Desolate Scars

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Rating: Mature
Archive Warning: Graphic Depictions Of Violence
Category: F/F
Fandom: Supergirl (TV 2015), Supergirl (Comics)
Relationship: Kara Danvers/Lena Luthor, Alex Danvers & Kara Danvers & Maggie Sawyer
Character: Kara Danvers, Alex Danvers, Maggie Sawyer, Lena Luthor, Everyone else has a more minor role
Additional Tags: Friends to Lovers, Mutual Pining, Slow Burn, Fluff, Humor, Canon Divergence, Angst, Sexual Content, no explicit smut though, Happy Ending, Violence, Mental Health Issues, Kara doesn't know she likes Lena for like eight years, it takes them eight years to confess, because Kara is an oblivious dork, and Lena Lesbian Luthor is a scared lil gay
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Desolate Scars

by Local_Asshole

Summary

[Desolate: abandoned; lonely; solitary; a state of complete emptiness or destruction.]

Kara is a senior in high school when a student transfers, who is immediately the center of attention. Her surname is notorious, but no one knew that the Luthors had a daughter. She is silent, keeps to herself, and others avoid her presence. It seems as if she prefers it that way, but they cannot help but be drawn to one another, something more gradually blossoming between them. However, as soon as they get closer, trauma separates them, only for them to find their ways back to each other almost ten years later.

But a Super and a Luthor? Impossible.

High school to present timeline A.U.

Notes

Find me on Tumblr at spoopercorp and on FF as Local-Asshole.
Estranged

Chapter Summary

A new girl transfers in the middle of the first semester. It has only been a day, but Kara has already heard some very nasty rumors. To her surprise, and hidden chagrin, she finds that the girl's name is Lena, of the infamous Luthor family, and that she is seventeen and in her grade as well.

TRIGGER WARNING: BULLYING.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Estranged

"I didn't know the Luthors had a daughter."

"No one did. I guess Lex was the only kid that mattered to them."

That's true.

"Are there any other hidden Luthor demons National City should be worried about?"

"No."

"And how exactly would you know that?"

"I have my connections, I'm positive."

"So what's with her then? She's really quiet."

No. Afraid.

"I don't think she's shy if that's what you're saying. There's such a thing as an introvert you know, and even then, no one talks to her, gets near enough to touch her even with a ten foot pole. I mean, if they do, it's usually to cuss her out and in the end she gets a few bruises from what I've heard."

"A bitch Luthor that comes from a monster family deserves more than 'a few bruises' in my opinion."

"Agreed, and she just got here, they're just testing the waters before going all out on her I think."

"This's the exact opposite of when her brother was here. He was the most popular guy in school before...you know...Metropolis... Well, I'm honestly not surprised that he was the favorite, he definitely seemed more like a charmer."

Definitely.
"I guess, when it comes to the Luthors, you exchange your sanity for drop-dead good looks and genius intellect."

Is that a compliment or an insult?

"Apparently, she transferred from a boarding school in Ireland? Then she came back home to National City; she's almost eighteen, a senior I think. I also heard that before boarding school she was homeschooled."

"Talk about sheltered snotty rich kids."

"No shit. I heard she's taking college courses outside of high school as an extracurricular on top of all this other shit she's forced to do and learning to take over the family company once she gets her degrees."

"I also heard she's fluent in ten languages, plays seven instruments, dances, paints, sculpts, writes, and builds a mean Langston black body field generator, whatever the fuck that is."

"What the hell? I don't know if she or her parents have noticed, but this isn't the Renaissance."

"The family's like the Black Plague though, so they're more Medieval to me. Emphasis on the 'evil'."

Funny.

"Maybe the new Luthor will be the new favorite if she targets a larger population than Lex did."

"Not a chance, Superman's got beef with the Luthors, he'll eventually find a way to incarcerate them before they decide to do anything sketchy."

Lena frowned from her stoic veil at their not-so-subtle-and-inconspicuous conversation regarding her and her family.

Not that she was surprised in the least bit. It was to be expected after what Lex had done, after he massacred cities, homes, real people with very real lives just to get in the face of Metropolis's beloved superhero.

He was always so petty.

The rumors were intriguing, entertaining to hear and often amusing. But a lot of them were also on the spot, strangely accurate.

The raven-haired girl silently plopped down onto her desk, which she conveniently chose all the way in the back to avoid any unwanted attention. Or worse, confrontation that would most likely result in conflict and, of course, injuries. Though, there was rarely a broken bone nor serious bleeding recently. But the Luthor knew all too well that the bullies needed to gauge her reaction, make sure she was not her insane lunatic brother who could fight back.

She was used to abuse, thought it was normal, found it appalling when she discovered that it was her own family that was unique in its upbringing compared to others; others, who were considered truly normal, utilized touch as a form of affection and not discipline or punishment or to inflict pain for fun.

And she found that she was unknowingly craving that foreign form of touch everyone else shared. That Lex had.
Her classmates could do their worst, but it would never be on par with what her mother could do. They could never wrought that.

Lena caught a blonde girl in the corner of her eye that seemed to be staring at her, indicating that she had likely been eavesdropping as well, listening into the conversation which Lena assumed she agreed with. However, she was only judging from the fact that when she nearly locked eyes with her, the blonde snapped her head back so fast that Lena was concerned she had whiplash.

Instead, she frowned again, mistaking it for fear.

She shrugged internally, that reaction from others was expected as well.

After all, the Luthors were associated as harbingers of death and suffering to put it honestly, albeit melodramatically.

Lena frowned even further, if that was possible, unable to see the girl's face nor reaction as she turned away so fast.

Kara sighed as she slid into her seat, part relieved and part annoyed, fumbling with her glasses nervously.

Relieved because she was sure she had not made eye contact with the new girl.

Annoyed because of the vitriol that surrounded Lena, and it was only the first day; she deserved better than that, than such quick and negative judgments based on her family's actions, not her own.

A lot of the rumors were far-fetched and Kara refused to dwell on their probabilities.

But the whispers about Lena being adopted was the only really plausible thing for the blonde to comprehend; the Luthors were probably the perfect poster family for Hitler's Aryan race and Lena looked extremely out of place compared to the rest of them.

Different.

*Not a bad different though.*

Kara's lips twitched as she forced herself not to smile, as she tried not to let her mind wander about Lena's foreign, though not exotic, appearance. Everyone was tan in National City, of course, it was California. However, Lena's skin was a fair, pale white, contrasting her long near-black hair and deep green eyes that held that ninety-nine percent coldness and indifferent Luthor trademark.

The one percent she could not quite figure out.

But she was breathtakingly beautiful.

Lena was easy to pick among crowds and Kara frowned, troubled at the thought that she was an easy target to keep track of for the supposed bullies lingering in her radius.

She *loathed*, absolutely *hated* any interactions meant to cause harm to another.

Kara hated the sin, *not* the sinner.

Krypton was a merit-based society, so arriving to such an architecturally, scientifically, and socially anarchic and primitive planet like Earth was a *colossal* step backwards.

So, she believed everyone should be judged for their own actions, not of others affiliated.
Her chagrin at Lena's appearance was more directed towards her friends, not the super gang though, but the other more distant acquaintances she had made during her high school years.

Kara was worried she would be disappointed in some of her more familiar peers if they bullied another student; she had great faith in humanity, believed that goodness was innate, inherited, but her trust and expectations often let her down.

Her worries were made true by the beginning of the second quarter, much to her dismay.

Kara never heard anything directly pertaining to Lena since her arrival a few weeks prior, they were always rumors, but she had a nagging hunch that for the entirety of the term, the Luthor had experienced less than welcoming students. Students that were supposed to make her comfortable, or at the very least not shun nor bully her senseless.

Same with the teachers, but they were too abhorred by her family, so they diminished their socializing into nothing more but clipped and curt greetings.

When she did spot the Luthor at school, there were times she had an accidental look at the injuries haphazardly covered with sleeves or hats or scarves or even gloves.

Or at least that was what she thought they were, it could have been her imagination, she never had time to lock her gaze and analyze before Lena's nervous and shifty eyes rested on hers, scrutinizing her along with all the other students.

Saying that Kara was disappointed when she caught sight of a group of kids her age surrounding a vulnerable Lena Luthor was an understatement.

She was furious.

The fact that she was on conversing terms with all of them definitely did not help.

Oh yes, Kara was absolutely going to intervene, until a comment from Lena made her stop in her tracks.

She was not supposed to be able to pick it up, but she had the perk of super hearing and the voice sounded so broken, but not small as it was confident and firm at the same time.

A paradox really.

"Please leave me alone."

Kara did not think her heart could ache any further, but the next sentence proved otherwise.

"I'm not worth it, you'll only waste your time on me."

What made it worse was that there were bystanders and people who ignored the scene altogether.

Then it got even worse when Lena started to apologize for things she could not control, things she did not even do.

She was just a student like the rest of them, but the only difference was that she was trying to survive and get by as unscathed as possible.

That was the moment the blonde snapped and lost her faith in humanity for a split second.
Lena was being shoved around by the group, every time she regained her balance another pair of arms roughly pushed her away into another and another before her textbooks were slammed out of her hands.

She sighed inwardly, moved to retrieve them, but before she could do that she felt a boot make itself comfortable against her chest, sending her collapsing onto the concrete.

The hit was unexpected, robbed her lungs of precious air as they contracted, struggling to sip back in oxygen until they were full-fledged gasps.

There was going to be a nasty bruise there later.

Lena grunted, got up on all fours and continued to gather her books.

Apparently, one of them thought it was an invitation to sock her in the face, laughters all around as the group and the bystanders complimented the action.

Lena bit her lip, swallowed back a whimper, felt her two nostrils flood blood out and a pulsating tenderness in her left eye.

They all threw insults at her, slandered her and her family, and she found herself zoning out, bored of the same old garbage that spewed out of everyone's mouths and rolled off their tongues.

For a moment, Lena found herself hating her brother even more if that was possible; because of his actions, she could not live a relatively normal life outside of the family.

She grit her teeth, clenched it shut so tight she could feel them grinding against each other, then she closed her hands into fists against the cold ground.

She never enjoyed conflict, hated fighting back unless it was absolutely necessary.

So instead, Lena always appeased them, always apologized for actions that were not hers, but she would not cry. She let the tears build up, but never let them spill over.

"I'm sorry."

It came out like it was second-nature to her.

And she was still too dazed from the punch to notice a fuming Kara stalking towards them.

"What are you all doing?"

The group of students was startled by her sudden outburst; the blonde was probably the most popular and most likable girl in the entirety of the school, a puppy-like person that no one thought could be provoked and enraged.

They were dead wrong.

"You're bullying someone! How could you all do this?" she was shocked into speechlessness, her loss of words clearly showing. "What's wrong with all of you?"

"She's a Luthor!" someone defended, as if it was a great reason to treat someone with such disrespect.

Kara snapped her head at the boy, glared daggers into his nonexistent heart through his unkind eyes, "Save it, Thomas. Her last name doesn't define her."
He sank back, muttering to himself.

At this point the group and bystanders dispersed.

The blonde was tormented herself when she first came to Earth and had no room for tolerance when it came to bullies.

She watched them all go, shaking her head all the while.

Then Kara heard a shuffling as Lena rushed to try to pick up her books with one arm while cradling her chest with the other.

"Here, I'll help you," the blonde insisted, reaching out.

Lena flinched so hard that she fell backwards, shaking slightly, grimacing.

Kara retreated, heard the booming heartbeat erratically playing within the girl's chest.

She frowned as a sad realization dawned upon her, that Lena had a difficult time trusting, expected pain from everyone, regardless of the genuine kindness shown to her.

The Luthor recovered quickly and used both her frail arms to get her books back and winced at the pain.

"Hey, are you okay?" Kara asked, and cursed herself internally when she made a habitual mistake of gripping the girl's hand.

She was always such a touchy person.

Lena panicked and pulled away.

"I-I'm so sorry, I should've asked if I could check first before..." the blonde trailed off feebly, then sighed.

*I'm such an idiot.*

"Your eye," Kara pointed to her own, trying to communicate that it was blackening and swelling with vague and silly hand gestures, "Do you need ice or-"

"I'm fine."

If Lena was not so eager to leave, her lips would've twitched as she found her savior endearingly amusing, and she was unused to such kindness. It was *foreign* and *strange* and *scary*, and she found herself much more comfortable with a beating rather than a hug. Touch was always reserved as punishment and torment, same with words, anything different was terrifyingly unfamiliar, regardless of whether she craved it or not.

Lena shook her head lightly, but it was hard enough to cause a shattering headache and make her sway.

Kara tensed, prepared to catch her if she fell, but at the same time refusing to overstep her boundaries unless it was absolutely necessary to prevent further injuries.

"Are you sure? I don't feel comfortable with you walking home like this, *alone* for that matter, plus your nose's bleeding a lot and-"
"I said I'm fine," Lena stated, her breathing unsteady and uncertain, rushed out and stern before pivoting and walking away.

Kara successfully fought against the overwhelming urge to go after her and stayed put, watching her leave until she was completely out of sight.

"Honey."

Kara shook her head out of her reverie and turned at the source of the voice.

Eliza's eyes dropped, "You've been picking at your food since dinner started. Is something wrong?"

The blonde shook her head again, "No, I'm just...not hungry, I guess."

Alex dropped her fork and repeated the phrase slowly, enunciating each syllable, "Did Kara Danvers just say she...wasn't hungry?"

"So there is something wrong," Maggie stated next to her girlfriend.

The blonde shrugged, "Yeah, I guess? I don't know."

They all stopped eating and turned their attention to the Kryptonian sitting on the dining table, waiting, expectant.

Kara shrunk under their anticipation and twisted her fingers together, "It's about the new girl, Lena Luthor I think?"

Her older sister tensed, "If that Luthor bitch tried any-

"Alex," Eliza and Kara both growled.

"Sorry," she apologized sheepishly, "No vulgar language at the dinner table."

"I'd prefer no vulgar language at all, but we know that's not going to happen," her mother commented.

"That's not really what I was angry about," Kara muttered, folding her arms.

Alex noticed the cross look her little sister gave her, "What is it? Spit it out."

"You don't know Lena, she's a good person."

"And you know her enough to make that judgement?" she countered.

"Guys..." Maggie whispered nervously, ready to negate the intensity of the conversation.

Kara narrowed her eyes, but then her expression softened as she sighed, standing up, "I'm going to bed."

She was in no mood for confrontation.

"It's seven."

Alex's comment went ignored, and she turned to give her mother a pleading look.

Only what she received was the classic parental glare.
The auburn-haired girl raised her hands in defense, "What'd I do?"

Maggie face-palmed, "Seriously?"

"What?"

Eliza recalled the exchange from a few seconds ago, "You know, I'm pretty close with a lot of parents of kids in Kara's grade, and they're not very fond of Lena."

"Why should they be? The Luthors are crazy. Maggie, you should know that better than most people."

"Alex, babe, I know you're protective of Kara, but she can handle herself," the detective sighed, smirking when her girlfriend rolled her eyes in mock annoyance, "What happened between the Luthors and my family's in the past."

"And you're going back to your second year of college after this weekend, and you're majoring in biochemistry. Not only that, but you're a D.E.O. operative," Eliza frowned, "I'd think my own daughter would know not to make such accusations on a girl she doesn't know just 'cause of her family's history."

Alex groaned in response.

"Don't give me that attitude or you won't get dessert."

Then she pouted, "But, *Mom*!"

Maggie snickered.

The next day towards the end of school, Kara saw Lena scampering through the hallways, trying her best to dodge the sneers and glares made her way.

The blonde thought that the girl was skilled in hiding herself very well because since her transfer, Kara was unable to really pinpoint her location.

Lena was not necessarily small as she was definitely taller than the average female human height.

So it confounded the blonde why she was unable to spot her before, but then again, she had not had that encounter with her until yesterday. Never really paid any mind nor attention.

Now maybe she was subconsciously looking out for her new...peer?

Lena tried her best to sneak through the hallways, but after yesterday's scuffle that was interrupted by arguably the most popular girl at school, she found it immensely more difficult to be invisible and silently cursed her savior.

Her savior, who was now making her way into a class they shared.

Math.

Lena successfully moved out of her line of sight and poked her head back out from the end of the hall when the girl walked in.

Early.
Class did not start until ten minutes.

She internally sighed, saying her goodbyes to what was potentially a quiet moment she could keep to herself.

An obstacle that abruptly startled her path made her stumble and fall to the ground, bruising her already bruised ribs even more. She watched as her textbooks spilled out of her backpack and groaned, but before she could make a move to retrieve them, a pair of strong hands shoved her against a locker.

"What's up, Luthor?"

She recognized the boy as Thomas, from what she recalled from their last encounter.

At her prolonged silence, he slammed her into the locker again, "I'm expecting an answer."

"I-I...I was just...going to class. Please, I don't want any trouble."

"Awww, no trouble?" he chuckled, then his mouth distorted into a severe frown, and he kneed her in the gut, "Not something I'd expect to hear from a Luthor, that's rich."

Lena gagged, doubling over and a fist was slammed into her cheek when she heard her name spit from the boy's acidic mouth.

Kara's silence was interrupted when she heard the sound of shaking metal, but waved it off. Students were always messing around in the halls before class, so she opted to finish reading her book in relative peace.

However, when she saw a figure enter the classroom, her eyes were drawn up.

It was Lena, though Kara noticed she was slightly hunched over, carrying her books in one arm and letting the other fall against her ribs; her hair was draped over her face as if to hide something.

She winced when she sat in her seat and the small squeak of pain she made alarmed Kara.

The blonde, for a split second, saw a nasty bruise forming on her cheek, and she knew very well that it was not from yesterday.

The Kryptonian's face morphed into one of complete anger and before she could stop herself, she made her way over.

Lena panicked, shrinking into her seat immediately when she saw Kara walking towards her with an enraged expression.

Apparently, the blonde noticed the young Luthor's shaking and look of fear.

Her anger was not directed towards the girl, and she felt awful for scaring her, so her features softened, "Don't worry. I'm not going to hurt you."

Lena struggled to relax at the statement and Kara noticed.

This time, the blonde's voice was more gentle and tender, and she pointed at the location of the new girl's bruise on her own face, "Is it new?"

Though she already knew the answer.
But she found herself surprised when Lena stated otherwise.

"N-No."

The Kryptonian heard the human's heart rate pick up at the lie.

"I-I..." her eyes darted around, avoiding Kara's gaze, "I fell. This morning I mean."

The blonde frowned at the stuttering beat again, then she smiled slightly, deciding to probe no further, "Do you mind if I sit next to you?"

Lena was caught off guard, but managed to find her voice, "W-We have assigned seats."

"I'm sure I can persuade our teacher into letting us sit next to each other."

The Luthor hesitated at first and was about to say no until her vision rested on the eager blue eyes towering above her.

It was this moment she finally got to take in her savior's appearance.

Her hair was long and curled neatly, but almost had a wild side to it as well, like she was in a rush. And her innocent, soft face was framed nicely with her glasses.

Lena snapped her head away, refusing to trail her gaze down her classmate's body, so she just nodded, inviting Kara into her lonely area.

The blonde grinned happily and Lena swore that her teeth were the purest white that she had ever seen.

The Luthor appreciated that her elbow partner respected her personal space as she slid the chair slightly away.

Oddly enough, Lena found that she wanted the blonde to be closer.

"I didn't know we had this class together."

The Luthor nodded, found herself surprisingly disappointed. Of course she would pay no mind to a pathetic Luthor.

"What's your schedule?" the blonde tried again, "Maybe we share some more classes?"

Lena hesitated, unsure if her classmate would take advantage of that information and exploit it to any bullies.

For some reason unknown to her, she relayed her schedule to the bubbly student, but only of their shared classes to compromise.

"We have chemistry together as well. And English."

Kara studied her for a minute and the raven-haired girl's heart stuttered nervously.

"Your ribs."

Lena's mind fizzled for a second at the unexpected statement, "What?"

"You're holding them more tightly, closer to you. Did you bruise them when..." she trailed off.
When they hurt you?

"When you fell?" Kara finished instead.

"I'm fine."

The blonde's smile never faltered, but her eyes were downcast, "That wasn't the question."

"Yeah."

"You should probably go to the nurse's office. I can show you the way."

"I'm fine."

Kara did not think she could hate a simple phrase like that so much, but she relented, thankful that short replies were better than none, "Okay, I'm just making sure, just tell me if you change your mind. Or if you need anything, okay?"

Lena nodded once, tersely, obviously dumbstruck by the endless amount of kindness this girl she barely knew had been offering her since she arrived.

When the bell rang, the Luthor saw herself out in a second, as fast as possible.

Kara did not bother to go after her, opting to watch from afar with a sad look as the figure moved into the hallway, slowly gathering her things.

Chapter End Notes

Constructive criticism appreciated.
Chapter Summary

Their newly-found acquaintance is tentative. Lena prefers to keep their relationship strictly as peers and finds herself exasperated for all the confusingly wrong and right reasons.

TRIGGER WARNING: ABUSE, BULLYING.

Chapter Notes

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See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Untouched

Slowly, at least agonizingly slowly for Kara, she had been gradually introducing herself into Lena's social space, which was, as expected, consisted only of herself.

However, for the Luthor, she found the blonde's endearing insistence to be unbearably annoying.

Maybe frustrating was a better word.

Her relationships never even bordered on friendship, not even close. Everyone was an acquaintance or less, nothing more, and the fact that Kara was threatening that familiar trend with her bubbly personality and beautiful face and fluffy blonde hair and puppy-like attitude was absolutely frustrating.

How dare she?

A week passed since their first encounter and Lena was unable to shrug her classmate off, not that she tried to, which was something that had shaken her to her core greatly; she never tolerated anyone to the point where she did not actively try to get rid of them.

I guess there's a first for everything.

The frustration was mutual for Kara; she usually coaxed out shy people easily, everyone for that matter, but Lena was...different.

Eventually it hit her.

She's afraid and broken, not shy.
And the blonde had never really dealt with that before.

Well, she had, but everyone's broken pieces were different and Kara was always able to put them back together with relative ease, like an effortless puzzle.

Lena though, she was shattered, several pieces a fine grain, simply impossible to put back together perfectly with so many parts strewn about.

Kara lost her entire planet to put it simply, and she remained positive and bright and optimistic that she could help others.

A kid by the name of Bruce Wayne lost his parents and preferred to brood and be edgy and mysterious like his teen angst would never ever go away.

Everyone heard about the incident with the Waynes, a tragic story shared among everyone at the time.

But the blonde remained in the dark about Lena's history, as it remained placid and unperturbed.

The Luthors enjoyed being in the dark, and it made their influence all that more catastrophic.

For Kara, she wanted to see what was underneath, she just wanted to pull off that stoic and cynical veil that masked something else inside - the potential, the capacity for love and kindness, uninhibited by the fear, the misfortune, and the tragedy.

For a moment Kara did not want to dig out the adversity buried within Lena's past - Lena's heart.

She did not force her classmate to sit with her at lunch, just opted for greetings and formalities.

The blonde did not think she was going anywhere with the new girl, their physical and emotional distance remained constant. If anything, by the Luthor's demands, it could have stretched even farther, and she was thankful that she was not being pushed away, at least actively so.

Lena was disturbed with how affectionate Kara was with everyone, words and actions and all.

But that was exactly the problem for her; well, the kind words were fine, bearable even, but the blonde's penchant for hugs was terrifying.

The Luthor realized that Kara stopped being so touchy with her, maybe because she could hear how loud her heart was erratically beating at the notion of someone making physical contact with her without it being heinous.

The only progression with their connection was the talking, the conversations that were elicited out from Lena by Kara besides pertaining to their classes. It was not easy to get out of her shell for speaking, but it was not awkward at least. It was more amusing if not anything else.

There was one time the blonde bolted late into class in the middle of a lecture, her hair unruly and messed, and she found herself obligated to explain to Lena about what happened to her, mostly regarding her appearance.

"I flew here..." her voice pitched higher, "On...on a bus..."

The Luthor tilted her head curiously, but ignored the statement and continued with her work.

Then there was a moment in chemistry class where she assumed the blonde had something that kids called a 'brain fart'. 
"Chemistry's so difficult. I'm not familiar with these elements from Ear - here. I'm not familiar with the elements from here. Yes. Yes, that's right."

Lena quirked a brow, her voice not as small as when she was being bullied and hustled around, "Kara?"

She fixed her glasses in a nervous habitual movement, "Y-yeah?"

"Chemistry's a universal subject."

"R-Right. Yes. Of course. Heh."

But she was smart.

Almost genius in intellect.

And Lena was always baffled at why Kara acted like she struggled with science or math, like she was hiding something.

Maybe she just wanted to fit in.

But she was also just...strange, and she said weird things.

Then Lena realized that maybe the girl's first language was not English, which would explain that confused look she always had on her face whenever she read a paragraph that was a bit too long or whenever she asked the raven-haired girl what this word or that word meant.

Not to mention her absolutely horrid spelling at times.

Horrid in a funny way.

She was clearly fluent in English, but there were times where her phrases and sentences strayed from informal to formal, away from casual to more...professional in its structure.

Or maybe she just really struggled with English in general.

Eventually, Lena could really see why Kara was the most popular girl in school. She was shy, awkward, but kind, selfless, passionate, and just plain friendly and likable. Not to mention she was the human embodiment of a puppy.

She was not popular for her physical beauty, though of course her figure was gorgeous, but she was a the cheer captain and a part of the varsity soccer team.

Lena remembered Kara talking about Alex, her older sister, with high praise along with Maggie, the latter's girlfriend.

Alex entertained soccer freshman year, but found that her calling was towards basketball and lacrosse.

Maggie played baseball and softball, and dabbled with volleyball for a time.

The Luthor preferred to stay active with her brain, but joining any clubs was obviously out of the question, and she used to do track, but that was tossed out the window as well.

Kara was a curious girl, but typically did not look like she was one to be captivated by others, but left everyone else captivated by her.
Or maybe it was more accurate to apply that to Lena as well.

The captivators, the blonde for all the good reasons and the Luthor for all the bad ones.

Except, unbeknownst to everyone, Kara was mesmerized by the raven-haired girl for some Satanic reason.

It was obvious many boys, and girls, crushing on Kara did not take too kindly to being one-upped by a 'crazed' Luthor, since the blonde's attention was only paid to her, plus her close gang of friends.

That was what jeopardized Lena's safety, that she was seemingly being hovered over for protection by the puppy-like blonde, who did not realize what increased danger she was putting her in.

People were jealous, shocked.

The students admitted that, yes, Lena was certainly beautiful, foreignly ethereal in her features; but she was cold, indifferent, intimidating, completely unreachable...

She was someone to admire or want to be, minus her murderous family and her 'mean' personality.

She was not someone to know. Never that.

Kara, on the other hand, her beauty was not intimidating.

It was more on the comforting side; innocent, kind, sincere, clumsy...with a dorky personality, dorky glasses, and she was just dorky in general.

She was someone people wanted to go home to.

Someone people wanted to get to know, to understand, to help grow.

And Kara just could not understand as to why no one thought the same with Lena.

No, she could understand perfectly as to why, but she could not comprehend nor fathom it.

It made her angry that it was simply a surname holding everyone back like it was an epidemic.

