jump or move, her fingers merely going slack with the sound in case Kara needed to pull away.

“Can you move?” Cat asked after another round of silence, “or would you rather stay put?”

“Move to where?”

“The bedroom,” Cat saw the flash of panic and something else in Kara’s eyes but pushed it aside as she continued. “The first aid kit is in my bathroom.”

“Oh.” Kara scooted a little further forward, the protest of her side reflecting on her features.

“If you want to sit here while I get it that’s okay. It’s late enough and I don’t expect any visitors, of the human kind anyway.” Cat’s tone was smooth and tender, allowing Kara to set her pace, to a degree anyway. Cat needed to see under her shirt and check Kara’s ribs just to be sure.

“No, I should move, I can feel things getting stiff.”

Cat gave a nod, edging herself out from between Kara’s knees and the table before standing just off to the side, ready to grab the other woman if she needed extra support. Kara pulled in a shallow breath, getting her feet flat before pitching her weight forward and letting the momentum carry her up and off the couch. While she didn’t stumble, she made a face all the same as Cat gestured for her to go ahead of her. Kara tested muscles and joints, rolling her shoulders a bit and flexing her hands into fists and out again, pain lancing up her right arm with the reverb from her knuckles.

“I don’t think these are right.” Kara urged, feeling as if she had submerged her fist into jello. Cat was at her other arm, guiding her away from the bed and onto the seat at the foot of it.

“Sit here and get your shirt off.” Cat didn’t linger around for Kara’s expression this time, the sudden snag in her breath followed by a soft ‘ow’ was enough. “I mean it Kara.”

Kara watched as Cat stepped into her bathroom and disappeared around the doorway, the sound of water running making it almost impossible to hear much else beyond a cabinet or two shutting. She made a face before looking down at herself and the droplets of red across her clothes. She reached up only to swear again before switching hands and fumbling a bit with the buttons.

When Cat returned, Kara had her overshirt off, mostly, the sleeves were still caught around her wrists and she was trying to pull her left one free with her teeth.

“You have an issue with asking for help don’t you?” Cat’s voice held no judgement, she was the spokesperson for not asking for help all things considered. Kara only made an annoyed whine of a sound as Cat set the large kit on the bed just behind Kara before pulling a chair over and sitting down.

“Give it here.” Cat held out her hands as Kara reluctantly held out her right arm first. Just as gentle as before, Cat unrolled the woman’s sleeve, opening it up at the wrist before carefully guiding it off. She followed with the next before folding the thing up and setting it aside. Kara sat in a white tank and jeans, and Cat could already see the slight swelling on her left side by comparison. The contours she had appreciated the day before not syncing up.

“Want me to-“

“I got it.” Kara snipped, regretting it a second later but Cat remained patient as Kara’s left hand
curled around her waistline and pulled the shirt free. She followed the broken seam around with a bit of a wince or small sound of frustration before Cat leaned over and pulled the last bit free.

“This part will probably be a little rough.” Cat advised as she stood again, while Kara looked up at her. “I—we need to take a look though, to make sure we don’t need to take another trip into town.”

Kara sighed, shifting forward on the bench as she reached behind herself with a bite back of a groan and started to pull her shirt up across her back. Cat was quick to move, putting a knee up on the bench as she caught Kara’s hand and whispered for her to let go. There was a moment where Kara wanted to be defiant, to tell Cat she could manage before she uncoiled her fingers and let her arm fall back down.

Cat shifted her weight, pulling the back of Kara’s shirt up, her brow furrowing with compassion as she saw the reddened skin across the other woman’s lower back where she had been body slammed into the booth near the end of the fight. She felt the tension in the shirt at Kara’s front, realizing where it was caught. She cleared her throat softly, thankful when Kara thumbed the hem and it moved again. Cat guided the thin material over the back of her head, telling Kara to just keep her arms down as she stepped back around off the seat and sat back in her chair, gradually bringing the tank top down Kara’s arms.

Kara didn’t look down at herself, remembering how Alex had told her nothing really hurts until you look at it and your mind seizes on it. The discomfort alone without looking at it was enough. This wasn’t how she had envisioned this moment by any means and when she glanced up to make a comment to ease the tension she felt coming from the woman across from her, the only thing she wanted to do was erase the crestfallen look written all over Cat’s face.

“It’s not… that bad,” Kara whispered as if saying the words would make it true. When all it did was force Cat’s eyes back up to her before the woman drew in her own grounding breath and straightened away.

It would do no good to break down over Kara’s injuries and how guilty Cat suddenly felt about them. Kara might be invincible but she wasn’t invulnerable, not all the time. This time it just happened to be in her defense; and the only reason they were even here was because Kara had a platform through CatCo to get her voice heard beyond being Supergirl.

“No,” Cat answered finally, it was worse. She licked her lips and excused herself for a second, telling Kara she needed her to move to the very edge of that bench seat.

Kara frowned as Cat disappeared again, almost looking down before convincing herself not to. She let out another breath, cheeks puffing from the strain as she edged forward with her feet flat. The sound of water splashing in the sink made Kara tip her head a bit before Cat emerged, a dry towel over her shoulder and a wet one in her hand. Steam still rising from it as she passed it between her fingers.

“Sit up straight if you can, I’ll try to go fast.” Which she would, and thoroughly. If the discoloration around Kara’s left side was anything to go by, this would hurt worse than Kara’s initial acquisition of it. Which was the last thing she wanted to do.

Kara did as requested, her eyes narrowing as Cat touched her elbow, guiding her left arm up and stretching her out. Kara made a growl of a sound in her chest but kept any words that bubbled up from escaping. Cat eased the woman’s forearm onto the top of her head, giving a small push as an order to keep the limb there.

“Just warn me,” Cat started, letting the warm water trickle over Kara’s exposed skin first. “If
you’re going to shout out or something.”

Kara made another noise, thinking Cat was just being overly cautious until the searing heat of the washcloth was laid out over her ribs and side, stealing her breath away with a choke. Cat winced empathetically, the pressure of her hand following after, causing Kara swear in her native language.

“I’m sorry,” Cat whispered genuinely. She bypassed the chair for the space along the bench beside Kara, as she swept the wet cloth back around the contours of Kara’s ribs and across her lower back. Observing Kara’s body straighten higher and try to bend away from her, had Cat wincing in sympathy. Kara made a fist with her left hand until the worst of the sensation drifted away with the washcloth around her back. The heat coupled with the pressure of Cat’s hand soothed the strain in her muscles allowing her to breathe a little easier only to give an involuntary shudder when the woman’s touch moved up along her spine slowly enough to make Kara think Cat was counting each bone along the stretch.

“Not your fault,” Kara husked as Cat’s touch spread over her shoulders making her relax all over again.

“It is,” Cat corrected, wrapping her hand around the back of Kara’s neck before squeezing firmly against the cords of muscle and along the baseline of her hair. Kara let out a groan of a different sort, allowing her head to fall back into Cat’s hold until even the muscles there seemed to sigh.

“It’s not…” Kara repeated after another minute and this time Cat didn’t argue. Instead, she worked the tips of her fingers into the hot cloth against the base of her skull, the whole of her hand still clamped around her neck.

“That feels good,” Kara let out another echo of approval as Cat squeezed again, before easing Kara’s head back up for her to hold steady. Cat tilted her head, observing Kara’s candid expression as she drifted between the variables of sensation working through her body; again wondering just how unaccustomed to all this the other woman was. Cat moved the cloth to the side of her neck, watching the pluck and twitch across the flat of Kara’s chest, knowing she had found another sore spot.

“That... not so much,” Kara murmured, opening one eye to look over at Cat awaiting a response. Only to find her so concentrated on the task at hand, that the woman didn’t even look up. Kara felt the rough press of hot cloth against her neck then, pursued by minute bursts of pain in Cat’s wake.

“Mmm... I wouldn’t think so.” Cat sat on her own leg, body barely brushing against Kara’s own with her nearness as she surveyed Kara’s throat and the side of her face after cleaning the remnants left behind by the shattering glass. “Doesn’t look like anything got embedded, but there are a few deep ones I’ll have to go back over.”

Kara made a slight face only for her features to instantly relax when Cat moved again, her chest tightening all on its own as Cat smoothed the cloth along her jaw, cupping her face as she drew her thumb back towards herself intent on rubbing along the curve of Kara’s cheek.

“Deep breath.” She requested while Kara complied until her body took over, pulling in twice as much air than she thought possible the instant Cat’s thumb pressed across the swell of her cheek.

“I know it hurts…” it was the closest thing to another apology Cat could muster. Her own eyes narrowing as Kara closed hers to hide the emotions building behind them. The muscles along her neck and chest flexed with her effort to try to divert the feeling as Cat again rubbed over the broken skin to clean where blood had dried. Cat moved off the bench easily, legs pressed against Kara’s
knees, her other hand fanning across the flat of the other woman’s chest to distract her as Cat made another rough pass across the side of her face. Kara winced less than before, her chest tight and driving hard against Cat’s touch.

“This is getting cold,” Cat lifted the washcloth back, turning enough to head back to the bathroom until the wrap of Kara’s fingers around her arm stopped her.

“Going back and forth seems kind of pointless.”

Cat knew Kara wasn’t wrong. Initially, it had been just a convenience, now Cat needed it to collect herself away from the other woman’s watchful gaze. At least that had been the intention with heading back in there until Kara had reached for her.

“Grab the first aid kit then.”

Kara nodded, not wanting to let go of Cat just yet but not trusting herself to pick the kit up with her other hand. She let the other woman slip free of her grasp, turning to get her shirts and the kit.
Chapter 19

Chapter Notes

due to the maintenance window tomorrow i figured i'd release a chapter early ;)
also the ratings have gone up juuuust be safe

Cat edged into the bathroom, taking a half-second to collect herself. She caught her breath before pushing off the structure and making for the nearby sink to start the hot water the instant she heard Kara on the other side of the wall.

Kara slowed to a stop and lingered in the doorway, watching Cat move almost on autopilot. It was a kind of effortless second nature one learned over time and repetition. If anyone had told her that Cat Grant had a skill for tending to someone in Kara’s state she would have thought they were drunk.

“While standing in the doorway is an improvement, it cuts only half the distance you know?” Cat relayed, looking up at the other woman in the mirror. While Kara could make out some of her reflection, she noted how Cat was blocking any view she might get of herself from the chest down.

Again, effortless.

Kara stepped inside, realizing the bathroom was nearly the size of her bedroom, though truly she shouldn’t be surprised. With a few more steps, she set the first aid kit on the end of the counter before deciding to edge up onto it herself with nowhere else to actually sit. She realized midway up how bad an idea that was, given the muscles she had to engage.

That wasn’t the worst of it.

The bone-jarring series of thumps she felt all the way down her spine from her hand was agony. She swore in a sharp burst of noise and should have slipped right back off painfully. Perhaps even sprawled onto the floor, were it not for the pair of hands pressed into her abdomen and the body set between her thighs flush against her own.

Cat knew the instant she caught Kara backing up what she had intended to do. The sink was forgotten as she stepped over just as the woman placed her injured hand on the counter and made to hop and push to get herself up. Cat watched the pain register in waves, working up through Kara’s torso from the source before cascading out over her features. Cat grabbed for what she could, trying to avoid the worst of Kara’s injuries before bracing her own body against the counter edge and forcing the other woman backward with her forward momentum.

Kara bit back another sound between a whimper and a curse through clenched teeth. She leaned towards her left side while holding her right hand off the counter away from both of them. She didn’t want to make the same absent-minded mistake of using it to brace herself to lift off the floor. She had thought she was being helpful, putting herself higher than Cat so she could get to parts of her easier and had nearly taken them both to the floor because of her oversight. What surprised her more and was only just starting to really sink in, was the fact that Cat had not only kept herself from going back, but leveraged their positions to take on Kara’s unbalanced weight and anchored
“I got you,” Cat reassured, thanking her personal trainer’s suggestion for adding an extra session to her week even if it was just to be able to do what she had right now. Kara’s legs tightened around her body, keeping her close in what Cat could only guess was an involuntary response; even if Cat had no intention of going anywhere. “It’s ok Kara just try to breathe, I’ve got you…”

Kara focused on the only other sensation registering in her body beyond pain. The warmth of Cat’s hands where they were fitted within the contours of her abdomen and around her right side took her breath away. She sucked in a slow breath through her nose, letting her head fall back as she flexed other parts of herself to push past the pulsing waves. How in the world did humans even function sometimes? She had seen plenty of people worse off in a fight that made it look so easy, like they could just shake it off and run a marathon. Those people were highly trained and making a living for themselves fighting on pay-per-view, but still.

“I was trying to help,” Kara said on the edge of so many emotions entangled with equally numerous sensations while Cat just held onto her, caught in the clasp of her legs.

The thought to move away or be embarrassed by their position was so far from Cat’s mind it didn’t even register anymore. What did was the chill of Kara’s skin under her hands; she had always thought the woman would be warmer. Especially since she could fly so close to the sun compared to the rest of them; or could have before now. That was a sobering thought. One that made her press herself harder against the counter to act as a support for the other woman. If Kara could get injured, that meant she could get sick, that any one of these injuries on her body could-

“I think… I fixed what was wrong with my hand…” Kara conveyed between the clench of her teeth.

Cat adjusted her hold, turning slightly to shoulder Kara’s weight where she needed it, one hand remaining against her bare skin as she reached for the other woman’s wrist and drew it closer. “Make a slow fist.”

Kara whimpered with apprehension, while Cat set her thumb between the tendons in the middle of the other woman’s hand.

“Just once then straighten, if it’s not right-“

Kara curled her fingers slowly, feeling the sharp stab of her knuckles as they moved but didn’t grind. All of her fingers came together evenly this time, unlike before when the middle pair refused to cooperate like a broken hinge. Kara bit into her bottom lip, forcing out the start of another curse but kept it poised in the back of her throat. Her fingers opened back up after another three count, stretching out as her arm trembled from the effort.

Cat let out a breath of relief as the digits worked properly this go around. She would still take Kara into town to the local clinic, but at least now she wasn’t carrying on an argument about emergency care inside her head. Although Kara’s ribs might negate that short-lived reprieve.

“Can you hold yourself up?”

“I think so.” Kara huffed, relaxing her hand and refraining from shaking it out to try to rid herself of the tingling fuzz vibrating across her knuckles. Cat let her hand go after ushering it up in the air above their heads a bit before placing both hands low along Kara’s stomach to act as a ballast.

“Scoot back,” Kara did so slowly, rocking back and forth until her legs could bend around the
counter comfortably, or would if she unlocked her ankles. “I’m not going far, I promise.”

Kara looked confused before she realized how her legs were set. With a faint apology, she unlocked them and tried to relax.

“You don’t have to apologize.” Cat offered, easing herself aside so she could reach the first aid kit but kept her hand somewhere along Kara’s body to comfort her just the same.

She flipped the lid of the container with one hand, rummaging around its multitude of compartments before smacking a small plastic bag on the counter. She shook the thing out a second later before pulling another hand towel off the nearby rod.

She moved back between Kara’s knees, feeling those hard curves tighten around her hips again as she pulled her hands away entirely. Cat urged Kara’s hand back between them again, folding the cloth over the freeze-pak before binding it against Kara’s knuckles.

“Hold that up again, set it on the towel rod if you need to.”

Kara did as she was told as Cat moved to her opposite side, a hand resting on her thigh as she shut off the water and dropped a few smaller towels in the filled sink. Kara observed silently, her focus on Cat making the ache in her body ease a little more, only to be replaced by a different kind as Cat flexed her hand against her leg.

“How… where did you learn all this?” Kara questioned softly as Cat looked up at her. She pulled another washcloth from the sink, wringing it out firmly a few times before situating herself where Kara was comfortable again.

“You pick up a few things being a parent.” Cat explained, wrapping the cloth around Kara’s right forearm causing her to sigh with relief. “The rest,” Cat continued with a twinge of reluctance, “were acquired a little more first hand than I would have liked.”

“Which one?” Kara felt her chest tighten at the implication, while Cat busied herself with wringing out another washcloth.

“First husband.” Cat confessed, content with regarding the water spill over her fingers with her task instead of looking at whatever was settling in Kara’s eyes with her profession. The unexpected touch of Kara’s fingers against her cheek slowed Cat’s motions. She kept her eyes elsewhere, forcing herself not to lean into the caress before pulling aside with a biting hiss.

“I’m sorry—I’m sorry,” Kara rushed as Cat shook her head and waved the apology off. Her body stilling again when Kara’s touch returned. Cat carried in another slow breath, expecting another stab of pain only to feel the considerate pressure of Kara’s fingertips turning her head this way and back.

“Can I see that?”

Cat swallowed visibly, offering the washcloth as Kara took it from her, caressing her skin with it. She had been so concerned about the other woman Cat hadn’t thought to examine herself. She was sore that was certain but hadn’t considered that she had sustained anything more than an overstretch of muscles until warm, damp material swept across her skin. Kara hardly breathed, cleaning off the small set of scratches along Cat’s face towards her hairline. Cat stared at Kara’s arm and the play of muscle there as she moved until Cat reached up and stilled the other woman’s efforts.

“Let’s get you taken care of first.” Cat kneaded at Kara’s wrist tenderly, she wasn’t ungrateful, but
Kara was far worse off when compared to a few cuts on her face. “Please?”

Kara let her eyes run over Cat’s features, almost wishing she could read her mind and the thousands of thoughts, or none, that might be flowing through it. There was plenty laid open to her just in her expression, in the compassionate weight of her fingers as she took back the washcloth and the continuous point of contact Cat maintained with her. Kara felt as if she was a wholly different person, that both of them were. Just Cat and-

“Cat I have to tell you something,” Kara whispered faster than her brain could argue that she just stay silent.

Cat was moving again, having soaked the cloth in her hand once more and had just finished wringing it out when Kara spoke. With the slightest hesitation, she leaned into the counter before arranging the cloth against Kara’s shoulder. Goosebumps rippled out across the other woman’s skin with the contact, accompanied by a sparse shiver and Cat knew there would be no avoiding getting Kara into a shower or bath. The controlled urgency in the woman’s voice caused Cat’s insides to twist and her heart to beat faster; as did the straightening of Kara’s torso with the kind of posturing Cat had only been witness to when she was in a blue suit with a red cape.

“You can tell me anything,” Cat barely breathed, easing the wet heat over Kara’s collarbones towards the flat of her chest.

“I’m Supergirl,” it was the most absurd thing to come out of her mouth given their circumstances, but it was the only thing that her throat would allow to pass. This was not the way she had ever intended to tell Cat who she really was. She had nearly said those words on balconies, in mid-air, after their second interview, even in the middle of Cat’s office without her suit. Not a single one of those times felt as right as this one.

Cat’s hand fanned over the center of Kara’s chest. Her words registering in such a way that she swore she could see the phantom imprint of that crest before flexing her fingers where they had stopped. Kara was broken down, beaten up and bloodied, and still every ounce of the heroine she claimed to be. She had to have known the instant that first hit landed how compromised she was and still Kara had nearly driven two men into the ground with no hope of getting up.

All for Cat.

To say she already knew felt wrong, even if she did; having suspected for so long and being proven right when J’onn had revealed himself. There was knowing and then there was knowing absolutely. To hear the words now, outside of all the places she considered theirs, when they were stripped down and exposed to each other was beyond measure. Were she to respond callously, even if unintended, with already having known, it would feel like slamming a door in Kara’s face.

Cat swallowed hard, working around a thousand words that refused to organize properly in order to convey what she wanted. Kara’s heart pounded against her hand, her own rushing to match it as she pushed up until they were close enough to share the same breath. Cat’s features delicately whispered against Kara’s skin, heat blossoming against the incidental caresses with their nearness. Her lungs involuntarily drew in a shallow breath, hovering perilously close and advancing no further. Kara was vulnerable and possibly in shock and as much as Cat wanted to kiss her-

Kara closed the fleeting distance between them, sealing away any hope for oxygen between them as she fit her mouth against Cat’s. A sharp intake of breath followed in the next second before Cat’s bare hand kneaded against her chest with the dropping of the washcloth. Kara nearly fainted with the vibration of a whimper against her mouth from the other woman. She chased after the sound with a tender pressure, as Cat gasped into her mouth. Kara worked their lips apart and
intensified their kiss with a turn of her head.

Fingers curved around the back of Cat’s neck, tangling into her hair and drawing her closer, until the woman seemed to melt into her body with another more penetrative sound of surrender. Cat rubbed at Kara’s chest as the woman’s legs fastened around her again, urging Cat closer still. Fingers trembled across the skin of her neck, rippling across Cat’s nerves in concert with the heady pressure of Kara’s heels against the back of her thighs.

Kara could hardly breathe, dragging in oxygen where she could as she tugged and tasted and savored the essence of Cat on her tongue. The scent of Cat’s skin permeated her lungs, making her delirious. She resisted the urge to wrap her arms around Cat and lift her up, knowing somewhere in the haze she would only hurt herself and ruin the moment. Her hand fell down Cat’s back instead, winding the fabric of her shirt into a fist before drawing her up into the depths of their kiss all over again.

Cat’s hands wrapped low around Kara’s hips, unsure where else to even try to hold on to her. Strong thighs hugged her sides, their bodies set flush against one another as she endeavored to push higher, stealing Kara’s breath away with the unrestrained return of affection. It was Kara who let out a profound groan this time, sending tremors across Cat’s body. She drew Kara’s bottom lip into the grasp of her teeth by the tongue, worrying the swell deliberately with a dainty edge of suction before breaking apart.

Kara bowed on the verge of collapsing, her lips tingling and raw. She breathed audibly, their foreheads pressed against another, as their noses brushed and quivering lips teased just out of reach. Cat’s hand on her stomach kept Kara at bay, even as she flexed her legs and pinned the other woman to her. Cat barely opened her eyes, everything blurring together as she let herself drown in the tides of arousal that crashed across her insides.

Kara tried again to capture Cat’s mouth only to have her roll just out of the way with a more determined press of a hand against Kara’s abdomen. Fingers grazed her lips, silencing anything she thought to say. The smooth pad of Cat’s thumb pushed at her bottom lip before fingers slipped into Kara’s hair and tugged her down. Kara let out another breathless noise, tipping forward as Cat pulled her own shoulders in and held Kara’s features in place. The velvety caress of Cat’s tongue licked its way inside her mouth, sampling every contour while lips pulled and shaped around Kara’s own.

Kara felt the rougher edge of Cat’s nails round over her scalp, thumbs kneading along the base of her neck as she drew further into the woman’s hungry embrace. Kara let out a whine, her solar plexus caving with the electricity supercharging her nerves, swirling through her insides only to pool heavily around her hips. Cat drew back just enough, curving the edge of her tongue up along the underside of Kara’s upper lip in a slow, possessive lick of a movement before tipping herself away.

Blood rushed across Kara's ears as a different fire ignited low against her spine promising to flare white-hot and take her right up with it. She gasped with a quiver of her bottom lip, legs flexing hard around Cat’s waist in warning as her body moved against the apex of her thighs. Cat stilled almost instantly, her eyes flaring a little wider as Kara huffed out a breath and just stared at her wordlessly.
Hands came to rest across the flat of Kara’s chest, fingertips dreamily pawing at the base of the woman’s throat as she tried to ground herself. The flush that spread beneath her touch was sign enough of what had just happened and Cat felt her heart roar and her body clench around her own aching need.

She licked her lips absently, trying to read Kara’s mind as she looked at her in such close proximity. Shock, awe, lust and something far greater stared back at her on the verge of confusion, or revelation Cat couldn’t make out the difference just yet.

“Are you okay?” Cat spoke so quietly, Kara wondered if the woman had simply willed the question into her mind. She gave a small nod, not trusting her voice at the moment.

Cat seemed to understand, letting her palms drift away before settling atop Kara’s thighs to steady them both. Cat swallowed around a heavy breath, lips remaining parted to gather as much oxygen as possible without passing out.

“Think you can wait here?” Thighs flexed under her hands and Cat rubbed along the shelves of muscle reassuringly. “I’m just going to start a bath, it’ll help.”

There was no way Cat was going to try and continue what she had started before they kissed now. Kara gave another nod, the hand still twisted around Cat’s shirt slowly relaxing, as her limbs followed to allow Cat the ability to move a little easier.

“Stay here.” Cat requested, waiting for Kara to acknowledge her again before she started to drift away. When she was certain Kara wouldn’t fall or follow, she stepped back and made her way to the large tub even as she couldn’t feel her own legs. She turned on the hot water, dropping the plug once the temperature seemed right and pulled a few towels from a nearby cabinet.

She started to look for some kind of oil or Epsom salts only to question if Kara might be allergic or sensitive. Cat set the towels on the back of the tub, drawing a breath to ask, only for her lungs to fill to capacity as fingertips folded under her shirt and fanned against her lower back.

Kara stood just behind her, watching the run of her fingers along the sliver of exposed skin she had found. Cat barely moved even to breathe. The electricity of Kara’s touch arcing across her nerves, rippling through her body like stones across a pond. She turned her head to the side with the sweep of Kara’s other hand moving her hair aside.

“I thought I told you to stay put,” Cat husked, her chest caving as she felt Kara breathe against her neck.

“You didn’t say for how long,” Kara’s voice was right at her ear, making her shudder. Fingertips stretched out followed by Kara’s palm as she rubbed her hand up along Cat’s back. Cat let out
another murmur of a sound on impulse, her body wavering back. She reached low with one hand, finding Kara’s thigh before squeezing gently when the woman nosed against the side of her throat.

“Kara…” Cat closed her eyes, not wanting to see the look her warning tone might cause, but Kara only placed a soft kiss behind her ear.

“Are you going to join me?”

Cat tightened her hold against Kara’s leg, her breath catching as Kara’s touch rounded across her ribs towards her solar plexus.

“I can’t.” Those two words seemed like the hardest she had ever had to utter. Kara’s palm smoothed across the flat of her stomach, pulling her back until they were pressed against one another. Cat swore under her breath, her other hand snaking around Kara’s forearm before wrapping around her wrist as the woman’s touch started to slip lower.

They stood like that for a long moment, Kara nuzzling against her neck, breathing in tandem, while Cat held on for dear life. She wanted nothing more than to let Kara go and let her find whatever solace or connection she was after, but knew they would both pay for it after. Cat pulled Kara’s hand up, pressing her touch against the center of her body firmly, trying to convey how much she wanted this but couldn’t bring herself to do so just yet.

To give in would be easy, more than easy, however fast or slow the pace. It was the after she was worried about. Kara was still dancing on the edge of shock fueled by adrenaline. Despite how much of the latter had siphoned away. With her powers in the state of flux that they were, she was also undoubtedly experiencing a myriad of sensations Cat wanted her to indulge fully in. If for nothing more than the sheer possibility of never experiencing them once her powers returned.

If they did. That thought grounded her firmly as did the minute quakes refusing to let Kara just stand still. She pulled in a deep breath, using the sound like a kind of signal flare that seemed to register with the lift of Kara’s head away from her.

“I want you to listen to me Kara,” she felt the woman stiffen behind her, recognizing the rejection for what it was. Without letting go of Kara’s wrist Cat turned into the other woman’s body, refusing to break contact even when they were face to face. Pliant curves and bare skin tested her resolve but Cat held firm.

Kara searched over Cat’s features, her eyes were thin rings of ice around the vast depths of the universe and Cat knew then and there what she was doing was the right thing.

“I want you so much right now I can practically taste you.”

Kara let out a groan, the sound vibrating through her chest and into Cat’s body. She placed tender fingertips to Kara’s lips then, never breaking eye contact as she spoke.

“But you have got to let me take care of you right now.” Cat watched her words slowly register through the haze, forcing Kara to take a deep breath that ended in a grimace further proving her point. “Will you let me do that?”

Kara swallowed heavily, the ache in her body from her injuries slowly prickling to attention through her ardor. She pulled in a shallower breath, understanding sliding home as her lips moved towards an apology. Cat rose up, holding back the other woman’s words with a firm and easy kiss.

“Don’t…” she whispered while Kara stayed silent. “Just get your clothes off and get in the tub.”
Kara breathed out a laugh, nudging Cat back with her forehead before fumbling with the button of her jeans. Cat stepped back enough to look down, her head tipping curiously before she hooked Kara’s fingers with her own and drew them away. Kara didn’t want to ask for fear of how Cat might take it but she seemed to have already read her mind. Cat kept their bodies apart, thumb pushing the metal button aside before pulling the zippered seam apart.

Kara forced herself to look up and away, her skin burning red at her chest. Cat glanced up at her briefly, ramping down on want in favor of need. She eased the waistline over the swell of Kara’s hips carefully pulling the material down until it went slack in her grasp. Kara searched for her without looking down, their fingers grazing until she had hold of her jeans.

“Are you going to stay?” It was a genuine question. Kara wasn’t sure if she wanted to be alone with herself just yet. Her body felt heavy as if she were moving through poured concrete all of a sudden.

“I can,” Cat said tentatively. “I wasn’t sure if you were allergic or sensitive to anything or there would be more than just water in there.”

“Eucalyptus is okay, I had that before and I was fine.”

Cat nodded, making sure Kara could stand on her own before stepping aside. She opened a small cabinet, pulling out a couple of items before easing them into the swirling stream of water. She caught the pool of denim out of the corner of her eye and tipped her chin to her opposite shoulder, eyes remaining on the water as she adjusted the temperature again.

The cleansing scent of eucalyptus and lavender filled the space, making it easier to breathe. She poured another lid-full of something else into the water, swirling her hand around until it dissolved. There was more movement behind her and the faint utterance of a curse in another language before Kara’s hand found her shoulder to brace on.

“Don’t move.” Kara requested as Cat gave a small nod, the edge of bare skin lingering in her periphery. Cat drew in a slow breath, closing her eyes as she steadied herself while Kara used her to step into the tub.

“Oh, Rao that’s hot.” She felt Cat tense under her grip and quickly reassured her. “It’s okay, I just... wasn’t expecting it.”

Cat licked her lips, arguing whether or not to open her eyes. “Go slow and tell me what you need.”

Kara sucked in another breath, “Turn towards me.” Cat did so and Kara suddenly wanted to cry when the woman kept her eyes closed. Hands up and ready to catch her despite being blind. Kara huffed out a breath, pushing her emotions back with it as she rested a forearm on Cat’s shoulder so she could grab the edge of the tub.

“Down.”

Cat moved, holding onto Kara’s bicep as the other felt for the tub so she had a better stance when Kara’s weight bore down on her.

“Take it easy, I’m right here.”

Kara let out another gasp with a choke of a sound, her grip tightening around Cat’s frame hard enough to make the woman worry. Cat heard her name through a whimper and immediately opened her eyes and moved onto her knees, pitching forward to grab hold of the other woman. Kara bit back a cry, her arms surrounding Cat’s shoulders fiercely as the other woman was left holding...
her weight.

Kara huffed and bit back the words threatening to burst free of her throat when Cat grabbed for her. Pain crackled through her insides like a whip, lashing at her nerves and taking her breath away. She squeezed her eyes shut, bowing her head against Cat’s shoulder as waves of hot water undulated across her overly sensitive skin with her hasty actions.

Cat’s heart caved with the sounds Kara tried to throttle into silence. Having reached for Kara hastily when she thought she was slipping, Cat had just held on where she could, only to find her hands around Kara’s ribs. She corrected herself instantly, letting Kara sag onto her arms when the other woman nearly collided with her in order to wrap around her.

“Talk to me…” Cat whispered, her body humming with empathetic pain. Her hand fit around the back of Kara’s head, kneading at her scalp to try and alleviate her discomfort. Kara tried for another deep breath, her arms tightening around Cat’s body instead. Cat whispered against her ear, reassuring that she was all right; that it would ease up if Kara just took her time and breathed along with her.

Kara’s chest twitched and seized as she swallowed back the start of sobs that threatened to overwhelm her just like everything else. She fought not to take a deep breath, her lungs seizing with the effort sending fissures of pain across her torso again. She felt weak and useless, sore and incapable of being anything Cat could ever possibly want; and yet, despite it all Cat was right there. Had been from the start. Kara felt the swirl of fingers against her scalp, the racing beat of Cat’s heart against her chest and the dulcet whispers against her skin working over her like a salve. Kara let the other woman invade her senses again on an entirely different level from a moment ago. Drawing on her strength to push through her discomfort and the alarming throb across her body into something tolerable. She pulled in her first deeper breath, the strain of her muscles not at sharp as a moment ago. Cat’s whispers shifted, encouraging her to follow that new path and enabling her to take another fuller breath.

“This hurts,” Kara finally uttered against Cat’s collarbones, having completely buried herself away to keep the other woman from seeing her cry.

“I know, I’m sorry.” Cat felt Kara’s weight ease a little as she set herself on her knees, allowing Cat to move a little easier not having to hold the other woman up completely. She pressed her hand flat between Kara’s shoulder blades, arms still set under Kara’s own as she dipped her other hand into the water cupping enough into her hand to bring up before letting it cascade down across Kara’s skin.

Kara breathed across Cat’s chest, focusing on the rivulets of water running down the expanse of her back. She nuzzled her forehead against the side of the woman’s throat, eyes unfocused as she tried to allow her body to acclimate. Cat set her chin against the curve of Kara’s head, nuzzling her gently as she swept water over her while gradually lowering her down into the water.

“That’s it…” Cat breathed, as Kara eased down onto her heels. Kara’s arms slid away from her, her left hand going for the edge of the tub to steady herself until Cat intercepted her, serving as her edge to keep steady. Cat averted her features, taking Kara’s breath away all over again with her commitment to Kara’s comfort and modesty, what little of it was left to maintain. She moved around until Kara couldn’t see her anymore without turning, her hand still held like a lifeline. Cat shifted her weight, using Kara’s hold to keep her minimally stable before fingers slipped away.

“Turn off the water.”
Kara frowned, looking at the water level around her, knowing even if she laid back it wouldn’t rise above the level of her chest. She started to reach forward, only to come up short with the warning twinge at her side forcing her to move further forward on her knees to accomplish the task. She let the hot water side linger a little longer, already feeling her back growing cold. The water moved on its own; the level rising until a faint hiss caught her attention.

“I admit, it might be hotter than I intended.” Kara looked over her shoulder with the nearness of Cat’s voice just as the woman slid the rest of the way down into the water, knees up around her chest.

Kara turned further, still on her knees, the bulk of her injury still above the heat. She looked the other woman over, certainly not one to complain-

“But I thought…”

Cat raised an eyebrow at her, maintaining that same line of focus above Kara’s collarbones. “You’re easier to reach like this, and you can relax without drowning… I hope.” There was a good possibility Cat had overstepped, if that were possible, all things considered. Despite their expressed fondness for one another, this kind of intimacy carried a whole other weight to it.

Kara tipped her head at the other woman, still bordering on confusion. “I’m also a little sore,” Cat admitted. “You might not be at the level you’re used to, but you are by far more conditioned for those sorts of things than I am.”

When Kara said nothing Cat straightened a little more, hands wrapping around the edges of the tub. “I… can get out, if it’s too-“

Kara shook her head, clearing the fog. “No… please, I… I just thought when I asked before…” Kara let her words linger, her arms dipping into the water at the elbow as she set back down again on her heels in front of Cat.

“This is different,” Cat allowed as Kara remained still half out of the water, poised between the uncertainty of what to do and the apprehension of reigniting the pain in her side. Cat drew in a deep breath, reaching for a washcloth before dropping it in the tub. “You’ll feel better if you ease into it.”

Kara gave Cat a wry look, tempered by growing exhaustion. Still not convinced the shock of it all would be worth it.

“Trust me?”

Kara’s body moved with a soundless laugh, looking at where they were, naked and sharing a bath with one another.

“You have to ask?”

Cat shook her head, fitting the cloth around her hand like a glove. “I don’t have to, but it would be irresponsible for me not to.”

Cat made a fair point, any number of others wouldn’t have even tried this much with Kara. Undoubtedly she never would have made it past the couch with some and would be regretful and in even more pain for someone else’s pleasure as a result.

“Thank you.”
Cat looked up at her sharply, sensing a deeper sentiment behind that simple phrase than maybe Kara had intended.

“For making me feel… safe.”

