Summary

When a navy seal mission kills the world’s most wanted terrorist, the rest of the family is in an emotional uproar. With two years of hardly speaking, can Lena see beyond her longing to impress her mother to better her relationship with her sister and escape a toxic relationship? Or when she meets a certain reporter who is related to one of the seals that killed her brother, will that drive the CEO further into Lillian’s shell?

Watch as the story unfolds, will Lena be able to see the light? Or will Lillian continue to be the ultimate puppet master?

Notes

Hey everyone. So, I had a random idea pop into my head about a new story. By no means, and I stopping Flowers and Grenades, but this just came to mine and I had to share it.

Really can’t wait to see what you think. It’s going to be one hell of a ride. Enjoy.
Clear and Present

When the president addressed the nation two years ago, announcing that Seal Team Twelve had successfully assassinated the world’s most wanted terrorist, Lex Luthor, the world rejoiced. However, for the Luthor family, it was a much more complicated set of emotions. The Luthor name carried a mixed reputation, the majority was viewed to be evil, conniving and ruthless, leaving only one of the Luthors to be publicly admired. The middle sibling is a decorated navy seal, who is an active member of the seal team that killed Lex—it was her bullet that was the metaphorical and literal nail in his coffin. Many people adored the decorated seal, admiring her strength and dedication to keeping her country, along with the rest of the world, safe from her brother and many likeminded terrorists. With that being said, not everyone adored the seal. Some despised her, most notably, her mother.

It was no surprise to anyone, Lillian had always been an avid about her love for her eldest child, even if he was a terrorist. Many people feared the woman, and rightfully so. She was cunning, intelligent, manipulative, and knew exactly what moves to make to keep her self safe from prosecution. So, when the news broke that her middle child, Ava, had been the responsible for killing her favorite child in Lex, it was no surprise to the seal that she was hated by her mother. Well, even more hated than she already was by the woman. Lillian’s resentment of her middle child started when her husband, Lionel, signed the family company over to Ava instead of Lex. Lionel had always been weary of his son’s mindset and beliefs. His fears were confirmed when his son had laced one of his father’s cigars with a toxic that killed the man instantly.

Ava took over the company at the age of twenty-two, using her intelligence and compassion to make the world a better place. She started several project initiatives to combat the battle against the world’s water shortage, hunger, along with several domestic problems in the states. Ava inherited her father’s passion and love for the military, he, himself was a retired and decorated war hero. Ava used her company to establish several projects to help veterans and their families, ranging from housing, medical care, and overall, spreading awareness to the public about the lack of care and funding to help retired veterans. The country adored Ava, and their love for the ambitious businesswoman grew instantly when she made the decision to enlist into the military after the world found out about Lex’s ruthless attack on the Pentagon.

Her decision came with a price. It completely severed her tumultuous relationship with her mother, along inadvertently driving a wedge in her relationship with her baby sister—which her mother played a major role in that wedge. Lena was brought into the Luthor home at the age of four, being a result from an affair Lionel had with her biological mother while he was on a business trip. However, when Lena’s mother tragically passed away, Lionel didn’t hesitate by bringing his daughter into their home, and that caused a major rift in the family’s dynamic. It wasn’t Lena’s fault, she was an innocent child, but Lillian made it a point to make the youngest Luthor feel unwanted, unloved, and extremely unwelcome in their home.

Ava and Lex quickly took to Lena, they enjoyed her arrival and were the only people other than her father that made her feel like she was an actual member of the family. There was a slight age gap
between the siblings, Lex and Ava were only separated by one year in age, while Lena had four years separating her from Ava, and five from Lex. She bonded with Lex as he taught her how to play chess, he taught her all of his tips and tricks to easily beat opponents, which eventually led her to win multiple world chess championship titles. As for Ava, Lena instantly gravitated to her due to her overwhelming sense of compassion and love. Ava would sneak Lena extra cookies and sweets under their parents’ noses, and sneak into her baby sister’s room during stormy nights to comfort her, or let Lena stay in her room whenever she felt like it. It was little actions Ava would do for Lena that made the pair’s bond extremely strong.

Between Lena’s two siblings, she was more drawn to Ava. Both sisters went to boarding school in Ireland for a majority of their childhood, due to their father’s corporate connections. The sisters quickly accepted their new culture, and completely fell in love with Ireland. So much so that they found themselves speaking in Irish more than English—which caused Lillian to intensify her bearing attacks against Lena. Another reason the CEO gravitated toward her big sister is because she singlehandedly, always protected her from everything, without hesitation—even if Lena had actually messed up or got into trouble. Ava always managed to take the blame, her way of defending Lena from their mother’s harsh criticism as much as possible.

As Lena grew older, she noticed another shift in the family dynamic. Her parents fighting became more and more frequent while Lex’s demeanor became harsh and irrational. He started referring to her as the mistake that drove their parents to fight and berated her just as hard, if not harder than Lillian did. It screwed with Lena’s mindset, a lot, scarring her emotionally far beyond what she’s willing to admit. However, the only constant she had in her life was the love of her sister. Ava continued to believed in her and supported her in every way imaginable. Whether it was cheering for her at science fairs, or Ava making the choice to skip the occasional volleyball practice to help Lena with a project, Ava always managed to be the support Lena needed. Oh, but her emotional baggage would come back to haunt her.

After Ava took over the company, she became more and more busy. She was focused on projects while she worked to finish her PhD works on biomedical engineering and pharmacology. With that being said, Ava managed to cheer and support her sister as much as she could despite her busy schedule. Lex vocalized his hate toward Ava after she was handed the company. Lex stayed around the mansion while Ava was busy with the company, Lena found herself growing closer with her brother. Lena noticed Lex’s behavior became more and more erratic, during this time. She found herself often agreeing with him out of fear, not wanting to receive the brunt of his harsh actions. She didn’t believe in his radical ideals, but he often displayed a soft side with Lena, and it reminded her of when she was just a child—she clung onto that side of him until she graduated high school.

After graduation, Lena went on to be one of the youngest to graduate from MIT with multiple degrees before she joined Ava as a co-CEO of L-Corp. The sisters made an impeccable team, making advancements in technology that was making the world a better place. Lena felt good about the work she was doing with her sister, and their relationship only intensified. Any thoughts or new innovative ideas that Lena pitched, her sister pushed her. Ava made Lena prove to people the importance of the project or idea. Ava believed in her baby sister, she admired her determination along with her fierce intellectual ability which Lena oftener doubted. However, with Ava’s constant
motivation and at times, harsh criticism, it drove Lena to prove her point, resulting in a better outcome than the young CEO originally had planned. Lena appreciated the push from her sister, and made her only love her sister more. Their work relationship thrived and eventually, made the sisters inseparable. They shared a home on the water together, they were best friends, and found to be each other’s sole purpose for continuing to make the world a better place, and leaned on each other throughout the entire process.

The universe had a funny way of throwing hitches into their life, and the major hitch was the reemergence of their brother’s sadistic mind. The news broke about an attack the Pentagon during a military memorial service, killing dozens and leaving hundreds wounded—an attack led by Lex. The news shook the country to the core, including their sisters. In that moment, they sat in their conjoined office on the top floor of L-Corp. Lena watched as her older sister processed the news, and she wasn’t shocked when Ava chose to enlist into the military. She admired her strength and supported her decision wholeheartedly. However, when Ava left for the military, little did the CEO know how much her emotional baggage would come back to bite her in the ass. Lillian wasted no time in swooping back into Lena’s life, using Ava’s absence to her full advantage. Lillian has always known that Lena has strived for her sense of approval, acceptance, and love, in which, she wasted no time in weaseling her way back into Lena’s mind and heart.

Lillian expertly used Lena’s sense of longing against her. The mother slowly created lies and stories to drive a wedge between the sisters. Ava was quickly moving her way to become one of the first active women in the navy seals, alongside her best friend Alex Danvers. Ava’s drive and climbing in the naval ranks didn’t allow her to contact Lena or come back to visit very often. Lillian managed to use that to her advantage, secretly she used her youngest daughter to do some of her bidding for her, and Lena was completely oblivious to it. Lena thought Lillian was doing it to better their relationship, clinging onto the false promises and sweet sentiments her mother told her, while Ava was away. So, when Lena watched as the report came out about Ava’s seal team killing her brother, it caused Lena to spiral into a wave of mixed emotions.

The CEO loved and admired her older sister, however, hearing the news about her brother’s death, and knowing that her sister was responsible for it, caused the CEO to bottle her mixed emotions into tiny boxes. She knew that her brother was evil, ruthless, and needed to be handled to make the world a better place. However, as much as Lena believed that, a large part of her could only view him as her sweet, loving older brother. On the other hand, the CEO couldn’t believe that her loving and nurturing sister, who had never known to be violent, helped bring him to his death. She was conflicted, confused, and hurt, about the situation and Lillian used it to her advantage. The mother saw her youngest daughter in a state of peril and convinced Lena that Ava would ultimately do the same thing to her if she wasn’t careful.

Lillian planted that small seed of doubt in Lena’s mind, and that seed managed to grow exponentially. The doubt led the CEO to stop answering Ava’s calls while she was deployed, and to stop acknowledging her sister’s presence while she was home between deployments—even if she was four feet away from her inside of a board meeting. Lillian’s doubt caused Lena to completely shut down in regards to anything that had to deal with Ava. Her plan worked, because the siblings haven’t managed to talk about anything other than about business for two years. It hurt Ava deeply,
and Lillian thrived from it.

It wasn’t that Ava didn’t try, because she did. A lot. However, she quickly figured out that her mother had been able to plant enough doubt in Lena’s mind to make her not want to listen to the seal. Their relationship became more strained when Lena tried to sue Ava and remove her from the company—a move pushed by her mother. Thankfully, for Ava, her wife’s sister was one of the best attorneys in the country. Laurel made it virtually impossible for Lillian and Lena to remove her from title as co-CEO of L-Corp. However, long time friend to Both Ava and Lena, Sam Arias was an active CFO between different branches of their company. She heard of the lawsuit and instantly used her power and fluency with multiple partners to keep Ava as an acting CEO, which infuriated Lillian. It came with a stipulation, Ava had to attend a certain number of board meetings along with at least one public event a year, to keep her title. Sam was thrilled to piss off the mother, however, it distanced herself from Lena, and brought Sam and her daughter to closer to Ava and her new family.

Which brought up another issue, one that would further separate Sam from Lena because Lena doesn’t know that her sister has been married for almost three years. Ava met her wife over five years ago at a naval base, and the pair instantly fell head over heels in love faster than they expected. But, with the danger of their professions in the military, they cherished their love and their moments together. Not wasting any time whatsoever in admitting their love for one another. Sara was a trained fighter pilot and combat specialist for the navy before her jet was shot down, causing her to partially lose eyesight in one eye, ending her pilot career just two years into their relationship. Sara accepted her fate, but thankfully, she was offered to continue training naval officers in combat tactics as well as training new pilots at the naval base in National City. From there, the couple wed in a private naval ceremony before starting a family of their own.

Lena is completely unaware of the fact that she is an aunt to an adorable, two year old, little girl named, Poppy. It wasn’t that Ava is hiding her marriage or her daughter, but when the news circulated that Lena has been dating James Olsen, Lex’s best friend, the seal made the move, with her wife’s support, to not speak publicly about their relationship. Both women know about the man’s ties to Lex, even though it wasn’t public knowledge of his ties and support to the terrorist, the couple felt the need to protect their daughter in the beginning.

Ava knows Lena’s relationship with James is a ploy to keep their mother happy. A ploy in which causes Ava to shake her head daily because she couldn’t understand why Lena would let their mother control her personal life. However, she knew that Lena has always wanted their mother’s approval. When Ava came out as a lesbian, Lillian was furious and it only sent Lena further into her bisexual closet. With that being said, it is Lena’s choice to date whomever she pleases, as long as that person truly makes her happy. James clearly doesn’t, anyone with eyes can see that. So, it doesn’t mean that Ava or Sara wouldn’t laugh when they see the awkward couple tonight at the charity fundraiser for one of the war veteran projects. The married couple are tired of hiding, because honestly, if someone wants to come after them, good luck. Both women are deemed and registered to be lethal weapons by the military—they dared anyone to try to take on their family.

Tonight will be the first time Ava and Sara will show their relationship publicly, and show off their
adorable daughter. The married couple park their car in the Ritz Plaza Hotel parking lot, before exiting the car, both women dressed in their naval dress blue uniforms. The couple quickly move to the backseat, unbuckling the adorable toddler from her car seat as the bright, blue-eyed and blonde haired toddler squeals with happiness, squirming her body around in a champagne formal dress. The toddler wraps her arms around Sara’s neck as she lifts her out of the car before setting her on the ground. Ava gently closes the car door as each woman grabs each one of their daughter’s hand into their own, before Sara presses a tender kiss against her wife’s lips.

“You ready for this?” Sara asks as Ava nods.

“I am. Are you?” Ava asks as Sara smirks.

“Oh, you of all people know that I’m ready to do anything as a massive, ‘feck off’, to anyone. Especially, if it’s directed toward your mother,” Sara says as Ava laughs.

“God, us spending a month back home in Ireland, was such an amazing idea. You and Pops both picked up an accent and it’s bloody well melting my heart,” Ava says happily as Sara smirks.

“Hmm, I’m glad you think so. I like driving you a little mad,” Sara says seductively before capturing Ava’s lips in a tender kiss.

“Mummas! Ups! Ups!” Poppy squeals happily as the women smile.

“That’s our cue,” Ava says as Sara smirks.

“I’ll be with you the entire time. So will Pops. I dare anyone to give us any trouble,” Sara says with a wink.

“Alright, prepare for take off, little one,” Ava says happily as her daughter laughs.

The married couple slowly approach the entrance of the hotel, raising their arms to gently lift their daughter from the ground, causing the toddler to squeal with happiness. As the women approach the entrance, shocked gasps from the media are heard around the couple before they rapidly capture pictures of the happy couple as they walk hand-in-hand with their daughter. Sara glances over at her wife, offering a smile and a wink, to calm her nerves as the couple enter the hotel. The family make their way through the busy lobby, making sure no one steps on their daughter, before entering the
crowded ballroom.

The ballroom is decorated elegantly as a variety of people are gathered in the crowded room. As the family enter the room, several attendees offer them shocked gasps and smiles as they pass by, just continuing to focus on each other and their joyful toddler. Poppy tugs on Ava’s hand, motioning for her to pick her up, before the seal quickly picks up her daughter, resting her on her hip before setting the hat of her uniform atop of Poppy’s blonde curls. The little girl squeals happily as Sara wraps her arm around Ava’s back, pressing a kiss against her wife’s cheek.

“God, we’re so lucky,” Sara says sweetly as Ava’s hat slightly falls over their daughter’s eyes, causing the toddler to giggle hysterically.

“Yeah, we really are,” Ava says happily before pressing a kiss against her daughter's cheek.

“Any sign of the wicked witch of the west?” Sara asks as Ava sighs, finally noticing her mother glaring at her from across the room as she stands next to Lena and James.

“They just spotted us. On your six,” Ava mumbles as Sara nods.

“Are they coming over?” Sara asks, never looking at the group as the three slowly make their way toward the couple.

“Unfortunately,” Ava says before Sara presses a sweet kiss against Ava’s lips before their daughter pouts.

“Oh, babygirl. Are you jealous of your mummas kissing?” Sara asks as the little girl nods her head.

“Póg! Póg! (Kiss! Kiss!),” Poppy says before the women quickly pepper her cheeks with kisses, causing the toddler to squeal happily.

“Incoming,” Ava whispers as she notices the trio walking closer.

“We got this. Is breá liom tú, mo grá. (I love you, my love),” Sara says as Ava smirks, loving how their trip has made her wife more comfortable with speaking Irish—and if Ava’s being completely
honest, her wife’s newly picked up accent is beyond sexy.

“Ise breá liom tú,” Ava says sweetly.

Sara’s hold around her wife tightens slightly, pulling her closer to the pilot’s body as she notices the three people walking toward them. Lillian is wearing a garnet, floor length gown with her hair pulled into an elegant bun, displaying the predominant scowl plastered on her face for the entire room to see clearly. As for Lena, she’s wearing a low-shoulder, tight-fitting black gown with her raven hair down in loose curls, framing her sultry makeup and stoic facial features perfectly as James walks alongside her in a rather cheap-looking charcoal suit, with his arm protectively wrapped around Lena’s lower back. The embrace looking so forced that it nearly causes Sara to burst into laughter, however, she quickly hides it by pressing a sweet kiss against her daughter’s cheek. The three stop just in front of the couple, in which the navy seal instantly notices Lena’s eyes begin to dance between herself, the child in her arms and her wife before Lillian arches a brow at Ava.

“Oh, well, if it isn’t my murderous daughter using a fellow soldier and child to better her reputation. I thought you would have tried something a little more elegant, and not so pedestrian,” Lillian says coldly as Ava smirks.

“It’s nice to know that you haven’t lost your touch with pleasantries, Mother,” Ava quips.

“Well, she for one has never known what it’s meant to be elegant, Lillian,” James says coldly as Sara arches a brow.

“Coming from the man wearing a cheap, polyester suit? Yeah, I don’t think you get to have an opinion on being elegant,” Sara says smoothly as the man’s jaw clinches with anger.

“Who the hell do you think you are? Do you know who I am?” James asks in a threatening tone.

“No, actually, I don’t. We haven’t been properly introduced yet. The only thing you and Mommy Dearest have managed to do is insult myself, my wife and our daughter. My name is Captain Sara Lance, pilot and combat specialist instructor for the United States Navy. You can call me, Captain Lance. It’s nice to meet you, Mr. Polyester,” Sara says smugly, as a proud smile crosses Ava’s lips. The trio’s eyes widen in shock at the admittance, especially Lena, before Lillian scoffs as she shakes her head.

“Cén fáth nár inis tú dom? (Why didn’t you tell me?)” Lena asks softly, earning glares from James
“Tá a fhios agat cén fáth. (You know why.),” Ava says softly as she nods to toward their mother and James.

“Don’t speak to her. Let us handle this,” James orders in a harsh whisper.

“Leave it to you to marry someone of your own kind,” Lillian snaps as Ava arches a brow.

“Someone of my kind will forever be a step above you and your kind, Mother. Let’s be clear, when I refer to ‘your kind’ that only includes yourself and the gobshite of a man standing next to you,” Ava says calmly.

“What the fuck did you just call me?” James asks bitterly as Sara covers their daughter’s ears with her hands.

“Language, Polyester. There are children present,” Sara says with a glare, as James jaw clenches with anger.

“Mr. Olsen, a gobshite is basically someone who talks a lot but their words have no value. Rather accurate description of yourself if I do say so myself,” Ava says as Lillian scoffs.

“You listen to me, you ungrateful brat. Don’t think for a second that I can’t take everything away from you like you did to me,” Lillian snaps coldly as Ava arches a brow.

“Am I supposed to feel threatened? Your son couldn’t kill me when he had his chance in the desert all those years ago. What makes you think that you could finish the job if your golden child couldn’t do it?” Ava asks, causing Lena’s eyes to widen slightly in shock.

“You, son of a bitch,” Lillian whispers harshly.

“Technically, I am the daughter of one but you know, semantics,” Ava counters, causing Sara choke back a small laugh as the mother’s mouth gapes in shock. Lillian’s face scrunches with anger and before she can respond, Poppy grabs the hat from her own head before looking at the angry woman.
“Mummas! Nade! BOOM!” Poppy says before throwing the hat, only to ricochet off of Lillian’s forehead. Ava and Sara exchange a glance, laughing loudly as Sara quickly picks up the discarded hat while Lillian scoffs angrily.

“Is this how you’re raising your child? To be an arrogant bullet sponge like her mother?” Lillian asks harshly, causing Sara’s grip to tighten around Ava at the derogatory term for combat military operatives.

”You would actually have to have bullets hit you to be a bullet sponge, Mother. Last time I checked, we seals are pretty good at dodging things,” Ava counters as Lillian scoffs.

“And terrible at raising a child,” Lillian snaps.

“Well, I never had the best role model on how to be a mother. But, as for our daughter, she blew you up with a hat grenade because of the sour look on your face,” Ava says with a smirk, noticing her sister’s lips to slightly turn upward in a small smirk before quickly masking it.

“She’s a good judge of character and we couldn’t be more proud,” Sara quips before planting a kiss against her daughter’s cheek. Lillian shakes her head as her hand balls into a fist before storming away. James quickly follows after the angry woman, leaving Lena alone, staring at the couple.

“Tá sí blasta againn. (She has our accent.),” Lena says as Ava nods proudly.

“Chaith muid mí in Éirinn. Tháinig sí ar ais le ceann amháin. Mar sin rinne ár n-inión.(We spent a month in Ireland. She came back with one. So did our daughter.),” Ava says with a smirk as she looks between her wife and daughter lovingly.

“Our accents?” Sara asks as Ava nods.

“Shite, you picked up on a lot while we were away on holiday,” Ava says as Sara smiles.

“You can speak Irish?” Lena asks as Sara shrugs.
“Eh, I’m still learning. We want to expose our daughter to as many languages and cultures as possible. I know that being Irish is something Ava is very proud of and honestly, I am willing to learn or do just about anything to make my wife and daughter happy,” Sara says as Ava’s smile widens.

“Tá tú i ndáiríre pósta? (You’re really married?),” Lena asks softly as Ava nods.

“Tá mé, agus is é seo do neacht, Poppy. Tá sí beirt. (I am, and this is your niece, Poppy. She’s two.),” Ava says softly. Lena gasps in shock, her eyes quickly dancing between her sister and the toddler in her arms before releasing an emotional sigh.

“You can talk to her, if you want. I’ll make sure she doesn’t hat grenade you,” Sara offers, hoping the CEO and her wife can slowly rebuild their relationship. Lena apprehensively takes a step forward, moving closer to the couple. The toddler looks at the CEO before smiling widely.

“Hi, little one. You look very lovely in your dress,” Lena says softly, waving at the toddler. Poppy quickly grabs the CEO’s index finger, gripping it tightly before look at Ava.

“Hiiiiii. Mumma, pety,” Poppy says as the little girl lightly shakes Lena’s hand, causing the CEO’s eyes to widen at the little girl’s actions.

“Yes, darling. She is very pretty. You know, Mummy’s sister, Auntie Laurel?” Ava asks as the toddler nods.

“Uh huh. Pety, tak tak,” Poppy says as the seal nods.

“Yes, my darling, she talks like us. This is your Mumma’s baby sister, your Auntie Lena,” Ava says as the little girl squeals happily.

“Pety Auntie Lena!” Poppy says happily, causing Lena’s eyes to fill with tears. The CEO quickly shakes her head before slowly retracting her finger from the toddler’s grip and looking at her sister.

“I have to go,” Lena says, rapidly disappearing into the crowd, leaving the toddler extremely confused. The little girl’s lip begins to quiver before Sara and Ava plant kisses against their daughter’s cheek.
“Mummas? Me? Bad?” Poppy asks, causing the women to shake their head instantly.

“Oh, my darling, no,” Ava says softly as the toddler looks at Sara.

“No, baby. You didn’t do anything bad,” Sara coos as their daughter’s bottom lip continues to tremble.

“Mummy,” Poppy mumbles, reaching for Sara.

The toddler wraps her arms around Sara’s neck, burying her face into the crook of her neck, before Ava softly transfers her daughter into her wife’s arms. Ava gently rubs her hand along her daughter’s back as she notices her sister staring at her from across the ballroom, sadness radiating in her eyes as James wraps his arm around the CEO tightly.

“Shite, what did they say to you to make you go along with their little game?” Ava asks softly as Sara shakes her head.

“There’s no telling with your mother. She’s a bigger twat than I expected though,” Sara says as Ava smirks.

“You’re not wrong about that. I can’t believe Pops grenaded her,” Ava says as Sara laughs.

“I didn’t even have to say anything, babygirl, beat me to it,” Sara says before planting a kiss into her daughter’s hair.

“Well, you were too busy handling James. Mr. Polyester? Really?” Ava asks as Sara shrugs.

“If you think for one second that I’m going to let some arrogant gobshite badmouth my wife about being elegant while he’s wearing a cheap suit, then I clearly have failed you as a wife,” Sara says before Ava shakes her head with a smile.

“You couldn’t fail me if you tried, my love. You defended me honorably. You, Captain Lance, are
“Likewise, Lieutenant Luthor,” Sara says with a sultry wink, knowing that with her accent and use of her wife’s rank will drive her crazy.

“Aham, beidh tú bás dom, (you’ll be the death of me),” Ava mumbles as she kisses her wife.

“Is é bás gnéis an bealach is fearr le dul. (Sex death is the best way to go.),” Sara husks lowly.

Ava smirks, planting a tender kiss against her wife’s lips, only to kiss her daughter’s cheek before wrapping her arm around her wife’s back.

“Well, since Pops did our job for us and we’ve made an appearance. Why don’t we head home and maybe, get some ice-cream on the way?” Ava asks before her daughter perks her head up.

“Sceam?” Poppy asks as both of her moms nod their heads.

“Yes, my little darling,” Ava says before Sara smirks.

“Mums get dessert after sceam, right?” Sara whispers as Ava nods.

“You will always be my favorite dessert,” Ava says with a sultry wink.

The toddler squeals happily, squirming from Sara’s arms before the pilot sets their daughter on the ground. The toddler grabs her mothers’ hands, before nodding her head, signaling that she’s ready. The couple nod with smiles before happily leading their daughter out of the ballroom, playfully lifting and swinging her on their way out—completely unaware that Lena watched them exit the ballroom, choking back tears.

Lena didn’t realize how much of her sister’s life had changed over the last two years. She is an aunt to an adorable little girl, and a sister-in-law to a woman she knows nothing about. It hurt Lena, more than she thought possible.
The New Board Member

Chapter Notes

Hey everyone! Here’s the next chapter! Can’t wait to see what you think!

Lena takes a seat the the head of the conference room table as the board members continue to file into the room, each taking their seats at the table. The CEO glances down at her watch before noticing the empty chair next to her. The CEO knows that her sister will be in attendance today, however, she normally arrives earlier than anyone else. With five minutes to go before the meeting starts, Lena’s knits her brows in confusion before shaking her head. It’s her sister’s choice to show up, however, since the fundraiser two nights ago, the CEO would be lying to herself if she didn’t admit that she’s been thinking about her sister. Hell, that’s all she’s been thinking about. She knows that a lot can happen in a person’s life in two years, however, she couldn’t believe how much Ava’s life had changed. She’s married to a beautiful pilot and not to mention, they have an adorable daughter together—Lena’s niece. Oh god, her niece. Lena instantly recognized at the fundraiser how much the little girl already looks and sounds like a perfect blend of her sister and her wife. The toddler’s bright blue eyes match that of Ava’s wife, however, the little girl’s wide splitting smile was entirely Ava. Oh, and her intellect at the age of two, Lena had no doubt that Poppy is a Luthor.

Lena couldn’t help but feel guilty about not knowing about her niece, or not knowing anything recent about her sister’s life. Ava looked extremely happy with her wife and daughter at the fundraiser, however, Lena had a weird sense of feeling angered by the fact that Ava didn’t tell her about her family. Lena knows that she doesn’t have a place to be angry, per say. She let a lot of things impact her decision in not going out of her way to communicate or reach out to Ava but seeing her at the fundraiser caused a lot of feelings resurface for the CEO—it unsettles her. Lena hates it. The CEO shakes her head, clearing her thoughts as the last of the board members take their seats at the conference table. One of the members begins distributing out folders to the other board members, placing a folder in front of Ava’s empty chair before handing the last folder to Lena. The CEO offers a small nod and smile to the man before he retakes his seat at the table. Lena opens the folder and scans the agenda as the board members look at her. Glancing down at her watch one final time, the CEO sighs just before the conference room door opens.