Lena was no longer someone, she was something, dehumanized and demonized by others.

They were working as pairs on a lab project in chemistry, their sleeves rolled up and out of the way as they were carefully observing chemical reactions.

The Luthor stated that she would be back with another batch.

After a few moments Kara was startled from concocting a liquid when she heard a familiar cry of pain.

She quickly turned to the source, saw a stain on Lena's lab coat. And the liquid seemed to have poured over her left arm and hand as well, her burning skin bleeding slightly wherever the chemicals made contact.

Her super hearing picked up on a few chuckles and whispers berating her partner.

"What's going on here!" the teacher shouted, "What'd I say about lab safety?"

Kara glanced at the boy next to her friend with a suspiciously empty vial and the other boy next to
him who was failing to hold in his laughter.

"What happened, Lena?" the teacher repeated, scowling.

The boys, Maxwell Lord and Devlin Davenport, glared daggers at the girl, as if to shut her up from saying something that would rat them out.

Lena was not paying any attention to them and for a moment Kara thought she would actually deliver justice to the jerks.

But she was horribly wrong and the answer Lena gave the teacher made Kara's stomach twist.

"I-I spilled some on myself, I should've been more careful. I'm sorry."

The shit eating grin plastered on Max's face widened and Kara wanted so badly to slap that smug look off of his mouth.

The teacher sighed, "Make sure it doesn't happen again, and go to the nurse."

"I'll accompany her," the other boy offered slyly.

"How kind of you, Devlin."

Lena stiffened significantly, eyes widening with fear.

The Kryptonian could hear her heart rate spike to coincide with her mini hyperventilating.

"No, I will," Kara countered while glowering at the two boys, seeing the girl relax slightly, "I think she'd be more comfortable if a friend was with her."

The teacher seemed to consider for a moment, "Very well, wash the chemicals off and then come back after you've made sure she's in the nurse's office."

The blonde nodded tersely and swiped a clean rag from the shelves and wetted half of it before leading Lena out of the room, her mood clearly ruined.

After they were out of earshot down the hall, Kara turned to face the Luthor, crossing her arms, "Why didn't you say anything?"

"I did."

The blonde sighed exasperatedly, "I meant why didn't you tell the truth?"

"They're only going to come after me with more force. Besides," she smiled bitterly, whispering the next sentence to herself, "no one would've believed me, I'm a Luthor."

Kara frowned, ignoring the last statement, "But if you don't fight back this could keep going on, it could get worse either way, but at least you'd let someone know."

A moment of silence passed.

"How are you feeling?"

"That's none of your concern," Lena replied coldly.

"It is of my concern! You're my friend!" then she faltered when her 'friend' flinched away at her
raised voice, "O-Or, at least, I consider you one, I mean...I-I don't know how you, ahem, feel about it, so-"

Lena cut off her adorable rambling, "I'm fine."

Kara growled at the phrase, "No, you're not! You have no idea how much it bothers me when you say that!"

"Sue me," came the cool response.

The blonde groaned, reaching out to grab Lena's arm, but she stopped midway, remembering that the girl was very not fond of physical contact.

Her voice softened, held less confidence, "Uh, um, may I..." she gestured awkwardly at her friend's bleeding hand.

Lena hesitated, "I...yeah, sure..."

She braced herself, but found strong hands gently placed on her upper arm, sliding just below her elbow to lift it up.

The touch was filled with care and affection, she wanted to stay and pull away at the same time.

When Kara dabbed at a particularly sensitive spot, she hissed, squirmed away from the raw tenderness.

The blonde retracted herself, "I-I'm sorry, I didn't mean to," she took a huge gulp of air and let a deep breath out, "Oh wow, that's...that's a lot of blood."

"Queasy much?"

"Very much. I'm a wimp actually."

"Then maybe playing hero isn't your thing."

The blonde smiled thoughtfully, a long stretch of silence filled the air around them as Kara continued to gently dab away the blood, soaking it into the rag.

After a moment, Lena sighed, she sounded irked and her eyes slanted angrily, "Why're you doing all this? I'm a Luthor."

"You're Lena, not Lex, not Lillian, not Lionel. Lena," the blonde smiled fondly.

Kara heard the girl's chest tighten as her heart pounded against her chest, and she thought that maybe, this time, it was because of something good, because Lena truly deserved it.

"I appreciate your sentiment, but we can't be friends," the girl pulled her arm away.

Kara froze, all of those days trying to get close to the Luthor shattered with a single sentence, "W-Why?"

"You have a reputation to uphold h-"

"I don't care."

Lena held a finger up and glared, "Let me finish."
The blonde chuckled nervously, made a gesture that she was zipping up her lips and throwing away the key.

The Luthor groaned internally at her cuteness, then cleared her throat, "You may say you don't care, but I'm sure you're at least a little bit concerned. However, that's not the majority of my worries."

She paused, continuing after Kara bobbed her head a bit too wildly for a nod.

"Since you've become...closer to me...in and between classes, before and after school, it's been more tedious to hide to put it simply."

The blonde frowned, which slowly morphed into a gaping mouth; she was appalled as what the sentence was implying dawned upon her.

"I-I'm so sorry. If I knew that befriending you would put your safety in more danger I..." she shrunk, "I was an idiot to think that..." she trailed off, "I would've tried to keep my distance."

Lena narrowed her eyes.

_Tried?_

Then she shook her head, "I think it'd be best if you stop whatever you're doing."

Kara nodded, trying to understand, "Then I guess...I guess I should leave you alone now?"

Lena returned the gesture and watched as the blonde reluctantly made her way back to the classroom, shoulders dropped.

The Luthor swore she could feel something inside her stir.

Little did she know it was the thawing of her heart.

Lena clamped her mouth shut as she was examining the dining table for her and Lillian.

"Don't mumble when you're confused or unsure, it shows your lack of intelligence."

The Luthor narrowed her eyes and ignored her migraine, struggling to remember the formal setting for a dining table.

_Service plate on the bottom, salad plate stacked on top. Cake fork placed horizontally above facing right. Dessert spoon horizontally above that and facing left. To the left of the plates's the dinner fork placed vertically and facing up, same with the salad fork but shifted one over after. Far left’s the folded napkin. The bread plate with the butter knife's in the top left corner. Dinner knife, teaspoon, and soup spoon to the right of the plate placed vertically facing up. Farther to the right's the cup and saucer. To the top right's the water, red wine, and white wine glasses in that order.

Lena was sure her cotillion etiquette made sure she was not forgetting anything and she double checked to see if her mother's set-up matched hers.

She nodded and sighed, relieved, but something nagged at her that she neglected a piece of vital information.

_But everything looks perfect._

She racked through her brain to triple check every detail.
The fish's a part of the appetizer and that's complemented by white wine, and then there's steak for the entree and that main meal goes with red wine. Nothing's for dessert, but it's safer to leave the unused wares on the table than to omit them.

Still, Lena could not help but panic a little at the possibility she was forgetting something.

I should calm down and stop being so paranoid. Dinner looks fine and I haven't gotten anyone pissed at school since I transferred.

She straightened herself suddenly, not firm, but stiff, when she heard the bolt to the entrance unlock.

Lillian nodded towards her daughter, "Lena."

She returned the gesture, "Mother."

The woman sat across from her and examined the dining set-up with vexation and rearranged the silverware.

Lena looked on with mortification.

Fuck, I forgot she was left-handed. I'm so stupid!

"I-I apologize, Mother, I'll make sure it doesn't happen again."

Lillian clicked her tongue, "Stuttering is unbefitting of someone raised in a prim and proper upbringing. Elegance is of utmost importance," her eyes narrowed, "And no elbows. Disappointing."

In Lena's mortification, she forgot that she rested her arms on the table.

"Yes, Mother."

"You're almost eighteen. I expect more from you. My sweet Lex did everything perfectly. Perfectly."

The girl sighed internally, no excuses, not even valid reasons or else it would be thought of as talking back and turned into a lecture.

Or a beating.

"Yes, Mother."

And she was in no mood to for a belt to be whipped against her back.

They went through dinner in silence, and Lena found herself missing Lionel and Lex. Her father was just as cold as her mother, but since he passed, Lillian took up his mantle and the severity of punishments increased tenfold. Lex was always the one to diffuse when he sensed that something was amiss.

But he was in prison. Rotting in his cell along with his glorious xenophobia.

"How has school been?"

Lena glanced up from her plate, tilted her head slightly.

Her mother was never concerned about how she felt nor her well-being, so she deduced that Lillian was trying to scout out information on something.
"Fine," she answered cautiously.

"Good grades."

Stellar.

"Of course."

"Have you gotten into any trouble lately?"

"No."

A pause.

Lillian glared daggers at her daughter, "I don't tolerate lying."

Lena's eyes widened in surprise, and this time she could not stand idly by as she was accused of something she was sure did not happen, "Wh-I'm not-"

The woman slammed her fork on the table and the girl was immediately silenced by her fear.

Lena's hands were shaking and she put them on her lap to hide them from view, ignoring the stinging pain from the acid spilled on her earlier.

Her mother began calmly, "I received a call from Devlin Davenport's, Thomas Elliot's, and Maxwell Lord's folks."

Lena clenched her hands into fists, managing to make her voice as calm as possible to prevent an unwanted outburst, "What'd they say?"

"That you stirred up some trouble, multiple times. That was the gist of the brief conversation I had with them."

"I swear I didn't-"

"You could've potentially scared off my investors from the Davenport and Elliot families and severed my affiliation with Lord Technologies. You could've jeopardized the company. What do you have to say?"

"Mother, I didn't do anything. They're lying."

"You're prone to insolence, have an inclination for distractions, so why should I believe your excuses?"

Lena's expression was downcast, head hung low when she saw her mother's face flare with ferocity.

She was so deep in thought she did not notice the clacking stilettos nearing her, "Lex was perfect in every way, I understand that it's hard for you to do the same when you're...well, like this."

Lena muttered, "'Perfect'. Sure. Explains why he's in prison. Tell that to his wardens, to the people he's killed and the families he's destroyed. 'Perfect' my ass."

A hard backhand slammed against her left cheek, irritating her almost healed black eye.
The force was so powerful it sent her tumbling onto the floor.

Lena quickly slid away into the corner of the dining room, shaking and holding in her whimpers of fear.

"You will *not* get away with disrespecting me or your brother. Not only that, but you also disrespected the Davenports, the Elliots, and the Lords, maybe you should eat less so you don't have the energy to stir up trouble like that again."

The next day at school was probably the worst so far. She luckily got away with only a dislocated shoulder and elbow. No open wounds thankfully, so a few weeks could fix those up easily.

If she got professional medical attention.

Most of the time she haphazardly bandaged or stitched herself up, too afraid to seek out a hospital because her often temperamental mother might get the idea that Lena was turning her into the authorities for child abuse.

She calculated the time she would need to fully recover for all her injuries. The black eye and bruised ribs were no longer tender to the touch, but her left arm’s joints needed several weeks. Then the same arm needed a few months to scar over and disappear, very likely a lot less since her skin was burned superficially.

*Again, at least no horrid open wounds or broken bones.*

Then Lena cursed inwardly.

*They'll take advantage of my increased vulnerability.*

She would have to be more crafty when it came to avoiding the bullies.

That went out the window when she stopped in the hallway and saw Kara forcing a smile at a rather bulky boy, who she deduced was trying, and failing, to flirt with her.

The blonde looked very eager to leave, but of course, she was much too nice and polite to leave or reject him harshly.

So, without second thoughts, Lena stalked over and placed herself between the two.

"Excuse me?" he grumbled.

"Sorry, Terrence was it?"

"Terry," he corrected.

"Well, I need to borrow Kara for a while to discuss our project, I hope you don't mind trying to find another time to converse?"

The large boy bristled, growling before moving off.

Lena sighed dejectedly.

*So much for laying low. Mother's going to kill me, Terrence Cannon's family's another investor of the company.*
And if rumors did him any justice, he was a brute and solved conflict with his fists instead of his words.

Lena broadened her shoulders, mentally prepping herself for another potential beating sooner or later.

"Thank you."

The Luthor jumped, turned to meet the beautiful, warm blue eyes that praised her.

"Don't mention it. It wasn't a problem, I owe you for all the times you've helped me out."

Kara frowned, "You don't owe me anything. You never did."

The blonde's demeanor slackened when she eyed Lena's arm hung in a cast and sling.

"I-I know you said we couldn't be friends, but I mean, as a peer, I can still be concerned, so..." she appraised the injured arm, "Is this from the incident yesterday?"

The Luthor glanced at her arm, "Y-Yeah."

When Kara noticed her heart spike again, she casually utilized her x-ray vision, and her concerns were made true.

New injuries.

The blonde tried her best to be as subtle about it as possible, since it looked as if her bones were still slightly out of place, "You...you didn't break or pop anything out, right? 'Cause that looks pretty serious."

Lena tensed at the notion of being caught in an actual lie, "No, no I didn't," her heart sped up again, "Just...extra safety precautions. I'm a clumsy person sometimes."

"You?" Kara giggled, "Lena Luthor? Clumsy? In the same sentence? That's unheard of."

The Luthor did not appreciate her teasing.

Or maybe she did judging from the heat and butterflies pooling in her stomach as she could only mumble a retort, "Don't test me."

"Are you threatening me?" the blonde smirked playfully.

Lena rolled her eyes and pivoted, "I need to get to class."

Kara's smile never faded as she watched her classmate walk away.

"So, you guys are friends?"

"Well," the blonde paused, "No, not really? Maybe? I don't know..."

Winn tilted his head, chomping a large bite from his sandwich and speaking through the mouthful, "How do you 'not know'?"

Kara rested her chin on her hands and squished her cheeks, letting out a muffled, "She's just...so confusing."

The boy gulped down his food, "I can imagine."
The blonde quirked a brow, waiting for him to elaborate.

"Well she is a part of the Luthors."

Kara nearly seethed at the comment before Winn interrupted her.

"Hold on, let me finish before you shred me into pieces," he took a sip of his juice box, "What I mean is that her family isn't...the best, which's definitely an understatement. She's being judged by their actions, not hers, I can imagine why she's being so confusing. I had that phase too, going about appeasing people...you know...with my dad and all," he cleared his throat, "Ahem, since Lex's crimes exploded on the news, my dad, Toyman, he's become the laughingstock of his cell block, or every criminal is compared to what Lex did."

The blonde nodded in understanding, "Yeah. I see."

"I understand her to some extent too, albeit a small one; I was judged based on my dad's actions. Now I'm not, all thanks to her brother, but I also feel bad that this kind of burden fell on her too."

"I wish everyone else was as understanding as you."

Winn smiled widely, reached out for Kara's hand to comfort her and patted it, "Maybe they'll come around."

"I'm not sure about Lucy and James though."

The boy frowned, "Yeah, I'm not either. Their parents have some serious beef with the Luthors, and not the sirloin kind."

"What's that supposed to even mean?"

"Their beef's the A5 kobe strip steak kind."

Kara rolled her eyes, "I'm not a meat connoisseur."

"It's a three-fifty per pound kind of beef."

The blonde's eyes bulged this time, "Now that is some serious beef they have with each other."

"Yeah, I don't recommend you bring Lena up with those two honestly."

"Bring who up?" Lucy inquired, plopping down next to her friends along with James.

"W-Uh, th-the new teacher," Winn sputtered, busying his mouth with his meal.

"There are a lot of new staff and faculty members this year though," James stated.

"It's just this one that Winn has had trouble with, nothing important," Kara laughed nervously, gulping down her milk.

Lucy chuckled, "You have a mustache."

"I-What?" the blonde hastily wiped it away with her sleeve.

"You missed a spot."

"Where?"
"There," she gestured.

Kara wiped the designated area away.

"No," Lucy shook her head again, containing her laughter with the boys, "There."

"Where?" she shouted.

"It's right there!" James chuckled.

The blonde removed her glasses and furiously wiped her entire face, "Did I get it?"

Winn had a fit of laughter, "You still missed a spot."

"I rubbed my entire face! How could I mi-" Kara narrowed her eyes and huffed, "I got it the first time, didn't I?"

Lucy shrugged and took a bite from her apple, speaking through the crunching, "Yeah, you did."

"You're all evil."

The group chuckled.

Kara's eyes somehow rested on a familiar figure in the back of the cafeteria, Lena, who glanced from her novel to watch the blonde and her friends mess around.

When her wintergreen eyes met the familiar blue, she quickly raised the book to hide her face.

The Kryptonian's heart skipped a beat.

Was that...a smile?

Though it was a very tiny one, and it was enough to inspire her to make it her life goal to at least get a genuine laugh out of the girl.

Chapter End Notes

Constructive criticism appreciated.
Chapter Summary

*Kara notices Lena has been gradually becoming more gaunt and tired, if that was possible. Her concerns skyrocket and they just cannot keep away from each other. And Eliza Danvers absolutely does not like Lillian Luthor. At all.*

**TRIGGER WARNING: ABUSE, BULLYING, VIOLENCE.**

Chapter Notes

*Find me on Tumblr at spoopercorp and on FF as Local-Asshole.*

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

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**Starved**

Lena had gone through her life untouched, starved from its affection, only experienced with the handful of pain it brought.

Until Kara of course.

Who she halfheartedly attempted to scare off.

It was not entirely a failure.

There was definitely more distance between the two; no longer did they work as pairs for their shared classes, no longer did they get within five feet near each other unless it was absolutely necessary. But there were also the occasional greetings here and there, maybe small talk about classes.

Then Kara would struggle trying to refrain from hugging Lena or comforting her whenever it looked like a particular day was more tiresome than another, whenever the bags under her eyes were larger than usual, whenever her perpetual scowl frowned even further.

Or whenever a group of assholes decided to gang up on Lena.

The blonde still did keep a close eye though, and it seemed no one was being horribly physical with her.

But there was one day when Devlin decided to interrupt her reading and intentionally spilled his ice cold water all over her.

Kara was often so close to intervening until Lena gave her a warning look, and the blonde was torn,
but knew it would be more beneficial for Lena's safety if she stayed uninvolved, remained a bystander.

What alarmed the Kryptonian the most was that she had never ever seen the Luthor eat since their passive showdown in the chemistry room with the aristocratic boys a day or two ago.

It was definitely not nutritious for high schoolers, who often had larger than life appetites.

At first, Kara assumed Lena ate before lunch, as several teachers allowed their students to eat their meals early, and she always had at least a small sandwich to get her through.

After five days, she noticed that what she had previously thought was not the case.

At last period, she heard Lena, whose eyes seemed impossibly darker from the bags, sluggishly move to plop down into her seat in the back, two desks over Kara's.

Lena's stomach growled, though quiet, it was still mortifying.

*She didn't eat again. It's been almost a week.*

The blonde's brows furrowed in concern as she watched the girl groggily wipe the exhaustion from her eyes and fumbled in her backpack to take out her textbooks.

During the entirety of the lecture, Lena was resting her swaying head on one hand, propped up with her elbow on the desk.

She was quickly nodding off to sleep before she felt a hand roughly knock her arm from under her and her head connected to the solid material of her desk.

Lena grunted in pain, rubbing the sore spot near her temple as she heard a few scattered chuckles sound in front of her.

She shook her head to keep herself more alert and went throughout the rest of last period hypervigilant and paranoid.

The Luthor let out a breath of relief when the bell rang and moved to collect her belongings. She stood up much too fast and felt the vertigo come on.

A pair of strong hands placed themselves on her shoulders and waist and held her steady.

"Are you okay?"

Lena recognized that voice, the only one that could sound so sweet and genuinely worried for a Luthor.

"I'm...fine..." she tried dizzily.

"I should just stop asking you if you're going to keep saying that."

Lena released a mirthless chuckle and moved from Kara's space, "Then stop."

Kara narrowed her eyes as the raven-haired girl continued, "But we both know you won't."

"She's just so...ugh!"
"Frustrating?" Winn finished, walking alongside his distressed friend.

"Yeah! She's so cynical! And the way she talks is just...ugh!"

"Annoying? Do you need a thesaurus, Kar?"

"Shut up. But yeah. Pretty much, I'm never sure whether or not she's being sarcastic anymore!"

Winn contemplated for a moment, "She's probably being serious most of the time."

"How would you know?"

"A lot of depressed people are more honest with their conversations. They might say something pretty dark, but it sounds sarcastic so everyone just thinks the person's bitter and has dry humor."

"I...I've never had a lot of experience. I mean, when Alex was struggling to come out while simultaneously trying to figure out her feelings for Maggie, she got..." Kara trailed off, "I'm not sure how to deal with that kind of stuff."

"I'm sure it was a lot like when you came to Earth, right?"

"Well, I just cried for weeks and wouldn't come out of my room."

"Everyone copes differently, Kara."

"I just wish Lena was more upfront about her feelings, then I could help her better."

Winn's eyes were wistful, "Sometimes people don't want to be helped."

"Of course they do!" the blonde argued, "They just won't admit it! It makes them look weak or...something like that. They're afraid of help."

"If all of the rumors I heard about Lena are true, then I'd definitely be hesitant to get help too."

Kara's shoulders hunched over, "Fine, I get it."

"Anyway, I need to go home soon and this's my stop," Winn smiled, waving, "See you later."

Kara stuck her tongue out and watched as her friend walked away.

A moment later her ears picked up something in the distance.

"Hey, Luthor, where you going?"

Kara bolted her spine up and bristled, scanning around frantically for the source.

Lena attempted to walk faster, pretending not to hear the gruff voice that called her out.

"Hey! Luthor! Don't ignore me!"

The girl groaned quietly and snapped around to face the bulky figure making its way toward her, "What do you want?"

"Since you so rudely interrupted me and Kara the other day, I decided to give you a lesson."

Lena made a snide remark, "I don't know, Terrence. I'm pretty busy today, you'll just have to schedule the lesson for when I'm free."
The boy fumed and puffed his chest up before slamming a fist against the side of his target's head.

"It's Terry."

The girl fell to the ground with a thud, holding her cranium as if it would ease her tripling vision. She felt as if she was going to vomit, then she laughed at herself.

*Throw up what? Stomach acid? I haven't eaten in almost a week.*

A savage kick to her gut made the bile travel to her throat and she let out a strangled gasp from the concrete ground, "Please, stop."

Terry smirked, "Pathetic. You're such a loser, I don't know why you even got adopted."

Lena flinched at the words and removed herself from her defensive fetal position, scrambling away in vain while trying to stabilize her vision.

"C'mon, why don't you fight back? It'll make it more fun for me!"

The Luthor's anger flared momentarily, "Fuck off!"

Terry was a bit taken aback by the outburst and his victim took the opportunity to collect a handful of dirt and splay it across his face with her one good arm.

He shouted out at the discomfort, wiping his eyes of the blinding earth.

Lena rose up, supported with her shaky legs.

*I need to run.*

However, her head betrayed her and sent the world whirling around, making her take a moment to stop and slow it.

That was all the time Terry needed to shove her to the ground.

She shut her eyes tightly, anticipating the barrage of kicks and punches.

Kara darted over to the scuffle and saw the large boy who tried to flirt with her swing back his leg as Lena shook in fear.

"Hey!"

Terry halted his foot just as the blonde tackled him.

The Luthor opened a single eye, relieved that her vision dwindled into doubles, but she panicked when the boy who was in front of her just a moment ago seemingly vanished.

Then there was the sound of the hedge of bushes next to her that rustled and she saw Kara emerge from the greenery, the foliage and dead leaves mangled in her honey locks and argyle sweater along with her skewed glasses.

The blonde looked in the opposite direction, "Lena?"

Then frantically the other way, a relieved look on her face when she spotted her classmate.

Unfortunately, Terry was blocking her view, raising a fist at her.
Kara did not flinch, did not even blink an eye.

But all Lena could see was that her classmate was going to get hurt because of her and she bolted up, ignoring the pain in her left arm and pouncing on the bully's back.

"Don't you dare touch her!" she growled.

"What the hell?" Terry choked out in surprise, but then laughed when he felt the frail arms locked around his neck, "You're going to regret this."

"Wha-"

The boy shifted his momentum backwards and slammed Lena harshly onto the ground, breath taken away and her body cushioning his fall more or less.

"Lena!"

But she could not hear Kara's worried cry as she was too focused on the horrible ache that spasmed throughout her body.

The Luthor tipped over so she faced the sidewalk, felt the bile rising that she was definitely certain she could not hold back and vomited her saliva and innards out.

Meanwhile, the blonde dragged Terry around by the collar and put a fist in his face, and she swore she heard something crack.

"What the hell!" he cried out, tears of pain springing from his eyes as he scrambled far away from her.

Kara did not even watch him run off and dropped by Lena's side, scanning her body.

*Her left shoulder and elbow are kind of out of place and the same arm's still healing from the chem incident.*

The blonde sucked in a deep breath.

*Okay, calm down. Those are all old.*

She exhaled when she noticed that the new ones were just bruises.

*Thank Rao.*

Kara moved to sling Lena's good arm over her shoulder, momentarily forgetting about her issue with touch until she stiffened.

The blonde's stance became firm as well before the girl relaxed and cautiously leaned into her.

"Shit."

"What?" the blonde asked, her face etched with anxiety.

"I think I'm g-"

A flood of bile mixed with her stomach fluids escaped her mouth and pooled onto the ground.

"Crap! That's it!" Kara huffed, "You're absolutely going to the hospital this time."
"But-"

"Nope. Hospital."

[Big Sis :)]: Where in God's name did you go? Mom's been worried sick!]

[Me: Uhhh, heh, I'm sort of at the hospital…]

[Big Sis :)]: What the hell! We're coming over right now! You better pray I don't go into agent mode.]

[Me: But I'm fine though, it's just someone else I'm currently watching over. I don't want to leave her alone.]

[Big Sis :)]: If Lucy got into trouble again, I swear she's going to get it from me.]

[Big Sis :)]: This's Eliza, and we're definitely discussing what happened when we see each other, especially the phone call from the Cannon family concerning their son's broken nose.]

Kara did not bother to reply, knowing that it would trigger more questions, and she could answer all of those sooner or later.

Right now, her main concern was Lena's health.

The doctor strode from the room where the injured girl was currently being checked on.

The blonde saw the same look again.

The one that everyone gave whenever they spotted a Luthor.

She frowned.

It was not like she could blame them.

Lex sent thousands upon thousands of people to hospitals, many lost their homes, families, friends, stability.

Even coroners were horrified by the gruesome deaths by Lex's hands.

She sighed, "So?"

"Well," the doctor adjusted his bifocals and cleared his throat, "From what we've seen, she's only received a few bruises from the scuffle. But we're concerned about her left arm; there was a burn wound and it's healed very nicely, but her elbow and shoulder are going to need to be reset, so we've contacted her legal guardian."

Kara shivered at the thought of meeting Lillian in this sort of situation. From what she's heard, she was a cold-hearted bitch, though she was ignorant of the fact that the woman was physically abusive as well.

"Kar."

The blonde rotated her head to where she could see her sister fuming towards her, with Eliza and Maggie following suit.

"Babe," the detective put her hand on her girlfriend's shoulder when they reached the youngest
Danvers, "You've got to chill. So chill."

Her grip tightened at the last, enunciated word. As a result, Alex took a deep breath and said in the calmest tone she could possibly muster through the walls of clenched teeth, "What. Happened?"