Cat frowned slightly, giving a single shake of her head, her mind reeling at the thought of someone else’s imprint left behind on Kara’s body or mind that had induced the need for those words and the unspoken intention behind them.

“You always should. No matter how capable we both know you are.” Cat’s voice had a sharp edge to it that Kara recognized in herself. Always ready and waiting to knock someone down a peg or ten who made anyone else feel anything but safe. Odd how she had taken such little consideration with herself before now. Kara swallowed after another round of silence between them, her mind threatening to wander through the unfettered passages of her mind and failed relationships she had tried to make work before-

“Should I just go under and get it over with-“

“No,” Cat made a face at herself and the vehemence of her tone. The intention having been reserved for her own dark thoughts concerning Kara’s past experiences up to this point, few as they may have been.

“No…” she corrected, smoothing her own ruffled feathers before beckoning Kara closer. “Scoot over here.”

Kara did so after another moment until she could sense the boundaries of Cat’s legs in front of her beneath the water. Cat moved again, sitting up enough to reach her.

“Take a slow, deep breath.” She instructed, kneading at the washcloth beneath the water. “Just let the steam and fragrances get into your lungs.”

Kara nodded, resting back a bit further as she tried to calculate how deep before her ribs burned. The moment she started, Cat pulled her hand up from the water, pulling the washcloth with her as she touched Kara’s sternum and moved up as she breathed in. When she stopped, so did Cat, rubbing in tiny circles at the base of her throat before she left the weight of the cloth drag itself down into the water.

“Again…” Kara nodded, her eyes half-closed as the warmth of the washcloth rubbed across her skin. This time Cat eased it up her side, applying no pressure as Kara’s brow creased and her shoulders tensed. When she stopped this time Cat squeezed, sending the excess water down Kara’s body in rivers. Kara breathed out a little rougher as the hot water spilled between the valleys of her ribs and over her bruises.

They repeated the process a few more times until Kara craved the heat. Her body slipped below the waterline, with gentle nudges and touches from the other woman gradually turning her around. With her last exhale, Kara felt her body relax all on its own, melting into the water and against Cat’s waiting body.

Her mind stumbled with the realization until Cat’s hand, sans washcloth, floated over the flat of her chest and soothed her apprehension with the barest touch of her weightless fingertips. Kara shifted until they were both comfortable, Cat sandwiched between the woman and the back of the tub as Kara’s head lulled back against her shoulder.

“How’re you doing this?”
Cat answered with a soft laugh, trickling water, and her fingertips along Kara’s throat effortlessly before placing a soft kiss against her temple.

“I don’t know how not to with you.” Cat’s barely spoken words swirled through her with an unexpected weight. There were so many things hidden within that sentiment Kara didn’t even know where to start asking.

She drew in a truly deep breath for the first time all night, her lungs stammering with use of fatigued muscles. Instead of allowing the questions swirling in her mind to find voice she let herself just float. Arms going slack, skin barely breaching the water and so long as she didn’t focus on the means, it almost felt like flying.

Almost.
Chapter 21

Kara nestled down near the middle of the bed while Cat pulled the covers up and gently tucked portions of it around her and the pillow she had set near her side should she turn over in her sleep. Getting out of the tub had been a bit of a challenge, mostly because Kara had genuinely fallen asleep against her. Her body finally giving in once the last vestiges of her adrenaline slipped away. It had allowed Cat to gently prod and manipulate Kara’s ribs and side enough unhindered to determine if anything was broken.

Considering Kara had only taken in a few deeper breaths and not come right up out of her sleep told Cat enough. The bones seemed solid with little give and none were out of place or hooked against a neighboring rib. At best, they were bruised, which was sometimes far worse than just a break. It would take longer to heal, but she hoped they wouldn’t get that far before Kara’s abilities returned.

Cat sat on the side of the bed, back against the headboard as Kara turned enough to look at her, just staring as if she were looking into another plane of existence. She drew in a deep breath, reaching over and tucking Kara’s hair away from the side of her face and behind her ear. Kara blinked slowly, coming back into herself before drawing in a sharp breath of her own in acknowledgment of having lapsed into her own little world.

“Sorry.”

Cat shook her head, fingertips tracing across Kara’s features and into her hair, forcing her eyes to close partway. “Don’t be. You’ve had a busy day.”

Kara gave a wry laugh, the sound escaping her on a breath as she pulled her pillow down and wrapped her arms around it. She was clean and bandaged, the ache in her body still evident but more along the lines of a dull throb than a scalding fire.

Never in a hundred years would she have thought she would be stretched out in a bathtub in the middle of nowhere with her like they had been. Kara could barely muster up enough nerve to ask Cat out for coffee and there they were, naked and content, intimately entangled with one another in their own little cabin in the woods… maybe not little, but still.

It was the kind of scenario one experienced after years of being with someone, but when she really considered it, that seemed to be the nature between the two of them. Skipping around the mundane and stumbling into milestones while figuring out the in-between on happenstance.

They weren’t dating; neither had ever asked the other for more than coffee or a moment of time during a lunch break. Although, Kara had sought no one else’s company on that level in nearly two years and Cat’s own endeavors in that arena had fizzled out until she was publicly turning even A list celebrities down.

They weren’t in a long-term relationship but the two of them had navigated the world side by side for nearly four years. Initially, one-sided on Kara’s behalf, but Cat had gradually worked her way into the finer points of Kara’s life outside of CatCo. She remembered dates and names and the minutia Kara had barely mentioned in passing and some she had never stated to the other woman with the ease of calling up a budget report.

It was such an odd juxtaposition but one Kara found rather fitting to them. They knew part of each other better than some married couples while remaining completely and utterly oblivious in
Their whole relationship was backward, or more like someone recounting it from memory. Starting with milestones and flashpoints that they then navigated through afterward. Only to conclude the two women had always been heading towards those moments and had just bypassed the fuss of time and labels of what they were to each other in between.

Kara wondered if that was because of her own mishaps when it came to the passage of time; a quarter of a century lost can do odd things to a person. For Cat, she guessed it was through the experiences with her four marriages and two kids and all the time she had felt she wasted or lost in between.

“What’s going on in there?” Cat whispered, her hand had drifted to Kara’s shoulders lazily, focused on trying to keep Kara relaxed so she might again fall asleep.

“You already knew,” Kara was everywhere inside her head and the recall of her confession in the bathroom of who she really was suddenly jumped to the front. “They told you before you came didn’t they?”

There was a quiet sadness in Kara’s voice as if someone had taken something from her unintended but it still hurt just the same.

Cat let out a breath, shifting enough to pull her legs up and slide down beside Kara. She propped her head on her hand while Kara continued to look at her expectantly.

“They did, but I already knew who you were. At least I thought I did.”

Kara frowned weakly, scooting a little closer. “I don’t understand.”

“Kara, I’ve known who you were the moment you stepped into my office at ten-fifteen. I just didn’t realize it until you allowed me to see it.”

Kara still looked so confused and Cat wasn’t sure if it was because she wasn’t explaining herself or because Kara was on the verge of exhaustion.

“You have an incredible ability to distract. To make people doubt just enough that what they think they see in you and Supergirl is just the mind trying to apply those heroic qualities to a normal person. Not that they’re the same.”

“You tried so hard,” Kara said with a bit of a yawn.

“So did you, I seem to recall my assistant and Supergirl in my presence at the same time once.”

“I thought that worked.”

Cat smiled warmly, still tracing small designs along Kara’s skin as she yawned again.

“You put Clark Kent down as a reference.”

Kara’s eyes flared a bit with that, her body fighting against the threads of sleep weaving through her.

“You know-“

“Even if I didn’t know the relation in the beginning, your interview on the hill, then bringing him into CatCo as your cousin… it wasn’t too difficult to follow.”
Kara almost pouted, nuzzling into her pillow a little more.

“Didn’t help I worked with him before you. You pull the mild-mannered reporter angle off a little easier. I would still say whoever trained you both in that needs to take a few notes.”

“You never said anything.”

“I said plenty until I understood what I was doing which wasn’t fair to you. Something like that, it wouldn’t matter who told me what. If it wasn’t from you it didn’t matter.”

Kara looked up at her again, the fog of her brain making it even more difficult to put the point together.

Cat eased herself down, so she was lying on her arm, setting the two of them at eye level as she ran her hand down Kara’s limb before tangling their fingers together easily.

“I’m glad you told me because I know it’s the truth and that you trust me when it comes to you.”

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Alex stretched with a yawn, rubbing at her face as she sat back in her chair. Her phone was still silent as far as Kara or Cat were concerned and Winn had gone home an hour ago. Eliza was still fooling away in the lab hoping to reverse engineer something to help Kara if this ever happened again or if her body couldn’t fight off the toxin alone. Which was apparently a possibility? They had one of Kara’s articles ready for the early editions hoping to draw her latest fan out of hiding. Even with all that coming together, they were still no closer to anything groundbreaking. It was all still speculative and fleeting. Any lead they thought they had, once ran down, came up empty and Alex still couldn’t shake that there were more pieces to this game they just weren’t seeing.

“Should get you a cot,” Vasquez murmured, taking the chair beside Alex far more fresh-faced than her friend.

“I don’t think that’s regulation, at least not out here.”

“You’re going to wear yourself thin, ma’am.”

Alex cut the other woman a look before leaning further back into her seat and folding her arms over her chest. “I’ll be fine.”

Vasquez nodded unconvinced as she pulled up Winn’s program to look over the scans in his absence. Her brow furrowed as she called up a map, laying the algorithms over the display before pressing a few more keys. Alex watched passively at first until Vasquez’s focus narrowed.

“What is it?”

“The signal output,” Vasquez narrows the field, as Alex watched the gridline shift and Mark it’s way along the map. “I don’t think it’s random.”

Alex frowned, looking over the screens. “Winn said it was scattered all over.”

Vasquez nodded, watching the display. “Scattered suggests True randomization, bouncing across
any point it can find.”

“But?”

“These signals aren’t doing that. They’re random but purposefully random. Look here…” Vasquez pulled back, showing the signal bypass two or three relay points before pinging one that seemed too far to consider it just happenstance. “It should’ve hit these other points and bounced then back and forth.”

Alex tipped her head, the lines reminding her of a spirograph or some kind of geometric lathe used to prevent bank note forgeries.

“Pull the map back.” Alex requested, watching the signal expand in scope while narrowing in design. The two women watched as the signal bounced and jumped on a set course leaving the two of them both stunned and borderline enraged.

“Isn’t that where…” Vasquez quieted with Alex’s glare, her attention turning back to the map and the penitentiary that was serving as an origin point for the signal.

“Get Hank down here, and Winn,” Alex commanded even if Vasquez was already moving to do so. “See if you can get a clear line to the penitentiary, emergency code only in case they’ve been compromised. No code, no relay, understand?”

“I’ll make it look like a signal check if I have to.”

Alex moved to another console, keying in a headset before setting in a very specific frequency. She waited for the panel to turn green before hitting the initial signal emitter; she watched the relay transmit the initial warning broadcast before she pressed a button on her headset.

“Superman, this is Alexandra Danvers,” she took a deep breath, knowing the only other time they had used this frequency was on record from years ago. While this wasn’t a call for help against a megalomaniac Kryptonian general, the threat was just as vile. “If you can hear me, I need you to get to Stryker’s Island now, we’re sending additional agents for support just in case.” Alex looked up at the monitors again and the hexagon symbol with a single letter the trace was producing.

“It’s Lex Luthor.”
Chapter 22

Chapter Notes

Mentions of abandonment and the ravings of a lunatic mind

The sun was barely breaking across the city as trucks dropped off the Sunday morning edition to newsstands. Online subscriptions sent out their typical notifications across phones and tablets, while other media outlets began the wind up into the new week with their morning shows. Number one on the overall agenda, the bomber in National City targeting CatCo. Beyond Cat’s name, given her position with the company and her own brush with death, they gave no other details as to intended targets or persons of interest. Within moments the news shifted to Supergirl, relaying her heroism in light of the bombing at CatCo.

“No acknowledgment of the bomber sir, front-page article belongs to Ms. Danvers calling for advocacy, giving a human voice to the voiceless.”

The man on the other end smiled faintly, giving a nod to himself. “Everything stays quiet today then. Give the cape a reprieve and the reporter the spotlight.”

“Yes, sir.”

The phone was hung up with a snap by the warden holding it, a final threat he swore to make good on before they had seized him. Ignoring his predicament, Lex merely stared ahead at his soon to be temporary cellmate. Lex was bound and upright in the center of his cell, while guards removed every ounce of privilege he had ever been granted.

“Let’s see how you do without your toys.” The warden offered before the guards cleared out, leaving Lex in the center with nothing but a slab for a bed and a hole for a toilet. The warden stopped just inside the cell, looking up at Superman.

“He’s all yours.”

The sound of the door slamming shut and locking the two away had little effect as Lex merely smiled while Superman stepped into the light.

“Alone at last.” Lex shifted where he was bound before heaving a mock sigh. “Little help here blue boy?”

There was a sharp burst of light before Lex fell forward under his own weight, giving a series of clicks with his tone.

“Not very boy scout of you.” Lex pushed up from the floor, dusting his hands off before moving to his slab to take a seat as if he were sitting on a throne. “But that’s to be expected, the real you showing up behind closed doors and all.”

“I’m not leaving here without answers.”

“Ooo, is that supposed to scare me? What’re you going to do? Break me down? Intimidate me and shake me about until I grovel and beg for mercy? I don’t have any powers so you can’t use that
“I mean it Luthor.”

“He means it, ladies and gentlemen! He wants the truth!”

Superman lifted his chin eyeing the man.

“With honor and justice folded in I bet.” Lex rolled his eyes. “That’s what you stand for, isn’t it? Truth, justice and the American way?” He pointed at Superman. “The truth as you know it, right? The truth of the victor, as you’ve twisted and shaped it for your own means and for everyone who can’t think for themselves to ingest.”

“You’re the only one here who does that, spouting lies until you and your followers believe them.”

“Ah ah ah…” Lex waved a finger. “I speak truth to power. I know the real truth, the one unsullied and perverted by things like you.”

Superman narrowed his eyes ever so slightly, searching over Lex’s frame for a long moment.

“I bet you’re wondering what could he possibly be talking about? The lies you’ve convinced yourself of must be so confounding when they’re challenged, even just a little bit.” Lex shook his head to emphasize his point. “Boggles the mind sometimes.”

“Is there actually a point to all of this Luthor, or are you just biding your time for something else?”

Lex grinned, leaning forward conspiratorially. “You know, a part of me had hoped someone would’ve figured this all out just a little sooner. Might’ve saved you the trip.” Lex winked before leaning back again. “Although, come to think of it, considering the Maiden of Might isn’t the one standing here I can only conclude she’s…” Lex made a roundabout gesture with his hand. “Under the weather perhaps?”

Lex watched the twitch just under the Kryptonian’s eyes, confirming his point. He had honestly been expecting Supergirl, despite what he had orchestrated days prior. There was the possibility she was as right as rain like his men on the outside had relayed, but that news was two days old. The last time he had used that agent of accident, Superman had succumbed within a few hours to the alien toxin. With their tangled history, it was a fifty-fifty shot to expect the Kryptonian’s cousin. Had Superman not flinched, he would have assumed that was the only reason he was here now.

“Then again, maybe she’s fine, and is just showing you the same courtesy you have with her over the years.” That again provoked a reaction, the tip of the Kryptonian’s chin down and the narrowing of his eyes. He was curious, which meant he was listening. “Her city and her life are too important to deviate from to take care of your failings.” Lex gestured to himself.

Superman raised a brow at that, his arms coming to cross just under his sigil.

“What better way to learn something about someplace so foreign and the right set of behavior than from family right?”

“You’re stalling,” Superman stated, giving a small shake of his head. “Whatever part you’ve played is just that, a part. This is a waste of time while the real criminal-”

“The only real criminal here is you, Superman.” Lex bit back, his irritation at the Kryptonian’s arrogance showing. “Don’t look at me like that and tell me it’s a lie. Even I haven’t done what you have to your family or people who cared about you. That is criminal.”
“You helped murder your father and tried to have your sister killed—”

“Because YOU poisoned her against me!” Lex roared, coming up off the slab, stopping a breath away from the Kryptonian who didn’t waver. “You and your allies, purveyors of a false god, prophets of lies and deceit.”

“This is a waste of my time,” Superman stated once Lex seemed to reign himself back in, his shoulders turning as he turned away to leave.

“Hope, help, and compassion for all.”

Superman stopped short, his back still to Lex.

“It was a little juvenile for me at first but when I really sat with it, I came to realize something. The simplicity of it, the ease to understand it held more truth and depth than what you stand for.” Lex slowly eased back onto the slab, putting his back against the corner watching the Kryptonian carefully.

“There’s no discrimination there, for me, for humans for aliens, rich, poor, good or bad, doesn’t matter. With your cousin, she doesn’t discard people, she wasn’t just handed this world on a platter and the best part is you’re to blame for that.”

“You’re out of your mind Lex.”

“I’m out of my mind?” Lex laughed, loud and full as Superman turned enough to regard him over his shoulder.

“There are three, maybe four, people in the world who have one common truth, a kinship really, when it comes to you. It’s a very definitive thing, a dark little stain on that symbol you hold so dear.”

“Enlighten me.”

“Now he wants the truth, but is he sure he can handle it?”

Superman drew in an exasperated breath, pinning Lex with a look.

“You wouldn’t understand. Not being a self-made individual, you can try and I’ll be happy to help but there is that little fundamental nuance you have to really know, to experience before you can truly grasp the depths of all this.” Lex tipped his head, studying the Kryptonian in front of him. “What makes it so much more, satisfying, beyond that lack of knowledge, is that you’re the sole cause behind the need to rise up from nothing into something. So there is a small thank you in that, however misplaced the sentiment is.”

“And who exactly are these individuals?”

Lex chuckled, “Cat Grant and Kara Danvers, of course.”

Superman’s shoulders broadened and his eyes narrowed as he turned back around slowly. A part of him thought Lex had finally slipped off the last little edge of sanity he may have held, while another lingered on the edge of panic at Kara’s identity being compromised by this man.

“Don’t look so shocked. For either argument. Their struggle or your cousin’s identity. Which in all honesty, I have you to thank for. Sending your little friend Olsen to National City was quite the breadcrumb. At first I thought maybe you were making amends, but sadly no.”
“Make amends?”

Lex shook his head in disappointment. “I’ve read so much about your intellect and yet I have to wonder, how much of that is just another fabrication.” Lex pushed to a stand then, nearing the Kryptonian as he set his hands behind his back.

“For driving Cat away, you and Lois Lane. Come to think of it, I suppose sending Olsen was a means to kill two birds with one stone. Offer him a consolation prize of sorts and ensure Cat didn’t get too cozy with your cousin.” Lex gave him a look. “I mean, you couldn’t possibly let someone like Cat Grant overshadow your precious Lois.”

Lex stepped away again while Superman watched him pace.

“You know, she never testified against me. Never once came to my trial. I seem to recall the Planet making something of a sideline story about how unbiased her network was by comparison. I think Lois titled it, ‘Playing the Devil’s Advocate’? The two of you had already taken the rug out from under her in Metropolis, ruined her career, she had to cross the entire country to build herself back up from nothing.”

Superman just stared ahead while Lex moved and gestured about.

“The second she got a taste of that, a second chance with another Kryptonian,” Lex snapped his fingers right in Superman’s face. “There you were, sending your little errand boy to spy on her, and your cousin.”

“I did that to protect them.”

“You did that to cover your own ass. You fed your cousin to the wolves from the moment she arrived here. Unworthy of your attention, of that compassion you hold so dear for humans.” Lex looked Superman over as if he were nothing but an insect to be squashed. “Your self-centered arrogance is probably the only reason she even put on a cape. Because you were too busy and couldn’t be bothered to lend a hand when it came to your own flesh and blood and her chosen family.”

Lex stepped closer, eyes never leaving Superman’s. “Is that what it is? People who willingly put themselves in harm’s way and come out alright that irks you? You can’t play hero anymore with them so they become outcasts?”

“What are you getting at Lex?”

Lex tipped his head at the Kryptonian. “It was always a convenience to be left out of the loop with you, pushed to the side, never really trusted. Only ever reaching out to me or your so-called friends when they’re useful because they have something you want. Just so you could have all the glory in the end.”

Lex stepped up into Superman’s space, nearly stepping on his boots to do so.

“We all know what it’s like to be thrown aside by the likes of you. I can’t save myself, too late for that what with believing in you, but I can save them and expose you.”

The two stared at one another for a long moment before Lex smiled like a child opening a box on Christmas morning.

“He wants to know why,” Lex whispered
Superman pushed out the crest on his chest as Lex gave an incredulous laugh, easing back and setting back down on the slab again with renewed vigor.

“Cat rebuilt her life, after the two of you destroyed it, into an empire beyond anything the Planet could have hoped to be. A patron saint of truth because even she isn’t afraid to call out Supergirl when she needs to be reigned in. If I recall, she was even willing to die trying to save the world without powers while you succumbed.”

Superman shifted his jaw, the weight of what had happened with Myriad and the Daxamite’s pulling at his shoulders.

“Kara Danvers, the assistant turned reporter. Being Cat’s protege challenges Lois’ place and your own human facade. She doesn’t serve as a mouthpiece for an alien masquerading as a god. She uses her own, providing a real voice to the world and its problems that should be heard.”

Lex crossed his arms over his chest, looking Superman directly in the eye.

“Then there’s her alter ego Supergirl,” Superman’s jaw flexed again as he stared down at the other man. “Dropped off at the doorstep of humans to fend for herself by the only living connection to her homeworld. After all your efforts to belittle and minimize her… She’s faster than you, stronger, smarter, born from the ashes of your ego” Lex tipped his head.

“She’s better than you in every way and the world is going to know it.”
Alarms went off all over the facility, sending agents into motion as it pulled out Alex out of her sleep from within the bunk room. Hank was already on deck while others tried to pinpoint the cause.

“It’s Kryptonite sir, the signature doesn’t lie,” Vasquez stated ominously. Hank looked over at Alex when she appeared, zipping up her uniform and combing her hands through her hair.

“Where?”

“Inside this facility.”

“That’s not possible,” Hank called as Alex stepped closer, watching the detectors work through the DEO floor plan along the screens.

“It is, if we have a breach and it’s coming in on its own two legs.” Alex ground out.

“Metallo? But he’s-“

“He’s gone but there are others like him or could be. This is Luthor we’re dealing with,” Alex marked a few points on the table Vasquez handed her in the meantime. “He may have planned all this, just to lure Superman away knowing we couldn’t send Kara. For who or what, I don’t know”

“Lock it down, no one in or out,” Hank demanded. “I want a report on all floors, every entry point. If Lex has sent someone here-“

“The signal’s not moving,” Winn announced putting everyone on edge while Alex stepped over to him.

“Where was the last point of contact?”

Hank relayed orders to all teams as the lockdown protocol was initialized over the comms.

“Holding cells,” Winn announced before looking back to the others. “Just outside the containment bay for the Gahedran.”

“Alex-“

“On it.”

“Delta and Echo teams, detainment area, level A. Danvers is headed there now. Alpha and Bravo, I need a sweep of all entry points that have access to those areas.”

“Uh, sirs…” Vasquez interjected, unsure if what she was looking at was even real.

“Sierra and Tango teams, start at the top and work your way down.”

Vasquez tapped on her pad before throwing the feed she was deciphering onto the main screen, overriding audio across the main ops area.

“J’onn! Alex! Anyone I need you here now!” Eliza’s voice sounded over the room, pulling everyone’s attention. She was jumping and waving at a camera trying to get someone’s attention.
Just beyond her, they could see Superman, propped against a wall, inside the containment zone where Eliza couldn’t get to him.

“Lift the protocol!” She shouted as Superman dropped to his knees, the eerie green flare of Kryptonite crawling over his skin. “The security walls dropped and I can’t get to him! Lift the protocol!!”

“Oh my God,” Alex uttered, as Clark went down completely, unable to get away from the source. “Winn lift the protocol!!”

“I can’t, it’s part of the failsafe, not until it’s neutralized.”

“Try!”

Eliza moved out of frame as another camera tracked her path as she grabbed something off a wall and moved back towards the panel separating her and Kara’s cousin. The sound of metal pounding and reverberating across the hall came over ops as Hank pulled himself away.

“Winn…”

“I’m trying Alex.” Winn’s hands were flying over the keys, trying to pinpoint the locking mechanisms to override them.

On the other side of the containment cell, the Gahedran knelt down, hand pressed against the glass where Superman sat. Eliza reared back again, her next swing falling short with a new idea.

“Alex if you can hear me, have Winn open the alien holding cell. Number seven it’s cell number seven!”

Alex could hear Hank on the comms, relaying new orders to other teams racing around the building while Winn concentrated his efforts on the detainment area.

“They’ll still be contained…” Alex scanned the camera view, Superman was bracketed on all sides, it was a failsafe for the detainees in case their enclosures failed.

“Yeah and Superman won’t be able to fend them off if they try anything.” Winn suggested.

“Just do it!”

Winn punched in a few more keys as the cell flushed red and the seal broke.

Eliza abandoned the extinguisher, pressing against the ballistics panel as the detainment cell door split apart. The alien slipped out easily, pushing the cell doors wider to accommodate their frame before looking at Eliza tentatively. “I need you to find that green stone. Please… he won’t hurt you. I promise.”

The alien looked at Eliza, more reptilian than human, before looking at Superman. Even if they found it, Eliza knew the alien wouldn’t be able to get it far enough away without some other kind of intervention. The lead box Superman had brought it in was across the hall on the other side of the containment barricade. With another swing of the alien’s features towards Eliza, the woman tried to convey the urgency of the situation wordlessly. Not even sure the Gahedran could understand a word she had been saying up to this point. The figure crouched low, touching Superman’s chest before turning him over and revealing the large chunk of Kryptonite just under his torso. It held Superman’s body up gingerly, easing the stone out from under him before throwing it towards Eliza as if burned.
Hank appeared out of nowhere right beside Eliza, arm outstretched and reaching literally through the containment wall before surrounding the Kryptonite with his hand in mid-air and absorbing it into his body. After a few seconds the alarms disengaged and the containment walls began to lift as two DEO teams flooded the hall guns drawn. Eliza crawled under the gap despite Hank’s protests, scrambling for Superman and the other alien, setting herself against the latter as they helped her pull Superman into their joint grasp. Agents had weapons trained on the released prisoner, shouting demands at the Gahedran while Eliza shouted right back.

“STAND DOWN!” Hank’s voice boomed across the room ending all verbal conflict, while Eliza continued to try to calm the Gahedran and convince them to help her lift Superman. After a few moments the pair urged the man to his feet, moving towards Hank who stood in the center of the hall barring further passage. Eliza lifted her chin defiantly, and Hank suppressed the smile that fought to show. Clearly this was where Alex and Kara got their stubbornness from. Although to be honest, they still had a ways to go to match Eliza’s intensity.

The two of them stared one another down for countless moments before Hank squared his shoulders in a display of reluctant concession.

“There are better ways to go about this Eliza.”

“I didn’t know what he was doing until it was too late.” Eliza huffed, her anger simmering just below the surface enough to make even Hank waver slightly. “You can take it up with him right after I do.”

Hank shifted his jaw, knowing she was telling the truth. He glanced to the Gahedran holding the bulk of Superman’s weight before turning his focus back on Eliza.

“Delta team… escort these three to medical and secure this floor.”

The others on the main floor watched the exchange, unsure of what to do or say at the scene they were witnessing.

“Remind me never to cross your mother Danvers,” Alex looked over at Vasquez as she spoke. “She’s fucking terrifying.”

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Kara woke up slowly, her movements sluggish as if someone had wrapped lead weights around every one of her limbs. A cold, wet panel of pillow forced her head up as she made a noise bordering on disgusted and confused before she wiped at her mouth. She turned over even slower, her body reminding her that she wasn’t the superhero she was a few days ago. A dull ache prickled across her nerves, sending goosebumps across her skin as she pushed herself to the edge of the bed.

Her body longed to stretch up and fully, while her mind sent off warning bells at the outcome of doing such a thing. She tucked into her left side a bit, stretching what she could and still came up short with a wince. Kara gave a small grunt of frustration before covering her mouth with a bandaged hand suddenly realizing Cat might still be asleep. With a slow turn she found herself alone and let out a slow exhale of relief.

She remembered their hands tangling together before everything became a solid void. That sobered
her up quickly enough and try as she might, Kara couldn’t recall a single dream, memory or sleep induced fantasy she sometimes had to force herself into just to try and actually rest. Kara had mere handfuls of those kinds of nights. Where she wasn’t reminded of her time in space flooded with memories of a dying planet or visited by the ghosts of those she had lost; and this was the first one in years.

Before she could dwell further on that revelation the overwhelming scent of bacon and sweet, sticky cinnamon rolls permeated her senses. Her stomach dropped and sang the song of its people, pushing her to stand as she rounded the bed on uneasy legs, and made her way out of her room.

Cat was filling a second mug with coffee, adding Kara’s usual favorite flavors to the mix until it was the perfect consistency and color. She caught the sound of someone swearing just inside the hallway after a resounding thump. She bit back her smile, drifting around the island so she would be the first thing Kara saw when she emerged.

“Afternoon sunshine.”

It was well beyond morning. Cat had let Kara sleep until she couldn’t tolerate her own stomach’s grumbling.

Kara stepped into the main room on socked feet, her legs bare and a thin shirt her only covering. Cat rose a high brow, biting back a laugh at the air-dried waves that refused to be tamed. Kara drifted towards her, hands outstretched for the cup offered like a tithe. Working on autopilot, Kara surrounded the mug and Cat’s hands, drawing her in and kissing her briefly before pulling the cup to her lips.

Cat lingered where she was for a moment, not having expected that and when Kara nearly choked she realized neither had the other woman.

Kara swallowed hard, sputtering a bit before looking sheepishly at Cat.

“Morn..uh..sorry-no I’m not-I mean, I didn’t mean-“

Cat stepped into her space, glancing down to Kara’s lips before leaning in and rubbing away the small drops of coffee left on them with her thumb before drawing her finger to her own lips to taste.

“Didn’t mean what?”

Kara stood stunned, her mouth moving without sound before Cat gave her a wry smile.

“Hungry?”

Kara nodded and Cat gently turned her shoulders to the table, albeit with a touch of resistance where a plate was already waiting for both of them. All resistance fled from the woman at the sight before her, as she made her way over and coiled up in a chair.

Cat laughed softly as Kara propped a leg up in her chair, as if shielding her left side with her thigh and somehow worked around her knee to cut into her eggs. Cat grabbed a bowl of cut fruit before settling into her own seat across from the other woman, already poised for a bite only to stop herself.

“What’s wrong?”

Kara swallowed hard, her cheeks flushed red as she started to lower her fork. “I should wait, I’m
not a heathen, my manners must still be asleep.”

Cat shook her head, plucking a piece of melon free from the bowl before popping it into her mouth. “Eat, Midvale.”

Kara didn’t need to be told twice as she took a hearty bite before leaning back into her seat to enjoy it.

“Smerisly…” Kara said around a mouthful. “Mhat d’you put in these?”

Cat cut into her eggs, fixing herself a much smaller bite. ‘Love’ she thought.

“Effort.”

Kara rolled her eyes, shaking her head as Cat merely chuckled low in her chest, the sound almost coming off as a purr.

“Chew before you swallow or you’ll choke.” Cat warned as Kara added more to her first mouthful with a hint of a wince.

Kara gave a nod, slowing down enough to appease Cat and the twinge across her cheek with the stretch to accommodate her food. Even if Kara’s powers were nullified, it astounded her how hungry she still felt.

“It is nice to see you still enjoy it so thoroughly though.” Cat allowed, watching Kara’s jaw slow as she chewed while Cat snagged another piece of fruit.

Kara felt another twinge vibrate through her body with the comment. Reaching for her coffee instead of another bite in an attempt to hide her expression and the feeling the other woman’s words evoked.

A quiet apprehension drifted through her as she studied Cat before returning her focus to her plate. Her mind questioning why she would feel shy now given everything that had happened between them last night. Even if nothing had really happened beyond a few passionate kisses. Not nothing, there was one something on Kara's behalf. The sudden reminder coiling low around her hips as she swallowed heartily.

The want and intention on both their parts had been there even if Kara’s body had been in no condition to be so willing.

Kara had seen Cat naked, shared a bath with her, fallen asleep between her legs wrapped up like life long lovers.

And Cat had allowed all of it.

Not just allowed it but welcomed it, hadn’t balked, shamed, judged or convinced her otherwise. Injuries aside, any concern with modesty had been tended to when needed but without the typical fuss she was used to with humans, and their views of the body in its natural form, it hadn’t even been anything to really consider.

Granted, Cat wasn’t like most people. If anything Cat loved her own body like a temple. Beyond the couture and the confidence, the attention to her diet and exercise regime; Cat was comfortable in her own skin. It was a developed skill, somewhat innate on some subconscious level but still. The more she thought about it, the more Kara couldn’t think of an instance when the other woman wasn’t.
Kara’s mind jumped roughly, flooding her with images laced with amorous intentions as her chest tightened all on its own.

Cat had seen her naked.

Her brow furrowed with the abrupt shock of the thought, wondering for a brief moment if whatever was affecting her physically might also be toying with her mind. Her focus was everywhere and nowhere at once with Cat at the center. She flew around in a skirt and a leotard for crying out loud, there wasn’t too much to leave to the imagination honestly. But the weight of that single thought trickled down her spine like a Rube Goldberg machine, setting off varying responses throughout her body until she nearly choked.

“Easy,” Cat soothed as Kara shifted and came up short of breath. “Your bounce back is still a little stunted there.”

Kara nodded again, swallowing hard and instead of another bite of food she just sat with herself, moving food around her plate pretending to work up another bite.

Cat watched her carefully, not wanting to push or pry but the shift in the other woman’s demeanor was rather difficult to ignore. Admittedly Cat was thankful for the small talk, after last night she wasn’t sure she could handle the depths of a conversation she had been predicting now that adrenaline and emotion had faded away with the rising sun.

Not that she didn’t want to talk about last night and all the unspoken things between them amid all the things they’d revealed without speaking. She very much wanted to discuss the nuances of what had occurred outside of tending to Kara’s injuries, with the cunning use of actions over words. That thought alone was enough to give her pause. The ease with which they had navigated need and want while managing to accomplish both without actually doing anything beyond a little making out confounded her.

It was an odd place to be, really. Cat was a very private person, even in her personal life. It had attributed to at least two of her failed marriages. Being unavailable or evasive, closed off, cold and any modicum of other choice phrases that boiled down to distant or one-sided.

With Kara it was, for lack of a better word, different. There was no requirement for the profession of her feelings or thoughts. No demands for forced affection or physical intimacy, or even outlined definitions of what they should be to one another.

They just… were.

Were what, she didn’t rightly know and for once Cat felt that was okay. Certainly they needed to discuss that at some point, healthy boundaries and all but with Kara, one look could tell Cat exactly where or what they were without further explanation. What was altogether more surprising, was Cat’s willingness to accept those wordless affirmations as an irrefutable truth.

They were in this together. Maybe they had been for a while. Only now, they had allowed themselves to not only see it but acknowledge and act on it. At least Cat assumed it was a joint effort and not just an overstep on her behalf. While she might feel one way, Kara might not.

Cat mulled over another piece of melon, unable to pinpoint an exact moment when their dynamic had shifted but the truth of it, as far as her part was concerned, was staring her in the face.

She hadn’t dated in years. Cat hadn’t been actively doing so before Kara entered her life, but the offers for drinks or dinners or even one-night stands had gone from passive maybe’s to outright
refusals. She had put that effort into something useful. She had focused it down to getting to know Kara and being a part of her life outside the lines of CatCo. Sure, initially it had been out of a nagging curiosity to discover Supergirl’s identity, until the intention had shifted and Cat found she just honestly wanted to get to know who Kara really was.

Not only because she suspected she was Supergirl, but because Kara Danvers was a genuinely intriguing person. A person who had been at her side for years with a devotion unmatched by any prior assistant. Not to mention the actual gravitas and self assuredness the other woman had developed over time towards calling Cat out on her bullshit. Of course, if she was considering devotion, Kara had been allowed beyond the simple boundaries of an assistant on that front a while ago.