Ava enters the room, wearing a tightly tailored, black suit with a gray, navy seal issued shirt, layered under the black blazer, proudly displaying her dog tags around her neck. The sleeves of Ava’s suit jacket are quarter-length, stopping just below her elbows, displaying her black and great nautical sleeve tattoo on her right arm, as her long, blonde hair falls in loose curls over one shoulder. The navy seal’s outfit is completed with a pair of white and black checkered Vans, as a pair of RayBan sunglasses rest on top of her head. Much to everyone’s surprise, Ava’s daughter is standing next to her, wearing a small black suit with a purple shirt with the words, ‘Navy Seal In Training’ written across her chest. The toddler is wearing a pair of glittery purple and black checkered Vans, with a pair of oversized Aviators on her face as her platinum blonde hair is pulled into a tiny ponytail. The board members coo as Ava slowly lifts her daughter, placing her on her hip as she makes her way to her seat. Lena’s eyes widen briefly at the arrival, unaware that Ava was bringing her daughter with
her. However, her shock is quickly masked with a small smile, because she had to admit, her sister and niece looked absolutely adorable.

“I’m terribly sorry that we’re late. My wife had a work emergency, and our sitter has the flu. So, when Poppy found out she was coming to work with Mumma today, she had to look perfect for her first board meeting,” Ava says as she takes a seat in her chair, causing the board members to laugh.

“We haven’t even started yet. You’re right on time,” Mrs. Peters says sweetly as she watches Ava slowly open the bag and retrieve an assortment of toys for her daughter, including a plush chemistry set and turtle, along with a glitter sippy cup filled with juice. Lena takes a rapid sip of her coffee, hiding her gasp as she notices the plush turtle on the conference table. Ava used to call the CEO that as her childhood nickname because she was extremely shy, and the name just kind of stuck with the siblings. However, Ava hasn’t called her that in years, and the CEO sighs, knowing it is probably just a coincidence.

“Well, if I would have known that we would have had such an important board member joining us, I would have made more copies,” Mr. Taylor says as Ava laughs.

“Well, thank you. Her scribbling can be quite overwhelming and direct at times. I would hate for her to step on anyone’s toes on her first day. I’ll let you know, my daughter may look sweet and innocent, but she is a shark. Isn’t that right, my little darling?” Ava asks with a smirk as the toddler shakes her head.

“No. I seal, Mumma!” Poppy says as she points to her shirt, looking at her mother in all seriousness. Ava smiles widely, nodding as she plants a tender kiss into her daughter’s hair.

“Excuse me, I stand corrected,” Ava says, causing everyone in the room to laugh.

“Shall we begin?” Mr. Taylor asks as the board nods in agreement. Ava slides the sunglasses from her daughter’s face, tucking them into the breast pocket of her jacket before kissing her daughter.

“Alright, my little darling. We have to be quiet and listen to everyone, okay? You can play but you have to stay in Mumma’s lap,” Ava Whispers as Poppy nods.

“Otay, Mumma,” Poppy says with a nod.
The board meeting begins, each member slowly discusses the latest projects and their respected finances. Lena steals glances at her sister and niece, throughout the meeting. The CEO smiles as she notices the little girl glancing up at Ava, periodically. The toddler mimics each time her mother nods or sips her coffee, by nodding or taking a small sip of her juice herself. Lena releases a small awe-filled sigh at the little girl before Poppy’s eyes widen as she notices the CEO. The toddler smiles widely, grabbing her turtle and beaker toy before shimmying from her mother’s lap as Ava asks a board member a question.

The seal never takes her eyes off the board member as she places her hand on her daughter’s shoulder, stopping her from moving too far from her. Lena smirks as she shakes her head, because the move is something so subtle and instinctive that Lena knows this isn’t the first time that her niece has tried to wander away from her. Much to the CEO’s surprise, Poppy reaches for her, holding her toys toward her, causing Lena’s eyes to widen before she slowly slides her chair closer to the toddler. The CEO diverts her attention from the folder, taking the plush toys from the toddler and setting them on the table before Poppy climbs into her lap.

At the sudden loss of her daughter’s touch, Ava glances over to find Poppy sitting happily in Lena’s lap, as her sister’s eyes widen slightly before glancing at the seal. Ava’s eyes widen, noticing the slightly panicked look in Lena’s eyes and the apprehension of what to do with her arms before the seal reaches to grab the toddler.

“I’m sorry,” Ava mouths as Lena shakes her head.

“She’s fine,” Lena mouths with a small smirk before slowly moving to wrap her arms around the toddler.

As a question is directed toward the CEO, she never misses a beat, quickly giving the board a calculated answer as she continues to hold Poppy in her lap. A small smirk crosses Ava’s lips, watching as Lena continues to talk with a board member as she absently runs her hand along Poppy’s hair as her daughter happily plays with her toys. Ava grasps her coffee cup, silently sliding her daughter’s juice toward her before sipping on her coffee. Poppy smiles, before quickly taking a sip of her juice and glancing up at the CEO.

Ava studies her daughter, watching her as she studies Lena’s movements, finding Poppy trying to mimic Lena’s expressions. Each time Lena nods or arches a brow, Poppy nods and does her damnedest to arch one of her tiny brows. However, it results in her entire face scrunching, but adorable all the same. Seeing her daughter with her sister causes Ava’s heart to pound in her chest, filling it with warmth and love. This is everything the seal has wanted for the last few years, however, she hates how her mother managed to drive a wedge between them. Ava wants her sister to be in her life, in her daughter’s life, and she’s hoping they can eventually get back to that but she knows it’s going to be a hard road to get there after everything that’s happened.
As the board meeting continues, the members notice the little girl mimicking Lena and Ava’s movements, causing them to smile widely. The members of the board would never admit this to Lena, but she’s always worked better having Ava around. They know their history is confusing and strained, but they had hope for the siblings. What better way to do that, than having an adorable little girl break the ice. The last member of the board pitches an idea, a cost saving initiative that could save millions while managing to continue turn a marginal profit increase without having to lay off any employees. As the other board members nod their heads in agreement, they turn their attention to the siblings, waiting for their answers. Ava glances down at some of the notes she’s written, bringing her hand up to her chin, lightly pressing the knuckle of her index finger to her lips as she considers her option. Little does she know, Poppy is mimicking her every move, even glancing down at Lena’s open folder, causing the board, and Lena, to smile widely at the toddler. Ava glances up at her daughter, smiling as she notices Lena press a light kiss against Poppy’s temple before a happy sigh escapes her lips.

“And in no way will we have to lay off employees?” Ava asks.

“No ma’am. You have my word,” Mr. Davis says as Ava nods before glancing at Lena.

“Cad a cheapann tú? (What do you think?),” Ava asks.

“Is plean maith é. (It’s a damn good plan.),” Lena says as Ava nods.

“Okay then,” Ava says, looking at the board, as Lena nods.

“It appears we are all in agreement,” Lena says before Mrs. Peters holds up her hand.

“Wait, we haven’t heard what our newest board member’s opinion is,” Mrs. Peters says as she nods toward the toddler, causing the board members to nod their heads.

“Nothing is finalized without Miss Poppy’s consent,” Mr. Taylor says as Ava and Lena smirk. Ava slowly moves her hand, taking her daughter’s hand into her own, causing her daughter to look at her mom.

“My little darling, you have a big decision to make. It’s like choosing between apple juice or chocolate milk. You ready?” Ava asks with a smile as Lena holds onto the toddler in her lap, moving her head slightly to look at face.
“Ap ju, cho mil?” Poppy asks, her eyes widening as Ava nods.

“Yes, my little darling. It’s very a very important choice but we can only say, ‘yes or no’. Okay?” Ava asks as Poppy nods.

“Otay, Mumma,” Poppy says.

“So, do you think we should say, ‘yes’?” Lena asks sweetly.

Poppy glances between her mom and aunt, her face scrunching as she thinks really hard about her decision. Ava and Lena smile as the little girl looks at them for help. Both women nod their heads before Poppy presses her lips into a firm line, looking like a very serious Lena before taking a sip of her juice. The toddler sets her juice on the table before looking at her mother and aunt one final time before nodding in all seriousness.

“Mumma, Auntie. Yes,” Poppy says as the women smile widely at the toddler. Ava presses a kiss to her daughter’s hand as the CEO presses a kiss into her hair before the board smiles widely.

“Well, I believe we have our decision,” Mrs. Peters says as the members nod.

“Well, then. I believe, our work is done here,” Lena says as Poppy nods in agreement, causing Ava to smile widely.

“I’ll have copies of the paperwork sent to your assistant along with a copy sent to Miss Poppy’s assistant as well,” Mr. Taylor says with a smile.

“Thank you,” Ava says.

“I hope we see more of you two,” Mrs. Peters says sweetly, as Ava offers a polite nod and smile at the woman.

The board members offer the siblings and the toddler smiles a warm goodbyes before exiting the
conference room, closing the door behind them. Ava slowly begins packing her daughter’s toys into her Iron Man backpack as Poppy continues to play with her toys. Lena smiles as she watches the toddler play with her plush turtle before glancing up at Ava.

“Tá sí dochreidte. Tá sí chomh neamhspleách agus chomh clisté cheana féin. Gan trácht air, tá sí an-ghreannmhar. Shíl mé ar feadh nóiméid go raibh sí chun easaontú linn. (She’s incredible. She’s already so independent and intelligent. Not to mention, she’s hilarious. I thought for a minute that she was going to disagree with us.),” Lena says as a small laugh escapes her lips.

“Ó, níl aon smaoineamh agat. Coinníonn sí Sara agus mé ar a bharraicíní gach lá. Cuireann sí i gcuimhne dom go leor. (Oh, you have no idea. She literally keeps Sara and I on our toes every single day. She reminds me a lot of you.),” Ava says, causing a shocked gasp to escape Lena’s lips.

“I ndáiríre? (Really?),” Lena asks as Ava nods.

“Ó, tá. Níl fáthíos uirthi aon rud a thriail, ach faigheann tú timpeall ar dhamhán alla é nó má thundersiónn sé, tá an cluiche os a chionn. Ó, agus nuair a bhíonn sí thart ar dhaoine nua, déanann sí cúlú ina bhlaosc. Cosuí le turtar beag. (Oh yes. She isn’t afraid to try anything, but you get her around a spider or if it thunders, it’s game over. Oh, and when she’s around new people, she retreats in her shell. Like a little turtle.),” Ava says sweetly, causing Lena’s eyes to widen.

“Ach thug sí chugam láithreach é, (but she took to me instantly),” Lena says as Ava sighs softly.

“Mo thurtán beag, I (my little turtle, I),” Ava says before Poppy squeals loudly, interrupting the sisters’ conversation. Lena’s eyes widen at the use of the nickname gave her during their childhood as the seal looks at her daughter.

“What’s up, my little darling?” Ava asks.

“Mumma, me me ne?” Poppy asks as Ava nods.

“I’ll have to check the schedule when the next meeting is and see if it fits into your busy schedule,” Ava says as Poppy nods.

“Good,” Poppy says as Ava shakes her head as Lena smirks.
“You keep this up and you’ll steal your Mumma’s and Auntie’s jobs right from under our noses,” Lena says sweetly.

Ava smirks, watching as Lena presses a kiss into Poppy’s hair before feeling her phone vibrate. The seal quickly retrieves her phone, noticing her wife’s name flash across the screen before she answers the call, holding the phone up to her ear.

“Hi, baby,” Sara says happily, causing Ava’s brow to arch at her wife’s overly chipper tone. Ava knows that when her wife left their home this morning she was furious, so, the sudden change in her attitude has the seal intrigued to say the least.

“Hey, you. You sound awfully happy for someone who had to deal with someone crashing a helicopter this morning,” Ava says as Sara laughs nervously.

“Yeah, well, it happens. Can I not just be happy to talk to my beautiful wife?” Sara asks as Ava shakes her head.

“Sara, what did you do?” Ava asks as her wife sighs heavily through the phone.

“Didn’t work did it?” Sara asks as Ava hums.

“Valiant effort but not even close,” Ava says.

“Shite,” Sara mumbles as Ava sighs.

“Just please tell me that you’re okay,” Ava says, causing Lena’s eyes to soften at the sound of concern in Ava’s voice.

“I’m fine, baby. I promise, but, I did do something,” Sara says.

“Stop stalling and tell me,” Ava counters as Sara sighs.
“Okay, here it goes. Kara is home early from her trip. I got excited when I saw her and then I invited everyone over for dinner tonight. I know that I was going to go to the store for us today, but everything happened with the idiot that parked the chopper too fucking close to the end of the carrier. The damn thing fell off into the harbor, Admiral is up our asses, Mick and I, want to kill the cadets and now, I won’t get off until six, everyone will be over at 6:30. AND. Ethan threw up Poppy’s missing pacifier this morning. I cleaned it up, but I left the throw up towels in our bathroom floor,” Sara rambles rapidly as Ava groans.

“They were the new towels, weren’t they?” Ava asks.

“That’s seriously all you got out of that?” Sara asks with a laugh.

“Were they the new ones?” Ava asks.

“Wellllll, define new,” Sara says as Ava sighs.

“Sara,” Ava warns.

“Gotta go! Training pilots, berating cadets and busy keeping our seas and skies safe! You’re amazing, beautiful, and I love you!” Sara says before ending the call. Ava sighs before shaking her head, tucking her phone into her pocket as Lena glances at her sister, watching as Ava plants a kiss onto her daughter’s hand.

“Pops, I’m going to beat Mummy over the head with rock when she gets home. Yes, I am. You wanna help me?” Ava asks, cooing at her daughter, causing the toddler to squeal happily.

“YEA!” Poppy says as Lena nods sadly.

“Looks like you have to get going,” Lena says as Ava sighs.

“Unfortunately, we do. My wife decided to invite people over to welcome home one of our friends that just got home from a trip overseas. Our golden retriever threw up and she used our new towels to clean it up, only to leave it in the floor, and now, Pops and I have to go to the grocery,” Ava says as Lena nods.
“Even with all of that going on, you still look extremely happy. It’s good to see,” Lena comments, noticing Ava’s smile widen as she nods her head.

“I really am. I couldn’t imagine my life without Pops and Sara. We balance each other out in a lot of ways. Hearing how excited she is that Auntie Bear is home, makes up for all of the running around that I’m going to have to do today,” Ava says softly. Poppy’s eyes widen at the sound of her aunt’s name before happily flailing her arms.

“Auntie Bear? Home?!” Poppy asks as Ava nods.

“Yes, my little darling. You’re getting to so spoiled today. Sitting in Auntie Turtle’s lap, Auntie Bear is coming over tonight. You basically have an entire zoo of aunties,” Ava says sweetly, causing her daughter to squeal happily as Lena sighs at her sister’s use of her nickname. Poppy looks at Lena, before wrapping her arms around the CEO’s neck, hugging her tightly.

“It was good to see you, little one,” Lena says softly, hugging the toddler. Poppy leans back, smiling widely at the CEO before looking at her mom.

“Póg, Auntie Turtar? (Kiss, Auntie Turtle?),” Poppy asks as Ava smirks before noticing Lena’s confused facial expression.

“She wants to kiss you goodbye. Warning, she is a mouth kisser,” Ava says as Lena nods with a smirk.

“God, you are so smart, little one. Yes, póg (kiss),” Lena says sweetly as watches the toddler smile.

Poppy puckers her lips, causing Lena to smile before puckering her lipstick stained lips as the toddler presses a light kiss against the CEO’s lips. Lena smiles as she notices some of her lipstick on Poppy’s lips, quickly using her thumb to wipe it away as Ava smirks, cherishing the sweet moment shared between her sister and daughter. The seal finishes packing the toys and the sippy cup into the backpack before looking at her daughter.

“Alright, Pops. We’ve got to get going and you need to take a nap before everyone comes over,” Ava says sweetly as she stands to her feet, causing the toddler to nod sadly before she yawns widely.

Poppy plants another kiss against Lena’s lips before sliding out of the CEO’s lap, moving to stand
next to her mom. Ava slides the Iron Man backpack straps over her shoulders before picking up the
toddler, resting her on her hip as Poppy leans her head into the crook of Ava’s neck. Lena stands to
her feet, moving her hand to lightly rub the toddler’s back.

“Oh, my little darling. You are going to nap so hard,” Ava says as Lena smirks.

“Well, after the deal she made this morning, I’d say she’s earned it,” Lena quips as Ava laughs.

“You’re not wrong about that. The next meeting is with Matthews, right?” Ava asks as Lena nods,
rolling here eyes.

“Unfortunately,” Lena says before the seal nods.

“I intended on staying until Sara called,” Ava says as Lena arches a brow.

“Really?” Lena asks as Ava nods.

“Absolutely. Matthews is a gobshite that has a habit of disrespecting women in power or if they have
a strong opinion. However, it’s probably a good thing that I’m not staying or my daughter’s
vocabulary would include a lot of curse words,” Ava says as Lena smirks.

“In English and in Irish,” Lena says as Ava smirks, nodding her head.

“Well, if he gives you any problems, all you have to do is call. I’ll have my phone on me all day,”
Ava offers sincerely, causing Lena’s eyes to widen slightly before nodding.

“Oh, um. Thank you,” Lena says before Ava nods.

“Of course, mo thurtán beag (my little turtle). Give him hell in there,” Ava says sweetly, planting a
light kiss against CEO’s cheek before moving to exit the conference room—shocking Lena at the
sweet gesture. As Ava opens the door, Poppy slowly raises her head before waving at the CEO.

“Bye, Auntie Turtar (turtle),” Poppy says, causing Lena to smile widely at her niece.
“Bye, ceann beag (little one),” Lena says sweetly, waving at the toddler as they disappear from the conference room.

Lena sighs softly, retaking her seat in her chair as she leans into the chair with a small smile across her lips. She couldn’t believe how good it felt to have her niece sitting in her lap or hearing Ava call her by her childhood nickname. It made the confused sense of guilt and anger the CEO has been harboring for the last several years disappear almost instantly. She and Ava had talked more after the meeting than they had in two years and Lena loved it.

She was curious as to what the navy seal was going to say before they were interrupted by Poppy’s squeals and a phone call—the CEO just hopes one day they can maybe finish their talk. It shocked Lena, but what shocked her even more, is how much she’s already missing her sister and niece’s presence.

The sound of her phone chiming snaps the CEO from her thoughts. She receives the phone from the pocket of her slacks, staring at the screen as she notices a text from James. Groaning softly, she opens the text, before shaking her head.

*James: We have reservations to meet with Ben and the boys at seven. Wear the red dress I like and don’t be late.*

Lena sets her phone onto the conference table before pinching the bridge of her nose. Of course, he would schedule plans for them without asking her with his horrible friend group. Oh, and request her to wear the horrifically tight and revealing dress that Lena absolutely despises.

Her sister’s little family will be happily spending time together with their adorable daughter and their friends while she will be sitting at dinner with people she has nothing in common with. This is the CEO’s life now, and she’s not sure how she feels about it.
Hey everyone. Next chapter.

I’m working on Flowers and Grenades too. Don’t worry.

Parts of this chapter may be triggering, refers to emotional/verbal abuse.

The navy seal focuses her attention on the steaks and assortment of vegetables cooking on the grill before feeling her wife’s strong arms wrap around her torso followed by a light kiss against her shoulder. Ava melts into her wife’s touch as she closes the hood of the grill before turning around in Sara’s arms to plant a kiss against her forehead. The seal notices her wife has changed from her fatigues, now dressed in a pair of jeans and a sweater along with a pair of glasses before turning her head slightly, as she nuzzles her face into Ava’s neck.

“It’s good to be home. Where’s Pops?” Sara says softly as Ava smirks.

“Napping before the calvary arrives. She had a hard day at the office,” Ava says as Sara laughs.

“How did everything go?” Sara asks as Ava sighs.

“Actually, pretty amazing. The board loved her, even made her feel like it was her decision to make on the project,” Ava says as Sara releases an awe-filled sigh.

“That sounds adorable,” Sara says softly.

“It was,” Ava says before Sara looks up at her wife.

“How was seeing your sister?” Sara asks as Ava sighs.

“Good, actually. Pops crawled into her lap half way through the meeting and she mimicked both of our movements during the meeting. It shocked Lena at first, but she took to her pretty quickly. It was adorable. We had a good talk afterward,” Ava says happily as Sara smirks.
“Sounds like you two are making progress,” Sara says as Ava nods.

“Yeah, well, we have a long way to go. I can see the apprehension and doubt in her eyes every time she looks at me. But seeing her with Poppy, hearing her talk about her, there was a glimmer of hope. I called her by her nickname today,” Ava admits as Sara’s eyes widen.

“You did?” Sara asks as her wife nods.

“Just seeing those two together, shite. It melted my heart. It’s something that I’ve wanted to see for so long and it made me forget about everything. She is so good with her, Sara. I just, I miss her. So much,” Ava says as tears well in the seal’s eyes. Sara quickly plants a kiss against her wife’s lips before wiping away her tears.

“Believe me, my love. I know, more than anyone else. It’s hard for you to see her like this toward you and I’m telling you, if she knew about what really happened with Lex, James and your mother, what they did to you. She would think differently. I know that she would,” Sara says as Ava shakes her head.

“Her longing for our mother’s approval outweighs more than anything that I could ever say or do. I’ll always be the one that killed our brother,” Ava says sadly as Sara sighs.

“Baby, we know how hard that was for you. He was your big brother too. Even after everything he did to you, what he took from you. You and your big heart still saw the small part of good he may have had while you were growing up. It made you hesitate in pulling the trigger,” Sara says as Ava nods.

“Lena doesn’t know that,” Ava says.

“One day, she will. Regardless of what make come of it, I’ll be here for you. So will Pops and our family. I promise,” Sara says sweetly as Ava nods before planting a kiss against her wife’s lips.

“You’re my entire heart, you know that?” Ava asks sweetly as Sara smirks.

“Even when I ruin our new, good towels with Ethan’s throw up?” Sara counters as Ava smirks.
“You could ruin as many new towels as you want but as long as I have you and our little girl, nothing else matters,” Ava says as Sara smiles.

“Me too. I’m sorry for throwing all of this on you today,” Sara says as Ava nods.

“We’re a team, that’s how this works,” Ava says as Sara nods happily.

“Best damn team there is. Not to mention, the best looking,” Sara says as Ava laughs.

“Oh, and can’t forget about our modesty,” Ava counters playfully as Sara smirks.

“There’s the smile that I love so much,” Sara says as Ava nods.

“Thank you for always being my rock,” Ava says sweetly as Sara presses a tender kiss against her wife’s lips.

“You’ve been mine, through my injuries, childbirth, and a lot of other shite. I’ll always have your back because you have mine,” Sara says before Ava captures her wife’s lips in a sensual kiss.

“Is breá liom tú,” Ava says sweetly.

“Is breá liom tú. So so much. Now, I have a strange feeling that our hooligan family is about to arrive and I’m going to go steal my Poppy kisses before her aunts and uncles hog her all night,” Sara says sweetly.

Ava nods with a smile, planting one last kiss against her wife’s lips before she turns to go into the house. The seal playfully smacks her wife on the ass, causing the pilot to yelp in surprise before shooting Ava a flirty wink over her shoulder as she enters the kitchen. The seal turns her attention to the grill, opening the lid before using the pair of tongs to place the food onto a large tray. The sound of mixed cheers and voices echo from inside the home, causing Ava to smile as she notices Alex and Sam enter the kitchen, holding Ruby on her hip, as Zari, Mick, Gideon, and Kara follow behind them. The sound of Poppy happily squealing fills the kitchen as the family cheers and coos at the presence of the toddler. Ava shuts off the grill as she balances the tray of food in her hand before walking into the kitchen to be with her family. The family smiles widely at the seal’s presence,
quickly wrapping their arms around her in a large group hug.

“Where’s Laurel?” Ava asks as Sara rolls her eyes.

“She’s stuck in court. She’ll be over later,” Sara asks as Ava nods.

“Easy! Aves is holding the goods!” Kara says as the group laughs loudly.

“Can’t have me dropping them, now can we?” Ava asks before setting the tray on the counter before hugging the reporter.

“It’s so good to see you,” Kara says softly.

“It’s great to see you back in one piece after running from a jaguar, was it?” Ava asks as Alex and Sam laugh.

“Is that what she told you?” Sam asks as Sara nods, causing Kara to blush.

“It was. However, she looks guilty,” Sara says.

“It definitely wasn’t a jaguar,” Zari says as Ava and Sara exchange glances.

“Kar,” Ava says as the reporter groans.

“Damn it, guys! A little help!” Kara defends.

“You’re on your own, kid. Beer?” Mick asks as looks at Alex, earning a nod.

“Mick’s right. You’re on your own, Kar,” Alex says, following behind the man toward the fridge.
“Ah, geeze, thanks guys,” Kara says as Sara and Ava arch their brows.

“So, what really chased you?” Sara asks as Kara sighs.

“A beetle,” Kara says as the wives arch their brows.

“How in the world did you mistake a large predatory cat for an insect?” Ava asks as the room erupts in laughter.

“It was really freaking big! Okay!? I can’t really compare being a badass naval operative to being chased by a beetle. So, I panicked,” Kara says as the wives laugh before shaking their heads.

“Never change, Kar. I’m going to set the table before your stomach turns you into a raging jaguar-beetle and you chase all of us out of the kitchen,” Sara says playfully before moving to set the table, causing the members in the room to laugh as Kara groans.

“I wonder what sound that animal would make. Like a growling-hiss?” Zari asks, causing the women to laugh as Kara groans.

“Rubes and I will help you set the table,” Sam says happily as the pair follow behind Sara.

“Whatever, I’m going to love on my little angel. At least she won’t make fun of me,” Kara says playfully before moving to take Poppy from Gideon’s arms.

“AUNTIE BEAR!” Poppy screams as Kara smiles widely, pressing kisses against the toddler’s cheek.

“Hi, Poppyseed. My goodness, you’ve grown like a weed!” Kara says as poppy shakes her head.

“Me flow, Auntie Bear. No weed,” Poppy says as Kara smiles.

“You’re right. You’re my beautiful flower and I can always count on you to be on my side, huh?” Kara asks as she kisses the toddler’s cheek.
“Yeah!” Poppy says with a nod.

Gideon plants a tender kiss against Poppy’s cheek before narrowing her gaze at Ava. The seal arches a brow as Gideon approaches her, knitting her brows at Ava before pointing a finger at her.

“We had a deal and you broke it,” Gideon says as Ava arches a brow.

“Gideon, how on earth could have I broken a deal with you if you literally just got back from England? I haven’t seen you in almost two weeks,” Ava counters.

“You promised me that if I let you corrupt our little flower that you wouldn’t corrupt Sara with your devilish Irish ways. I go away for two weeks and come back to find that you’ve turned your wife into one of YOU,” Gideon says as Ava nods.

“One of me, ay? Say, what’s so bad about being Irish?” Ava asks as Gideon arches a brow.

“Do I need a list?” Gideon counters.

“Oh boy,” Zari says.

“Here we go,” Sara says playfully.

“Everything was perfectly fine until you came in and decided to change everything. Just like you and your people did in the war while we were minding our business. We didn’t change anything, yet your wife speaks more Irish than she does English. Typical for an Irishwoman to be so abrasive,” Gideon counters as the family slowly turn to watch the women square off.

“How is it that they return home to their dual-citizenship countries for a short amount of and come back acting as if they’ve lived there for decades?” Alex asks softly as Zari shakes her head.

“Your guess is as good as mine. Still funny to hear them bicker though,” Zari says as Alex nods with a smile.
“Oh, right. How could I forget? We wanted our independence and to enjoy our own language. You’re right, the Irish, we’ve always been the bad guys,” Ava counters playfully as Gideon smirks before quickly masking her smile with a serious expression.