Apparently, they all noticed Kara's downcast mood and softened in care.

Eliza sat next to her, sandwiching her hands between her own warm ones, "Honey, what happened?"

The blonde pulled her hand away and rubbed her forehead in frustration, "She was being bullied. I..." her voice cracked at the thought of how broken her 'friend' was, "I couldn't just stand there and watch it happen again."

"Who?" Alex inquired.

"Lena," Maggie stated knowingly at the same time as Kara, who looked up to her in surprise.

The detective smiled at her tenderly, nodding once to showcase her understanding.

"So..." the agent waited for her to elaborate.

"I was walking home. I heard Lena and Terry. Then I decided to intervene and broke his nose. So, yeah."

"Damn," Maggie almost chuckled, "I didn't know Little Danvers could be badass."

"Kara..." Alex and Eliza both scolded.

"I'm not going to apologize for what I did, Lena could've left the fight far worse, but I am sorry I worried you guys. And Terry deserved it too."

Her lips formed a tight frown.

"I hate that kid. Got what was coming to him," Alex sighed, "His parents are nice though, so I don't think they'll press charges when we explain what happened. If they'll believe us."

Then Eliza's overprotective motherly side surfaced, "How's Lena?"

"I don't know. She has a lot of nasty bruises and her elbow and shoulder are dislocated. But every time I talk to her she always says she's fine. It's so annoying!"

"It's all right, don't be such a grump, honey. She just needs to warm up to you."

"It's been months."

"Yeah," Alex snickered, then whispered loudly to her girlfriend, "Kar's not used to people not wanting to be friends with her."

Maggie chuckled, "Why am I not surprised?"

One of the doctors exited the room, "You can visit her, but we have to take two at a time at the moment, we're still running some tests, but afterwards we can increase the number to three or four once we clear everything out."

She repeated the information to the group that the other doctor told Kara.
"There is one thing that also concerns us other than the injuries she sustained."

A pause.

"She's quite...thin, and rather gaunt, she could be borderlining emaciated within a few months if she doesn't eat properly."

"Kar," Eliza furrowed her eyebrows, heart dropping at the implication, looking at Alex and Maggie, who shared the same grim expressions.

Then she glanced at her daughter, who sighed tiredly, "She hasn't been eating at school, not that I could see, and it's been going on for a while. Maybe a little over a week? I'm not really with time at the moment so…"

The doctor nodded, jotting notes down, "It's not very bleak compared to the other cases we've had, and we found that stomach acid had recently been purged, but we still need to do a full-body check-up. Do you know if she's had any history with anorexia or bulimia?"

Kara winced at the words, she never considered something so dark until now.

"No," she shifted uncomfortably, "We've only known each other for a little over a month? Maybe two even?"

Eliza rubbed the blonde's back soothingly.

Kara was always so innocent about these things.

"Should we go introduce ourselves?" Alex whispered to Maggie.

"I don't think she's very kind to strangers," the detective stated, folding her arms and giving her a cross look.

"If Lena Luthor only tolerates Kara out of all the other kids she could've chosen, I want to meet her."

"She doesn't like to be touched, so no handshakes, okay?" Kara pleaded.

Alex nodded and clicked the door open and Maggie followed suit, but hid by the curtain in the darker side.

The raven-haired girl tensed in her assigned bed, "Who are you guys?"

"Alex Danvers, I'm Kara's older sister," she smiled, "We just wanted to check to see how you were doing."

"Nice to meet you," she whispered timidly.

The agent frowned because the girl in front of her was no Luthor, not blazing with arrogance and entitlement. She was quiet, reserved, did not have that hidden bloodthirsty and ravenous look in her eyes like her brother.

Then she grinned, happy that she judged the girl wrong.

Lena turned to face the hiding figure next to Alex, waiting until the detective emerged from the shadows.

The Luthor suppressed her look of recognition.
"I'm Maggie. I'm..." she looked at the auburn-haired woman standing next to her before averting her eyes back to Lena, "I'm a part of the family too. Alex is my girlfriend."

The frail girl smiled politely.

"I hope you feel better."

And Luthor was stunned by the genuine kindness in those words.

The pair quickly made their way out.

"Maggie," the patient called out hoarsely.

The detective paused just outside, then looked at her girlfriend, mouthing 'give me a minute'.

Alex nodded knowingly before her girlfriend disappeared back into the room.

A tense moment of silence encased Lena and the police officer.

"You're..." she started then trailed off, struggling to find her words only to stumble over them, "Maggie Sawyer. Correct?"

The woman was a bit startled, "You know me?"

Lena smiled sadly, "How could I not? I make it my mission to know every person my brother's actions have affected."

Then she continued shakily, "I'm sorry. For your loss. For what he did to you. I know it's not much coming from me, a Luthor, and you probably hate me, but I mean it when I say-"

"Hey, kiddo, you can stop right there."

Lena pressed her mouth shut along with her eyes, anticipating backlash or something of the sort.

Maggie took a deep breath and ran her fingers through her own long brown hair, "Of course I miss my parents, and I appreciate what you've said, but...you shouldn't apologize for things you didn't do. Okay, kid? It's not your fault, and people who think it is don't know any better."

The Luthor could feel tears stinging her eyes and hastily reached up to wipe them away, "I-I'm so sorr-"

"Kid," Maggie warned.

"Right," Lena's lips twitched, wanting to smile, "Thank you."

"No problem. Don't mention it."

The detective clicked the door shut.

"So?" Alex inquired, holding tightly onto her girlfriend's hand, "How'd it go?"

"That kid just needs a long hug, you know?"

They all chuckled.

"We're only two or three years younger than you guys," Kara reminded her.
Maggie shrugged, "I think you're still kids. Especially you, for as long as you wear those god awful puppy pajamas that is."

"Hey! They're cute!" the blonde pouted.

"Point proven."

"Whatever," came the grumble.

Alex smirked, "We'll wait right out here, it's your guys's turns now."

Kara eagerly dashed into the room with Eliza making her way over, who shut the door behind her.

The mother turned around to see her daughter halt her habitual hugging, arms in mid-air, and she saw the girl in the bed flinch.

Eliza frowned, her intuition telling her that Lena was too used to being hurt to accept any form of touch from anyone.

_How could a mother let this happen to her own child?_

Kara's arms dropped to her sides when she remembered, then she folded them over her torso tightly to prevent her from subconsciously reaching out.

But Lena nodded, giving her silent permission.

And the blonde embraced her tenderly and gently, let out a breath she did not realize she was holding when she felt the girl relax and lean into her.

_This's good. This's great. She's letting me hug her._

When they finally released each other, Kara had a moment to take her friend's gaunt appearance in. Her collar and cheekbones were much too prominent, her fingers were almost skeletal, and her eyes were sunken far, far back.

The awkward Danvers gave her feeble greeting, "Hi."

"Hello, Kara," Lena paused for a second, internally cursing herself for how formal she sounded.

"Are you okay?"

"I'm..." she trailed off when she caught sight of the warm blue eyes glaring a warning at her.

Lena tried again, chuckling humorlessly, masking her hurt with her dryness, "I've been worse."

Eliza's lips twitched into a small smile, acknowledging her attempt to lighten the heavy situation.

"I'm not sure if that makes me feel any better," Kara mumbled worriedly.

Lena hesitated again, noting her distress, "Are you all right?"

Kara put her hands on her hips and said in an almost mocking tone, "I'm fine."

The Luthor could not help but smile, just slightly, but it was enough for the blonde to return a beaming grin back at her.

The moment was interrupted when a loud growl emanated from Lena's belly, whose face
transformed into one of mortification, a bright red hue rushing into her pale, sunken cheeks. "I'll get you some food," and with that Kara bolted out of the room.

The woman sat next to the girl, placed enough distance to comfort her anxiety of proximity with others. "I'm Eliza Danvers. Kara's mom."

For a moment Lena wondered about the father, then fiddled with her blanket nervously, "Of course. You...you two look like each other."

The woman chuckled, "I get that a lot, but Alex is actually my biological daughter. Maggie got it correct the first time though, said Kara was too clumsy to be my own."

The Luthor's ears perked up and she tilted her head curiously, drawn by it and the motherly warmth the woman exuded, like a hearth.

"Kara's adopted?"

Eliza nodded gently, "came to us when she was thirteen."

A pause.

"Maybe she'll tell you about it some day."

Lena let out a single, sarcastic chuckle, "Yeah."

Eliza sighed, "Kara. She...she's gone through unfathomable trauma in her childhood, but she's always had a loving and supportive family."

Lena's eyes were downcast as she heard the woman continue. "She hasn't experienced neglect, only loss, it's a great burden for her, and it probably won't ever go away. She's quite innocent and very trusting, doesn't fully understand that other families aren't like her birth or adopted ones. It'd probably shatter her heart if she knew the extent of it, but she's too occupied listening to boy bands and watching cartoons to pay any attention. Part of that's my fault, maybe if she knew then she'd know how to be there for you, to be a better friend for your case."

"Yeah," was all Lena could say, and she did not bother to correct Eliza on how they were not technically friends. She could only be alarmed by the fact this stranger could tell so much about her and her family without even being personally acquainted first.

She felt uncomfortable to the warmth, wanted to crawl back into the cold, but also wanted to throw herself into the hearth entirely as well.

Then she thought of Kara, warm and sweet and bright and bubbly Kara, scintillating smile and all. Her heart thudded loudly, as if it was pounding out of her rib cage at the thought of the pain and hurt behind all of those giggles and naivety.

What sort of unforgivable trauma hid in the darkest part of Kara's mind?

The woman's smile faltered minutely, tone laced with uneasiness as she shifted to a different topic, "The doctor tells us you're undernourished, that you haven't been eating lately."

She tensed, but acknowledged it, "No. I haven't."
Eliza nodded, waited until she relaxed a bit more to ask her the final question.

"Your mom, does she not-"

"Lena."

She could see that the girl stiffened even more, eyes widened and slightly shaking, failing to hide her fear.

She exhaled, "Mother."

Eliza stood up so she could examine the exchange better as her eyes shifted back and forth between Lena and Lillian.

"I apologize for inconveniencing you."

Eliza was already apprehensive of the fact that the woman's own daughter was apologizing for an unforeseen hiccup in her health.

She was apologizing for burdening her mother with her being in the hospital.

It already screamed at Eliza something was terribly wrong with their relationship.

"No need," Lillian replied, less coldly than usual in front of a witness, "I'm sure we can discuss this at home."

At this point Lena was shaking even more, trying futilely to cease it as she focused her eyes on the clumps of cloth in her fists from the warm blanket.

The cruel woman turned to the guest in the room, holding out her hand, "And you are?"

"Eliza Danvers. My daughter is Kara Danvers, played hero and saved Lena from bullies. Biochemistry researcher."

She nodded tersely in approval, "Lillian Luthor. I must apologize for the trouble she's caused you," darting her eyes at her daughter for a split second and watching her flinch at the gaze.

"Don't worry about it, we're all very fond of Lena."

The girl watched the meeting anxiously, sweating from the nerves that fired up in her brain.

"I should be going now, it was lovely to meet you and your daughter, Mrs. Luthor."

Lillian stood by Lena and gripped her injured shoulder, "Likewise, Mrs. Danvers."

Eliza caught the rough gesture and refrained from contorting her face into anger at the woman intentionally hurting her own daughter.

*That's no way a mother should be to her children.*

Lena grimaced and bit her lip, held back a whimper of pain, her eyes suddenly begging for the stranger to not leave her alone.

*Please.*

Eliza's features softened, as if to apologize for abandoning her.
Then she glanced back at Lillian and gave her a stern smile, then saw herself out.

She nodded for her oldest daughter and her girlfriend to follow her out of earshot, "I don't like her."

"What?" Alex nearly shouted, "You're not being serious, are you?"

"Yeah! She's a good kid," Maggie argued, agreeing.

"I'm not talking about Lena. She's a sweetheart. I'm talking about her mom."

The detective crossed her arms and arched a brow, "You barely got the memo that she's a total bitch?"

"I didn't think she was that much of one."

"Guys!" Kara called out, rushing over, "I told the nurses to bring her food. And why're we over here by the way? Lena's in that room," she jabbed her finger in the designated direction.

Eliza smiled, "Her mother came, it looks like we have to go."

"What?" the blonde gasped, "I can't meet her?"

Kara was just short of complete ecstasy that Lillian took time out of her busy schedule to visit her daughter.

*Maybe she's not as cold as everyone says she is.*

Eliza knew exactly what was going through her mind, knew that she was misunderstanding the situation and mistaking it for Lillian actually caring about her daughter.

Her elated naivety had to go sooner or later.

But she was worried it would be replaced with cynicism and loneliness, that it would match Lena's melancholy.

Eliza sighed, that was an entirely different discussion she would have to sit her down for another day.

Chapter End Notes

*Constructive criticism appreciated.*
Runaway

Chapter Summary

Kara tries to include Lena into her Super Friends circle, but the Luthor and Lucy and James do not hit it off and things do not go well and Kara is angry.

TRIGGER WARNING: BULLYING.

Chapter Notes

Find me on Tumblr at spoopercorp and on FF as Local-Asshole.

Runaway

A few days after seeing Lena at the hospital, Kara saw her early before school, reading on a secluded bench inside, away from the awry and cold winter snow.

Kara took her figure in, her left arm was still in a cast, but she looked better and healthier, less skin and bones, more fat and muscle. Not only that, but her bruises were fading pleasantly.

However, she did look exhausted, and she could see some old fading scars on her front side, not that she was too concerned about them, assuming they were from before they met.

The blonde skipped over, frowned when she noticed the girl flinch away again.

"S-Sorry. I keep scaring you, but I was just so happy to see you here so..." she beamed, then tilted her head curiously, brows furrowed, "You look better."

Then she faltered, stumbling and stammering about, "W-Well, you always look great. It-It's just...you don't look like you're going to collapse in the middle of a conversation and...and d-die or anything? 'Cause, you know, 'cause I'd be really sad and...I-I'll just stop...talking. Now. Yeah, yes, right now."

She rubbed the nape of her neck sheepishly, embarrassed by her unnecessarily verbose greeting if the blood rushing through her neck and settling into her cheeks was of any indication.

Lena set down her novel and the tired, icy green eyes looked up to the blonde, then they thawed into a more forest-like hue, "I have to thank you for what you've done for me and I wish I could do something to pay you back."

"Friendship isn't a business deal," Kara stiffened, correcting herself with an awkward cough, "Er, I meant - I meant classmate. Yeah."
Lena's eyes were thoughtful, "No words can explain how grateful I am. You're a good..."

She paused.

"Friend," Lena smiled softly, very softly, repeating, "You're a good friend."

The blonde's eyes widened and she let out a dramatically long gasp, and suddenly, Lena was enraptured in a tentative, passionate hug, lifting her off the ground.

She almost yelped in surprise, but without thinking about it, the Luthor tenderly leaned her head against the strong space between Kara's neck and shoulder.

The blonde had not noticed the girl in her arms trying to break the hug until she felt her smirk.

"You're a cuddler aren't you?"

Kara looked at her, "Oh, definitely. Yeah. And you're probably not one."

The girl shook her head, "Not used to it."

The Kryptonian almost frowned at the unintentional implication, "Right, I should probably let you go now, but you should get used to hugs and hand holding soon, I'm a very touchy person."

The blonde grinned widely and released the Luthor from her affectionate grip, moving to sit next to her.

"You're not...worried about me attracting any of your bullies?"

"No, like you said, regardless of whether you're with me or not, they're still going to try something, and get even worse with their attempts. I can actually try to defend myself next time, depending on if they come from an investor family."

"What do you mean you'll *try*?" Kara folded her arms, "Are you saying you just *let* them beat you up?"

"They come from influential families, I can't let them tarnish the company's reputation."

"I didn't know you could fight if that's what you're saying."

"I took classes."

"And you, what, couldn't kick anyone's asses?"

"I only utilize them to defend myself."

"Do you still take classes?"

"No, I took them without my mother's knowledge. She forced me to quit, to pursue something more feminine and ladylike for someone of my upbringing."

The blonde tilted her head, "So..."

"Poetry. Composition. Dance. Lots and lots of instruments."

"How many did she make you play?" Kara asked, flabbergasted.

"Piano, violin, cello, flute, harp...a classically trained Renaissance woman she says. I'm not as
musically inclined anymore since I'm forced to do so, but it looks good for the family and that's all the matters."

"Does your mom know this's the twenty-first century?"

"Sometimes I wonder that myself," Lena chuckled bitterly, "Even so, I'd like to think I can defend myself properly."

Kara narrowed her eyes, "But you don't. You let it happen."

"You're going to be mad at me forever about that, aren't you?"

"Uh. Yeah. If I was bullied, I'd at least show off to let them know not to mess with me."

"Speaking of, you tackled Terrence to the ground," Lena stated, "How exactly?"

She scanned Kara's figure, which she was well aware was fit and lean, but the majority of her muscles were often hidden behind her oversized shirts or argyle sweaters.

"Oh!" the blonde giggled, bouncing in her seat, "I take fighting classes 'cause, you know, I obviously don't have super strength," a nervous chuckle, "My sister wants me to learn more forms. She and her girlfriend work for the government, so, yeah. Alex was worried about the bullies in elementary and got me to take some classes."

"Did she not teach you how to use a gun as well? She does work for the government after all."

Kara laughed and shook her head, "No. The bullying stopped in the beginning or middle of high school. What about you? Considering how many stalkers are after you I'd think you'd at least know some of the basics."

Lena nodded, "Yes. Lionel. My..." she gulped, "...father. He was in the Air Force and trained new recruits, he taught me some stuff about it, brought the boot camp home."

"Oh! My friend's dad's in the military too, he's in the Army though," Kara frowned, tears stinging her eyes as she sniffed, "And she's joining pretty soon."

She quickly waved the subject off, "But anyway, I'm glad you're back, now those awful bullies can't do anything when I'm with you."

Lena's heart skipped a beat, "You're not my bodyguard."

"But I'm your friend."

Her heart skipped another, "My only friend, I don't quite want to make you feel obligated to hover over me and possibly get hurt in the process."

"I don't feel obligated," Kara grinned, shrugging, then she gestured to Lena's novel, "I see you reading a lot, but this book in particular always makes a comeback."

The Luthor held the book out, it was worn and torn, old and ancient from profound use; the pages were warped and some of it yellowed and there were stains here and there. It was also void of any other color besides a royal, dark crimson on the hardcover.

Kara examined it, looked at the binder and then inside for the text, squinting her eyes and rotating the book about, "Okay, I'm either holding it upside-down or this isn't in English."
"Gaelic actually."

"You speak Gaelic?" Kara squawked, amazed.

A nod.

"Fluently?"

Another nod.

"Wow, that's so cool!"

"It's not *that* impressive. I *am* from there, though I don't remember anything, but I did go to boarding school in Dublin, so..."

Kara looked at her in awe, "What other languages can you speak? Did you have an accent?"

"I speak Russian, French, and Latin fluently. And yes, I had an accent, but for future business purposes I learned how to sound American."

"Okay, *wow*."

"Everything's related, Latin-based, anyone can learn most European languages easily. Though Gaelic is mostly Celtic-based."

"But still! I only know two languages!"

"What's the other?"

Kara shifted uncomfortably, a forlorn and faraway look in her face, "Well, it's like...Chinese, I guess. I really struggled to learn English, had a thick accent a few years ago actually."

Lena noticed her discomfort and prodded no further, "I dropped Mandarin for Arabic and Japanese instead. It was too difficult for me; too many characters to memorize and grind down."

"I'm sure you would've gotten it eventually. You're Lena."

"You flatter me, Kara."

"Stop being so perfect at everything then."

The Luthor's blush deepened, "Everyone has their weaknesses, Kara. Things that they're not good at."

After a moment of silence, the blonde perked up again, tapping on the novel's cover, "So, the book, what's it about?"

"I'm not sure you'd like it to be honest. I tend to gravitate towards...the darker side of things."

"I don't know, you haven't told me what it's about so how would I know if I'd like it or not? How would you know if I'd like it or not?"

"You listen to NSYNC and Backstreet Boys, and you probably watch Powerpuff Girls every weekend."

"Hey! I have the share of dark stuff!"
Lena arched a brow.

"I've watched Courage the Cowardly Dog."

"All right," the Luthor smirked.

Kara took a moment to admire Lena. The majority of the times she had seen or encountered her was when she was being harassed. She looked so small and vulnerable, but if she had a normal conversation with someone who was not trying to physically harm her, that age-old Luthor facade of cold confidence came about.

Except Lena was more sarcastic and snarky with Kara.

The thought made the blonde smile.

"The book's about a girl," the Luthor explained, "She was adopted and when she's around our age, she feels lost and confused, especially since she has pyrokinetic capabilities. She grew up out of place, and she sets out on a journey with her closest friends to find her birth parents. On the way, the group goes through some obstacles and other..." a pause, "Things happen. It's tragic, the entire story, especially the ending."

"How so?"

"You enjoy spoilers?"

"No, but I can't exactly read Gaelic so..."

"Maybe I can translate it for you."

"That's not fair!" Kata pouted, folding her arms, "I want to know and now I have to wait? Plus, you're already busy and you probably don't have time!"

"I don't mind. I want to. And you have to admit, it'll have more of an emotional impact if you read the entire story."

"Fine. I'll wait."

"And you don't have to wait long either. I can get you one or two parts a week 'cause it's relatively short, only seven chapters."

"Sounds awesome!" Kara clapped, "I love books!"

"Anything for a friend," Lena whispered, enjoying the feel of how that word rolled off her tongue. She could not recall the last time she had such a genuine bond.

Then she frowned, only able to think of one person.

Lex.

The blonde shook Lena's shoulders gently, "Would you like to sit with me and my friends today?"

The Luthor's muscles tightened into a tense position, "Ummm...I usually go to the library or..."

"Don't worry, there are only..." she counted her fingers while mumbling the names, "...going to be five of us. Four if you decide not to, which's okay, I don't want to pressure you or anything."
"I think that'd be okay with me, as long as your friends don't hate the Luthors too much."

Kara squeaked nervously, completely forgetting Lucy's and James's histories with the notorious Luthors.

Lucy lost her mother and James lost his father because of Lionel.

"N-No," she pushed her glasses up, "They're really cool once you get to know them."

"Seriously, Kara? What the hell's wrong with you?"

"I'm sorry, Winn! I was so excited to have Lena back that I completely forgot James and Lucy hated her family."

"Yeah, and her too, not just her family!"

"Well, they're idiots, I'm going to change that then."

Winn sighed, rubbing his head, "That's nice, but I have to admit that this's too soon, are you sure you can't explain the situation to her?"

"I can't say no now!"

"No to what?" James inquired.

"Doesn't matter right now," Lucy smiled, "Heard you were playing hero, saved a girl from a couple of bullies. Is she the new person joining our super gang?"

"Well, she doesn't exactly know my secret..."

"You let someone join before you told them you were an alien?" the brunette smirked, "Must be special."

Kara scratched her scalp nervously, "Well, she is."

James's and Lucy's faces darkened as they looked past their friend.

"Don't tell me it's her."

"Who?" Kara turned around, but she beamed at the sight, "Lena!"

"Hey."

She dashed over to give her new friend a grand hug, so strong it lifted her off the floor again.

"Woah!"

The girl's smile faltered when she saw James and Lucy glaring at her.

Then she pulled away from the blonde's grasp, voice quieted, "Are you sure about this?"

"Um... I was so happy to see you that I forgot two of my friends aren't actually very...fond of your family."

"I don't want to make things awkward. Or cause a rift in-"
"What's she doing here?" Lucy asked almost vehemently.

Kara stood her ground, gripping onto Lena's hands, "I invited her."

The Luthor just stared at their joined fingers, noting the heat the coursed through the blonde.

"Kar, she's a Luthor," James spat, "Her brother nearly killed, you know, your cousin?"

"Oh gosh..." Winn mumbled nervously, then he glanced at Lena and mouthed an 'I'm so sorry'.

"That's the thing, it was her brother that did all that, not Lena."

"How would you know you know if she's not going to grow up to be her brother?" Lucy argued, "Why would you risk being friends with her, especially since you're..."

An alien.

"Couldn't you say the same for yourself?" Kara countered, "How would I know if you'll turn into your dad? Why would I want to risk being friends with you?"

Lucy was taken aback, "That's different."

"No, it isn't."

"Yes, it is! Her entire family butchered other families to get what they wanted," James argued, "It didn't matter how many lives and homes were lost. She's just like them. She'll always be like them."

The boy took a step towards Lena and jabbed an accusatory finger against her chest, a ruthless string of insults leaving his mouth, "Cruel, heartless, manipulative, psychopathic-"

"James!" Kara warned, firmly pushing him away with her palm, voice ice cold, "Watch what you're saying."

"Or what? Why're you defending this bitch?"

"Guys..." Winn warned, especially to James and Lucy, as he sensed that Kara was near her breaking point, which was very foreign, because the Kryptonian never let herself get furious.

Not being in control of her emotions was dangerous when she was unable to control her powers.

Before the blonde could reply, she felt nimble fingers slip away from her hold. She turned around and called after her friend, "Lena! Wait!"

"Good riddance," Lucy muttered.

Kara exploded, "That's it! What the hell's wrong with the both of you?"

The trio flinched at her outburst, the blonde never cursed, much less even get a little frustrated with most people.

She continued, "You just thought it'd be okay to chase her away? You think bullying is okay?"

"Of course we don't tolerate bullying," James said.

"Well it sure does look like it! You two think it's okay to assume the worst in someone you barely know!"
"You barely know her too!" Lucy countered.

"I know her better than this entire school! Everyone here ignores her or bullies her! I really thought you guys would give her a chance, but maybe I thought too highly of you two, maybe I should lower my expectations from now on."

Winn gasped, then looked at James and Lucy, trying to diffuse the situation, "Guys, she doesn't mean that. Right, Kar? Right?"

Kara remained silent, arms folded, then she walked away, leaving the question unanswered, "I'm going to go find her."

They watched as she stormed off in a rage.

Winn made a cross face at his two friends, folding his arms and tapping his foot impatiently.

"What?" they said, "We didn't do anything!"

Winn's lips pursed into a frown, "You're both going to apologize to Kara, and when you see Lena again, you'll do the same."

"Why should we apologize to a Luthor?" Lucy snapped as James narrowed his eyes.

Winn gave a fake smile, "Why don't you kids sit your asses down for story time?"

The two listened intently to his recap starting from when Lena transferred.

The front door clicked open.

"Kara, honey?" Eliza called from the kitchen, "How was school?"

She jumped when the door was slammed shut.

*I might have to replace the frame and hinges.*

Alex and Maggie startled.

The detective looked over her newspaper at her girlfriend.

The agent stood up and straightened (pun intended) her outfit, "C'mon, newspaper lesbian, looks like the puppy's upset again," she shoved Maggie, "Feet off the table, how many times do I have to tell you?"

Alex poked her head out to survey the area, but the moment she moved over she was tackled by one of Kara's bear hugs, "Woah! Kar, what happened? Shit, ow, too tight..."

The blonde sobbed, loosening her arms, "I-I couldn't find her!"