Cat drew in a deep breath, her mind slowly easing into the truth of it all. Over the course of time around each other, where Supergirl had become a constant for the people of National City and beyond it, Kara had become Cat’s.

She lifted her gaze back to the other woman who had finally started to eat again. Cat was thankful Kara’s powers had waned enough so that she couldn’t hear her heart as it started to race away.

Cat had fallen for the other woman so effortlessly, she hadn’t even stopped to consider that they weren’t together. They had made no declarations, passed no secret admirations to each other behind flower deliveries or insignificant baubles. Neither of them had asked the other out, or even made some kind of pass or allusion to their current state.

She hadn’t been seeking a relationship of any kind beyond frivolity to appease her boredom or loneliness at times. She hadn’t been pining over never finding someone else to share in the intricacies of her life beyond her professional persona. If she were honest with herself, she had written the concept off entirely. As Kara took another bite, relishing in the taste of her food yet again, Cat felt the whimsical drop in her stomach coupled with the telltale tension in her chest squeezing her to attention.

Cat was in love…
“What the hell did you think you were doing?!” Eliza barked, shoving Clark back down onto the medical bed beneath an array of sunlamps. “I have half a mind to call Lois, or better yet Martha.”

Even the Gahedran shrank away at that, sitting on an adjoining bed, legs swinging about. She watched Eliza attentively, her quick actions making them want to bolt.

“I wanted to help. I didn’t know there was a K-protocol or-“

“Maybe if you spent more time-” Eliza cut herself off, letting out a breath to calm herself. “You might want to keep more abreast of the goings-on of certain agencies in the future. Specifically, when you made such a point to eliminate the very thing you brought with you from human hands.”

Clark shifted his jaw, settling back down as he stared at the ceiling. He was better now, knew his vitals showed as much but to move against Eliza would be a devastating blow regardless of who he was.

“Why didn’t you send a better message?” Eliza said with a softer tone, looking over the monitors and adjusting the sunlamps. “Have J’onn or Alex meet you at the sky-entry? They could have prepared this place for it. After the cryptic message you did manage to send about Lex Luthor being behind all of this, you’re lucky-”

The Gahedran shot to attention, spines, and scales rippling to life and making them appear three times their size with no signs of stopping. Both Eliza and Clark responded, as Clark moved from the medical bed in a blink and put himself between the alien and Eliza. She, on the other hand, marveled at how someone seemingly so small in stature, even with the defensive display, was increasing their physical mass until they stood taller than both her and Superman.

“He’s not here,” Eliza explained easily, setting a hand on Clark’s shoulder to put him at ease as well before slowly inching around the man. “Nor is he coming here.” Eliza stepped beyond Clark, her hand remaining on his shoulder as she offered her other out to the panic-stricken alien who towered over her. “He’s not going to hurt you anymore either.”

The alien’s tail twitched, the end of it whirling about vigorously even as the spines along its back and limbs began to recede. They made a show of sniffing the air before shuffling a little closer. They reached out slowly, the back of their hand coming to rest within Eliza’s hand. In a blink, the pangolin-like scales shifted in a wave, adjusting their color and flattening out almost seamlessly while mimicking the woman’s skin tone as their body mass decreased. Clark straightened at the display with recognition while Eliza slanted her head.

“Extraordinary…”

“Alex said there was some kind of alien toxin…” Clark murmured, moving closer only to stop when the spines across the Gahedran’s shoulders pricked to attention with his progress.

“Yes,” Eliza said with a firm calm, moving a step closer until the alien narrowed the distance, setting both, now smaller, hands in Eliza’s one. They appeared small and inexperienced, insecure in their surroundings like a newly uncaged animal. They had been calmer in a cell than they should have been as if that was all they had ever known.

“They’re not supposed to exist,” Clark whispered regarding the alien as they drifted from one foot to the other deliberately.
“Like Kara wasn’t?” Eliza suggested reaching up with her other hand in full view before bringing it to the alien’s other arm, gently caressing their shoulder and nudging those spines down along their base.

“Not exactly. The only other one I ever met died years ago.” Clark hadn’t seen it before, didn’t even know what he was looking at, to be honest, until that cascade of scales and spines. He had fought with another of their kind, shortly after disclosing his existence to the world but never knew what it was. Lex had been behind that attack then too. Knew exactly how to provoke it into attacking the city, just like before. Only this time his cousin had been the one to intervene.

“They were bigger,” Eliza looked back at him as if he had suddenly hit his head while the Gahedran merely blinked. “I mean... overall.”

The Gahedran reached up then, hovering a hand over the man’s chest near his symbol before tapping on it gently. He glanced down at the sigil, before turning his eyes back up.

“Me?” The alien shook their head, before pointing at Eliza then themselves. “You and her?” The alien nodded, pointing at the last word.

“Her... you’re a her?” The alien nodded before they tapped his chest again, where he looked over at Eliza for help.

“The other one was a he?” Eliza offered, causing the alien to nod while Eliza’s frown deepened.

“The other one you’re referring to was her father.” Hank’s voice pulled the trio’s attention as the Gahedran nodded emphatically before tipping their head curiously at the man. “Yes, I can hear you youngling, now that you are not so scattered.” Hank stepped closer, producing the lead box to Eliza while Clark stepped further aside. “I’ve temporarily disarmed the kryptonite protocol, all I ask is that you explain why you brought it.”

Clark looked to the others, then the lead box Eliza took only after gently extricating her hand from the Gahedran’s.

“Alex said an alien toxin had affected Kara. With... you-know-who behind all this, I assumed it was something he had gained from this one here and not in the way I initially thought.”

“How did that thunderbolt strike you?” Hank questioned with an edge of irritation. He had a lot of respect for the man but sometimes his righteous naivety showed up at the oddest moments.

“I told him.” Eliza clarified, setting the lead box down and well out of the way.

“I brought that,” Clark interjected, gesturing to the kryptonite, “so you could run tests, get current samples, anything you needed to help.”

“In the detainment sector?” Hank eyed the man.

“I brought that,” Clark interjected, gesturing to the kryptonite, “so you could run tests, get current samples, anything you needed to help.”

“In the detainment sector?” Hank eyed the man.

“That was where I found Eliza, she was tending to this one and-“

“And I opened the box while he was distracted” Eliza added, sending a look Clark’s way. “When the alarms went off, he thought it was a prisoner breach or something on that level and in trying to push me aside it got knocked loose.”

Hank eyed them both, knowing full well that wasn’t exactly the truth without having to read Eliza’s mind. It felt like truth enough to her, but Clark’s body language said otherwise. He glanced to the Gahedran who merely stepped closer to Eliza before drawing in a deep breath.
“You realize, Kara hasn’t checked in at all, and that the messages we sent haven’t been marked as read. She could very well be fine.”

Clark shook his head. “If she was, I can promise you I wouldn’t have been the only one arriving on such short notice at Stryker's Island.”

There was no arguing that, despite the situation Kara was faced with, if she had heard Alex’s transmission to Superman, she wouldn’t have hesitated to show and confront him. With her absence that could only mean that her powers were vacant.

Hank heaved out a sigh, his arms crossing over his chest as he looked at the three. “I’ll see if I can’t get Winn to find a neural transmitter, I can’t play translator all day in here.”

Clark looked at the man curiously while Eliza gave a small knowing smile.

“Ok then,” she began, setting her hand on Clark’s shoulder. “Until then, let’s get those samples quick and safe?”

The Gahedran rocked up, nudging Eliza while provoking the others to look at them. Hank cleared his throat before gesturing to a glass container nearby. Without prompt the alien snatched it up, moving from foot to foot in some kind of anticipation before looking expectantly at Hank.

He gave an empathetic sigh before clearing his throat. “Lex Luthor.”

Spines and scales came to life again, as the alien turned before making a horrible noise that made even Clark shudder. After another moment or two, the alien wavered, easily caught by Eliza as they nudged the container into her chest.

“Sample…” Hank supplied as he and the other two looked at the ocher tinged substance coating the inside of the glass.

Eliza soothed the alien with a few tender words, passing the container to Hank who ushered it beside the kryptonite box and gave a shudder all his own.

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Kara stood in the kitchen, changed and feeling more awake than before. Her body still felt heavy in parts, others angry and throbbing but the more she moved the less that feeling lingered. Although Cat had warned her moving too much would likely wear her down and leave her sore later.

She was attempting to wash the dishes, finding the task a little frustrating with the plastic bag she had wrapped around her right hand when the dish gloves wouldn’t fit. Cat had slipped away to get dressed, the plan so far consisting of lazing about and taking it easy. It had been suggested that maybe if they put their minds together they might be able to figure out something about who or what was behind all this.

Cat was just finishing up in her room when she caught sight of her phone on the nightstand in the mirrored reflection in front of her. A nagging thought pulled her focus to it as she straightened an earring before slowly turning to look at the device.

She had no idea what Kara had done with her phone but hadn’t seen it out or hanging from a pocket and assumed the woman was doing exactly what Cat was. Limiting any possibility of discovery.
She couldn’t help but wonder now if doing so had only contributed to Kara’s current state. A sliver of guilt worked its way along her spine as she stepped over and turned the device over to power it on.

She waited as the default carrier screen displayed before message after message crawled across her notifications. Her brow furrowed as she caught names she knew and the first few words of concern or comment about her whereabouts and wellbeing.

There must’ve been a news run, undoubtedly splashing her name everywhere and Kara’s too, although she prayed that wasn’t the case. The message from Adam pulled her attention first and foremost, her jaw working hard at the picture of her two sons coming up on the screen. She touched their faces with her fingertips, her motherly side rearing up and chastising her current choices until a pop-up screen glared up at her.

Cat nearly dismissed it until she saw a few keywords and took the time to read. Her heart felt even heavier then as the notification relayed what she had been afraid of. There was a clatter from the kitchen that pulled her attention, grinding salt into the wound before she looked back to the notification sent from Winn before turning her phone back off.

Kara set the last plate in the rack genuinely proud of herself as she pulled off the bag and checked to make sure the wrap was still dry. She caught sight of Cat coming out and made a proud stance to show her accomplishment off only to find her smile waver and her chest tighten.

Cat was… sullen, eyes a little swollen and posture on the edge of defeat. When she registered the fact Kara could see her, it all siphoned away behind a mask of indifference. Kara hated that, couldn’t even count the times she’s seen it and knew it was going to be a rough day at work. This wasn’t CatCo and Cat’s mother was hundreds of miles off.

“Cat?”

The woman kept moving, making her way to the living room to stand in front of the windows and just look out over the surrounding woods.

“Cat what’s wrong?”

Cat gave a small shake of her head, waving Kara off before wrapping herself up in her own arms.

“You need to call your sister.”

“Not until you tell me what’s wrong.”

“Kara.” Cat said louder than intended, watching Kara stand there and take the lashing, regardless. “please, call your sister. I just need a minute.”

Kara didn’t want to leave, fighting the urge to wrap Cat up she wavered for only a moment before stepping away towards her room. She grabbed her bag from the seat at the edge of the bed, ignoring the shooting pain in her side as if she deserved it. She fished around inside until she found the phone from earlier, thankful her memory was still somewhat intact.

She dialed the number on instinct, waiting for it to connect as she moved around her room to the far side, keeping the linear chart she had started the day before out of her view.

It only reminded her of the reality of their situation. That this was the farthest thing from a private getaway with her girlfri-
“Kara!”

The woman closed her eyes as her sister ran off a litany of questions and explanations, one name suddenly pulling her attention.

“What did you just say?”

“Lex Luthor did this. Clar—Superman won’t explain anything further just that—”

“My cousin is there?”

“Yeah, he’s with Mom.”

Kara felt as if she’d been punched all over again.
Chapter 25

Chapter Notes

Small anxiety attack warning for a character I. This chapter

Kara turned off the phone, throwing it aside on the bed before laying back. Pain nudged her side and she gave a small grunt of frustration while staring at the ceiling.

Lex Luthor.

The man of tomorrow’s annoyance. She had to hand it to him to a small degree. He never gave up, not even a little. There was a long game being played here. Kara felt as if she were too close to the middle of it all to see the greater picture to determine if she was the focus or just a convenience. That annoyed her even further, harkening on her own insecurities surrounding her cousin and his reputation. That this was really all for him and she was just a pawn. As if her life, not only as Supergirl but as Kara Danvers, was just someone else’s means to an end. A card to be turned over and played against her cousin. Kara rubbed at her face with her good hand, forcing out another dark huff of an exhale.

Her entire extended family was involved now, which should have made her feel better. All it did was compound everything that much more. At the very least, they were working on something to restore her powers in the meantime. Fat lot of good it would do at the DEO, but she suspected her cousin would help with that delivery too if warranted.

She let her hand drop with a bounce trying to map constellations out through the ceiling to no avail. Her thoughts swam back to Cat easily, wondering if she hadn’t called Alex first or something while she had been in her room changing. Whatever had set her off was one more brick in the wall that was building back up between them.

Kara should have known better than to have contacted Cat in the first place. If she hadn’t maybe they wouldn’t be in this predicament. Cat would still be in National City, or somewhere with her sons. She could be anywhere but stuck here taking care of Kara while she hid from the world. Kara closed her eyes, pushing back the swirl of emotions she felt working around her throat. This was never supposed to be about them and she shouldn’t have allowed herself to get so comfortable and complacent.

For Cat’s sake over her own.

There was a small knock at the door and Kara sat up slowly, half on her way to telling Cat she should leave and that Kara would be fine because her cousin would be here shortly no doubt, only to find it wasn’t Cat standing in the doorway.

“How are you doing there?” Melanie’s voice pulled Kara from the bed completely with a slight dip towards her left side. “Too much lazing about I see.”

“Sorry, I didn’t hear you come in.”

“Cat said you might be back here on the phone with family. Nice of you to check-in and all while
you’re out here. Most people wait till after they get home to relay that kind of thing.”

“That kind of…oh about getting in a fight. Yes, uhm well my sister and I are pretty close so…”

Melanie smiled warmly, edging a little further inside. “Listen, I just wanted to drop by to bring you two some food without fuss, but Jacob’s got this whole get Cat out of the house kind of thing going on out there.”

Kara frowned looking over Melanie’s shoulder only to realize she couldn’t see through the wall to check on the woman in question.

“I understand if you two just want to shack up here. Lord knows I’d hate having anyone meddling in my private getaway. Especially with how busy Cat and you seem to be in National City. Not that Jacob takes me anywhere.”

Kara made a face before searching out her words, not wanting to be rude. “Wait, Jacob is doing what now?”

“He saw how Cat was when we got here and figured you two had a bit of a row or something. He’d never say it but he loves Cat to death, and he’s trying to help. Suggested we all get up and out of the house, go fishing, reach out and touch nature and all that.”

Kara’s mind circled around the mention of Cat’s demeanor, her frown showing through easily. “He wants to go fishing now?”

Melanie smirked, “That was my response. Cat’s too sweet to say no, but I’m not convinced she’s really up to it. Not to mention you. Walking around with a bit of a broken wing there.”

Kara looked at her hand before lifting her attention back to Melanie. “I… could use some time out of the house.” Kara gaze drifted to the linear board before she crossed the room to obscure it from her guest. “Not in town either. I think I made a rather glaring first impression, and that needs to calm down a bit.”

Melanie chuckled. “Oh, hon that’s not going to happen anytime soon. This is a small town. That’s the most excitement any of us have seen since Marine One landed here a couple years back. Secret service pouring out of it like a clown car.”

Kara stared while Melanie beckoned her closer and into the hall.

“As I said, I understand if you don’t want to, or if Cat doesn’t want to. I can convince Jacob really.”

Kara drew in a slow breath, not sure if she wanted to be in the house with Cat while they walked circles around each other in avoidance.

“I think it’s a good idea. Not great, but it’s nice out. Cat could use the fresh air,” so could she. “It’s been ages since I went fishing, could be a little fun?”

“Better than wallowing about here working up to an apology.” Melanie rubbed Kara’s back as they walked down the hall, fleeting but enough to soothe as they stepped into the main room. Kara noted Cat was still set against the far wall, surrounded by the view while Jacob continued to talk quietly to her. That was until he saw Kara.

“Hey there slugger. Was just asking Kitty here if you were one of those UFC types that comes on Sundays at the Brewery.”
“Jacob.” Melanie scolded before giving Kara a small smile. “Nevermind him, you could startle a deer with a sneeze and he’d think you were the incredible bulk or something.”

“Hulk.” Cat corrected, looking Kara over and already realizing she was outnumbered, even if Melanie agreed with Cat on not embarking into the woods.

Kara studied Cat when the woman wasn’t looking at her before glancing to Jacob before she got caught. “We could stay in, Melanie mentioned food and-“

“Nonsense.” Cat allowed abruptly, “JJ here has all the stuff we need,” Cat’s tone was a little too glib for Kara’s liking as if she were teetering on some kind of edge point. “There are a few chairs and things in the garage.”

“I brought the truck down this time. I can back it down and then Melanie and I can carry anything the rest of the way.”

“Oh Melanie can, can she? I see, volunteered before I even have a chance to offer.”

Kara and Jacob seemed to exchange spaces as he neared his wife while Kara drew closer to Cat. Melanie edged Jacob further away, glancing at the two women and the tentative approach Kara made.

“We don’t have to go,” Kara whispered, keeping more than an arm’s length away from Cat, as she tucked a hand into a pocket while the other woman still had her arms folded around herself.

“It’s fine,” Cat replied, knowing she could use the break to collect her thoughts without the walls seeming to close in, despite how vast they were. “Did you call-”

“Alex says hello.”

“I’m sure she didn’t.”

“Oh she did, and her boss, and Winn, and my mother and my cousin.”

Each new individual mentioned brought everything in tighter, until she started to feel suffocated by all of it. First Jacob trying to prod and ease the tension she clearly manifested and now this.

Her mind rushed ahead of her and fell back at the same time. From walking into the vault and seeing Kara’s face on that damned device, the image of her sons from her phone, to the explosion in the sublevel of CatCo, waking up to Kara curled against her chest, to watching Supergirl lead an alien threat away from the people and watching her naked body settle into her own in the bath. Back and forth, narrowing down and closing in, grinding down to the reason why any of it was happening.

Cat tried to pull in a deep breath, unable to do so. Kara sensed the sudden shift, recognizing the tell-tale sign of panic and stepped just this side of Cat’s eye-line as the woman’s knuckles turned white.

“Cat… can you still hear me?” The cut of the woman’s eyes to her said enough and Kara gave a small nod of acknowledgment. Making a show of taking in a deep breath for Cat to try to mimic. Instead, the woman’s fingers dug in harder and Kara backed up a step.

“I need you to focus, Cat. Focus on what you can see, right now. Can you do that?”

Cat gave the barest hint of a nod.
“Tell me... five things,” Kara kept her voice at a whisper, calm and steady. Cat fought against the vice of her throat pulling in a short breath.

“The chair,” Cat began, eyes darting until something pulled the words. “A fire poker,” Kara stepped closer with her next word and the next before Cat’s focus leveled out, pushing the haze of her vision away, “and your necklace.”

“That’s good,” Kara assured, “now, touch four things.”

Cat was still tense and her fingers curled away from her arms as she pulled at the edge of her thin pullover, rubbing the zippered edge between her fingers. She moved uneasily, her other hand grasping for the cold metal of a lamp before falling to the suede round of the couch arm for balance as she flattened her palm over it. She reached out with her other hand, fingers trembling until they caught on the warm panel of Kara’s skin just above the neckline of her shirt, urging the numbness she felt away.

“Three things you can hear…” Kara spoke again, keeping absolutely still.

“Voices…” she sounded closer to her usual self, turning her head just so. “The clock on the wall behind you.” The sound of blood pounding through her ears from her heartbeat softened, the drumming throb easing down to a dull murmur. “A bird outside the window…”

“Two things-”

“Chocolate…” Cat interrupted, pulling in a deeper breath but not quite full enough yet. The cage of her ribs releasing with her next intake as Kara stepped closer. “Lavender on your skin.” She pulled in her first solid breath, lungs quaking with the effort as she turned her hand around the woman’s shirt and drew Kara closer. This wasn’t her fault, none of it was. It was all Cat’s. Like everything and everyone before and it would only be a matter of time until it was all too much and Kara would leave like every-

“One thing you can taste…”

Kara’s voice rooted her to the spot, chasing away the demons of her past and those trying to claim her present. Kara’s hands hovered near her, not touching just lingering, waiting for Cat to move, to fall.

Cat stepped forward blindly, not trusting the ground beneath her feet but the woman in front of her. Eyes open, their lips met tentatively, Cat’s fitting around Kara’s own with a whimper and a deeper breath than she thought possible. She tasted the sun and the open air, the infinite void of space and the fire burning within the stars.

Hands barely surrounded her hips, easing her back as she tasted something she hadn’t in longer than she could remember.

Hope.

Cat let Kara guide her back, their lips breaking apart gently. Kara stayed close, making sure Cat could stand on her own as the woman let out a heavy exhale.

“Are you alright?”

Cat nodded, fingertips brushing over Kara’s skin, trailing along her jaw and down her throat.

“I am.” Cat pulled in another breath and another, the adrenaline rush of anxiety and overwhelming
guilt slipping away to a quiet murmur with it. “I didn’t mean, I-“

“It’s okay.” Kara soothed, squaring her stance but moving no further. Leaving any further actions to Cat herself. “I understand.”

The weight of truth held in Kara’s words drove Cat the rest of the way into the ground and herself as she looked up at the other woman gratefully. There was a small noise that pulled Cat’s attention while Kara remained focused on her.

Melanie stood alone against the island, looking everywhere but at the two women even as Cat looked over at her questioningly.

“Jacob went to get the truck…” She allowed, “whether to just pick me up or haul us all to the lakeside is up to you two.”
Chapter 26

Chapter Notes

Cause it's a gross weekend here and I feel like releasing more chapters so consider anything between here and friday a bonus

With a few more reassurances from Cat, the four had made it down to the lakeside. While there was a dock and a couple of chairs set closer to the house, the fishing was better further down.

Kara was with Jacob, only after Melanie promised she'd stay with Cat, who sat in a canvas chair across from a small fire. The ground had been cleared, most likely by Jacob before now which left a nice little patch of lakefront for them to enjoy.

Cat let herself relax into the chair, the smell of citronella burning away as she watched Jacob run down the parts of Kara's fishing pole and how she should try to cast. Her difficulty wasn't in being inexperienced so much as it was being injured but Kara didn't let on. She paid close attention, her expression curious and thoughtful as Jacob cast his line before encouraging Kara to follow suit.

Melanie nudged another log to the center, spitting embers up into the sky before glancing over at Cat still focused on Kara.

"She looks good on you y'know."

"I beg your pardon?"

"She's the only person that's come here first, not after because you needed the calvary." Melanie smiled knowingly, unafraid of the look suddenly thrown her way. "You know that doesn't work on me. I'm not one of your employees Kit."

"It would if you knew what was good for you," Cat said, although the real bite of her words didn't quite fill her statement out.

"This is me you're talking to here. We're not like the ones back in that city of yours who move too fast to think about the other people around them.

"I don't know what you're talking about."

"The then newly elected President of the United States herself has shown up here, only after you caused enough of a stir by being away from that tower of yours to make people worry."

That had been a darker point in Cat's life than she would have cared to admit. Broken down and thrown away again. Her mind supplying that shortly upon her return from that sabbatical in the woods, thanks to Olivia's help, Kara had applied for the open assistant's position and she hadn't been back since. At least not in that kind of capacity.

"That's a helluva SOS if you ask me."

"I didn't."
"Not out loud, but your posture says everything about you right now and it's asking for help. But not like that."

Cat looked Melanie over for a moment raising a high eyebrow at her.

"You're trying to convince yourself of something that's only going to hurt you, and her. Something awful and somewhere you think it's for the best or that you don't deserve the other option you're afraid to look at in the eye."

Cat remained silent, jaw shifting just enough to be visible.

"You haven't cornered the market on coming from a bigger, busier place Cat. Nor falling for someone you'd least expect and having it throw your whole view on life and what's deserved into question."

"And that makes you an expert?"

"It oughtta. I had that same look, took me years to realize how stupid that was. A few more to try and make up the difference, even if Jacob forgave me the second we saw each other again."

Cat turned her attention to the fire, sitting further back into her chair.

"Kara's like that, you can see it. You and I both know she can fish just fine. Anyone who can knock around a pair of assholes like they were born to it is plenty capable of those simpler things."

Cat actually laughed, small and breathless but it was there.

"But she's listening, taking it in, and enjoying the moment. Makes Jacob happy, makes her happy. Simple."

"What's your point?" Cat allowed, side-eyeing the woman before looking out over the lake and the already setting sun.

"Here you are trying to run away, justified in making it complicated. Life's complicated enough without any extra help. That over there," Melanie nodded towards Jacob and Kara, the latter of which laughed away as the man helped her reel something in. "That's simple, doesn't mean it's easy."

Cat watched Kara try to maneuver the rod as Jacob held it steady; the two working away at whatever they had caught. Any other time, Kara could've just flicked her wrist and it'd be done. Despite everything, she was in her element. She was powerless and on this side of recovery, but there she was enjoying every second.

"You got it you got it!" Jacob encouraged, helping Kara pull up the rod where she lacked the finesse due to her injuries. "Nose up you got 'm!"

Kara couldn't help but laugh, feeling the struggle in her body and the fight the other creature was putting up. She had forgotten what that was like outside the suit. To work for something genuinely without the aid of her abilities. It made her feel almost normal. She pulled hard as Jacob spun the reel before the fish popped out of the water and Jacob grabbed a net hauling it up the rest of the way.

"Damn woman lookit you! One-armed and everything." Jacob struggled with the net while Kara laid the rod down to help.
Jacob undid the hook, holding the fish up as it flapped and struggled before calming down, allowing Kara to see. It was easily over ten pounds and still plenty full of fight.

"Whatcha thinking?" Jacob asked, hugging the fish a bit to keep it from wriggling away.

"It's beautiful," Kara said, gingerly touching the rough curve of its head before it lashed about.

"I know that look," Jacob said with a knowing edge, letting Kara take hold of half of it with her good arm. "Say your piece now."

Kara smiled feeling the muscle and bone writhe against her hold. "We can't keep it."

"I figured," Jacob said gently watching Kara before he eased his hold and let her take the bulk of the animal.

Kara eyed the fish as if giving it a piece of her mind to reflect on later before she stepped to the water's edge and tossed it back in. She dipped into her left side from the stretch of muscles but her from never faltered.

"Sometimes it's just about being reminded, isn't it?"

"What's that?"

"The balance of things."

Kara looked out over the lake, her catch swimming away. How the setting sun came through the height of the trees like stars. It would be a few hours yet before dark, but the visual was there nonetheless. She felt worn in. If that was the best way to look at it. Grounded and settled in her less than perfect body amidst the vastness of their location. Her shirt was wet here and there from sweat, her bandages itchy and her body still sore but in an oddly comforting way. She often forgot, with her abilities, what it meant sometimes to just feel the exertion of the self even in the simple things.

Not that she wanted to give up her powers, far from it, but sometimes as Jacob had just pointed out, it was about the balance of things. Kara found she didn't have a good sense of that a lot of the time. Most of the time it was all or nothing with little else in-between. She pulled a deep breath, the vibrancy of scents wrought from their surroundings filling her lungs.

She filtered so much out with her powers on a passive level it was a little overwhelming; sweet and acrid, earthy and decaying, cool and clean. She would never do that in the city, too many people and too much industry.

Again, balance.

"You're a good balance too y'know." Jacob offered, tucking away some of the gear. Kara looked over at him, her smile faint.

"Kitty's a hard thing to find that with I think."

Kara raised an eyebrow at him, moving over to help clean up. "Are you saying she's a difficult person?"

"Far from it, I think she's an amazing person, and for some, that's difficult to really comprehend. Which is a failing on their part, but they try to make it hers and succeed."
Kara frowned slightly, putting their gear back into one of Jacob's tackle boxes. "Meaning?"

"You're different, that's easy to see, but she knows it. Not sure if she sees it right, but you're the first person she's allowed here that wasn't just a friend if you catch my meaning."

"I didn't know here even existed until a couple days ago."

"My point exactly. This is Kitty's safe place. It always has been since her Daddy died. Which means you're a pretty safe and trusted person in her life."

"Trying to tell me something there Jacob?"

"Well Miss Kara, I could but I think you already have a good idea. I'm not one to meddle," Kara eyed him but he ignored her just the same. "Just saying don't let her convince herself otherwise. She's good at that in this kind of selfless way that's really just punishment if you get my drift."

Kara locked the tackle box and stood, giving a small stretch with a wince before picking the thing up. "Can I ask you something?"

Jacob looked over at her then, rods held over his shoulder and the fishing cooler in his other hand. "I suppose, if it's mine to answer, sure."

"How do you and Ki-er-Cat even know each other?"

Jacob grinned. "Well, part of that I can say, the rest you might have to ask her about."

Kara looked at him curiously before adjusting his grip on the cooler as he nodded back towards Melanie and Cat as to where he was headed. "We kind of grew up together, albeit reluctantly."

"Reluctantly?"

"Surprised you hadn't asked about it before, seeing how close you are and all to her."

"Asked about what?"

"The family resemblance, although she's just my half-sister so it might not be so noticeable as I think it is."
Kara gave a small wave as Jacob and Melanie pulled away with a single honk of the truck horn. They stepped back into the house and shut the door, the sound of the water in the kitchen shutting off making her shake her head. Of course, Cat couldn’t just let the dishes go until morning. Kara made her way back over slowly, getting a good look at the other woman as she stood near the opposite end of the kitchen and dried plates.

The four of them had spent an hour or two by the lakeside, Kara curious as ever with Jacob’s revelation but didn’t want to push anything after Cat’s earlier panic attack. Honestly, Kara wondered why she hadn’t had one of her own yet. Of course, the moment Cat had reached over and set her hand along her knee all the elements driving her towards that darker place drifted away with the caress. Again that was Cat’s superpower, as Kara had deemed it a while ago, manifesting itself in the most unlikely and unbidden ways.

The amusing bits of conversation didn’t hurt either, grounding her in the ease and comfort of that balance of things Jacob had mentioned. There was very little either she or Cat could do beyond what they already had with everything else back in National City. To just sit and dwell on it all was pointless and a waste of energy. Something Kara knew she had in limited reserves at the moment.

Their conversation drifted around childhood stories between Jacob and Cat to the wellbeing of the town and how Kara might actually have a plaque in her honor at the diner by now. Like it or not, she was just as much a part of this place as the rest of them now and that apparently went a long way.

Cat had been the one to suggest the other two stay over for dinner. What with going to all the trouble of bringing it in the first place and knowing Melanie, she had made enough for an army. Which wouldn’t have been so bad if Kara had the capacity to eat the bulk of it. While she still had the most out of the four of them, it wasn’t nearly as much as she would have otherwise.

Shortly after that Melanie had stated she had an early morning with the store and despite his falter on the matter, Jacob eventually agreed. Cat and Kara now found themselves, in the quiet of each other and the distance across the kitchen between them. Kara studied Cat’s frame. She seemed more relaxed and at ease. The ghosts of whatever had taken hold of her earlier nowhere in sight. As a matter of fact, Kara thought she heard the other woman humming and swaying ever so slightly in time to it as she dried off another plate.

Kara pulled in a deeper breath, announcing her presence with a gentle clearing of her throat although Cat merely continued as if she did this every night while Kara looked on.

“You want some help with that?”

Cat shook her head, setting the plate down before picking up another. “I’ve got it, you’ve already done your fair share this evening.”

“Jacob was the one that caught the main course. I just threw mine back.”

Cat smiled easily, her hands smoothing over the plate with the cloth before she picked up another. “Still, you tried.” Cat knew Kara had to be sore. If she wasn’t, she should be, and no doubt without her powers would find exhaustion knocking shortly.

“Can I at least help put things away?”
“I dunno, can you?” Cat looked over at her, raising a challenging brow that made Kara cant her head in amusement.

“May I, help put things away?”

“Nope.” Cat tossed a dishtowel at her, before picking up another dryer one and exchanged a plate for a salad bowl. Her smirk still in place while Kara’s smile widened around her expression of disbelief.

“You…” Cat nearly sing-songed, “Should stay put. Relax, I’ve got this. It’s been a busy evening.”

Kara looked on as Cat’s self-satisfaction with herself and her assessment of the situation and Kara and the intended plan for the rest of the evening all seemed to be set in stone on her say so. Except Kara was having none of it as she lobbed the rag on the counter. She felt fine, better than, really. A little sore, a little worn in but nothing that would have kept her from helping with something like putting away dishes. Especially when she had been part of the making of the mess. That was the rule.

“You always this difficult when it comes to dishes?”

“Not dishes, you on the other hand, maybe.”

“That’s unfortunate.”

Cat’s hands hesitated with the comment volleyed back at her and Kara felt her cheeks flush when the reality hit. As Cat resumed drying the dishes she chanced a sidelong look the other woman. Noting Kara’s push from the wall and gradually nearing presence.

“Are you always so difficult when it comes to someone telling you to stay put?”

“With you, absolutely.” Kara had no idea where her sudden emboldened confidence was coming from, but trying to work herself around being polite and mindful had drifted away shortly after seeing Cat swaying in the kitchen.

Cat’s hands stilled completely, her shoulders tensing just enough for Kara to notice as she continued to move forward slowly. Cat eased the bowl down after another few steps, turning enough to look at the other woman.

“What are you doing?”

“Walking towards you… slowly.”

Cat felt the pluck of a chord within her body, the sensation fluttering low across her nerves.

“Why?”

Kara kept drawing nearer and nearer, eyes never leaving Cat’s figure. “Any faster and I’d scare you away.”

Cat gave a wry laugh, breathless and hesitant as she took a few steps back. “Is that so?”

Kara gave a small nod, her arms uncrossing as she continued to move forward.

Cat bit into the corner of her cheek a bit giving the barest shake of her head at Kara’s posturing. “I never thought I’d use the word smug when it came to you but that is exactly what you are right now.”
“I’m not being smug,” Kara whispered as Cat continued to back up. “That’s one of your special
talents.”

Cat rose a high eyebrow at that. Her gaze flickered down to the curve of that smile still pulling at
the corner of Kara’s mouth, just as the wall met her back. “If not smug then what?”

“Confident,” Kara was right in front of her, the two of them just staring at one another between
heartbeats. Cat set her hands against the wall, fanning them out beside herself as she pushed herself
forward ever so slightly. Kara reached for her in the next second, hands cupping Cat’s features as
she drew the woman the rest of the way forward and into her.

Kara didn’t hesitate as she claimed Cat’s lips on her next breath, pulling her in and kissing her with
absolute abandon until her chest felt tight. Cat’s hands twisted around her shirt, pulling her in at
first before breaking away.

Kara slid her fingers through Cat’s hair, kneading gently at the back of her neck as she searched out
Cat’s eyes waiting for her to speak as she caught her breath.

“Why did you do that?” Cat breathed, torn between yanking Kara to her and pushing her away.

“Because I wanted to.”

Cat’s mind fused the words together, her hands tightening further as she forced herself to replay
them in her mind to make absolutely certain Kara hadn’t said ‘you’

Kara leaned forward again, only this time Cat kept her at bay, holding onto the other woman for
dear life as her mind raced ahead of itself.

“Cat…?” Kara eased her grip on the other woman, hands sliding down her arms before
surrounding her wrists, thumbs rubbing gently against the back of her hands still twisted around
Kara’s shirt. “If I’m wrong… if… if you don’t have the same feelings, let go.” Kara swallowed
thickly, thinking maybe she had crossed too far over a line here. “I’ll understand.”

It might take forever but she would at least try. The last thing she wanted was to push the other
woman, to make her react due to misplaced expectations or any number of reasons to do something
half-hearted.

This differed from the night before. Those had been moments that could be the product of
adrenaline and emotions and crossed signals. There was no injury to tend, no immediate threat
throwing them together, nothing to be excused away on outside influences and muddled feelings
because of it. This was just the two of them, flirting, connecting and admitting something genuine
between them had merit and weight wrapped inside an undeniable truth.