“Damn Irish, too proud to admit when you’re wrong,” Gideon says.

“We had a long time to learn it from the English,” Ava says before the women smile widely at each other before laughing loudly.

“You Irish wanker, come here,” Gideon says happily. The family joins in on their laughter, knowing the pair could go back and forth for hours as they wrap each other in a tight embrace.

“Alright, now that Ireland and England has had their usual standoff, let’s eat!” Alex says playfully. The family slowly begins to take their seats around the table as Ava and Gideon continue to hug each other.

“I missed you. I’ll never say this to anyone else other than you and I’ll deny it if you tell anyone but, Sara sounds bloody adorable with an accent,” Gideon whispers as Ava smirks.

“I missed you, too and don’t I know it. How is your mum doing?” Ava asks softly as Gideon sighs.

“She’s alright. Thank you for asking,” Gideon says softly as Ava nods.

“If you need anything, don’t hesitate to ask,” Ava says, knowing the woman’s mother has been having major health issues but has been reluctant to come to the states for treatment.

“Likewise. Sara mentioned her eye hurting today at lunch. Just thought you should know,” Gideon says as as Ava nods before planting a kiss against Gideon’s cheek.

“Thank you,” Ava says before the pair move to sit at the table. Gideon moves to sit next to Zari as Ava sits next to her wife as Poppy sits on Kara and Sara’s lap. The family exchanges glances before Sam smiles widely.
“Pops, you and Rubes want to say, grace? Before we eat?” Sam asks as the toddler and Ruby exchange glances before nodding.

“GRACE!” Poppy and Ruby shout as the family smiles.

“LET’S EAT!” the family says in unison before passing the food around the table.

The family happily eats their food, laughing and smiling as Kara discusses the details of her latest trip, ranging from the jungles of Africa, the Middle East, several stops throughout Asia before finishing in Central and South America. She just finished her last tour in the Peace Corps, where she acted as a reporter and photographer, documenting her journey along the way, continuing to spread love and sunshine in each place she visited.

Sitting at a table full of navy men and women, ranging from the intelligence specialists in Zari and Gideon, the pilot and combat specialists in Mick and Sara, to the two navy seals in Ava and Alex, could make people such as Sam, Laurel and Kara, being a journalist, lawyer and CFO, feel out of place. However, their family loved and admired the women for their respective jobs, and they couldn’t feel more welcomed or proud of their family.

As the family finishes their dinner, Mick, and Gideon quickly begin grabbing everyone’s plates to wash as Ruby and Poppy disappear into the living room to play with the excited Ethan, Ava and Sara’s golden retriever as Zari sits pretending to supervise—even though, she honestly just wants to play with the two girls and adorable dog. The family smile as they hear the little girls play with Ethan before releasing content sighs as they sip their respective glasses of wine and beer.

“So, now that you’re back, what do you plan on doing?” Sam asks as Kara sips her wine.

“Well, Cat Grant hired me as a journalist at CatCo. I met with her today and she’s really excited to have me on board,” Kara says as the women nod.

“That’s amazing, Kar,” Sam says.

“Cat is a lucky woman to have you,” Alex says as Ava nods.

“Yeah she is,” Ava says with a wink.
“Thanks, guys. I’m really excited,” Kara says happily.

“So, that means that you officially met Mr. Polyester,” Sara says as Kara arches a brow.

“Who?” Kara asks.

“James Olsen,” Ava says as Kara nods.

“Ah, yes. I met him. He was too busy kissing Cat’s ass to even notice that he interrupted our meeting. He’s a bigger jerk in person,” Kara says as the women nod.

“Yup, and an even bigger snake,” Alex says bitterly as the women nod.

“I don’t know why Cat keeps him on her payroll after everything that’s happened,” Sam says as Ava sighs.

“’She respects Lena. That’s why. She’s not going to fire him because in the public eye, they appear to be a happy couple. Meanwhile, we all know that my mother is just shaming Lena back into her bisexual closet,” Ava says as Alex shakes her head.

“Homophobic twat,” Alex mumbles.

“That’s a horrible way to live,” Kara says softly.

“But Cat loves and always has been one of your biggest supporters,” Sam counters as Kara nods.

“It’s hard to believe that she would keep someone around who actively hurt you and enjoyed it. Not to mention, never being silent on the fact that he supported Lex,” Kara says as the seal nods.

“But they don’t know the entire truth about what happened. Mommy Dearest has managed to keep that under wraps,” Sara quips.
“I really do hate that woman,” Alex says as Sam and Sara nod in agreement.

“Me too,” Sam says.

“Believe me, you’re preaching to the choir,” Ava says with a nod.

“She was a real peach at the fundraiser. Managed to disrespect us both and our daughter in one single breath,” Sara says as the women shake their heads.

“Pleasantries have always been her forte,” Sam says before sipping her wine.

“Yeah, no kidding. Those were mild, even for her,” Ava says with a shake of her head.

“I hope to never her on a bad day or I’d punch her into next week,” Sara says as Kara nods.

“I’d help you do it, too,” Kara says.

“Ava, how is Lena doing? Your mother won’t even let me near her after helping keep you on as CEO,” Sam says as Ava sighs.

“Confused, hurt, angry. She is processing the fact that she had no clue that she’s an aunt and that I’m married. Then there’s the whole, I killed our brother thing. So, she’s her closed-off self,” Ava says flatly as the women sigh.

“Aves,” Alex says as Ava shakes her head.

“It’s true. The longer she’s with that gobshite of a man and under our mother’s thumb, she won’t think any differently,” Ava says before Sara arches a brow.

“Well, Pops already has made an impact on her. Now, if a certain, beautiful and single journalist were to come along, peak her interest, it could help,” Sara says as Alex and Sam smirk while Kara’s
“I will admit, Lena is wow. Incredibly beautiful, but I’m not sure if she would even go for a woman like me,” Kara says before Poppy rushes into the room.

“Aunty Bear! Play!” Poppy says before Kara nods, practically sprinting away from the table into the living room to avoid the conversation as the two couples sit at the table, smiling at each other.

“You’re right, my love. Kar is exactly Lena’s type,” Ava says softly as her wife smirks.

“Oh my god. How have I not noticed this until now?” Sam asks.

“Lena is the type of woman that my sister would usually go after too. Smart, charming, beautiful. It sucks she’s taken by an egotistical asshole,” Alex says as Sara smirks.

“All of you have that look like you’re up to something and I’m not sure that I like it,” Ava says as Sam smirks.

“You know, with a phone call, you could easily have Cat send Kara over to L-Corp for an interview,” Sam says as Alex nods.

“My fiancé does have a point,” Alex says, pressing a kiss against Sam’s cheek.

“They could meet and bam! Sparks fly,” Sara says as Ava groans.

“My love, I think, you’ve been watching too many Disney movies with Pops,” Ava says as Alex arches a brow.

“Aves, you have to admit. They would be an adorable couple,” Alex says as Ava sighs.

“Yes, they absolutely would. Kar is amazing and everything that I could possibly want in a person to date my sister, but,” Ava says.
“But what?” Sam asks as Ava’s face falls, causing Sara to press a kiss against her wife’s cheek.

“If Ava were to do that, it would be like she’s manipulating a situation in Lena’s life. Just like Lillian,” Sara says as the Alex and Sam exchange a sad glance while Ava nods.

“Aves, you can’t honestly compare yourself to your mother. You want the best for her, unlike what Lillian has in mind for her,” Sam says softly.

“Lena’s had enough people fucking with her life. Forcing her to buy into decisions and beliefs that aren’t her own. Hell, relationships that aren’t her own. She deserves to make her own choices. I won’t do anything that would potentially look like I’m manipulating her. Even with the best intentions, I can’t do that to her,” Ava says as the women nod.

“Ava’s right,” Alex says softly.

“Yeah, when Lillian decided to tell Lena that I’m engaged to a woman that helped take down Lex, she completely shut me out. If she found out that Kara is Alex’s sister, she wouldn’t stand a chance with her and she would pull further away from us than she already has,” Sam says sadly as Alex nods.

“Shite, Lillian literally plays six moves ahead,” Sara says before Ava sighs.

“She always has. We can only hope that Lena wakes up to realize it herself one day,” Ava says before sipping her wine.

“It would help if you tried talking to her more,” Sam says.

“I have only seen her twice since we got back from holiday and I’ve been training for our next assignment. Besides, I’m not sure how much sisterly advice she’s up to receiving at the moment,” Ava says as Sam nods before sipping her wine.

“Are you ever going to tell her? About what happened before that mission?” Alex asks, causing Ava to grab her wife’s hand under the table and hold onto it tightly.
“She deserves to know, Aves,” Sam says as Sara gently moves her free hand to rub her wife’s back.

“I know, she does and I will tell her. Shite, she won’t believe it until I bloody well show her. It’s taken me three years to get comfortable in front of all of you and you were there with me for everything. I trust all of you, fiercely and I still struggle with it. Mentally, I’m not ready to tell or show Lena because we don’t have any sense of trust left. Thanks to our mother,” Ava says softly.

“We know, baby. No one is pressuring you into doing something that you’re not comfortable with yet,” Sara says in a comforting tone before Sam and Alex reach across the table, offering their hands toward the seal. Ava slides her hand into both women’s hands, squeezing it tightly as they look at her lovingly.

“But when you are ready, we’ll be with you,” Alex says softly.

“Every step of the way,” Sam says, rubbing her thumb along Ava’s knuckles.

“Thank you,” Ava says with a nod.

“I just hate that she’s alone in all of this,” Sam says as Ava sighs sadly.

“Me too. It breaks my heart every single day knowing that too. Unfortunately, it’s going to take time. All we can do is be patient and hope for the best,” Ava whispers as the women nod sadly.

“Yeah, and in the mean time, look how cute our daughters are,” Sara says, nodding toward the living room.

The women fall into a small silence, watching as Ruby and Poppy play happily with Zari and Kara as they play what appears to be pirates and sailors. Poppy and Ruby rush around the living room happily has Zari and Kara playfully chase them, with Ethan quickly at their heels.

Moments like this, watching the children in their live play and laugh without abandon, fills every one of the family member’s hearts with an overwhelming sense of love. The family had been through a lot in the last three years, and they had became stronger because of it. The only thing missing was Lena, and they prayed that one day, the CEO would finally see the light and come out from her
mother’s shadow.

They just weren’t sure when that day would come, or if it would even come at all, and that’s what scared them the most—the unknown.

Meanwhile...

After sitting at a very long, hate-filled dinner, in an extremely uncomfortable dress, the CEO couldn’t wait to get back to her penthouse and enjoy a glass of wine, alone. The dinner party was strictly members of James’ friend group, which consisted of several men whom shared the same radical ideals and mindset as that of her deceased brother and her significant other—if that’s even what she’s supposed to call James these days.

The man had always been around, being a best friend to her brother, but they were never really that close. However, after Lex’s death, the man gravitated toward the CEO and vice versa. They both mourned his death, and found comfort in the shared sense of grief but then with time, things changed. At first, the CEO really believed the man was interested in her. Using his wide smile and deep brown eyes, along with sweet sediments and statements to charm Lena—her mother’s approval also contributed into the CEO agreeing to go out on a date with the man.

The CEO found parts of him to be physically attractive, finding herself not minding to fall into an embrace or the occasional kiss. However, with time, James became impatient and he began resorted to aggressive sexual behaviors and statements, which completely turned Lena off. James didn’t take the rejection lightly, either.

He began using subtle digs, commenting on her appearance and her insecurities against her. If the CEO didn’t wear her hair in a particular way, or the days that she chose to wear suits instead of a skirt of a dress, he made a point to criticize her for it. Often referring to her being too beautiful to be hidden under so many clothes, and for a while, Lena didn’t notice the jabs until they became more frequent—more harsh.

Lena had always been comfortable with her curvaceous body. She had inherited her curves and large breasts from her biological mother, which differed from her older siblings. She remembered her sister’s statements over the years, Ava constantly stated how envious she was of Lena’s curves. Often being able to wear certain dresses and outfits that accented her curves, while Ava had always referred to herself as being tall, awkward and lanky at times.

With her life in the public eye, she was constantly under scrutiny about her appearance and her body type and she acted as if it didn’t phase her. With that being said, the CEO still held unspoken
insecurities about her body, but hell, what woman doesn’t? Lena always harbored self-doubt toward her love handles and her stomach. She was in no way unfit or overweight, but would never have the washboard abs like her older sister, and it bothered her more than she liked to admit.

Lena has always been an extremely busy woman, but she still made time to eat healthy, participate in yoga, the occasional CrossFit workout and actively ran long distances. She became comfortable with her body, adopting the slogan, ‘strong is sexy’, rather than focusing on trying to become a version of herself that her body would never physically be able to transform into, and she was okay with that—or so she thought.

James knew about her hidden insecurities and with time, turned the things she once loved about herself into her personal hell. He slowly began dictating what she was to wear, how she was to coordinate with him. He blamed it on the constant media attention until it filtered into her every day life. If she protested or denied the man’s requests on certain outfit choices, he unleashed verbal attacks.

The CEO fought back hard in the beginning. However, with time and the personal attacks becoming more and more frequent, she often found herself agreeing in order to save her from an exhausting emotional battle. If it wasn’t James attacking her, it was her mother. With her relationship with her sister and Sam being strained since Lex’s death, James and Lillian are the only people Lena felt like she had in her life. So, she wore the clothes they wanted her in and she kept her opinions to herself, because it was easier that way.

As for her evening, the dinner with James’ friends consisted of their usual hateful rhetoric before moving onto talking about her sister and niece. The group bashed the navy seal on her parenting choices before questioning Lena’s business decisions, making offhand comments about L-Corp suddenly becoming a daycare. The CEO downplayed the remarks, smirking and nodding along with the men, but the never did she respond or chip in on the issue. She wasn’t going to bash the adorable actions of her niece inside the boardroom or the conversation she had with Ava after the meeting ended—she didn’t dare stir that fire. She remained silent and stoic, biting her tongue, until the dinner ended.

Currently, Lena finds herself sitting in the back of her town car, sitting in an extremely uncomfortable dress as an angry James sits next to her. The man scoffs, shaking his head before looking at the CEO angrily.

“Mind telling me what the hell you were thinking at dinner tonight?” James asks as Lena arches a brow.

“I don’t know what you mean,” Lena says as the man shakes his head.
“You made me look like an idiot in front of my friends,” James snaps as Lena sighs.

“I’m not entirely sure how I made you look idiotic in front of your friends, James. I barely spoke three words the entire night,” Lena quips.

“That’s exactly my point. You had every opportunity to say something and you chose not to, why?” James asks as Lena shrugs.

“I thought my opinions on the issues discussed at dinner were redundant at the time. Therefore, I didn’t feel the need respond,” Lena counters as James scoffs.

“The fact that you allowed your sister to make a mockery out of you and your company by bringing her daughter into the workplace, only to remain silent when asked about it, made me feel even more embarrassed to be seen sitting next to you, tonight,” James says bitterly.

“What exactly are you trying to say?” Lena asks curiously as James glances at her before shaking his head in disgust.

“Tonight, you displayed your lack of spine and not to mention, the dress you’re wearing displays all of the extra weight you’ve managed to pack on lately. That dyke made you out to be a complete laughing stock in the business world and you did nothing to stop it. Lex, himself, would be ashamed to have been seen with you tonight. It’s pathetic,” James snaps coldly.

The CEO feels a pang of hurt course throughout her body, causing her to turn and stare out the car window. Lena fights back the tears beginning to form in her eyes as James scoffs before the car slows, stopping in front of the man’s apartment building. He quickly opens the door, grabbing his jacket before exiting the car, only to duck his head back into the car.

“Thank you, Frank,” James says, causing the driver to nod.

“My pleasure, Mr. Olsen,” Frank says politely. James narrows his gaze at the CEO, who is still staring out of the window, before leaning further into the car to whisper into Lena’s ear.

“Don’t ever pull a stunt like what you did tonight at dinner, or I will make you regret it. Do you
understand? You are a Luthor, so you need to get over yourself and start carrying yourself like one. Maybe skip the next few meals and glasses of wine, it’ll help lighten the load,” James whispers harshly before slamming the car door shut.

The car merges back into traffic while Lena feels her cheeks begin to stain with tears. The CEO shakes her head, choking back angry sobs before releasing a shaky sigh from her lips. Lena sits in silence, holding her arms protectively around her body as she stares out the window, admiring the city lights as they flash by. Even their beauty couldn’t fight the numb, loneliness feeling coursing through her body—a feeling she’s grown accustom to over the last two years.

Lena is alone and she’s beginning to realize that maybe, just maybe, she’ll be better off alone.
Kara sits at her new desk on the top floor of CatCo, happily sorting through notes on her most recent article topics. Cat Grant wasn’t lying when she told the young journalist that she was happy to have her on their staff. She gushed over Kara’s work, and practically gave the journalist the opportunity to pick and choose which pieces she wanted to write. Kara feels extremely grateful for the opportunity that Cat has given her, and she isn’t about to let it slip through her fingers.

The only problem with her new job is having to work next to James Olsen. Many people in their workroom adored the arrogant photographer and Kara couldn’t understand their reasoning behind it. For a man only used for taking pictures and the occasional puff-piece, he carries himself as if he owns the company. Every word the man says is laced with hate and it floored Kara. The journalist isn’t an angry or violent person by any means, but having to work with the man that has hurt her family members, carry himself as if he an innocent saint, makes her want to punch him—hard.

James strolls through the workroom, offering a smug smile to the various women in the room along with flirtatious winks before taking a seat at his desk. The man arches a brow at Kara, his eyes studying her blonde curls as they cascade around the journalist’s face as a wide smile crosses his lips. Kara notices the predatory stare from the man, causing her to adjust her glasses as she internally cringes.

Shaking her head lightly, Kara continues to flip through her notes, not giving the man the satisfaction of even acknowledging his creepy smile. She highlights a few sections, beginning to piece together an article before her boss leans against the side of the doorway to her office, causing Kara to glance up at the woman.

“Kara, I know, I told you that you had your choice in what pieces to write. However, I need you to take the lead on this next article because it’s important to you,” Cat says as Kara nods.

“Okay, what is it?” Kara asks curiously.

“L-Corp was in the middle of improving their water purification system, along with several other disaster relief initiatives and suddenly, it just stopped,” Cat says as Kara’s brows arch.
“Why would they stop?” Kara asks as Cat shrugs.

“No clue. The company was just nominated for several awards for their programs, but with sudden halt in production, they’re receiving a lot of backlash. Which is why I’m sending you over to interview Lena Luthor,” Cat says as Kara’s eyes widen slightly before James clears his throat.

“Um, Cat? You don’t have to send the new girl over to get a quote from Lena. I mean, she is my girlfriend, so, getting a quote would be a piece of cake,” James says with a smug smile. Cat arches a brow before rolling her eyes.

“Kara’s personally witnessed L-Corp’s technology helping the most devastated areas around the world. Her perspective will set the tone for the article, bringing awareness to the readers. You may be dating Lena Luthor, but don’t think for a second that I am naive to you being behind in several projects. You are confined to your desk until further notice, Mr. Olsen,” Cat says dismissively, causing the man to clench his jaw tightly as he nods. Cat smirks before turning her attention to Kara, causing the journalist to nod.

“When is the interview?” Kara asks.

“In fifteen minutes. Chop, chop, Kara. Don’t embarrass my company by being late,” Cat says before walking toward her office.

Kara quickly stands, gathering her things before throwing her purse over her shoulder. She closes her office door behind her as she sprints toward the elevator, receiving a glare from James on her way by. Kara catches the elevator doors before they close, sliding into the elevator as a small sigh escapes her throat. She’s interviewing Lena Luthor, and she hopes her family wasn’t behind it.

Meanwhile...

Lena hastily exits the boardroom with Ava following quickly behind her. The meeting was originally intended to discuss investments and partnerships. However, when a low-ranking partner demanded Lena for a larger cut in shares, the meeting went south and fast. The man owned a small portion of shares and held many ties within the business community. It was no secret that the man in question was a friend of James, which is why Ava knew that Lena had kept him on board. However, when he personally attacked Lena, the CEO counted his argument with factual evidence about his lack of contributions to the company before Ava had the chance to do it herself. It shocked the navy seal, but also made her feel extremely proud to see her baby sister conduct herself with poise.
Lena storms into her office, quickly walking to her desk as Ava enters the office, closing the door behind her. The seal slides her hands into the pockets of her slacks, as she approaches Lena sitting at her desk, as the CEO rapidly scribbles notes onto a file. Without looking up, Lena knows her sister is in the office, releasing a heavy sigh as she stares at the reports.

“That’s not how I thought that meeting was going to go,” Ava says softly.

“If you’re here to criticize me, you can leave the same way you came in,” Lena says as Ava shakes her head.

“I’m not here to criticize you, I’m actually here to tell you that I’m proud of you,” Ava says, causing Lena to look up at the seal in confusion.

“How could you possibly think that after I severed a partnership with a man who has ties to some of our biggest investors?” Lena asks as Ava smirks.

“You didn’t stoop to his level of personal attacks. You countered him with statistics and numbers, all of which, are very true. His profit margins are laughable and the investors thought the same. He may have friends, but you and I, we both know that friendships don’t make their businesses turn a profit. You said everything before I had the chance to and I couldn’t be more proud of you,” Ava says sweetly, causing Lena’s eyes to widen at the level sincerity in her sister’s voice.

“Not what I thought you were going to say,” Lena says as Ava nods.

“Well, it’s the truth. I’m also thankful that Poppy wasn’t there to hear some of his comments. Her little sponge of a mind would have learned a lot of words from the gobshite and I’m not ready for her to be cursing like a sailor just yet,” Ava says as Lena nods with a small smirk.

“Her schedule wouldn’t allow her to come in today?” Lena asks as Ava smiles.

“Well, when her Auntie Laurel and Sara promised her a trip to the zoo today. So, going to a meeting with me was not her top priority,” Ava says as Lena nods.

“Can’t say that I blame her,” Lena says as Ava nods.
“However, she did want me to give you her final notes about the board meeting from last week. She was very adamant that I deliver them to you in her absence,” Ava says, moving closer to the CEO’s desk. Ava retrieves folded pieces of paper from her front pocket before handing them to the CEO. Lena arches a brow at the seal before slowly looking down at the folded papers as she begins to unfold them.

“The top page is her notes, they’re very thorough if you ask me. The purple is about the finances, the blue is about the plans going forward, and I believe the orange is the statistics behind it,” Ava says as Lena looks at the jagged, loopy scribbles filling the pages, causing Lena to smirk.

“Ah, you weren’t kidding when you said they were detailed,” Lena says with a smile as Ava nods. The CEO shakes her head lightly before arching a brow at the second page behind her niece’s notes.

“Oh, I know. She let me review the top page, but she insisted that the second page is for your eyes only,” Ava says before Lena flips the page. The CEO’s eyes widen as she notices a page from a coloring book, displaying a picture of a turtle, that’s been rapidly colored with multiple shades of green throughout the turtle’s outline. Lena’s eyes widen as she notices lip imprints in red lipstick around the page, causing the CEO to glance up at the seal in shock.

“She did this?” Lena asks softly as Ava nods.

“She did. Pops got into our makeup and had lipstick smeared all over her face while she was making your picture. I had to go out and find every coloring book with turtles in them because she wanted to give you the most perfect picture,” Ava says with a smile, causing Lena to gasp as she stares back at the drawing.

“Well, tell her that I think, it’s absolutely stunning and I love it. Oh, and that I’ll take her notes and her opinion seriously,” Lena says softly, allowing her thumb to slowly graze over one of the lipstick marks from her niece. Ava nods before slowly moving to the edge of Lena’s desk, lightly sitting against the corner as she stares at her sister.

“If you ever want to come by and hang out with Pops, or have dinner, my door is always open,” Ava says sweetly, causing Lena’s eyes to widen briefly as they begin to fill with tears.

“You’re serious?” Lena asks as Ava nods.
“Pops adores you. She’s excited that she finally got to meet her Auntie Turtle after hearing about her for so long. She would love to have you around more, and if I’m being honest, so would I.” Ava admits softly, causing Lena’s eyes to continue to well with tears.

“Really?” Lena asks, completely confused by her sister’s statements. Ava nods as she slowly moves her hand toward the CEO, resting it near Lena’s hand as she holds it open, offering it to the CEO to take.

“Mo thurtán beag, tá a fhios agam gur tharla go leor idir sinn ach níor stop mé riamh grámhar duit. Is fada liom uaim thú ná á fhios agat. (My little turtle, I know that a lot has happened between us but I have never stopped loving you. I miss you more than you know.),” Ava says softly, causing Lena to gasp at the admission. The CEO feels a stray tear fall down her cheek as she stares at her sister’s open hand. Lena slowly moves her trembling fingers to hover over her sister’s open hand before resting her fingers over Ava’s lightly.

“Bhraitheann tú i ndáiríre an mbealach sin? (You really feel that way?),” Lena asks as Ava nods, gently moving her thumb along Lena’s fingers.

“Bhí tú chomh tábhachtach sin dom i gcónaí. Ba mhaith liom go mbeifeá i mo shaol, i saol m’iníne. Mar sin, nuair atá tú réidh, támid anseo. Tá mo dhoras oscailte i gcónaí duit, mo thurtán beag. (You have always been so important to me. I want you to be in my life, in my daughter’s life. So, whenever you’re ready, we’re here. My door is always open for you, my little turtle.),” Ava says sweetly. Lena gasps, her trembling fingers instinctively tighten around Ava’s hand as tears cascade down her cheeks. Before the CEO can say anything, the sound of Ava’s cellphone ringing causes the seal to quickly retrieve the device, only to scowl as she answers the call.

“Lieutenant Luthor,” Ava says.

Lena wipes away her tears as she watches her sister nod into the phone with a frustrated expression. Ava groans slightly before Lena hears a man’s voice yelling through the phone, before the call ends. Ava shakes her head before sliding the device into her pocket, never letting go of Lena’s hand.

“Everything okay?” Lena asks, as Ava sighs.

“A member of my team got completely pissed at the pub last night and crashed a dingy into the training pool at the base. My boss is furious and we are being ordered to the base for a meeting. Which means that we’re going to be swimming to China or living in the cold showers for the next several years, or a combination of the two,” Ava says as Lena shakes her head.
“How does a dingy end up in a training pool?” Lena asks as Ava shrugs.

“Who the feck knows,” Ava says as Lena nods.

“So, you have to go,” Lena says as Ava nods sadly before Jess enters the office.

“Lena, the reporter from CatCo is here for your one o’clock interview,” Jess says as Lena nods.

“Send them in,” Lena says before Jess disappears from the office. Ava squeezes Lena’s hand one last time before leaning forward and pressing a kiss against the CEO’s cheek. The action shocks Lena, causing her eyes to widen before Ava offers a small smile toward her sister.

“I wasn’t lying about what I said. I have to go, but if you need anything, I’m always here,” Ava says sweetly before her cellphone begins ringing. Lena’s widen in shock at the seal’s statement, completely caught off guard by Ava’s actions. Lena notices the seal answer the call, as she moves away from her desk. Lena can hear the sound of a woman laughing loudly in the phone as Ava groans.

“Sara, it’s really not that funny,” Ava deadpans, causing Lena to smirk.

Ava offers the CEO a small smile and a wink before moving to exit the office. Jess opens the door, revealing the journalist, causing Ava’s eyes to widen slightly.

“Did you do this?” Kara mouths as Ava shakes her head slightly.

“I promise you, I had nothing to do with this,” Ava mouths as Kara nods slightly.