They seated themselves on the couch, sisters enrapt in each other's arms and Maggie rubbing soothing circles on Kara's back.

"Little Danvers, before you explain, we're going to need you to take some deep breaths, okay?"

A moment later, she hiccupped, "I-I invited Lena to sit with us during lunch and James and Lucy were so mean and scared her off..."
"What?" Eliza gasped, joining the trio on the opposite sofa, her mom-look activated.

"They hate her for what her family did to theirs, and I understand where they're coming from, but I just wish that they'd try to understand too, like Maggie."

The detective laughed, "Well, we all know that no one can be as awesome as me."

Alex gave her a look.

"Okay, except you, Danvers, you're almost as cool," she stretched across and pecked her girlfriend on the cheek.

"That's what I thought, Sawyer."

"I think..." Kara sighed, running her fingers through her messy hair, "I'm going to go to the warehouse."

Alex cringed, "Please don't destroy all of the cars, last time you pummeled them until they were condensed into the shape of a dime."

"When was that? I didn't think Little Danvers was capable of that much rage," Maggie inquired.

The two sisters reddened in embarrassment at a memory and sunk further into the cushions.

Eliza barked into a fit of laughter, "Alex ate the last potsticker and Kara was not happy."

"Do we have to apologize today?" Lucy grumbled, falling into step with her closest friends.

Winn grunted, "Uh. Yeah. Kara got upset, and angry. She never gets angry. So you guys really, really, really screwed up."

The boy walked up to the entrance and knocked on the Danvers's front door.

"It's open!"

The trio entered the premises to see Eliza walking out with a tray of cookies, "Winn!"

Alex and Maggie looked up, "Hey!"

Then they glared at the other two.

"So you guys heard then," James chuckled nervously.

The detective and her girlfriend folded their arms, complemented by Eliza's stern look.

"Where's Kara?" Lucy asked, "We need to apologize."

"The warehouse."

They gulped.

"Is...is she really that upset?"

"I don't know, Luce," Alex sighed, crossing her legs and leaning back, "She's either there pigging out or we're going to have to buy more car junk again. And for your sakes, you better pray it's the former, but I wouldn't get my hopes up."
"C'mon, guys!" Winn exclaimed, patting their backs, "I'll lead you out."

They exited the comfy home and walked a few blocks away until they were faced with a rather compact, but roomy warehouse.

From which they could hear angry shouting and sounds of grinding and crashing metal from.

Winn grinned, seeing the two shake in fear. He slapped them on the backs and pushed them inside regardless of their protests, then shut them in, "Good luck!"

Kara was so occupied with her fury and with ripping apart the steel of each car she had not noticed anyone entering, continuing to pummel another and another vehicle towards the ground.

"Ahem, uhhh..."

The blonde snapped her head around at the noise, glowering at the sources before resuming her routine, "What do you guys want? Come here to justify your hate against Lena 'cause of your prejudice with her family? If you are, you can see yourself out. Immediately."

"Well. W-We actually wanted to apologize," Lucy stammered.

"Apologize to Lena when she comes back. I don't need one," Kara stated, swinging a leg against the hood of a car and tearing it right off.

James gathered a deep breath, "We were wrong."

"I know."

There was an astoundingly bloodcurdling scream of metal that ground against their eardrums.

They flinched.

"We know you're angry and you might not even forgive us but-"

"I do forgive you guys," Kara interrupted Lucy, "I'm disappointed and upset still."

James ran a hand across his face, "That's even worse."

"I'll admit that I am angry."

Lucy frowned, "Sorry, we really are."

"Not at you guys, at myself," the blonde sighed, distraught, "I couldn't find Lena anywhere today after the little standoff."

"There's school tomorrow, we can apologize to her then, and you can explain everything, and invite her over for game night this weekend to cheer her up."

Kara smiled brightly, "Yeah! That's a great idea!"

The blonde buzzed in her seat, excited for the prospect of spending time with Lena during the notorious game nights her family and friends had together.

Only, Lena did not come to school, which Kara found peculiar, because she always went to school, even if she was deathly sick.
The blonde waited and the next day came in no time, but the Luthor was absent again; then it was the next day and the next and the next.

Finally, the school board labeled her as a missing student, their calls to Lillian did eventually go answered by her personal assistant, stating that a family matter had come up with the business, that Lena would be doing her end at their property.

It was a week since the girl just burst off, and the worry was nail-biting for Kara, whose fingers and legs jittered up and down due to the stress.

When Friday night came, the blonde gave up hope that her friend would show up, her worry consuming her. Lucy, James, and Winn were concerned as well, along with Alex, Maggie, and Eliza.

Kara decided to take a walk and clear her head in the rainy weather, and before the blonde could change her mind, she decided to move towards the Luthor manor, a large mansion so obviously situated so that everyone knew it housed the Luthors.

The estate was in the richest neighborhood in the city, but nothing compared to the Luthor's property.

It was in a secluded and rural, forest-looking area, more casual than anything, and definitely not reminiscent of the Luthors' abodes, which were the corporeal manifestation of elegance and grace.

Kara's fingers clenched tightly around the bars of the closed gate, utilizing her x-ray vision, scanning the old money abode and finding that who she was looking for was not present.

What she did find was a cupboard emptied of its contents, along with a rather large cellar, which she could only assume both of which held alcohol.

Most likely liquor, as Kara thought the Luthors were much too entitled to keep cheap beers.

The blonde's heart spiked at what the scene insinuated.

Simultaneously, a muffled rhythmic thumping made itself known.

Though not quite rhythmic.

More erratic and struggling than anything else.

Kara strained her ears to listen more intently, picking up the noise a block away from the property.

She tilted her glasses lower, scanning her surroundings in the lush environment before coming to a stop when she spotted a figure huddled down against a rather large tree, shivering from the misty weather, the rain drops soaking the figure's entire body.

*It's too dark. That can't possibly be her. Maybe it's a homeless person.*

Then her thoughts wandered again.

*A homeless person. In this neighborhood. Right.*

Kara jogged her way over to the girl and the sounds of quiet sobbing made themselves more prevalent.

Chapter End Notes
Constructive criticism appreciated.
Wanted Distraction

Chapter Summary

Lena thought about running away multiple times and finally enacted on the decision, much to Kara's panic, which is further escalated when she finds her friend extremely drunk. Then she decides Lena needs to loosen up and have some fun so invites her over for game night.

TRIGGER WARNING: IMPLIED UNDERAGE ALCOHOL ABUSE, IMPLIED SELF-HARM.

Chapter Notes

Find me on Tumblr at spoopercorp and on FF as Local-Asshole.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Wanted Distraction

It shattered her heart, she had never seen Lena cry. Then she panicked, unsure of what she could do to help; the Luthor was sensitive in more abnormal ways, perhaps even unpredictable. She did not want to risk it at the same time.

Kara sniffed the odor of age-old liquor mixed with petrichor and saw the shattered glass shards from afar, that was when she made a solid decision. It reminded her of Lionel, though the only thing she knew about him was that he was an alcohol connoisseur - or a drunkard.

"Lena?" she called gently, inching closer.

The girl snapped her head up and sank further into the uncomfortable bark, pressing her hands into the wet dirt and soil of the earth.

The Luthor yelped, snatching her hand away and cradling it against her chest.

The broken shrapnels of glass on the ground snagged themselves into her skin when she startled from whatever she was doing.

Lena grimaced, scowling as she examined the lightly bleeding damage done to her right palm.

"You dummy!" Kara scolded, grabbing her wrist, "We're cleaning that up right now!"

"N-No! Please!"

The blonde immediately loosened her grip, "What? Why?"
"I..." she swallowed heavily, felt like her mouth was made of cotton and that lead weights were pulling her eyes down, "I don't want to go home."

"So, you did run away."

"According to school classifications. Yes. My mother's too busy with work. I told my maids I'd be in and out. They don't come looking for me in the woods, so I often go back to grab...food and...stuff."

Kara observed the slur at the end of her sentence and made an angry face, looking at the ground ridden with alcoholic beverages.

'Food' she says.

"Looks like you get more stuff than food," she stated sarcastically.

Lena ran a hand over her face and leaned against the rough bark of the tree, "I-"

She lost her balance and swayed until she tipped against Kara, mumbling incoherent things into her collarbone, who squeaked at the ticklish heat of the Luthor's breath.

"I think I'm going to-"

"Going to wh - Lena!"

Kara grimaced when the contents of her friend's stomach poured all over her shirt.

"Shit. I think I...might be...a little...drunk."

"Shit. You think?"

"That kind of language's unbefitting of a lady," Lena teased, mocking her mother's tone.

"Yeah, yeah, yeah. C'mon," Kara hoisted her up so she leaned against her broad, supportive shoulder.

"Okay."

The pair took a step and the drunk instantaneously faltered, passing out from sheer exhaustion.

The full weight that leaned against Kara slackened and she ended up having to carry her.

She had a moment to contemplate.

*Should I use my super speed? She's sleeping.*

Then she shook her head.

*_No. Bad idea. She could wake any time._*

The blonde looked at the mansion receding as she increased the distance.

*Well, she's drunk so...it can't hurt.*

Within several seconds, Kara lifted herself and her precious cargo into the air and speedily flew away.
"Hey, Lena," the blonde gently coaxed, shaking her subtly in the hopes she would wake and not succumb to the alcohol completely.

She sighed in relief when the girl's eyes cracked open.

"Where..." she suddenly groaned.

"My house."

She bolted upright, swallowing the bile rising in her throat, "I should go. I'm so sorr-"

"Woah!" Kara patted her on the back, "Calm down. Alex and Maggie are on a date, and Eliza had to work overtime today. Don't worry about trying to make an impression, except they already like you so..."

The sight of the familiar sunny smile relaxed Lena and she relaxed into the cushions of the couch, watching as the blonde sauntered into the kitchen.

"Why're we here?" her nose crinkled, "What's that smell?"

There was a momentary rush of running water coming from the kitchen sink and Kara was walking back into the living room, kneeling across her friend.

"To clean your injury. And that smell, that's all the alcohol you drank," the blonde stated wryly, "And probably the vomit's aftertaste."

She took Lena's shallowly lacerated hand in a warm, damp cloth and began to wipe the dripping blood.

The Luthor could not help but flinch slightly, though not from the pain, she experienced far worse, "I-I'm sorry, I'm still not used to..."

All this.

Kara noted her loss of words, but got what she was implying regardless, "Don't worry. I know," she smiled tenderly, her touch even more feather-light and gentle than before, "I understand, okay? I care about you, you're my friend and you're worth it, and I'll reassure you every time."

Lena's tears gathered to a brim and she huffed, hoping to steer the direction of the conversation elsewhere.

She glanced at the cushions, now harboring splotches of red.

"I ruined your couch."

"It's just a couch."

"Blood stains."

"So?"

"So some people don't enjoy their belongings to be...aesthetically disturbed nor altered."

Kara chuckled, "You have a funny way of looking at things."

A frown immediately graced her features.
"Is something wrong?"

"Lena, ummm, I got most of the smaller shards out, but..." she trailed off.

"But?"

"Sorry."

"For wh - *fuck*!"

A larger piece of shrapnel clinked onto the hardwood floor.

The Luthor swiped her hand far away from Kara, who saddened at the flash of something related to betrayal that flickered across her friend's face.

"I still need to wrap it in a bandage," the blonde replied, holding out her palm for permission.

"I..." she hesitated.

"I'd...I'd *never ever* hurt you intentionally, Lena."

The furthest response Kara was expecting was a small nod as she genuinely believed her.

"I know you wouldn't," and then she placed her injured hand atop her friend's palm.

The blonde felt her heart swell with indescribable happiness at the prospect of Lena's trust in her, and proceeded to wrap the bandage around.

"Would you...my family's hosting game night tonight, and I was wondering if you'd like to...participate?"

Her friend froze in place.

Because the last time she invited her to something it did not turn out well.

Kara sighed, "Me, Alex, Maggie, and Winn will be there. Eliza's too busy."

A pause.

"So will Lucy and James, and his two guy friends."

Lena nodded, but the blonde made a rushed and desperate statement, "They don't want to hurt you though."

The Luthor's brow arched, amusement coloring her eyes because she *totally* believed that.

"They wanted to apologize for their behavior," Kara continued, "They really feel bad about bullying you the other day. Of course, they're still a little...on edge around..."

*A Luthor.*

"...around strangers, but they're willing to give you a chance."

Lena nodded and watched her friend's eyes sparkle with hope.

"So you'll stay?"
She nodded again.

"I'm so glad! They're cool once you get to know them, and eventually they'll love you to pieces."

The blonde bounded away into the kitchen to prep the meals, "You can join me or just sleep or something until it starts."

She considered offering her dry clothes to wear, but thought better, as it suggested a much closer friendship, which Kara was unwilling to push her into.

A shadow fell over Lena's face, darkened her angular and intimidating features.

She whispered quietly, more to herself than anything, "Do I even deserve to be loved?"

Kara nearly shattered a glass cup, pressing her lips shut.

She was not meant to hear that.

Lena looked at her hands, and no matter how many times she tried to convince herself that none of her family's actions were her fault, she could still see the blood on her, on her own hands for doing absolutely nothing when exposed to injustice.

Her thoughts were interrupted when a clank of glass resonated from the coffee table in front of her.

"Water," Kara stated, plopping next to her, "To dilute the alcohol in your system and get rid of that awful taste."

Lena nodded, taking a sip, "Thank you."

The blonde noticed her shivering, and dashed away and back with a heap of pillows and blankets, draping one over the Luthor's shoulders, then a towel for her soaking hair.

"Thank you. Again."

Kara absentmindedly wrapped her hand around Lena's ice cold fingers, "Gloves?"

It took a while for her to shake the shock off to reply, "No, thank you."

"Not a problem."

"It is a problem," she frowned, "You're always helping me. I feel indebted to you."

"How about that story you promised to translate?"

"Oh!" Lena dug into her pockets to fish out several papers with notes scrawled in them, "I actually did translate all the chapters since I've been gone, except..." she crumpled up a rather awfully unreadable and smeared paper, "It looks like the final chapter has been inconveniently ruined by the weather."

Kara pouted, "You totally planned that."

"I wish, but it looks like you're going to have to wait for the conclusion. Go ahead and read. I'm going to take a nap in the meantime."

However, after the first chapter, Lena found it increasingly difficult to stay asleep as Kara's intermittent gasps of surprise and shock interrupted her. Then there were elongated choruses of 'no'
and 'why' and then she would drag her hands down her face in distress.

"Enjoying yourself?" Lena yawned.

"Yes and no," Kara sniffed.

"Are you crying?"

"It's so sad!"

"Stop complaining," the Luthor teased, "I usually focus on the method of the author's story writing to divert my attention if that'll help you."

"How so?"

Lena stretched and sat closer to her friend, laying and stacking out the papers.

Kara caught a glimpse of... *something* on her wrists, but they flashed too quickly for her to pay any close attention to.

"There are seven chapters, yes?"

The blonde nodded.

"The author doesn't title any of them, they just have corresponding numbers in ascending order, but if you note the revolving theme for each one... Actually, let me put it this way."

She thought for a second, stringing her words together before continuing, "I think you realize that the general theme for the book is loss."

"Yeah, she lost six out of her seven friends so far, it's hard not to notice," Kara said bitterly.

"Well, in the first chapter, her friend was-"

"Greedy."

Lena nodded, "And her friend died as a result of that flaw. In the second chapter, her friend was jealous, wanted those same powers, played with fire, died as a result of envy."

"Seven sins."

"They had a propensity to write about that when Dante's Inferno was published at the time," Lena explained, "The first, avarice, the next was gluttony, then lust, then pride. And one of my favorites, sloth, when her friend was too slow and died 'cause of that."

"So we're missing wrath."

The Luthor nodded, "The author addresses and closes everything nicely in the final chapter, despite it being-"

Kara clasped her hand over her friend's mouth and whined, "Shhh! No spoilers!"

Lena's voice was muffled under her hand, "You said you didn't mind for this."

"Uh. Yeah. When I couldn't read it. But now I can. So, no spoilers!"

The Luthor chuckled and made to gather the papers up, her sleepiness preventing her from noticing
that her sleeves rode up so that her scarred flesh flashed out.

Kara's heart stopped, and without knowing it, she let out a broken whimper. "Lena..."

With her arms still stretched out, she paused and casually looked over to her friend, "What?"

Then she frowned at the sight of watering, blue eyes, "Kara, what's wrong?"

The raven-haired girl followed the blonde's gaze and landed on the slits that decorated her wrists.

"Oh," she quickly made to pull back, but was immediately met with resistance when a gentle, but firm hand gripped her forearm.

What surprised Lena was that Kara was wide-eyed at her sudden action as well.

Then there was the fact that neither of them were not tugging at one another.

The blonde made the first move, scrunching up the sleeve until it hit just below the elbow, then she traced her fingers over the scars.

Lena shivered at the ghostly touches, her head hung low in shame.

"We're home!"

The pair scrambled to opposite ends of the couch, forcing their casualness as Maggie and Alex strode into the house.

"Hey, Lena," the agent greeted warmly.

"Hello, Alex."

"'Sup, kiddo," the detective added, "Joining us for game night?" she nodded at the blonde on the other end of the couch, "She force you to?"

"Apparently. Something like that."

"Glad to hear it."

Winn's head poked through the entrance, and he grinned widely, "Kara!"

"Winn!"

They shared a loving hug before moving to the couch.

The boy smiled politely at the Luthor, "I don't think we got the chance to get to know each other. I'm Winn."

"Lena."

"Where's Lucy and James?" Kara inquired.

"Oh, they're still in the car. Should be coming out soon though, and James brought two of his football friends, Mike and Adam."

The Luthor tensed.

"It's okay," Winn reassured her in a comforting voice, "They're both really nice when they're not
ignorant bigots. Mon - Mike - and Adam are chill though."

Lena failed to fight back the chuckle that left her throat.

"What'd you say, punk?" Lucy rhetorically asked, locking his head in a choke-hold.

Winn shivered and squeaked in surprise, "Ummm, nothing?"

Lucy smirked, releasing him, "That's what I thought."

He nervously chuckled back and rubbed his throat gingerly.

Kara could sense Lena's discomfort and reached out to squeeze her fingers encouragingly, as if to say everything would be okay.

They were so lost in their moment that they missed suspicious, but knowing, looks shared among the trio.

And it was okay; the apologies that spewed out of James's and Lucy's mouths were genuine and heartfelt, so tooth-rotting in sweetness that Lena considered stopping them midway.

However, what mattered to her the most was that she was not being rejected, rather than that, she was being given a chance, and that was beyond more than enough for her.

When the games started, Lena preferred to observe on the sidelines, taking comfort in knowing she would not have to partake in an intense game of Never Have I Ever nor Truth or Dare.

She found it especially entertaining whenever the group targeted Kara, making her flustered and pouty.

Lena liked everyone.

Alex and Maggie were a sarcastic duo, but they were thoughtful and kind.

Lucy was similar to herself, albeit more aggressive and sassy about everything. Not to mention confident and assertive.

On second thought, maybe Lena and her were not so similar after all.

Then James, he was an overall sweet guy, considerate of others and put them before himself, much like Kara. This was a far cry from what Lena witnessed at lunch, but it was understandable; her family destroyed his and Lucy's, they had every right to hate her, even if it was not her fault.

The only person that slightly irked her was Mike, who seemed to be a stereotypical frat boy, but his heart was in the right place even if one could not say the same for his big mouth. He was charming, Lena could not deny that, but she could also see that his eyes were set on Winn and their feelings were definitely mutual, even after all his playboy affairs with other girls.

Adam was the only person she found perplexing, but in a frustrating and confusing way. She knew, objectively, that he was genuine and sincere with his kindness; he was charitable and friendly towards others no matter what.

She liked him.

But she also did not.
Not when he and Kara were sitting so close and exchanging playful, innocent touches with one another.

Not when they shared a look that was too akin to star-crossed lovers.

Then she was reminded of her troublemaking and mischievous ex-girlfriend, Veronica, in boarding school, who coincidentally moved in National City as well. Though she still had yet to see her, it was a metropolitan city after all.

Lena felt embittered and acknowledged her unbefitting jealousy for a full minute before she sighed inwardly.

*They're both good for each other. There isn't even any competition, not even hardly.*

She resigned, relinquished Kara, not that she had her in the first place.

Lena only wished that she could have something like that with someone.

But she found herself unable to long for anyone other than Kara, and realized that she was in deep shit.

Then there was the fact that she was a Luthor.

The girl ran a hand down her tired face, feeling her pensive overanalysis charging in.

*I don't deserve her. I'm a Luthor and she's the exact opposite of that name. I could never be with anyone. I deserve to be alone.*

It was then Lena resolved to distance herself, taking any precautionary measures to ensure she would not do something stupid or anything of the sort.

*I hope they make each other happy. That he makes her happy. She deserves it. All of it.*

Then after came stories, which everyone had their turns of flushed expressions and childish giggles.

However, it just buzzed by for Lena, who was so lost in how happy her blonde friend, and her other new friends, looked during game night.

"Hey, Lena?"

*Shit.*

Unfortunately, since she was so occupied, she missed whatever was said to her and she silently cursed herself.

"I'm sorry, I didn't catch that."

Lucy smiled carefully, nodding in Kara's direction, "We were just talking about our favorite birthday stories. The best one so far's about how Kara refused to talk to *anyone* for like a month 'cause we all insulted her cooking."

"It was a very sad time," Kara sighed, reminiscing.

Adam gave her a comforting smile and took her hand in his own to squeeze it gently.

Lena felt a sore and aching pain in her chest, found that it left her breathless.
She blinked away the hurt.

"I don't ship them," Alex whispered to her girlfriend, "My sis and Adam."

"Believe me, Danvers. I don't either, but they're exes for a reason," Maggie smirked, "Lena and her though...ultimate gal pals."

She made a subtle thumbs-up.

However, Alex tilted her head dumbly, "What?"

The detective face-palmed, "Sometimes I forget how bad your gaydar is, Danvers."

"I'm pretty sure my sister's the straightest person in the world. She's only ever dated boys...Adam and Mon-El - er - Mike, in this case..."

"You were pretty sure about being straight until I came along, weren't you?" Maggie stated, then she said in a mocking tone and stuck her tongue out, "Maybe Kara hasn't found the right girl yet."

Alex opened her mouth to say something, then closed it, then opened it and closed it again.

"Yeah."

"And don't you think we're being biased for not liking Kara and that guy? 'Cause you know," she gestured between them and whispered quietly, "Lesbians..."

"Fair argument."

"The potstickers were god-awful," Mike warned, "Don't let her cook for you."

The Kryptonian growled and snapped her head to Lena, desperately trying to change the subject, "What about you?"

"Me? I've never tried your-"

"Oh, no not that, when's your birthday? What's your most memorable one?"

Lena hesitated, "I-I don't..." an exhale, "I don't know."

"You don't know your favorite birthday memory?" Kara gasped.

"No. I don't know when my birthday is, and never celebrated either," she corrected, "The orphanages didn't have any information when they took me in, but I was adopted the twenty-first of February, so...I guess that's my 'birthday' then, so to speak."

The blonde's expression darkened into something more depressing, her eyes almost downcast.

_She doesn't even know when she was born..._

"Bet you were too busy prancing around like a ballerina and practicing piano or a million other instruments to do anything fun, huh?" Lucy chuckled.

Lena appreciated her teasing and retaliated, "I'm not sure if someone who enjoys studying law for fun should be judging me."

Lucy's eyes widened in surprise, "Touche, but it's definitely more entertaining than _engineering_."
"I'm not so sure if I enjoy mindlessly reading each and every law signed."

"Bitch, fight me, then you'll have something to remember, even if it's not your fondest."

Lena smiled, "I don't think you can beat the time I got my cat. Not birthday-related, since I never celebrated, but it was definitely something."

James frowned playfully, jest in his tone, "I guess we can't be friends then."

The girl's shoulders slumped, but the boy laughed, "I'm a dog person. Cats are evil creatures."

"I like cats!" Winn protested.

"Dogs," Maggie and Alex stated easily.

"Two against two, what's it going to be?" James asked, turning to Lucy.

The brunette shrugged, "I'm more of a fish person."

"Fish? Seriously, Luce? Why am I dating you?" James gasped, "Why?"

"I don't have time to take dogs on walks! And claws scare me too! I just have to feed the goddamn fish."

"But you also need to filter and clean the tank," Winn added, almost teasingly.

Lucy frowned, "Maybe I'm just not a pet person."

"What about you, Kar?" the boy asked.

"What?"

"Were you even listening?" he deadpanned.

"Uh. Yeah, we're talking about animals?"

"You weren't paying attention."

The blonde rubbed her neck sheepishly, a bashful smile painting her face, "No. Not really. Sorry..."

Her mind drifted off again, busy with sulking over the fact that Lena did not know her own birthday.

"Hello?"

A finger snapped in front of her face.

"Earth to Kara. Favorite animal for a pet?" Winn repeated.

The blonde pondered for a moment. Deep in thought.

"I have a lot of energy, I think a puppy would match my vibe more."

"You're definitely a lot like a puppy," Alex reaffirmed.

Kara giggled, "But I love all animals!"

"That's 'cause you can touch all of them without being mauled or envenomed to death," Winn
muttered to himself.
The blonde glared at the boy, her icy blue eyes forcing him to shut his mouth.
"You two are literally the personifications of memes."
Lena tilted her head curiously, "What's a meme?"
There was a collective gasp.
Lucy removed the offended look on her face, "Allow me to educate you."

"So, memes are just..."
"I know," the younger Lane whispered solemnly, "They're divine and ineffable."
"That's a bit *over* dramatic, wouldn't you say?"
"Me? *Dramatic? Never!*" the brunette scoffed, "So what's your favorite meme?"
"Grumpy Cat, or the 'me, an intellectual' one," Lena answered with confidence.
"Sophisticated," Lucy hummed, "But don't you mean..." she stifled a chuckle, "'meme, an intellectual'?"
The Luthor cringed, "Right...I see you enjoy puns as well."
"I take after Kara."
"What's your favorite meme then?" Lena inquired.
"Kar and I were *really* into the doge meme at one point, but...*me, an intellectual*, decided to move on."
"I heard that!" the blonde shouted across from them, pouting.
Lucy ignored her, "And then there's James, he likes the Harambe meme, uncultured swine. Alex and Maggie like anything gay, *obviously*. Adam likes petty Joe Biden, which isn't bad. But Winn's tastes are better, he likes Pepe and Dat Boi, but he's also a huge fan of Nicolas Cage, so-"
"*Bees!*" Winn interrupted, "Also, before you insult me, National Treasure *is* a national treasure."
Lucy rolled her eyes and groaned, turning back to Lena, "Anyway, I believe my tastes are a bit more superior. I've gone from dick-butt to Kermit and Arthur's fist."
"As amusing Arthur's fist is, I'm going to have to say Adam's preferences are more similar to mine..." Lena admitted.
Lucy was silent for an unruly amount of time and the Luthor found herself a bit uncomfortable before the brunette screamed out, "You uncultured swine!"

"So was it..."
Lena closed her book, setting it back in its slot within the library's many shelves, echoing Kara and urging her to conclude her sentence, "Was it..."
"Fun?" the blonde finished, "Last night?"