Kara felt the tension in Cat’s arms ease and the pull of her shirt relax pulling her shoulders down
with it as she started to step back. Cat’s hands surged into her hair, pulling her down as the other
woman met her halfway. She worried at Kara’s bottom lip, tasting her sigh before slipping inside
to taste the sound and carry it into herself.

Kara breathed her in sharply, hands rounding Cat’s waist as she leaned in further. Lips clung to
each other hungrily between broad strokes and tender caresses. Without thinking, Kara drew Cat
from the wall, arms wrapping low around Cat’s hips before she pulled her off the ground and
edged her onto the counter with a painful grunt of effort.

Cat whimpered her apology against Kara’s mouth, the sound lost as the other woman chased it
away with another possessive stroke of her tongue. Cat pulled her back as gently as she could,
fingers tangled in her hair in order to look at her properly. Kara’s nails grazed the skin of her lower back, pulling at her shirt until Cat leaned away enough for Kara to pull it off her.

Cat guided her back easily, breathing her in and tasting her lips with a soft moan. Kara pulled at the buttons of her shirt front until Cat took over, undoing the rest in a flourish as Kara stretched back to free her arms. Another grunt pulled her up short as Kara’s hands fell to the counter on either side of Cat’s body, eyes tight and breath held.

Cat kissed the side of her face tenderly, hands unmoving where they were around Kara’s ribs as she waited for the woman to breathe again. Kara swore under her breath, leaning back enough to look down at herself while Cat caressed her skin where she could find it. Her torso was still wrapped tightly, the discolored patches of skin peeking over the edge.

Cat fanned her hand over Kara’s side waiting for the tension to ease. Kara tested a deeper breath, the stretch of her ribs twinging but the sharp pain from a second ago remained elusive. Cat’s other hand smoothed across the front of her chest, rubbing against the panel where her crest normally resided.

“I’m okay.” Kara breathed leaning into the counter while Cat urged her to stay still.

“You would think that,” Cat breathed, not looking up yet as she continued to touch along Kara’s side.

Kara dipped her head, seeking Cat’s lips again, making contact with a quiet sound of satisfaction. Cat indulge her for a moment, allowing the rush of Kara’s ardor to sweep her up again. Their kiss was deep and slow even as Cat leaned back and Kara followed. Cat pressed her hand against Kara’s side pulling another rough sound from her on an exhale before they broke apart again.

“Damnit…” Kara breathed, as Cat brushed soft kisses along her chin.

“It’s okay,” Cat whispered, nudging her gently until their foreheads were pressed together.

“It’s not…” Kara replied, starting to pull away until Cat’s hand grabbed her around her waistband and pulled her back. The back of Cat’s fingers pressed so intimately against her skin stole her breath away while her heart pounded in her chest.

“I know how much you want this,” Cat began, her fingers straightening out from where they were pinned, making Kara shudder. “Because you’re not alone in that want…”

Kara made another whimper of a sound with Cat’s confession before the woman reaffirmed her grip around Kara’s waist.

“I don’t want to hurt you, and I don’t want you to hurt yourself,” Cat swallowed visibly, leaning in past Kara’s features so her voice was right in her ear. “I want you to enjoy every second of it… just as much as I want to.”

Kara wrapped an arm around Cat’s body, pulling her closer before burying her face against the side of her neck. Cat let out a soft gasp as the pressure of Kara’s mouth fit around the side of her throat. She felt the sharper bite of Kara’s teeth, and the wet heat of her tongue before letting out a low groan that transitioned into a hiss. Cat grabbed for the back of Kara’s head, fingers curling into her hair and drawing her closer with a whisper of encouragement. Kara drew Cat even closer, feeling the slight round of the woman’s hips rubbing against her as Cat whispered against her ear provoking Kara to suck harder.
Kara stood at the edge of the lounger that was part of the couch in the main room, Cat still holding onto her waist having guided her around by it after shutting off the lights in the kitchen. She had thought they were going somewhere else until Cat passed the mouth of the hallway and lead them into the larger expanse of the great room.

Cat knelt onto the furniture, while Kara’s heart refused to settle as she grabbed the back of it to keep from pitching too far forward. Her body wavered between exhilaration and exhaustion the latter of which she was trying to stave off as best she could. Drawn further onto the cushions after the other woman, with another kiss. The action stilling her mind until all she could focus on was the taste of the other woman on her lips. The sound of her belt buckle jangling about made her weak in the knees as the tension from it was pulled away with a tug around her hips along with the woman’s hand from around her waistline.

Kara sat on her heels, breathless and sore and wanton. Her arousal weaving through her discomfort enough to keep the worst of it all at bay. She watched as Cat pushed back on the lounger, laying herself out until she was propped back on a cushion. Kara swallowed hard, starting forward on the brace of her hand around the back of the furniture as she started to stretch out over Cat’s body.

Her side protested, and she adjusted her angle to try to compensate, just as Cat’s hands fit themselves against her abdomen to hold her steady. Cat shifted slightly, helping guide Kara down so that she was on her uninjured side mostly until the two were a tangle of legs facing each other. Cat kissed the start of Kara’s frustrated expression away, smoothing the lines threatening to linger across the woman’s forehead.

“Relax…” she whispered, the two of them adjusting around one another until they were comfortable. Cat’s legs hooked and wrapped between Kara’s own, bodies joined at the hip, her hand resting along Kara’s side while the other was tucked up between them as she laid back enough to look at Kara in such close proximity.

Kara looked dazed and confused, uncertain of what to do with their current position. She leaned over, nosing Cat’s features before placing a soft kiss on her lips like some kind of apology.

“You have done nothing wrong,” Cat breathed, using Kara’s legs to pull her body closer. Fingertips ghosting across Kara’s throat where they could reach.

“I… thought-“ Kara searched Cat’s eyes, doubt getting the better of her.

“I know,” Cat whispered, “trust me,” she emphasized, trying to convey that Kara was not alone in her thinking or wanting for something more than their current positions would allow comfortably. Kara let out a deep breath, the ache in her side growing as her arousal tempered to a simmer.

“Have you ever-“

Kara’s eyebrows rose towards her hairline, out of all the things she had anticipated Cat to ask-

“Are you really wondering if I’m a virgin right now?”

Cat pinned her with a look, her expression still soft despite Kara’s tone. “It had occurred to me, but that’s not what I was going to ask.”

“Oh… I was going to-“
“Would it be so bad to ask that?” Cat challenged gently, not letting Kara finish. Instead, she just floundered for words with no counter. “It is rather important, even if someone has convinced you it’s not before now.”

That stung a little, not because of Cat’s sudden protective tone but because it had been important to her at a time, until it wasn’t. A misguided experience from college, and the few attempts at some kind of connection with another person after. Ironically, her relationship with Cat, before this point, had been the longest she’d had with anyone on any personal level beyond family.

“What were you going to ask?”

Cat saw the shift in Kara’s eyes, chastising herself for her lack of tact given how vulnerable and exposed Kara was on more than one front right now. With the side step of an answer with another question on Kara’s behalf Cat let it alone, for now.

“You don’t have to answer if you don’t want to,” Cat allowed, her fingertips tracing across Kara’s lips as she tried to ease the possible blow her actual question might inflict.

“It’s okay, just ask me Cat.”

“Have you ever been with anyone when you didn’t have…”

Kara’s eyes leveled on Cat’s then, the weight of the question hitting her square in the chest. Cat nearly regretted the question as soon as it registered in the other woman’s mind but she had to know. They were already in a precarious enough situation and whatever might happen beyond tonight she needed to be fully informed before she just let things happen as they may.

Kara worked her jaw a moment, considering the question and her honest answer. The idea had never occurred to her, not in this way. She had thought plenty of times what her life would be like without her abilities, more times than she could count. The farthest she had gotten on an intimate level had centered on not breaking someone’s nose when she kissed them. She had trained her body and responses for years to be able to gauge her tactile awareness while calculating the exact levels of pressure to apply to any given object on a thought and it hadn’t been necessary to consider. She didn’t have the best experiences with sex but she had them just the same.

Except.

“No.”

The flutter of Cat’s eyelashes was unexpected, as was the tender kiss that followed right after. The wheels in Kara’s mind stalled as Cat held her in those few precious seconds before drawing away again. Their hands filtered through one another carefully, Cat ever mindful of her injured hand as she drew their joined grasp to her and held it against her chest.

Cat’s heart was racing for an entirely different reason. Kara might not be a virgin when it came to sex, but she had no concept of Kryptonian anatomy and was now worried about what she might do even accidentally without Kara’s abilities as a buffer. She swallowed thickly, a weight settling over her shoulders as that thought struck her deeper than Kara intended and Cat wasn’t so certain Kara even knew the depths of what that single word held.

“What is it?” Kara whispered, wishing she could read Cat’s mind as her expression seemed to drift just about everywhere making it impossible to decipher.

“That’s very important.” Cat pressed, tightening her hold gently. “I know how things are supposed to work, except with you. I know nothing about your body, what it can do, should do, what it’s
capable of… without your powers.”

Kara’s brow furrowed as she sought the implication between Cat’s words.

“You’ve studied the human body yes?”

Kara nodded, shifting a little closer.

“And you know what can happen with a woman her first time… I mean it can happen other ways too but, I… I don’t. I have no other reference. There’s not exactly a book out there for what to expect with your alien girlfriend.”

Kara stiffened right along with Cat at the ease of the word that fell from her lips. The two of them just staring at one another before Kara swallowed and nuzzled in a little closer. Cat remained tense despite the physical reassurance, her mouth dry as she repeated the word in her head.

“We… I… don’t have something like that, I mean I do but it’s different?”

Cat bit at her bottom lip, studying Kara carefully.

“You’re not, you wouldn’t break anything? I’m not even sure that’s the right word, but it doesn’t work like that… exactly.” Kara sighed at herself, she wasn’t explaining this right at all, never really had to, never thought she would have to. On Krypton sex wasn’t like it was on Earth, it wasn’t utilized for procreation nor did it have the same depths as it did for humans. Mostly because Kryptonian relationships had other means of connecting to a lover beyond the physical. Given the lack of technology on that front on Earth Kara could understand why sex for humans was given so much weight by comparison to the self.

Kara searched Cat’s features before glancing down at their hands, letting out a deep breath. Anatomically she wasn’t that far removed from a human, there were differences of course besides processing sunlight into energy. Although humans were just as capable but on a much smaller scale. Reproductively they were compatible, but again subtle differences.

“Are you sure about this?” Kara cautioned, she hadn’t really had this kind of conversation before nor had she ever expected to. “I… I don’t want to make you uncomfortable or-”

“Are you worried I’m not going to be attracted to you Kara?”

Kara’s eyes lifted with the question, her answer written in her gaze.

“I already know you’re different. It might be easy to dismiss but I’m well aware you’re not from this planet. Your abilities make you stand out but it’s other things too, things you’re probably not even aware of but they’re there.”

“Like what?” Kara mumbled, she had thought she was rather good at hiding herself.

“For starters, I don’t believe I’ve had any other employee put in as many equipment replacement orders as you over their tenure.” Kara’s cheeks colored at the mention even as Cat caressed her lips with the edge of her fingertips. “Your approach to certain things, your process, even some of your articles come from this place that’s just not quite human. But that’s what makes them so good, it’s a refreshing perspective.”

Kara let out another slow breath, feeling a little more at ease, but only a little.

“Your metabolism is another, you can argue how high it is all you want but most people I’ve ever
met like that practically despise food because they have to have it in abundance but you love it.”

She watched Kara shift a bit, knowing that was a point of contention that someone had made her
self-conscious of. “Should I worry about a potsticker coming between us?”

Kara genuinely smirked, giving a modest laugh. “Only if it’s the last one.”

“Duly noted.”

Kara chuckled softly, scooting close enough to where their foreheads were almost touching.

“All those things are on the outside, things anyone might notice and excuse away. But this, Kara, is
something entirely different. You have no powers, or they’re dormant or something but they’re not
there. I could… I could really hurt you and I would never be able to live it down.”

Kara gave a wry, melancholic laugh, the irony of it all not lost on her. “I live with that every,
single, day Cat.” She felt the other woman’s fingers flex around her own, the faint twinge of her
knuckles driving the point home. “Even more with something like this. I have to regulate so much
so I don’t hurt people. When they run into me, when I touch them, learning how not to break
someone’s nose when I kissed them wasn’t exactly a highlight.”

Cat bit at her lips, hiding her smile at the thought. “Maybe they deserved it.”

Kara closed her eyes giving a small shake of her head with an edge of a smile. “Maybe, it didn’t
earn me the best reputation in school. Which is probably why I finished so quickly?”

Cat frowned at that, getting more comfortable on the tangle of their limbs.

“Now, despite how I got here, I don’t have to worry. At least when it comes to hurting you and at
the same time-“

“We’ve switched places,” Cat finished solemnly. She couldn’t imagine what it had taken Kara to
just exist amidst such fragile and feeble things, humans notwithstanding. It was an odd
juxtaposition. Here Cat was, far more capable in this situation and Kara could very easily suffer for
it, more than she already was.

“It sucks honestly.”

Cat let out a throaty laugh with that, tempering it quickly although the mirth in Kara’s eyes told her
she wasn’t offended or put off from the response.

“I’m sorry,” Cat whispered while Kara shook her head. “No, I am.” Cat breathed in a deep breath
of her own, her thoughts bordering around the ones that had seized her in a panic earlier. “Earlier…
the reason I was so overwhelmed.”

Kara drew their hands to her then, dusting her lips across Cat’s knuckles as she spoke. “You don’t
have to tell me.”

“I know, but I want to.” Cat offered and Kara shouldered deeper into the cushions. “It’s all my
fault.”

Whatever Kara had been expecting Cat to say, that certainly wasn’t it and her expression conveyed
as much. “Cat…”

“It is. If you were still my assistant… if I had never hired you.”
Kara leaned over then, silencing Cat with a weighted kiss, lingering against Cat's mouth until she let out a whine and let her in a little further. Fingertips brushed across the side of Kara’s face, pulling her closer until the two of them broke away breathless.

“Please don’t say that,” Kara whispered vehemently, eyes still closed. “You… even before this, Cat you’re one of the best things that’s ever happened to me.”

Cat swallowed thickly, her apology already brimming as Kara tipped her features up to look at her, stunning her into silence with their unspoken conviction.

“It’s not your fault, not this or my powers or anything before now.”

“Kara…” Cat could barely breathe, her chest tightening involuntarily with Kara’s words.

“Cat, it is not, your fault,” Kara repeated herself, watching every word land until Cat finally took a real breath again. Kara pulled her closer, leaning back just enough to pull Cat onto her without compromising her ribs. She felt the slightest shudder in the other woman’s body and wrapped herself around the other woman as best she could. Cat nuzzled into her chest, forehead pressed into the side of Kara’s throat as she wrapped her arms around the other woman's frame gently before giving a firmer squeeze of her legs knowing she wouldn’t hurt her by doing so. It was a poor excuse of a hug but it would have to do.
Chapter 29

Alex ran across the DEO main floor headed for ops while other agents made for their own posts. Alarms going off as the target map was pulled up on the main screen.

"Someone get me patched into that feed." Alex was still in plain clothes, having seen the news reports filter in while she was getting coffee.

"Already on it." Winn announced as some stations morning show was brought up on the main screen.

"Superman said Luthor wasn't going to do anything." Alex started, stepping onto the dais.

"I don't think it's him." Vasquez offered as they looked on. Across the screens was some kind of archival closed circuit footage from years ago if the decorum was anything to go by.

Two women were obviously going at one another verbally despite the lack of audio it was easy to see how agitated both of them were. Which was only furthered by a sudden pause from both women before the brunette slapped the blonde.

There was some kind of edit, jumping forward in time as a woman who looked an awful lot like Cat with longer hair and an even shorter skirt made her way into some kind of office off the main room. After a few moments the second woman came into frame, saying something against the door before baring it shut. She dipped back to the door as it shook, offering some kind of parting response before sauntering off.

In the next cut Lois Lane appeared, in the same clothes from the earlier footage stepping out onto the helipad of the planet.

The footage cut again to clearly marked archival footage of Superman's first appearance rescuing Lois from the downed helicopter before the feed cut again, showing the office door finally pulled open by a rather young James Olsen. The camera jumped to another angle of the room, focused on Cat as she stared at the grainy television feed from a mounted box-style television while the footage of Superman flying with Lois Lane and the totaled helicopter back towards the roof was fed to her and the rest of the world live.

The closed circuit footage lingered on Cat who turned her back to the room and everyone else gathered by windows or watching the televisions around her. She was gathering her things, head down, and gradually made her way out of the newsroom.

The screen paused on what looked like Cat's breakdown from inside the elevator before a current live shot of Lois Lane appeared. She was being followed by a myriad of other reporters and what looked like paparazzi, until she came up short with another gaggle of microphones and a cacophony of questions.

"Miss Lane, Miss Lane can you confirm that it is you in the video?"

"Did Cat Grant already know about Superman?"

"Did you plagiarize her articles about him?"

"Is it true she was supposed to be on the helicopter and not you?"
“Did Superman know? Is he a part of all this?”

Winn put up multiple news feeds, all circling around the validity of Lois Lane’s career, or questioning Cat Grant’s whereabouts in light of this new viewpoint and any number of associated things.

"Are you involved in the intention to stifle Kara Danvers or other reporters who threaten your career?"

"Did you know about the bombing at CatCo before it happened?"

Alex winced internally at that, as did Lois who stopped dead in her tracks.

"Oh shit…” Alex whispered as Winn and Vasquez glanced at her.

"How dare you." Lois stated under her breath, her temper flaring to life. "Kara is family and you know what, despite our history, so is Cat. So you can take your questions and your accusations and shove them right up your-"

"I wondered why he took off so fast." Hank interrupted, as Clark appeared out of nowhere at Lois’ side easing her away from the mob and into the Daily Planet where additional Metropolis police officers were stationed. Ever since the bombing at CatCo it had been a standard for all news outlets but especially the Planet as Lois was considered a possible target.

"Do you think Miss Grant knows?" Winn questioned glancing back at the others before turning back to the screens again. "Yeah no probably not. Should we warn her again or?"

"Is there anything she can actually do?" Vasquez asked looking at the others.

"Discredit the footage but that looks right about the time she wrote her book." All eyes leveled on Alex. "What, we owned it, Kara nearly wore the spine out."

Vasquez raised her eyebrows toward her hairline glancing to Winn who remained silent as he typed away on his keyboard without any real intention.

"You can send her a message, she got the last one, albeit a bit late but still. If she does come back before Kara that’s a whole other kind of storm she should probably be prepared for." Hank allowed, looking at the news feeds. "Get me a line out, I want to make sure this isn't related like some precursor to another attack or something."

"On it." Winn supplied, fingers moving rapid fire over the keys.

"And see if you can find out where it came from, it might point us towards another group that's got it in their minds to enact what Luthor has started."

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Lois slammed her purse down on her desk, the rest of the newsroom giving her a wide berth, all except Clark. Perry could be heard yelling in his own office and Lois fed off the energy before shouting at someone to mute the nearby tv.

“Lois,” Clark tried, her eyes cutting over sharply to the man trying to calm her down. A perfect
hybridization of his two selves, inconspicuous and protective. The fact Lois hadn’t torn into him in
full view of everyone should have been enough to leave even the most skeptical with the
impression that they were together. Not that the two of them really kept their relationship a secret
but still.

“Don’t Clark, let me be angry, for myself and for them. I don’t care if it’s Lex or someone else
right now but just let me have this.”

Clark let out a breath, whatever he was going to say to console her fading away as he moved to sit
on the edge of her desk.

Lois paced away in the small space, knocking her phone off the hook as it rang over and over. She
let out another breath, giving a small shake of her head. "This is insane, and something only Lex
would come up with."

Clark adjusted his glasses, having already informed Lois of his visit to Stryker's Island and
Luthor's subsequent relocation to Blackgate. "I don't think it's him."

"Oh really? What? Did you make him pinky swear?"

Clark rose an eyebrow at her before she waved him off.

"You'll forgive me if his word doesn't strike me as rock-solid." Lois explained, glancing to the
monitors again before looking away. They were all different people then, young and constantly at
one another. It was almost a game, only realizing once they were older how childish it had all
been. She wasn't blameless at all, that was evident in the video but neither was Cat. The two of
them were like an old married couple who knew exactly how to push each other’s buttons to the
point of breaking.

That day had been one of those, remembering it now, despite the outcome that came with time, it
still stung a little. It was like a breakup, an intense, turbulent, no good, very bad breakup.
Somehow she had thought at the time the two of them would always be side by side trying to outdo
one another. Rival journalists pushing the Planet to varying heights and making each other better
for it in the long run.

Lois would be lying if she said she hadn't thought of eventually doing some joint endeavor with the
other woman. Breaking some kind of scandal or shining light into some dark political corner the
likes of the Post at some point. Then the next thing she knew Cat was gone, never having intended
on staying. The woman had been silently working in the wings to start a new chapter beyond the
simple newsroom to make something more of herself beyond the black and white typeset.

Make she did, Cat built an empire but then Lois had understood the other woman was meant for
greater things. Not unlike herself, even if she did it on the tail end of a cape. Now Cat had her own
crusader and where Lois had praised Superman, Cat had criticized Supergirl. Constructively but
still. Cat had managed something with Supergirl that Lois hadn't with Superman. Cat had remained
objective. Whatever their relationship was, although Lois had her idea, it remained another entity
entirely by comparison.

Then there was Kara, she spoke out more than Clark ever did on the treatment of aliens. On
scandals and slave trades and fight rings and all the inequality of it while maintaining that she was
just a human voice with a vested interest. Lois had no doubt that came from being older, from
having to learn what it was like to be a foreigner on a foreign planet. All with her more humanized
cousin's shadow looming over her.
Lois didn't feel threatened by Kara's career, she relished in it. Hell, she even promoted it. How anyone could think she or Clark were behind what had happened at CatCo was beyond reason. Lois had to remind herself, yet again, she had more insight and information on all parties involved. Which meant her responses and reactions to things when questioned by others, with such ludicrous intention just to get a story, made her want to lash out. She turned finally and sat in her chair, leaning back into it as she looked up at Clark who merely tipped his head at her.

“You going to give me a little more intel here on what’s actually going on?”

Clark glanced around the room before leaning in a little closer. “What do you mean?”

Lois gave him a look, her arms still crossed over her chest. “With Lex.”

Clark sighed giving a small shrug. “Ravings of a mad man who has more influence and reach than we keep thinking he does. His agents are still out there, some renewed by his mother but his access to them is a little disconcerting.”

Lois looked nonplussed. “So you’re telling me, this is all some misguided thank you because Cat never raised her voice to him? Not to mention your cousin. That he’s under some impression that you and I stole Cat’s life from her and he’s trying to make it up to her by… bombing her building?”

Clark looked just as lost on the logic. “I guess? Lex only makes sense in his own mind.” There was more to it than that but the parts where Lex had pointed out his own abandonment of Kara he had yet to inform Lois about.

“And you don’t think he’s behind this little stunt?” Lois gestured to the tv’s still running the footage.

“No, he called his agent off, but that might’ve been the point. Shake the tree until others come out of the woodwork. That right there, is just a smear campaign, designed to do nothing more than discredit you or I and paint Cat in a better light.”

"How convenient for her to be MIA so she can't rebuke or promote it." Lois knew better, but it felt good just a little bit to say it. If she hadn't known better, she might have actually chalked it up to the other woman, if they were still on the kind of footing they were back then. They were rivals in the public eye for sure, it made a great story, personally was another matter.

"You know this doesn't have her kind of angle. It's not worth anything, nor does it serve a purpose."

"Oh it serves a purpose, just not one Cat would ever intend. Not now." Lois huffed, looking away from Clark again. "I can't even make a comment or defend myself without it looking petty or so defensive as to be considered an admission of guilt. You and I both know what happened that day before yo- Superman showed up."

Clark nodded, crossing his arms over his chest and letting out a small sigh. "You did lock her in that office to scoop her interview."

"Yes and were it not for Superman I'd be dead. It was petty and stupid and loaded with jealousy and betrayal."

Clark sat up a bit with that.

"Don't give me that look Smallville. She and I were at each other all day. If I recall she started it with a spilled cup of coffee."
"You slapped her."

"Yes I did. That she deserved and even she knew it that's why she let it happen. She knew exactly what she was doing and so did I."

Clark frowned looking at her. "You're justifying physically-"

"I knew, I knew she was leaving. I found out because I thought she was working on another article. Turns out she was buying a radio station and the Tribune."

"So you confronted her and slapped her for it?"

"We made it up Clark." He nearly slipped off the desk with that confession. "She had just lost custody of her son while she was in hiding, I might add. Right after that whole Mob case thing. That really did her in and she wanted an out and a new start."

"So... all that on the video-"

"I was helping her make a clean break. I didn't think she'd be so vehement about making it look good but do you really think Cat Grant would just tuck tail and walk away with that kind of news happening at the same time? Superman was just icing on the cake and it worked, spectacularly. No one paid any attention to her and what she was doing when there was a real life superhero to contend with."
Bathed in sunlight, Kara drew in a slow breath as awareness filtered across her nerves. She felt safe and warm in that day-glow kind of way and incredibly content. Unlike the night before she felt genuinely rested as she pushed her hips and shoulders down and stretched her back up gingerly. She pulled in a deeper breath, arms folding slowly towards her head until she felt the warmth surrounding her torso shift before her bandages were pulled and a thud accompanied by a small shout brought Kara up short. The fog of sleep drained away in an instant, abruptly remembering she wasn’t in bed but on the couch in the main room. The same couch she and Cat had fallen asleep on… together.

“Oh sh-” Kara turned over with a twist, “Cat are you-” she rounded over the edge of the couch, her inquiry cut off with a cushion lobbed at her head. “Rao blessit!” When Kara tried again a blanket was thrown her way, tangling her up for a moment. “Cat!”

Kara tugged the blanket off her face, her hair disheveled and flyaway, leaning over the couch and nearly bonking heads with Cat with her sudden nearness. She breathed roughly, swallowing hard as Cat tipped her head at her with an unamused glare. “Are… are you ok?”

Cat raised a high eyebrow at the question, and only then did Kara realize she was also biting back a smile. The corners of her mouth twitching and pulling with the urge to expand further.

Kara let out a wry exhale, giving a slow shake of her head. “I hope your ass hurts.”

“You dumped me!” Cat said and before Kara could fire off another retort the woman hooked the front of her bra and pulled her forward, edging towards a kiss with the barest nuzzle of her nose against Kara’s. “Consider yourself lucky.”

Cat was gone almost in a blink and Kara let out a small shout of her own as she caught herself on the floor, not completely going over while Cat stood up and stretched nearby.

“Now I really hope your ass hurts.” Kara allowed with a bit of a grunt, letting her arm cave in with a turn as she allowed her weight to carry her down to the floor in a slow wave of motion. Her hand didn’t hurt nearly as bad as it should have but it was still tight and heavy as if her fingers were encased in lead.

"Oh God, Kara are you okay? I'm so sorry," Cat turned and was immediately down on the floor above her head, already reaching for her hand intent on checking her over while Kara laid there just looking at her.

"It's stiff?" In all honesty, it didn't hurt as much as it had the day before and when she took a deeper breath she realized her ribs didn't hurt nearly as bad as they had either.

"I tend to lose sight of things when I'm teasing, seeing how I get so little opportunity to try it out on anyone anymore."

Kara reached up to cup Cat's face looking at her from upside down running her fingertips over Cat’s jawline before giving her a small smile. "It's okay. You didn't hurt me, and maybe you'll have more opportunities to try that out now." Kara's brow furrowed. "Teasing not... uhm..."

Cat smirked ever so faintly letting Kara's words fade into silence. She tested Kara's hand, pushing at the woman's fingers and rubbing at her knuckles. Surprised when Kara didn't pull away from her whereas a few nights ago she would have flung her hand across the room to get away from her.
"It's still a little sore," Kara offered, closing her fingers into her hand and giving a slight wince as she made a fist. At least she could actually make one without lightning running up her arm, it was more like a dull spark that eased as soon as she relaxed her hand.

Cat sat back when Kara moved, the woman turning over and pushing up to sit. She felt the sun at her back again, feeling it warm her insides with a renewed sense of energy as she pulled at the now looser bandages around her midsection.

"Let me," Cat offered, taking over where Kara left off, carefully loosening them up before unwrapping them from around her. Her arms brushing against the insides of Kara's own as she reached behind her to pass the wrap around. Her head tipped to the side when the angry red that had been at the uppermost part of Kara's ribs came away pink and yellowish. The more she exposed the more surprised she was with the extent to which Kara's injury seemed to have healed overnight.

Near the base of Kara's ribs was still purplish and blue, but the spreading panel of bruises and broken vessels was significantly reduced from even a day ago. A thread of disappointment ran through Cat’s body that she quickly shoved away with relief that the other woman was actually healing and might have her powers back. Cat set the wrapping aside, fingers carefully pressing against Kara's ribs until she gasped and pulled away.

"Not healed completely." Cat murmured, her touch lingering on the outermost edge of Kara's injury, the heat at the center was still there which meant there was still a ways to go.

Kara bent her body enough to look down at herself, touching along her side until she twitched or involuntarily pulled away from herself. She looked up at Cat when the woman’s hands drifted away, trying to read her expression. She’d be lying if she said she wasn’t a little excited, as just looking at Cat caused other feelings to sweep over her. Kara’s chest tightened with the subtle barricade she saw slip into place as Cat seemed to settle into herself.

Kara narrowed her eyes with the motion; trying to trigger that part of herself she always grasped at when looking through something. In her mind, it was like sliding a filter into place over her eyes but from the inside. She pushed and concentrated, the cords along her neck tensing visibly until Cat looked utterly perplexed.

"What are you doing?" Cat whispered, glancing over her own shoulder to see if she was missing something before looking back to Kara.

"Testing something," Kara felt nothing, no slide or flicker of anything nor did her vision change. With that done, she looked around herself, scooting closer to the couch as she fit her hand under it and lifted.

Or tried.

The couch tipped off-kilter, but with no more emphasis than any other normal person could muster. Perhaps a little more but nothing glaringly obvious or something she would have to temper like she would with the full range of her abilities. The couch dropped back with a thump as Kara turned back to look at Cat who seemed in limbo between impressed and apologetic before she schooled her expression.

"They're not…"

Kara shook her head. "They're not back yet." The tension in her chest eased, replaced by a whole other feeling she wasn't entirely sure she should be so welcoming to.
Cat cleared her throat with an edge of nervousness, realizing they were both shirtless and knelt less than a foot from one another on the floor. To further the point, her eyes dropped down to Kara's torso and the contours of muscle that tensed and moved as Kara did when she came closer.

"We… should get dressed or something."

Kara stilled when Cat looked back up at her, unsure if she should move any further or not. She saw the depth of Cat's delicate collarbones with her next breath along with the rising urge to trace her lips across those lines. It was almost as if Cat read her mind and used the nearby table as a brace to pull herself up and step back, fingers absently rubbing across her sternum towards that very line.

"I'm going to jump in the shower." Cat explained, gesturing in the general direction of the hall. Certain it would be a cold one. "Then we can figure out what we're doing for the rest of the day."

Kara watched the woman fidget and shift, the corner of her mouth lifting slightly at the display before Cat nodded at herself and nearly ran into a chair when she turned to move. Kara was up in the next moment, steadying Cat from behind, feeling the tension gripping the woman's arms before she left her go.

They stayed like that for another moment, Cat warring with herself to turn around or not while Kara remained still. Her hands lingering just off the round of Cat's hips, fingertips barely making contact when Cat moved out of her grasp again.

Kara let out a breath she didn't even know she was holding once Cat was sequestered in the hallway, a hand pressing against her chest while her heart raced beneath. She would definitely be taking a cold shower, otherwise, she had ideas about showing up in Cat's bathroom with nothing more than a towel.

By the time Cat emerged, Kara was in the kitchen. Her hair was still drying, but she was dressed and clearly had some sort of plan in mind by the look of her attire. Cat was fairly certain Kara had bought her jeans a half size too small, or she honestly had more muscle contour hidden under those work slacks than she gave herself credit for. Her shirt was sleeveless, the Oxford collar at the neck nothing but tease of a thing as there were no buttons to be found. As Kara reached for a mug, she gave Cat a rare glimpse at her arms. Instantly reminding her of when she had first arrived to find Kara chopping wood like she was born to it.

As a distractionary measure, Cat glanced at the clock, wondering how in the world either of them could manage to sleep half a day away and not even notice. She was hungry and still in her robe, which she pulled tighter around herself as Kara turned while offering her a cup of bribery disguised as coffee.

"Dare I ask what this is supposed to butter me up for?" Cat said with a low tone before she took a tentative sip. Her body coming alive instantly with the fusion of caffeine and warmth.

"I thought we'd go back into town."

Cat nearly choked and Kara winced, moving over to grab her cup until Cat waved her off. "I thought you wanted to steer clear. Let that reputation of yours fizzle out and all?"

Kara gave a one shouldered shrug, assured in the fact that Cat was stable as the woman leaned against the island looking her over thoughtfully. "Or embrace it. My reputation back in National City isn't too far off and I don't shy away from that one."

Cat hmphed out a laugh with another sip at that.
"Besides, I… don't know if I'll ever be back here, at least anytime soon and I don't want *that* part to outdo what I did enjoy while we were there."

Cat rose an eyebrow at her, taking a third sip with silent consideration before pursing her lips a bit. Admittedly the best parts of their evening had been tainted by the end of it, which she could work through over time but it would be easier to do if there were better memories to utilize for that purpose.

She took inventory of Kara's attire once more, from the cut of her shirt caught on the buckle of her belt to the haphazard gather of her jeans tucked into the open mouth of her shoes. Her lips twitched at the more rugged boots than Kara would have ever owned, thanking God or whomever that this place was rather limited in its apparel. The look was a farrago of scholarly brawn Cat wanted to emulate for her magazine with Kara as September's centerfold; right down to the glasses and mess of a half-bun holding her hair back from her face.

"Give me a minute or two and we'll go," Cat said after a long pause before taking a hearty swallow of her coffee. "And bring some kind of jacket or something, in case it gets chilly."

Kara was about to argue when she realized she might actually get cold, being so used to her powers regulating her temperature. Which was something she wished for the longer Cat looked at her.

"If you didn't buy one there might be something in one of the closets that'll fit."

Kara nodded as Cat disappeared, waiting for a few more seconds before moving to one of the closets to find something even if she didn't need it at all right this second.
Kara stepped out of the SUV, thankful Cat couldn't see her as she let out a breath. The woman’s casual, relaxed nature had done her in, along with the barest scent of her perfume and soap swirling about the car along their drive into town.

When Cat had finally come out of her room, ready to go about an hour later, Kara had to use every ounce of self control to keep her jaw from hitting the floor.

Cat didn't even look like Cat. The sophisticated, powerhouse bitch on heels she was so used to seeing breeze into the office everyday now softened to the point of being ethereal. She seemed unencumbered in a town with no name.

It reminded her of the time she had dealt with Lord's super train and Carter and Cat's ensuing wrath thereafter. Only now, there was no immediate crisis, no Carter and no wrath in sight beyond her own libido.

Cat was in a barely there white shirt, the kind that looked impossibly soft and had been washed a thousand times, barely holding together. Modeled after a man's undershirt that tapered at the sides and curved with a modern tunic style beyond her waist. She had on a thin overshirt that would do little in the way of keeping her warm if the temperature dropped further but that's what Kara was for. Right? What had really surprised Kara was the fact that Cat owned jeans, they were undoubtedly designer and probably cost more than her monthly salary but still.

She grabbed the sweater she had found, folding it over her arm as she jammed her hands in her pockets and rounded the front of the car where Cat was waiting, slowing to a stop. Cat was leaning against the bumper, studying Kara's approach before looking at her with a secret little smile.

"I should have said this before," Kara started, looking just over Cat's shoulder before clearing her throat and looking at her directly. "You look really beautiful Cat."

Cat saw Kara's cheeks redder slightly, shoulders squaring as if to make herself look bigger while Cat held her gaze for another minute before glancing down at her feet.