Ava winks at the journalist before exiting the office. Jess quickly follows the seal out of the office, closing the door behind her, leaving Kara alone with the CEO inside of the office. Lena’s eyes widen slightly, noticing the beautiful blonde standing in her office. The journalist is wearing a white blouse tucked into a khaki skirt with a pastel pink cardigan layered over the shirt with a low pair of heels. The journalist hair is down in loose curls, framing her soft makeup covered face with a pair of brown glasses to finish her look. Lena bites the inside of her lower lip, finding the woman in front of her to be incredibly attractive before standing to her feet. The CEO smooths out the non-existent
wrinkles from her black skirt paired with a red blouse under her black blazer. Lena’s hair is down, resting in straight locks as she moves to stand in front of her desk. Kara swallows, finding the CEO to be even more beautiful in person before slowly approaching the CEO and extending her hand toward the CEO.

“Miss Luthor, it’s a pleasure to meet you,” Kara says as Lena shakes her hand, nodding slightly before arching a brow.

“And who are you exactly?” Lena asks as she motions for Kara to have a seat before rounding her desk. Kara sits in the chair, as she internally scolds herself before Lena sits behind her desk.

“I’m Kara Danvers. I’m with CatCo Magazine. I’m here to interview you about the work your company has done with the water purification systems in developing countries,” Kara says as Lena arches a brow.

“It’s a publication not known for its hard-hitting journalism. It’s more like ‘high-waisted jeans: yes or no?’, rather than water purification projects,” Lena says smoothly as Kara smirks before staring into the emerald green eyes of the CEO.

“Ms. Grant wants to incorporate more than just fashion choices into the magazine. The readers like to heard about successful companies ran by women who also are making a difference in the world. It sends a positive message to the readers,” Kara says as Lena nods.

“Well, I’m not sure how the Luthor name would inspire anyone. Given our history,” Lena counters as Kara sighs.

“You and your sister have used L-Corp to change the world. Your technological advances have changed the lives of thousands. I’ve first hand seen the effects and impacts you’ve made on people, Miss Luthor. You’re inspiring a lot of people and giving them an opportunity at the best life possible. Gosh, it’s amazing,” Kara says as Lena arches a brow.

“You’ve seen our work?” Lena asks as Kara nods.

“I served in the Peace Corps for the last several years as a reporter and photographer. I travelled to some of the most underdeveloped areas in the world. When you and your sister made trips to install the water purification systems, it completely changed people’s way of life. You gave them hope and was beautiful to see it firsthand. It’s no wonder why L-Corp is about to receive so many
humanitarian awards,” Kara says as Lena nods.

“Well, thank you,” Lena says as Kara nods.

“Which is why I have to ask. Why the sudden stop in production?” Kara asks as Lena sighs.

“Well, our company has to make some tough decisions. Yes, we give back to the community, however, we still have to turn a profit margin to stay afloat,” Lena counters as Kara’s eyes widen.

“Even if that means keeping the lives of thousands in limbo?” Kara asks as Lena arches a brow.

“What are you implying, Miss Danvers?” Lena asks as the journalist sighs.

“Nothing, it’s just, the decision to half production is making people question the motives. I just have a hard time believing that you and your sister would rather make money rather than helping people. To me, it doesn’t add up,” Kara says as Lena scoffs.

“Certain things change, Miss Danvers, it’s the business world after all,” Lena says as Kara nods, before noticing the child drawings on Lena’s desk. The journalist smirks, knowing who is responsible for the drawings before glancing up at the CEO.

“You know, my office is filled with drawings from the kids I met overseas. Their way of thanking us for helping install your programs, for supporting them. Helping others is more important than some paycheck,” Kara says as Lena nods, glancing down at the drawings only to tuck them into the top drawer of her desk.

“Well, unfortunately, multiple business partners of mine would highly disagree with that statement,” Lena counters as Kara nods.

“I’m not here about what they have to say. I want to know what you have to say about it,” Kara says as Lena nods.

“My sister and I, since she took over the company, have always shared the same views on wanting to help the world in any way that we can. Nothing brings us more joy than to help people in need,”
“Then I’ll ask again, why stop if it’s something you’re passionate about?” Kara asks as Lena shakes her head. Kara can tell the CEO is hiding something, probably due to James or her mother. Lena sighs before nodding her head as she stares at the journalist.

“May I ask you something?” Lena asks as Kara nods.

“Of course,” Kara says.

“What if something your passion toward isn’t enough? Like no matter how much you want to do something, your hands are always tied. How can you make it possible when everything is stacked against you?” Lena asks as Kara sighs.

“I personally believe that if you care about something so much, you can make it happen. It’s not always easy, but you find a way to keep going. To make people see that passion, to spread that importance,” Kara says as Lena smirks.

“You sound a lot like my sister in that aspect. She’s always been the one to push me to make people hear the importance on an issue. As for your original question, after everything that’s happened with my family over the last two years, it hasn’t been easy. Trying to make the best decisions for the company along with my own life, it’s a hard balance, and can be overwhelming at times. I decided to take a step back to reevaluate things before pushing another project through. However, most people think that I’m sitting in an office plotting some evil plot for world domination,” Lena says sadly, causing Kara to nod.

“You’re entitled to take breaks. For the record, I think, people are wrong about you,” Kara says, causing Lena’s eyes to widen in curiosity.

“How so?” Lena asks.

“I believe that people should be based off of their own merits. To me, you are an incredibly brilliant mind, seeking to help people and everyone is quick to judge you based on your family’s history. You’ve continued to help people in need while receiving the constant scrutiny over things that were out of your control,” Kara says as Lena arches a brow.
“You gathered that opinion based off the twenty minutes you been here?” Lena counters as Kara smiles.

“I would like to think that I’m a journalist with a pretty good judge of character. You seem to be extremely passionate about your work. CatCo readers are going to be in awe of a successful, brilliant and beautiful CEO that’s trying to make a difference in the world,” Kara says as her eyes widen slightly at the fact she just called Lena beautiful. Lena feels her heart pound hard against her chest at the woman’s words before smirking.

“Are you always this charming to the people you interview? Or am I the exception?” Lena asks, causing the journalist to blush as she fiddles with her glasses.

“Uh, M-Miss Luthor, I apologize for what I said. That was extremely inappropriate. Cat is going to kill me for embarrassing her,” Kara rambles before Lena smiles widely as she laughs softly.

“We can keep this little secret between us, darling,” Lena says as her accent pops with the term of endorsement. To further fluster Kara, she flashes a perfect a perfectly arch brow and smirk, causing the journalist to blush.

“Gosh, I-I don’t know what to say now,” Kara says as Lena smirks, secretly loving the effect she’s having on the blushing journalist. Jess enters the office, offering a polite smile before nodding toward the CEO.

“Mr. Carter is on the line, ready for your conference call whenever you are,” Jess says as Lena nods.

“Thank you, Jess. Tell him that I’ll be with him in just a moment,” Lena says before the assistant nods and exits the office. Kara stands to her feet, straightening out her skirt as she hugs her purse close to her body.

“I guess that’s my cue to leave,” Kara says as Lena nods.

“I hope that I gave you enough to work with,” Lena says as Kara nods.

“You did. Thank you so much for letting me interview you,” Kara says sweetly as Lena smiles.
“Well, I hope this isn’t the last time we talk,” Lena says as Kara smiles before glancing down at the floor, fidgeting with her glasses.

“I hope not either,” Kara says with a wide smile. Lena smiles at the journalist, watching her exit the office before leaning back in her chair.

“So fucking beautiful,” Lena whispers to herself before glancing at her phone.

The CEO answers her conference call, answering it happily as she opens her desk drawer. The CEO stares at the drawings from her niece as she sits in on the call, feeling happier now than she has in years.
“Good” Intentions

Chapter Notes

Next chapter. Oh, boy. Can’t wait to see what you think.

“You know, I didn’t think that I would like the accent but it’s really growing on me,” Laurel says as Sara joins her on the couch after putting Poppy down for a nap.

“Funny, because you said the same thing when you found out about me and Ava,” Sara counters as the lawyer nods.

“Well, could you blame me? My baby sister came home from a deployment to tell me she had fallen in love with a Luthor,” Laurel quips as Sara sighs.

“They’re not all bad,” Sara says as Laurel nods.

“Well, Ava isn’t. The mother is a diabolical bitch and the jury is still out on the last sibling,” Laurel says as Sara nods.

“I don’t think Lena is a bad person. I think, her mother and boyfriend have warped her into believing their sense of truth,” Sara says as Laurel hums.

“It’s a shame, the way Lillian is using her as if she’s a puppet. It makes Lena look guilty without her even realizing it,” Laurel says.

“I know, but Ava still has faith that Lena will snap out of it,” Sara says as Laurel arches a brow.

“I think the better question is, do you have faith that Lena will snap out of it?” Laurel asks as Sara sighs.

“I want to, I really do. She and Ava were so close. I mean, she’s met Poppy and apparently is great with her, but,” Sara says.
“You’re hesitant,” Laurel says as Sara nods.

“Don’t get me wrong, I don’t question my wife’s judgement. Especially, with our daughter. I know, Ava would never let anything happen to our little girl. It’s just, I don’t know what lies they’ve planted inside of Lena’s head and it makes me question things. Am I wrong for feeling that way?” Sara asks as Laurel shakes her head.

“Absolutely not. You’re being a protective wife and mother. Ava has always held out hope for her family, even that monstrosity of a creature that she has for a mother. She held that hope even after Lex, Lillian and James tortured her. It’s says a lot about her character,” Laurel says as Sara sighs.

“Damn her big heart. It’s one of the first things that made me fall for her. I just don’t want something to happen where Lena hurts her because it’ll be far worse than anything those three bastards did to her in the desert. I can’t watch her be in that much pain again,” Sara says as Laurel nods.

“None of us want to see that again. It crushed all of us. Ava has to permanently wear the scars as a constant reminder of how much they hate her. I can’t imagine having to wake up to that every day,” Laurel says sadly.

“She’s been having nightmares about it. They happen after she goes to a board meeting with Lena. She won’t admit it but I think that when she looks at Lena, she sees the hurt in her eyes and it causes her mind to spiral,” Sara says as Laurel sighs.

“She hasn’t talked to her about it?” Laurel asks as Sara shakes her head.

“No, she’s afraid and I don’t blame her for it. She still hates herself for believing if she went through that pain, they would leave Lena alone,” Sara says as Laurel scoffs.

“Not surprising that Lillian would play that card. She used Ava’s loyalty against her,” Laurel says as Sara sighs.

“She always has been several steps ahead,” Sara says as Laurel shakes her head.

“No kidding. She managed to make a few of our confidential informants disappear last week,”
Laurel says as Sara arches a brow.

“What?” Sara asks.

“A few people came to my office with dirt on James and his friend circle. Apparently, they’re working on something big to try to revamp Lex’s terrorist group. We were building a case and Sam gave me more information on the group but last week, they vanished into thin air,” Laurel says.

“Lillian sent them on a permanent holiday to hell, no doubt,” Sara says as Laurel nods.

“We’re going to keep digging. I’m not going to stop until those bastards are both behind bars,” Laurel says as Sara smirks.

“Spoken like the most feared DA in all of the west coast,” Sara quips as Laurel smiles.

“Well, they fucked with my family. I protect my family, even if they are trained, lethal weapons,” Laurel says with a wink.

“You still think they somehow managed to shoot my jet down, don’t you?” Sara asks as Laurel sighs.

“I do and so does, Sam. The research that the informants told us, I didn’t really understand but Sam did. It was the same style of drone that shot your jet down,” Laurel says as Sara shakes her head, adjusting her glasses.

“Forever clipping my wings,” Sara says sadly.

“I know, that you said that you’ve moved beyond all of that. But, what if Lillian was responsible for it? Would a part of you resent Ava for it?” Laurel asks as Sara sighs.

“I miss flying every second of every day. Teaching is great, but it’s not the same, not even close. If Lillian was responsible for all of it, I wouldn’t be surprised but I wouldn’t feel resentment toward Ava. It isn’t her fault that Lillian is a monster. She sat by my side, every day, even when I was horrible to her, cheering me on and supporting me—loving me through it.
“She still spends time in the lab on her days off from the base, working on glasses and contacts to make my vision in my left eye normal again. Not because I ask her to do it but for the fact that she knows how much I miss flying. I would never be able to resent her for something she had no part in or control over,” Sara says as Laurel smirks.

“Who knew that Irish navy seal would be such a big softy for anyone other than her daughter,” Laurel says as Sara smiles.

“She makes me feel beautiful when I wear my glasses or when my eye looks foggy. She doesn’t try fixing me or changing it, she just wants me to be happy. I couldn’t be more in love with that big, soft heart of hers,” Sara says as Laurel smiles.

“I know, I’m hard on her a majority of the time,” Laurel says as Sara arches a brow.

“Only a majority of the time?” Sara counters as Laurel laughs.

“Okay, I’m hard on her, all of the time. However, I’m glad you have someone like her in your life. I adore Ava, but you will always be my little sister. I have a constant urge to protect you but I’ve gotten better with it. I think,” Laurel says as Sara laughs.

“Not threatening her every time you see her is an improvement,” Sara says as Laurel smirks.

“Well, I have only ever wanted the best for you. I believe, full-heartedly, that Ava Luthor is your person. She brings out the best in you and makes you happy. Which makes me extremely happy,” Laurel says sweetly, causing Sara to smile.

“Thank you, and you know, she changed her name,” Sara says as Laurel’s eyes widen.

“Really? She didn’t even hyphenate it?” Laurel asks as Sara shakes her head.

“She keeps Luthor for her military and professional life but outside of that, she is Ava Lance. She wants Poppy to grow up free of the Luthor reputation for as long as possible. It won’t completely go away, but, yeah. My girls are both Lance women,” Sara says proudly as Laurel smiles widely.
“When did she do it?” Laurel asks as Sara smirks.

“She finalized it a while ago but with her constant deployments and our schedules, we forgot to tell people,” Sara says as Laurel nods.

“Holy shit. Color me impressed. A Luthor giving up their name is something that I never thought I would hear,” Laurel says as Sara smirks.

“Ava’s the exception, remember? Besides, she may have given up here name but I gained her Irish ways. It was a fair trade in my opinion,” Sara says as Laurel laughs.

“How’d Gideon handle it?” Laurel asks as Sara laughs.

“Oh, their England versus Ireland standoffs are even more heated now but it’s still hilarious. I think, she likes it but won’t admit it. However, she doesn’t like it when I answer her in Irish,” Sara says as Laurel shakes her head.

“Leave it to you to be married to one of your best friend’s fierce country rivals,” Laurel says as Sara smirks.

“Yeah, well, keeps it interesting. So, speaking of keeping it interesting, when’s the last time you went out?” Sara asks as Laurel sighs.

“God, I can’t even remember. My dance partner is married with a child, so,” Laurel says as Sara laughs.

“Oh, blaming me for your lack of fun?” Sara asks as Laurel smirks.

“No, but I do think we are overdue for a night out. All of us are,” Laurel says as Sara nods with a devilish smirk.

“I think, we need to change that but after my wife finally escapes the cold showers,” Sara says as
Laurel laughs.

“Deal.”


days later...

Lena sits at her desk, holding the latest issue of CatCo magazine, smiling as she finishes reading the extremely flattering article that Kara wrote about her. The CEO makes a mental note to send the beautiful journalist flowers before setting the magazine on her desk as her mother strolls into her office. The woman is wearing her usual formal attire, consisting of a elegant black dress underneath a cream coat and a pair of heels as she approaches the CEO’s desk.

“I didn’t think you would be stopping by today, Mother,” Lena says as Lillian arches a brow.

“Now, is that any way to greet your mother when she is simply dropping by to see her daughter? With your sister attending more board meetings, her bad manners have managed rubbed off on you,” Lillian says before sitting in the chair across from Lena’s desk.

“That would require her and I to actually engage in a conversation for that to happen,” Lena counters as Lillian nods.

“Ah, so her bringing her bastard of a child into the boardroom negates her lack of manners and professionalism, I presume?” Lillian asks as Lena sighs.

“Not at all,” Lena says as Lillian arches a brow.

“Yet, you allowed it,” Lillian counters as Lena sighs.

“It was a shock, however, I didn’t think making a scene in front of the board was worth it. Especially, with it being her required board meeting to attend. It hasn’t happened since because I took care of it,” Lena lies smoothly, not wanting to admit the fact that she enjoyed having her niece at the meeting.

“Good, because if it does, you’ll be a laughing stock to the business community. James told me about
the dinner and I’m appalled that you remained silent on the matter,” Lillian says sternly.

“You know how his circle is during conversations. I couldn’t have gotten a word in even if I tried, Mother,” Lena says slyly as Lillian nods.

“So, when were you going to tell me about you breaking the agreement with Hutchins? Or did your vile excuse of a sister play a role in that?” Lillian asks as Lena sighs.

“I made the decision. Due to his lack of profits and damning demands, it doesn’t benefit the company to continue supporting his company,” Lena says as Lillian arches a brow.

“Without consulting James or myself first? You know, how much we value that relationship. He has ties to very important people, Lena,” Lillian criticizes as Lena nods.

“I’m well aware of Mr. Hutchins’ ties. The investors agreed with the decision because they value profit over relationships. Profit is the only thing that matters to them,” Lena counters as Lillian shakes her head.

“Apparently, to you as well. Embarrassing one of your boyfriend’s friends along with both of us in the process. We need people like him if we want to reach our goal,” Lillian says as Lena arches a brow.

“A goal that is only known to you and James. You both have left me in the dark in that regard,” Lena says as Lillian’s jaw clenches.

“Oh, please. Stop with the defiance act. It makes you look pedestrian and weak,” Lillian says coldly as Lena nods.

“I apologize,” Lena says as Lillian nods.

“Good, now. We have another manner to discuss,” Lillian says as Lena nods.

“What is it?” Lena asks as Lillian smirks.
“In a few weeks time, Cat Grant is hosting a public event downtown. The entire city’s elite will be there and I think it would be the perfect opportunity for James to propose,” Lillian says as Lena’s eyes widen, feeling her heart sink at the statement.

“What?” Lena asks as Lillian sighs.

“Don’t look so shocked. You have been together for almost two years. It’s time and it will send a positive message, not to mention good press coverage,” Lillian says nonchalantly.

“Mother, we don’t even share a home together,” Lena says as Lillian shrugs.

“Simple fix. I’ll arrange for you two to move into a new penthouse prior,” Lillian says as Lena shakes her head.

“Do I have a choice in the matter?” Lena asks as Lillian arches a brow.

“Of course, you do. All you have to do is say, ‘yes’, when he proposes,” Lillian says as Lena sighs.

“I’m not ready to move in together. Let alone marriage, Mother,” Lena says as Lillian scoffs.

“Nonsense. You and James are perfect for one another. Besides, I don’t see any other suitors in this city lining up for you. Especially, when you can’t even manage to look presentable in the workplace or hide the extra weight you’ve managed to pack on lately,” Lillian says, causing Lena’s chest to deflate.

“Regardless, it doesn’t mean that I’m ready for marriage. Let alone with what comes afterward,” Lena says as Lillian shakes her head.

“If you don’t do this, your murderous sister will continue to appear like she is the woman of the year instead of the insidious monster that she truly is, Lena,” Lillian says as Lena scoffs.

“By me, agreeing to marry James, you want to use it, as what? A way of getting back at Ava?” Lena
asks as Lillian sighs.

“Lena, don’t be naïve. Marrying James will solidify your status, because the city adores him. You will restore the Luthor name by doing this, furthering your popularity within the city. Not to mention, solidifying several partnerships along the way when James comes onto the board,” Lillian says as Lena’s eyes widen.

“Excuse me, what did you just say?” Lena asks.

“After you’re married, James should come on as a board member, helping to direct the company. It ensures the best interests of the company and prevents that bitch from running it into the ground. Majority rule, and she will have no way to stop it,” Lillian says as Lena shakes her head.

“You know that Ava will never allow that to happen. She is the majority CEO of this company and her lawyers ensured that years ago. She has the power to stop anything, including the addition of a new CEO. Not to mention Sam’s power and input on the board as well,” Lena argues as Lillian smirks.

“Leave the legalities to me, honey. Believe me, this is in your best interest. Ava and Sam only want to further themselves. Who do you think stalled your research on vaccines? Your initiatives on furthering the fight against climate change? Certainly wasn’t James or myself. We would never do that to you, honey,” Lillian says before standing to her feet.

Lena sits in a tense silence, shaking her head slightly as Lillian slides her purse over her shoulder before smiling at her daughter.

“I’m having lunch with James. I’ll tell him the good news,” Lillian says before turning and exiting the office.

Lena watches at the office door closes before slamming her hand against her desk in frustration. She hastily stands, moving to the small bar in her office before pouring herself a generous glass of whiskey. She sips the amber liquid as she returns to her desk, sitting in her chair as she gets lost in her thoughts.

The CEO is not ready for marriage, especially, not to someone that she isn’t in love with, even if he is approved by her mother. Lena is confused, hurt and angry by her mother’s statements about Sam and Ava’s actions against her. She opens the top drawer to her desk, displaying the drawings from
her niece before reaching for her cellphone. She scrolls through the list of contacts, stopping on a number she hasn’t called or texted in years. She quickly clicks on the contact before typing a text.

**Lena (to Ava): An bhfuil do thairiscint fós fós? (Does your offer still stand?)**

**Ava: Ar ndóigh. (Of course.)**

**Lena (to Ava): An bhfuil am ar leith ann? (Is there a specific time?)**

**Ava: De ghnáth, téann Poppy le hocht. Ach is féidir leat teacht ar aghaidh ag aon phointe. Fiú má tá sí ima chodladh, tá fáilte romhat i gcónaí. (Poppy usually goes to bed by eight. But you can come over at any point. Even if she is asleep, you are always welcome.)**

Lena studies the texts from her sister, unsure of why she felt the need to text her, let alone in Irish, but it was a natural reaction for the CEO. Lena sighs before sipping her whiskey as she drafts another message before hitting send.

**Lena (to Ava): Beidh mé os cionn seacht gcinn. (I’ll be over around seven.)**

**Ava: Féach tú ansin, turtar. (See you then, turtle).**

**Lena (to Ava): Féach tú ansin, béar. (See you then, bear).**

Setting her phone onto her desk, the CEO sips her whiskey in silence. She’s going over to Ava’s home, and she’s not entirely sure if she’s ready for it.
“Wait, you did what?” Sara asks, adjusting her glasses as Ava sighs into the glass of whiskey.

“Sara,” Ava says before glancing over at Poppy playing by the kitchen with Ethan before rushing into the living room.

“Baby,” Sara counters as Ava sighs.

“Look, I offered for her to come see Poppy or talk when she was ready. It happened nearly a week ago. How was I supposed to know that she would actually want to come?” Ava asks as Sara shakes her head slightly.

“You know that I support you but I just don’t want you to get your hopes up,” Sara says as Ava’s shoulders slump slightly.

“Laurel said something the other day, didn’t she?” Ava asks as Sara sighs.

“Nothing more than what I’ve already been feeling myself,” Sara quips.

“What are you trying to say? Every person with the Luthor name is bad news?” Ava asks defensively before Sara runs her hands down her wife’s arms.

“Hey, don’t do that to me. We are a team. I’m always on your side,” Sara says as Ava nods.

“I’m sorry,” Ava says before Sara wraps her arms around Ava’s neck.
“Look, I hope and pray for Lena every day, but the fact that she continues to surround herself with the people who made me almost lose you, Ava, makes me want to protect you more than I already do,” Sara says sweetly as Ava nods.

“I know, it’s just hard for me to give up on her,” Ava says as Sara nods.

“I’m not saying for you to give up on her. All I’m trying to do is make sure that you keep your guard up,” Sara says as Ava presses a tender kiss against her wife’s lips.

“You’re very sexy when you get protective, Mrs. Lance,” Ava says as Sara smirks.

“Well, I aim to please, Mrs. Lance,” Sara says before pressing a tender kiss against Ava’s lips.

“Shite, you know the things that I need to hear even when I don’t want to hear them,” Ava says softly.

“You’re not mad at me?” Sara asks as Ava shakes her head.

“No, my darling. I’m not nor do I blame you for feeling that way, given everything that’s happened,” Ava says before Poppy rushes toward her moms.

“Mumma! Pu up!” Poppy says as the couple smiles.

“You think you can do weighted pushups?!” Sara asks as Poppy nods before flexing her arms.

“Strun!” Poppy says as Ava smiles.

“Yes, my little darling. You are so strong. Let’s go show Mummy how strong you are,” Ava says sweetly. Poppy grabs each of her mothers’ hands, pulling them into the living room before looking at Ava.

“You’re really hating that she saw us doing those in the backyard, aren’t you?” Sara asks as Ava groans.
“Using her as our weights made her day. But I don’t know why she always makes me do it,” Ava says before pressing a kiss against her wife’s lips.

“Hmm, cause you’re our strong seal, Mumma,” Sara hums, capturing Ava’s lips in a tender kiss.

“Mumma!” Poppy whines as Ava nods.

“Alright, drop into position,” Ava says as Poppy nods. Sara smiles as she watches her wife and daughter move onto the carpeted floor.

“How many do you think you can do, Pops?” Sara asks as Poppy scrunches her face.

“Five, Mummy!” Poppy says as Ava and Sara widen their eyes.

“A whole five?!” Sara asks.

“Yeah!” Poppy says happily.

“Goodness, that’s more than Auntie Alex can do!” Ava says playfully, causing Sara to laugh.

Sara watches as her daughter sets her tiny body in a perfect pushup position as Ava slowly hovers her body over Poppy, mimicking the position as she gently lowers her body to make it seem like the toddler is experiencing a weighted pushup. Sara smiles happily, watching her daughter and wife slowly begin to do pushups, appreciating the slow movements of the exercise makes her wife’s muscles pop.

A soft knock on the door causes Sara to glance toward the door as Ethan rushes toward the sound. The pilot smiles at her wife and daughter before moving to answer the door, finding a nervous Lena hugging her coat over her business clothes. Ethan happily wags his tail at the CEO as Sara offers a small smile to Lena.

“Hi, I’m sorry it’s late. I got held back on a conference call,” Lena says apologetically. Sara shakes
her head, before opening the door wider.

“Believe me, we are the queens of getting held late at work. Come in,” Sara says sweetly, ushering the CEO into the house.

Lena admires the home, notching the vast array of family pictures, including pictures from Ava and Sara’s wedding. Lena slides off her coat, only for Sara to hang the garment and purse on the coat rack, causing Lena’s eyes to widen briefly at the kind gesture.

“Thank you,” Lena says as Sara nods.

“Don’t mention it. You’re actually just in time to see Pops’ work out,” Sara says as Lena arches a brow.

Sara leads Lena further into the cozy home before her eyes focus on Ava and Poppy in the middle of the living room floor doing pushups. The little girl grunts, causing Ava to plant a light kiss against her daughter’s hair as she stares down at her lovingly.

“Poppy saw us doing weighted pushups one day. We used her as our weights and she’s been determined to do them ever since,” Sara whispers as Lena smiles.

“That’s adorable,” Lena says softly.

“She has better form than a majority of the cadets I’m training right now too,” Sara says, causing Lena to laugh at the remark.

“Mumma, hard,” Poppy groans.

“One more, my little darling. You can do this. You’re almost there,” Ava encourages.

Lena smiles as she watches the pair, noticing how sweet her sister is being with her daughter. Poppy finishes the last pushup before Ava rolls onto her back, holding up the toddler slightly as she squeals happily.
“Dis it! Seal! Mumma!” Poppy squeals as Ava smiles widely.

“Yes! You’re a very strong seal,” Ava says sweetly before kissing her daughter.

“Li you!” Poppy says happily before Ava smiles. Sara leads Lena into the room, each sitting on the couch as the pilot smiles.

“You are so strong, baby! Just like Mumma!” Sara coos as Poppy squeals. Ava sits up, holding the toddler as she notices her sister sitting on the couch.