"The party kind of died when you fell asleep actually."

Kara gasped, genuinely upset, "Oh no, I'm so sorry."

"I'm joking. Lucy was the life of the party in your absence. I learned plenty of things, caught up with pop culture."

"So you like them?" the Kryptonian asked hopefully.

Lena paused her browsing, fingers resting on a random book's spine. She thought about everyone, how kind and welcoming they were, how they were trying their best to accept her. But she still felt as if she did not belong, like she was imposing, that she was creating a rift in the group.

Deep inside, she thought they would never see past her Luthor name. The cautious looks in all of their eyes were evident of that.

Except that was what she expected, so she was not too irked.

What actually bothered her was Adam. How she could not find one horrid flaw in his personality to condemn him.

Lena knew she had a small crush on Kara, she was the first person to approach her and truly accept her, regardless of what her family represented. Though, she did not know exactly when she developed feelings, perhaps a few weeks after they met. In between all of the bullying drama and times in the libraries, something just...shifted. By now they have known each other for nearly half the school year and Lena was more prone to jealousy with the intensity of the feelings she had for the blonde, romantically speaking.

"Yes, I like them. I don't have any qualms with your friends."

Kara noticed her hesitation and stepped closer, "But?"

"What do you mean 'but'?"

"It sounds like you want to say something else."

Lena hated that she was not as enigmatic when she was with the blonde, who could weave around her mysterious nature.

"I don't want to say something else," she denied, her heartbeat picking up at the lie.

Then Kara faltered, imagining one of the worst-case scenarios, "Did any of them hurt you?"

Lena's eyes widened and she shook her head, "Oh God no, Kara. That's absolutely ridiculous."

The librarian came by to shush the pair loudly before leaving.

The Luthor mouthed an apology before turning back to the shelf and browsing, refusing to look at Kara, "I genuinely mean it when I say I like them, okay? No worries."

"But something's bothering you."

"I'm fine."
"You know I hate it when you say that."

"That's the only answer you're ever going to get."

"What's wrong?"

"Nothing's wrong."

Kara gave her a skeptical look

Lena returned it with a stoic and impassive mask.

Then her expression softened, "Fine. Something's up. I'll admit that."

The blonde opened her mouth to say something, but Lena pressed her index finger against her lips, "But I don't want to talk about it," her eyes fell to the floor, "Please? I just...I don't..."

Kara nodded, relenting as the finger pressed on her mouth lowered, "Okay, but if it becomes too much for you to handle, promise to tell me, okay?"

Lena hesitated, "I'll try..."

"I guess that's as far as I can get with you," the blonde mumbled.

Chapter End Notes

Constructive criticism appreciated.
"I know you're always in the library," Kara smiled, sitting next to Lena on the adjacent chair in a secluded table, "I'm curious though, what holds your interest?"

"You know already. Science, mathematics, the like."

She frowned, "That's boring, I hardly think that it holds your interest as much as that book you love so much."

"And why do my interests interest you?" Lena countered, not in the mood for sharing personal hobbies.

Kara shrugged uncomfortably, "I just realized that I ramble to you constantly. You probably know ninety percent of me and I probably don't even know the surface of you."

"I usually like to keep it that way."

"Surely you actually want to share things you like? Maybe I'll even like them too? Then we can have something less forced to talk about besides my love for food and boy bands."

"Then that means I have to talk, and socializing depletes my energy. My needed energy for focusing on school. I just have to listen, and I'm fine with that."

"But I want to listen to you too, Lena."

The raven-haired girl paused sorting out the books she gathered, then she sighed, "I enjoy reading about outer space."

Kara smiled and clapped her hands, "Oh! Me too! They remind me of..." a pause, "Of home," she
shook her head, "Why do you read about it?"

Lena shrugged, "I've always had a thing for space, then Superman came along and I got more curious."

"S-Superman?" Kara squeaked.

"Well, being Lex's little sister and all, he made his anti-alien vendetta my business as well."

"So you know..."

"Superman's secrets? Yes. Not that it interests me too much though."

Kara gulped, "What kind of secrets?"

Lena lifted a brow, "I guess it won't hurt to share with you, but his birth name's Kal-El, and there's no one on record. I've checked, he's under a different alias. According to all of my brother's endless notes."

The blonde held in a gasp.

She knows his name.

"Apparently, there's this material called kryptonite, it's the only thing his species, Kryptonians, aren't immune to; a pretty green rock that my brother was working on with Lord Technologies long before his arrest."

Kara gulped, tapping and adjusting the rim of her glasses, "W-What'd they do with it?"

"I don't know, the last I saw, which was a long time ago, they changed the pretty green rock into a pretty red one."

"That's...that's good to know?" Kara forced out, chuckling, unsure of what red kryptonite would do to her and Clark.

Lena shrugged, "I guess. If Superman ever goes off the deep end we might have something to defend ourselves with."

"He's not like that," Kara defended.

"Do you have a crush on Earth's mightiest hero?" Lena teased.

The blonde reddened and sputtered out vehemently, "Ew! No!"

"Shhhh!" the librarian warned.

"Sorry," she turned back to her friend, "He's only done good. He'd never 'go off the deep end'."

"On the contrary," Lena countered, "Regardless of who he is personally, there's the possibility of mind control and the fact that there'll always be collateral damage. Corruption doesn't care if you're a good person or not, it'll just spread slower," she closed her eyes, "Countless people have lost their homes and lives in the middle of his fights. Even then, I'm not too sure he's all that nice, maybe as his alter ego, yes. But when he puts on that suit..." she ran her fingers through her black tresses, "Hopefully he won't act all high and mighty; that symbol on his chest could get to his head, make him arrogant and haughty."
"You know who he is?"

Lena smirked, "Is that all you got from that? That I know his secret identity?"

"Ummm..."

The girl waved it off, "I don't care honestly, my mother's never seen the notes, I'd never reveal his identity, nor has Lex, but he likes to play...games, with people, regardless of casualties," Lena sighed, "And Superman hasn't done anything wrong that I know of; he's helping people, there's no harm in that, in sacrificing the few to save the many; majority rules. I just worry his sense of justice only consists of black and white."

"You're...very rational about...aliens."

Lena looked surprised, then laughed, "Unlike my brother? He doesn't seem to realize that aliens are just as, if not more, complex than humans are, their unique situations. They're refugees. They're looking for homes, like humans in the midst of wars. As long as it doesn't become a huge problem, the wanting to take over Earth that is...I don't see the need for hunting them down."

She hesitated, "I am biased though, for both sides. I blame Superman, or aliens in general, for driving my brother mad..."

Kara frowned.

So much for thinking I could tell her the truth about myself.

"I could see it gradually happen, with my own eyes, I just loved him too much, so I didn't see it. I still do love him, the old him, I hate the man he is now. Lex wanted to make a difference, I just didn't see whether he meant a good one or a bad one, not until it was too late."

Kara nodded, urging her to continue.

"He writes to me. From prison. He still claims he wants to change the world, to create a utopia. His ideas are chaotic, fragmented. He wants to break apart the twisted spaces in between society."

Kara placed her hand on her friend's, "It's okay, I understand. He was afraid, right? Of what aliens could do?"

The girl chuckled, "I don't think so, fear was the last thing on his mind, though he'd never admit to such a weakness. It was more...jealousy, I think. Envy. He coveted what aliens could do. As much as I adored him, I was very aware of his power-hungry attitude, sometimes bordering on narcissistic or sociopathic; he never admitted loss or being wrong. A psychopathic megalomaniac at its finest."

Lena sighed, "I'm sorry. I went on a tangent, I didn't mean to bring up the world's most hated villain."

Kara squeezed her hand in reassurance, not minding the digression, "Don't be sorry, he's family, he's your brother. And I enjoy listening to you, doesn't matter what you talk about. Although, outer space's a plus, is it the only thing you specialize in?" Kara chuckled, her heart swelling at the fact Lena was not an adamant anti-alien activist.

"W-well...I also come here to...write."

She cringed when the word left her mouth.
Kara nearly bounced off of her seat, "Like, writing novels?"

"No. I don't have the time to create a full fledged book. I just write poetry when I'm stressed or the like."

The blonde gasped, "You should share some time!"

She noticed her friend's heartbeat race once again.

"Well, I mean, if you want to. I don't want to intrude or be nosy or anything, heh," she twisted her fingers together anxiously.

There was a comfortable silence that rested between them.

Then, "Yeah. I'll...I think I might eventually share one of my poetry books with you. They're just little nothings I guess."

"I'll bet they're going to be little somethings to me. And books?" Kara repeated, "As in plural?"

"Yeah, what's got your tongue tied? I have almost six books filled with poetry from...when I was eleven I believe, which's kind of embarrassing when I also consider the fact that the notebooks have hundreds of pages."

Lena shuddered and flushed at the admission.

"N-No! It's definitely not embarrassing. It's just..." the Kryptonian's lips pursed into an intense frown, "You said you wrote when you were stressed and stuff, so, yeah, that's...that's a lot of stress and pent up emotions in all those books."

"Does everything I say always upset you?" Lena inquired, trying to liven up the mood, "It's nothing, really, I just write what every poet writes. You know, whining about death, love, suicide, loss, oppression, the patriarchy..."

The Luthor found her dark humor to be comedic and laughed to dilute the tension in their conversation.

She forgot, however, that Kara, a ray of sunshine, did not find the statement to be funny and flinched at one of the sandwiched words mentioned.

*Suicide.*

Lena resisted the urge to clasp her hand in her friend's.

"I'm sorry. I'll keep my brooding and moping to myself from now on."

The blonde nodded, shifted in her seat, "You just...you worry me a lot."

The Luthor deflated, a bitter look crossed her face, mixed with a concoction of bewilderment and anger. Her chest puffed before she took a calming breath.

"Don't."

"What?"

"Just...please, *anything* but pity. Even hate's better than that for God's sake."
"Lena, I-

"Kara."

"I'm not pitying you, you're probably one of the strongest people I've ever met. And that's saying something 'cause I know Lucy and Maggie and Alex and Eliza, and they're badass. There's a difference between worrying for a friend and pitying someone."

"And don't compare your family and friends to me of all people," Lena replied coldly, "I'm sure you can utilize someone more deserving of such high regard you place them at."

"They're your friends too! They consider you theirs, so the least you could do's think the same!"

The librarian came back to hiss and shush at them before leaving, keeping eyes on the obnoxious seniors.

Kara groaned quietly, "It just frustrates me how you just don't...see anything in yourself."

"There's nothing to see."

"Me and everyone at game night could beg to differ."

"Yeah, everyone was polite, but that doesn't mean I didn't see that they couldn't get past my family's historical propensity for bringing destruction."

"It was just one day, they're going to need more time to warm up to you."

"I don't want more friends, I don't want more people dragged into my family matters and knowing their...affairs."

"You're doing it again," Kara nearly growled, folding her arms.

"Doing what?" Lena mimicked her actions.

Neither of them backed down.

"Pushing me away," the blonde choked out.

The Luthor faltered, her resolve and walls crumbling into pieces, "Kar...I'm sorry, I still need to get used to all this...this friend stuff, it's new to me, but I'm trying. Really."

Kara sunk into her chair even further.

"I said something again, didn't I?" Lena sighed, resting her face into her hands propped by her elbows on the table.

A moment of silence passed before the blonde said something again, a shaky sigh leaving her throat.

"Every time you indicate, whether it's with your actions or words, that you're not familiar with people liking you or caring about you...it makes me sad 'cause you deserve so much."

Lena smiled slightly, "I appreciate the thought, but you're the only one in that boat," she chuckled darkly, bitterly, "Sorry, I hate to break it to you, but everyone else would rather drown than hop on, would rather stuff their faces full of Luthor hate than acknowledge at least one good deed done."

"I don't want everyone else to jump on anymore," Kara sniffed, wiping a tear away, "I want you on
there with me, I don't want you to drown with them."

Lena took a moment for the words to sink in, mouth parted in shock.

"And just 'cause the masses think that of you doesn't mean they're right," she sniffed again.

"And how would you know you're right and they're wrong?" the Luthor challenged.

"I want to believe humanity's better than bullying someone 'cause of their last name, better than accusing someone for crimes they didn't commit."

"I think you hold too much hope and optimism for mankind."

"I think you hold too much doubt and cynicism for mankind."

"I prefer pessimistic misanthropist, but can you blame me for thinking that?" Lena chuckled mirthlessly, the rhetoric evident in her tone.

Kara answered anyway, "No...I-I can't begin to even imagine what pain you've gone through. But I'm your friend, you can always tell me, help me understand. Help all of us understand...Alex, Maggie, Lucy, Winn, James, Adam-"

Lena laughed, "I don't think confiding in them about my problems would be ideal, and I especially don't want to confide my problems with your boyfriend."

She waited, gauging her crush's reaction.

"B-Boyfriend?" Kara squeaked, giggling, "Oh, Adam? He's...we had a thing before, but now we're not...we're actually on really good terms."

Lena relaxed, but not entirely, and decided to divert the direction of the conversation, "Did the split result in your lack of cooking skills?"

The blonde gasped, secretly glad for the change of tone, "How dare you insult me like that!"

"Shhh!" the librarian growled again.

Kara shrugged, "Sorry?"

She turned back to Lena, "What about you? Do you..."

Why am I even asking?

"Am I romantically involved? No. I swear my mother has eyes everywhere," she answered, her expression darkening for a split second, shaking her head, "I had a relationship at one point, but it didn't work out. Then I figured love wasn't for me, it's just another form of madness, and God knows I've already experienced so much of that in my life."

"You're so cynical, no wonder that didn't work out," Kara teased back, sticking her tongue out.

Lena slapped a stack of papers on her friend's head.

A few weeks after game night, the young Kryptonian struggled with talking to Lena, or more accurately, ever since her mother got back from her business trip. She was always so apprehensive whenever it came to Lillian, not that Kara could blame her, she was an intimidating woman.
It seemed as if the young Luthor was more distant, though not avoiding; she was less tolerant of physical displays of affection, which Kara understood, but she was frustrated with herself that whenever she saw Lena she would pounce on her like she was prey and squeeze her into a bear hug. As of lately, Kara observed her friend would flinch whenever a hug was too strong or if she nicked a tender, healing spot on her body.

Then she would unconsciously grab her hand and then graze that odd rigid texture of her skin.

Which brought yet another problem up.

Kara wanted to address Lena's wrist scars, but she knew well that it was not in her place to mention nor was she supposed to see it in the first place, but knowing her friend, she would have never ever told a soul willingly.

Everything came to a head when she found her in the locker room, surrounded by girls bitching at her about her family, as usual.

However, the majority of the insults regarded Lena's body, which the blonde was unable to comprehend in her rage.

"Get away from her! What's wrong with all of you? What'd she even do to deserve this?"

"C'mon, Kara, chill out and join us, this Luthor bitch deserves what she got."

The Kryptonian fumed, she felt so hot with anger that she thought steam was coming out of her ears.

Clearly, the group of girls noticed it as well and quickly filed away, leaving their victim tightly backed into the corner.

Lena had her gym shorts and sports bra on, but she covered her torso with a rather over-sized jacket. She was shaking, head dipped to the floor in shame.

"Hey..." Kara approached her cautiously and crouched, "Hey, Lena...it's okay. I'm here. Look at me."

The girl shook her head, voice trembling, "Hat. My hat," she pointed vaguely, still not looking up.

The blonde handed it to her, but panicked when she glimpsed her friend's swollen eye as she tried to put it on.

Kara grabbed her wrist and almost flinched away when she felt the scars, "Your eye! Did they hurt you? I swear I'll-"

"No! It wasn't them!" Lena quickly interrupted.

But Kara was skeptical and narrowed her eyes.

"I swear it wasn't them, they were just teasing me about it."

"More like bullying," she retorted, darting her gaze to the Luthor's face, "But your eye injury looks recent."

Lena hesitated, realizing she had no way to divert the conversation, so she nodded very slowly, "Yeah...it is..."

"If they didn't do it then who-" Kara gasped when she saw the jacket slip, showing the bandaged
upper arm that had splotches of blood, "What happened here?"

Lena moved away to avoid the outreaching arm, but in the process, her cover slipped further and she scrambled to pick it up, but it was already too late.

"Lena..." Kara choked back a sob and covered her gasp when she saw the scars that marred her front side, some of them recent and patched up with blood soaking through the bandages.

The Luthor's expression shifted to impassive, voice struggling not to waver, "Just give me my clothes."

Kara gave them to her without a word, too horrified to say anything.

Then Lena spun around and the blonde could barely contain a cry when she saw how much more abhorrent her body was; it was as if she was maimed constantly, consistently, for years judging from how some of them were faded and how some of them were a new and angry red color.

It was like someone was literally whipping her into shape.

Lena sighed, one filled with exhaustion and regret, "I know you're staring, Kara. Please don't."

The blonde ceased her gawking, "I-I'm so sorry, Lena..."

The young Luthor nodded slowly, owlishly blinked the oncoming tears away, "I know..."

"So..."

"I don't want to talk about it, Kara," Lena whispered harshly, "Just drop it."

"If it concerns your safety I'm obviously not going to drop it," she grumbled.

"I'm no child, I can take care of myself."

"You're technically not an adult yet. You need to tell one, especially your mom, she'd be terrified for her own daughter, that you're being hurt."

Lena chuckled, dropping her head, finding it genuinely funny that her mother would actually care, "I can't really tell the person that's doing the abusing that, can I?"

Kara was baffled, these were one of the times that she wished she did not have super hearing; there were things she regretted overhearing by accident and she could not undo the bewildered look on her face.

Luckily, Lena was not looking at her and sighed, "I'm eighteen soon, things will probably get better then, hopefully."

Kara could only nod.

The door slammed shut.

Alex and Maggie jumped, startled from their movie date.

They checked the time, around three, after school.

The agent squinted her eyes playfully at the woman next to her, "I think you're bad luck. Kara seems
to get upset more often whenever you come over."

Maggie tossed a cup of popcorn at her girlfriend.

"Hey!" Alex lamented, "This's my favorite shirt!"

"Good. I hate that shirt."

The agent gasped, picking the kernels that escaped into her bra, "You don't mean that! And you got popcorn inside my bra!"

The detective rolled her eyes, "Let's go check on your little sister, Danvers."

Maggie dragged her girlfriend out the room to see Kara muttering to herself.

One word caught the detective's attention.

"Lillian?" she echoed, "What about Lena's mom?"

"She's hurting her own daughter!"

Maggie and Alex exchanged an almost unsurprised look.

It did not go unnoticed.

"You guys knew?" Kara shouted, "And you didn't take action? How could you guys do that?"

"Well, Lillian isn't exactly a great mom, anyone could see that from a mile away," Alex retorted.

Maggie sighed, "Let's all just calm down, okay?"

"Not until you explain why you didn't do anything! You work for the police, Mags!" Kara snarled.

"Child abuse cases are a lot more complicated than that," the detective frowned, "I've tried to ask Lena about it, but she won't provide me with any reasonable doubt to go off of and we just left it."

"Why would she refuse help? She's being beaten and tormented every single day!"

Maggie plopped onto the couch, "She's scared for other people. If Lillian finds out who helped send her to jail, she has a ton of influence to ruin their lives. A ton. She's scared for you especially, Kara; you're already in Lillian's cross-hairs for saving her from all those bullies. She probably thinks it's only a matter of time before you figure everything out."

"But still!" Kara tried to argue, voice cracking as she sank into the sofa.

Maggie, placed her hand over hers, "Even if I did try something, which would very likely be successful...there's the variable of Stockholm syndrome, and Lena's still a minor, she'd have to go back into an orphanage or foster care, and her trauma just can't deal with any more of that," she paused, eyes downcast, "Not to mention no one would want to adopt her, given her background. If she's in an orphanage and turns eighteen, she'll be released and she won't have anywhere to go; barely with money to sustain herself, no company inheritance knowing her mother. Best case scenario, Lillian wouldn't want anymore bad press and compromise with money - bribery."

Kara swore she felt her heart break and could only reply with an emotional voice, "Why?"

"Kiddo," Maggie's eyes softened, "She said she'll wait until she's eighteen, she's got something up
her sleeve, okay? She's got a plan to try and inherit the company earlier than expected."

Kara could not reign in her fury, "I'm still angry! This doesn't change how I feel! I need to do something! I can't just sit back and watch her get tortured for Rao's sake!"

"We know, Kar," Alex smiled somberly.

The blonde was crying at this point, the tears freely pouring down her cheeks as she tasted the salt paths trickling past her lips, "Lena keeps getting broken over and over and over again. And she's always the one that has to put herself back together, by herself, sometimes harder, sometimes weaker than before. I'm trying my best to help her, and I thought it was working at first 'cause I didn't know how deep her pain was, but I'm scared that one day she'll just give up and I can't do it and nobody will be able to fix her."

"She's used to being alone, to doing everything herself," Alex stated, "She's not used to receiving help, or receiving anything for that matter, and you know that, better than anyone. Again, she doesn't want you involved, to be targeted by her mom."

"Eliza was as adamant as you when she puzzled it together too," Maggie added, but immediately regretted her decision when she saw the look on the Kryptonian's face.

"Eliza knew?" Kara spat, distressed at her own ignorance.

Alex laughed nervously, "Everyone did actually...not you apparently; you tend to try and see the best in everyone, so don't blame yourself for not picking anything up."

Kara smothered her face into a pillow and let out a muffled scream.

"You seem distraught," Lena whispered while penning down her notes.

"Yeah. I am," Kara whispered back, harsh and clipped.

"You're angry at me," Lena stated simply, masking her upset.

"Yeah. I'm angry at you," the blonde gave a curt nod, jotting more notes down next to her elbow partner.

Lena breathed deeply, "Do you want to talk about it?"

Except she already knew what it was about, though it had only been a week since the...revelation.

"You're smart, Lena. I'm sure a genius like you already figured it out."

"You're being dramatic."

A pencil snapped, loudly, the splinters scattering about the blonde's desk.

"Dramatic?" Kara repeated in disbelief, eyes wide, then her expression was something akin to coldness.

Lena winced, "Let me rephrase that--"

"No, I get it, I get it. I'll try to disregard your safety and your health and your own life as much as you do."
"Can I help you ladies?" their teacher interrupted, arms crossed.

They stopped talking, the silence between them almost deafening.

Which was interrupted when the bell rung.

Lena sighed, "Kara..."

But the blonde immediately gathered her things and stormed out of the classroom.

The Luthor felt remorse boil in the pit of her stomach and swallowed her hurt down.

_Tonight. I can talk to her tonight. She won't want a confrontation right now._

Lena thought that she should have been thankful, that if this was the last time they talked, she could keep her distance like she initially wanted to.

But she cared about Kara too much to let her go, and she was also torn with the situation with her mother.

_I was wrong. Pity's better than hate._

And Lena felt her heart ache at the notion that Kara despised her. She was frustrated, everyone hated her, but she was only affected by the blonde's opinion.

Lena took a shaky breath.

A voice in her head convinced her that she was the reason Kara was no longer smiling and laughing at school, from what she could see. Hopefully, she was the exact opposite when she was at lunch with her friends.

She sulked on her way out of class and to her locker, gathering the things she needed.

She groaned when she felt her stress headache coming on and thunked her skull on the metal of her locker.

"Hey, Luthor!"

Lena groaned again and muttered under her breath, "Can I get a break?"

She turned around, no nonsense and fully prepared to unleash the signature coldness of her family.

But instead, her eyes widened in surprise when she was pinned against the wall of lockers, an onslaught of a familiar rosy scent assaulting her nostrils.

Lena gulped, moving her eyes up from the person's stilettos and failing to avoid the gratuitous cleavage until she settled on a familiar face.

"What's up, Little Luthor?"

"Veronica?"

Chapter End Notes
Constructive criticism appreciated.
Chapter Summary

*Kara investigates what is going on between Lena and Veronica and her group of misfits. When she finds them in an upsetting situation, her negative feelings manifest and burst; in the heat of the moment, Kara causes a ripple between her and Lena's already fragile bond.*

**TRIGGER WARNING: BULLYING, SUICIDE ATTEMPT, VIOLENCE.**

Chapter Notes

*Find me on Tumblr at spoopercorp and on FF as Local-Asshole.*

Jumper

"Glad to see I still have an effect on you," Veronica purred in her ear, making the girl shiver.

Lena's face reddened as she attempted to regain her composure, her cold facade returning, "You're mistaken. What are you even doing here anyway?"

"Looks like you still got bite," Veronica purred, leaning in to connect their lips and moving her leg in between her target's thighs.

Lena released a surprised sound, but the other girl swallowed it and it came out as a pathetic muffle.

When Kara heard someone call out Lena by her last name, her stomach plummeted and she turned around to scope through the sea of students, spotting her friend pinned against the lockers by a stunningly attractive girl around the same age.

She felt anger broiling in her stomach.

However, it was a masquerade for jealousy, though she was unaware of that.

Then when the mysterious girl leaned in to kiss Lena, her jaw dropped to the floor and she felt a painful ache in her chest for some reason unknown to her.

When Veronica shoved her leg in between Lena's thighs, the blonde mistook the shocked sound that left the Luthor's throat to be a pleased moan and the angry shade of red on her complexion to be one of fluster.

Kara frowned, feeling the familiar burning in her eyes as tears threatened to collect and spill over.
She whipped away and merged into the crowd of students, mistaking the feeling of heartbreak for anger.

Veronica released her victim's lips from her mouth's prison with a quiet smack, turned her head and went in for another.

Lena narrowly avoided the blood red lips, roughly pushing her away and wiping her mouth clean of the lipstick that smudged across her cheekbone, "What the hell do you think you're doing? Do you not recall us breaking up?"

"I don't recall us ever being exclusive, just a hook-up, a one-night stand where many more followed," Veronica tilted her head, "You're so needy, did you really think you were that special?"

Lena pursed her lips and folded her arms, "Whatever, why're you here?"

"I can't visit an old friend? We did move into the same city, did you forget about me?" she made a pouty face.

"Yes," she answered without hesitation, "And blissfully so."

Veronica chuckled, unfazed by the remark, "Is it 'cause of that blondie I heard you keep hanging out with?"

Lena froze, "How'd you-"

"Oh, please, I still keep in touch with Devlin, he's one of my most popular clients."

"I'm not going to ask you to elaborate on that."

Veronica rolled her eyes and sighed, "I'm not a prostitute if that's what you're thinking."

"Color me surprised, then what's he paying you for?"

She grinned, "It's a secret."

Lena rolled her eyes, "We both know that you're full of those."

"You're one to talk, Luthor. You're better at keeping secrets than I am. Also, I didn't know you were capable of making friends, and from what I've heard, it's genuine. So, when will you introduce me?"

The raven-haired girl dropped her head.

Veronica frowned mockingly, "Awww, you guys break up already?"

"Fuck off, Sinclair," Lena growled.

"No need to get so feisty, I've got the perfect distraction for you," the girl chuckled, holding out her hand and giving her a look, "Want to see what's got Devlin intrigued?"

Lena hesitated, she knew if she got herself involved with Veronica's mischievous ways again, there would likely be consequences, but she could not bring herself to think about them.

She welcomed any distraction that could get her mind off of Kara, and alcohol was definitely not a strong candidate anymore.