"Thank you, you clean up quite nice yourself."

Kara lingered on the sidewalk, her legs felt weightless and she could have sworn she was hovering above the concrete and glanced down just to check.

"Kara?"

Kara turned and took a wide step closer before they were side by side again. Cat glanced at her for a moment, hiding her smile at the dust of red on Kara's cheeks.
"Where are we going?" Cat said as the two casually made their way down the sidewalk. It was still early enough that some stores were open but the majority of people were there for the after hours fare.

Kara kept her hands in her pockets, glancing up at the main drag before giving a small shrug. "I… hadn't really gotten that far?" Kara admitted, knowing she wanted to take Cat out but when they actually got here had no idea what to do. "I mean there's the diner I guess if you're hungry or the candy shop, maybe a movie?"

Cat noted Kara's slight awkwardness, the stiffer set of her shoulders and the uncertainty of her surroundings. Were they in National City she had no doubt Kara would have the entire evening planned down to the minute. The theatre was modestly busy, as usual, but Cat didn't really feel up to sitting in a dark theatre watching the classics when they could do that back at the house.

They stepped around another couple, parting too easily for Cat's liking. When they shouldered beside one another once more Cat threaded her arm through Kara's own. How Kara didn't falter in her steps she wasn't sure but she managed to maintain her gait, tension pulling at her chest.

"Is this okay?"

Kara told herself to relax, her shoulders following the order as she flexed her arm around Cat's hold. "Yes."

"Good." Cat leaned into her after a few more steps, counting in her head until she felt Kara take her first full breath and genuinely relax. This time a couple parted around the two of them. Paying them no more mind than anyone else.

At first.

Kara tipped her head when she thought she heard the scuff of a boot coming to a stop, seeing an exchange of conversation before pointing in her and Cat's direction.

Kara drew her hand out of her pocket, with Cat starting to pull away until Kara eased her hand around the other woman's back to settle near Cat's opposite side. It was Cat's turn to tense; suddenly at a loss, however momentary, at Kara's action and not entirely sure why. Especially since she had been the one to initiate any kind of contact beyond a certain line. It was as much unsettling, as it was intoxicating; the tender pressure at her side just below her ribs, the solidity of Kara's body moving against her own and the weight of the intended affection behind it. It wasn't feigned or pressured, resigned or possessive… it just was.

After another moment, Cat told herself to stop thinking and wrapped her arm around Kara's waist. Thumb hooking around the belt loop of her jeans so she didn't unravel the moment by grasping Kara's injured side. She felt Kara's hips shift, her chest pushing out as her shoulders rounded back. Her confidence manifesting in her posture and drawing an amused smile to Cat's lips.

"No judgement," Kara started, her tone a hard one to place, somewhere between tentative and protective. "I know this is a small town…"

Cat rose an eyebrow, looking up at Kara a moment before looking back to the sidewalk gradually noticing people nearby and across the street pointing them out or stopping to look.

"But?"

"How… progressive is it?" Kara questioned, nodding to a few people in the doorway of a shop watching the two women pass before whispering amongst themselves. "That's the third group I've
seen watching us now."

Cat pressed closer into Kara's side, directing her to the brewery with a gentle nudge. "Let's stop in here. More public, more people."

Kara nodded, reluctantly unfolding herself from around Cat, hand sweeping across her lower back as she let the woman go ahead of her in order to glance back down the way they came, counting at least seven people gradually heading their way.

Cat stepped inside with Kara right behind. Cat's fingers trailed down her arm before threading through her own, gently pulling her through the initial throng of people and away from the door. There was a live band near the back and an open dance floor littered with various couples while other patrons were scattered around the bar and surrounding tables. The lights were up by half and the mood was easy and jovial as they wove through until Cat grabbed the first unoccupied table.

There was a wave of motion in their wake, starting near the door and rolling through the place that seemed to dissipate near the stage. Kara hung her sweater on the back of her chair before scooting in while Cat looked out over the crowd.

"Tell me that was weird," Kara asked, looking around as people seemed to pay them no mind once they settled.

"Not what I was expecting."

Kara reached under the table, her hand rounding Cat's knee with a gentle squeeze, pulling her attention. "We don't have to stay here. We can go back if-"

Before Kara could finish a waitress appeared, setting down two frosted mugs and a couple of beers.

"Oh.. uhm.. wrong table? We haven't ordered anything." Kara began while Cat seemed stunned into silence for a moment.

"Oh no hon it's fine." The waitress interrupted before pointing to the bar. "On the house, Kendal's order." With the point Cat and Kara noticed the bar owner's wave before giving a smile and turning back to the patron nearest her.

"We have a few things on special if y'want something to go with it. Again it's on Kendal."

Cat looked over at Kara who shrugged before glancing at a chalkboard on the wall then back to the waitress. "Surprise us?"

"Sure thing, ya'll enjoy."

Cat waited until the waitress was out of earshot before looking back at Kara and leaning in. "Not sure that was wise, I have no idea what's going on."

"I didn't want to be rude, I mean that's probably the owner right? Not some random bar patron?"

Cat gave her a look, still unsure even as she wrapped her hand around Kara's own on her knee. "It is… but I don't remember anything being on the house before now."

Kara started to say something when the mic on stage was tapped, pulling everyone's attention.

"Ladies and gents and Roy, I see you over there," there was a whistle from the crowd and a bit of
laughter before the man continued. "I've just been told we have a special guest here tonight. Fair
warning now, any of you out of town gentlemen need to be on your best behavior or she might just
kick your ass into tomorrow."

Cat frowned while Kara looked around curiously.

"For those that don't know we had a bit of trouble the other night down at the diner."

Cat's eyes widened as Kara sat up straighter.

"Now you'll all be glad to know she's doin' fine, better than fine by the look of it."

Cat bit into her bottom lip to keep from laughing while Kara turned a new shade of red.

"Right over there to my left, everybody, Miss Kara!"

A round of whistles and hollars went out, along with a few bangs from table tops.

Kara sat there open mouthed and practically in shock. She honestly had assumed Melanie was
kidding about the level of notoriety Kara might garner. It was one thing to be on the receiving end
of it as Supergirl, and entirely another like this. She looked over at Cat again as she sent up her
own whistle of appreciation.

"Alright settle down now, I'm sure she didn't come here for all that. Miss Kendal says she's got em
covered so, on that note, let's all enjoy the rest of the night!"

There was another round of hollars and applause before the band started in with a single guitar riff
before the drums kicked in and the place was alive again.

Kara gave Cat's knee a firmer squeeze before the woman pulled away on reflex with a laugh.

"Did you call ahead or something?!!"

Cat leaned in again, pressed into the table. "Because that would be the first rule of keeping a low
profile right? Of course I didn't, Melanie did warn you."

"I thought she was kidding!" Kara leaned forward as well so they could converse over the music
and surroundings.

Cat merely grinned, the absolute absurdity of it all too much to contain. "Small town remember?"

Kara rolled her eyes, the abrupt presence of someone at their table side pulling both women's
attention. A pair of seemingly harmless older gentlemen stood nearby, the first of which removed
his hat and Kara instantly recognized him as the one who had tried to defend Cat at the diner
before being sucker punched.

"Ladies, we don't mean to impose, but it seemed awful rude the way we met before and William
and I would like to make it up to you. If that's alright?"

Cat smirked, glancing at Kara who turned towards them a bit. "We've already got drinks…"

"We thought you might like a dance, a proper one of course." The man offered, his age easily
discerned by the sun weathered lines around his eyes. Kara drew a breath to say thank you with a
polite decline until Cat held her hand out.

The man smiled softly, putting his hat back into place before taking Cat's hand and drawing her up,
but not before she leaned over to Kara, placing a kiss across her cheek on her way to her ear.

"Adventure, remember?"

With a careful spin the man drew Cat away before his companion offered Kara his hand. "It would be an honor, ma'am."

Kara looked after Cat incredulously before looking to the older gentleman in front of her and taking his hand.

Cat was already halfway across the floor by the time Kara got there, the livelier tone of the music making it easy to cover ground.

"I'm not sure I'm very good at this." Kara apologized, as the man chuckled and allowed her to place his hands where she was comfortable.

"First rule, just have fun, second rule, just go with it Miss Kara."

Kara nodded, taking in a deep breath while keeping visual tabs on Cat before she squared herself. "After you then Sir William."

The man's laugh was genuine as he started with a simple set of steps before speeding up once she caught on. The two of them matching pace to the music as they moved about. After her initial awkwardness she just let herself be guided around, laughter bubbling up at some mention of how mean her right hook had been. After another round across the floor another gentleman stepped up, gently tapping Williams shoulder before asking to cut in.

"Haven't ever danced with a celebrity before, but what you did back there Miss was mighty impressive. Mighty impressive."

Kara shook her head, thanking William before trading partners, again moving across the floor with a little more ease given the man's younger age. He twirled her around before pulling her back in as the music picked up and the two made it a kind of game.

Meanwhile Cat looked on, her own partner changing out with a grandiose bow and a boisterous laugh from the woman. The two passed one another across the floor with the next song change, keeping up with the tempo as both women were led around by various townsfolk all with some comment or thank you.

As Kara came round again her partner was interrupted with another tap. Immediately giving a hat tip before handing Kara over to the next patron.

"Jacob!" Kara grinned, hugging him before he spun her around and back.

"Here I thought you two would've just taken it easy and stayed in until you had to go back to that city of yours." Jacob's voice was full of amused sarcasm as Kara took his hand and the pair started to dance. "Imagine my surprise when we come out of the store to find Cat's car parked along the street and half the town talking about you on the way here."

Kara laughed, easily led around as Jacob put a little more flair into their maneuvers around the floor. Making sure to pull everyone's attention, even Cat's from where she now stood off to the side talking to Melanie and sipping on water.

"That'll learn ya." Kara answered with another laugh from the man as they moved around. "Should have given me more warning. You knew I thought Melanie was just exaggerating."
"And miss this? Not a chance." The two continued to move around much to the delight of those around them. "Should have figured you could dance as good as you fight."

"I'm a quick learner."

Jacob smirked, noting the winding down of the current song. "You should be dancing with someone who can truly appreciate it." He turned her around enough to see Cat again, never having seen his half-sister so comfortable in her surroundings or her own skin in all the times she had visited here before.

"You're not?" Kara questioned before he leaned in.

"Not as much as someone else I know who should be." He twirled her around as the song transitioned, letting her go in the last bit of a twirl with a small shove in a particular direction.

Kara came out laughing, her balance off enough to carry her further forward in her momentum as the music calmed and the bulk of patrons moved to get another drink or coupled up. When she stopped she was standing in front of Cat. The other woman a little off guard by the looks of it with Kara's abrupt nearness, hands already up to catch the woman if needed.

Kara took a second to catch her breath, her smile lingering as she looked at the other woman. She glanced at Cat's hands as they started to lower before stepping in and catching them before they reached the point of no return.

With a few steps the pair eased back towards the depths of the dance floor, a modest distance between them. Their joined hands off to the side while Kara held her other to Cat's side as Cat's slid to the round of her bare shoulder.

Kara led them around the dance floor, Cat easily following her lead with careful steps and turns around other couples. Kara kept her small smile in place, her expression transitioning from amusement to awestruck on a thought. She slowed their motion even further with Cat's decisive attention on her while the room began to fade from her awareness. Pale eyes searching through Cat's own while the other woman did nothing more but stare right back at her without flinching as she let those last little barriers between fall away.

Kara felt something burn its way through her chest, racing out towards their joined hands and where Cat touched her shoulder before doubling back across her nerves and throughout her body. Her fingers moved further inward from Cat's side on her next step. The tips tracing down along the lower curve of her spine as if it were something sacred.

Cat felt Kara's hand turn in her own as their steps narrowed, wrapping around the back of it while Kara's thumb rubbed firmly against her palm to open her fingers. She pressed her hand over Kara's chest on her own. Starting at her center where Kara's crest normally rested before smoothing just over her heart as Kara's fingers curled around her touch firmly. Her lungs drew in a deep breath as the weight of Kara's hand walked around her lower back to her opposite side, drawing her in on the next half step.

Their bodies aligned against one another on the turn, Cat's features nuzzling against the curve where Kara's shoulder and neck met, lips dusting against her skin with a silent affection. Her hand slid between Kara's shoulder blades, twisting around the fabric of her shirt before pulling the other woman in closer.

Kara nosed along the delicate round of Cat's ear, words failing her despite the want to say something. Lips near enough to relay the secrets of the universe and all she could manage was the
barest whisper of the woman's name. She felt Cat step inward, slotting their legs together until the two of them could barely move beyond the gentle sway of their bodies in a small circle as if they were the only two people in the room.
Kara backed up slowly pulling off her sweater and stepping out of her shoes with a bit of a stumble as Cat shut the door behind them and let her things fall to the ground. Kara's hands were in her hair again, their bodies pressing together with a sharp intake of air as they caught up to one another.

Cat barely remembered even driving them back, the two of them suddenly at the back door when Kara had turned her around and pulled her into the kiss they still shared now. Kara made a soft moan of a sound as Cat's hands found her waist, guiding her back with a push of her hips. She turned them around so that she was walking backward, pulling Kara along down the hall between quiet moans and urgent kisses.

Kara pulled her back and pinned her against a wall just outside the door, painting her skin with her tongue and rounding each caress off with open mouthed kisses. Cat's hands threaded into her hair, holding her closer before pushing off the wall and turning them around again in order to get them through the door. Kara felt the bed against her legs, grabbing Cat around the waist in order to lift her up as she sat back forcing their mouths apart for the first time since they stepped foot in the door. Kara pushed them both further onto the bed with a shove of her foot before laying back completely as Cat stretched over her.

Kara bent forward again, kissing Cat deeply. The two fighting for air around heady kisses and languid strokes of Kara's tongue as she opened herself up further. Drawing Cat up to her as Kara's legs rose up from the bed, knees brushing around Cat's ribs as the other woman crawled the rest of the way over Kara's frame.

Cat's hands found the bed on either side of Kara's head, knees holding her weight as the underside of Kara’s thighs pressed against the tops of her own. Kara used the shelf of Cat's thighs for leverage, rolling her hips up to drive them into the other woman unashamed. She held Cat’s features in her hands and refused to give her even a second to catch another breath. Cat’s arm fit under her shoulders, hand tangling in her hair and cradling the back of her head as Kara lifted up at the shoulders to kiss her deeper.

Cat let out a soft moan, her free hand twisting into the sheets as Kara's hips ground against her again, legs rubbing against her own, knees pressing into her sides. Not that she was admitting to anything but any other time she had allowed her thoughts to wander she hadn't been on top. Her mind shifted gears with the decadent pressure of Kara’s fingertips rounding over her ass before they curled around her waistband and urged her closer. They broke apart with a gasp that skipped into a moan as Kara’s mouth found her neck and teased along the cords of muscle there.

Cat let out another gasp when Kara bit down on an overly sensitive spot as the hum of a laugh followed it. Cat let her knees widen, letting out another low sound at the stretch of her legs and the solid pressure of Kara's body that rose up to meet her. Legs wrapped around her lower back, Cat's inner voice giving praise to any number of forces that had given her the discipline to stick to her workout regime even if the only payoff was this feeling right here.
Kara raised her legs higher, wrapping around Cat's body, pulling her down further as she leaned her head forward and teased her mouth across the exposure of Cat's chest. She hated being confined, had ever since she was shoved into her pod, but being smothered by Cat's full weight like this was the most wonderful exception. She lent her voice to the feelings swimming through her body, muffled by Cat's supple curves and miles of skin.

Her head fell back with an audible gasp of her own, her body rocking against the bed as Cat drove herself into her unexpectedly. The corners of her mouth lifted in a smile, Kara's laugh a rich note of pleasure tangled in wry amusement that broke apart on another moan as Cat dipped low and rubbed against her once more. Kara tightened the hold of her legs, pressing them together even more as she felt Cat’s muscles shift and pull, drawing back for another thrust and this time she pushed back.

Cat swore above her with the shallow impact, her head falling forward, brushing against Kara's chest. Fully clothed and half undone, she wasn't sure if she wanted to take the time to even get undressed or keep going. Kara uttered her name like a prayer, hands fitting around the curves of her ass, pulling her in, making the decision for her. She shifted her weight just enough, Kara's body arching beneath her as Cat straightened one leg for leverage and ground her hips down in right circles against the other woman.

Kara felt weightless and grounded in the same moment, her body moving all on its own to meet Cat's every motion. She didn't hold herself back either, each breath coming on loud waves that crested on every pitch of Cat's body into her own. They found a rhythm easily, pushing, pulling and thrusting against one another. Kara's head fell past the edge of the bed as Cat's hand gripped the mattress right beside her, knuckles white with renewed effort as she rolled against her in an ever-continuing motion.

Kara's hips wound around and around, winding her insides up tight, one foot falling away from Cat's back as she pushed harder and higher. Each breath became more ragged and shallow, the sound of Cat's name choked off as Cat held them together and ground herself in almost painfully. Cat hooked a leg around Kara's fallen one, a heavy groan breaking from Kara's throat as she pulled Cat in tight at the waist and hardened her rhythm.

"Don't stop… don't stop… don't-" Kara sucked in a sharp breath, her body bowing up against Cat's as the woman applied even more pressure and friction. Tight little bursts of Kara's hips shook the both of them as Cat thrust against her with a rough noise, holding herself against Kara's body and driving into her with renewed fervor.

Kara let out a broken cry, her leg pinning Cat down, hips jumping out of rhythm with involuntary quakes that erupted across her frame as liquid fire poured through her insides. Cat wrapped her arms low around Kara's back, pulling her up as best she could while burying the sound of herself against the woman's chest as she came.

Seconds felt like hours before both women collapsed around one another. Pawing and clinging to one another as tremors jerked at their muscles, leaving them weak and useless. Cat panted against Kara's chest, fighting for oxygen against the fabric of her shirt while quivering fingers curled and pulled at the material. Kara groaned into the air, grabbing for the bed enough to pull her head the rest of the way up onto the bed so that she didn't pass out from the rush. Her legs fell apart, jostling the both of them with another chorus of sound. Her vision was hazy as she stared at the ceiling, while her insides washed about on the ebbing tides of her orgasm.

Cat relaxed against her completely, both of them struggling to catch their breath. She felt heavy and a little smug as Kara's heart tried to pound through her own ribs against Cat's ear. Arms closed in around Kara's sides, hands slowly fitting into the valleys of the woman's ribs on either side as Cat
tried to figure out how her body worked.

Kara let out another groan as Cat started to move again, her nerves raw and exposed. She felt stifled, hot and wet, her clothes heavy and rough against her skin.

Her heart sent a pulse-wave throughout her body with every beat, thrumming between her thighs beneath the pressure of Cat's body. She heard the soft grunt from the other woman as she tried to get her knees up and pull back until Kara grabbed at her hips and held her still.

"Wait…" Kara breathed as Cat's chin rounded against her sternum in order to look at her.

"I don't want to hurt you." Cat breathed as Kara hummed beneath her.

"You won't…" Kara blinked her haze away, running her hands up Cat's sides, pulling up her shirt to get at her skin. Shivers wove through both women even as Cat pushed up unsteadily. She ran her arms under Kara's body, hands cradling the back of her head once more as Cat lifted up just enough on her elbows to look down at the other woman.

"Are you okay?"

Kara hummed again, her hands smoothing over Cat's lower back as the woman's hips dipped down again and stole Kara's breath away. "Not if you keep doing that."

Cat bit into her bottom lip, watching Kara carefully as she purposefully rolled her hips into the other woman again with an aching slowness. Her growing smile pulling her lip free as Kara's eyes nearly rolled into the back of her head. "You look so incredible when I do that though."

Kara shook her head back and forth a little in disbelief, a heavy weight tangling around her hips again. "I want more." She breathed, eyes slotting open to gaze at Cat as her fingers dug into the woman's back without the bounds of restraint she usually would have had to apply

Cat sucked in a sharp breath through her nose just the same, giving a warning of a laugh before she smoothed Kara's hair from around her face enough to lean down and kiss her. It was slow and deep, pulling at the threads of arousal weaving back and forth through Kara's body while serving to bring the woman back to Earth a bit more.

Kara sighed against the kiss, her body relaxing further until the incessant heat pounding throughout her body was reduced to a simmer. Her hands drifted to Cat's thighs as the woman drew herself up on her knees, gradually breaking away in order to sit up. Kara bit at her bottom lip at the sensory assault of Cat's weight pressing against her and the visual of her straddled across her hips.

Cat traced her fingers across the flat of Kara's stomach, the woman's abs jumping under her explorations before she laid them flat around her navel. Kara squeezed Cat's thighs firmly, rubbing her thumbs up along the shelf of muscle, provoking a small shudder from the other woman. Her heart picked up the pace all over again, a creeping nervousness spilling over. She swallowed thickly before Cat's fingertips brushed across her cheek.

"Talk to me Kara…"

Kara looked just over Cat's shoulder briefly, idly wondering how they kept managing to work backwards to go forwards before finding her voice through the clench of her throat with another swallow.

"I've thought about this, about you like this…" Kara's words drifted away, her head shaking slightly. "So many times." Her voice barely rose above a whisper, thumbs rubbing absentely along
Cat's thighs. "And now that it's actually happening..."

Cat started to move off until she saw a flicker of panic and rejection thread across Kara's eyes. She corrected her course, simply scooting lower in order to lay herself out against Kara's torso again.

"I don't want you to be disappointed because I'm not... my powers are gone and-"

Cat's fingers pressed against her lips, halting her words as the woman studied over her features carefully. "I've never wanted you because of your abilities Kara," her thumb rounding over Kara's lips, "or because you were Supergirl. I'm not going to be disappointed in anything, even if we stop right now."

Kara's eyes flared but Cat continued to rub at the woman's mouth to keep her silent for now.

"You have never been alone in keeping powerful secrets," Cat breathed, waiting for her words to fully register before she continued. "Given everything you've trusted me with, it's only fair I confess something to you that I've hidden, even from myself."

Kara pressed a small kiss against the pad of Cat's thumb, eyes searching over the woman's features waiting for her to continue as Cat leaned in closer.

"Kara... I fell for you, before you ever put on that cape," Kara's eyes widened with the confession while Cat smiled softly, the genuine confusion in Kara's expression pulling at her heart. "Even if you lost those abilities entirely, they are just a small part of what you're capable of, they're not who you are." Cat set her hand against Kara's heart. "This, Kara, this right here is what I've fallen in love with."
Kara pushed up on her elbows, forcing Cat back a bit on the stretch of her arms with the sudden motion. "You're in love with me?"

"Yes." Cat said without an ounce of hesitation.

Kara sat up further, pulling Cat into her lap, all her worry and doubt and misgivings slipping away as she just stared at the other woman.

Cat shifted further forward, thighs hugging around Kara's hips as she studied her, waiting with the utmost patience. Kara smoothed her fingertips across her skin, thumbs rubbing along her jawline with such reverence it made Cat's insides ache.

Lips closed around her own, eyes open until Cat couldn't take it anymore and sank into the other woman. Arms surrounded Kara's shoulders, hugging herself to the other woman as the touch of Kara's tongue swept into her mouth. Kara held her close, refusing to break away until she was light headed and Cat was breathing heavy.

Cat swore Kara whispered something, her brow furrowing as her mind tried to register the words through the pounding rush of her heartbeat in her ears.

"I didn't..." Cat shook her head slightly, as Kara's hips pushed up against her, "What did you say?"

"Show me..."

Cat felt those two words reverberate through her very core. Hands tangling in Kara's hair as she held her steady. "We don't have to do anything Kara." Cat assured once more, needing that absolute certainty that there was no obligation based on what Cat had confessed to.

"Do you want-"

"Yes."

"Then show me Cat."

Cat guided Kara to her, teasing her mouth across the woman's skin, pulling and nipping her way along the contours of her features. Drawing tiny little gasps and tender stutters of breath in her wake. Kara's hands settled around her thighs again, kneading at the lithe muscle before grabbing firmly when Cat passed over a particularly sensitive spot. Cat lingered over that sensitive trigger, lips whispering over it as she curled her fingers just enough so that the blunt of her nails could drag down Kara's arms.

Kara's body erupted in response, sending another quake of shivers down her spine as all the hairs on her arms stood at attention on pebbled flesh. She let out a soft whimper, hands sliding higher along Cat's legs until they collided with her hips. Cat placed a soft kiss along the plain of skin,
nipping at the round of Kara's jaw.

"Rao bless it..." she breathed, thumbs rubbing firmly against the crease of her thighs up over the just of Cat's hips. "I can feel all of that..."

Kara's words made Cat falter, nosing along the delicate space behind Kara's jaw towards her ear. "Would you not normally?"

Kara dug her fingers in gently, unafraid she would leave any kind of mark or squeeze to hard. "N-not always..." Kara's eyes met Cat's as the woman leaned back again, close enough to share the same air and far enough so that Kara wasn't just an unfocused blur.

"I do... but sometimes," Kara swallowed thickly, her pupils fathomless as they searched through Cat's gaze. "Sometimes it's so fleeting I'm not sure it happened?"

Cat gave a small nod, understanding evident in her eyes as she drew in a deep, resolute breath. She lifted her hands away from Kara's forearms, leaving just the tips of her fingers against her skin before slowly moving her touch back up. Kara's reaction was instantaneous, shivers taking hold of her again, hips pushing up against Cat's weight as her lungs caught on another breath.

Cat glanced at the movement of her hand, Kara following suit as Cat traced small patterns along Kara's skin, weaving letters and filigree with phantom ink back down her forearm. She turned Kara's hand over, fingers wrapping around it before her thumb pressed firmly against her palm. Kara was awestruck with the sensation kneading against her palm, fingers curling inward all on their own from the tension.

Cat drew her arm up by her hand, drawing the limb close before placing featherlight kisses across each finger. Kara continued to watch in awe, each kiss showering her nerves with fire carried on currents of electricity through her arm towards her chest. Cat pushed her fingers up, drawing her palm close before placing a slow, open mouthed kiss against the warm skin. The both of them jumped on the pulsewave that jolted through Kara's body, but Cat held firm, never breaking contact.

Kara felt her breath come in shallow bursts as the searing wet heat of Cat's tongue lanced between her fingers before her teeth rounded the first digit and bit down tenderly. Cat watched Kara with the utmost care, her tongue pulling the length of Kara's finger into her mouth before surrounding it completely.

Kara uttered something even she didn't understand, as wet velvet surrounded her finger and teeth worried the thick of it just above the knuckle. The next sound that escaped her was throttled mid-release as Cat tipped her head back, dragging the length of Kara free of her mouth.

Kara curled her fingers away, thumb rubbing over slick skin with a soft whine as she tried to remember how to breathe.

"Can you move?" Cat's voice was a half step lower, her own arousal manifesting in the richer tone of her voice and flush of red along her throat. Kara swallowed hard, giving a small nod before Cat set a hand against her chest, easing them further apart. "Lay back against the pillows..."

Cat knew she had to calm Kara down, if her breathing and visible throb of the veins along her throat were any indicator Kara could easily come apart with a well placed thought on Cat's behalf. Not that Cat would mind if that was all Kara could manage, far from it, but this wasn't about her, not like that. This was about what Cat wanted to see, so much as Kara wanted to feel. The woman had made a very specific request of her and Cat was not about to disappoint.
She already had a sinking feeling that any of Kara's other lovers before now had simply gone through the motions. Paying her no real attention; not that they weren't considerate so much as inexperienced and eager. Attentive to achieving the end result instead of enjoying the entire journey. Which was something Cat wanted so very much for Kara above and beyond herself.

After another few passing seconds, Kara withdrew from her slowly. Hands pulling at the bed behind herself as Cat pushed up onto the balance of her knees to allow Kara to move without her added weight. As Kara pushed back, Cat pulled at the bed, dragging the covers down and behind herself as Kara leaned back on her arms once she felt the pillows rising up to meet her. Never once looking away from the other woman.

Cat crossed her arms over herself, pulling her shirt off in a single motion and leaving it behind as she crawled forward, her belt snaking away to the floor a second after. The round of Kara's knees pressed against her chest, halting any further progress and keeping her at bay as she looked Kara over. Kara was propped up on her elbows pushing through the heavy weight around her chest with each breath as Cat refused to move any further. She licked her lips absently, taking in exposed skin and sloping curves. The way Cat's hair framed the angle of her features, the green of her eyes almost otherworldly as they leveled on her curiously.

"Are you okay?" Cat watched Kara nod, the corner of her mouth lifting slightly as Cat pushed up from all fours so that she was on her knees once more. "Do you want me to-" Kara's leg fell aside, the other remaining bent as her hands curled around surrounding pillows.

Cat bit back her smile, leaning forward as she placed a hand into the open triangle made by Kara's limbs, pressing her weight into the bed. She stretched her fingers, gripping at the mattress deliberately, a few scant inches away from the spread of the other woman's legs. Kara sucked in a sharp breath, the phantom tease of Cat's nearness pinballing across her nerves in anticipation as she fought to remain still.

Cat reached up with her other hand, fingers weaving around the hem of Kara's shirt as she pushed the thin material up, a breathless hum of a sound escaping her at the flex and jump of Kara's abs. She traced the pads of her fingers around Kara's navel in slow circles, half expecting her not to have had one.

Kara held her breath, her body betraying her with minute tremors. Her nerves felt tethered to Cat's fingertips, twisting and winding and tightening with every pass. Kara's hips surged up when Cat's fingers dipped lower, her thumb pushing at the buttons of Kara's jeans before prying her zipper apart and folding the edges down.

"How do you even function…" Kara breathed aloud, making Cat pause and adjust. Moving the hand between Kara's legs to just outside her hip enough to hold her weight at a better angle as she leaned closer, her free hand curling around Kara's loosened waistband before pulling.

"What do you mean?"

Kara let out another whine of a sound, her head swimming, thoughts going everywhere and nowhere at once. Her skin was on fire where Cat touched her and she felt as if her heart was going to break through her ribs at any moment. Her powers constantly regulated her systems, which wasn't to say she couldn't get aroused or overwhelmed, it just took a lot longer to allow herself to recognize it for what it was. There was no real way to describe it beyond passive cognition, as if she had to convince her own body the stress being induced wasn't harmful. Right now, without them, she felt everything, every breath, every touch, the weight of her clothes, the rough material of her bra, the wet heat between her legs-
"Talk to me Kara…" Cat whispered against the woman's skin, placing a soft kiss against a panel of skin above the line of her underwear. Kara's head fell back with a groan, her hips lifting as relief flooded her nerves when Cat pulled her jeans down her thighs. Instantly feeling cooler but only briefly as she pitched and twisted until Cat dropped her jeans off the side of the bed.

"I can't breathe," Kara uttered, not sure she could say more if she looked back at Cat, the heat of her exhale washing over the inside of her knee. She felt Cat hesitate and pulled in a quick breath. "Oh don't stop Cat please don't stop now."

"Keep talking… slowly." Cat requested, placing another kiss against Kara's skin as she ran her fingertips along Kara's calf.

"Hot… my... my clothes are... irritating..."

"I'm working on that," Cat soothed, slowly caressing Kara's skin to try and calm her down.

"I know, I know… I'm not used to, everything at once." Kara breathed, hands kneading at pillows and sheets over and over again. "Can't think, just want… so much…"

Cat hummed against her thigh, moving to Kara's other leg as she placed a tender kiss against her knee. "Tell me…"

Kara concentrated on Cat's voice, the whispers of touch against her skin along her legs slowly unraveling the threads Cat had wound up moments before.

"Everything is… heavy, and warm and spreading everywhere you touch, everywhere I think you'll touch me, everywhere I want you to." Kara let out another whine, her hips rolling up as Cat nipped at her inner thigh. "Lightning… th-that's like lightning... and my heart is beating so hard…"

Cat nudged Kara's legs further apart, the mattress dipping lower as she moved higher along Kara's body. Kara let her arms give out, body braced on pillows as she tried to focus her vision on the ceiling.

"Safe… even... even as vulnerable as I am… Gods Cat."

Cat pulled in her own deep breath, a low groan of a sound reaching Kara's ears as she dropped another kiss against the jut of Kara's hip, pulling the woman's hips up again on another gasp.

"Wet… like I'm melt-melting... and I don't want it to stop..."

Cat hummed against her skin with another kiss, her hands moving higher along the bed as she crawled over Kara's body. Weaving a trail of kisses, outlined with delicate flickers of her tongue up along Kara's torso, dragging her shirt up with her in the process.

"You're a powerful motivator, Kara," Cat murmured against the shallow dip of Kara's solar plexus, her ribs expanding to capacity with her next breath. Muscle and contour moving beautifully in response to Cat's affections.

Cat reached over for one of Kara's hands, disentangling it from the sheets and guiding her down between their bodies. Kara closed her eyes trying to catch her breath again, focusing on her own hand and the pressure of Cat's fingers against it. Kara felt the rough fabric of Cat’s pants, the cold metal bite of zippered teeth as Cat widened her knees to accommodate her. A tight band of elastic skipped past her knuckles, fingertips skimming through course down until they were enveloped in molten silk.
Kara’s eyes flew open wide, shoulders pulling from the bed, any further movement halted instantly with the abrupt nearness of the other woman over her. Kara had lost all sense of her spatial awareness and thankfully hadn’t sat completely up like she had initially intended. Cat was near enough to kiss, her body trembling on the exploratory swirl of Kara’s fingertips, breath coming in growing waves. Kara barely moved, biting into her bottom lip somewhere between amazed and concerned as she regarded Cat’s features. Cat wavered closer on a pant, pulling her own hand free so that she might hold herself up. She nosed Kara’s features, forcing herself to breathe slow and steady despite the building maelstrom within her that Kara commanded.

A broken exhale echoed between them as Kara fit the whole of her hand around Cat, heel pressing against the firm round of her body as fingertips waded back and forth through the shallows. She watched Cat’s eyes threaten to roll back before they closed, hips struggling to stay still, brow furrowing in effort to control her breathing and temper the cascade of sensations crashing through her.

“Kara... If you kiss me right now…” Cat warned, Kara’s mouth poised to do just that. The woman was struck dumb with Cat’s sensory awareness. Her eyes were still closed, hands kneading at the bed, knees threatening to give out and give in. She opened her eyes back to Kara then, yielding and wanton and unashamed at how far and how easily Kara worked her up without even so much as touching her until now.

Kara’s exhale was breathy and rife with emotion as she stared into that knowing gaze, wanting nothing more than to close that remaining distance between them and feel Cat come apart in her hand. Her gaze dropped down to Cat’s mouth, the whine that followed curling around her chest like a vice. She knew down to her very core that Cat would follow through with whatever choice Kara made with absolution. The weight of it all was euphoric, and the only reason she knew she didn’t have her powers back with the rush of it all was due to the fact that she wasn’t hovering four feet above the bed or digging down through the mattress to the springs with her other hand right now.

“I didn’t…” Kara nudged Cat’s features with her nose, watching the restraint and tension coiled along Cat’s body gradually ease. Cat let out an incredulous breath of a laugh, the sound lingering in her chest and vibrating along her throat. Her body jumped all on its own as Kara’s hand slid free of her, wet knuckles painting a trail across Cat’s exposed stomach before drifting away. “...mean to interrupt you…”

Cat panted a little harder, and a little faster as Kara laid back again on the support of one arm, holding Cat’s gaze. Kara rubbed her thumb in fluid circles around her first two fingers for an intoxicating second, the repetitive motion finally drawing Cat’s gaze to them, before Kara painted her own lips with the wetness coating them while Cat looked on.
Chapter 34

Chapter Notes

I know some people needed a little extra love after the premiere tonight. Here's another chapter

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Kara fit the tip of her finger between her teeth as Cat swore under her breath. Flashing the other woman the start of a smile, the edge of her tongue savoring the flavor on her skin before pulling the digit free. With that deliciously pervasive action, Cat suddenly realized she had somehow ventured down the wrong path of thinking when it came to Kara and her current situation. Kara wasn't just this big bundle of nerves that would bruise and hurt over the smallest of things. She wasn't a virgin, nor was she inexperienced…

Kara just didn't have her powers.