“An you, Mummy!” Poppy says happily, causing Sara to smile at her daughter.

“Your Auntie Lena just saw how strong you were too,” Ava says as the toddler’s eyes widen as she notices the CEO.

“Auntie Lena!” Poppy shouts as she rushes toward the CEO. The toddler crawls into Lena’s lap, hugging her, only for Lena to hug her niece tightly.

“Hi, little one,” Lena says before the toddler looks at her.

“You see? I strun!” Poppy says, flexing her muscles. The woman laugh as Lena gently feels the toddler’s arm muscles, widening her eyes as she nods her head with a smile.

“You are so strong. I can’t even do that!” Lena says as Poppy smiles widely.

“I tea you!” Poppy says as Ava groans, causing Sara to laugh.

“Not tonight, baby. Same some of that strength for later,” Sara says as Poppy nods. Ava moves to sit next to Sara on the couch, pressing a kiss against her wife’s lips.

“Thank you, after the last week of doing nothing but pushups, I’m sore,” Ava says as Sara smirks.
“I did it to save you both,” Sara says as Lena nods with a smirk.

“Thank you. I wasn’t kidding when I said that I’m not sure if I could do one,” Lena says before Poppy squirms happily in the CEO’s lap.

“You li your dra?” Poppy asks as Lena arches a brow with a smile.

“I loved them. I keep them on my desk,” Lena says sweetly as Poppy smiles widely.

“Dra wi me?” Poppy asks as Sara and Ava smirk.

“Glad we didn’t put them away already,” Sara says as Ava nods.

“She’s all set up at the kitchen table because Ethan likes to eat crayons. So, until that phase passes, the kitchen is her studio,” Ava says as Lena smirks.

“I would love to draw with you,” Lena says.

“Yay!” Poppy says before sliding from Lena’s lap.

The toddler grabs the CEO’s hand, only for Lena to stand and follow her niece into the stunning kitchen.

“Mummy could use a refill,” Sara says as Ava smirks.

“Mumma too,” Ava says as the couple stands, making their way into the kitchen.

Lena and Poppy sit at the table, the toddler sitting in the CEO’s lap, flipping through pages of a coloring book as the couple walk around the kitchen island. Lena glances over, noticing Sara leaning against the island, bumping her hip against Ava as she walks by, causing the seal to smile before pressing a kiss against her wife’s lips. Lena smirks at the couple before Sara glances over and offers
her a small smile.

“Ar mhaith leat rud éigin a ól? Tá fuisce, fíon againn. (Would you like something to drink? We have whiskey, wine.),” Sara says as Lena’s eyes widen at how easily the pilot speaks Irish.

“Bheadh fíon iontach. Go raibh maith agat. (Wine would be great. Thank you.),” Lena says. Ava smiles as she grabs a bottle of red wine and a glass, beginning to pour the drink.

“Tá sí sách maith, tá sí? (She’s gotten pretty good, huh?),” Ava asks as Lena nods.

“Very good, actually,” Lena says as Sara smirks.

“Well, thank you,” Sara says sweetly. Ava hands her wife a glass of whiskey before walking toward the table, setting Lena’s glass of wine next to her as Poppy points to a picture of a teddy bear before looking at the CEO.

“Is this the one you want to color?” Lena asks as Poppy nods.

“Yes!” Poppy says, grabbing multiple crayons as she begins to color. Lena smiles, grabbing a crayon before beginning to color with her niece.

“You know, I call your Mumma, ‘bear’,,” Lena says as Poppy looks at her in confusion.

“Mumma seal. No bear,” Poppy says as Lena smiles with a nod.

“She is a seal, but growing up, she was my bear. She let me cuddle with her a lot when I got scared,” Lena says as the toddler nods. Sara glances at Ava, who is absentmindedly swirling her whiskey glass, lost in her thoughts. Sara wraps her arm around her wife’s waist before pressing a kiss against her chest.

“Auntie Bear is bear. Mumma seal, no both,” Poppy argues as Lena laughs before pressing a kiss into the toddler’s hair.
“She is your seal and my bear. She can be both, little one. Different people just have different nicknames for the same person,” Lena explains as Poppy scrunches her face as she nods slowly.

“Mummy?” Poppy asks, causing Lena to glance over at the couple, noticing them standing in a loving embrace.

“Yes, baby,” Sara says.

“Ni nam?” Poppy asks as Sara smiles.

“It’s like when I call you, ‘baby’ or Mumma calls you, ‘my little darling’. They’re just other names to call people. It’s out of love,” Sara explains as Poppy nods.

“Auntie Turtar,” Poppy says, pointing at Lena. The toddler watches her mothers nod with small smiles.

“Yes, my little darling. That’s her nickname. You’re so smart,” Ava coos as her daughter smiles.

The toddler returns to her drawing, happily coloring with Lena. Lena smirks, gently taking a sip of her wine before Poppy yawns widely. Lena gently rubs her hand along her back, causing Poppy to sigh softly as she leans further against the CEO.

“Those pushups must have worn you out,” Lena says as the toddler nods. Sara and Ava slowly approach the pair as they smile, noticing how tired their daughter has become.

“Say, she also helped Mummy fly a helicopter today,” Sara says as Poppy nods.

“I seal pilot,” Poppy says, causing the women to laugh before Ava runs a hand through her daughter’s hair.

“Yes, my little darling, you are and a very sleepy one at that,” Ava says before the toddler shakes her head.
“Dra no done,” Poppy says as Lena smiles.

“We can finish it another time, little one. I’m sorry that I got here so late,” Lena says sweetly as the toddler nods, closing her eyes.

“Alright, baby. Tell Auntie Lena, ‘goodnight’, so I can get you to bed,” Sara says before Poppy turns around in Lena’s lap. She wraps her tiny arms around Lena’s neck, only for the CEO to return the hug before the toddler looks at her.

“Nih nih. Póg? (kiss),” Poppy asks as Lena smirks.

“Such a gentlewoman. Yes, póg, (kiss). Sleep well, little one,” Lena says. The toddler plants a kiss against Lena’s lips before reaching for Ava. The seal swoops the toddler into her arms, rapidly planting kisses against her neck and cheeks before Poppy kisses her on the lips.

“No mon?” Poppy asks as Ava shakes her head.

“I checked and sprayed. No monsters,” Ava says sweetly.


“I love you, so much, my little darling. Sweet dreams,” Ava says before Sara takes Poppy into her arms.

The pilot plants a kiss against her daughter’s cheek before disappearing down the hall, Ethan quickly following behind the pair, leaving the sisters alone. Lena quickly tidies their coloring area as Ava motions for Lena to follow her into the living room. The sisters sit on the couch, each cradling the drinks in their hands before Lena breaks the silence.

“You’re incredible with Poppy. The pushups were adorable,” Lena says as Ava smirks.

“Thank you. You’re not too terrible with her, either,” Ava says as Lena’s eyes widen.
“She is absolutely incredible. Literally, you can’t help but smile when she looks at you with that dimpled smile and those big blue eyes of hers,” Lena says as Ava nods with a smile.

“Don’t I know it. Shite, when your wife and daughter use their gorgeous eyes in a pout, there’s nothing you can do but to agree to whatever they want,” Ava says sweetly as Lena smirks.

“Seeing all of you, together like this, you all look ridiculously happy. Like nothing else matters,” Lena says as Ava nods.

“Well, Sara and I, we have an agreement. We try to leave work at the door and not bring it into our home. Make it our own little personal escape, so we can just focus on us and our daughter,” Ava says as Lena shakes her head before sipping her wine.

“Wish that I could do that,” Lena says as Ava arches a brow.

“What do you mean?” Ava asks as Lena sighs.

“I’m constantly surrounded with work. Not to mention, in my personal life, I’m always reminded of the bad decisions I’ve made for the company, wrong outfit choices, etcetera,” Lena says as Ava nods.

“I’m guessing James and our mother didn’t take the news lightly about the decision to end the partnership with Hutchins,” Ava says as Lena scoffs.

“ Took it about as well as we do when people think we’re from Scotland,” Lena deadpans as Ava nods.

“Ah, I get it. Well, you could have just blamed it on me. They can’t possibly hate me any more than they already do,” Ava says before Lena shakes her head.

“It was my decision. Yes, you supported it, but I wasn’t going to hide the fact that it came from me. Besides, that gobshite told them already. She just wanted to hear it from me,” Lena says, sipping her wine as Ava nods.
“It was a good move,” Ava says as Lena nods.

“Can I ask you something?” Lena asks as Ava nods.

“Of course,” Ava says as the CEO sighs.

“You and Sam. Were you two behind the stop in my projects on vaccine development and climate change initiatives?” Lena asks, causing Ava’s eyes to widen.

“What?! Why on earth would we do that?” Ava asks as Lena shrugs.

“I don’t know. It happened shortly after the news came out about Lex. I thought, maybe you two were behind the reason why it stopped,” Lena says as Ava shakes her head.

“Sam and I, we have always supported you in the projects that you are passionate about. As far as I knew, those projects were still in progress,” Ava says as Lena nods.

The CEO sips her wine, her eyes glancing around the living room, studying the pictures on the wall. Lena’s eyes continue to dart around the room, before her eyes widen slightly at the sight of a familiar, beautiful journalist with Poppy resting on her shoulders as she hugs Ava. Lena’s jaw clenches before she rapidly shakes her head.

“So, did you play a part in sending Kara Danvers to my office?” Lena asks coldly.

“What?” Ava asks in shock.

“You knew who she was that day she came into my office. She’s in your pictures on the walls. Why didn’t you tell me? Or did you just send her to my office to try and charm me to separate me from James?” Lena asks as Ava scoffs.

“I didn’t tell you because I was rushing to base. Yes, I saw her on the way out, but other than that, we have never discussed her. Kara is one hell of a journalist. She came to interview you because she personally used the technology we designed in developing countries. It’s personal to her, so she wanted to interview the actual source,” Ava counters as Lena scoffs.
“Yet, she didn’t interview you,” Lena says as Ava shakes her head.

“Because you’ve continue to enhance them while I’ve been away for deployments. Cat made the right choice in wanting to interview you because you have personally kept up with it,” Ava says as Lena shakes her head.

“Right, Cat’s decision to send a beautiful woman into my office is a total coincidence,” Lena snaps as Ava knits her brows.

“I may have done a lot of things in my life, but manipulating your personal life? No, I’ll leave that to our mother,” Ava says as Lena scoffs.

“I don’t know why I came here,” Lena says. The CEO hastily stands as Sara renters the room, eyes widening as she watches her wife follow Lena toward the door.

“Why can’t you just admit that she’s using you?” Ava asks as Lena rolls her eyes.

“I would rather her dictate my life than have someone who killed our brother consistently lie to my face,” Lena snaps, causing Ava’s eyes to widen. Sara moves toward her wife, lightly rubbing the small of her back as Ava clenches her jaw.

“Oh my god. It’s always going to come down to that, isn’t it? Your obsessive need to feel accepted by our mother and James is always going to beat the fact that I genuinely love and support you. They’re fueling that need by filling your head with lies and your head is too far up their arses to even realize it!” Ava says harshly. Within seconds, Lena’s hand smacks Ava’s check, causing the sound to echo throughout the silent home. Sara moves her hand against Ava’s chest, pulling her close to her, as she holds her hand against the rapid rise and fall of her chest.

“Baby, socair, (calm down),” Sara whispers, noticing her wife’s tense body language and dilated pupils. Sara gently rubs her hand along Ava’s chest, lightly rubbing her collarbone with her thumb, causing Ava to relax as Lena shakes her head.

“I don’t know what make me think that coming over here would change anything. You’re never going to change. You still killed our brother,” Lena snaps before turning to exit the home, only for Ava’s voice to stop her in her tracks.
“I may have pulled the trigger, but it doesn’t mean that you were the only one that lost their big brother. I mourned his loss, just as you did. The weight of my actions cast a heavy burden on my heart, one that I will always carry with me. You’re right, nothing has changed. No matter how much love or support that I give to you, it’s never going to compare to your need for Lillian’s approval,” Ava says sadly, tears streaming down her face. Lena glances over her shoulder, tears burning in her eyes before she exits the home, closing the door behind her. Sara holds onto her wife as the seal’s eyes continue to release tears.

“You okay?” Sara asks as Ava nods.

“You were right,” Ava says softly.

“About what, baby?” Sara asks as Ava sighs.

“Until she separates herself from James and our mother, I don’t want her around Poppy. I can’t have that risk of something happening to our little girl, Sara. I-I can’t,” Ava says rapidly before Sara nods, moving her hands to cup her wife’s face.

“Hey, baby, hey. Look at me, Pops is safe. I am here and I support this, okay?” Sara asks sweetly.

“Okay,” Ava says softly, nodding before Sara plants a tender kiss against her wife’s lips.

“Let’s go check on our little girl, then we can crawl into bed and I’ll hold you,” Sara offers sweetly, causing Ava to nod.

Sara locks the door before holding her wife close as they slowly make their way toward their daughter’s room. It wasn’t how the couple envisioned the night ending, but one thing is for certain. Until Lena separates herself from Lillian and James, she is viewed as a wildcard. Ava never wanted to label her sister that way, but her mother’s claws are so deep into her sister’s mind that she has no other choice.

They could figure it out later, right now, Ava just wanted to love on her wife and daughter.
Alex enters the cafe, scanning the small dining area as she notices her sister smiling and waving from a corner booth. Alex smiles, rolling her eyes playfully at her excited sister as she moves to sit across from her.

“Hey! I’m glad you could make it,” Kara says happy as Alex smirks.

“How many coffees have you had this morning? Or do I even want to know how much sugar you added to it?” Alex asks as Kara rolls her eyes.

“One and probably not,” Kara says, icing her hand to her face to play with her glasses except, she’s not wearing them. Alex laughs before glancing down at her menu as she shakes her head.

“I wish that I had your energy most days,” Alex says as Kara smirks.

“Well, one of us hasn’t been getting our asses kicked because a cadet crashed a dingy into a pool. How did that even happen, by the way?” Kara asks as Alex shakes her head.

“Idiot ramped it up the dock, somehow had enough hang time to crash through the window before landing in the pool,” Alex says as Kara laughs.

“Impressive,” Kara says as Alex nods.

“Yeah, until you’re doing more pushups than god and living under the cold showers,” Alex says as Kara grimaces.

“Yikes, yeah. I can see why you’re not enthused by it,” Kara says as Alex nods. The waitress approaches the table, quickly taking their food orders before Alex smiles at Kara.
“So, I read your first article in CatCo Magazine. It was amazing,” Alex says proudly as Kara smiles.

“Thank you. I really enjoyed writing it,” Kara says as Alex smirks.

“Oh, and what about interviewing Lena?” Alex asks as Kara blushes.

“She’s incredible. Answered all of my questions and then some. She even sent me flowers, thanking me,” Kara says as Alex arches a brow.

“You have that look,” Alex says as Kara shakes her head rapidly, trying to hide her blush.

“No look,” Kara says as Alex laughs.

“Bullshit. You’re blushing,” Alex says as Kara sighs.

“I might have called her beautiful,” Kara mumbles as Alex’s eyes widen.

“Oh, that explains the flowers,” Alex says as Kara groans.

“It was a kind gesture, Alex. That’s all,” Kara defends as the seal shakes her head.

“Mmhmm, a gay gesture if you ask me,” Alex says as Kara’s eyes widen.

“Awww!” Kara scolds, causing Alex to laugh.

“What?! Lena is constantly being interviewed and I bet, she’s never sent anyone flowers to thank them for it. I mean, you did flirt with her,” Alex deadpans as Kara groans.

“I didn’t mean to! It just slipped out and besides, she’s dating that asshat James, anyway,” Kara says
as Alex nods.

“Don’t remind me. How did she react to you saying it?” Alex asks curiously, noticing her sister nervously picking at the corner of a napkin.

“She did this sexy eyebrow arch, followed with a wink and gosh, a ridiculously attractive smirk. Said something about keeping it between us,” Kara says as Alex smiles devilishly.

“Yup. Totally a gay gesture,” Alex says as Kara rolls her eyes.

“Alex,” Kara warns as Alex raises her hands in defense.

“What?! She totally flirted with you!” Alex counters as Kara shakes her head.

“Well, whatever. She has a boyfriend. I can’t believe that none of you had anything to do with it,” Kara says as Alex smirks.

“The universe must want her away from that dick just as much as the rest of us,” Alex says as Kara nods.

“Yeah, but I felt dirty for doing that. I’m not a home wrecker,” Kara says as Alex nods.

“Kar, you did nothing wrong. You’re not technically being a home wrecker because they literally have no chemistry,” Alex says as Kara shakes her head.

“But still,” Kara says as Alex smirks.

“Meeting her only solidified your crush, didn’t it?” Alex asks as Kara nods, releasing a heavy sigh.

“Unfortunately. Why does she have to be with someone who literally is the most arrogant and heartless man that I have ever met?” Kara asks as Alex shakes her head.
“Because her heartless excuse for a mother pushed them together,” Alex answers as Kara nods.

“I can’t even imagine how miserable that must be,” Kara says as Alex shrugs.

“Lena is a smart woman, who is getting manipulated. It doesn’t make it right, but she has a choice. It’s up to her whether or not she wants to use that choice,” Alex says as Kara nods.

“Yeah, well. I have to keep my flattering skills to a minimum because apparently, James is proposing soon,” Kara says with a shake of her head, causing Alex’s eyes to widen.

“What?!” Alex says, completely shocked as Kara nods.

“Yup. Overheard him bragging about how he’s going to marry Lena. Right before he checked out the group of new interns,” Kara says as Alex’s mouth gapes open in shock.

“Holy shit. Ava is going to literally freak the fuck out when she finds out,” Alex says as Kara nods.

“That’s what I’m afraid of,” Kara says as Alex shakes her head.

“Shit,” Alex says as Kara sighs.

“I haven’t told her. I just heard about it this morning. I’m not sure if I’m the best person to break the news to her,” Kara says as Alex nods.

“I’ll tell her. It’ll be better if I do it. We can spar or go for a ride to clear her head,” Alex says as Kara nods.

“Good idea,” Kara says as Alex shakes her head.

“Jesus and they fought last night, too,” Alex says as Kara’s eyes widen.
“What?” Kara asks.

“Apparently, Lena came over. Spent time with Pops and they were talking until things got heated. Lena thinks that Ava sent you to interview her, she’s evil for killing Lex, blah, blah, blah. Anyway, Ava was an angry mess this morning during drill,” Alex says as Kara sighs.

“It just keeps getting better and better,” Kara says sarcastically.

“Enough about that bullshit. Let’s talk about real weddings,” Alex says as Kara smiles.

“Oh, a much better topic,” Kara says as Alex smirks.

“I kinda need your help with something,” Alex says as Kara nods.

“Name it,” Kara says happily.

“Sam and I are scheduled to go wedding cake tasting next Wednesday. However, Aves and I are getting deployed Monday and won’t be back until sometime that weekend. So, I was hoping, you wouldn’t mind taking my place?” Alex asks as Kara smiles widely.

“You had me at cake. Send me the details and I’m there,” Kara says as Alex smiles.

“Thank you, Kar. You’re saving my ass, big time,” Alex says as Kara smirks.

“Don’t mention it. Can I even ask where they’re shipping you two off to?” Kara asks in a worried tone.

“Classified location. It should be a simple in and out. Retrieving some stolen biological warheads, that’s all,” Alex says nonchalantly as Kara shakes her head.

“You say it as if it’s any given Tuesday,” Kara deadpans as Alex smirks.
“For Aves and I it is,” Alex says before Kara reaches across the table, taking her sister’s hand into her own.

“Promise me, you’ll be careful,” Kara says as Alex nods.

“I always am, Kar. We stay ready so we don’t have to get ready,” Alex says playfully, causing Kara to laugh.

“Okay, someone has been watching too much RuPaul without me,” Kara says as Alex smirks.

“You really need to hear Pops scream, ‘yas queen’. It’s adorable,” Alex says as Kara whines.

“Please, tell me there’s a video,” Kara says as Alex pulls out her phone.

The sisters watch their adorable niece, laughing and smiling, before their lunch arrives. The sisters enjoy their lunch, discussing wedding plans and upcoming articles, just happy to be in each other’s company.

**Wednesday...at L-Corp**

“When is she supposed to be here?” James asks, staring onto the balcony of Lena’s office.

“Any minute now. Which, I remind you, is a closed meeting,” Lena says with a glare as the man scoffs.

“Won’t be long until I’m helping run the company,” James says with a smug smile as Lena sighs.

“Ava is the majority CEO. You realize that I could potentially lose my position when she finds out,” Lena says as James rolls his eyes before looking at the CEO.

“Lillian is handling the legalities. Soon, Ava won’t have a say in the matter,” James says.
“Again, I know that Ava will fight tooth and nail to ensure that she keeps her role in the company. I don’t think it’s going to be as easy as what my mother is making it out to be,” Lena says as James arching a brow.

“Are you doubting her capabilities?” James asks as Lena shakes her head.

“No, I’m simply saying that Ava is no push over. She is well versed in contracts and legal agreements. More so than most of the lawyer’s in the city. It’s going to be hard for to actually take her down,” Lena counters as James smirks.

“Well, you leave that to us. We happen to know what makes her tick,” James says, chuckling to himself with an evil smirk.

The action unsettles Lena, before the door to her office opens. Sam strolls into the office, wearing a black suit and heels with a folder tucked under her arm. Lena and James’ eyes widen at the CFO’s presence instead of Ava. As Lena begins to open her mouth, she’s cut off by James.

“What the hell are you doing here?” James asks as Sam arches a brow.

“Ava was sent on a deployment early yesterday morning. She’s not expected back until sometime over the weekend. Therefore, I’m filling in on her behalf,” Sam says calmly.

“Jess wasn’t informed of her deployment,” Lena says as James scoffs.

“Typical,” James says as Sam shakes her head.

“Ava is serving her country and keeping out country safe from the people who spread the hateful rhetoric that you thoroughly believe in, Mr. Olsen,” Sam says as James clenches his jaw tightly.

“I think, people like Ava and your fiancé are the ones we need protecting from. They actively kill people, unlike myself,” James says as Sam smirks, holding her head up in confidence. The CFO notices the uncomfortable look across Lena’s face before glaring at James.

“Well, people with your mindset act as a plague to humanity. It’s people like you that put my loved
ones in harm’s way because they believe in the good of the world. Something you can’t seem to wrap your head around,” Sam quips. James hands ball into fists before Lema clears her throat.

“Well, I have a meeting at two and we have a lot to discuss. You two can have your pissing contest some other time,” Lena says, causing James to glare harshly at the CEO.

He grabs his coat, hastily exiting the office, only to roughly bump Sam’s shoulder as he passes. The door closes behind him, causing Lena’s shoulders to visibly relax as Sam moves to sit across from the CEO.

“Lena, are you okay?” Sam asks, causing Lena to scoff as she looks at the CFO.

“Why do you care?” Lena asks as Sam’s eyes widen.

“Look, Lena, you and Ava have been two of my best friends for years. Just because I don’t agree with some of your decisions doesn’t mean that I stopped caring about you,” Sam says softly, causing Lena to look at her, shock evident in her facial expression.

“Yet, you’re marrying a woman that helped kill my brother,” Lena retorts as Sam sighs.

“My fiancé and Ava, they are more than their jobs, Lena. They carry demons with them that no one should have to carry. They do it to keep us safe,” Sam says as Lena nods slowly.

“How can you look past their jobs so easily?” Lena asks, causing Sam to nod.

“I focus on the goodness of their hearts and not what they’re forced to do in certain circumstances for work. Just because they are trained and ordered to do things, by no means, does that mean that they enjoy it. They leave their work outside of their personal life because they don’t want to bring those demons home more than they already have to,” Sam explains as Lena nods.

“Yet, your daughter and my sister’s daughter, idolize them for their jobs,” Lena says as Sam sighs.

“The first time that Ruby told Alex that she wanted to be a seal when she grows up, it crushed her. She doesn’t want Ruby to grow up to experience the horrors she’s seen or experienced, nor does she
want her to experience the nightmares or flashbacks that they deal with on a regular basis. They feel honored that their daughters admire them, but in no way is that the life they want for them,” Sam says, causing something to trigger in the CEO’s mind. She had never thought of that, Ava’s smiled and fed into Poppy’s admiration of her job, but never once did she think about the horrors that come with it. Sighing softly, Lena nods before running her hand along her gold necklace.

“Then why act so proud?” Lena asks as Sam nods.

“Because they’re the only two women seals in the history of the Navy. Yes, they are proud of that accomplishment, but as for Poppy and Ruby, they both want them to end up being a journalist, a painter, CEO, or whatever else they want to become. Personally, I’m hoping Ruby wants to be like me so she can take over my workload,” Sam says with a smirk, causing Lena to smile.

“She brought Poppy into a board meeting. Even at the age of two, she has the poker face of a CEO,” Lena says as Sam smiles.

“Sounds like our Pops,” Sam says with a small laugh as Lena sighs.

“Yeah. Anyway, about the budget,” Lena says before Sam slides a folder onto her desk.

“Before we start, here is a folder of every project that Ava or myself has approved or disapproved,” Sam says as Lena slowly opens the folder. Her eyes quickly scan the document, noticing that neither one of them have halted any of Lena’s personal projects or initiatives. The CEO’s eyes narrow on a familiar name, causing her jaw to clench in anger before glancing at Sam.

“Thank you,” Lena says as Sam nods.

“Don’t mention it,” Sam says as Lena shakes her head.

“Why are you both continuing to be kind to me?” Lena asks softly.

“Well, I can speak for myself and Aves, since I’m acting as her currently, but it’s because we love you. We believe in you,” Sam says as Lena scoffs.
“I don’t know why,” Lena says as Sam sighs.

“Honestly, I believe in my heart that you need to have an extremely honest conversation with your sister,” Sam says as Lena scoffs.

“Yeah, I doubt that she wants to even look at me, let alone speak to me after the argument we had last week,” Lena counters.

“Look, I know that it’s hard but I’m telling you, Lena. You need to talk to her because at the least, it will give you clarity and closure about what’s happened. There’s a lot of things that you don’t know about and once you do, it’ll change everything,” Sam says as Lena arches a brow.

“How so?” Lena asks.

“That is for you to decide,” Sam says as Lena nods.

“I’ll think about it,” Lena says as Sam smirks.

“Alright, as much as I would love to continue this, we need to talk about this budget. If I’m late to my cake tasting, my wedding planner will literally pick the nastiest cake just in spite of me,” Sam says as Lena nods.

The women discuss the budget, their ideas flowing freely and easily between the two women. Little did Sam realize, she planted a lot of things inside the CEO’s mind from her statements to the file sitting on her desk.

Ava and Sam didn’t reject the projects that Lena was so passionate about, her mother did.
The cool desert breeze causes Ava to slightly shiver under the moonlight as she sits on a piece of concrete, lost in her thoughts. The mission to retrieve the stolen warheads and biological weapons led her team to find more than they bargained for along with one of their youngest and newest members to be fatally killed. He was young, had a pint to prove and he disobeyed Ava’s orders, causing him to rush in and receive several gunshots to the head and torso. Ava takes the loss personally, however, her fellow teammates assured her that it isn’t her fault, but it doesn’t mean that it won’t haunt her.

The most shocking of it all was finding drones that were the exact make and model to the one that shot down her wife’s jet inside the makeshift laboratory. It makes Ava angry, and when they discovered that the laboratory belonged to one of James’ closest friends, it only furthered her anger. Moments like this make Ava miss her wife and daughter, her only sense of escape from the horrors swirling in her mind.

The soft sound of footsteps approaching causes Ava to turn her head slightly as Alex moves to sit next to the seal. The women sit in a small silence before Alex relieves a small pack of cigarettes and a lighter, opening it and offering one to Ava. Ava glances at the open pack before Alex smirks at her.