She took Veronica's hand and was led away.
"Kara," Lucy called out.

"Huh?"

"You called me, asked me if we could have girl time at Noonan's tonight," she stated, looking out the windows into the darkening night, watching as the last of the day's light was swallowed up into the void, droplets of rain and dew dripping onto the panels.

Her lips morphed into a wry smile, "You're picking at your food. Not to mention there are sticky buns, potstickers, and chocolate pecan pie on it. So, what's up?"

The blonde set her fork down and sighed, burying her head in her hands, "It's Lena."

"What'd she do? Hah! Convenient. Right as I was warming up to her. I swear if she did anything I'll literally gut out her nonexistent heart and feed it to-"

"Lucy!" Kara warned, glowering at her friend.

The brunette lifted her arms up as if to surrender, "Sorry, I'll stop. So what happened?"

"I'm more upset about what she didn't do, or won't do in this case."

"Yeah?"

"Her mom, Lillian, I recently found out she was abusing Lena. Badly," she sighed.

"Those rumors are true then?" Lucy asked, her expression saddened, she felt pity for the poor girl.

Kara nodded somberly, flicking at the glass cup in her hand, futilely distracting herself with the echoing sound.

"How'd you find out?"

"I wasn't supposed to. She was in the locker rooms and these girls were ganging up on her and then one thing led to another and..." she huffed and her voice broke, "She has so many scars, Lucy. They're all over her body and I wish I could just...just unsee it."

Erase it.

The brunette frowned, "But it could be anyone doing that to her."

"No, I heard her say it, I really wish I didn't have super hearing sometimes."

"I don't get it, why're you upset with her and not Lillian?"

"I didn't say I wasn't angry at her mom."

"Okay, then what's going on between you and Lena then?"

"Lena won't turn in her mom, even after Maggie tried to talk to her, and I get why, I do, but I'm still...angry."

Kara's grip on the glass cup tightened and a fracture cracked its way from the lip and near the base.

"I understand where she's coming from too, cases of child abuse are pretty complex when the child doesn't want to be helped, or just wants to wait it out. A lot of them suffer from Stockholm syndrome
and lash out when you offer any form of aid."

Kara's eyes narrowed, "God, I'm still just so, so angry, Lucy. I've never felt so intense. Everything about Lena's situation makes me hot and I just want to...explode."

The Kryptonian's grip hardened against the glass and it shattered into pieces.

"Woah!" Lucy chuckled sarcastically, "Hey, cool it with the edginess will you?"

The blonde rolled her eyes, gathering the shards onto her plate.

She stiffened when she heard a familiar voice outside of Noonan's, the sound made her want to seethe.

"C'mon, it'll be fun."

An unfamiliar voice sounded not too far.

"Veronica, would you slow down?"

So her name's Veronica.

"I'd rather know what I'm getting into, and we've never agreed on our definitions of 'fun'."

Kara's stomach twisted.

Lena's with her.

She looked at Lucy, "It's getting late, my parents want me home before ten."

"We still have an hour, are you sure you don't want to keep talking?" the brunette made sure.

"I'm sure, it was great talking to you, Luce," she smiled and slammed some bills down, hugging her tightly before quickly walking out and tailing the group.

"Sandra, why don't you try convincing Lena?" Veronica laughed, "It doesn't seem my words are really comforting her."

"No. They aren't," the Luthor muttered.

"I don't know if I'm equipped to comfort her."

"Right, sometimes I forget you're colder than she is," Veronica chuckled, "Pam?"

"Ivy," she corrected, glaring at Lena, "And I think you're forgetting what the Luthors did to my family."

"I'm sorry, it wasn't my fault my family decided to hate aliens and metahumans," she remarked.

"You know what, Luthor-"

"Oh don't be so mean, puddin'." Harley murmured in her ear.

Ivy grumbled before turning away, holding her girlfriend's hand tightly, who squeezed it back softly.

"Unbelievable," Lena threw her hands up in the air, "I'm even judged by petty criminals."
Suddenly she was on the ground, wheezing on all fours, a sharp pain in her sternum rendering her breathless.

"Say that again, Luthor," Ivy snarled.

"Hey, hey, hey, let's all be nice," Veronica sighed.

If it were not for Kara's super vision, she would not have been able to catch the large branch that struck Lena in the chest and retract into Ivy's sleeve in just under a second.

She was just about to intervene until Sandra quietly placed herself between Lena and Ivy.

"Back off."

"Hmmm, Sandra, I didn't know you had it in you," Veronica raised her brows in surprise.

"I don't, not usually."

"Then what's it to you?" Ivy growled.

The girl stared undaunted at the metahuman, and it made Kara wonder what she was capable of to stop the redhead in her tracks.

"It's an unfair fight, clearly. And my bond with Lena's built on mutual respect and honor."

Ivy rolled her eyes and continued walking to their destination, "Okay, Mulan. I don't get what the deal's with Asians and honor, I might as well call her Prince Zuko while I'm at it."

Sandra aided the Luthor to her feet and rolled her eyes at the comment, "I find it ironic that you want equality for metahumans when you make such racist remarks."

"It's a joke, Sandra. Chill."

She let out a single chuckle, "You amuse me."

"Ching chong, motherfucker," Ivy spat back.

"Why don't you watch your language? Or do you want me to treat you like I did with that obscene man who approached us earlier?"

Ivy's eyes widened and she shivered, gripping Harley's hand and walking faster.

"Thank you..." Lena mumbled, cradling her chest.

Without looking at her, Sandra nodded in acknowledgement.

"What is this place?"

The Luthor observed her surroundings, filled with several aristocrats that she recognized, cheering something on in the middle of the large expanse of space, where a cage that reached to the ceiling was fixed.

"A fight club, darling," Veronica grinned devilishly, "And lucky for all of you, I'm the host, so everything's on me: drinks, food, et cetera."

Lena cautiously approached the center of the room, curious, but the sight that she saw forced her to
choke back a gasp.

There was blood splattered all over the makeshift arena, flesh and limbs scattered about.

Then she noticed the fighters had abnormalities: different skin colors, gills, extra arms or legs or even heads, bones protruding from their bodies, and so forth.

"What the hell is this, Veronica?"

"A fight club, I just told you."

"Yeah, and it doesn't look like they want to fight! You're forcing people to-"

"People?" Veronica scoffed, chuckling, "You're still so naive. They're aliens, beasts, monsters...they don't have any rights you know," she fished out something in her pocket, lifting it into sight.

It was a small rock with neon red crystals embedded into it.

"This place's paid a fortune, and Max promised me more if I tested out this pretty little thing on all the aliens. Said it should be temporary. Don't want my clients or fighters to be permanently affected."

Lena smacked the rock from Veronica's hand, the material sliding somewhere beneath the feet of the club-goers, "They're still _lives, lives_ that you completely disregard! I'm out of here," she declared, walking away.

She froze in place when her gaze connected to a pair of familiar blue eyes.

She was too distracted with who they belonged to in order to notice that the orbs flickered in and out of a bright red before settling back to its normal hue.

"Kara?"

The blonde's expression flashed through so many different emotions in seconds: horror, sadness, confusion.

But they eventually settled on disappointment and anger.

She bolted out of the club.

"Kara! Wait!" Lena called out, chasing after her friend.

"Should we follow her?" Sandra inquired calmly.

Veronica grinned, gulping down her martini, "I'm always in the mood for some drama, but let's give them a little privacy and then we can check on them."

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"Kara! Just wait! Stop for a second and listen to me!" Lena begged, "Please let me explain!"

The blonde whipped around so fast that Lena ran right into her.

She stumbled back and rested her hands on her knees and panted, blinking the water out of her eyes.

For a moment the two let the rain drench them, let it soak into their pores.

Kara folded her arms, fuming, "You have _one_ minute. _One,_" she reiterated, "Before I change my mind."
Lena was unable to respond, still speechless that Kara was actually willing to talk to her.

"I guess your silence speaks for itself."

"No, Kara, I-"

"No, Lena! You know what, fuck you!" the blonde snapped, raising her voice, a cruel chuckle escaping her throat. "I had faith in you, I truly believed that you weren't your brother or your parents! But I was wrong! You're exactly like them, engaging in those sickening activities behind my back, and not telling me! That's disgusting! A-And...and hanging out with...with her - Veronica!"

Suddenly the memories of Lena and that vile girl kissing flashed across her mind.

She shook her head, that was irrelevant, why was she thinking about that now?

"You're no different at all! I was so stupid to think so, you fooled me into thinking so!" Kara shouted, backing Lena against the building, jabbing an accusatory finger against her sore sternum, snarling as she saw the girl wince, "You're cold, cruel, dishonest! What you experienced from all those bullies, from your own mom, you deserve it!"

The blonde's hands were pressed against the Luthor's hip and ribs, alarmingly increasing in pressure.

Lena choked out a whimper, tears stinging her eyes, "K-Kara, you're hurting me. This isn't like you."

There was a part of the Kryptonian that was screaming to stop what she was doing, but there was some uncontrollable fire in the pit of her heart that was pushing to break the Luthor in front of her.

There were several snaps and Lena screamed in pain, then suddenly she was flying and her back slammed against the opposite building.

She scrambled away, cradling her likely broken ribs and hip; she shook in fear, unable to fathom the inhumane strength the blonde possessed.

"Is there something going on here?" Sandra asked cautiously.

"Yeah," Kara replied, whipping around and her glare moving to Veronica, intensifying.

"What's your problem?" Ivy glared back.

The blonde noticed the vines entwining her wrist and snapped them off with ease.

The redhead's eyes widened and she whispered to Harley, "Who the fuck is she? She shouldn't have been able to break from that."

Kara shook her head and ignored them, focusing on Lena again.

"Ka-"

"I think you've made your point clear. Rot in hell."

Kara stalked off, leaving Lena's shattered heart in her wake.

---

Alex sighed when she heard the door slam shut and she nudged Maggie with her elbow, urging her to follow as they tailed Kara, "Want to pay for the new door this time? I mean, I knew high school would be a bitch, but..."
"I paid for it last time, Danvers."

"Damn, I was hoping you wouldn't remember."

Alex poked her head through the crack of the door, "Hey..."

Kara wiped her tears away, though her swollen red eyes betrayed her.

"What happened, sweetheart?" Eliza cooed, walking in to sit next to her daughter.

"Sh-She's just like her family, I saw her."

"Saw her?" Maggie urged the girl to continue, leaning against the doorframe.

"At an alien fight club."

"Why?" Alex asked, already skeptical.

"She was with her...friends? I don't know, maybe girls from her boarding school?"

"Are you sure she went there for fun?"

"I don't know? I'm pretty sure? I-"

"Did you even let her speak? I'm sure there's an explanation, reasonable or not, but since it's Lena, I'm pretty sure she has a good reason," Alex questioned, "You know you have a really bad habit of interrupting people when you're angry."

Kara faltered, recalling with immense pain their previous arguments and dug her fingers into her scalp, "No...I...I didn't let her talk..."

She sighed in relief when she felt the last of her unnatural anger seep completely away from her body.

Before she could register what she did to Lena, Alex's voice interrupted her thoughts.

"Ah...and we have found the solution," the agent smiled, fishing her keys from her pocket, whirling them around her fingers, "Let's go pay her a visit then."

"What? It's, like, almost midnight!"

"This's the one time I'll extend your curfews," Eliza stated.

"I have a curfew?"

The woman gave Alex the mom look, "When you're at my house you have one."

The agent laughed nervously, "Oh. Whoops."

"Ms. Luthor."

Lena lazily looked up, still dazed by her argument with Kara.

Though it was not really an argument, she just stood there silently and took whatever came out of her now former friend's lips.
She shuddered, grunting at the pain in her chest and leg, her mind still racing around the thought that Kara actually hurt her.

The one person that told her to stand up for herself, to not tolerate any of the nonsensical hate spewed at her, to defend herself, to show that she was better than her xenophobic, and many other things family.

The pain ran too deep and she needed to counter it with something else.

*Fight fire with fire.*

Lena sighed and looked at the mansion, "My mother's home?"

"Indeed, Ms. Luthor."

She nodded and cleared her throat, then clicked the door of the luxurious ebony sedan open, her eyes and voice absent of any signs of weeping.

"You're dismissed."

"Yes, Ms. Luthor."

She limped into the manor with a very mad woman standing in the living room, "*Where have you been?*" Lillian snarled.

"That's none of your business, is it?" Lena retorted.

The woman's eyes bulged and in a flash, she was in front of her daughter and struck her in the gut.

The girl keeled over and not a moment later, a hard slap connected to her cheek and she fell to the floor.

Lena tasted blood and felt a soreness radiating from her stomach, but she still could not get the image of Kara's disappointed and angry expression out of her mind.

*Not enough pain.*

"What did you say?" Lillian spat coldly, "Clearly I need to give you more lessons on being polite."

"You heard me."

A six kicks assaulted her chest and she felt more ribs crack and bruise.

As she was nearing the sweet bliss of forgetting Kara, it all suddenly stopped.

"Pathetic. Worthless excuse of a daughter," Lillian growled.

Lena could only utter a wheeze.

The woman stepped over her daughter, "I'll be back tomorrow, maybe the beating you've gotten will knock some sense into you."

The door slammed shut and Lena found herself crying, the image of Kara's disappointment morphing into something like hatred, lines blurred between.

*Not enough pain.*
She sauntered upstairs into her room, in her path she flipped tables and chairs over, shattered fine dining wares, dragged a knife across the walls in chaotic designs, emptied out cupboards and spilled the contents all over the hardwood floor.

At this point she was tearing her room apart, and could no longer feel the physical pain her mother inflicted upon her body, only the harsh words that left Kara's lips and the accusatory finger that jabbed against the center of her chest.

Then the words, the cruel words that swirled in her lungs, that she willingly breathed out.

*Not enough.*

Then there were the pills on her counter, which she hastily snatched away and dry swallowed without any second thoughts.

Lena caught sight of her reflection on her vanity mirror and studied it, a cold yet tear-ridden expression with red eyes painted in her face. The area where her mother struck her had already started bruising, she had a split lip, and her hair was wild. Her appearance was unkempt and unsettling, it was like a completely different person to her.

Lena huffed and smashed the glass with her bare hands, giving no care to the shards that embedded into her knuckles.

She began to sob, only just barely feeling the overdose symptoms come on.

*The pills. They're not working fast enough.*

An idea popped into her head when she looked out of her balcony.

Lena removed her shoes and wet socks, still wearing an oversized t-shirt and jeans.

She eyed her poem book, flipping it open, her tears soaking the ink and smearing it.

*You have me in the palm of your hands.*

*My heart races for you.*

*I'm your antinomy, your antithesis.*

*And you're an immaculate goddess.*

She stepped outside and onto the railing, excruciatingly ripping out every page from her poem book about Kara and tossing them out, the numbness preventing her from feeling the raindrops on her skin and how chilly it was.

"Here we are. Luthor manor," Alex smiled.

Maggie gaped, "Holy shit, their garden's huge! Their driveway's literally hundreds of feet away from their front door."

The detective then squinted, "I see some lights," she turned to Kara, "We'll be waiting out here. Text or call if you need anything."

The blonde nodded and exited from the vehicle, pulling her hoodie on to shield herself from the drenched weather.
She knocked on the large double doors, "Um, this's Kara Danvers, I was wondering if I could speak to Lena?"

No answer.

She waited for a moment before knocking louder, more insistently, "Lena, I know you're home, I want to hear your side of the story. Please?"

Silence.

Her next sentence rushed out, "Lena, please, I...I don't know what came over me, and I hurt you. Please, I want to fix this."

Kara groaned, unable to resist her urge to utilize her x-ray vision to scan past the door.

She gasped at the amount of damage and thought of no consequences when she let her strength get out of hand and snap the hinges of the mahogany door clean off.

The blonde quickly looked around.

Not here.

She glanced at the stairs, noticed there was a sharp engraved design that followed up the path as she did as well.

Kara used her x-ray vision to scan through the rooms and found Lena moving erratically about at the end of the hall.

She shut off her vision and walked over, slowly creaking the door open, "Lena? Is everything okay? I wanted to apologize."

The aperture finally swung wide.

"Lena?"

Her familiar pale figure stood atop the rails and did not turn, unable to hear anything over her despair.

The sight was so surreal, it had to be a nightmare.

No, no, no, this can't be happening.

It took everything in Kara not to dash forward and she took a tentative step closer, "Lena...don't do this," she pleaded, "Just get down from there. Let's talk, okay?"

The Luthor jerked her shoulders upright, her heart raced in fear, then they sagged again as she pivoted, dropping the book.

The last thing Kara saw was a self-deprecating smile, then Lena fell back and let gravity do the rest.

The scream that left Kara's mouth was filled with utter agony and terror as she broke the sound barrier with her flight.

"No!"

Lena felt the wind whip against her back as she fell from her family's mansion, and she closed her
eyes, hoping that she would hit the ground, hoping for the pain to end as soon as possible.

But she never did.

*It* never did - the pain.

She could still see in the back of her head the hateful blue eyes.

*I guess this's hell then. I deserve it.*

A warm hand tapped frantically against her cheek and she forced her eyes to crack open.

Then she noticed that her savior and her were floating in the air, but could not comprehend the situation fully in her current state.

"You *dummy*!" Kara sobbed as she lowered to the wet grass, tightening her hug around the body, the body that thankfully still had a beating heart.

She released a relieved, shaky sigh, hiccuping, "*W-Why?*

Through the aching pain in her body, through the soreness in her ribs, through the ragged breaths she was heaving, Lena managed to speak.

"*Ka-*"

She only got one syllable out before she began to convulse as blood poured out of her nose and her eyes rolled back, the pills' side effects ravaging through her body with impeccable timing.

The blonde panicked and dialed her sister.

"Everything oka-"

"Alex! Please get over here! I need help! Lena, sh-she tried to jump, but I caught her and now I think she's having a...a *seizure? Please, I don't know what to do!*"

"Fuck! Don't worry! We're coming!"

The couple sprinted over and found Kara hovering over Lena, trying to feel a pulse, a breath, but she was too panicked to concentrate.

The Luthor's eyes fluttered and she made a gagging sound, blood and bile pouring from her foamy lips.

"Flip her on her side! And hold her down!" Alex barked, Kara immediately following the order, "Shit! She's choking on her vomit!"

The agent turned to her girlfriend, "Maggie! Call an ambulance *now!*"

"Already on it!"

At that moment Lena ceased to struggle, bloody fluid still leaking out of her mouth.

Alex checked for a pulse and breath, "Her heart rate's elevated and erratic. And she's still breathing, but hyperventilating."

Maggie shut her phone and examined the bile splayed on the ground, noticing white ovular shapes.
Her eyes widened, "She overdosed," then she sprinted into the mansion and into Lena's room, scouring the ruined space for the container.

The detective pulled out drawers after drawers, one of which contained a tiny box of razors that made her swallow shakily at the sight, some of them fresh with blood.

Then she glanced down at the carpet, and after skimming under the stands and bed, she snatched a familiar cylindrical orange pill container, pocketing it.

Chapter End Notes

Constructive criticism appreciated.
Distant Altercations

Chapter Summary

The revelation of Kara's alien identity leaves Lena confused and heartbroken on top of her road to recovery, all eloquently masked within the infamous cold Luthor mask. Kara is concerned for Lena's safety. Lena is frustrated with her growing feelings for Kara, yet is terrified of her, and does not know how to deal with it.

WARNING: POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER.

Chapter Notes

Find me on Tumblr at spoopercorp and on FF as Local-Asshole.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Distant Altercations

"It's been over a week! Almost two! I don't think she'll ever want to see me again!" Kara lamented in despair.

"Hey..." Alex cooed, rubbing her little sister's back, "I'm sure she just needs some time," the agent comforted as they both walked into the hospital, "We'll still ask every day though, okay? Mom probably wants some closure too, she's been really worried about all of us."

The blonde's shoulders drooped as she stared down at the bouquet in her hands, "You don't understand...I..."

She trailed off, unable to confess to even her sister what she had done to Lena before the incident.

Alex turned to face the front desk clerk, "Hey, Kara Danvers wants to visit-"

"Lena Luthor?"

She nodded.

"Luckily, your persistence has prevailed, she's accepting visitors for a short time today."

Kara immediately brightened.

"Room 1110, in the psychiatric ward. I'll have someone escort you."

The blonde hopped on her feet and bid a temporary farewell to Alex before following the nurse through the maze of halls.
Kara stood outside of Lena's room, her nerves spiking to the point she trembled with anxiety.

She took a deep breath and knocked, "It's...it's Kara..."

A pause.

"Come in."

The blonde frowned at the sight, she was really getting sick of seeing her friend clad in a hospital gown in such an empty canvas of a room, bandaged with wires sticking out of her.

She strutted over and set the flowers on the night stand.

"Plumerias," Lena murmured softly, gazing at the pure white petals.

Kara nodded, "You told me they were your favorites."

The girl dropped her head, felt a bit of heat rushing to her cheeks, "You remembered."

"Of course I did."

Lena lifted her head to stare at her friend, and Kara stumbled back; it was colder than any of her other expressions, which was saying something, but the emotion in her eyes was raw.

Raw with betrayal and fear.

The look was so intense that the blonde had to avert her gaze.

The silence became thick with tension and it made Kara uncomfortable.

"You're an alien," she finally spoke.

The blonde startled, shying a guilty look back at the patient, "Yeah...I'm sorry I didn't tell you sooner..."

"Don't be," Lena responded immediately, her expression still grim, "That's not why I'm angry."

So she is upset.

Kara flinched and chanced a question, "Why...why're you angry?"

However, the girl replied with another question, "Clark Kent - *Kal-El* - he's your cousin? *Superman* is your cousin? You're Kryptonian? Is that all correct?"

Though they were supposed to be questions, they sounded more like statements, factual.

Kara nodded, confirming.

Another stretch of deafening silence engulfed them as the footsteps out of the room echoed in the halls.

"I understand, I'm a Luthor after all, but tell me," Lena started, eloquent and careful, Kara's big blue eyes looking at her own restless orbs with concern, "Was it all a pretense? Were my feelings some sort of plaything you toyed with just because you could? Some *game*? Or was it because Superman needed someone to keep an eye on me, the sister of Lex Luthor, his greatest enemy? Were you waiting for me to do something wrong so you could-"
"Neither!" Kara blurted out, not wanting the sentence to finish. Lena's coldness wavered slightly and she flinched away, increasing their distance from one another. Kara closed her eyes, found the fear in her friend's actions directed towards her unbearable. A hint of Lena's sorrow showed, "I've had a lot of people lie and manipulate me, but I do care about you, Kara. But why would you be any different the first opportunity you get?"

"Lena, no!" Kara began to implore, "I care about you too! You're my friend!"

The girl clenched a fistful of her blanket in her palms, moist with cold sweat from sleepless nights, "No. You're not. That time you confronted me's evidence enough of that."

Kara froze in place, a look of disbelief etched across her features. It was then she knew how much her words had hurt Lena in her unexplainable, blinding madness. She realized that the bullied girl she saw in the beginning was snaking its way back, but even colder and more detached than before - a defensive maneuver.

They were back to square one, and Lena was more than likely unwilling for anything to get past it again.

"You may leave."

Kara's heart stopped and she sauntered out, ignoring the voice that screamed at her to go back, to hug Lena tightly and never let go.

The blonde halted her steps when she saw familiar faces lining the waiting bench. But one caught her recognition in particular. She hissed, "Veronica."

The girl tilted her head, "I don't believe we've been properly introduced."

"Kara," the blonde almost spat, "What are you guys doing here? Fight club bored you already?"

Ivy rolled her eyes, leaning against Harley, "Dude, chill."

"We're concerned for her," Sandra commented, "This's the third time this has happened," she tilted her head, "Surely you must understand."

Kara's lips parted, but she clamped her jaw shut before she could gape. Third time?

Veronica noticed her crestfallen expression, "Might I ask what you are doing here then? I thought you two got into a..." a pause, "a little cat fight."

Kara glared at her, "That's none of your business."

"Was it 'cause you were jealous?" she teased, delighting in the blonde's angrily flustered reaction.

"This isn't a joke!" Kara snapped, "What kind of friend are you?"

"A friend who was there for Lena when you weren't," she gestured to the rest of the girl's sitting on
the bench, "We all were."

The blonde faltered and shifted in place uncomfortably.

"Awww, did I hit a sore spot for you?" Veronica smirked.

"You're despicable," Kara whispered harshly.

"Says the girl that made Lena jump."

The blonde reeled back at the accusation, "I-I didn't..."

"Oh, but you did. You were such a cute girl that manipulated Lena, told her she was special and loved and cared for. You made her believe that she wasn't alone and after that, what'd you do? You left. Hypocrisy at its finest," she laughed, "You crushed all of that into tiny little pieces just a week or so ago even though you knew very well what she'd gone through. But no matter, Lena's used to getting broken. And thanks to you, she might never be the same again."

Veronica chuckled, and the sound was beginning to grate on Kara's nerves immensely.

"Not to mention you nearly killed her. She nearly died 'cause you couldn't control yourself," then she whispered quietly, "This's why less-than-humans don't have any rights," she winked, "Now Lena has a fractured hip and broken ribs because of you. Oh, and a nasty bruise on her back. But luckily for you, she didn't say anything, made a fancy story up to cover her mom and you, too backed up and elaborate for the authorities to question."

Then it hit Kara, all at once, how the pain and hurt she caused Lena had dug into her bones and cut into her marrow. All of the anger washed away with an overflowing amount of sadness, regret, and guilt.

She's right. It's all my fault. Lena jumped because of me.

She did not dare consider the possibility that her friend could take on her brother's vendetta after what happened.

"You want to know the ending of that book Lena loves so much?" Veronica grinned devilishly, "The poor girl couldn't control her powers and exploded, incinerated the entire world due to her wrath - her friends, her family, everyone. She was alone in the end."

Kara pivoted and ran away, tears streaming down her face as she tried to shake Veronica's cruel words out of her head.

Not a few days later, Kara had the audacity to visit Lena at the hospital again, halting just outside her door.

What am I going to do? Apologize? What am I even supposed to do? What does she need from me? What does she want? I can catch bullets, I'm stronger than a locomotive, I can shoot lasers out of my eyes for Rao's sake, but I didn't get the power to read minds?

The blonde stood there and pondered, looking at a small box in one hand and a notebook in the other.

Would she want to write in her poem book while she's recovering?

She stole a glance at a piece of paper peeking out of the notebook.
I'm blinded by you, unable to flee.

You, who shines so bright that all other light is put to shame.

She immediately regretted it, a bitter image of Veronica flashed across her eyes.

_I shouldn't invade her privacy like that._

The Kryptonian reigned in her super strength and knocked quietly against the door.

"Come in."

They both tensed when they saw each other and Lena averted her gaze, fearful that the monstrosity she experienced that night would come back to haunt her.

She blinked when the lights were flicked on.

Kara frowned, the first to break the daunting silence.

"I got you a treat to snack on, and I...I brought your poem book, in case you wanted to write or something."

Lena stiffened and the blonde widened her eyes.

"No!" she answered prematurely, then winced at the volume of her panicked voice and how the Luthor's heart rate spiked, "I didn't...I didn't open it or read it or anything."