The woman wasn't conditioned to all the sensations, emotions and thoughts bombarding her all at once. Not like Cat or most other humans who had to contend with a lifetime of awkwardness and discovery that eventually presented a gradual awareness over time in order to function despite everything going on with their body in such an intimate setting.

Kara wasn't getting to some irreversible point of being overwhelmed and needing to stop outright so much as adjusting to the intensity of it all coming at her instantaneously rather than through a Kryptonian filter. Cat had misjudged Kara by a mile and wasn't going to make that mistake twice, for both their sakes.

Cat shifted her jaw visibly, her smile growing while Kara's waned, not from fear but the sudden understanding that whatever upper hand she thought she had, fizzled away on the other woman's gaze.

Cat widened her knees as she moved forward, her hips dipping low as she leaned over Kara, their bodies barely brushing against one another with every breath. Kara held her's in anticipation of Cat's weight settling over her, that feeling already so elusive to her in such a short span yet she craved it all over again. Her hands poised to help ease Cat the rest of the way down without touching her just yet.

Cat made a show of licking her lips, an amused hum of a laugh sounding in her throat as she cocked her head and made as if she were going to kiss Kara into next week. The whisper of Kara’s hands against her waist made her stop, while the unbidden sound of disappointment that followed pulled another noise of amusement.

“You should take another moment to really enjoy that,” Cat teased, her lips barely catching against Kara’s skin, her tongue flicking against the swell of Kara’s bottom lip to emphasize her point. Kara tried to lean up and close the remaining distance only to have Cat drift just out of reach. “It's going to be a while yet…”

Kara let out a huff of a breath, her hands wrapping around Cat's hips and pulling her down purposefully as she pitched her hips up into the other woman, pleased with herself as Cat groaned.
"Is that a threat or a warning?"

Cat pushed right back against her, bracing her upper body on her hands to keep Kara from reaching her despite all her efforts. "That darling, is a promise."

Kara gasped when Cat's body shifted, pressing the weight of her thigh between Kara's legs before rounding the motion up against the heat there. Kara moaned, head falling back again, hands running under Cat's waistband and around her ass, pawing at her curves. Cat found the cords of Kara's throat as they were bared to her, teeth worrying Kara's skin before lips surrounded a spot that made the other woman actually squeak.

A hand found its way into Cat's hair, threading tightly as she widened her mouth and sucked hard enough to bow Kara's back off the bed. Whatever sound or words Kara had attempted were strangled into silence as Cat pressed the flat of her tongue against the captured skin. Kara fought for air, pain, and pleasure tangling together at her throat until Cat pulled back with an audible pop of a sound. Sparklers went off around Kara's throat, zipping through her body in a thousand directions as she settled back down with a stutter of motion. Cat laid out on top of her, chest to sternum as she brushed her fingertips across the swollen red skin throbbing away with a tender yet satisfied apology.

"Get these off..." Kara demanded when she was finally able to speak again. Her voice thick and syrupy, hands already pushing at Cat's waistline until the woman sat up again with Kara quick to follow, pulling and tugging while Cat's hands slid under her shirt, flicking away the clasp of Kara's bra before grabbing it and her shirt in one go. Kara sat back reluctantly, as Cat pulled her clothes away, lobbing them towards the floor before Kara's hands went back to the task of removing Cat's jeans once more.

Cat grabbed her wrists, halting her progress until Kara stopped focusing on the material and its removal and looked up at her. They stared at one another for another lingering moment until Kara tested Cat's hold, receiving a raised eyebrow and a smirk for her efforts as Cat tightened her grip. Kara tipped her head curiously, the corner of her mouth lifting slightly as she tried again where Cat actually pushed her arms back. Not to be outdone, Kara squared herself a bit and tried again to grab for the folds of Cat's jeans. Cat pressed her thumbs against Kara's wrists, not enough to hurt her but the feeling registered just the same.

Kara's fingers curled inward involuntarily but that was hardly what made her jaw go slack. The genuine strength of Cat's arms were on full display. Muscles she didn't even know the woman had locking into place, holding Kara back. Kara knew better than anyone how much attention Cat paid herself and her physique but had rarely, if ever, seen the fruits of such labors. She felt her insides twist sharply, heat lashing at her hips and along her spine all over again before she slowly tracked her eyes up, committing every contour that presented itself to her.

Cat was still up on her knees, grip firm, eyes half-lidded as she watched Kara with the utmost care. Any ounce of this turning towards a negative and she would let go without hesitation. Kara's chest flushed pink, lungs working overtime to pull in the proper amount of oxygen as she relaxed enough so that her arms were moved out a little wider. She whispered something in her native language, eyes lifting to Cat's as she gradually leaned forward as if she were asking for permission.

The closer she got, the wider Cat pushed her arms, until they were out and back by her own sides, lips dusting across the rise and fall of Cat's chest as she breathed. Kara lashed out with her tongue, drawing the center of Cat's bra between her teeth before pulling at the thin material. Her arms going slack, forcing Cat forward with the sudden lack of resistance. Kara let the material go with a snap, mouth fitting around a pliant curve as they collided. Cat let out a broken gasp as Kara pressed her
tongue against the stiff swell before drawing the sensitive pink skin into her mouth.

Cat bowed towards her, head falling forward as she reaffirmed her grip on Kara's wrists and pinned her arms behind her back, nipping at Kara's ear when she could, only to feel the action mimicked back at her. Her next gasp was sharper, rounding out into a heady moan right against Kara’s ear as she teased and flicked her tongue against the swollen skin.

She pressed her knees in against Kara's thighs, the vibrations of Kara's appreciation against her chest, sending her into a fit of shivers. Kara doubled her efforts, worshipping the tender skin with languid strokes and gentle pressure. Teeth grazing over the fuller swell of Cat's breast before she let her head fall back with an aural suck of a sound.

Cat turned her head, pressing her mouth against Kara's ear, breath hot on her skin as she spoke. "You are impossible…"

Kara laughed on a breath, her hands stretching out while Cat still held her wrists against her lower back. She pushed at the material again, licking at the valley between Cat's breasts before breathing over her. "You love it."

Cat made an odd grunt of a sound, her insides turning over, coating her spine in hot wax that gathered between her legs when another gasp seized her lungs. Kara nosed at her again, teasing her tongue against the neglected peak until it was well and truly soaked before blowing cool air across it.

Cat struggled for her next breath, whimpering against Kara's ear without restraint. Her hands flexing tighter around Kara's wrists until the woman let out a faint hiss, the sound transitioning into a growl as she bit into the curve of Cat's breast in response. Cat huffed against her ear, hot and throaty. "And so incredibly sexy it takes my fucking breath away, Kara."

Kara's eyes rolled on another groan, the vice of her teeth replaced with soothing kisses. Cat let her go then, nails pressing into Kara's back as she drug them up with just enough pressure for Kara to feel without welting her skin. Kara's arms wrapped around her body, dragging the straps from her shoulders as she painted Cat's skin with open-mouthed kisses.

Kara pried the material down, a hand pushing past the band of Cat's jeans, grabbing her ass firmly, before leaning back and lifting up as Cat drew her legs in until her knees were between Kara's own. Cat's arms wrapped around her shoulders, Kara's free hand dragging the other woman's jeans down until she could grab enough of them to forcibly pull them off with a sharp tug.

Cat's laugh was instant as Kara's balance pitched and laid them both out, propped up on pillows and each other. Kara fit her teeth around Cat's chin, applying a gentle pressure there before Cat tipped her head down, intent on giving Kara something else to worry her teeth over. Kara hummed into Cat's mouth laughing in her chest until the sound was replaced with a low moan.

Cat trailed her hands down Kara's sides, fingers hooking around the last bit of clothing between them before she lifted her hips and pulled. Kara’s legs lifted, her knee catching the thin cotton with a final shove on Cat's part before Kara worked herself out of them. Kara pulled in a deep breath, her body tensing here and there with little spasms as Cat settled her weight over her and nuzzled in.

Every point of contact felt like warm silk, snagging on juts of bone where their bodies rubbed together. Kara traced her touch up along Cat's spine, fingers slotting between the valleys of her ribs as she kneaded gently. The firm pressure of Cat’s full weight made it almost impossible for Kara to discern where she started and Cat ended. Cat pulled gently at Kara's bottom lip as she broke away, her hands rounding over Kara's waist, thumbs rubbing along the shape of her hip bones, gradually
working her touch lower and lower.

The tension in Kara’s chest was back, winding tighter and burning hotter, spreading out across her nerves and back up along her spine only to wash throughout her body all over again. She relaxed back into the pillows, watching Cat openly as she pushed up just enough to separate them above the waist. One of Cat’s hands turned, the soft touch of the back of her fingers running up along Kara’s stomach, the corner of her mouth lifting as the muscles beneath jumped and spasmed.

Cat swept her hand inward to Kara’s center, knuckles grazing across her solar plexus, fingers slowly straightening with the turn of her hand so that she might rub the whole of her palm along Kara’s sternum before fanning out along the flat of her chest where her crest would reside. Kara jumped under her touch, her breathing measured, heart hammering away at her ribs again as if it were trying to jump into Cat’s grasp. She looked up from the hand rubbing against her reverently, only to find Cat looking right at her. Despite the struggle to control even the most basic functions she was struck absolutely stupid by the look Cat had for her. This moment, right here, this was something Kara wanted committed to her memory for the rest of her life.

Cat was a tapestry of emotion, woven together with heartfelt intention and genuine admiration, hung up on the verge of some kind of life-changing discovery with every pass of her hand against Kara’s skin. That ethereal quality Kara had caught glimpses of prior to now was on full display; the loose curl of her hair, the flush and dewy glow of her skin, to the keen focus of her eyes that were as green as Kryptonite and just as disarming. All of it reinforced by Cat’s nakedness stretched over her own.

Kara’s chest expanded with every breath, her turbulent emotions fueling the sensations rippling out from that touch which seemed to meld Cat into her own body. She reached up, suddenly filled with the desire for more connection. Kara’s hand curled around Cat’s forearm, kneading at the muscle there until Cat lifted her hand up enough to allow Kara to thread her fingers with her own and close around her hand firmly.

Cat bent down to her, tentative and slow, waiting for Kara to meet her partway. Kara nosed Cat’s features with a trembling sigh before closing her lips around Cat’s. Where before there was a ruttish undercurrent infusing their kisses, now it was replaced with a reciprocal veneration. Kara’s fingertips traced along Cat’s jawline drawing her closer as her chest caved on her next breath. Cat breathed in on Kara’s exhale, their joined hands moving over Kara’s head and into the pillows where Cat reaffirmed her hold only to have Kara squeeze right back.

Kara felt Cat shift her weight onto one of her thighs, hips pressing down in gradually increasing circles that Kara’s had never quite stopped since they had fallen back into the pillows. Her shoulders lifted from the cushion when Cat’s other hand made a languid swirl of motion through the course down below her waist, fingers curling tight around the short kink of hair.

Kara flexed her fingers around Cat’s own above her head, the other woman pressing their joined hands further into the pillow as Kara gasped aloud at the first touch of Cat’s fingertips dipping into the shallows of her sex.

Kara opened her hand, fingers stretching wide before reaffirming her grip on Cat’s own with a breathy groan, shoulders bowing inward as she pushed up with her hips and dug her upper back into the bed. Using Cat like an anchor, she pushed against their joined grip, another groan escaping her when Cat applied more pressure, pinning the limb in place as their lips finally broke apart.

Cat tipped her chin back a little further as she slid her fingers inside Kara slowly. A heavy exhale washing over Kara's skin as she caressed and teased the vice of rigid walls and a tighter band of
quivering muscle that greeted her just inside. Kara let out another sharp moan, more building in her throat with every breath behind it.

That was certainly different, nothing like Cat could recall in any woman she had been with or even through her own solitary explorations. Cat pushed up on their joined hands, hovering over Kara from the waist up, knowing she needed to be as attentive as possible, while also not wanting to miss a single second. She bit at her bottom lip, winding her fingers over carefully as Kara whined around more phrases she didn't understand, her touch working in and out, stretching after that elusive band until it relaxed while Kara shuddered.

"Are you alright?" Cat whispered, lips brushing against Kara's with the question, eyes searching over the other woman's own. Kara's brow furrowed, lost between wanting more and wanting to stop for just a second before she nodded.

"I need you to say it darling," Cat kissed her chin tenderly, her fingers having stilled. "It's okay if you need to breathe or stop… but you have to tell me what you need."

Kara's features broke, head falling back, free hand coming up to cover her face as she sucked in a hard breath.

"It's alright…" Cat soothed, careful not to move abruptly, letting Kara take her time. The other woman's body clenching around her fingers in slow undulating waves.

"It's… so much…" Kara managed between what Cat finally understood as her native language, her heart swelling for more than one reason as that dawned on her.

"We should-"

"Gods please- … Cat... don't st-... I just-" Kara slipped into a torrent of her native language again. The corner of Cat's mouth lifted in awe at the other woman and the ease with which she spoke while those waves fluttered and gripped at her just as Kara gave a laugh in disbelief.

"Cat, :zhao w rrip," Kara's hand fell away with another, richer, hum of a laugh as she looked back at Cat expectantly. ":zhao w rrip"

Cat rose an eyebrow at her and the lilt her own name took on from Kara's accent. Ignoring the burn of her arm in favor of the decadently sentient kneading against her fingertips, her own smile edging a little higher. "Try again Kara… slower this time. "

Kara's mind caught up to her, realizing everything she had just said Cat hadn't understood. She swore again in Kryptonian and swallowed visibly, the hand tangled with Cat's squeezing hard.

"I love you."

Cat gasped, Kara's words coursing through her veins as another heady pulse-wave gripped her fingers. Cat tipped her head, gently stroking with her fingertips causing Kara to groan under her breath.

"Tell me again..." Cat whispered, Kara rising up ever so slightly on a breath. "The way you meant to…"

":zhao w rrip..." Kara said with more confidence, her native accent heavy as her body pulled at Cat's fingers all over again.

Cat hummed with a purr, touching her forehead to Kara's own, ":zhao..." She slowly circled her
fingers around the word rolling off her tongue. Cat's eyes flared while Kara huffed out a breath, pressing against her. "w rrip… Kara…” Cats fingers slid into a shallow recess where the pulsing band receded once more with her caress.

Kara gasped again, her leg hooking around Cat's body and pinning her down almost involuntarily as her lips moved with breathless words that needed no translation as they spilled out.

Cat rubbed her fingers against the divot, Kara’s hips jerking up higher to meet each increasing swirl of Cat's fingers, their eyes never breaking away from one another as Cat slid her fingers in deeper against another pulsing ridge that gripped at her hungrily.

"Yes... Cat that's-" Kara tripped through a myriad of encouraging sentiments, her hips driving up, begging for more. Cat curled her fingers down, skipping across another hollow on her way to the first before stretching her fingers deeper against the undulating ridges once more. Kara's head fell back with a primal sound, her body quivering on every stroke. Her fingers reaffirming their hold around Cat’s own above her head, using her for leverage to drive her body further down the bed, stopped only by the upward thrust of Cat’s fingers.

Cat marveled at how Kara’s body could struggle so passionately to match Cat’s gradually increasing pace. The way those thin bands fluttered and pulled her deeper, how she discovered more of those little shallow indents that made Kara cry out or send her into a wave of spasms.

Cat was rocked up and forward every time they collided by Kara’s leg, still hovering, looking down at her as the woman’s head fell back, neck exposed, mouth set wide as softer moans grew louder and louder. Fingers twisted into the sheets and dug into the back of Cat’s hand above her head, hips lifting up off the bed completely as Cat’s fingers wove in and out of her, deeper and deeper with every thrust until she felt something inside her break apart.

The floodgates of sensation opened within her, barreling up from Cat’s buried touch, building and doubling over in the unforgiving rush through her body. Filling her to capacity before drawing the tension in her muscles unanimously along her nerves. Kara let out a broken cry, her head back and body desperate to keep her in that perfect moment of terminal velocity.

It was far too fleeting. Kara held on a second longer, her cry rasping into a louder string of incoherence before she was cast back down to Earth at light speed. Her insides turned to fire, liquid pools boiling over and thrashing around her hips as Cat’s fingers fed electrical currents throughout her limbs. Her internal ridges undulated in erratic tidal waves, refusing to let Cat go.

Kara’s eyes went wide, the weighted haze of another orgasm seizing her lungs and claiming her finite muscle control all over again. Her hand tore itself from the bed, surrounding Cat’s forearm to still her as a full-throated groan poured out of her in the form of the other woman's name.

Chapter End Notes

SUPER SPECIAL THANKS TO @findoutwhatilove for the bundle of nerves line AND for all the other fantastic things you've helped with along the journey of this story. I am super grateful ... especially those dang runaway spaces ;)

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Thank you @Argyle_S for the help with translation cause Lord knows I've been doing
that all wrong lol
Chapter 35

Chapter Notes

The morning after...

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Cat stood in the kitchen, covering a small yawn as she stirred her coffee with a lazy turn of her fingers. Her hair was half-dried from her shower, robe hanging from her arms, the thick of it draped across her back below her shoulder blades. It was still loosely tied at the waist, so at least it didn't drag on the floor. Already her mind had determined if she did nothing more than mill about in her bra and underwear all day she could still consider it productive given that she had showered and wasn't naked.

Cat tested the first sip of her coffee, hands warming around her mug as her mind relayed glimpses of a few scant hours prior. Treating her with images of a very naked Kara, glazed over in sweat, unable to speak in anything beyond her native language. Cat somehow figuring out, through the feeble attempts and fumblings, what Kara wanted to do but her body refused to coordinate intent into action.

There had been a moment, or maybe five, where Cat was certain Kara had been cast so far into the ether that she might just slip into unconsciousness and not wake up until the mid-day sun roused her. Not that Cat would blame her, she was sore in her own ways and acutely aware of her physical space. It was like a faint electrical current humming across her nerves, just under the skin and it made her overly sensitive to her surroundings and the influences of things around her on a tactile level. Which was another reason why Cat was so content to have so little on.

Cat took another sip of her coffee, letting the warming sensation spreading through her carry her to the ground and root her there. She closed her eyes, setting her mug back down, drawing in a slow breath as she lingered in the feeling of Kara wrapped around her like a blanket, heavy and devoid of any strength, while Cat lay stretched out against her side.

Her mind audibly recalling something akin to apologies tumbling from Kara’s lips against her chest into her heart; at least that’s what Cat had figured the words were. Even if the language was foreign to her, the intention behind them was clear. Accented by Kara's lack of finer motor control and full awareness. Cat could have pushed, she could have teased and worked Kara up until the woman couldn't take it anymore until Cat got off… if this had all been strictly transactional.

Instead she had kissed Kara's apologies into silence, soothed her worries, and what tasted like guilt, before folding the covers over both of them in order to watch Kara sleep until Cat couldn't remember being awake anymore.

Cat hummed to herself with a wry lilt, a thread plucking away inside her chest at the idea she had utterly and completely waylaid Supergirl. Granted Kara had a slight disadvantage without her powers but that pridefully ambitious part of Cat preened just a little. Until it was enveloped in the depths of undeniable affection and genuine love she carried for the other woman.

That was a sobering epiphany, to say the least. That feeling didn't just take root and thrive overnight. Those feelings and their corresponding emotions had been building in her undetected for
far longer than she initially realized. She tried not to look back and over analyze it all, even if it seemed reminiscent of a twelve-step program from start to finish. She wanted to exist in the moment now, and the way it made her feel… human again.

All these parts of her that Kara had challenged her to face, to work through and process both good and bad, to finally accept in herself, had been buried so deep for so long she had honestly forgotten that she even had the capacity for such things. Not just for another person beyond her sons, but for herself. Kara had been sound asleep when it first hit her, like a wrecking ball straight to the chest. She had been so thankful the other woman had been exhausted, unsure if she would have been able to articulate properly why she was crying or how it had nothing and everything to do with Kara. Kara had been right, without even knowing how much so that it still took Cat's breath away.

It was not her fault.

Cat swallowed hard, hands pulling up from the counter to rub at her face, gently pushing tears aside with her fingertips. She let out a rough exhale, already knowing her therapist was going to need an entire file cabinet devoted to their next appointment. But for once, Cat was actually looking forward to it. A preemptive session over a knee jerk reactionary one designed to keep her sanity in check. She pulled in another breath, her lungs twinging at the depths of it as if the muscles hadn't been used that far down in ages. She felt airy and hopeful, her mindset effortlessly stumbling over itself with what she recognized as happiness.

Cat felt Kara behind her before she even crossed from the hallway, and instead of her standard reaction of guarding herself away, tensing with anxious anticipation at being touched or seen, her body relaxed even further. Open and welcoming to whatever Kara had to offer, even if it was nothing at all.

Kara studied Cat curiously, awestruck at whatever change had taken hold of her. Her approach was slow, fingers tapping on the island, socks shuffling across the floor so Cat could gauge her proximity. She reached but didn't touch, hands smoothing on the counter on either side of Cat's body without touching her. Ready to pull away in an instant if Cat felt boxed in.

"Hey…" Kara whispered, her eyes closing at the weight of Cat's body leaning back against her. She squared her stance when that weight increased where before it would have been more of a nudge. Cat nuzzled back into the other woman's shoulder, turning her head to drag her nose against the side of Kara's neck before kissing the mark she had left the night before with a tender reverence.

"Hello Kara…" Cat spoke the words against her skin, leaving another languid kiss on a less sensitive part of her throat. Her body nuzzled even closer at the hand that smoothed over her stomach, Kara's fingers pressing gently against her skin as the tips made small swirling patterns just below her navel.

The rarity of her given name rounded out in Cat's voice still sent shivers down Kara's spine, and she prayed to Rao that she never lost that feeling. Her lips brushed across Cat's forehead, only to be guided lower as Cat reached up to her and gently pulled her down.

Kara tasted coffee and cream, sounding out an appreciative hum as the woman lazily opened herself up further to Kara's tender explorations. Cat's hand filtered into her hair, rubbing at the back of her neck as her other hand kneaded along Kara's forearm as the loose bond of her robe broke apart.

Cat pushed back against Kara's body, the strength of her arms surrounding her from behind. She pulled gently on Kara's tongue, tasting her breathless moan before answering back with her own as Kara's fingers twisted around the waistline of her underwear and tugged gently. She relaxed all of
her weight against the other woman, yielding completely in her arms as she deepened that kiss with a soft whine.

Kara wrapped her arm around Cat's slender waist, hand palming her opposite side. Cat gave a firm squeeze of her other arm, dragging her nails up along the contours of muscle until they both shuddered. Kara's fingers slipped beyond the thin band, a sharp series of breaths building between them as she stretched lower. Cat's mouth fell open against her own, lips trembling against the subtle flickers of Kara's tongue as her fingers skimmed across wet heat.

"Gods Cat..." Kara husked around a groan, coating her fingertips in the growing wetness of Cat's swollen skin as the woman drew in a stutter of a breath against her mouth. Kara stretched further, arm pressed flush against Cat's body as she swirled her fingers through the intimate shallows that quivered and sucked gently at her skin with each broadening stroke.

"That's all you darling..." Cat purred, her voice a rough whisper of a thing that rounded up to a sharper gasp. Her next words fell apart into a breathy unf of a sound before she forced her throat to work. "Fu-Kara..."

Cat's hand fell to the counter edge, the other still threaded around the back of Kara's neck like an anchor chain, kneading and pulling as she rocked her body back into the other woman, arching against her as her hips struggled to stay still.

Kara tugged at Cat's bottom lip, teeth worrying the swell gently, as she curled her fingers and eased them just inside before dragging them back out slowly. Cat let out a broken sound, holding her breath involuntarily before another deeper moan poured out of her. Her hips rolled in a wave, hungrily seeking out Kara's touch.

"Please..." Cat husked, pulling and pushing, held up in the strength of Kara's embrace, surrounded by her body as Kara's fingers explored everywhere but where she wanted her. "I want... I..."

"Tell me," Kara licked at her mouth, watching Cat's eyes nearly roll into the back of her head as she circled her fingers round and round. "Tell me what you want Cat..."

"I want you inside me."

Kara let out a growl of a moan, capturing Cat's mouth in the snare of her teeth before gently sweeping her tongue across her lips. Their kiss breaking apart as she tightened her hold around Cat's waist and buried her fingers deep inside with an aching slowness.

A heady stutter of breaths filled the air, Cat's hands clinging desperately to wherever they could along Kara's body. Her back arched, hips shaking as they moved involuntarily, striving to push Kara's fingers in deeper. She gasped when Kara moved, her head falling back over Kara's shoulder as her nerves were set alight on pulsing waves of sensation.

Kara circled her fingers in tight little motions, the heel of her hand applying just enough pressure to that bundle of nerves throbbing against her palm as she coaxed and stretched her fingers with a slow rhythm. Cat's hips chased after her hand, rounding over and over with counter-rhythms against each languid thrust.

Cat kneaded at the back of Kara's neck, her hand sliding down for the breadth of her shoulder, using her as an anchor as she pulled, grinding her hips back against the cradle of Kara's own as they rose up to meet her. Kara nipped at her neck, whispering Kryptonian sentiments against her skin as she adjusted her stance, and on her next upward thrust, caught Cat's weight and bucked her up almost off the ground while her fingers plunged deeper inside her.
Cat let out a laugh surrounded in a groan, the sound bubbling up from Cat's chest as she let her body sag against the strength of Kara's own as her fingers moved inside her. "Do that again…"

Kara hummed with a bit of a growl, circling her fingers as she drew them back only to drive them back inside with the hard thrust of her hips against Cat's body.

"Oh Kara… yes…" Cat rolled against her, nails digging into Kara's shoulder as she pulled and rubbed herself against the woman behind her without shame. "Harder… I won't bre-ak!" Cat bowed away as Kara thrust into her again, sending another round of delicious sensations to pulse through her body.

Kara rocked Cat up again, this time pulling her back and turning them around. Cat's balance suddenly pitching her forward with a slap of her hands on the lower level of the island. A wry laugh laced with arousal and a challenging playfulness on Cat's behalf circled them both as she grabbed the opposite side of the island and stretched out. Cat gasped with a whine as Kara's touch retreated completely, leaving her hollow and wanton. Her body pressing fully against the counter edge as Kara pulled her arm free. Cat started to push back up, intent on turning around when she felt the firm press of Kara's other hand against the upper part of her back.

Another wave of arousal burned through her veins with that gesture, the flex of Kara's fingers against her skin making her shudder as she searched the space ahead of her in anticipatory confusion. Her robe twisted low at her waist, her body pulled back into Kara's own with a solid impact that stole her breath away.

Kara rubbed her hips against her, rounding against the curves of her ass in deliberate circles as her robe was moved aside. She felt Kara's touch low at her back, kneading at the small recesses along either side of her spine until fingers fit around the waistline of her underwear intent on drawing the material down. Kara leaned over her then, lips brushing over the flush skin of Cat's back, pulling a heady series of breaths from the depths of the woman's lungs.

"I don't know about you…" Kara muttered, tasting Cat's skin with broad strokes of her tongue, rounded off with hungry kisses as she moved lower. Giving a final push to Cat's upper back to keep her there as she drew herself away. Cat's body shook with every glancing touch of Kara's fingers as they trailed down her legs, her body hyper-aware of Kara lowering to the floor behind her as she let gravity draw her underwear to the floor.

"But I'm starving."

Cat's eyes went wide at the searing breath of Kara's words against her thigh, another groan echoed back at her as her head fell forward with the gentle nip at the inner cord of her thigh. Her legs were nudged further apart by the turn of Kara's shoulders between her legs, the woman's hands kneading at the back of her thighs as she was urged to step back a little further. Body still bent over the counter, Cat balanced on her forearms anticipation clinging to her insides in waves.

The first touch of Kara's tongue against her swollen skin made her jump. Kara's grip on her thighs tightened to hold her still as she repeated the slow, probing lick of her tongue, mapping the shallow contours of soaked folds with a heady moan. Cat rocked her hips forward, a mewling whine working its way from her throat as fire spread out along her hips. Molten heat was pooling around the base of her spine, building and rolling across her nerves.

"Oh fu-oh God… Kara-Kara-"

Cat's voice dissolved into incoherence, hands pawing at the island as Kara pushed up higher, mouth opening wide as she surrounded the other woman. The flat of Kara’s tongue moving in continuous
strokes only to stiffen and curl, painting symbols around that aching bundle of nerves until Cat couldn't see straight.

Her knees banged into the island on either side of Kara's body, her weight held up in Kara's strong grip as she pushed and sucked and teased Cat into submission. Cat let out a litany of sounds and disconnected phrases, until all she could do was pant and groan, voicing her encouragement while her hips rolled and surged against Kara's mouth.

Kara shifted beneath her, setting one of Cat's legs over her shoulder for balance, her hand snaking up, fingers teasing and swirling in the shallows of her entrance. Kara kneaded her touch against that red, swollen skin, widening the stroke of her fingers until she held Cat open and dipped her tongue into the searing wet heat.

Cat's fist slammed into the countertop, her weight sagging against Kara's body as every exploratory stroke of Kara's tongue sent heavy waves of arousal surging through her body before ebbing back and crashing into the next. Again Kara swirled the firm tip of her tongue back up, circling around with a languid pressure as her fingertips memorized every contour before carefully pushing their way back inside.

The noises above her were raw and unfiltered, pouring out of Cat's mouth and echoing through the great room. Kara hummed against her, sucking gently as she stretched her fingers with deep, twisting strokes. She pushed deeper and harder with every turn seeking out a particular spot she knew was there until she found it. Cat came straight up off the counter when she grazed it, her body shaking heavily before she laid herself out again on a groan. Kara's fingers curled forward after another deep thrust, rubbing against a thin ridge that made Cat laugh with a rich, sultry flair only to gasp and moan and flounder for words.

Cat felt the growing heat from Kara's touch coating her insides with a thick, all-consuming weight. The sensation drawing away like an ocean wave until she felt her thump against it and rub at her possessively before drawing back for more. A heady pressure settled low in her body, rippling out on a tidal wave until she was drowning in it. Her whole body, clenched tight, riding out those waves that continued to crest and surge through her, flinging her over the edge only to catch her midway and consume her all over again. Kara didn't stop, her tongue etching Kryptonian symbols onto her very soul as her fingers pushed deeper, fingers massaging that place so deep inside Cat swore she felt her touch against the thunderous beating of her heart.

To say she saw stars was an understatement. Her muscles writhed as her nerves burned out on the third wave. Her body caved involuntarily from the onslaught, her limbs incapable of holding her up. The strength of Kara's hand was at her back, legs propped on Kara's shoulders as she lashed at her with her tongue, growling against her as she strained against the numbing vice of Cat's inner walls until Cat screamed at her to stop.

Cat's hands bit into Kara’s skin, holding on for everything she was worth as full, all-encompassing wave after wave pounded through her, stealing her voice and every possible thought beyond the mantra of 'i love you' shouting its way to the stars in her mind. Their bodies slid against each other in a heap on the floor, as Kara uttered calming words against her skin as Cat enveloped her around a hybrid of laughter and sobs. Kara's fingers were completely numb, Cat's inner walls still squeezing at them in hungry spasms that showed no sign of easing off. Kara felt fingers in her hair, weakly pulling her back until Cat's trembling lips closed around her own. Another broken moan bubbled up between them as Cat tasted herself on Kara's mouth as she struggled to breathe.

Kara pulled Cat’s robe around them, trying to stave off the unending quakes that shook their way through Cat’s body relentlessly. She pulled back just enough, pressing their foreheads together as
Cat whined and breathed hard and heavy, eyes still closed as she clung to the other woman. She rolled her hips, the hand in Kara’s hair tightening with renewed strength as she clamped down around Kara’s fingers one more time. The quaking of her body halted briefly, another soundless moan caught in her throat as Kara’s fingers were urged out of her with an aching slowness. Kara drew her closer a second after, legs coming up from the floor to cradle Cat’s body against her own as much as she could without smothering her.

“Are you okay?” Kara whispered with a rough edge, watching Cat nod slowly, eyes searching over Cat’s features, “I didn’t hurt-”

“No,” Cat’s voice was a shredded remnant of a thing, swallowing hard as she nosed Kara’s features. “Wha- Kara...what did you do to me?” Cat kissed her again weakly, arms locked around her shoulders, legs squeezing at Kara’s sides, hugging herself closer.

Kara hummed against Cat’s mouth, cradling the back of her head in her hand as she broke away again, searching through Cat’s eyes as they only now seemed to come into focus. She drew a breath, nosing Cat’s features, fully intent on saying something profound and inspiring when the sound of tires on gravel caught both of their attention followed by a short burst of noise from a car horn.

Chapter End Notes

the re-reads of these last few chapters is going to be lit I can feel it ;(
"Why'd you honk?" Lois asked looking over at Clark suspiciously before the man fumbled with his seat belt, nearly smacking himself in the face with it.

"They didn't exactly know we were coming Lois. Not like you could call Cat and Kara didn't reply to my earlier message which means she's still without her powers."

"I figured knocking would have sufficed." Lois answered as Clark fell out of the truck and shut his shirt into the door. "Honestly, I didn't expect you to go full Kent here Smallville, you're acting like Cat doesn't know who you really are."

In all honesty Clark didn't know, he suspected she did, especially after so much time around his cousin. Of course, given what he had heard, wishing to God he hadn't, as they were driving by it might as well be a foregone conclusion. He was stalling.

"She might not. She didn't the last time I visited."

Lois stepped out of the truck, moving to the back to get her bag as Clark untangled himself from the door. "That was nearly a year ago, I thought Kara said she and Cat were closer now?"

"Huh? I did, when did I say-I meant at work not, I mean at CatCo not with the cape."

Lois raised a high brow at him, tipping her head curiously as he adjusted his glasses and fixed his shirt before grabbing his own bag. "So she doesn't know?"

"I'm not sure?"

"I doubt Kara would have left that detail out... oh wow." Lois suddenly caught up to the conversation, looking back to the behemoth of a house set off in the middle of nowhere. The two of them showing up had been on her urging, although Clark hadn't exactly put up too strong an argument. He needed to relay something or another to Kara and Lois needed to get Cat back into the land of the living to clear this all up. "Oh my God."

"Now Lois, before you jump to any conclusions-"

"Cat doesn't know."

"What? Cat doesn't know?" He shook his head, rubbing at his temples a second. "I mean, what doesn't she know?"

"You said Kara has no powers because of the Decahegon."

"Gahehdean," Clark corrected, "I didn't know what it was or I could have tried to warn them before
she encountered it."

"Right so, it goes without saying, Cat doesn't know she's, that Kara's really-"

"Supergirl?"

Lois nodded as Clark glanced to the house rubbing at the back of his neck, trying to shut out a few more choice sounds before looking back at Lois.

"I don't know." Clark said genuinely, what he did know was despite the surprise company the two inside weren't exactly sounding as if they were in a scramble to get presentable if the comments between Cat and his cousin were any indicator.

"Damn…” Lois said, shouldering her bag as she came around and stood next to Clark. "This is complicated."

"Very."

Lois eyed him a second before looking back at the house. "Why hasn't anyone come to the door yet?"

"They're uh, probably wondering the same thing about us?"

"Oh, right."

***

“You have got the be fucking kidding me…” Cat said, glancing out a window as she ran a hand through her hair while Kara nearly tripped over herself pulling her pants on in a rush.

"Is it Jacob?"

"It's your cousin," Cat gasped softly as Kara pressed against her, Kara's arms braced on the window edge as she caught sight of Lois and Clark.

Kara swore in Kryptonian, her heart beating hard against her chest as Clark glanced that way before pointing something else out. "He heard me."

Cat hummed in amusement, smoothing over the sudden burst of arousal at Kara's body pressed against her. She was going to have to push Kara on that, ever since the woman had carried her from the kitchen back to the bedroom all she wanted to do was wrap herself around the woman and just-

"He's going to hear something else if you don't stop," Cat warned.

Kara glanced down, as Cat looked over her shoulder at her, their mouths so close to touching. Cat moved hastily, snagging Kara's lips hungrily, turning around in her arms as she kissed her breathless, uncertain when she might get another taste of them given their newest arrivals.

"He's going to hear something else if you don't stop," Cat warned.