“I won’t tell Sara if you don’t tell Sam,” Alex says as Ava nods, moving to take a cigarette. The women quickly light their cigarettes, each taking a long drag before exhaling slowly.

“Shite,” Ava says with a sigh as Alex nods.

“It wasn’t your fault. Jeffries disobeyed every commanding officer,” Alex says as Ava nods.

“He was so young, Alex,” Ava says as Alex sighs.

“I know, and it showed along with his disrespect toward women in leadership roles,” Alex says, puffing the cigarette.
“I know it but with that idiotic move along with what we found, shite. It makes me feel a scary sense of cold and calm,” Ava says, taking a drag of the cigarette.

“It confirms Laurel and Sam’s theory about who is responsible for shooting Sara’s bird out of the sky. I’m pissed too,” Alex says as Ava slowly blows the smoke from her lungs.

“It makes me want to track them down and break every bone in their miserable bodies for doing that to her,” Ava says coldly as Alex wraps an arm around her best friend’s shoulders.

“As much as I love that thought, it would make us no better than them,” Alex says as Ava nods.

“I know but it doesn’t mean that they don’t deserve to feel the same amount of pain they put my wife through” Ava says softly.

“Not only Sara’s pain, but for your pain as well,” Alex says as Ava nods.

“I agreed to that pain. To protect Lena, and we all saw how that turned out,” Ava says bitterly, taking another long drag from the cigarette.

“I know, Aves. No one faults you for that. If I was put in that situation, I would have done the same thing to protect Kara. We protect our baby sisters because we love them and want the best for them,” Alex says as Ava exhales smoke while Alex takes a long drag of the cigarette.

“Yeah,” Ava says sadly before Alex releases a heavy, smoke-filled breath.

“Aves, there’s something you should know,” Alex says, causing the seal to look at her.

“What is it?” Ava asks.

“Kara overheard James bragging to his coworkers about his plans to propose to Lena,” Alex says, causing Ava’s eyes to widen.

“What?!” Ava says in shock as Alex nods, puffing her cigarette.
“She told me before we were shipped out. Aves,” Alex says before Ava takes a long drag of her cigarette.

“That’s what that cheeky cunt has been planning. Shite, I should have seen it coming sooner,” Ava says harshly, causing Alex’s eyes to widen.

“What are you talking about?” Alex asks as Ava shakes her head.

“Our mother hated my father for signing the company over to me instead of Lex. Her pushing James to propose is to have Lena put him on the board to outweigh my input,” Ava says as Alex gasps.

“Basically, letting her run L-Corp,” Alex says as Ava nods, flicking the butt of the cigarette away.

“Exactly,” Ava says as Alex shakes her head.

“But you’re still the majority CEO, right?” Alex asks as Ava nods.

“Laurel and I, along with Sam, made damn sure of that in all of our contracts. Doesn’t mean that our mother won’t fight like hell to change it,” Ava says harshly before Alex shakes her head.

Alex flips her cigarette butt away before opening the pack again, retrieving another cigarette, only for Ava to follow her actions. Both women light their cigarettes, before Alex shakes her head.

“What do we do?” Alex asks.

“I’ll talk with Laurel. Make sure there isn’t any secret loop holes for her to slip through,” Ava says as Alex nods.

“And what about Lena?” Alex asks as Ava shakes her head.

“Who knows,” Ava says, sipping her cigarette as she stares at the ground.
“Kara flirted with her by accident during the interview. Lena sent her flowers as a thank you,” Alex says as Ava scoffs in disbelief.

“No shite,” Ava says as Alex nods with a small smile.

“Gay move, huh?” Alex asks as Ava laughs, nodding in agreement.

“Oh yeah. She doesn’t send flowers to anyone,” Ava says as Alex smiles.

“I told Kara that! She didn’t believe me,” Ava says as Alex shakes her head.

“Maybe, there is some hope for her after all,” Ava says softly, puffing smoke from her lips.

“You should tell her what happened,” Alex says softly.

“I don’t think she will want to hear anything that I have to say,” Ava says sadly before Alex exhales smoke from her nose.

“Well, I know that Sam planned on showing her that you two weren’t responsible for ending her projects. Maybe it will spike some questions of her own,” Alex says as Ava sighs.

“I hope so but if not, she’s going to fall back into Lillian’s trap. If she agrees to marries him, whatever chance of rebuilding our relationship will be finished,” Ava says before Alex rubs her hand along Ava’s back.

“Which is why, we can’t let her agree to marry him. If she does that means Lillian wins and I’m not about to let that bitch beat us,” Alex says as Ava smirks.

“You’re right, I need to tell her,” Ava says as Alex smiles smugly.

“Say it again,” Alex says playfully as Ava lightly shoves her.
“Feck off,” Ava says with a smirk before Alex laughs.

“You know, our stress smoking tradition during deployments is a nasty habit but we do have some of our best talks during it,” Alex says as Ava nods.

“Definitely and some of our best planning. My proposal, your proposal, the paint party,” Ava says as Alex nods.

“God that paint party. We have to have another one of those,” Alex says as Ava smirks.

“It was one hell of a night,” Ava says as the women laugh, remembering how ridiculously out of control their little family became, not to mention the raging hangovers the following day.

“And now, we plan to take down your mother,” Alex says as Ava nods.

“You’re supposed to love your parents, unconditionally. I loved my father, beyond words, and it crushed me when Lex murdered him. The day that my father died is the day that I became an orphan because the only feeling that I have toward Lillian is an unfathomable hate for what she’s done, what she’s still doing,” Ava says coldly as Alex nods.

“Me too and she’s not even related to me,” Alex says as Ava smirks.

“Be bloody thankful for that,” Ava says before Alex pulls the seal into her side, causing Ava to lean into her embrace.

“We are going to stop her, I promise,” Alex whispers.

Days later...

“Seriously?” Laurel asks as Gideon nods.
“Exact make and model,” Gideon says as Sara shakes her head.

“Son of a bitch,” Sara mumbles, thankful that her daughter is asleep for the evening.

“Who owns the lab they raided?” Laurel asks as Gideon arches a brow.

“I shouldn’t tell you this but it belongs to a Mr. Greg Hutchins,” Gideon says as Laurel’s eyes widen.

“Holy shit,” Laurel says.

“Who is that?” Sara asks.

“One of James’ best mates,” Ava says as she enters the home. Sara springs to her feet, moving to wrap her arms tightly around her wife as she presses a tender kiss against Ava’s lips.

“I’m so glad you’re home,” Sara mumbles as Ava smirks.

“Me too, my love,” Ava says sweetly as she follows her wife toward the couch. Gideon stands from her seat, hugging the seal tightly.

“You, Irish wanker,” Gideon mumbles as Ava smirks.

“You, snobby Brit,” Ava whispers, planting a kiss against her cheek. As Ava breaks the embrace with Gideon, she turns as Laurel wraps her arms around the seal, hugging her tightly.

“Welcome back,” Laurel says sweetly as Ava smiles with a nod.

“Thank you. It’s good to see you,” Ava says before both women sit on either side of Sara.

“So, back to this Greg Hutchins, dude,” Sara says as Laurel nods.
“He and James, both have backed Lex’s beliefs and technology. Selling them to the highest bidder in the terrorist ring,” Laurel says as Gideon nods.

“Not to mention those blimey bio-toxic warheads,” Gideon says.

“So, this proves that at least James was involved with shooting my bird out of the sky,” Sara says as Laurel nods.

“It’s does but it doesn’t connect us to Lillian,” Laurel says as Ava shakes her head.

“It’s does. When Lena made the decision to part ways with his company, she was the first person to criticize her for it,” Ava says as Laurel’s eyes widen.

“That definitely helps,” Laurel says as Gideon nods.

“We can trace to try to see if they left a trail of potential meetings, etcetera,” Gideon says.

“If we tie it together, will it be enough?” Sara asks as Ava shakes her head.

“Not unless Lena knows the extent of their plans, which I’m guessing she doesn’t,” Ava says as Laurel sighs.

“Damn it,” Laurel says.

“Bloody bitch is always a step ahead,” Gideon says as Sara nods.

“No kidding,” Sara chimes in before Ava sighs.

“Which leads us to another issue,” Ava says as the women exchange glances.
“There’s more?” Sara asks as Ava nods.

“James is planning on proposing to Lena. Knowing Lillian, she’s pushing it in hopes that Lena will put him on the board of my company. Trying to void my opinions on any company issues,” Ava says as the women gasp.

“Excuse me, what?” Gideon asks.

“Shite, is that even possible?” Sara asks as Laurel knits her brows.

“Not with the contract we drafted. Ava is the majority owner and that’s final,” Laurel says as Ava nods.

“We need to scan through everything. Even if there is a sliver of a loop hole in the contract, she will find it,” Ava says as Laurel nods.

“I won’t let that happen. You have my word,” Laurel says as Ava nods.

“Do you honestly think that Lena is going to agree to that? To marry him?” Sara asks as Ava shakes her head.

“I don’t know but if she does,” Ava says, stopping herself as she sighs.

“Then Lillian will think she’s in full control,” Gideon says as Ava nods.

“How?” Laurel asks as a dry laugh escapes Ava’s lips.

“If Lena agrees to marry him, Lillian will work it to where she doesn’t feel the need to sign a prenup,” Ava says as Sara’s eyes widen.

“So if she did leave one day, he would still own part of L-Corp,” Sara says as Ava nods.
“Still having some control,” Gideon says softly.

“Bullshit. Over my dead body will I allow that woman to ever control a fraction of what’s rightfully yours,” Laurel says harshly.

“We need a plan,” Sara says as Gideon nods.

“A bloody good one at that,” Gideon says as Ava nods.

“Sam talked to Lena while I was away. Showing proof that Lillian stopped her projects. From the sounds of it, Sam said it struck a cord with her. Now, we drive the nail through the coffin,” Ava says.

“How?” Laurel asks as Ava sighs.

“I tell her the truth,” Ava says, causing the women to widen their eyes in shock.

“Bloody hell,” Gideon mumbles.

“Baby, are you sure that you’re ready for that conversation?” Sara asks, holding her wife’s hand. Ava sighs, shaking her head slightly before glancing at her wife.

“I swore to my father to always protect her and give her the best chance for a future. If I don’t, she will never know the truth and the choices that I made that day will have been for nothing,” Ava says as Sara nods supportively.

“What if she still agrees to marry him after she finds out the truth?” Laurel asks softly, causing Ava’s face to contort into a cold expression.

“Then she will be no better than Lillian or James. She will make herself an enemy to our family and country. They need to pay for what they’ve done, the pain they’ve caused all of us. I’ve had to take down a sibling before, and if I have to do it again, so be it. My true family is more important,” Ava says coldly as the women nod.
The women continue to plan and strategize, finalizing details on their future efforts against Lillian and James. Ava excuses herself to go into her daughter’s room, causing Sara’s heart to ache for her wife.

Lena cannot agree to marry James because if she does, she has no idea the shite storm coming her way.

Especially, if Ava’s leading the charge against her.
Days later...

“So, I have news,” Laurel says, strolling into Ava and Sara’s home.

Kara and Zari are sitting on the smaller couch with Ethan sprawled across their laps while Sara is holding Ava, with the seal’s back against her chest, as the seal holds the sleeping toddler against her chest. Gideon is happily sipping on a cup of tea, curled in the loveseat next to the fireplace.

“What is it?” Kara asks as Laurel sighs happily, smiling at the adorable toddler before sitting next to Zari and Kara.

“Well, word on the street is that James and his group of idiots are meeting with a potential new partner tomorrow night,” Laurel says.

“Where’s the meeting?” Sara asks softly, causing Laurel to smirk.

“Our favorite club, Cobalt,” Laurel says as Zari smiles.

“Oh my god. Please, tell me you want us to go investigate,” Zari says as Laurel nods.

“You read my mind,” Laurel says as Kara and Zari smile at each other.

“Dancing partner?” Zari asks.

“Always,” Kara says before Ava knits her brows.
“Oh, baby. It’s been so long since we’ve went out dancing,” Sara whispers into her wife’s ear.

“How are we going to investigate without them knowing? They will recognize all of us instantly,” Ava says, keeping her voice down to not disturb her sleeping daughter.

“Well, not all of us,” Laurel says before the women all glance over at Gideon, who’s eyes have tripled in size.

“Oh, bullocks. I knew, I should’ve stayed home,” Gideon mumbles as she shakes her head.

“And what’s your plan? Send her in there? That won’t suspicious, at all,” Sara says dryly as Ava nods.

“Lena also knows what Gideon looks like. She saw her in a family photo,” Ava says as Zari arches a brow.

“Maybe she won’t even be there. I mean, I can’t really see her wanting to hang around that kind of scene,” Zari says as Kara shakes her head.

“No, but any way that James gets to flaunt her around like his personal property, he will,” Kara says as Ava nods.

“Kar is right. He probably won’t let her out of his sight,” Ava says before Sara and Laurel exchange a glance, smirking slightly.

“Unless, we cause a distraction,” Sara says as Laurel nods.

“Exactly, which won’t be hard due to how well you and Ava dance together. We create a diversion, I’ll watch from the bar, Gideon can slip in and take pictures of what we need and get out before they come back,” Laurel says as Kara’s brows knit.

“How will that get them all to leave? Especially, Lena,” Kara asks as Ava smirks.
“Alex mentioned that she flirted with you. Her seeing you dance with Zari will peak her interest for
dancing with a beautiful woman that isn’t her,” Ava says as Zari smirks.

“Oh, watch out, Sara. I might steal your wife tomorrow night when I’m all dolled up, looking fine as
ever,” Zari says playfully as Sara arches a brow.

“Uh huh, until she sees you flop around like a fish on the dance floor. Besides, if you try to steal her
away from me on the dance floor, I’ll break your leg,” Sara threatens playfully as Zari gulps with a
nervous smile.

“Have I told you how much I love you, lately? And how much I really don’t want you to break my
leg?” Zari asks nervously.

“That’s more like it,” Sara says playfully.

“I won’t let that happen,” Ava says, flashing Zari a wink.

“Besides, you have to make Lena jealous of the fact that your spaz-arse is dancing with Kara,” Sara
quips before Kara shakes her head nervously.

“I wouldn’t call what we did was flirting, per say. I called her, ‘beautiful’ and she sent me flowers.
That’s all,” Kara defends.

“Total gay move,” Gideon says.

“Oh yeah,” Zari says as Kara sighs, blush filling her cheeks.

“Not to mention the flirty wink or the smirk. I know, how my sister flirts, those are her two give
aways. Oh, and the flowers. Yeah. She’s interested in you,” Ava says, causing Kara’s cheeks to burn
with blush.

“Aw, so cute,” Zari says, pinching Kara’s cheeks lightly. Kara swats her hand away playfully as
Gideon rolls her eyes with a smile.

“So, what’s next? Other than the two floppy, spastic fishes dancing together,” Gideon says as Zari and Kara gasp in mock hurt.

“We are not that bad,” Kara says as Gideon’s eyes widen.

“Ehh,” Gideon says.

“We just know how to have a good time. Besides, I think, you’re jealous about all the fun you’re going to be missing out on,” Zari says as Ava and Sara laugh lightly.

“Keep telling yourself that, Z,” Sara says as Gideon nods.

“Best not to dance too close to the married dancing queens. May make you look bad with all the flopping going on,” Gideon quips as Zari and Kara exchange a glance.

“She’s got a point,” Kara says as Zari nods.

“Yeah,” Zari says softly, causing the women in the room to laugh lightly.

“How will Gideon be able to get pictures?” Sara asks as her and Ava lightly rub Poppy’s back.

“We will plant a camera on a necklace for Gideon to wear. It’ll be small, and the black lights of the club won’t reflect it, making it completely unrecognizable. I spoke with Alex and Sam on my way here. They’re going to stay here, with Poppy and Ruby. They both agree that it would be overly suspicious if they were seen at the club too. They will watch from the club’s surveillance cameras and they’ll be able to take still shots of everything Gideon finds. They’ll also be our eyes in the sky. We will all wear ear pieces, so we can communicate. They’ll be able to give us a heads up if we run into any unforeseen trouble,” Laurel says as the women smile.

“What do you think, my love? Ready for a night of fun while taking down some bad guys?” Sara asks before Ava glances up at her wife. Ava smiles, planting a kiss against Sara’s jaw before nodding her head.
“You had me at dancing. Taking down that gobshite is just an added bonus,” Ava says as Laurel smirks.

“Gideon?” Laurel asks as the woman sighs.

“I will, however, you have to buy all of my drinks for the evening,” Gideon says as the lawyer nods.

“Done,” Laurel says happily.

“I only drink top shelf,” Gideon quips as Laurel’s smile widens.

“Me too,” Laurel says with a wink before looking at Zari.

“Oh, you already know my answer. This is going to be so much fun,” Zari says as Kara shakes her head with a laugh.

“Kar?” Laurel asks.

“Well, when am I ever going to have the chance to play spy inside of a nightclub again? So, I’m in,” Kara says as the women smile.

“So, we’re all in agreement then,” Laurel says as the women nod.

“We are,” Ava says before Sara kisses her wife’s temple.

“I cannot wait to dance with you,” Sara whispers into Ava’s ear, causing a smug smirk to toy at her lips.

“Me too,” Ava says softly.
“Wait,” Kara says as the all of women look at the journalist.

“What is it?” Laurel asks.

“What if Lena tries to talk to me? What do I do?” Kara asks nervously as Laurel smirks.

“Just because we are trying to find out what James and his idiot group of terrorists are planning doesn’t mean that you have to act any differently toward her,” Laurel says as Kara sighs.

“If I were you, I’d wear something hot. Oh, and definitely flirt with her if she talks to you,” Zari says as Kara shakes her head.

“It’s just,” Kara says as Ava arches a brow, noticing the conflicted look along the journalist’s face.

“What is it, Kar?” Ava asks sweetly.

“It’s just makes me feel like I’ll be lying to her,” Kara says softly, causing Sara to shake her head.

“No, it won’t be. You are going out with your friends to have a good time. That’s all,” Sara says as Kara scoffs.

“While we indirectly spy on them,” Kara counters before Gideon sighs.

“No, that’s my job. Your job is to have a good time while we do the dirty work,” Gideon corrects as Kara looks at Ava.

“Aves,” Kara says as Ava sighs.

“You’re doing nothing wrong. We are collecting evidence about James’ new contacts. I have no doubt that Lillian and James are keeping her in the dark about their plans. You’re not hurting or lying to anyone, Kar. I promise,” Ava says sweetly as Kara nods.
“Alright,” Kara says as Laurel looks at her.

“You still up for this?” Laurel asks as Kara nods with a smirk.

“Yes, but there better be plenty of alcohol involved,” Kara says as the women laugh.

“With us? Oh, hell yeah,” Zari says as Sara smirks.

“The first few rounds of glow shooters are on me,” Sara says as the women smile.

What’s could be more fun than a night out, dancing with friends while simultaneously spying on hateful terrorists? Well, with glow shooters being involved and good music, the women couldn’t think of a more fun way to spend tomorrow night together.

The following night...

Sighing softly into a whiskey glass, Lena stands alongside James in the VIP area inside of the club. The CEO is wearing her hair down in loose waves, cascading over her shoulders as she stands in a sleek black dress and a pair of heels. Lena’s makeup is dark and sultry, accentuating her lips with cherry red lipstick, as her outfit is accessorized with a gold bangle on her wrist and two gold necklaces hanging around her neck. Lena looks incredible, and everyone, except James, can’t keep their eyes off the beautiful woman. He didn’t want her to wear the outfit, but after doing some more research after her talk with Sam, it turns out, she was telling the truth. Lena hasn’t confronted James or her mother on the matter, but it didn’t mean that she couldn’t subtly act out against him—hence, her outfit choice.

James laughs with his friends, carrying on about something that Lena has no interest in. He only brought her here as a bragging chip, hoping to sway whomever the group is meeting tonight’s decision to partner with him. The CEO didn’t want to be in the club, especially, not with James, but she remained stoic, sipping on her whiskey as she stares at the people dancing happily. The sooner this night was over, the better because this is the last place she wants to be right now.

Meanwhile...

Laurel and Gideon are already inside of the packed club, each of which are dressed to impress. Gideon’s outfit consists of a pair of black leather pants, paired with a red, spaghetti-strap blouse with
a deep neckline, displaying the perfect amount of cleavage and the dangling necklace around her neck as her dark hair falls along her shoulders. As for Laurel, her body is framed in a sleek, navy dress, amplifying her cleavage and curves with her blonde hair falling in loose waves.

The women stand near the bar, scanning the club as they order their drinks. It doesn’t take long for the women to spot James and his group of friends with Lena standing awkwardly beside them, looking stunning as ever. The bartender hands the women their drinks before the pair clink their glasses together with knowing smirks.

“The girls just arrived and we’ve got eyes on the band of idiots,” Alex says through the com system.

“Looking hot as ever ladies,” Sam says as Gideon and Laurel exchange glances.

“Oh, we know,” Gideon says she and Laurel throw back a shot of tequila.

As for the four remaining women, they make their way toward the club’s entrance, and they were all dressed to impress. Sara is wearing a pair of ripped black skinny jeans and a white, tank crop top, displaying her right abs and chiseled arm muscles, along with a pair of white high-top converse to complete her look. The pilot has her hair down, falling in straight strands, framing her sultry makeup on her face perfectly. The pilot holds her wife’s hand, her eyes freely roaming along Ava’s body, completely mesmerized by how good her wife looks. Ava is wearing a pair of coral skinny jeans with a strappy, soft-gray tank top, exposing her muscular back and a jagged scar underneath the multiple crossing straps. Sara is proud of her wife for wearing the shirt, having the courage to display a scar that haunts her daily. The seal has her blonde hair down in loose curls with a white and pastel floral printed hat with a soft-gray bill that’s slightly curved, resting backwards atop her head only to complete her look with a soft-gray and white pair of Vans.

The married couple looked amazing and so did the women walking next to them. Zari is wearing a pair of dark pair of skinny jeans paired with a green strappy tank and a pair of heels, with her hair falling in perky short curls. As for the journalist, Kara is wearing a dark purple button-down, multiple buttons unfastened to display a tasteful amount of cleavage with the sleeves rolled below her elbows. The front of her shirt is tucked tight pair of black jeans, displaying the gold buckle of her belt with of boot heels. The journalist has her hair down in flowing curls, framing her soft makeup clad and frameless face.

Zari smirks, looping her arm with Kara’s, causing the journalist to smile widely. The four women approach the club as catcalls and whistles echo throughout their ear pieces.

“Daaaayyyuuuum,” Alex says playfully.
“Yeah, what she said,” Sam says as the women smile.

“All ready?” Sara asks as the women nod.

“Gids and Laurel are in position,” Alex says.

“We’ve got eyes on the bad guys,” Sam says.

“Let’s do this,” Ava says as Zari smiles widely.

“Get your asses in here!” Laurel says playfully through the coms.

“Well, you heard the woman. Let’s fucking party!” Zari cheers as the women laugh.

As the foursome move toward the door, they noticed the long backed up line of people hoping to gain entrance into the nightclub. The bouncer’s face remains stoic as a man argues with him, however, when he notices Ava and Sara, his lips turn into a wide smile.

“Ah, if it isn’t my two favorite Lance women. It’s been a while. I was starting to think you forgot about me,” the bouncer says as Sara and Ava smirk.

“It’s good to see you, Reg,” Ava says with a wink.

“Of course, we didn’t forget you. We are mothers to a beautiful two year old. You know how hard it is to leave your baby when they use those adorable, puppy eyes,” Sara says sweetly as the man nods with a laugh.

“Don’t I know it. My boys are growing up way too damn fast. Your favorite DJ is behind the turntables tonight,” Reggie says as Zari pumps her fist happily.

“You remember, Zari and Kara, right?” Ava asks as the man nods.
“Oh, I do. I couldn’t never forget the song about the glow shots they sang the last time you were here,” Reggie says as the women laugh.

“Sounds about right,” Kara says as Zari nods.

“Expect it again, tonight,” Zari says as Reggie laughs. The bouncer lifts the rope, ushering the women into the entrance before closing it behind them. He politely opens the door before smiling at the women.

“Have fun. Let me know if anyone gives you any trouble,” Reggie says with a wink.

The women nod, thanking him before disappearing into the nightclub. The foursome exchange devilish smiles as they walk toward the booming music.

It’s time to fucking party.
Lena watches as James and his friends greet a tall, muscular man wearing a gray suit with his jet black hair slicked back with too much gel. The man greets them with polite handshakes and slaps to the arm before smiling at Lena. His eyes dance along her body in a predatory gaze before flashing her a flirty wink as he extends his hand toward the CEO.

“Miss Luthor, I don’t think we’ve met. Lynx Thornton, pleasure to meet you,” Lynx says with a charming smile that makes Lena’s stomach churn. The CEO has heard of the man, he’s known for his mysterious and diabolical medical research projects. She offers a polite smile, shaking the man’s hand before he presses a kiss against her knuckles.

“Pleasure to meet you, Mr. Thornton,” Lena says sweetly.

“You know, I don’t know how James managed to snag a woman of your stature. Beautiful, top of your field, not to mention your intellect. I’ve read your papers on vaccines and I must say, I would love the chance to work with you one day. If tonight goes well, we just might,” Lynx says as Lena fakes being flattered while James wraps an arm around the CEO.

“What can I say? I’m just that good,” James says smugly as Lynx laughs.

“Well, thank you,” Lena says politely, ignoring James’ comment.

“How about we get this meeting over with so we can enjoy the rest of our evening?” Lynx asks as the group of men nod. The group follows the man into a small room, before James leans his head down toward the CEO’s ear.

“Stay put. Let the men do our jobs,” James orders harshly before entering the room and closing the door behind him.

Lena scoffs before taking a long sip of her whiskey. Little does the CEO know, Laurel and Gideon
have been watching from the bar, before nodding at each other.

“Meeting’s started,” Laurel says into the coms.

“Copy that,” Sara says.

“When do you want us to make our move?” Ava asks.

“They’re opening files now. I’ll give you the go, until then, enjoy ladies,” Alex says.

Gideon and Laurel smirk before the lawyer leans across the bar, catching the bartender’s attention. The lawyer quickly orders multiple rounds of shots for the foursome before pointing toward the women. The bartender nods with a smirk before moving to make the shots.

The foursome take in the atmosphere of the club. The booming, techno music echoes throughout the nightclub as black lights and sporadic strobe light pops in perfect timing with the music. The dance floor is filled with people laughing and dancing, completely enjoying themselves before a waitress approaches the group.

“Compliments of the blonde at the bar,” the waitress says, holding a tray with three rounds each of glow shooters. The women smirk as they look at Laurel, who flashes them a flirty wink before the women quickly grab their shots.

“Fucking love you, Laurel,” Zari says, heating Laurel laugh through the com.

“You’re welcome. Bottoms up! Hurry up and go shake your asses,” Laurel says as the foursome hold up the shots.

“Well, here’s to a damn good night,” Sara says.

“And looking amazing,” Ava chimes.

“And good company,” Kara says.
“Salud!” the foursome say, clinking their shots together.

The foursome down the multiple shots, feeling the warm, subtle burn coat their throats before handing the empty glasses to the waitress. The waitress offers a small smile before disappearing toward the bar and Kara lightly shakes her body.

“Good?” Zari asks as Kara nods.

“Better every time,” Kara says with a smirk.

“We’re going to go scope out the dance floor,” Zari says as wraps her arm around Kara’s waist as they disappear into the crowd.

Sara wraps her arm around her wife, pressing a kiss against Ava’s lips. Ava smiles widely at her wife, noticing the light of the black light illuminating the scar in Sara’s left eye. Ava gently cups her wife’s cheek in her hand, staring lovingly at her wife, causing Sara to arch a brow before leaning in to whisper into the ear without the com system.