Lena seemed to relax, but only slightly, "Set them on the nightstand."

Kara shuffled over and placed them down quickly, turning to face her friend in the hopes that they could discuss things.

But the Luthor's back was facing her, arms folded into her torso as she shivered at the blonde's proximity - at the person who hurt her, tossed her around like she was a rag doll.

She was clearly not in the mood to talk.

Kara repressed the urge to sigh, looking back at the poem book.

There was a slip of paper under it and she could not help but feel tears trickling down her face.

_Even in the cold place where only death exists,_

_You're there - your scent, your voice, your face...the warmth you left at my fingertips._

_But here the words and smiles barely resemble you._

_Is she talking about me?_

Kara's expression was crestfallen as she headed out, the words written on the cheap paper echoing through her mind, reminding her of how much pain her friend was in because of her.

"Thank you, I appreciate the gesture," Lena whispered so quietly that no human ear would be able to listen, but she knew the Kryptonian could pick it up.
Kara paused just past the frame of the door, looking over her shoulder at the laying form before her eyes.

She heard the shuddering breaths the girl was taking; she was crying.

The blonde’s expression turned angry, upset that she could no longer hold Lena in her arms and comfort her.

The invisible barrier that separated them was thick, almost tangible, and now impossibly immovable.

The Kryptonian's grip tightened around the knob and she heard the creaking sound the metal made as it strained under her hand.

"No problem," Kara whispered back, forcing her voice to be steady.

And the door softly clicked shut.

The blonde leaned against it, elbows propped and her forehead brushing against the cold material.

_I'm a monster._

She felt a lump press against her throat and she wanted so bad to collapse and cry out, taking fistfuls of her blond locks and tugging at them in frustration.

Kara saw through the door as Lena shifted, wincing, until she reached the small box.

The blonde's lips formed a tiny smile through her tears, matching the Luthor's as she made to open it, the sound of cardboard grinding against each other.

The girl gasped quietly when she saw the cupcake inside, she could immediately tell that the blonde had crafted it for her and tears began to pour down her cheeks.

Kara sighed, breathy and shaky, "Happy birthday, Lena..."

After two weeks, the Luthor was finally discharged from the hospital, making her return in a crutch, bandages around her torso, and a small sling for her shoulder.

She looked smaller, weaker, and more pale than usual. She was restless from lack of sleep, too plagued by nightmares of a certain blonde to actually relax.

The exhaustion colored her eye-bags nicely.

_All because of me._

It was not until class that Kara really got to take a look at Lena, how she was likely not eating often if her protruding cheek and collarbones were of any indication. Her eyes were sunken into their sockets, her fingers were skeletal, and she looked void of anything; she was but a hollow, empty shell of her former self.

Lena passed Kara a note that said, "Red kryptonite, that's the substance that influenced you."

When LexCorp's and Lord Technology's strain of manufactured kryptonite was tested, so was Kara's and Lena's already mangled bond. The infection by the man-made element leaving the Luthor traumatized and ultimately fearful of the Kryptonian, the closest person in her life.
And Lena suddenly stopped going to class after that, or at least the ones she shared with Kara.

It was not until later that she found out the Luthor had switched out of those classes after meeting with her school counselor.

It was then everyone knew something much deeper had affected the pair.

Though her sister was the only person ballsy enough to inquire about it.

"You what?" Alex repeated in disbelief, Maggie sharing the same horrified look, "You hurt Lena?"

Kara's fists shook, so broken at the memories, "I-I don't know what happened, this thing called red kryptonite was influencing me, and I just...she could've died because of my lack of control. I *wanted* to stop, but...I ended up getting a front row seat to watch what I was doing."

Alex knelt beside her sister and placed a comforting hand on her shoulder, "Listen, it's *not* your fault, okay? You weren't yourself."

"But Lena-"

"She knows it wasn't you."

"But she still-"

"I know...it doesn't change the fact that what happened scarred her. She's traumatized, Kar."

"She's afraid of me..." her voice cracked.

Alex did not reply to the statement, but made one of her own, "I'll see if my team at the D.E.O. can analyze anything like that, to get their hands on some. In the meantime, I think you should be careful around Lena, give her some time, okay?"

Kara nodded weakly.

Maggie patted her on the back, "I have some books on how to be around P.T.S.D. sufferers, it might help. You could use the internet as a resource too."

"What about something on how to be around P.T.S.D. sufferers when you're the reason they have it?" the blonde replied bitterly.

Alex's and Maggie's faces fell, the silence swallowing them whole.

After a moment, Kara sighed, moving up from the couch, "Right...I didn't think so."

"Lena knows?"

The blonde stared, surprised at her friends' outbursts after her confession.

"I told you guys what happened and you're worried about her knowing who I am? Alex and Maggie were more concerned with Lena. And *don't* tell me it's 'cause she's a Luthor."

Everyone had guilty looks on their faces.

Kara's eyes widened, "You're kidding! What a sick joke! After all of that you guys are *still* doubting her!"
"We have a better reason to this time," James argued.

Mon-El nodded in agreement.

"Don't you dare tell me it's her family that's the reason. She didn't do anything, how many times do I have to say this?" Kara snapped, exasperated.

"It's not about them this time," Lucy explained, "Lena's terrified of you, don't you get it?" she winced when Kara dropped her arms to her sides and hung her head, "It's probably the exact same fear that drove her brother mad."

"She's not Lex," Kara whispered hoarsely.

"Nature versus nurture, Kar...sometimes they go hand in hand," Winn replied, "It's never a bad thing to be too cautious."

"I am being cautious, guys! I haven't been near her for...I don't know, but it's almost the end of the school year and I want to repair things and...I just..." Kara wiped several tears from her eyes, "I don't want to lose her...I can't watch her leave after graduation without some form of contact."

"I thought she was graduating early?" Winn asked.

He yelped in pain when Lucy smacked his head.

"What the hell, Luce?" he exclaimed, gingerly rubbing his skull.

"What?" Kara glared at everyone, "What do you mean early?"

"Nice, Schott," Lucy growled.

"Rumors were going around that she was leaving this week 'cause she's graduating early. She's not walking, she's going straight to college to get her degrees before taking over the company right after."

But the anger and sadness that flared within Kara spurred her to leave the table and finally confront her former friend.

She stalked into the library and quietly fumed.

Lena did not notice her approach until she looked up from her textbook, seeing that she was several feet away. Her brain sent alarms through her systems and she froze in her spot, muscles taught, shaking with fear. She could feel adrenaline shoot up her spine.

Kara's eyes widened when she heard Lena's heart erratically beat with her hyperventilating lungs and stepped back reluctantly, not wanting to cause her a panic attack.

"I'm...I'm not going to hurt you..." Kara croaked out.

"That's what you said last time," Lena mumbled hoarsely, broken.

But she clamped her mouth shut, cursing herself that she momentarily forgot the Kryptonian's super hearing.

Kara flinched at the statement, "I'm sorry..."
"I know."

But that doesn't change what happened.

Lena bit her lip so the last part was stuck in her throat.

But Kara knew.

The Luthor sighed, apprehensive, "What is it?"

The blonde took a deep breath, "You're leaving?"

Lena averted her eyes, "Yes. I am."

"Why-"

"And it's none of your business," Lena interrupted in a rush with a curt voice.

Kara nodded weakly, blinking back tears, "Okay...I just...I wanted to know if it'd be fine with you if we could...keep in touch? I gave you my number, but you've never called, and I just, I know it's stupid, but I was wondering if I could have yours?"

Lena barely picked out the last sentence and she made to stand up.

Kara's heart sank into a pool of dread, "I understand if you don't want to."

The Luthor ripped a piece of paper from her notebook and penned down her personal number, "I don't have my phone on me right now, so..."

The blonde took a step forward to reach for it, but paused.

She noticed the telltale signs of the beginning of a panic attack.

Kara raised her hands as if to surrender, "Just...set it on the table."

"Sorry," Lena said, placing the paper down, backing away to what she considered was a safe distance to avoid a mental breakdown.

"Don't be. You don't have anything to apologize for," Kara replied, ignoring the figurative hole that smashed and ripped through her chest, heart throbbing painfully.

Then Kara hesitated, "Would you...would you like to just go out for food or something? Before you go?"

Lena's expression fell, "I can't. I'm leaving today. To Metropolis."

A sarcastic thought flooded her mind.

But I'm sure your cousin will keep tabs on me.

Kara's eyes widened in shock at the revelation, her tone heartbroken, the city was all the way on the other side of the country, "I...okay..."

"Before I go though, I want to clarify something," Lena mumbled, then she looked into those blue eyes with less conviction, "I don't...I don't hate you, okay? Please don't think that when I leave."

Kara seemed to deflate her tension in relief, but her expression quickly turned somber, "But you're
scared of me..."

Lena remained silent, nodding solemnly.

Kara nodded back, then she opened her mouth.

*Will we see each other again?*

The cowardly lump in her throat obstructed it from flowing out and she closed her jaw shut with a clack, gritting her teeth and swallowing harshly.

Instead, she replaced it with another phrase, forcing a tiny grin, grinding her pearly whites apart.

"Bye..."

Lena's eyes softened, a small smile tugging at her lips as she echoed, "Goodbye, Kara."

There was radio silence from the Luthor's side since her departure, but the blonde was steadfast, sent her texts every day and images of cute animals.

She never gave up.

And a part of Lena was thankful for that because she did not know how she could have gone through her new life at Metropolis and at a college where everyone hated her if it had not been for her dorky sort-of-friend.

There were times she would type out a reply only to delete it, and then she would berate herself for giving Kara false hope with that cursed ellipse.

She could picture her face fall once the three dots disappeared.

Then Lex escaped prison and Lena was subjected to more hate and suspicion, but Kara, she was always there with support and care packages in tow; she always sent her a barrage of memes she found hilarious or videos she found funny or animal or food facts she found interesting when she knew Lena was in a particularly bad mood, according to the newspapers' articles on the Luthors.

Kara could still make her smile like an idiot.

And she encouraged her not to forget to vent out her emotions every day, sending her suggestions on what she could do: keep a happiness jar, exercise, go outside, volunteer at animal shelters...

Then the suggestions became humorous: vacuum the driveway to building a fort, which was juvenile in Lena's opinion.

She could only imagine Kara's over-exaggerated gasp and dramatic offense at her opinion.

It was then Lena noticed her nightmares had been receding, that her restless evenings were reduced to bouts of insomnia instead of her nightmares.

Nightmares about a certain beautiful, blue-eyed Kryptonian who she had not seen in so, so long.

Too long.

But what would Lena do if they *did* see each other again?
She could not hug her, that was for sure.

Tremble? Cower? Cry? Watch as her own fear crippled Kara into nothing but a heaping pile of guilt and shame and self-hatred?

Then there was the emergence of Supergirl, her appearance sparking rumors between her and Superman, which a romantic bond was quickly and vehemently debunked by both, much to Lena's amusement.

But she was proud of her, of Kara, how she decided to make a difference.

Then she shared a photo of her and James on Valentine's Day and Lena found herself going through the pages of poems she wrote about Kara.

I was drunk, intoxicated in the happiness that flashed shortly.

The light of memories blinded my eyes for a moment.

But you've gone back to a place that I can't reach, that I can't surpass.

You're lightning, untouchable, but you can touch others,

Brightening my world for just a moment,

Then you leave, to share it with another.

Like thunder, I'm too late,

Looking for you, chasing in vain.

You've wandered too far as time went by.

And we grow further and further apart.

Now you're becoming someone else's light.

The immeasurable distance between us

Has become a place where we can't be together.

Like thunder, I'm always too late.

She was jealous.

Even after all these years, I still have feelings for her?

So she settled for a girl named Odette, fucked and went on mindless dates until she forgot about her past.

It did not help.

She was similar to Kara in appearance and personality, though less clumsy and more mellow considering she was a ballerina. Her features were more regal than anything else; the only thing she shared with Lena's bubbly friend was the blonde hair and blue eyes and some quirks.
Then the Luthor decided that trying to forget Kara would be better achieved by dating and fucking someone unlike her.

Eleanor, a lovely woman with umber hair to match her dark, sharp eyes and angular, aristocratic features. She was intimidating, much like Lena, with her noble British accent and prim and proper attitude. She was kind though, humble and shy, and it was reminiscent of Kara unfortunately.

Lena loved them both, Odette and Eleanor, though more as friends than romantic partners. They were both ethereal and immaculate in beauty many would have said, but they were not Kara, and the Luthor was thankful that they were as understanding as her former Kryptonian friend.

Then Lena thought of how messy her life was, how she still feared her former best friend, and how she was too preoccupied with tracking down her brother's intentions and whereabouts with her company's resources.

*I'm not good enough for her. She deserves the best, and James can give that to her.*

She knew he and Lucy broke up because she joined the Army, but she never thought Kara and James would be an actual thing. She thought Winn and her would be more likely judging from all those times they squealed and geeked out about space and fictional characters together, which was so very often.

Then Kara suddenly stopped texting.

And it did not take long for Lena to find out why.

Lex's and Superman's recent scuffle had left the latter dead.

A memorial was placed in remembrance of Metropolis's mightiest, and only superhero.

Lena dared not to attend Superman's vigil, but tracked down where Clark Kent was buried, leaving plumerias at his headstone.

A short confrontation with Lois happened, wordless, but impactful.

Martha was a sweetheart though, tried to fizzle out the silent tension with Lucy awkwardly watching from the sidelines.

Kara was much too busy being Supergirl to visit Kal-El's grave.

At Superman's death, criminals popped up out of nowhere at an alarming rate to the point another alien by the name of Martian Manhunter had to aid her.

Lena avoided the news like the plague whenever it concerned the girl of steel as it would only make her worried for Kara's wellbeing.

Though she already was.

Clark was her last blood relative, and though he could not speak Kryptonese without a horrid accent nor did he know anything of Kryptonian culture, he was still family.

He was the last thing that gave Kara a semblance of home.

And Lena, or more accurately Lex, took that very thing away from her.

It made her angry at herself and she typed out her first text to Kara since they exchanged numbers.
[**Lena Luthor**: I'm sorry for your loss. My condolences.]

Needless to say, Kara was absolutely furious when she read the text and deleted it immediately.

*Now? After all these years? Now you choose to text me back?*

Her anger nearly overshadowed her understanding.

She frowned. She knew Lena struggled with words when it came to others, especially to her.

Kara sighed and pocketed her phone, her expression mournful as she gazed at the wilted plumerias next to Clark's grave.

Chapter End Notes

**Constructive criticism appreciated.**
Ghosts

Chapter Summary

Lena moves back to National City, the Venture spacecraft is blown up, the latter spurs controversy around the Luthor's intentions after her relatively quiet emergence. However, Lena could not care less about what other people think, but she does have a problem with how the incident forced her to meet with a blue-eyed blonde she had been trying to avoid. Kara has a problem with Lena's willingness to take suicidal risks when John Corben is sent to assassinate her old friend.

WARNING: VIOLENCE.

Chapter Notes

Find me on Tumblr at spoopercorp and on FF as Local-Asshole.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Ghosts

"Ms. Luthor?"

Lena pushed the button down on her intercom, "Yes, Jess?"

"A CatCo reporter is here, she wants to conduct an interview with you."

A pause.

"Send her up."

"Right away, Ms. Luthor."

Lena sighed and poured herself another glass of red wine, swirling it around before swiveling her chair to face her wall of windows overlooking National City.

She took a sip, relishing the bitter taste of ridiculously expensive centuries-old foreign grapes.

It had not even been a week into her stay and she was already suspected - or more accused - of the first object that blew up since her move.

For a moment Lena wondered what Kara thought about everything. Even after her own brother took Clark's life, would the blonde still have faith in her?

She suddenly chuckled to herself, taking a large gulp.
The last she heard from Kara was before Clark died, and she had taken up an internship somewhere. She heard the familiar sound of the double doors to her office creak open and tentative steps approach her desk.

Lena turned around, "Let's get this over with. Did I have anything to do with the explosion of the Ven-

She stiffened.

The blonde reporter smiled softly, tender, but cautious, nervously fiddling with her glasses.

"Kara..." the Luthor whispered.

Her lips formed a hesitant smile, "Lena."

They stood there, after almost a decade, just to take in each other's appearance, to note any changes. Kara was ever the same as her high school years: awkward, endearing, friendly... Her physical image had not changed, unless she was in her Supergirl attire. The hero, who was sure and certain, who was helpful and genuine in her care and actions.

Who was Kara.

With the Luthor, she seemed more professional, poised and graceful she was, wearing such elegant business attire with her hair down, not a single strand out of place perhaps controlled by Lena's will herself.

It was not terribly different, but the way she held her ground, her place, it oozed charisma and leadership and endurance...confidence in her own abilities with no ounce of weakness or an urge to back down.

Kara found herself feeling proud for the woman.

The C.E.O.'s knuckles were white as she tightened her grip around her wine glass.

Her friend noticed, despair etched across her features when she saw the quarter full bottle of wine on the otherwise colorless state of the desk.

Lena quickly diverted her attention from the alcohol, "A reporter?"

Kara only smiled, though it did not quite reach her eyes, "Funny, right? It's almost ironic. You were always the one that had a gift with words."

"How would you know?" Lena arched a brow, "I've never shown you anything."

The blonde became flustered, stuttering about, "W-Well I, uh, you said you liked to write, so I-I just assumed you'd, I don't know, write really well?"

"Well, you became a reporter, maybe you're better."

Kara blushed and adjusted her glasses, "Pffft, nah, no, never..."
Lena smiled.

*Still as dorky as always.*

"I guess we'll see when you release the article about this interview. Now then, shall we get on with it? Did I have anything to do with the Venture explosion?"

"Well, I guess that's straight to the point then," Kara chuckled nervously.

"I didn't if that's what you're wondering," then Lena frowned, pensive, "I'd like to make this company a force for good. I don't want to be associated with Lex's madness, I want to make a name for myself. I'm sure you understand."

The blonde dipped her head, thoughts drifting to her late cousin, "Yeah…"

The Luthor strode over to one of her cabinets and retrieved a tiny device, "This drive has all the information on the oscillator on board."

Lena found herself frozen in her spot when Kara took a step towards her to grab the device.

*Even with all of that extensive therapy I'm still shaking like a leaf.*

The Kryptonian immediately backed off.

The agonized expressions they adorned were evident.

Kara exhaled unsteadily, "You're still-"

Lena nodded shakily.

*Afraid. Terrified.*

The blonde's shoulders drooped, "I'm sorry. It's been so long that I forgo-"

"It's fine, Kara," Lena shut her eyes, rubbing her forehead as unpleasant memories invaded her mind, "I'm sorry. I didn't think I'd be like this if we met again, but-"

"I understand," she murmured, "Don't worry about it."

Lena took a hesitant step, then another and another until she was right in front of a pair of surprised blue eyes.

She held a shaking hand out between them, urging the reporter to retrieve the drive.

The C.E.O. flinched slightly when a pair of soft hands gently embraced her fingers, then her entire palm, increasing in its firmness until her shakiness ebbed into a slight tremble.

But they were so gentle and tender in its touch, contrasting to that one day.

Kara's eyes bore into Lena's, then down at their joined hands, then back.

The Luthor retracted her hand slowly, leaving the device in between the reporter's palms.

There was an excruciatingly painful silence.

Kara attempted to obscure her bittersweet joy.
Lena was struggling to regain her Luthor poise and professional fortitude at the very touch she craved for so long, that she was starved from.

The raven-haired woman sighed, "Do you think I blew up the Venture?"

"No. I don't."

The words were said without hesitation, certain and sure and clear as day, with an insurmountable weight of honesty and trust.

Lena frowned, her features taking on something akin to agitation, "You have too much faith in me, Kara. I don't deserve it."

"But you do."

The sentence came without hesitation as well, confident and strong.

Lena raised her voice slightly, moving to sit back down on her leather chair, "I'm not faultless, Kara. You put me on such a high pedestal, one day you will be disappointed in me, sorely. Everyone is, it's only a matter of time."

"I'm not expecting anything from you, Lena," then she smiled, full of just as much, if not more adoration than when they were in high school, "I know you have faults, but I'd like to think that I know you well enough to believe that you didn't do it."

Lena's breath hitched, words caught in her throat as she closed it off.

A moment passed and Kara decided to diffuse the tension with humor.

"But if your board members suddenly went missing, then I'd think you had something to do with it."

It worked.

"I can only deal with privileged, entitled white men for so long," the C.E.O. chuckled amusedly.

"I hear Max is upset that he's the second richest man in National City now, and that Terry and Devlin aren't too happy with being bossed around by you."

"No, they're especially not happy with the renaming ceremony and planning all of their company's events around that."

"Renaming ceremony?"

"Oh," Lena cursed herself for letting the information slip and attempted her hand at humor to divert the blonde's attention, "Yes, I'll be performing a speech - or villainous monologue - regarding the company's changes."

Kara's expression darkened, "You'll be out in public, where you could be assassinated at any given moment?"

"Kar…"

"Lena, you can't do this! You'll get killed! What would all of your efforts be for? Nothing?"

The Luthor shrank into her chair and flinched, her mind flashing back to the moment just before Kara had hurt her.
She's angry.

The blonde took a deep breath and ran her fingers through her hair, obviously stressed. She grit her teeth and spoke through the pearly whites, "That's suicide."

The look Kara gave her told Lena that she was in no mood for a morbid reply.

Not that she could talk at the moment, she was too busy trying to control her erratic breathing.

Kara facepalmed and groaned, "Rao, I'm such an idiot! I'm sorry, Lena, I didn't come here to...to scare you half to death. I should be more careful and I-I'm sorry."

At this point the Luthor's tremors ebbed into twitches, "No. I'm sorry too. I know you're only worried for my safety. I thought that I could control myself around you, but I swear to you that I'm trying."

A feeling a bitterness took over the blonde and she frowned, "That explains why you didn't reply to my texts for so long."

The Luthor deflated at the sarcastic remark, "I couldn't, I wasn't ready to-"

"Years, Lena," Kara interrupted, exhaling through her flared nostrils, "Almost. Ten. Years. I spoke to you every day. Do you know how cruel it is to look at those three godforsaken dots only for them to stop? Not a single word until Clark died, what, a year ago?"

Her frown contorted into a scowl and the two tore their eyes away from one another.

"We clearly have a lot to discuss," Lena said softly.

"Yeah. We do. This talk was nice, but..." Kara mumbled, rising from her seat, "Contact me when you want to catch up."

_But you probably won't._

The blonde bit back the words and ducked her head on her way out.

Lena's nails dug into her palms; she was frustrated with herself, that her trauma had more power, that it wedged itself comfortably in between her relationship with Kara.

She released a tense groan, burying her head in her hands.

"Lena, _please_ reconsider the ceremony. Maybe even to another day, then me and the D.E.O. can be prepared to-"

"I can't cancel the last second," the woman replied to imploring blue eyes, walking up to the stage.

She glanced over her shoulder to assure the blonde, "I'll be fine. I'm sure enough D.E.O. agents are around here, along with my security...and Supergirl."

Kara frowned and her shoulders sagged, "But-

"I'll be fine, Kara," Lena repeated, smiling gently.

The blonde huffed and folded her arms tightly across her torso, "Fine."
She relented and stepped away from the platform, merging with the crowd.

She tapped her communicator, "Alex, have the teams found anything?"

"That's a negative. Maggie's unit is trying to scout the area for anything sketchy, but I have snipers stationed in every corner along with some ground units with me in the vicinity."

"Be prepared."

"You too," the earpiece's feed clicked off before clicking back on with a buzz, "Hey, ummm, is everything all right between you and Lena?"

Kara hesitated, "I-I can walk next to her without her having a panic attack, but...I'm not sure. She's...she's still scared of me, wary, maybe less so, or maybe she's gotten better at hiding things, but-
"

"Calm down, Kar...it's Lena, she's going to want to try and fix everything just as much as you do. Things will get better, with time, and I know you've been so patient already, but I'm sure you can hold out a bit longer."

The blonde nodded slowly, "Okay, I will…"

For her.

There was an abrupt chorus of explosions and screams grating in her eardrums and Kara had to take a moment to right herself before dashing off to change into Supergirl.

"Alex-"

"L-Corp! The building! It's collapsing! Don't worry about Lena, I've got her!"

Kara reluctantly flew off to stabilize the sky scraping structure as Alex and her team flooded into the fleeing crowds, keeping an eye out for suspicious people and Lena.

The agent's eyes widened when she spotted the Luthor face-to-face with a man pointing a gun at her, disguised in an officer's uniform.

She activated her earpiece, running towards the scene, "I've got my sights on the target, can any of you get a clean shot?"

"Negative, Agent Danvers, there are too many civilians to not cause collateral damage," static, "And if you plan on engaging, we'll have to back down."

Lena's green eyes were, though frightened, filled with fire and resilience.

She clamped her fingers over her left side to stem the blood that was dripping from a bullet that grazed her, "You have impeccable timing."

"John Corben," the man chuckled deeply, "Though I'm sure you remember me well enough; I've worked with your pleasant brother on several occasions."

He clicked the gun again and Lena closed her eyes, waiting for the impact.

Pain suddenly radiated from her upper left arm and she shot her eyes open, hissing, ready to lecture the man that if he wanted to finish his job, he should have better aim.
Though her questions were answered when Alex rammed into him full-force once again, tackling him to the ground as they grappled.

Lena panicked, knew very well what the assassin was capable of and scrambled for one of the guns that slid towards her, forgotten in their brawl just as the man had the upper hand and Supergirl landed onto the concrete with a thud, persuading him not to shoot her sister.

Lena narrowed her eyes.

_The only thing this man understands is violence._

And she pulled the trigger, watched him fall to the ground in a barely-alive heap.

The Luthor let out a breath and dropped the pistol, glanced at the amount of blood that wetted her sweaty palms.

Her own blood.

Lena inhaled deeply and suddenly Alex was in front of her with the rest of her team, gently easing her down for transportation.

The Luthor twitched, "Ow."

"You just really enjoy putting yourself in danger don't you?" Alex grumbled, continuing to suture the woman.

"I'm perfectly fine."

"You got shot!" Kara shouted in distress, "You could've died for Rao's sake!"

Lena glanced over, her voice even, "I got grazed, and I'm not dead."

"Valid argument," Maggie teased.

The Luthor rolled her eyes and stood up once Alex was done.

"Can I go now?"

They all gave her a look.

Lena ignored them, "I'll take my leave then."

The trio gaped at her once she left with a cold shoulder.

Kara was the first to snap out of her daze, pulling at her blonde locks, "Ugh! She's so infuriating! She makes me want to flip a table over all the time!"

Alex and Maggie shared a look, but before either of them could reply, Kara already stormed off after the C.E.O.

"Lena!"

The woman paused, pivoted around, her expression calm and collected as she waited for the Super to stop in front of her a comfortable distance away.

"What do you think you're doing?"
"Going back to work."

Kara groaned, "How about you get some rest first?"

"A company doesn't run itself, Ms. Danvers," the C.E.O. sighed.

The blonde squeaked, nervously darting her head around to make sure no one overheard, then she put a finger to her lips and let out a dramatic, "Shhh!"

Lena gave a small chuckle, "Never outgrew that dorkiness did you?"