Kara glanced down, as Cat looked over her shoulder at her, their mouths so close to touching. Cat moved hastily, snagging Kara's lips hungrily, turning around in her arms as she kissed her breathless, uncertain when she might get another taste of them given their newest arrivals.

Kara flexed her hands around the window, eyes nearly rolling back into her head as Cat ravaged her until her lungs burned. She sucked in a sharp breath through her nose, pushing Cat back towards the window before making an odd squeak of a sound and breaking away.

Cat held onto her shirt front, before carefully smoothing the fabric out. She pushed up onto her toes, voice right against Kara's ear. "Go answer the door before I talk myself out of letting them in."
Kara nodded, swallowing thickly as she pushed off the window and backed up before tuning to do what Cat ordered.

"And Kara?"

Kara turned on a dime, taking a step back before Cat held her hand up to stop her.

"Warn him about needing some ear plugs or something, cause this little discussion between you and I is far from over."

Kara nodded again, jamming her hands into her pockets before she turned and made her way to the front door.

Just as Lois knocked the door pulled open, and before Kara could ask what they were even doing here Lois had her in a tight hug. Kara glanced up at Clark who looked around at the eaves before Kara gave a slight gasp and jerked to the right.

"Oh geeze, sorry Kar, don't know my own strength." Lois apologized as Kara stepped back, hand already rubbing at her side to try and force the painful twinge there aside.

"Uh yeah, little unexpected." Kara allowed, feeling Clark's eye on her before she stepped aside.

"Come in already." Kara gave Clark a looser hug as he passed before closing the door behind them. Already she was on edge, holding her breath in anticipation of some other shoe to fall from the sky and knock her out.

"What-"

"In the world are you two doing here?" Cat's voice sounded from the hall, the no-nonsense tone Kara had nearly forgotten Cat was capable of pulling them all to attention. "And how the hell did you even find this place?"

While Lois didn't jump at Cat's voice the shock of the woman across from her, stepping out from the hallway into the main room certainly made an impression. This was not the same woman from even a month ago when they had been at an awards dinner. Holding court and making the rounds in a multi-million dollar dress like the Queen everyone touted her to be. This wasn't even casual couture level Cat out for a weekender with her son, this Cat was one she hadn't seen in far longer a time than she cared to admit. Assured, settled, and radiant all wrapped in a bow of domesticity and if Lois didn't know any better-

"Kara and I have a tracker…" Clark blurted out, all eyes turning on him. From Cat to Kara with Lois in-between; confused, curious and chagrined all bearing down on him at once. “Since... the... fire... when she was little... er for emergencies and-”

‘Of course Cat would ask that question three seconds in the door’, Clark thought. Lois had pressed Clark and the matter of that very thing, knowing Cat wouldn’t just let it go unanswered. His explanation had been sound in the fact that Kryptonians could essentially find each other if given enough time and patience to filter through all the noise of this planet and hone in on their unique biological energy signatures.

Despite the similarities between Kryptonians and humans, their bodies operated on different frequencies, as did other aliens and meta-humans. Granted it was like searching for a needle in a haystack but with a few adjustments at the Fortress of Solitude and a little effort, Clark had managed to pinpoint his cousin. This method also ensured those that shouldn't find Kara, didn't, including the DEO. They were friendly enough now, to a degree, but he wasn't about to share that
information with them given their overarcng ties to the government.

Which would have been a fine response to Cat’s inquiry, up until about five minutes ago. Now both he and Lois just looked between one another as Kara rounded the both of them closer to Cat. The woman seemed less than pleased, eyeing the pair her jaw shifting visibly as she set her hands on her hips.

“Which tracker would that be again?” Kara questioned, her tone a little harder than it should have been, eyeing her cousin as she crossed her arms over her chest shouldering up to Cat. Lois actually elbowed Clark when he didn’t speak, the other two women staring the pair of them down before she looked at him with equal expectancy.

“The ones we uh, we got from that place that one time, that trip we took North.” Clark tried, glancing at Cat then back to Kara as if his look could will her to follow along. Instead she just raised a high brow at him, looking him over before looking over at Cat. Cat drew in a slow breath, eyes narrowing as she eyed Lois before leveling back to Clark once more. As amusing as this was deep down, the only reason they would be here is if something else had happened that required Kara, or more of Supergirl’s attention.

“Really, that’s the best you can do?” Cat questioned, looking over at Kara before crossing the room. She watched Lois prick to attention, wondering if the woman knew how easy she could be to read. Especially when it came to anyone showing any kind of interest in Clark beyond a particular level. Where before this had annoyed her to no end, she understood what Lois was doing, perhaps better than anyone.

Lois wasn’t threatened, like most people, especially women, might perceive her response when anyone came near Clark with less than clear and positive intentions. She was cautious and protective. Lois had known about Clark longer than anyone, which also meant she had to have suspected Kara from the day Superman had found her. She just had a piss poor way of showing it. Although now, Cat wondered if she herself would struggle with her own reactions when it came to Kara from this point onward. Cat pitched forward on her toes, plucking at Clark’s shirt a bit until Lois stepped between them.

“I mean honestly, Superman, that’s it? A secret tracker between cousins? Is it a watch? Oh... a decoder ring?”

Kara tucked in her lips, biting back a laugh as she watched her cousin flounder and Lois lean in towards Cat, poised to strike at her with a lash of quick words no doubt to change the subject through provocation.

“What happened to all that sway you had there cous?” Kara’s voice pulled their focus as she neared, while Cat straightened with a smirk. Clark gave his cousin a warning look while Lois raised a high brow at the saunter in Kara’s stride. Turnabout was fair play after all, and both Clark and Cat had done their fair share during his last visit to National City. It just hadn’t struck her how far the pair had gone with it until now.

“Still think watching him walk away is like,” Kara leaned in close to Cat, the woman’s smug stance in regards to Lois and Clark siphoning quickly away with her slip. “Transcendental meditation?”

Lois tipped her head while Clark actually winced a bit, watching his cousin carefully. “She knows.”

“Yes, she knows, and she’s known about you since before that you!” Kara looked at
Clark pointedly.

“So how did you really find us?” Cat questioned, as she made a mental note to ask Kara about that phrase later. She shifted her weight to one hip, brushing against Kara’s body with her nearness.

“Better yet,” Kara interjected, her shoulders squaring up as she involuntarily stood as if she were wearing her suit and ready to take flight. “Why are you here? All joking aside, what’s happened?”

The sudden reality as to why Clark would make the effort to find them hit Cat like a cinder block, she glanced to Lois who narrowed her eyes curiously before looking at Clark. Seeing as there was no longer a need for any kind of facade his own posture reflected Kara’s. Shoulders squaring back, spine aligning properly instead of in his casual slouch, his welcoming demeanor still present even if his expression sobered.

“There’s been another development with Luthor-”

Kara’s chest tightened, wincing slightly at the man’s name as she heard Cat take a sharper breath beside her.

“Lex Luthor?!”

“Way to understate it Clark,” Lois said under her breath, rolling her eyes and nudging him before looking at Cat, her brow furrowing. “Yes Lex Luthor, I know you’ve been incognito but certainly Kara mentioned-”

“You’re telling me Lex Luthor has been behind all this?” Cat's words were more statement than question as she looked between the two in front of her only to round over to Kara when Lois' initial statement registered in her brain.

Clark looked just as confused as Lois, the pair turning their attention to Kara who despite the triple threat, held her own. At least until she glanced more directly at Cat. Kara drew in a deep breath, that band across her chest only growing tighter before she turned her eyes away and back to her cousin.

“I hadn't told her yet.”

“Hadn’t told me…” Cat's voice was quiet, unable to place the feeling swimming through her insides beyond knowing she didn't like it.

Lois schooled her features, setting a hand at Clark's back before grabbing at his shirt and slowly stepping back. Clark didn't argue either, the look on Cat's face was enough, compounded by the fall of Kara's shoulders.

"When were you going to tell me?" Cat questioned, turning to Kara as the other two were completely forgotten.

"Today, I swear Cat. I didn't want you to worry, after everything you've already done I didn't-" "Today, I swear Cat. I didn't want you to worry, after everything you've already done I didn't-"

"How long?" Cat's tone was sharper, the mask Kara had finally gotten behind slipping back into place like a lead gate.

Kara physically winced again, hands curling into fists under her arms, pressing into her sides. The dull ache in her ribs sharpening with the added pressure. The disconnect was harsh, more than Kara would have expected. However it manifested in her, Clark actually looked apologetic, turning his eyes away out of some modicum of respect for her feelings. Lois noticed it too, hand wrapping
around Clark's arm as she looked up at the man.

"Before Melanie and Jacob came over."

Cat straightened a bit with that, her arms wrapping around herself. "Alexandra told you."

Kara nodded wanting nothing more than to reach out and pull Cat to her and try to explain why she hadn't told her when she should have. How she had been selfish in her reasons even if unconsciously. Wanting to stay in their little town of nowhere where no one like Lex Luthor could touch them.

The woman shook her head, fingers uncurling from one of her arms to keep Kara at bay before she stepped aside and walked away.

"Cat…" Kara tried only to have Clark set a hand on her shoulder.

"I just need a minute please." Cat offered back, there was no anger in her tone and Kara wished she had her powers back enough so that she could read the woman’s aura.

"I got her." Lois said after Cat slipped outside walking towards the lake line. "Just sit tight, it'll be alright." Lois squeezed her arm before following after Cat.

Chapter End Notes

!zhikuvaium - Literally means Big Idiot
Chapter 37

Chapter Notes

Kara and Clark are speaking in Kryptonian, and those words are *in italics* because I'm not going to break myself or anyone else trying to directly translate it all.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Kara set her head in her hands, having collapsed onto the edge of the couch after Lois and Cat were out of view. Clark looked out after them through the walls of the house over the rim of his glasses before turning his attention back to Kara. He was unsure of what to say or do while trying not to make this any more about him than he already felt it was. Guilt was an odd motivator, especially the kind you refused to acknowledge until it was just easier to shove it aside. Kara pulled in a deep breath, her face rubbing against her hands as she brought her head up.

"Is it always like this?" Kara questioned behind the echo of her hands looking up at her cousin who stood nearby just looking down at her.

"Always like...?"

"With Lois, is it like this with you and Lois?" It was too simple a question and Kara knew it, her tone reflected it and her misplaced agitation. Of course, it wasn’t like this for him. He and Lois had the luxury of working alongside one another without scrutiny or complication or accusations or water cooler gossip fueled arguments between their coworkers over power dynamics.

Clark could see the anger in her, the pulsing frustration that lashed at her aura even around the rim of his glasses before he slowly lowered to the ground until they were eye level with one another.

"I’m sorry," Clark offered, watching Kara’s entire body tense with the apology, her jaw shifting behind her hands as her eyes cut away from him and back towards the windows.

"It’s not your fault." Kara forced through the thickness of her throat, thinking she should have just hid away in silence until they could round over to this same conclusion without having involved Cat. She might not have wanted to admit it then, but she knew now what she had been doing, why she had reached out to the other woman. It wasn’t exactly a test, and yet it was at the same time. A test of what, she didn’t know, but the current results of it felt worse than if she had just spent the past few days here alone.

Clark reached up, pulling his glasses off his face and setting them aside. His hands hovered a moment, the gesture pulling Kara’s attention back with a confused furrow of her brow before he set his hands on her shoulders. The firm grip settling around the whole of her shoulders as Clark searched out Kara’s eyes.

"It is my fault Kara, maybe not this part, not completely, but plenty of things have been."

Kara looked him over cautiously, seeing him like this, as Kal-El and not Clark made her chest tighten even more. "Don't do this right now Kal. I swear to Rao-
"

"Kara, I need you to listen to me."
Kara slid away from him, standing up and moving away, her arms crossing right over her chest. He practically floated as he followed her, keeping enough distance so that she didn't run but enough to be felt.

"Why are you really here?"

Clark looked at her back, seeing the strength in her body pull taut, a streak of pride and awe settling around him.

"Cause if it's to assuage your own issues you can stop now and go back home."

"kahrah," he spoke her name in the old dialect, the way it was intended as if one were whispering the name of a god. Kara turned her head to the side, her own glasses slipping free with the curl of her fingers. She may not have her powers but she was the older out of both of them.

"kahl,ehl," she answered back, her warning evident. "You don't get to take this from me. Not like everything else. You want to say you're sorry? Fine, I accept that. Move on."

"I can't, I won't. I have to atone Kara."

"You were a child, alone, you didn't know."

"Once you were here I did."

There was no denying that, and Kara had skirted the edge of not knowing the finer details of that why for the longest time. Having come around to something she could forgive and still see the good everyone else did in him. She didn't know if she could take what he had to say now and come out the other side the same way.

"Why?"

"Because one of my greatest enemies had more consideration for it than I did."

Kara turned to look at him, their surroundings forgotten, the human trappings that allowed both of them to pretend to be anything other than Kryptonian falling away.

"What did he say to you?"

"It's not what he said, it's what he's done, what he tried to make right because even Lex Luthor, with all of his depravity, saw the wrong of it."

Kara raised an eyebrow at him, turning around completely as she squared herself and looked at him directly. "So this is all his doing, even your search for forgiveness, for atonement?"

"That much I will not accredit to him, he merely stirred the pot already boiling over."

Kal-El let out a breath, his shoulders falling as he stepped closer. "I've wanted to tell you for ages when we were both ready for it only to realize I was falling into the same trap I set for myself years ago."

"Which was why you couldn't tell Alex."

Kal-El shook his head. "You first. Lex has done all this, for you, and for Cat, because I wronged both of you and he's not entirely wrong but neither is he right."

"That doesn't make this any easier Kal."
"Nor should it, Kara you are one of the strongest if not the strongest person I know, short of Diana and that's not by much honestly. But, a spoken testament to your abilities is not going to make any of this any better."

"I'm not sure any of it will."

"I abandoned you. Alex wasn't wrong in her assessment of that. What she was wrong in was the reason why."

Kara drew in a deep breath, watching him cautiously.

"Everything was so different back then, I was alone and had been and suddenly you were there, and I knew, as much as that man wanted to hurt me and others, if they knew about you…" Kal shook his head. "If he had, if he found you, those things humans are afraid we're really capable of… I knew I would have proven them right."

Kara shifted her jaw, knowing the truth of his words, she had experienced her own brush with that part of herself with too many people. However, it didn't answer for the part after, where Lex wasn't a threat, where he and the others Superman had defeated and brought to justice were put out of mind and out of sight. It certainly didn't answer why he kept away even after she put on her own cape.

"That's very noble, but it still leaves a lot to be desired if we're being honest with each other Kal."

Kara moved towards him then, with more prowess and posture befitting a Kryptonian than he could hope to muster despite his time spent in the Fortress of Solitude.

"I almost went after him myself, right after he turned the skies red."

Kal frowned at that, studying her as she moved. 

"Not for the reasons you're thinking either," Kal may have started this but she was going to end it. "He did as much if not more damage than when I was under the Black Mercy with that little stunt. It's how I know that if I have truly lost my powers, I'll still be alright. There would be no existential crisis without them, a learning curve sure but not complete and utter devastation."

Kara circled the room, Kal moving around just the same, never looking away from one another.

"I didn't get the luck of gradual discovery like you with my abilities. They came on full force and without warning. You could have been there for that instead of Eliza and Jeremiah and Alex."

Kal took every word onto himself like a blow, as she continued.

"Tempered by the fact that not only your enemies but the government might find me. You gave them plenty to be on the lookout for. I suppressed my powers, to the point that some days I thought I didn't have them anymore and then when that red sun dawned…" Kara let her words fall into silence, their weight showing on her cousin's frame.

"I could have lived like that, adapted so easily. It felt like home for a single albeit terrifying minute and then it was gone again."

"All those people Kara, the chaos…"

"I know!" She shouted, looking away from him. "I know, it was too great a cost, but it didn't make
it hurt any less.” Kara let out a breath, her anger subsiding. "You weren't the only one…”

"Meaning?"

"Astra." Kara looked back at him then watching his shoulders shift. "She did it too. To both of us. I know she wasn't as close to your side but she knew you existed, she could have reached out just the same. Instead, she waited, and you didn't notice either. Funny trait that seems to run in our bloodline isn't it?"

"Kara, I waited until I knew you were capable. Until you were your own—"

"You waited, just like she did. That's the point. She, however, met me as an equal or tried. I learned everything about you through second-hand accounts. Then when I finally, finally stood on my own, you sent Olsen like some kind of consolation prize."

"I did that to protect you."

"You could have come yourself, it shouldn't have been him or Cat or even Reactron that carried your stories, your pictures... carried you to me Kal. Just like it shouldn't have taken Lex Luthor to remind you to be there for me now."

Kal looked away, knowing she was right, knowing he had the means, method and opportunity to make this right well before now.

"So I will ask you again, Kal, why now?"

"I don't know if I can do all this without you."

Kara straightened, seeing him for the little boy he was all grown up.

"When I found out what he had done, how he used something he knew from a previous encounter with me to get to you..." Kal shook his head as Kara drew nearer.

"Kal... what did you do?"

Kal-el pulled in a deep breath, reaching into his pocket before holding out a vial. "I went to the DEO, fully loaded with Kryptonite, ready and willing to do whatever I had to."

Kara frowned, looking at the vial before relieving him of it. "Kal-El what is this."

"A cure, at best, I know your powers haven't come back. That stuff you were exposed to, Lex only knew about it because of my own encounter with it. Granted I wasn't exposed to the levels you were by far and my powers came back after a couple of days.” Kal looked her over, his shoulders lowering further. “Kara, there is a very real possibility without it, yours might not return at all.”

Kara looked at the vial again, and the pinkish remnant of her injuries along her knuckles. It had barely been a week, and her abilities were still somewhat intact or she would still be wrapped up and barely able to take a deep breath. Then again, aside from an accelerated healing factor, all of her other abilities were dormant, or as suggested, drifting further and further away from the probability of returning.

“That doesn’t answer my question.”

“I tried to help Eliza, and your sister, figure this out. The only way I could think how... how I know you would.”
Kara looked up at him sharply, her jaw shifting slightly before she stepped closer, the vial tucked away into her pocket. She was slow and careful, her hands lifting to either side of his head before he stepped closer, yielding his height with the lowering of his head into her touch.

She brought them together easily, their foreheads barely touching. Another time, another place they would have done this long ago. Even if they had come together on Earth, things would have been so different as to be a whole other world all over again. It wasn't perfect, it didn't soothe the tumultuous undercurrent between them but it was a start, a bridge that with enough time and effort on both their parts they might actually finish together.

"You're not entirely wrong, I would do anything for the ones who are important to me, maybe with a little more thought, a little more finesse. Thank you, Kal-El, for giving me this choice."

Kal-El nodded, reaching up to touch her shoulders as was tradition.

"Even though there is still so much between us, I forgive you, Rao forgives you..."

Kal-El swallowed thickly, a soft prayer to a God he wasn't even sure he believed in sent up again as tradition. Kara pulled him to her into a fierce hug, his larger frame bowing to her as he returned the gesture. Nearly pulling her off her feet in the process.

"Now..." she said firmly, her voice wavering slightly as she slipped back into English. "Tell me what else is going on, because there is no way you would ever bring Lois here knowing Cat was around."

Chapter End Notes

,kahrah, - Kara - proper Kryptonian

,kahl,ehl, - Kal-El - proper Kryptonian
Cat stood out on the dock leading off from the outdoor space near the house, looking out over the lake and the surrounding wilderness. Wondering when she had preferred the quiet surround of nature to settle her mind over the maelstrom of noise and concrete that was the city below their balcony. Cat pulled in a deep breath, giving a small shake of her head at the ease of that thought. The scuff of a shoe behind her pushed those things aside, already preparing herself as the sound of footsteps came closer.

“You always did know how to make an exit.”

“And you an entrance.” Cat allowed as Lois settled into her periphery off to her right.

The other woman looked out over the surrounding woodland, the corner of her mouth lifting slightly. “Never pegged you for a nature girl either.”

“Amazed you don’t have a hay seed sticking out of your teeth.”

Lois rolled her eyes, giving Cat’s shoulder a shove.

“Watch it Lane, I’m taking you with me if you knock me in.”

Lois leaned in a bit. “Would it make you feel better?”

Cat glanced over at her, then beyond, judging the distance and effort it would take to knock Lois off the dock and into the water before looking back up at the woman pointedly. “Any other time.”

“Chicken shit.”

Cat snuffed out a breath, shoving back at Lois who let out a squeal and made to grab for Cat. Cat actually reached for her, wrapping an arm around Lois’ waist and pulling her back in before she knocked them both off balance enough into the water.

“Wanna try that again?”

“I’m good.” Lois felt steady again and expected Cat to let her go, until she didn't, letting out a slow breath. "You don't seem to be however."

Cat shifted her jaw, starting to move her arm away until Lois put her own around Cat's loosely.

"I'm not," Cat said after another minute, looking out over the water again. "But not in the way the hamster in your brain is turning the wheel."

"Think you can be serious and less insulting for a minute?" Lois leaned closer, "Swear I won't tell." Cat eyed her a minute before looking out again. "Old habits." Lois nodded with a slight mockery of a hum in agreement.
"Kind of like the one where we used to talk all the time."

Cat let out another snub of a breath, giving her head a shake. "Then you fell out of the sky and I moved away and that all fell aside didn't it."

"You realize a conversation is a give and take, one that requires participation from all parties?"

"You never called, you did write just not to me," Cat offered with a bit of a snark in her tone.

"You wrote too, three whole chapters in that book of yours."

"Best seller."

"I know, you sent me a signed hard copy."

Cat gave a small smile at that, rocking on her feet a bit.

"And you're avoiding the question."

"You're a reporter Lane, you know how this is supposed to work, or have you forgotten with the blue wonder in there?"

"Listen if you're trying to get a rise out of me Cat, it's not going to work. I didn't come here to start a fight."

"Why did you come here?"

Lois untangled herself from the other woman then, crossing her arms over her chest. Cat was a little more reluctant but let Lois go just the same. Lois moved around Cat then, coming to stand in front of her. "You have to come back with me."

"Contrary to popular belief Lane, I like you but not that way despite whatever you've heard."

"I'm serious Cat, Lex's little ploy notwithstanding, Clark wasn't kidding with that development angle in there. Dramatic as he made it sound."

Cat winced internally at the mention of that man, her eyes narrowing as she looked at Lois. "Now what?"

Lois flexed her hands a bit, rocking towards Cat. "Remember how you left the Planet?"

Cat rose a high brow, head tipping curiously as Lois actually fidgeted. "Vaguely." That was a lie, she knew it as well as she knew her own name.

"Remember how I told you I had the master tape, after your lawyer made a show of giving it to mine before we dismissed them?"

That had been such an elaborate ruse or at least initially, until it wasn't which was about three seconds after she and Lois had initiated it. An idea solidified further by the unexpected arrival of Superman, that had firmly set Cat's break from Metropolis and cast her into her new start in National City that much further.

"Turns out someone else had a copy somewhere and with Luthor's latest and greatest there, it got released."

"What?!"
Lois winced as Cat's voice genuinely echoed out across the water. "Jesus Cat."

"You told me you destroyed it!"

"I did."

"Lois, you told me you destroyed it." Cat's voice was slotted through the clench of her teeth as she repeated herself.

"I did!"

"Then how-"

"I don't know, none of us do, yet. Clark swears it's not Lex but I have my suspicions. Even if it's not him-"

"Lois, if people find out."

"Okay, full stop. While we might have plotted that out a bit, you and I, we didn't make that up. That was years of getting back at each other and wiping the slate clean between us. Watching it all over again from a sort of outside perspective I could see it. Sure we talked about it, and agreed to something wildly different. Then everything went off the rails. What you said then was just as real and hurtful as my hand across your face."

"I didn't think you'd react if I-"

"Bullshit, you let me have it and I gave it right back." Lois pulled in a settling breath. Seeing herself and Cat again from that day, the memories of what they both said, then with the helicopter crash. She shuddered to think what might have happened if Superman didn't actually exist.

"Full disclosure Cat, I know you unleashed everything on me. From losing your son to nearly losing your life, flung at me between your words like I was a punching bag. That was not part of the discussion we had about making sure it looked good in case that mob family still had it out for you once you were clear."

Cat squared her shoulders, Lois wasn't wrong. The easiest part of that whole plan had been to lie enough to get Lois to agree to an entirely different set of circumstances. Similar outcome but still. Cat had used Lois as a kind of catharsis for her own problems at the time. Vehemently and without remorse.

"That's the truth of it. What's on that footage, that was a real fight between two very flawed and hurt individuals. Regardless of the original plan." Lois offered, looking at the other woman pointedly.

Cat eyed her cautiously, there was a lot the two of them had never worked through. Built upon over the years certainly but even in reflecting back on it now, Cat honestly couldn't recall why they were still at it with one another beyond the show and attention it garnered. Again, another old habit.

"That doesn't seem worthy of coming out here the way you did."

"It does when her royal highness, Cat Grant is nowhere to be found. Along with one of her ace reporters after CatCo was blown out. I can't even defend myself or answer any questions-"

"Defend yourself? Lois, what are you talking about?"
"This really is the middle of nowhere. I know I read somewhere you had a chip implanted in your brain to be connected to the news twenty four seven but clearly that was wrong. " Lois said underhandedly.

"Now who's not answering the question?"

"They think it was me Cat. That I had something to do with it, because of our thing. That I've turned my focus on Kara because she threatens my career and that Superman may be part of it too."

Cat stared at her for the longest time before breaking out into a round of pure unadulterated laughter that echoed gloriously across the water.

Lois blinked, whatever reaction she had expected from the other woman, that certainly wasn't it. Cat continued on even as Lois leaned over.

"Cat… it's not funny."

Cat didn't stop, nearly doubling over as Lois nudged her.

"Cat… I'm serious, we're getting our own threats here."

Cat put a hand over her mouth, muffling the sounds as she straightened, her laughter evening out until it was nothing more than a rolling hum.

"Everything else aside, if this is what happens when you take a sabbatical with-"

"Don't go there," Cat warned with a slight lilt of amusement as Lois gave her a small smirk.

"I'm a reporter remember, we go there. We go there hard."

"You are not hard Lane," Cat actually snickered, her laughter threatening to bubble up again. "This is off the table"

"Only because right now 'Lois Lane and Superman's Secret Plot to Bring the World's Media Queen to Her Knees' is an actual headline. I'm not talking Onion worthy headline either."

Cat bit at her bottom lip, realizing if Lois had just barged in earlier she would have known exactly what brought her to her knees. She cleared her throat, giving a small shake of her head. Not even a few days out from the media circus and it all goes to hell. "Who printed-"

"The Emerald Star."

Cat made another face, her nose wrinkling. She let out a dark sigh with it, glancing back towards the house a moment before turning her attention back on Lois. "Leave it to us to play to the worst part of ourselves and have it end up like this."

Lois followed her gaze to the house, watching Kara and Clark circle one another in the main room before looking back to Cat.

"Through adversity or something like that."

Cat hummed with a nod, looking past Lois again to the water, her expression somber but otherwise unreadable.

"I can't… just leave her here." Cat finally said after a long stretch between them, the tone of her voice provoking Lois to straighten.
"Never said to, although coming back with her is going to look really obvious, from a reporter's point of view."

"Tabloid reporter, and you were doing so well up to that point."

"You know I'm right, just like you know what will happen if people really start trying to dig into her or him with all this."

Cat shifted her jaw into a hard line. "They won't find much of anything, I didn't and you know how I am. Besides she's got more help than he ever did to start."

Lois couldn't fault that logic, and there was no doubt in her mind that the gaps in Clark's own human history had been filled by those same people with Kara's insistence.

"Lex was bold enough to push the point beyond birth certificates and adoption papers, it sparks an idea that others might try to emulate. Or would have if you hadn't stepped in like you did. That whole public display with her and Supergirl, that was genius."

Cat smiled faintly. "Not my idea."

Lois looked struck with Cat’s admission.

"I didn't know, I mean, I knew," Cat emphasised, referring to the knowledge of who Kara really was, "but not for sure. That truth got revealed after. I just gave her another alternative is all, it was the least I could do."

"Least you could do? Call me jealous Cat, there's no way I could do this for him if our positions were reversed, not even a little bit. I mean I could try, but…"

Cat felt her chest swell a bit, she knew she could do little in the way of protecting Supergirl, given what she was capable of, but Kara Danvers, Cat had the means and the methods to protect her without falter and would do it again in a heartbeat regardless of their present situation.

“Can I ask you something?”

Lois eyed her carefully. “The fact you’re requesting permission means this is serious."

Cat gave her a pointed glare before Lois held her hands up. “Tonal shifts aren’t exactly my strong suit.”

“She admits it, finally.”

Lois made a face before biting back her initial comment. “Really Cat, what did you want to ask?”

Cat hugged her arms around herself again, her mind roaming about in a million directions off from a central point all at once. “It doesn’t ever go away does it?”

Lois glanced back at the house, her gaze leveling on Clark through the large windows. “I’d like to think it gets easier,” she looked back at Cat then. “Except in your case.”

“Gee thanks.” Cat sighed, glancing down at the dock properly.

“I don’t mean it like that, well maybe a little.” Cat huffed out a breath of a laugh before Lois stepped closer, setting an arm around Cat’s shoulders. “I’m only ever going to say this once.”
Lois’s tone made Cat look over at her, apprehension written around her eyes as she held her breath waiting for the woman to continue.

“I’ve got about fifteen years on you with all this…” Lois made a circling gesture before puffing out her cheeks with a breath at that realization. Cat glanced away, the quip Lois had expected not coming which made it all the more serious. She hugged Cat a little closer with that, leaning her head against the other woman’s in a comforting gesture of solidarity. “Just like you’ve got the same amount of time doing all the things I’m only just now thinking about, if I haven’t missed out on them.”

Cat unfurled her arms from across her own chest, knowing almost inherently what Lois was referring to. Her arm wrapping around the other woman’s waist again with a small squeeze.

“Leave it to you to somehow do everything backwards and be wildly successful at it.”

Cat breathed out a laugh, Lois’ words ringing far truer than Cat figured the woman realized. Her fledgling, yet not so fledgling relationship with Kara included.

“That’s still going to make it a little more challenging for both of you, I think.” Lois said honestly, she never had to navigate her position at the Planet opposite Clark’s, children of her own to contend with, or the kind of reputation Cat had built for herself either. That would make things difficult enough, without adding in all the things that came right along with someone like Kara.

"But I know one thing, would bet my life on it."

"Your whole life?"

Lois leaned back a bit looking at Cat with a serious expression. "You, never back away from a challenge."

Cat swallowed hard, trying to will Lois' words into another, less emotionally open, part of herself right now. She would be damned if she let the woman see her cry, just to relish in the thought she caused it. Good or bad.

The woman's words struck just the same as she looked back out over the water, pulling in another breath. Sensing the tension in Cat's body, the heat of her emotions pulling at her she looked away too, giving a small smile.

"Especially when that challenge does all this," Lois made another overarching gesture in Cat's direction.

"What?"

Lois threw Cat a knowingly lewd look.

"Fifteen years Cat…” she wiggled a finger in Cat's direction. "I know what Kryptonian afterglow looks like. Though, I'm just a tiny, little, maybe, sorta jealous cause I don't think Clark's ever managed to transform me into a damn woodland nymph like you here."

"Now you've just gone from tabloid to down right gaudy level Lois."

"Cat, I've seen you in your underwear, I've seen you after dates, I've seen you the morning after in full walk of shame glory!" Lois expounded, painting a wide picture before nudging Cat. "But I've never seen you look that particular kind of fucked."
Chapter 39

Clark looked up sharply, Kara quick to follow as she moved around his side studying him intently.

"I know that look, what? What's-"

Clark nudged Kara as he moved past her, the woman turning with the momentum to see what had pulled his attention so thoroughly.

"Oh sh-" Kara was right behind him, making their way out of the house towards the dock. Having caught sight of Cat trying to help pull Lois back up onto it only to watch her get yanked in with a scream.

"You said she didn't want to fight!" Kara chastised, catching up to her cousin as they made their way to where Cat and Lois were, trying not to trip in her haste.

"She didn't! I swear, how do you know Cat didn't start it?"

"For one, rude, and two I don't. I'm just saying she might've tried to end it or something."

The two of them pounded along the wooden panels, Kara careful not to slip as she slid across the wet space Cat had occupied.

Lois's erupted with a sputter, followed by Cat with one of her own. "It was a compliment!"

"That wasn't a compliment, that was vulgar and you know it!" Cat reached for her, Lois letting out another shout as her shoulders were grabbed.

"Not as vulgar as the things I bet she can do with that-" Cat put all her weight into the other woman, shoving her under only to sink down with her.

Kara wasn't sure who to try and grab for, or if she should, before looking over at Clark. He looked equally confused before the two women popped back up again.

"At least I've never had to lie about strange noises and a broken copy machine!" Cat threw back as Lois pulled at Cat's shirt.

"Like Kara's never broken anything at the office because of you!" Lois wrapped around Cat, hurling them both back into the water with a splash, as the two Kryptonians looked at one another with nearly the same expression.

Kara edged closer to her cousin, keeping an eye on the water. "You broke a copier?"

"Can we just get them out of the water please?" Clark adjusted his glasses before pointing towards the water and moving closer.

"All I ever broke was a phone…" Kara muttered under her breath as Clark knelt down near the edge. Both women appeared again, sputtering water and coughing as Clark held his hands out to them.

Lois looked up at him for a minute before looking over at Cat who was pushing her hair out of her face. The two bobbing and treading water. Lois cut her eyes to the other woman, taking Clark's hand as Cat grabbed his other while Kara stepped closer.
No sooner did he shift his weight to pull them out both women yanked him forward sending another splash and a round of laughter out across the water. Clark came up in a flourish, spitting out water and completely soaked as Kara laughed from her spot on the docks.

"I think your girlfriend finds this amusing." Lois offered, stopping Kara's laugh short as she looked at Cat not wanting to tip her hand anymore than she already had with the abrupt hitch in her laughter.

"She won't in a minute." Cat said, using Lois for leverage to push up out of the water enough to grab at Kara's waist and yank her forward.

Kara shouted before she went under, strong hands finding her arms before Clark hauled her up to the surface again. Kara coughed and grabbed for him, pushing the water from her face before the wrap of a much more slender body fit around her effortlessly. Cat kissed her without restraint, nearly dipping them both back under until Kara kicked to keep them above the waterline.

"Ew!" Lois teased, sloshing water their way and forcing a laugh from Cat before the woman broke away, smoothing Kara's hair back further. "No one needs to see that."

Clark swam closer to Lois, wrapping her up from behind before covering her eyes. "There. All better dear."

"Hey!"

Kara laughed again, her hand settling around Cat's thigh across her stomach to keep her up while she tread water for the both of them. Clark sent a wink their way as Lois tried to pull his hands from her face.

"Well now I can't see anything."

"Good," Kara said pointedly, earning her and Cat both a haphazard splash from Lois while Clark laughed. "I'd hate to melt that sensitive mind of yours."

"Excuse you!"

"That's my girl," Cat praised before Kara turned her head and kissed her right back. Clark actually shut his own eyes, muttering something under his breath.

"See! I wasn't wrong! Kryptonian afterglow!" Lois shouted in response to whatever the man had said. Kara broke away with a turn of her head while Clark let go of Lois, pinning her with a look.

“Do… I even want to know what you two were discussing out here?” Kara questioned, glancing at Cat who merely feigned innocence before Kara looked back over at Lois. The woman took a breath to explain only to be drug under by Clark.

“ Nope… I don’t think we do.”

***

Once the four of them had extracted themselves from the water and gone through another round of showers they had gradually paired off again. Lois and Cat, working through whatever idea Cat had
come up with to fix Lois’s dilemma surrounding her part in everything while Kara and Clark had opted for a walk in the woods to further clear the air between them.

The day fell into night, bringing the four of them back together in each other’s company again where the pairs traded off. Lois with Clark, and Cat with Kara as the two couples worked their way through making dinner and put aside any discussions relating to what had brought any of them here in the first place in favor of more light hearted topics.