“What’s going on in that beautiful head of yours?” Sara asks as Ava laughs lightly before pressing a kiss against the shell of her wife’s ear.

“You’re literally so perfect,” Ava says as she feels Sara smirk against her cheek.

“The black lights are making my eyes pop and my scar is showing, isn’t it?” Sara asks softly. Ava nods slowly, knowing her wife still holds insecurities about her injured eye before looking into her wife’s eyes.

“Hey, you are the most beautiful woman that I have ever laid eyes on. I couldn’t be more proud to have you as my partner in life,” Ava says sweetly as Sara smiles.

“I’m extremely proud of you for having the courage to show off your scar tonight. You make me feel so loved and beautiful, I couldn’t imagine my life without my sexy wife by my side,” Sara says sweetly before capturing Ava’s lips in a heated kiss.
“It’s the backwards hate, isn’t it?” Ava asks as Sara laughs, shaking her head.

“No, it’s every part of you. But, I really love the hat,” Sara husks, causing Ava to smirk as she bites her lower lip.

“I love you,” Ava says.

“Oh, I love you so much,” Sara says, pressing a kiss against her wife’s lips.

Zari and Kara rush toward the married couple with devilish smiles as ‘MIC Drop (Steve Aoki Remix)’, by BTS and Desiigner begins to play throughout the speakers. Ava and Sara exchange a smirk as Zari and Kara jump with excitement.

“Let me guess, you had something to do with this?” Sara asks as Zari nods.

“Come on! These people are worse dancers then Kara and me. Show this place how it’s done!” Zari says.

“Plus, there is a couple saying that they can’t be beat in a dance off,” Kara says as Sara and Ava smirk.

“The guy in the circle is one of James’ friends too,” Sam says as Ava smirks.

“Well, now we definitely have to go,” Ava says.

“Let’s go show them how a real couple dances,” Sara says, grabbing Ava’s hand.

Kara and Zari cheer as they follow the couple onto the dance floor. They makes their way toward the opening of the circle formed around a couple as they dance to the song. A new man enters, beginning to challenge the man, dancing in a mediocre hip-hop style, causing the crowd to boo before James’ friend pushes the girl he’s with to the side. The friend dances well, easily showing up his competitor, causing the crowd to cheer. The man celebrates as Ava lightly smacks Sara’s ass,
causing the pilot to smirk before she steps into the circle.

The crowd gasps, causing the man to turn, laughing at Sara before the pilot arches a brow with a smirk. Sara smoothly begins to dance, her hip-hop movements perfectly in time with the music, causing the crowd, including her wife, Kara and Zari, to cheer loudly as she effortlessly glides around the circle before popping a last move in front of the man. The man scoffs before moving to counter her routine, break dancing, including spins and a head stand, causing the crowd to cheer loudly before he dusts off his shoulder and walks away, pulling his dance partner toward him.

The couple dance together, their chemistry is questionable, causing Sara to smirk. The couple finish their moves before holding their hands up, challenging Sara and causing the crowd to cheer loudly. The pilot smirks, beginning to dance, using spins and flips of her own before slowly and seductively moving toward her wife. Sara slowly pops and sways her body up along Ava’s body, causing the seal to smirk seductively. The pilot’s hands move up Ava’s body to her hat, and in time with the music, Sara turns the hat’s bill to the front as a wide smile crosses Ava’s lips.

The crowd watches anxiously as Ava steps forward into the circle. Sara continues to dance and the couple laughs as Ava remains stoic. The seal smirks, flashing the pair a wink before popping her body effortlessly, perfectly in sync and countering her wife’s moves. The crowd goes wild, cheering loudly, Kara and Zari among the loudest of the cheers, as the married couple dances with so much chemistry that you would think their movements are choreographed.

The wives finish their moves, glancing at the challenging couple, only for them to scoff before disappearing into the crowd in embarrassment. The crowd cheers wildly Kara and Zari rush toward the couple, jumping up and down in excitement. Little did they realize, Lena has been standing on the outside of the circle, having watched the entire battle. The CEO enjoyed watching her sister dance with her wife, however, she was surprised to notice Ava’s left arm covered with a half-sleeve tattoo, and a large scar along the seal’s back. Lena also noticed a faint scar illuminating through Sara’s left eye, causing multiple questions to form in the CEO’s mind. She knows that she’s missed out on a lot of things in her sister’s life, but seeing the scars and new tattoo really hit home for Lena—making her feel guilty.

Oh, but her guilt quickly morphed into lust as her eyes landed on Kara. The CEO stated at the journalist hungrily, admiring the tight jeans hugging her toned legs and the tasteful cleavage displayed by the open buttons of her shirt. Lena almost didn’t recognize the journalist without her glasses or the dramatic change in her style. Kara went from a modest, librarian-styled journalist to a sexy, carefree, woman, and Lena enjoyed the change—a lot.

“Guys, need a distraction bigger than that. They’re meeting is almost over,” Sam says.

“But what?” Zari asks.
“Lena has been watching the entire time,” Alex says.

“Giving Kara sex eyes,” Sam quips as Alex groans throughout the coms.

“Guys, seriously. We have to get them out of that room before they finish the meeting,” Laurel says as the married couple nod slightly.

“Kara, you’re up,” Sara says as Kara continues to dance.

The music changes to an uptempo techno song, causing the foursome to laugh as they dance. The CEO watches as Ava and Sara her lost into each other’s movements while Kara shakes her hips against a woman she’s never seen before—feeling a hint of jealously flood through her. Kara laughs at something the woman has said before glancing over, noticing the CEO staring at her. The journalist gulps, admiring how sexy the CEO looks in the sleek black dress before flashing her a smirk. Lena’s eyes widen slightly in surprise before winking at Kara.

“Go get her, Tiger,” Zari whispers before moving to sandwich Sara between herself and Ava.

Kara waves the CEO over, causing the CEO to shake her head before Kara approaches her.

“Come dance!” Kara shouts over the music, causing Lena to knit her brows, not being able to hear the journalist.

“What?!” Lena asks. Kara sighs before leaning into the CEO’s space, her perfume overwhelming her senses as her lips hover along Lena’s ear.

“You want to dance? With me?” Kara asks, shocking herself at the boldness of the question—knowing the alcohol is responsible for her actions.

“I don’t think your date would like that too much,” Lena says, her lips ghosting along Kara’s ear, causing her to shiver slightly.
“Ooooooh, someone’s jealous,” Sam says through the com.

“Damn right, she is. I’m hot!” Zari quips.

Kara looks at Lena, laughing with a shake of her head, as she glances over at Zari, who is currently dancing wildly with a beautiful stranger.

“Zari’s not my date. She’s basically my family,” Kara says as Lena arches a brow, biting her lip slightly.

“I don’t know how to dance to this type of music,” Lena says as Kara laughs.

“I’m pretty sure the only people who know how dance to this music is Ava and Sara,” Kara says as Lena nods, as the married couple continue to dance flawlessly together.

“Well, I would hate for my lack of skills to make you look bad,” Lena says as Kara shakes her head.

“It’s dancing! It’s meant to be wild, fun and just losing yourself to the music. Who the fuck cares what everyone else thinks?” Kara asks as Lena smirks, lightly biting her lower lip.

“Promise you won’t laugh?” Lena asks as Kara nods before nodding at the wild dancing Zari.

“Can’t be any worse than Z,” Kara says, causing Lena to laugh.

“You take that back,” Zari says in mock hurt through the com.

“She’s not wrong,” Gideon quips before Kara grabs Lena’s hand.

“I promise. You really want to dance with me?” Kara asks with a shy smile. Lena smirks, arching a perfect brow as she nods her head.
“It would be rude of me to reject the chance to dance with such a beautiful woman. Even if I don’t know what I’m doing,” Lena says with a small smirk.

“Kar, she’s full of shite. Lena definitely knows how to move her hips,” Ava says into the com.

“I’ll be the judge of that,” Kara says with a smirk.

Kara smiles, leading Lena onto the dance floor near Zari and the married couple. Sara and Ava glance up, offering small smiles at the CEO, only for Lena to smile in return before feeling Kara’s hand rest against her hip. As the song morphs into another up tempo song, Lena notices as Ava and Sara’s movements continue to flow flawlessly before Sara turns to face her wife, as the couple get lost in their movements. Lena smirks as she feels Kara’s grip around her hip lightly tighten before the CEO gives into her lustful temptation for the journalist. Her hand moves to rest over Kara’s hand on her hip, lightly threading their fingers together as Lena moves her hips to the beat of the music. Kara’s eyes widen in surprise at the way Lena is holding her hand and the way she’s lightly grinding her hips against the journalist is driving her wild with excitement. Kara knows, deep down, Lena is with James, and this is wrong, but she can’t help herself. The journalist moves her other hand to Lena’s other hip, pulling their bodies flush against one another, Lena’s back against Kara’s front, as the journalist concentrates on moving her body with the CEO.

“You tricked me,” Kara says into the CEO’s ear, causing her to laugh. The CEO grinds her body harder against the journalist before leaning back to whisper into Kara’s ear.

“I really don’t know how to dance to this music but it doesn’t mean that I don’t know how to move my hips. If it makes you uncomfortable, I can stop, darling,” Lena counters playfully, her lips grazing the shell of Kara’s ear.

“No, please, don’t stop,” Kara says breathless.

Lena glances over her shoulder, her hair falling to one side as she smiles widely at Kara before becoming more bold with her dance moves, her grip tightening around Kara’s hand—both women getting lost in their little moment.

Meanwhile...across the bar...

Gideon and Laurel are both tipsier than they intended to be but if they couldn’t dance, they were going to drink. Oh, were the drinks going down so smoothly while they were waiting for their
opportunity to check out the meeting in the room behind them. The pair notice a fuming man approaching the private room, only to fling open the door in anger.

“Those fucking dykes beat me!” the man shouts as the room of men erupts in laughter.

“Aw, better luck next time, Luke,” James says with a laugh before the man shakes his head.

“Oh, you’re laughing now but your bitch is dancing with some chick on the dance floor,” Luke counters.

“That’ll do it,” Gideon mumbles.

“Oh, yeah,” Laurel says.

“What?!” James shouts.

“Well, gentlemen, let’s take a look and go check it out for ourselves,” Lynx says.

Gideon and Laurel watch as the men storm out of the room, heading toward the dance floor. Laurel nods to Gideon, who slowly stalks toward the room before disappear inside.

“Guys, James is headed your way with his band of idiots,” Laurel says.

“On it,” Ava says.

“Ava and I will start another dance circle to wall them off,” Sara says.

“Already on it,” Zari says.

“Kar, don’t let James see you with Lena,” Sam says in a worried tone.
“Gideon, you’re not going to have a lot of time. Get what you can and get out,” Alex says softly.

Laurel moves her way toward the door of the room, over-exaggerating her steps to appear drunk as she rests her hand against the wall, making the people passing by completely unsuspicious.

“I warned her, but she’s going to the restroom,” Kara says as Laurel groans.

“Fuck me, this keeps getting better,” Laurel deadpans.

The lawyer peaks into the room, noticing as Gideon quickly moves around the table, capturing everything on the camera in her necklace. She picks up a piece of paper, studying it intently as she moves the necklace around the paper.

“Lena is about to pass you on her way to the bathroom,” Sam says.

Laurel hangs her head down slightly, allowing her long blonde hair to mask her face as the CEO glances over her shoulder as she sneaks toward the restroom, completely unaware of the lawyer. Glancing up, the lawyer sighs as Gideon continues to scan files.

“Band of idiots are coming in hot,” Alex says.

“Shit,” Gideon says, rapidly moving the papers back to their original positions.

Laurel stands upright, leaning against the wall as Gideon begins to exit the room, standing next to the door. Gideon notices the group of men approach the room, causing her to eyes to widen in panic. Laurel instantly reacts, noticing the look before moving to stand in Gideon’s personal space.

“Public displays of affection make people uncomfortable,” Laurel says as Gideon arches a brow in confusion.

“Really?” Gideon asks.
Before Gideon can even blink, Laurel has her back pressed against the door, one hand threading through her dark hair as she kisses the woman passionately. Gideon’s eyes widen in shock before she melts into the kiss, moving one hand into Laurel’s hair as the other moves to cup the lawyer’s ass over her dress. Laurel smirks into the kiss, as the women continue to kiss each other feverishly. The group of men halt their movements, jaws slack at the two women passionately making out in front of them before Lynx clears his throat. Laurel begins to trail kisses onto Gideon’s neck, partially to keep her face hidden, but also because she was actually extremely turned on by the makeout session. Gideon pants heavily as she cranes her neck, giving Laurel more access before smiling at the men.

“I’m sorry boys, did you need something?” Gideon asks.

“Um, we’re actually having a meeting in that room,” Lynx says, tugging at his collar as he stares at the women.

“Oh, I’m so sorry. We’ll move,” Gideon says apologetically.

“No need to be sorry. I’m sorry we interrupted,” Lynx says as the men nod behind him in agreement. Gideon and Laurel move away from the door, the lawyer still assaulting Gideon’s neck with kisses as the men shake their heads.

“So fucking sexy,” one of the men say, causing the men to nod.

“Guys, Lena’s coming from the bathroom,” Alex says.

“You can watch us on your way back in. I know, it must be so hard, being so powerful,” Gideon says seductively, accentuating her words perfectly to drive the men crazy.

Gideon moves to capture Laurel’s lips in a passionate kiss, sliding her hand into Laurel’s hair to mask her face slightly, as she slides her other hand along the slit of the lawyer’s dress, only for her hand to dip inside the dress to grab her ass. The men shift uncomfortably, watching the women’s intimate moment as Lena slowly approaches the group, eyes widening at the men as they stare at the couple. James clears his throat, shifting his hand in his pocket before glaring at the CEO.

“Where the fuck were you?” James asks as Lena arches a brow.

“I have been here, watching people dance while you’ve been in your meeting. I stepped away for a
moment to use the restroom,” Lena says as James scoffs.


“I have been here. You would have noticed if you weren’t too busy staring at this happy couple next to us or in your meeting,” Lena counters as James to scoff hatefully.

“James, Miss Luthor has a point. We need to leave the couple alone and finish our meeting. Then, we can all enjoy our evening,” Lynx says.

The men enter the room as Lena shakes her head before moving to leave. James roughly grabs her arm, holding her in place as he clenches his jaw.

“Where the fuck do you think you’re going?” James asks as the CEO rips her arm away from his grasp.

“I’m leaving,” Lena says wale storming off.

James groans in frustration, grabbing the door to the room and slamming it shut, while Gideon and Laurel continue their heavy petting kissing act. Both women smile against each other’s lips before resting their foreheads against one another.

“Good work, ladies,” Alex says.

“It worked,” Gideon says with a smirk as Laurel laughs.

“I had no doubt and you seemed to enjoy it,” Laurel quips as Gideon eyes widen slightly.

“I had to for them to believe it,” Gideon counters as the lawyer laughs.

“Is that why your hand is still under my dress? You know, you could explore and feel more of me if we go to my place,” Laurel husks as Gideon’s lips turn into a wide smile.
“Oh! Stop groping my sister!” Sara says, causing the women to laugh.

“Please, we all watched you and Aves dance seductively all night,” Laurel says playfully.

“It’s true,” Alex counters.

“I had to watch our sisters practically hump on the dance floor, Al,” Ava counters as Alex gags, causing the women to laugh.

“Damn it,” Kara says softly.

“She’s got you there, babe,” Sam says with a laugh.

“Damn it! I’m the only one who didn’t get any action tonight! This fucking sucks!” Zari says as the women laugh into the coms.

“We got what we came for, let’s get out of here,” Laurel says, planting a kiss against Gideon’s lips.

“Lead the way,” Gideon says.

The group of women laugh as they all make their way to exit the club.

Oh, yeah. Tonight was a good night.
Hey everyone! Here’s the next update.

Little note:

1. Yes, I’m still working on Flowers and Grenades.
2. I am preparing for finals and updates will be postponed until late next week at the earliest.

Enjoy this chapter. Can’t wait to see what you think.

The following morning...

Sara carries her squirming and overly cheerful daughter into the kitchen, finding her wife cooking pancakes in her pajamas. Sara smiles as she notices two coffee mugs filled with hot coffee resting next to a mug filled with chocolate milk for Poppy—allowing their daughter to think she’s having morning coffee with her moms. Sara walks behind Ava, planting a light kiss against her bare shoulder, causing the seal to smile before craning her neck, planting kisses against her wife’s lips before kissing her daughter.

“Good morning, baby,” Sara says sweetly.

“Morn, Mumma!” Poppy says with a smile.

“Good morning, my gorgeous darlings. I’m making your favorite, blue cakes,” Ava says sweetly as Poppy squeals happily.

“Cof?” Poppy asks as Ava nods.

“Yes, my little darling. Breakfast is almost ready and then we can do the crossword while we sip from our coffee mugs and eat,” Ava says as Poppy smiles before squirming from Sara’s arms.

The pilot sets her daughter onto the ground before rushing to give Ethan morning hugs. The happy dog licks her face, causing the toddler to laugh happily as Sara wraps her arms around her wife’s
waist, resting her cheek between Ava’s shoulder blades.

“Hmmm,” Sara hums softly, causing Ava to smirk.

“Hungover?” Ava asks as Sara shakes her head.

“Sexed it right out of me last night and this morning,” Sara says playfully as Ava laughs.

“Best way to beat a hangover,” Ava says as Sara plants a kiss against the seal’s back.

“I agree, and not to mention, the best way to start the day,” Sara says as Ava nods.

“It’s a cure all, actually. That and your sweet morning cuddles,” Ava says, flipping a pancake as Sara smiles before planting a kiss onto Ava’s shoulder.

“Last night was a lot of fun. I’m glad we did it,” Sara says as Ava hums in agreement.

“Me too, but I’m not going to lie, I missed our night cuddles with Pops,” Ava says as Sara sighs in relief.

“Shite, me too,” Sara says as Ava leans further into her wife’s embrace.

The wives enjoy their embrace, enjoying their mornings they get to spend as a family. Poppy happily plays with Ethan before the sound of footsteps entering the kitchen cause them women to snap their head toward the sound. Their eyes widen as they notice Laurel dressed casually in leggings and a baggy shirt with her hair tied in a messy bun with dark sunglasses covering her eyes as several dark hickeys span along her neck. The couple laughs before Poppy squeals happily, causing Laurel to wince as the toddler rushes over, hugging the lawyer’s legs.

“Auntie Lo!” Poppy says happily as Laurel gently rubs her hand through Poppy’s hair.

“Hey, Poptart,” Laurel says sweetly. Sara moves, quickly covering her daughter’s eyes as she smiles at her sister.
“You’re going to scar our daughter with the amount of hickeys on your neck,” Sara says playfully, causing Ava to laugh as Laurel groans.

“Oh, like the claw marks down Ava’s shoulders aren’t doing that already?” Laurel asks as Sara rolls her eyes before uncovering her daughter’s eyes. Poppy quickly returns to play with Ethan as Laurel sits on a barstool at the kitchen island.

“What can I say? We had a really good night and morning,” Sara says as Ava laughs.

“By the looks of it, so did Laurel. Shite, it looks like Gids practically attacked you with a vacuum,” Ava says as Laurel smirks before taking off her sunglasses.

“Oh, I’ve seen worse on my sister’s neck from the likes of you,” Laurel says playfully as Ava shrugs with a smirk.

“So, want to tell us exactly what’s going on with you and Gideon? Or…” Sara says as Laurel sighs.

“I need coffee,” Laurel says as Sara moves to pour another cup of coffee. The pilot sets the mug in front of her sister, who graciously sips on the warm liquid, sighing in relief.

“So?” Sara asks as Laurel nods.

“Well, we hooked up,” Laurel says as Ava finishes cooking the breakfast before glancing at the lawyer.

“Obviously,” Ava says as Sara smirks, wrapping an arm around her wife.

“I don’t know. I mean, we’ve always had chemistry but last night was just different,” Laurel says as Sara arches a brow.

“How do you mean?” Sara asks as Ava moves slightly, retrieving their coffee and handing the pilot her mug. Sara plants a tender kiss against Ava slips before they sip their coffee.
“While we were waiting for everything to go down, I don’t know. We were just talking, flirting, and it just felt good. I mean, she’s obviously gorgeous, but if I’m being completely honest right now. I would have kissed her regardless if we hadn’t almost got caught,” Laurel says as Sara smirks.

“It’s about damn time that you admitted it,” Sara says as Laurel’s eyes widen.

“What?!” Laurel asks, squinting slightly.

“Oh, come on. From day one, Gids has always countered your remarks in a flirtatious way. Not to mention the looks you two give each other. It was a matter of time until you two sorted your shite out,” Ava says as Sara hums in agreement.

“My wife’s got a point, sis,” Sara says as Laurel sighs.

“It’s just,” Laurel says as Ava arches a brow.

“You don’t want something to happen that could potentially change your relationship,” Ava says as Laurel nods.

“Exactly,” Laurel says.

“Well, you already had sex with her. So, that is a change,” Sara quips as Laurel sighs before resting her head into her hands.

“I know,” Laurel groans, causing Sara to gasp.

“Oh my god. You’re falling for her,” Sara says as Laurel sighs before Ava smirks.

“Tá sí tite cheana féin. (She’s already fallen for her.),” Ava says.

“Tá tú go hiomlán ceart. (You’re totally right.),” Sara says softly as Laurel glances up at the couple,
pointing between the women.

“Nuh huh. None of that secretive, Irish talk because I don’t understand it,” Laurel says as Sara smiles.

“You’ve already fallen for her, haven’t you?” Sara says as Laurel nods.

“Yeah,” Laurel says.

“How long have you felt this way?” Ava asks as Laurel blushes.

“Honestly? I’ve always felt a connection with her but I’m pretty sure it hit me the night when you two got married,” Laurel admits as Ava and Sara exchange glances.

“Are you talking about our naval ceremony?” Sara asks.

“You weren’t there for that one,” Ava says as Laurel shakes her head.

“I meant the beautiful, bohemian wedding you had after everyone was home from deployment and traveling Asia. Or wherever the hell Kara was coming from,” Laurel says as the couple nod with wide smiles, remembering how incredibly special that night was for them.

Sure, the couple loved having a private, naval wedding ceremony but their entire family couldn’t be there. So, they made the decision to have another one, allowing everyone to be in attendance, including their daughter—which made their second wedding ceremony even more incredible than the first.

“What made you realize it that night?” Sara asks softly as Laurel sighs.

“It was just the combination of the romantic venue, and the overwhelming sense of happiness that I felt when she was next to me. Couldn’t take my eyes off of her when she was dancing with Poptart,” Laurel says as the couple smirks into their coffee cups.
“That was over a year ago,” Ava says as Laurel groans.

“I know,” Laurel says softly.

“Does she feel the same way?” Sara asks as Laurel nods.

“I think so,” Laurel says softly.

“That’s amazing,” Ava says as Laurel shakes her head lightly. Sara slowly reaches across the kitchen island, taking her sister’s hand into her own as she looks at her sister.

“What’s hold you back?” Sara asks as Laurel sighs.

“What if I fuck it up and hurt her? I mean, you know how terrible I am with relationships,” Laurel says with a dry laugh as Sara shakes her head.

“Hey, look at who you’re talking to right now. I was the queen of screwing up relationships until I met Ava,” Sara says as Laurel nods.

“How did you make it work?” Laurel asks as Sara glances up at her wife.

“Well, she made me realize that I don’t have to try to be something I’m not. She loves me through all of my flaws, insecurities, and all the other shite that I put her through,” Sara says sweetly as Ava presses a kiss against her wife’s temple.

“You have to agree to be a team. You’re constantly fighting with each other and not against one another,” Ava says softly.

“You two make it sound so easy,” Laurel says as the women shake their heads.

“It’s not, but once you have that shared understanding, it makes it so much easier,” Sara says as Ava nods.
“We have our moments. Whether it be getting defensive or worked up over something, you have to trust your partner to balance you and love you through it. It’s bloody terrifying giving another person the complete power to destroy you but trusting that they won’t ever use it against you. If there’s one thing that I’ve learned since the day I met, Sara, is the fact that she has been and always will be worth taking that risk. You’ll only end up hurting Gideon more if you don’t and that is exactly what you don’t want to do to her,” Ava says sweetly, causing Sara to stare at her wife lovingly before pressing a tender kiss against her lips. Laurel nods, taking in the words of advice from the married couple before sipping her coffee.

“Fuck, you’re both right. I’m in love with her. I’ve got to tell her,” Laurel says as the women smile.

“Uh huh. I expect you to thank us in your wedding speech,” Sara says playfully as Laurel smirks.

“One step at a time,” Laurel says as Ava knits her brows.

“Oh, shite,” Ava mumbles as Sara glances up at her.

“What is it?” Sara asks.

“If they get married one day, that means I’ll be the sister-in-law to a snobby Brit,” Ava says playfully as the women laugh.

“Oh, come on. You love Gideon,” Laurel says as Ava playfully shakes her head.

“I take back everything I said. Damn, English. Charming their way to infiltrate my home, thinking they can slowly march in here, and pushing their culture on us?! Psh, we are Irish and damn proud of that. Aren’t we, Pops?” Ava asks as she picks up the toddler.

“Yea! Rish!” Poppy says happily, causing Sara and Laurel to laugh.

“That’s right, my little darling. Come on, let’s get washed up for breakfast,” Ava says sweetly, kissing her daughter before playfully throwing her over her shoulder, causing the toddler to laugh loudly.
“We’ll set the table,” Sara says with a smile.

“For the record, I’m bloody happy for you, Laurel,” Ava says before disappearing down the hallway toward the bathroom. Laurel smiles, laughing softly before looking at her sister.

“Thank you for listening to me ramble,” Laurel says as Sara smirks.

“Well, you’ve talked me down and listened to me several hundred times. So, we’re even. Besides, I haven’t seen you like this with anyone before, it’s amazing,” Sara says as Laurel smirks.

“Yeah, and terrifying,” Laurel says softly as Sara nods.

“It will be the most amazing and terrifying ride of your life but it’s totally worth it,” Sara says as Laurel laughs.

“Look at us, being adults,” Laurel quips as Sara laughs.

“Ah, adults in appearance but still young, wild and free on the inside. Come on, help me set the table,” Sara says before moving to set the table.

Laurel smirks, moving to help her sister set the table before Ava and Poppy join them. The happy family take their seats around the table and enjoy their breakfast together.

Lots of changes in relationships occurred last night inside the nightclub, and internally, the three adults are hoping Lena is one of those changes before it’s too late.

Two days later...

After a long morning drill at the base, consisting of a thirteen mile ocean swim and combat tactics, the seal team was given the rest of the day off. Gideon and Zari were still working through the information they gathered from the club meeting along with Kara keeping tabs on James secretly at CatCo. Laurel also is continuing her research on the group of men in between court appearances
along with building up the courage to confess her feelings for Gideon. Meanwhile Sara and Alex chose to spend the day with their daughters, which included playing in park with Ethan and going to their favorite ice-cream shop.

As much as Ava wanted to join her wife and daughter, she and Sam were needed to oversee the latest development in new projects on her pharmaceutical line for drugs and implants targeting multiple strains of cancers. Lena wasn’t in attendance, being held on a very long and tedious conference call with some of the company’s oversea partners. In her absence, Sam was beyond impressed at the level of success and improvements that Ava has made to the line. If all goes well and the clinical trials work, Ava hopes to launch the line sometime soon in the near future.

After the lab meeting ended, Sam had to return to her office for a conference call of her own. By the time they finished, Sara and Alex were already at her home, helping Alex sort through different choices of attire to wear on her wedding day while their daughters were down for a nap. The navy seal was left alone in the lab, which was a rarity. Usually the lab is overflowing with interns and other researchers, not really allowing Ava to work in peace. So, finding the lab to be empty, she took advantage of the opportunity.

Which is where Ava finds herself now, listening to music as she studies the schematics on the lens variations for her wife’s eye injury. By no means does it skew her view of her wife, because Sara is perfect in Ava’s eyes. She doesn’t need to be fixed, however, Ava knows that Sara’s eye tends to bother her after long days at work. The combination of stress, sensitivity to light, causes Sara’s eyesight in her left eye to essentially split into two planes, leading to severe headaches, dizziness and pain.

Ava has developed several lens prototypes for contact lenses and glasses for her wife, but they weren’t perfect. Sure they help her sight but seeing her wife in pain made Ava physically hurt for her wife. Which is why Ava finds herself working endlessly to make the perfect lenses on hopes that Sara can live more comfortably with her injury, and maybe even return to flying more often.

Which is something Ava chooses to do, because she loves her wife and wants her to completely comfortable with her injury. Without Sara, Ava wouldn’t have the courage to stare at her own scars that hide beneath her clothes. It’s been a long journey, for both women to be able to be open and vulnerable about the insecurities that stem from their own injuries. However, through all the trying times, the couple has constantly been supportive and strong for one another, making their relationship stronger every day.

Not to mention, the women have fallen more in love with each other through their toughest and most challenging of times. Both women aren’t afraid to admit it to anyone about how hopelessly in love they are with one another, but the actions and looks between the women prove to anyone that has eyesight—the media ate that shite up, too. But it didn’t matter to the married couple, as long as they have each other, their daughter and family, that’s all that they need to be truly happy.
The seal continues to configure the angles on the prototypes, working between the computer and microscope diligently. She slowly manipulates the glass lens and the contact lens, wanting to balance the adjustments to make sure the correction won’t have any residual effects on her wife’s non-injured eye. Tilting her head slightly, Ava watches the projections of the lenses on the computer before nodding happily at the results.

With a series of rapid clicks, Ava sends the information from her workstation to a machine across the lab, humming as it begins to make several copies of the lenses. Ava leans back in her chair, bopping her head to the music before her cellphone begins ringing. The seal reaches for her phone, smiling widely as a picture of Sara and Poppy smiling into the camera, laying on top of Ava’s back, crosses the screen as her wife calls. Sliding her thumb, the seal answers the call before holding up the phone to her ear.

“Hey you,” Ava says sweetly.

“Baby, send help. Alex has been making me look through countless numbers of suits, dresses and rompers for the last two hours. I’m literally one more suit away from needing a straight jacket,” Sara says, causing Ava to laugh as she heads Alex scoff in the background.

“I am not that bad!” Alex counters.

“Don’t believe her. Literally, they all look the same but none of them are good enough,” Sara says as Ava laughs.

“We went through that stage too, my love,” Ava says as Sara sighs happily.

“Yeah, you’re right. How’s work?” Sara asks as Ava nods.

“Meeting went well. Have to finish up some minor adjustments and trials before they’ll be ready for release but it’s good,” Ava says.

“So proud of you,” Sara says proudly as Ava sighs happily.

“Thank you,” Ava says.
“So, do I even have to ask what other project you’ve been working on today?” Sara asks playfully as Ava laughs.

“I had the lab to myself so I took advantage of it. I made some adjustments for you. They should eliminate the headaches and dizziness, along with the pain,” Ava says sweetly, hearing her wife sigh happily.

“You’re amazing,” Sara says as Ava smirks before the machine stops, chiming softly at the completion process.

“And they’re finished,” Ava says as Sara laughs.

“Good. Now, get your hot arse home so I can kiss you before letting you take my place with Alex,” Sara says playfully as Ava chuckles.

“I’ll be home soon. I love you,” Ava says.

“I love you more,” Sara says.

Ending the call, Ava slides her phone into the pocket of her slacks, using her other hand to save the alterations in the computer before shutting the system down completely. The seal quickly cleans the workstation before walking toward the machine. She quickly gathers the multiple lenses, placing them into a protective sealed bag before sliding them into her pocket.

Glancing over her shoulder, her eyes scan the area, making sure she didn’t leave anything behind before exiting the lab to head home to save her wife from the dreaded suit search.

Meanwhile...

“How could you be so foolish?” Lillian asks as Lena arches a brow as the trio move throughout the halls on their way to exit the building.
“Me leaving that club was in no way foolish, Mother,” Lena counters as Lillian and James scoff.

“It made me look like an idiot in front of Mr. Thornton,” James says harshly as Lena shakes her head.

“Are you certain that you standing with your jaw gaped while shifting your hands in your pockets as you watched the two women making out in the corner didn’t have anything to do with it?” Lena snaps as James clenches his jaw, gripping her arm tightly.

“Enough. Yes, Lena’s careless actions were distasteful. However, Mr. Thornton has agreed to partner with us. Which is why, we we came here. We are meeting him for dinner in fifteen minutes to celebrate, giving Mr. Thornton the chance to speak with you. He’s looking forward to working and improving some of your research, dear,” Lillian says.

“Just make sure you actually use your voice at dinner. We worked hard for this partnership,” James says coldly as Lena shakes her head.

“You cannot expect me to want to work with a man like that,” Lena counters as Lillian arches a brow.

“Excuse me?” Lillian asks.

“I know about his work. He used dozens, of not hundreds, of innocent people to test his cures and they were nothing more than modified viruses. He lied to them, masking it as a part of a medicinal trial, only to watch those people suffer and die. His work goes against every scientific ethic that I believe in. I won’t work with a man like that,” Lena says, causing Lillian and James’ faces to contort in anger.

“Like hell you won’t,” James snaps, gripping the CEO’s arm tighter, causing pain to radiate through her arm.

“Lena, this blatant act of defiance is uncalled for and not to mention, incredibly disrespectful. Mr. Thornton has had his failures, much like yourself. Whether you like it or not, you will be speaking with him tonight,” Lillian snaps.

The trio make their way through the back exit and into the parking lot. The sound of another door
closing causing the trio to glance over, noticing as Ava exits from the lab. The seal is wearing a black, sleeveless blouse, displaying both of her tattoos along her arms, tucked into pair of olive slacks matched with a pair of black, boot heels. A pair of black RayBan sunglasses rest atop of her long, blonde hair that’s styled in a single braid from her bangs that flows into an effortlessly, elegant bun.

Lena notices as Lillian and James stare at the seal with disgust in their eyes. Lillian shakes her head, glaring at Lena before directing her hateful stare back at Ava.

“It appears that you still have no regard for professionalism or class by flaunting those monstrosities for the world to see,” Lillian snaps.

Lena watches as Ava ignores the comment, not giving the angry mother the satisfaction of receiving a glare in response or a comment. The seal continues to approach her vehicle, which only further angers Lillian as she notices the seal chose to drive her matte-black, personalized, four door Jeep. The Jeep’s rims are fitted to match the exterior color, completed with a set of roll-bars and cattle guard on the front. Lillian has always hated Ava’s vehicle, claiming it to be classless, especially when Ava drives with hardtop roof removed, much like it is at the current moment.

Lillian scoffs, before storming toward the seal with James dragging Lena behind the angry woman. Ava slides into her vehicle, shutting the door as she starts the engine. As the trio approach the vehicle, the sound of ‘Six’ by All That Remains, heavy metal music, blasts throughout the vehicle’s speakers, as the seal lowers the remaining windows down. Lena fights a smirk, knowing how much her sister enjoys listening to her heavier music as loud as possible as she leaves from work. Ava lowers her sunglasses over her eyes, causing Lillian to scoff before she slams her hand against the side of the Jeep’s door, causing Ava to sigh in annoyance before glancing over at the woman, lowering the music’s volume slightly.

“You may be the most boorish, classless and amoral excuse of a human being on this planet. However, when you are spoken to by your parent, you are expected to respond,” Lillian snaps coldly as a small smirk cross Ava’s lips.

“The day my father was murdered is the day that I lost the last of my parents. You may be alive, but you have been dead to me long before then. I don’t have to answer to you for anything,” Ava says calmly. Her voice is so calm that it sends an uncomfortable shiver down Lena’s spine, because she’s never heard Ava say anything cold to anyone, let alone to their mother. Lillian shakes her head, laughing lightly before glaring at the seal.

“I don’t know why I thought talking to you would have made any difference. You are an embarrassment to the Luthor name, just like your arrogant and incompetent father, driving this atrocious vehicle with that horrible music and your hideous tattoos,” Lillian snaps. Ava lightly shrugs her shoulders, moving to fasten her seatbelt, ignoring the comment from her mother as James rests his
hand on Lillian’s shoulder.

“Come on, she is a waste of our time,” James says as Lillian nods. The pair move toward the parked town car as Lena remains standing next to her sister’s Jeep.

“Ní náire tú. Is breá leat an trucail seo agus tá do chuid tatúnna go hálainn. (You’re not an embarrassment. You love this truck and your tattoos are beautiful.),” Lena says softly, causing Ava’s brows to raise in surprise.

“Go raibh maith agat. (Thank you.),” Ava says with a nod.

“Don’t speak to her,” James orders, causing Lena to clench her jaw slightly, a motion that Ava instantly notices.

“Lena, come. We have an important dinner to get to and you need to fix your makeup. Can’t have you looking like that vile excuse of a human in front of you,” Lillian says. Ava arches a brow, noticing how her sister’s body begins to deflate at the insulting words.

“Tá tú álainn, mo thurtar beag. Thairis sin, ní féidir leat comhairle a fháil ó bhean a bhfuil smál uirthi nó orduithe ó fhear lena zipír dá bríste gan fasach. (You are beautiful, my little turtle. Besides, you can’t take advice from a woman who’s makeup is smudged or orders from a man with the zipper of his trousers unfastened.),” Ava says, causing Lena’s lips to turn upward into a smile.

“Tá an ceart agat. (You’re right.),” Lena says with a nod as Lillian sighs.

“Lena, we are going to be late!” Lillian says harshly.

“Níl mé ag iarraidh dul. (I don’t want to go.),” Lena says as Ava smirks.

“Ansin, níl. (Then don’t.),” Ava says before Lena glances at James and Lillian.

“I’m not going,” Lena says, causing the pair’s nostrils to flare with anger.
“What?!” Lillian asks loudly.

“Lena, don’t be an idiot. Get in the car,” James orders coldly before Lena glances at Ava.

“An féidir linn dul go dtí an láthair agus an chaint againn? (Can we go to our spot and talk?),” Lena asks as Ava smirks.

“I don’t think that they’re going to like that too much,” Ava says as Lena shrugs.

“Who gives a fuck what they think?” Lena asks as Ava laughs lightly at the use of Kara’s choice of words that she told the CEO at the nightclub.

“I sure as hell don’t. Hop in,” Ava says, nodding her head toward the passenger seat.

Lena smirks, quickly rounding the car before opening the door and sliding into the passenger seat. Lillian and James scoff, yelling in protest as they move toward the vehicle. Lena slides a pair of sunglasses over her eyes before moving her hand to the radio, increasing the volume of the heavy metal music, downing out James and Lillian’s hateful protests. Ava glances over at her sister, receiving a nod and a small smile from the CEO before the seal drives out of the parking lot.

The seal smirks as she notices the fuming pair standing in the parking lot as she merges the vehicle into traffic. Ava glances over at the CEO, noticing the wind flowing through Lena’s hair as she nods her head to the music. Ava navigates through the city’s busy traffic in route toward a place she hasn’t been to in years.

The sisters are finally going to talk, but little does Lena realize, her entire world is about to be turned upside down.
Ava backs the vehicle into place, parking the Jeep in front of a cliff that overlooks the ocean with the city skyline behind them. It was a spot she stumbled upon when first moving to the city by accident. However, the location of the cliff is unknown to most, which made it the perfect place to escape from the public eye. In the past, Ava and Lena would come to this spot to talk or just watch the sunset after a hard day. However, after things changed in their relationship, neither woman has been to this spot, until now.

Ava turns off the engine before exiting the car, only for Lena to follow along behind her. The seal opens the back of the Jeep, leaving it open as she sits on the small trunk space. The CEO sits next to the seal, sitting a small silence as they watch the sun beginning to fall closer to the water’s edge.

“I nearly forgot how beautiful it is up here,” Lena says softly as Ava nods.

“Me too,” Ava says, moving her sunglasses to sit on top of her hair. Lena uses her own pair of sunglasses to pin back her windblown hair as a small sigh escapes her lips.

“Lillian was responsible for stopping my projects,” Lena says as Ava shakes her head.

“How did you find out?” Ava asks.

“Sam gave me a file while you were on a deployment. I scanned through it and recognized an alias that Lex used to use. It was used multiple times after his death and James isn’t intelligent enough to use something like that,” Lena says.

“I would say that I’m surprised, but then I would be blatantly lying,” Ava says as Lena nods before looking at the seal.
“Can I ask you something?” Lena asks.

“Go ahead, but you may not like the answer,” Ava says dryly.

“At the nightclub, I noticed that you have a scar on your back and Sara has one through her eye. What happened?” Lena asks as Ava nods.

“Sara and I, we’ve been together for almost six years: dated for three, married for three in September. During the middle of our second year of dating, I was sent on a brief deployment when she was ordered to do aerial coverage of a potential hostel area. She was picked because she was one of the most badass jet pilots in the Navy. Um, when she was landing back at a base overseas, her jet was hit by a drone. She somehow managed to see it coming at the last second and managed to eject out of the cockpit, but she still took most of the blast. She had several injuries but the one that caused her scar was from piece of shrapnel that came from her jet. It made a through and through wound in her left eye, causing her sight in that eye to essentially divide into two planes and ending her jet flying career,” Ava says sadly as Lena gasps.

“Oh my god,” Lena says in shock as Ava nods.

“It was hard for her at first. Rightfully so, because flying is her passion but with time, she got better with it. I developed some glasses and contacts for her to wear to help combat the headaches and dizziness. They seem to be working because she’s been flying more and more, which makes her happy,” Ava says as Lena shakes her head sadly.

“I’m sorry that happened to her, and that you both had to go through that,” Lena says as Ava nods.

“Thanks. It comes with the territory of our jobs, but you never realize it until it actually happens,” Ava says as Lena nods.

“What about you? How did you get your scar?” Lena asks as Ava shakes her head.

“I’m not sure if you’re ready to hear that story,” Ava says as Lena’s brow arches.

“Why?” Lena asks as Ava looks at the CEO sadly.
“Because when I tell you the story, it is going to bring up the very moment that caused you to hate me,” Ava says sadly as Lena shakes her head.

“I’m not going to lie, I was extremely shocked, hurt and furious when I heard what happened to Lex. I tried to hate you, but for some reason, I couldn’t. That only made me more angry. So, I shut down,” Lena says softly as Ava nods.

“When you heard the news, what were you told?” Ava asks.

“Your team raided his base and killed everyone in sight without question. When you got to his office, your team tortured him for days before you killed him,” Lena says as Ava laughs, causing Lena’s eyes to widen.

“Wow, that’s the story they told you? Jesus,” Ava says with a shake of her head, laughing lightly.

“Why are you laughing?” Lena asks as Ava looks at her.

“That story is total shite,” Ava says as Lena looks at her in confusion.

“Seriously? You didn’t kill him?” Lena asks as Ava sighs.

“I won’t lie, it was my shot that killed him but that story isn’t the truth,” Ava says as Lena knits her brows.

“Then tell me what actually happened,” Lena says.

“You really want to know?” Ava asks.

“I do,” Lena says with a firm nod.

“Before I start telling you, I need you to do something,” Ava says as Lena nods.
“Okay,” Lena says.

“Let me get everything out before you ask questions. If I stop, I won’t be able to get it all out,” Ava says as Lena nods.

“I won’t. I promise,” Lena says softly. Ava nods, sighing heavily before she gazed toward the ocean as sadness radiates through her eyes.

“About eight months before Lex’s death, my team was sent on a mission to retrieve several American hostages that were being held by an extremist group. The mission went well, we saved all of the hostages but they were in horrible conditions. We shipped them home in a medevac as quick as possible and our team was ordered to stay until another chopper could get us. The area we were in was extremely dangerous and getting any aircrafts into the area was damn-near impossible. So, we stayed, helped with parameter rounds, anything really, to keep our minds focused. One night, after dinner, I went to grab a few hours of sleep before I had to do parameter checks. However, when I woke up, instead of being in my cot, I was in a shack, hanging by my wrists from the ceiling while my feet were bound to the floor.

“As navy seals, we’re trained and prepared for what happens if we are captured. I kept calm and I studied every detail of that shack while I waited for my captors to arrive. I was hanging there for several hours, waiting for them to walk in, and just before nightfall that’s when I heard a truck engine outside of the shack. When the door opened, Lex walked in with Lillian and James at his sides. They didn’t say anything at first, the hate in their eyes said more than any words could. They weren’t there because they wanted something, they were there to hurt me. Then they moved toward the only table in the room and set a large case on top of it. James and Lex opened the case, smiling at me as they chose their weapons of choice to use against me. Lex, he drew up some kind of medication while James grabbed a metal cane. Lex injected me with the syringe and it set my body on fire. It heightened my senses, I could practically feel the sweat slowly releasing from every pore on my body.

“He smiled at me, with the most diabolical look in his eyes before he stood next to Lillian as James stepped forward and started hitting me. The drug made the pain excruciating, but I was determined to not let them hear me scream. Which only angered them further and eventually, I passed out from the pain as James continued to hit me. The beatings went on for another day and a half before they started waterboarding me. Which, I found to be odd at first, because waterboarding is something that we’re trained to handle easily. It was like a pity form of torture, allowing me to stay a little hydrated, and that’s when I realized they were doing it on purpose. Lex and James each had their time to hurt me, but Lillian hadn’t done anything besides watch them. After they finished waterboarding me, they resuspended me by my wrists before Lillian smiled at me, telling me that I would need my rest for the following day before I passed out.
“I woke up to the feeling of her smacking my cheeks with a devilish smile. She knew that beating or torturing me wasn’t going to break me. She didn’t know about my relationship with Sara at the time, or so I thought, so, she didn’t have that to use against me. Instead, she targeted the one thing that she knew would completely crush me—hurting you. As soon as she mentioned your name, my body shook with anger, which caused the three of them to laugh sadistically, because they knew it would completely crush me if something happened to you. When their laughter stopped, Lillian stared directly into my eyes, and I will never forget what she said to me: ‘If I’m capable of doing this to my own daughter, can you imagine what I’m capable of doing to the abomination that tore my family apart?’.

“My heart dropped in that moment because the amount of hatred in her eyes went far beyond just me and it crushed me. She laughed in my face as tears fell from my eyes, before she said, ‘We are businesswomen, so I’ll make you a deal. It will be a binding verbal contract but it comes with a price. I will not cause any harm to Lena from this day forward, allowing her to live her future in whatever way she chooses. In exchange for that future life, you will have to sacrifice being able to carry or bring a future life of your own into this world. A future life for a future life.’,” Ava says, tears streaming down her cheeks. The CEO has been quietly sobbing at the shock and horror of her sister’s memories.

“Oh my god,” Lena mumbles as Ava sighs.

“She knew how badly I wanted to start a family of my own one day. So, it came as a shock when I chose to protect you over having children of my own. She shook my hand and from there, they strapped me on a table. I watched and heard them laugh as Lillian cut me open while I was screaming in pain. Her intent was to make sure that anytime anyone saw me outside of my regular clothes, they would see that gruesome scar and run the other direction.

“After she was finished, I woke up to James using a large knife to cut along my back to leave his own mark on me. After he was finished, he and Lillian left, leaving me alone with Lex before I passed out again. The following morning, I woke up and Lex was running his hand through my hair while he cleaned my wounds—taking care of me. For a minute, it reminded me of when he would take care of me when I was sick as a child.

“I remember hearing the sound of my team’s chopper in the distance and then he took the same knife that James used and stabbed me in the chest—shoving it right near my heart before he kissed my forehead and disappeared. When my team rushed in, that’s how they found me. The next thing that I remember is waking up in a hospital bed, hearing Sara and our family sobbing, praying for me to wake up.

“The doctors told me that the knife missed my heart by millimeters and any hope that I had of Lex having any love or good left in his heart was completely gone. Any love or hope for my brother or our mother morphed into a dark, cold hatred. I used that hatred as fuel during my recovery because I
knew, I would meet him again. I wanted them to experience the same hurt that they put me through.

“Lillian and James had already started to worm their way into your good graces and it infuriated me. That’s why I kept leaving our office when they would come in to see you. I wasn’t mentally stable enough to talk about what happened, and when I would see them with you, it was a constant reminder that not only did they lie about the deal but that I failed to protect you.

“So, when my team was sent to his hideout, we were ready. By no means, was Lex to be taken alive and honestly, I was happy that we were ordered to kill him. We raided the place, only to find that Lex had used the devices his men helped him create against them. Everyone was already dead, whatever Lex used on them, made Anthrax and Ebola look like a common cold.

“We made our way to his office, finding him sitting at his desk, smiling. Our guns were pointed at him, and no one fired a shot until he reached for a detonator of some sort. My team members shot him in the hand, before looking at me and I hesitated. The last words that Lex said to me was, ‘Go ahead and kill me. I took away the two things that you hold so preciously in your heart: your ability to birth a child and the anathema that tore our family apart. Lena will be devastated by the loss of her big brother but when she finds out that it was you that killed me? Lillian and Jimmy will be there, swooping that bastard sister you love so much into their arms and she will shun you. My dear, Ava, the sacrifice you made was for nothing and I couldn’t be more proud of that outcome. Lena is with us now, and it’s all your fault.’

“I nodded to my co-captain and we each fired a single shot, piercing his heart, killing him instantly before we left that room. Alex held me the entire trip home while I sobbed into her chest. I don’t regret killing him but I regret hurting you. I failed you, as a sister, and I am so sorry,” Ava says as she buries her face into her hands as sobs escape her lips.

The CEO continues to silently sob, as a variety of emotions flow through her mind: sadness, betrayal, hurt, and pain. Lena shakes her head, trying to wrap her mind around everyone before she slowly reaches moves her hand toward the seal. Ava wipes her eyes, sniffing slightly as she notices Lena holding her out her hand, offering it for Ava to take. The seal slides her hand into Lena’s, gripping it gently, only for Lena to tighten her hold around Ava’s hand.

“Y-y-you let them do that to you to protect me? Even when I started pushing you away and treating you like shite!?” Lena asks as Ava nods.

“I made a promise to our father, the moment you came into our home that I would always protect you. I made you that same promise when you came into my room during a thunderstorm and curled up in my arms, Turtle. You have always had an amazing heart and soul, and I didn’t want them to ever have the chance to turn you into something you’re not. I have always wanted you to have an amazing life filled with love and happiness.
“I never wanted you to experience that type of pain or the effects that it has on your mental health. I wanted you to be able to have the love of your life and child be able to wrap their arms around you and not begin to tremble in fear because of PTSD episodes and flashbacks. I would go through it again if that meant keeping you safe because you are my baby sister and I love you,” Ava says honestly. Lena feels more tears fall from her eyes as her bottom lips quivers rapidly.

“O-o-oh my god. Bear, I-I-I’m so sorry,” Lena says with a sob.

Without hesitating, Ava pulls the CEO into her arms, holding her tightly as Lena sobs into the crook of her neck. Lena clings onto her sister, holding her tightly, sobbing harder as she feels the elevated and thickened scars through her blouse along the seal’s back. Ava releases a heavy breath, slowly rubbing Lena’s back as she presses a light kiss into the CEO’s hair, letting her sister sob and grunt angrily as she processes everything she’s been told.

“I’m sorry for letting you down,” Ava whispers as the CEO shakes her head.

“They did. Not you. I should be the one apologizing because even after I started to pull away, you kept believing in me, kept loving me. I’m glad you fucking killed him but he deserved to suffer more than a shot to the hand and two shots to the heart after what he did to you. They all do,” Lena says bitterly.

“I know, but if I had made that choice, I would have been no better than them,” Ava says as Lena sniffles.

“Shite, I’m so fucking stupid for believing they actually cared for me,” Lena says as Ava shakes her head.

“You’re not stupid for believing that they hold some goodness in their hearts, Turtle. I held onto that hope until they cut it out of me,” Ava says sadly as Lena shivers slightly.

“They used it against me and I let them do it. Their lies caused me to miss being there for you during your recovery, your wedding, holding my niece while she was an infant, and I’ll never be able to get that time they stole from me back,” Lena says coldly.

“I know, but all we can do now is move forward,” Ava says as Lena nods.
“Bear,” Lena mumbles.

“Yeah?” Ava asks.

“They may have fucked with my mind but you, through everything, kept trying. You have never failed me in any capacity nor could you ever. You are more than a navy seal or the villain that Lillian and James portray you to be, Bear. You are amazing and I couldn’t be more proud to have a sister like you. I’ve missed you so much and I know that I haven’t told you this enough but I love you,” Lena says, causing Ava to choke back a sob as she plants a kiss into Lena’s hair.

“I’ve missed you, too, my little turtle. So much,” Ava whispers as tears fall down her cheeks.

“Is it too late? To fix this? Us?” Lena asks as Ava shakes her head.

“No, it’s not,” Ava says softly, causing Lena to tighten her grip around the seal.

“I don’t deserve it but thank you,” Lena says as Ava nods.

“If we are going to rebuild our relationship, I need you to make me a promise,” Ava says as Lena glances up at her.

“Anything,” Lena says with a nod.

“They are going to come after you, pushing you to your absolute limits. Using whatever they can against you, it’s going to bloody well suck but you can’t let them convince you to go along with whatever they’re planning,” Ava says as Lena nods.

“They’ve been putting me through hell for the last two years and I was blind to it. Now, I know the truth and I’m not falling for any of their shite again. I’ll play along with their little charade to gather information so we can use it to send those bastards to hell,” Lena says firmly.

“You really want to do that?” Ava asks as Lena nods.
“They killed our father, manipulated me, and they hurt you. I will do whatever it takes to ensure that they will pay for what they’ve taken from us,” Lena says as Ava nods sadly.

“I know, by the look in your eyes that you’re determined to do whatever it takes to cripple them. But, there’s one thing that you can’t do,” Ava says as Lena arches a brow.

“What do you mean?” Lena asks.

“You can’t agree to marry him, Turtle. Even if it’s a ploy, you can’t agree to it, because if you do,” Ava says as she stops herself, shaking her head as tears fall down her cheeks.

“It’ll trigger your mind back to what Lex last said to you,” Lena says softly as Ava nods.

“It will cause the dark part of my heart to take over and consider you to be the enemy. As if you,” Ava says as she shakes her head as her body begins to tremble, causing Lena eyes to widen.

“As if I were in that shack, hurting you right alongside them,” Lena says as Ava nods, quickly wiping her tears away.

“The small, darkness that I have in my heart, terrifies me. If you were to agree to his proposal, my love for you would morph into a deep hate and I don’t ever want to feel that way toward you,” Ava admits sadly. The CEO moves one of her hands to cup the seal’s face, gently wiping away her sister’s tears before staring Ava in the eyes.

“I will never agree to marrying someone that I don’t love. Especially, if that person has inflicted so much pain to my own mental health and onto my only family member that I have left. I promise you, Bear, I wouldn’t do that to you,” Lena says as Ava nods.

A small silence falls amongst the sisters as they watch the sunset. They were making progress, however, unknown to the CEO, Ava secretly holds doubts about Lena. The seal doesn’t want to have these doubts toward her sister but Sara’s words about keeping her guard up around her flows through her mind.

Time will tell if Lena is serious about her words. Ava prays that her sister will prove herself, because
if not, the seal won’t hesitate to take her down right alongside Lillian and James.

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