It was an odd glimpse into a kind of life event Cat never would have thought herself to be a part of, certainly not with the surrounding company. Given the ebb and flow of conversation one would almost think they did this kind of thing all the time with each other. Down to Lois and Clark claiming it was their job to do the dishes since Kara and Cat had done the bulk of the cooking.

House rules.

Clark and Lois had retreated to their room not too long after that, claiming that the trip here had done them in, even if Kara knew that wasn’t possible on Clark’s behalf. Although he did look as if he could use the rest for entirely different reasons. He and Kara had hugged goodnight, the barest whispers of some Kryptonian sentiment exchanged between them before Kara found her way back to Cat.

Cat sat coiled up on an over-sized couch, thin blanket settled around her while a fire roared at the other end of the screened in outdoor space beyond the great room. It didn’t warrant them the kind of privacy Cat’s bedroom might but it also wasn’t within a few feet of her cousin and his fiancee either. Not that it really mattered considering Clark’s abilities. Kara pushed thoughts of him and Lois aside, fingertips tracing along the back of the lounger and over Cat’s shoulder drawing a sharper breath from the woman.

“Mind if I sit with you?”

Cat let her head lull to the side, looking up at Kara easily before shaking her head. Kara moved around the loungers, bypassing Cat in favor of throwing another set of logs on the fire before brushing off her hands and heading back over. Cat never took her eyes off the other woman, even as she pushed along the cushions until her back was against one arm and Kara settled against the opposite, folding a leg up against the back of the couch.

“If you told me a month ago I’d be having an enjoyable, private dinner with the likes of those two I might have had you committed.”

The corner of Kara’s mouth lifted with an amused exhale. “I dunno, maybe if I had asked you as a favor, you might’ve found yourself in a similar situation. At least I’d like to think so.”

Cat watched Kara carefully, wondering how so much could change and shift in the course of a few days when it had taken the two of them years to even reach some kind of starting point. Her gaze lowered to the slight fidget of Kara’s fingers, that small vial turning over and over in her grasp.

"Penny for your thoughts?"

Kara drew in a slow breath, offering the thing up to Cat who took it carefully.

"I'm sorry about earlier, with Lex and-"

"If it's at all possible," Cat interrupted quietly. "Could we leave him out of it unless absolutely necessary?"
Kara nodded. "I just, I didn't mean to upset you by not telling you. I wanted to, knew I should have but then Melanie and Jacob and-

"Everything else," Cat took a breath, drawing the vial closer. "I wasn’t mad at you, or upset as you put it, that you didn't tell me.” Kara looked over at her, drawing one of Cat's feet into her lap, rubbing gently at her calf. “Okay, not just because you didn’t tell me. I got upset, because I was scared.” Cat shifted, leaning back a little further against the lounger.

"I was scared because I can't do anything about that, or anyone else that might want to harm Supergirl. Scared that your innate nature will take you away from me on a whim, with plenty of things left that neither of us got to tell the other.” Cat’s tone was reflective, pulling Kara’s attention again with a fleeting glance. “We got lucky it was him, in a way.”

"How so?"

"He's predictable, and plenty of other elements like your cousin, can handle him. Other people, other things, maybe not so much."

The two of them sat with that for a long moment,

Kara pulled in a deep breath, chewing on her bottom lip a bit. "It's highly likely, if I don't take that, what you see is what you get."

Cat lifted her eyes to Kara sharply, the weight of the vial in her grasp almost crushing. The two stared at each other for a long time before Kara sat back against the arm of the lounger.

"I thought I would miss them more. Those impossible things I can do, but I don't, not like Clark did at least. From what James told me. He was inconsolable."

"Give it time?" Cat offered, not wanting to sway Kara one way or another, she couldn't even fathom what something like this could be like for Kara. She also couldn't imagine a world now without Supergirl in it.

Kara gave a small shrug. "This feels no different than when I wasn't using them anyway. When I saved that plane, that was the first time in ten years that I had flown. It took me three times to even try."

Cat swallowed, looking down at the vial. That should have given Kara pause, saving Alex had been a significant catalyst to her embracing her powers in the first place.

"There are some things I miss," Kara offered with a ghost of a smile. "Being able to hear you coming up the elevator, the colors of your aura. I have some of that back but it's just under the surface.” Kara shifted slightly, not quite looking up at Cat. “But there are things I don’t miss. Having to remind myself how much pressure to apply at any given second, or worry if I'm going to break your nose if I want to kiss you or-

"Kara this can't be centered around me," Cat said with a heavy tone. "We've done this before and it nearly drove me insane."

Kara frowned, looking over at Cat.

"When I first confronted you, I was so, so angry. It seemed almost criminal that someone like you, with all you can… are capable of doing, would spend hours of her day at my side running copy and setting appointments and relishing in the mundane. I told you as much."
"That wasn't just about the job then either was it?"

Cat shook her head. "I couldn't understand how someone like you would even consider someone like me. Even as a friend."

"Cat…"

"Until I found myself in the same situation."

Kara tipped her head as Cat stared right at her.

"I get it, a little late but it seems that's the way of it with us. That risk, that choice. I've already made mine and you have to understand, no matter what happens, it's my choice. Just like this is for you." Cat held the vial up to press her point, before leaning forward enough to fold it back into Kara’s hands. “But there are significant consequences, things you have to live with and accept as your choice and reason, not because of someone else.”

"I don't understand Cat, your choice? What choice?"

Cat shifted slightly, looking at the vial then back to Kara. "The complete and utter upheaval of my life as I've built it. I told you once to dive, when I refused to do exactly that. Maybe if I had then, things would be different, but it wasn't the right time then and I know that now."

"Are you…" Kara felt as if she had been slapped. She hadn’t expected it to be easy by any means but she thought the two of them would have at least tried to make a relationship work. Not this, this was the last thing she had expected. “A-are we not-"

"Kara, these last few days, they've changed everything, but it's not going to be like this when we go back.” Cat felt warmth spreading across her chest, fueled by every thunderous beat of her heart. “Deep down I know you know this.” Cat turned her gaze, feeling the heat behind her eyes.

"I have to deal with my children, they come first, just like you have to deal with Alexandra and your family. Then there's CatCo, both your employment and my ownership of it. This scandal with Lois and I, your sudden shift into that mainstream right alongside us. Not to mention having to deal with that other little organization of yours and J'onn, whether it's as you are now or as Supergirl."

Kara looked heavenward, this was the last thing she wanted to talk about, but knew it was inevitable. Her mind pitching hard, wondering how they could have lived out this entire life with each other almost in the span of a week but couldn't figure out how to make it translate back in National City.

Kara knew those threads of thought were coloring her choice. If Cat had never come, if she had never left, she knew she wouldn't hesitate to swallow the contents of that vial and go on about her life. Never knowing the glimpse of possibilities that had been revealed to both of them. Kara pushed at her face, shoving the wetness that fell unchecked from her eyes as she closed them. Cat moved at the same time, crawling into Kara's lap and taking hold of her face.

“I was getting used to being someone you loved,” Kara said under her breath.

Cat felt her chest cave with Kara's words, the emotion twisting the other woman’s voice nearly doing her in. "Kara. Look at me."

Kara kept her eyes closed, trying to breathe and reign her emotions in. Cat had made her choice, said as much without falter. Kara needed to pull it together, even if she would have chosen differently, which wouldn't be so devastating a prospect if she didn't know Cat as well as she did.
Once her mind was set, it was absolute. They might still be friends, but nothing more by the sound of it.

"Kara please?"

Kara let out a broken sigh, opening her eyes, looking at Cat through a watery haze.

"That vial, that’s your choice. Yours. Not mine, not your cousin’s, not the rest of the world’s, it’s yours. It can’t be about what you can, can’t, will or won’t have with me or anyone else for that matter. I’ve made choices like that, they don’t work.” More tears fell across Cat’s fingers as she searched through Kara’s eyes. “What I do know, is that having as much information as possible helps, and you need to know, when it comes to you and your powers, I don’t care.”

Kara let out another broken sound, her chest heavy and tight, as if it was encased in lead.

“Kara they don’t matter because they’re not the whole of you, and one of the things this week has shown me is that they’re just as fickle as anything else in this world. And just because you don’t have them, doesn’t mean certain people will suddenly stop coming after you or that you’ll be normal.”

“Cat…” Kara wanted her to stop talking, in a few hours this would all really be over and she wanted to stop talking, stop thinking, stop doing and just exist a little bit longer in this alternative reality holding onto Cat until she couldn't any longer.

“You need to hear it Kara,” Cat rubbed her thumbs across Kara’s features giving her a small smile. “Because I'm not giving you up.”

Kara set her hands over Cat’s on the sides of her face, almost wishing she could fly away, until Cat's words slammed full force into her chest. "What?"

"I said, I'm not giving you up."  

Kara sat up and Cat only scooted closer until she was settled in Kara's lap and her legs were wrapped around the other woman. Cat's hands smoothed away more tears as Kara sniffled and took her first deep breath in over an hour.

Kara looked uncertain, as if she had misheard or her brain had filtered out words or added others. Letting her hear what she wanted and not what was actually said.

"I will if I have to," Cat said honestly with a hard swallow, the fear of wanting this so much as to be alone in that want pulling at her insecurities. "If you can't, if it's too much, it's not going to be easy, I'm not an easy-"

Cat's words stuck to Kara's lips, fitting around the broad sweep of Kara's tongue as arms wrapped around her and pulled her closer. Cat curled in that much more, holding Kara's face in her hands and kissing her back thoroughly until they broke away with a rough exhale.

Kara kissed her again, quick and firm before pressing their foreheads together just to share the same air. "I thought-"

"I know." Cat pressed back against her, letting out a deep breath. "There are a lot of other things that have to be sorted through. More than I can really think of beyond the obvious."

Kara rubbed low at Cat's back, fingers moving in barely there circles as she started to calm down from the roller coaster of emotions she had been on. "Your son-sons, have to be alright with this. I
know what that's like, not exactly the same but-"

"With Alexandra?"

Kara nodded wondering exactly what it would take for Cat to not say her sister’s full name.

"Especially for Carter." Kara whispered, leaning back a bit. "He's almost the same age almost that Alex was when I showed up. He's had an… interesting enough time with Adam, but that's his brother. I'm not family. There aren't any exceptions to be made for that."

Cat wanted to say that Kara could be family but that would just be pushing the whole backwards to forward point again. She settled in comfortably as Kara leaned back, her hands still roaming along Cat's spine in soothing strokes.

"I know. It's going to take time and-"

"I'd wait."

Cat sat up a bit with that statement, Kara's features showing no detour from the truth of it.

"I would, I have…"

Cat shook her head. "Kara that's not fair."

"You can't talk about choices and not expect me to make mine, or already have some predetermined."

"Kara, it doesn't work like that."

"Why? Because no one would wait for you? Or because you don't believe you're worthy enough for someone to wait for you?"

Cat swallowed hard, staying silent. Kara knew she struck a nerve but it needed to be said. For all her confidence there were enough dents and blemishes in Cat's armor from her experiences with other people that sometimes read like a novel when Kara looked at her.

"I'm really very skilled at it, twenty five in space… another fourteen here… nearly four of those at CatCo." Kara watched a tear slip down Cat's cheek. "I would wait for you, Cat."

Cat closed her eyes, laying herself against Kara's body, searching out the drum of her heartbeat to keep her grounded. She didn't know if she could say the same, if her insecurities and old habits would eventually get the better of her. Even if the result would be hollow and temporary. "Don't ever stop surprising me Kara, as much as I hate surprises."

"I won't." Kara whispered, kissing the top of Cat's head.

Cat drew in a slow breath after another round of silence, nearly falling asleep in the comfort of Kara's embrace. "I don't know if I can keep your job, or mine for that matter. But God you make it seem so easy not to give a damn."

Kara gave a small hum, setting her cheek against the crown of Cat's head. "I could quit?"

"You could not," Cat offered right back, her own hands rubbing small lines along Kara's ribs gently. "Freelancing isn't your strong suit, if your first few steps with that cape are anything to go on."
"Is that constructive criticism or general observation?"

"Column a, column b."

Kara smirked faintly, rolling her eyes as she shifted them both enough so that they were stretched out over the lounger. "If I can't quit, neither can you. You tried that before."

"More than once," Cat allowed "I quit The Planet to start something new, something I really wanted." Cat pushed up gently, looking down at Kara. "You're something I really want too."

Kara studied Cat's features carefully, the implication heavy in her tone. As honest as Kara was about waiting, Cat was equally as honest about quitting. Kara reached up, fingertips running across the finer angles of Cat's face. Tracing the contours of her cheekbones in a path towards her jawline until her thumb rubbed over Cat's lips.

"I know, there's a lot, we both will have to deal with and more that will show up. Things that will get in the way, keep us apart from each other, make moments like this really difficult to find."

Cat pushed up higher so that she and Kara were eye level. Kara's fingers slipped past her lips, curling under her chin as she pulled Cat to her and placed a lingering kiss on her mouth. What was lacking in depth and passion, was made up for with intent and unspoken truths. Kara broke away after another minute, nosing at Cat's features with a weighted sigh.

"Promise me we'll come back here?"

Cat nodded wordlessly, body pressing heavily against Kara's as she laid her arms over the woman's chest, fingertips gently pawing at the base of the woman's throat. Cat kissed her again, her knees widening out around Kara's body as she moved her hands up until her arms were wrapped around Kara's shoulders once more when the other woman sat up.

"Take me to bed, Kara."
Cat locked the front door, checking it over one more time before turning to head down the steps.

Lois was over with Clark, checking that their belongings were secure under the back cover. Kara was further off, wrapped up in a hug from Melanie, as the two talked among themselves.

"Don't worry about anything, Kitty-Kat, I'll be back by later to make sure none of you left anything."

Cat smirked, catching Lois's head nearly pop off at the nickname. "Thanks JJ, maybe you'll let me know if you and Melanie ever wanna come visit, I'll send the plane."

"Not like we could drive in, the second we hit the city we'd be lost."

Cat laughed gently, pulling him into a hug.

"You take care of yourself Catherine," he offered, nearly picking her up from the ground. "Daddy would've liked her."

Cat swallowed hard, squeezing him a little tighter before giving a nod as she stepped back. "The uh, the rental company-"

"Is sending someone to pick up the car, I've already told them it'll be parked in front of the store." Jacob offered, stepping back from her as Melanie stepped over.

The two traded spaces, as Jacob made to Shadow box with Kara, sending her into a round of laughter before the two hugged.

Melanie looked Cat over, giving a small shake of her head.

"What?"

"Don't let that one get away, she does wonders for that sour disposition of yours."

Cat nudged the other woman, both of them looking at Kara and Jacob as the two talked quietly out of earshot. "Trust me when I say I have no intention of letting that happen."

Lois batted a hand at Clark's arm, leaning in as she watched the exchanges. "What'd she say."

"Who?"

"Cat."

Clark looked over, easily making out the conversations around them before coming to stand beside Lois, making a show of trying to hear. "She said… mind your own business Lane."

Lois turned on him, giving him a small shove with a laugh as he held up his hands defensively.

"You asked."

"Smart ass."

"You all ready? Even as early as it is, we’re not going to get there until mid-afternoon."
Kara said her final goodbyes, along with Cat before heading towards the car Kara had driven in.

"You think we're going to drive eight hours playing highway tag with you two?" Cat offered with a wink to Kara as Lois and Clark exchanged glances.

"The airport’s an hour from here, my jet is already waiting."

"You never said anything about a jet Cat." Lois blanched slightly as Cat tossed the keys to Kara.

"Where would the fun be in that?"

Lois looked at Clark as the other two got in the car. "She knows I don't like planes, right? Kara told her, right? I only like to fly with you."

Clark adjusted his glasses, looking at the car as it backed up before looking Lois over. "She knows."

"Damn it."

***

Vasquez rushed across the main DEO floor, pushing past a couple of agents before making her way into the aptly named wreck room. She pried the covers off of Alex, before tapping at her shoulder.

"I'm up, I'm up! What is it?"

"Kara's on the comms."

Alex was up in a flourish, pushing past Vasquez despite her protests and across the main floor, nudging Winn aside as she grabbed for a headset.

"Kara?"

"Alex."

Her name was said with a sigh of relief just as Eliza and Hank came around from the med labs.

"Where are you?"

"Are you at the main level?"

"Yeah, Hank and mom just got here do you want-"

"Hang on…"

"We've got incoming." Winn said with a gleeful lilt while the others moved to the sky entrance.

"Oh thank God, the cure worked." Eliza muttered under her breath.

"Bringing a friend."

The comm went out then even as Alex tried to warn her that Cat's presence might need to wait, only
to realize Kara should have been more specific with which friend. Superman slowed up as he
passed through the sky entrance, Kara easily held in his grasp. Despite being flightless herself,
Kara crouched low alongside her cousin as they landed.

Old habits.

Eliza grabbed for J'onn's arm at the display, the visual of Kara needing Superman's aid not lost on
any of them. The second Kara stepped forward Alex was right there, wrapping her up in a fierce
hug that Kara returned fully.

Kara squeezed a little harder for emphasis and Alex let out a small sound of amusement draped in
melancholy.

"We gave him-

"The vial, I know. I still have it." Kara whispered.

"I don't understand."

"I needed more time."

Alex leaned back, looking Kara over, her expression easy to read along with the confusion at
Kara's reply. Before she could ask anything more the others were there. Kara gave her sister's
shoulders a gentle squeeze before giving Winn a hug, along with Vasquez before looking at J'onn
and Eliza.

J'onn looked her over, the corner of his mouth lifting with a sense of knowing before he nodded
while Eliza touched her face before pulling her into a hug to rival Alex's.

"I'm sorry sweetheart, I thought-"

"It still might." Kara offered, hugging Eliza firmly before leaning back. "I haven't taken it yet."

"But Kara, the toxin."

"I know, the longer I wait, but like I told Alex just now, I needed a little more time." She glanced
at J'onn then. "While I hate to ask, knowing how fond you are of it, but I need you to put the skirt
on again… if that's alright?"

J'onn tipped his head up, glancing to the others, ending on Superman as he stepped closer. "I take it
there's a very good reason?"

Kara nodded as Eliza stepped back. "A few actually, how fast do you think-"

Before Kara could finish J'onn shifted, her signature cape falling into place. Kara grinned, glancing
to Clark and the others before drawing in a breath.

"Winn, I need you to get in touch with Cat, let her know we're good to go and waiting on her cue."

Winn looked at the three of them, always finding it odd to see Kara beside her super persona. "I'm
on it."

"Kara, what are you doing?" Alex asked voicing the question when no one else seemed to.

"Making things right."
The grounds at CatCo plaza had been cleared entirely, a small dais was set up and security was on standby along with a fair complement of NCPD officers. Various other news outlets were milling about, having been invited an hour or so prior.

Lois had her eyes closed, breathing hard and slow, her hand tangling around Cat's so hard that her knuckles were white.

"We're five minutes out Ms. Grant."

Cat acknowledged her pilot, her focus namely on Lois who flexed her fingers tighter with the announcement. "You alright there Lane?"

"Just get me on the ground Cat, I can't believe I let you do this to me twice in one damn day."

Cat chuckled, giving Lois’s knee a pat as the helicopter pitched and the engine began to power down with their descent. Lois swore over the intercom as Cat relayed another round of reassurances, rounding her building before narrowing down on the designated landing zone.

On the ground, the crowd had nearly doubled. News cameras were already relaying footage of the approaching helicopter as varied citizens and even some CatCo employees filtered into the plaza behind the human barricades.

The very open and very public display was a testament to Cat's resolve and character all things considered. Despite feeling like a lifetime for Cat, the city was still raw and on edge. While the weekend had soothed those removed from it all, the apprehension of a new business week, especially in and around CatCo was still heavy.

As they made their final approach, Cat took note of the rerouted pathways and various areas that were still blocked off while some appeared to be zoned for construction to repair the damages to the building, surrounding streets and general infrastructure from both the explosion and the alien attack.

Cat pulled in a deep breath, relaying to Lois that there would be a loud thump and it would be over. True to her word the helicopter landed with the sound as the pilot cut the engines and started the counter rotors to stop the main blades from turning.

Cat carefully untangled her hand from Lois', reaching up to pull her intercom off as the hum of the vehicle died down.

"Fuck you Cat, and this thing and this plan."

Cat grinned, fixing Lois's hair so it didn't look like a helmet before removing her own earphones and running fingers through her own hair.

"Just think Kryptonian afterglow and you'll be fine." Cat adjusted her suit jacket as the pilot gave the all clear once the rotors stopped turning. "Now suck it up and get ready, the cavalry will be here shortly."

Lois shot Cat a look before shaking her head, adjusting her own clothes, thankful she had worn a
jacket herself knowing her shirt beneath was soaked. "The things I do for my career."

Cat winked as she made to stand, true to form a couple groundsmen made their way over, locking the landing assembly in place before setting out a set of steps before knocking on the door.

"After you." Cat offered as Lois undid the lock masterfully before taking the hand of the gentleman just outside.

As Lois appeared, shouts and questions rose up across the plaza, the voices collecting in a cacophony of noise accented by other outcries until Cat appeared. As she descended the noise grew in volume, joined by shouts and applause.

The two women came to stand beside one another, the sound of camera shutters and more questions rising up to meet them. The human barricades receded to some degree, allowing the crowd in closer in response to the push of reporters and various cameramen clamoring for a sound byte or photo-op.

Cat grabbed for Lois's hand, pulling her along easily as the pair walked side by side, their hold breaking as they came within proper earshot of the mob. A litany of questions were thrown their way, from Lois's involvement to Cat's whereabouts and everything in between. Both of them remaining silent as they worked their way towards the waiting dais.

A shout rose up from the crowd, followed by another and more still as cameras pitched upward and cheers rang out even louder.

"Right on time." Cat murmured, keeping Lois from looking back as she continued onward.

From above, Supergirl and Superman appeared, gradually descending towards the plaza with Kara held against her cousin. There was a wave of shouts and more questions, reporters relaying what they could to their respective networks in finite detail as the trio landed a few steps behind the two women.

The two heroes remained impassive at best, although Superman did show a bit of a smile, shaking a few hands before Supergirl joined in, much to Kara's surprise. Kara heard her name called, questions and requests for comments lobbed her way just as much as the rest.

Not one offered a word, ambling towards the dais as a collective that would no doubt be talked about for months to come. Easily overshadowing the turmoil and apprehension Luthor's plan had attempted to set in motion. The divisive course he had set in motion coalescing back together as the five of them climbed above the growing mob.

Flanked by NCPD the group assembled on the makeshift stage, with Cat leading the charge and Supergirl and Superman balancing out the rear. Kara took her place beside Lois, the two making a show of hugging one another and exchanging something between them that pushed aside any kind of rivalry that had been pushed across the news outlets and rumor mills.

It was as exhaustive as it was exonerating and the tone of the crowd shifted accordingly. They all settled as Cat moved to the microphones, raising her hands a bit to settle the crowd. She gave her usual intro, along with her gratitude to all those attending, as the area grew quiet.

"I'm here to set the record straight concerning the recent events here in National City, as well as events that happened over fifteen years ago in Metropolis. Despite the efforts of some rather nostalgic and over zealous individual who would want you to believe otherwise, it’s absurd to think either Lois Lane or Superman had anything to do with either.."
Cat glanced back at Lois and Superman, still close to the mic. "First, I would like to apologize to both of you, for whatever scrutiny you've had to face in regards to your character and integrity with my absence these past few days." Cat turned back to the whole of the crowd then. "Apparently I need to put in a request with the world when it comes to taking time away."

A small round of laughter went out, followed by a few shouted comments in Cat's favor. She gave a knowing smile, straightening up as she looked into the cameras directly.

"The explosion and attack on CatCo and this city lay at the feet of one person, a name we had hoped through the valiant efforts of their only apparent sane family member, would have a different meaning."

Cat paused for dramatic effect, waiting for that innate moment when the anticipation amidst the masses nearly bubbled over.

"Lex Luthor."

A round of gasps and disbelief washed out over the crowd with a low murmur as varied reporters reached for their ear pieces to gather additional insight from their producers and other crews in studio.

"We know this, due to the insight of both Supergirl and Superman, and others who have to remain nameless. All of whom I owe a great debt to, as does this city." Cat drew in a slow breath, her expression turning. "Certain arrangements, courtesy of Superman and a particular friend of Gotham City, have been made so that what I am about to say is conveyed with absolute certainty for whom it is intended as I am only going to say this once. When in all honesty, it shouldn't have to be said at all."

In the bowels of Blackgate prison, Batman removed a small device from his belt, powering up the screen before holding it up to the only other individual with him.

"Lex," Cat said with a dangerous edge that made even Lois and Kara exchange looks. "What with all the things you have done before, all of your failures and shortcomings thwarted by Superman and so expertly laid out for the world by Lois Lane and Clark Kent, I would have thought you were smarter than this."

J'onn in the form of Supergirl looked towards Superman who gave a small shake of his head before looking back at Cat.

"As a journalist you're supposed to remain objective and detached with the expressed purpose of informing the people of what is going on in the world. This isn't one of those times. You targeted my reporter. You threatened my employees and this city. You even tried to eradicate Supergirl, while trying to weave some narrative that Superman and Lois Lane were involved, because I never spoke out against you all those years ago."

Cat waited for her words to settle, their weight carrying out across the world but most especially to the man she knew she was addressing by now.

"You narcissistic, megalomaniacal, insignificant little boy. Your mother should be ashamed for not putting you out of our misery before now. I never said a word because there were better things to do with my time. You weren't worth the words, the effort, or the consideration especially when I knew Lois Lane and Clark Kent were more than capable at the time. Your little gesture of gratitude, cost the lives of good people, people who won't be forgotten by me, or anyone else for that matter."
Cat took another moment to calm herself, looking out over the faces rapt with attention, hanging on her every word.

"National City doesn't need you, Kara Danvers certainly doesn't need you and frankly the world's been doing mighty fine without your influence thanks to Superman and Supergirl. Not to say you haven't tried, and yes, loathe as I am to say it, there are things we can all be thankful for due to your temper tantrums over the years. The greatest of which I have to say is our ability to adapt, to accept and to hope."

Cat took another moment to look back at those behind her, making a circle with her eyes starting with Lois and working across the two Kryptonians and finally settling on Kara, before she leaned into the microphones so her words wouldn't be missed.

"Change isn't easy. It never has been, never will be, but one thing that has changed is the dialogue. We’ve changed how we treat each other and those who are different from us. Not because of this, but because of people like Kara Danvers, who aren't afraid to speak the truth. Because of people like Lois Lane, who remind us what is worth the effort. Finally, because of heroes like Superman and Supergirl, and all the others who risk their lives and their loved ones so that the rest of us might have it a little easier."

Cat swallowed hard, jaw shifting as she squared her shoulders and turned her full attention back to the main array of cameras and crowd. "No matter where you are from or what you believe, human, alien, and everything in between, we have all managed to come out of the things that have nearly destroyed our entire planet stronger, together."

Kara glanced back at Superman a moment, and the crest along his chest as their family motto was again relayed to the world, the two of them exchanging a knowing look.

"I… we've taken up enough time today. There's still plenty more to be done, here and elsewhere in the world." The corner of Cat's mouth lifted, "This is Cat Grant and Kara Danvers from CatCo WorldWide Media, National City, Lois Lane from The Daily Planet, Metropolis, Superman and Supergirl from Krypton now of Earth, together, signing off."
Epilogue

Chapter Notes

And so we've reached an end...

I will admit this little Secret Santa prompt got away from me and easily. In fact there was a whole debate about keeping it going beyond this point but maybe I'll post a sequel or something if the mood strikes.

To @LianKing I hope this was everything you hoped for and more. Thank you so much for the prompt!

To @chupster thank you as always for being an incredible beta! You kick my ass and make me a better writer

To @findoutwhatilove thank you for letting me hash my brain into 9000 multiverses and not bat an eye beyond removing my extra spaces

To the bubble cause you're fucking amazing and most especially to everyone who has read and commented and left kudos and followed along with this crazy ride.

It was supposed to be so simple ;)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Kara stood in her office, giving a small smirk as she thumbed through the latest CatCo issue, scanning over the featured article. Her featured article, before thumbing past it to the cover feature. While Cat had taken the honors at the write up, it was Kara who had been given the creative direction for her cousin's wedding.

The photographs as a whole were more candid. Kara had called it 'In the Moment' because there was already so much planning that went into a wedding; to stifle the genuine reflections of joy, love and family just seemed inappropriate all things considered.

Kara carefully cut at the edge of the page, knowing she could get a print from the art department with an email if she wanted. Turning the image over before setting another blank sheet of paper behind it and cutting it to fit.

She set it into the frame, crossing her office before setting it up beside the Pulitzer with her name on it along her top shelf. Clark and Lois's wedding had been over a month ago, the memories still fresh in her mind regardless. Kara scanned over the picture once more, Clark and Lois in the foreground, smothered in cake and laughing. While it was one of the best from that moment, there was another reason entirely why she had chosen it.

Just over her cousin's shoulder, and purposefully out of focus, she and Cat stood completely oblivious to the whole of their surroundings. They were wrapped around one another, lost in their own little world even if it appeared the two of them were looking on at the happy couple. It was one of the only moments of them she had from an outside perspective.

Kara had been amazed it hadn’t been flagged. That Cat’s red pen hadn’t marred the mockup when
it was submitted over a month ago. Even now as Kara looked at it, she could see most people would be hard pressed to determine who the two were, but there was plenty to speculate on, all things considered. Either way, Kara knew, she figured Cat knew it to, and in a way it was their own little testament to the world.

A soft knock sounded, pulling her attention as Nia stepped inside.

"I'm sorry to bother you Ms-"

"Kara, please."

"Sorry right, Kara, your one-on-one with Miss Luthor had to be rescheduled, along with your three o'clock involving Wayne Enterprises, both at their requests." Nia slipped inside, closing the door behind herself as she handed Kara a few notecards. She seemed to be in a rush and showed no signs of stopping for Kara to even catch a thought.

It had taken months to get that interview lined up, not to mention the meeting wasn't her three o'clock, it was the company's. Which could only mean Cat had rescheduled, again, and tipped the rest of her work day schedule into whatever favor she needed for something that was more important.

"They're both slated for next week at the same time." Nia laid out a couple of file folders on Kara’s desk along with a few new layouts for next month’s issue. Cat's expert handwriting along the margins outlining Kara for final approval. Kara stared at the words, Cat rarely, if ever, delegated final approval to anyone other than James.

“Also Mister Grant called," Kara looked up sharply at that. "He said, and I am to be exact, that Adam has it under control, so they won't need you for the rest of the week."

Kara let out a breath, setting the appointment cards on her desk looking over the items Nia had set out for her.

"Also, your sister's on the phone. She wouldn't leave a message. She said it was important, not an emergency but close?"

Kara looked over at Nia. "I would have led with that."

"She told me to wait but wouldn't clarify? I just… she's on line one, I've cleared the rest of your schedule and shifted assignments."

"Nia, take my Tribune articles, proof and copy, you know what you're doing. Make sure you run everyone else's first, no later than five today for final edit. Then submit to Snapper."

"Kara I haven't-"

"Nia, you're good, you've got this I've read your submissions and I really need you to step up and own it right now ok?"

Nia took a breath a nodded as Kara's phone beeped before she let herself out.

Kara hit the button on her phone, keeping her voice low just in case Nia was still just right outside.

"Alex, what's wrong? Why didn't you-"

"Winn made sure your line was secure, this gives you an out with work if anyone asks."
"Alex-" Kara's warning tone held no room for argument.

"Cat sent us a message."

Kara straightened at that, wondering why she hadn't sent one to her first… unless-

"Alex is the tracker still-"

"No, she took it off. We found it in her penthouse. That's why I'm calling you like this, she could be compromised."

Kara felt her heart leap up into her throat, they had had their fair share of threats and dangers but nothing like this.

"What was the message."

"Top right drawer."

Kara drew in a deep breath. She was the only other person with a key to Cat’s personal drawer, a memento Cat had let her keep as a kind of promotional gift ages ago.

"I'll call you back." Kara ignored the protests on her sister’s end before hanging up the phone, fishing the key from around her neck, grabbing one of the layouts Nia had left before making her way out of her office. The last she was aware, Cat had a morning meeting off-site but would be back in time for the three o'clock.

Kara made her way across the bullpen, her heart thundering away with every step as she tried to remain impassive as she passed by Nia’s empty desk and made her way into Cat’s open office. She crossed the floor easily, not seeing anything out of place as she set the layout on the center while unlocking the mentioned drawer.

Kara made a show of getting a pen and notepad, pretending to scrawl something down as she drew open the drawer and looked inside.

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"Do you have any idea, any idea-"

"How much I owe you one." Cat said to the other voice over the phone. "coming from me that's no small thing."

"You have no clue who or what you're dealing with Cat."

"I know plenty, enough to know what I’m doing."

“And I still think you’re crazy. Oh... shit, okay, you have like three seconds."

“Okay, love you, bye.” Cat hung up her phone, her mind catching up to her words after the fact before she let it go at the sound against the glass behind her. Cat pulled in a deep breath, turning around to look at Kara in all her suited glory, cape rippling out behind her where she hovered in the air.
Kara looked as if she could melt steel as she dropped to the ground and made her way inside the house they hadn’t been back to in- 

“Gone fishing!”

Cat remained impassive, watching Kara stalk towards her only to back up with every forward step Kara took. The wall rushed up to meet her allowing Kara to step right into her personal space until they were pressed against one another.

“I thought something happened to you,” Kara whispered, her body still tense from her initial adrenaline rush.

“It was the only way I could think to surprise you,” Cat nosed at her features, their lips barely brushing against one another.

"Don't ever do that again,” Kara tipped her head just enough so that their mouths fit together, both of them breathing each other in for the first time in what felt like forever.

Cat reached up, setting her hands along the flat of Kara’s chest, kneading along the crest of her suit until she felt Kara stiffen. The corners of Cat’s mouth lifted slightly as she felt Kara pull away and look down, feeling her breath catch all over again.

“Cat…” Kara’s voice was soundless, hands coming to settle along Cat’s hips as she stared at the bracelet held in the other woman's fingertips resting against the center of her chest.

":zhao w rrip ,kahrah,zor,ehl,"

(I love you, Kara zor-el)

Kara could almost see the words as Cat spoke them with the utmost perfection. Her mind adding Clark to the growing list of people she was going to have one hell of a talking to right alongside her sister and Winn and-

".kaouvrreoshi w khap…”

(Marry me…)

Cat knew she was going about this backwards. They had only just started to navigate their way back to one another through the gauntlet that had presented itself since standing in this very spot nearly a year ago now. But Cat was no slouch and had taken every opportunity she could to learn with Clark and Alexandra's help in order to reach this point.

Somewhere along the way she had determined, by Kryptonian tradition, that she and Kara had been courting one another for years and after everything that had finally brought them together long enough to acknowledge it, this was the next proper step forward.

Kara swallowed hard, tears already burning behind her eyes as she looked up from the bracelet to search over Cat's features. She kissed her with trembling lips and open eyes, hearing the soft whine on the sudden rush of Cat's intake of air before pressing their foreheads together.

"zhi ,kathuryn,"

(Yes, Catherine)

Cat let out a breath she didn't know she was holding, drawing Kara closer to her and kissing her
until they were both starved for oxygen. Kara let out a broken laugh, riddled with emotion as Cat drew her arms up and carefully latched the bracelet into place.

Kara pressed her back against the wall, kissing Cat all over again until she felt the small thump of Cat's fist at her chest. Kara broke away with another whisper of a laugh, hands smoothing around Cat's hand as she kissed her knuckles gently as a small click of a sound rang out between them.

Cat looked at their joined hands in surprise, her heart beating against the cage of her ribs as the weight of the bracelet Kara had just affixed to her wrist settled over her skin. Cat let out her own disbelieving laugh, running her fingers over the warm metal before looking up at Kara. She nudged her features in a round of motion before capturing her lips with a gentle tug.

"No one’s expecting us back for at least a week…” Kara uttered, as Cat nipped at the line of her jaw before wrapping her arms around Kara's shoulders when Kara hoisted her off the ground effortlessly.

"Then what are you waiting for? Take me to bed, zrehemin."

Chapter End Notes

zrehemin - wife

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