"Dorky?" Kara almost exclaimed, offended, "I'm pretty mature if I do say so myself! How dare you insult me like this..."

The C.E.O. gave her a look and the blonde pouted, "Yeah, okay, point taken," then she frowned, "But...can you promise me that you'll take it easy from now on?"

"Kar...I-I'm not sure I can...with me being a Luthor and running the company, I don't think…"

She trailed off.

The Kryptonian's lips pressed more firmly together and she averted her eyes, "Right…"

"Hey..." Lena whispered, placing a hesitant, but comforting hand against her friend's elbow, "That doesn't mean I won't try."

Silence.

"I..."

Her sentence faltered again and Kara looked back up at the green eyes, seeing the internal battle to convey something.

Lena hastily picked herself back up, "Are you free today? This early evening I mean. Around six? At my place? We have...a lot of things to talk about."

Kara's expression was dumbfounded, lips parted in surprise.

"I...y-yeah, of course."

The C.E.O. smiled in relief, "I'll see you then."

The blonde could feel the enthusiasm beginning to course through her veins and grinned like an idiot, nodding furiously.

Having a Kara Danvers in a white dress shirt with a baby blue argyle sweater vest and some khakis begin rambling when the she swung her door open was, to be honest, not the last thing she expected.

"Oh Rao, Lena, I'm so sorry I'm late. I don't want to make excuses, but there was this pretty big group of thugs that wreaked havoc with alien weapons, which the D.E.O. is trying to figure out, and they decided to target the children's hospital and-."

"Kara."

The blonde startled at the cold, soft hand pressed onto her shoulder, "Y-Yeah?"
"Breathe."

The alien took a great big gulp of air.

A moment passed.

"I did say breathe, Kara."

She exhaled and Lena could smell a lovely mint scent.

Wintergreen. It was always the reporter's favorite.

"Come in," the Luthor welcomed her, gestured into the house and led her to the dining table, while throughout the journey, the blonde was appalled at how nice her estate was; though it was small, it was sleek, elegant, classy, and the decorations and furniture were modern and minimalistic with several dark shades of gray and umber.

It matched Lena's graceful poise and equanimity; everything was neatly organized as opposed to Kara's usually messy and scattered state.

But it was also empty...hollow, missing something.

Kara quickly saw that the difference was that there were no personal belongings, nor photos, just a few canvases of art to fill the blank void.

Then she noted that everything in the house was made for a single lonely inhabitant; there was a sofa, a coffee table, a small kitchen, and so forth...all made for one.

Being a Luthor, Lena never considered visitors, so she ended up quickly purchasing a dining table for at least two to accommodate the reporter at the last hour.

Kara looked at her friend, who looked away a second later; but she could see, see that it was filled with the same loneliness and desolation that she saw in high school. Only, it was muted, edges not as sharp, more blunt than anything. It was like she was used to it, the abandonment and hate, like she gave up hope trying to mend them.

Without any second thoughts, Kara strode over to Lena and enveloped her in an embrace.

Several moments passed while the blonde took in the familiar faint scent of vanilla from the black and silky tresses pressed against her cheeks.

Then she noticed that her embrace was not being returned and silently cursed herself again for letting her emotions rule her actions.

Kara pulled away, "I'm so sorry, I...I just, I really wanted to hug you and I missed you so much and-"

Lena clenched her eyes shut and tackled her into a tight hug, fingers clawing at the back of her tacky cashmere vest, their bodies flush against each other.

It was her turn to take in Kara's presence, how she smelled like strawberries and honey and wintergreen mint along with the earthly dirt and ashy soot from her heroics.

Strong arms wrapped themselves around the Luthor's shoulders, the heat from Kara's body engulfing her in warmth, contrasting her usual cold and chilly temperature.
Lena let out a shaky breath, "I missed you too…"

Kara shivered at the lukewarm breeze against her throat, then she felt a single wet tear brush her collarbone.

Lena huddled herself under the crook of Kara's neck, vulnerable, and the blonde could feel her lips form into a barely-smile against her skin.

The Kryptonian could feel the woman in her arms shake ever so slightly, could hear the racing heart pumping blood under her expensive and lavish blouse and within her chest.

She frowned and reluctantly unlinked herself.

"You're still-" Kara began.

"I'm sorry," Lena apologized, feeling her fear rise, crawling up her spine and into the nape of her neck.

"But you're improving, you're getting better…"

The raven-haired woman returned a tiny smile at the statement, "Yes. I guess I am."

Kara's head jerked up slightly, her ears picking up stealthy footsteps outside, "Are you expecting anyone else?"

"No, why?"

Her eyes widened and changed into her super suit in less than a second, then the door exploded and the blonde shielded Lena with her body.

Supergirl was not expecting pain though, sharp and localized throughout her torso and arms and thighs, especially her backside.

She choked out a gasp, felt a wet iron liquid build in her throat.

Lena inched herself back, a look of horror crossed her face when she spotted shrapnels of kryptonite impaled through Supergirl's body.

She did not want to imagine the many more embedded into her back.

Then Kara slumped toward her and Lena fell to her knees with the hero, clutching onto her cape.

The blonde managed to give out hoarse instructions into her ear.

"Lena… Run."

Then she flashed around, her fists caught in her opponent's. There was no way a mere human could stop her in her tracks.

"How'd you-"

"Remember me?"

"Corben," she growled.

"No," he grinned, correcting her, "Metallo. Cadmus sends its regards."
A green glow emanated from inside his shirt and the arc blasted Supergirl into the opposing wall and she laid still in the rubble, her consciousness slipping from between her fingers.

Lena ran to the pile, had no second thoughts when she began to pull the heavy pieces of her ruined home from her friend.

She was so busy panicking she had not noticed D.E.O. agents infiltrate her home as well to subdue Metallo.

Lena successfully pulled the hero out, her hands bruised and bleeding from the glass and debris she lifted.

"You're not doing this to me," she ground out harshly, darting her eyes and hands at all of her wounds, trying in vain to keep the blood from pouring out like miniature waterfalls.

_Shit, shit, shit. Where do I fucking start? Please don't die on me, I can't lose you, not when we just..._

Lena was alarmed at the amount of tears escaping her eyes and splashing onto Kara's still face, whose eyes were struggling not to droop closed.

She shook her head.

_I have to take them all out, the kryptonite is killing her._

Kara's pupils unsteadily focused on the woman above her, "I thought...I told you...to-"

A wet cough interrupted her and she winced, the viscous red liquid dripping down her chin.

"-to run…” she finished, grunting from the pain.

"I have priorities," Lena snapped back, the tears refusing to stop.

Kara heaved a great breath and chuckled, then hacked out blood again, "You _dummy_…"

She whimpered in pain when Lena gripped one of the larger shards, located in her hip.

The Luthor grimaced at what she was about to do next and hissed at the burning sensation on her own skin, "I'm sorry."

Kara let out a choked whine when she felt the shard roughly slide out of her body.

"I'm so sorry," she apologized again, "The faster I get these out the less radiation poisoning you have."

Kara managed to wheeze out, "What about...you?"

"Kryptonite isn't as harmful to humans, only burns upon contact," she stated factually.

The blonde gave her a reprimanding look.

Lena rolled her eyes, "You can scold me later. When you're alive and recovering."

The Luthor reached for a thin shard that pierced through her lower lung and yanked it out, but was horrified that it snapped off.

"This's going to really hurt…”
Before Kara could begin to protest, fingers dug into her open wound and pulled the rest out.

Lena was startled when a pool of blood overflowed from the rather small hole and pressed her hand onto it.

Kara wheezed and coughed violently, more red liquid collectively pouring from her mouth.

Lena began to panic even more.

_There's so much - too much blood. If the kryptonite won't kill her then the blood loss will._

She shook her head.

_No, if I take all of the kryptonite out she can start healing._

The Luthor targeted the large pieces and swiftly removed them from her arm, thigh, ribs...trying her best to ignore Kara's cries of agony and the horrible burning sensations against her palms.

To no avail.

And all the while, she kept a chorus of apologies, hoping to drown out Kara's hoarse and weakening screams.

Supergirl's eyes rolled back from the overwhelming amount of pain and she passed out.

_No, no, no, Kara, no._

Lena patted the hero's cheeks repeatedly, smearing blood on her skin, "Wake up, you can't - not now, I need you to stay awake, please."

Her panic increased a hundredfold when the Kryptonian's breathing began to slow.

"Lena! Get back!"

The woman turned to face Alex, whose team was already extracting Kara.

The older Danvers shook her out of her shock, "You need to come with us. It isn't safe here."

The Luthor could only nod, dazed.

:"How is she?" Lena asked Dr. Hamilton, Alex just as concerned.

"Great actually," the doctor spoke, "Thanks to you removing most of the kryptonite. She won't need stitches, the wounds have already healed up nicely from our solar emitters and will scar over and fade soon, but she'll be quite sore."

The both sighed in relief, watching Dr. Hamilton leave.

:"Where is she?"

The duo jumped.

"Supergirl, you need to get back on the sunbed, you're still recovering!" Maggie protested.

"I'm fine! I'm not resting until I find - Lena."
The Luthor just stood there, dumbfounded as the angry hero made her way towards her, she did not even notice Alex slipping away and motioning for the doctors and agents to do so as well, along with Maggie.

Kara paused just in front of Lena, wobbled in her stance, but ultimately prevented herself from toppling over.

The blonde scanned her friend, relief coloring her features, "Thank Rao…"

Then her eyes flooded with dread when she took Lena's bandaged hands, blood soaking through the white fabric, "I told you to run…"

"Kara, you were dying, right in front of my eyes. You really expected me to run away?"

"Yeah, I did," she responded somberly, downcast.

A pang of guilt struck Lena's heart.

"Kar…" she placed a bandaged hand tentatively, shakily on her hero's cheeks, the other still encased in the blonde's hands, wiping away a tear, "I…" it came out unsteady, "I am still afraid…of you."

Kara frowned, the familiar agonizing stigma of shame and culpability gnawing at the edges of her heart, even with their reunification.

"But…" Lena continued, caressing the hero's cheek, who gripped her wrist gently and leaned into the touch, "It doesn't mean that I don't care about you…okay?"

Kara nodded solemnly and they wrapped their arms around each other for a tender hug, tears freely welling up and springing out of their eyes.

"You gave me a heart attack, Kar…"

The blonde's arms tightened, "I'm okay. You're okay…"

"Fucking hell," Alex sighed at the end of the hall, poking her head back out of sight.

"Pay up, Danvers," Maggie smirked.

"How. I was so positive they'd just… Unfucking believable," Alex groaned, handing her girlfriend a fifty, "How have they not confessed to each other yet?"

"Classic mutual obliviousness," Maggie grinned smugly, swiping the bill from Alex's grip, "Still have that awful gay sense even after all these years…"

"Shut up, Sawyer."

Chapter End Notes

Constructive criticism appreciated.
Crossfire

Chapter Summary

_The pair awkwardly struggle to rekindle their friendship, not to mention an obstacle in the form of the developing alien detection device makes it even more difficult. Though, the efforts result in Lena inviting her high school friend to L-Corp's gala. Kara is dismayed because the Luthor is once again putting her life in jeopardy._

**WARNING: VIOLENCE.**

Chapter Notes

*Find me on Tumblr at spoopercorp and on FF as Local-Asshole.*

See the end of the chapter for more notes

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Crossfire

Kara jogged out from her room, surprised to see Alex and Maggie on the far ends of the couch, the former crossing her arms in bitterness and the latter with a smug grin plastered on her face.

"Did you lose another bet, Alex?" Kara asked, giggling.

The agent fumed, exhaling through her nose.

Maggie laughed heartily, "Got fifty bucks from her this time."

The blonde chuckled, "Alex, bet less, or better yet, stop betting with Maggie."

"Not a chance," she grumbled.

"Awww, c'mon, babe, don't be like that," the detective pouted, pecking her girlfriend on the cheek.

"Like what?" she growled back.

"Like..." she paused, snickering, "A sore loser!"

Alex raised a pillow at Maggie and chased her around.

The younger Danvers rolled her eyes, "Okay, you guys have fun, I'm going to interview Lena! Remember to lock the door!"

"'Interview', sure. You kids have fun too!" Maggie shouted back, muffled from the pillow shoved in her face.
Kara stopped her fist midway from knocking on the large mahogany double doors that led to the
C.E.O.'s office, flushing with nervousness.

*What if she's busy? What if she doesn't want to see me?*

The blonde began to pace back and forth in front of the doors, arguing with her conscience on
whether or not she should enter and possibly barge in and interrupt the Luthor in the middle of
something.

*But Jess said she wasn't busy.*

*But what if she got busy on my way up here?*

She squeaked, nearly jumping through the roof when the doors opened on the other side.

"Kara, you can come in you know, you've been pacing out there for five minutes," Lena stated,
looking at her curiously.

"Oh, uh, how'd you know-"

"I could hear someone in my thought bubble, and you shuffle quite a bit."

This time, Kara flushed from embarrassment.

Lena nodded into her office, smirking, "Come in, I'm not busy, regardless of what your inner turmoil
might be telling you."

The blonde followed the woman stopped a few feet away, still standing, when the Luthor retrieved a
cup of bourbon and rested on her chair.

"Before we get started..."

Kara perked her head up from her notepad, "Hmmm?"

Lena smiled nervously, "I..."

The blonde's eyebrows furrowed in concern, "Is something wrong?"

"No - well, yes, I..."

The Luthor trailed off again, but her bottom lip and worried it between her teeth.

She sighed, "I'm holding a private gala fundraiser for the children's hospital, the one that was
attacked by those goons you fought not too long ago."

Kara's grip on her notepad tightened, eyes knit in a mix of frustration and worry, "You're
endangering yourself again."

"If that's how you want to put it," the C.E.O. chuckled uneasily, "That's why Kara Danvers *and*
Supergirl are invited, the former for me to avoid snobby aristocrats, the latter for formal protection."

The blonde opened and closed her mouth intermittently, unable to formulate a response she was
satisfied with.

She finally relented, her tone defeated, "When is it?"
Lena's eyes widened, "It was that easy?"

"There's no use arguing with you once you're settled on your decision," Kara replied sharply, "You've made your mind, you're going to proceed with the gala with or without me, whether I like it or not, so I might as well."

Lena sipped her bourbon, "It's...it's this evening, starts at eight."

Kara gave her a look, "Were you planning on telling me?"

The Luthor's eyes focused on the blank space of her desk and mindless papers, "I don't know."

"So you were initially going to go without proper protection."

"Don't be foolish, I have security," she countered the statement.

"Security isn't enough for the people targeting you, Lena! Do you know how scared I was that Roulette was going to come for you after you gave me the location of her fight club?"

"But she didn't," Lena stated, "Veronica wouldn't do that, I know her."

The blonde took a breath and unclenched her fists slowly, achingly, pushing aside her jealousy.

The Luthor made sure to regulate her breathing and lower her heart rate controlled by fear.

Eventually, Kara nodded reluctantly, "I'll be there."

"Oh, I'm sure you will, I ordered dozens of potstickers from your favorite Chinese restaurant. Not exactly gourmet according to my chefs, but what matters is that you like it, I couldn't care less about my entitled guests."

Kara grinned enthusiastically, "I'll totally be there then."

Lena chuckled, "I look forward to seeing you tomorrow, Ms. Danvers," she smirked, "Now, about your article, I'm going to assume that this's about the Alien Amnesty Act?"

The reporter nodded, "Mhm!"

"And who better to interview than the sister of Earth's most despised anti-alien activist."

Kara startled at the blunt statement, "Wh-I...uh, well-"

"Kar, it's fine," the Luthor reassured, taking a gulp of her alcohol, "I know Snapper's rather interested in L-Corp's positions on everything, well, everyone's interested for that matter. Can't really blame them, especially when it's regarding aliens."

"I already know your position," the reporter replied, "It's more rational, more reasonable than most views."

"Is that so?" Lena inquired, smirking, twirling her index finger in the amber liquid, "I tend to be in the gray area, the middle of everything."

"But that's your opinion on aliens in general, right? What about the Alien Amnesty Act?"

"That's a bit more..." the Luthor paused, set down her bourbon on her desk, "Complicated...yes, I think that's the right word for it."
"Complicated how?"

"I do agree that aliens deserve basic rights, like humans, but again, they're not and that's where it gets complex; they possess abilities that far exceed a mere Earthling, I can see the potential danger in that, that we wouldn't be able to stop them if they decided to, I don't know, achieve world domination."

"There are heroes all over the world that'd be able to though."

"Yes, but the ratio? A handful of heroes against a potential uprising? One to thirty, give or take. Could be one to sixty if they decide to call upon their little friends from outer space," she made a gesture toward the ceiling, "Earth can't be the epicenter of alien disputes, humans may be resourceful, decently intelligent, but no match for the sheer power and cunning of some other alien species."

Kara nodded in understanding.

"I'm aware that rights are a particularly touchy subject nowadays," the C.E.O. continued, "For the L.G.B.T. community, for different races and religious groups, now it's aliens too."

Lena took a last swig of alcohol, her eyes pensive, still sober, "I do deserve the negative suspicions revolving around me, Kara, and you'll join that circle too."

The blonde gave her a cautious look, waiting for her to continue.

"I'm constructing something, it's still in development, something that's sort of a...compromise, so to speak."

The reporter found herself bristling at what was coming next, "What is it?"

Lena sighed, "Like I said, still in development, I'm aware of how many lives it could ruin and I want to decrease the collateral damage it could do."

"What is it?" the Kryptonian repeated, sterner.

"An alien detection device."

There was a loud snap and the reporter's pencil, broken into two pieces, fell to the tiled floor.

"What?"

Lena flinched slightly at the sound, exhaled, "A simple skin test to identify aliens."

"But..." for a moment Kara was speechless, "But doesn't that go against everything the President's trying to do? To welcome others? The Alien Amnesty Act will be in vain if you send that device out to the market!"

"Like I said, Kara," the Luthor snapped back, raising her voice as well, "I'm well aware of the damage it could do, which's why it's still in development, I'm not even sure if I'm going to put it out in the market yet. I know what I'm doing," she chuckled, it was bitter, humorless, "At least it's not genocide."

"But your device could be the cause of genocide, don't you get it? It's not fair-"

"You're just lucky you look human, Kara, that's different."

"Aliens shouldn't be hated just 'cause they're-"
Lena slammed her fist down on her desk, "It's not hate!"

She felt the wounds on her palms open and bleed out as her entire body trembled.

Before the blonde could shout back, the woman's chest ceased to puff and a broken whisper came out, her usual regal disposition tumbling down.

"It's fear..."

Kara stumbled back a step, wide-eyed, she could not tell if the booming in her ears was her own heart or Lena's.

The Luthor continued, voice wavering, "I'm not sure if the fear will ever go away for me, it'll always be in the back of my mind, when I'm talking to you, when I'm texting you, it doesn't matter...in the end, I'll always associate you with...with pain..."

"Lena...I..." the blonde's loving voice broke and she faltered.

"No one is immune to corruption...not even you. Not Kara. Not Supergirl. People who think otherwise are naive."

The Kryptonian hesitated, "What about you, Lena?"

The woman turned around, face-to-face with the glass panels that overlooked National City and Kara could see her hand drip slowly with blood, but something warned her that she should not reach out.

The woman's demeanor stiffened, "Of course not, but you'll know what to do. Corruption takes no prisoners, no risk of escaping. If the time comes, make it quick."

She's afraid of becoming her brother.

"You don't mean - no - please, Le-"

"I have an important meeting to attend to in ten minutes, Ms. Danvers."

The blonde winced, saw the woman's bleeding fist tighten.

"I'd appreciate it if you leave, so please, see yourself out."

Kara's shoulders dropped, along with her heart, clenching painfully inside her.

She forced the welling tears back, "Okay..."

Then walked away.

Kara laid on her couch, staring blankly with reddened and wet eyes up at the ceiling, so withdrawn and dissociated that she had not noticed her phone ringing for the last thirty or so minutes.

Eventually, belatedly, she rose from her position and owlishly moved her eyes to her phone on the coffee table.

The blonde reached for it, picked it up and slightly deflated to find that there were no messages from Lena.

Though her heart rate did stutter a bit seeing all the unanswered texts and missed calls from James,
Mon-El, Winn, and Alex.

She internally winced at the punny contact name that was in her notifications panel.

[Photo-James-ic: Kara]

[Photo-James-ic: Kara your sister is worried]

[Big Sis :) : KARA WHERE ARE YOU]

[Winnie: Pls don't let your Alex kill me...]

[Winnie: She won't leave me alone and keeps threatening my life!]

[Winnie: You know what fine I'm gonna be really petty about you in my will]

[Winnie: Oh did you change my contact name like I asked?]

[Mags: Kara please answer we're all worried and we've been trying to calm down Alex]

[Big Sis :) : BITCH YOU BETTER HAVE A GOOD EXCUSE OR I SWEAR I'LL START SWINGING]

[Big Sis :) : THAT'S IT I'M COMING OVER RIGHT NOW]

[Big Sis :) : AND IF YOU'RE NOT DEAD ALREADY I'LL FUCKING KILL YOU AND BRING YOU BACK FROM THE GRAVE SO LUCY CAN TOO]

[Moik: i shoulda kept my job at the mortgage]

[Moik: wait was it *mortuary?]

[Moik: did u change my name yet cuz i dont think thats how u spell mike]

[Mags: Good luck kid]

"Oops," Kara rasped out then her ears picked up jingling keys as they unlocked her door, clicking the mechanism open.

"Kara."

Her head was still hung, but she would tell it was Alex, with Maggie by her side of course.

She managed to make her voice sound less hoarse, "Uh, hi."

The agent froze in place, shaking he daze out of herself.

"'Hi'?" she repeated in disbelief, then angrier, "'Hi'?"

Kara glanced up and saw Alex stalking toward her, who froze when she caught sight of the red-rimmed teary eyes.

Her expression morphed from furious to caring within a split second.

Alex went to sit next to her little sister on the couch, "Kar? What's wrong?"
Maggie joined them, rubbing the distressed blonde's back in tandem with her girlfriend.

Kara could feel the water works acting up again and let the tears freely spill over her barely dried cheeks, sobs shortly beginning to wrack her body.

"I...it's Lena, sh-she...every time she looks at me th-there's always...f-fear and I hate it 'cause I can't...I can't do anything about it and...I can't take it anymore!"

Alex immediately knelt on the floor, hands rubbing soothing circles on her little sister's knees, "Hey, breathe, Kar. In and out. Yeah, that's it. In, one, two, three, out."

The they all took a moment for the blonde to calm down a bit before Alex broke the silence.

"What happened?"

Kara paused, waited for a few seconds to pass, pondered, "I...I don't want to talk about it..."

Her older sister nodded in understanding.

"Then we'll just stay right here with you, 'kay?" Maggie suggested, relieved when the blonde gave a fond nod.

"I'll bring out some ice cream!" Alex chimed in.

"And we can all watch Disney movies!" Maggie added, then quickly shot a 'shut the fuck up, your sister's upset' glare at Alex before her girlfriend could protest about the entertainment choices.

Kara's mood lightened and she was more cheery once they finished watching The Princess and the Frog, then chattering away once Mulan ended.

The blonde giddily sang to Frozen, much to Alex's dismay, who voted for Beauty and the Beast, the best out of the two choices.

"Hey," Maggie glanced at her watch, "It's a little past, don't you have a gala and a Luthor to attend to?"

Kara bolted upright, speedily changing into her super suit with a sapphire blue dress in tow, flying off through the window without a word.

Maggie glanced warily at her girlfriend, "You think those two will be okay?"

Alex scoffed, sipping her wine, "Are you really asking that question, detective?" her tone grew playfully mocking, "Of course they will be."

Maggie narrowed her eyes and tipped the agent's glass over, effectively drowning her girlfriend's nostrils in burgundy liquid and spilling the contents all over her shirt.

"Sawyer!"

"Lena!"

The Luthor rotated her head then back at the investor she was speaking to.

"I'm afraid we'll have to continue this another time, please excuse me."
The man in the suit gave a tight nod and Lena was off to greet her friend.

The C.E.O.’s mouth went dry at the sight, enchanted, frozen in place by Kara's stunningness.

The blonde's hair was quickly braided over her shoulder and the azure dress was satin and looked as silky as her hair to the touch, sequins decorating and interweaving in intricate designs here and there.

Lena snapped out of her gawking, but what she was not expecting was Kara to still be staring at her.

She looked at herself, thought that she would never compare to Kara's innocent goddess-like beauty.

But the blonde could beg to differ, roaming her eyes carefully over Lena's gorgeous figure, hugged by her slim black chinos, and her elegant white blouse neatly tucked in.

The Luthor's hair was lightly curled, long hair swept to the side to reveal a gracious amount of flesh on her neck and her protruding collarbone to complement her profound cheekbones, her supple skin fair and pale to contrast her rather dark outfit.

Then, of course, there were her deep forest green eyes and the signature dark blood red lipstick that she adorned, as opposed to Kara's natural pink lips and sea blue eyes.

The blond jumped when she heard a rough cough come from Lena, interrupting her reverie.

"I'm glad to see you here, Kara. I didn't think you'd come after..." she trailed off.

"Of course I'd come," the blonde smiled, "I'm sorry I was a little late, I got held back; Alex and Maggie and I were watching Disney movies."

The Luthor crossed her arms, an amused expression painting her features, "Why am I not surprised?"

"Hey! Mulan is great and we were going to watch Beauty and the Beast after, but I thought my time would be better spent here with you."

Lena was startled to see such affection in her friend's eyes, coinciding with her beaming smile, and she found it breathtaking.

The C.E.O. smiled back, "Beauty and the Beast was actually my favorite movie for a time."

Kara perked up, so engrossed in their conversation that she had not noticed they moved to an area with less party guests.

"Really?"

She nodded, "Yes, though I only watched it up to three times in my childhood, so most of it's fuzzy."

"Who's your favorite character?"

Kara rephrased her question at Lena's arched brow.

"I mean between Belle and Beast."

"Beast," the Luthor answered resolutely, softly, not knowing when she began to play with one of Kara's hands; she began tracing around it, almost caressing it carefully and cautiously so because fear was still frustratingly nagging in the very back of her mind.

"Why?" the blonde inquired, voice breathy.
Lena smiled, "He reminds me of me."

_Misunderstood. Hated. Demonized._

The Kryptonian frowned slightly, then her eyes lingered on her friend's fingers toying with her right hand.

Her frown deepened when her memories of hurting Lena flashed in front of her eyes, that it was the last thing that made her nerves snap and jump; she thought about Beast's anger, her own anger, how it drove them mad with wrath, how it made them monsters.

_Monster._

Kara shuddered and pulled her hand back, left the Luthor's hands in midair grasping at nothing.

"Me too," she whispered hoarsely.

And the gears seemed to click in Lena's brain.

She took just one step closer, cupped the blonde's cheeks with her hands.

"Kara."

The Luthor could feel the strong jaw under her fingertips tightening as she tried to connect their gazes.

"Kara, look at me."

A moment passed before the Kryptonian finally did, her sad blue eyes boring into sad verdant ones as she gently gripped the pale wrists, leaning into the touch.

Lena exhaled shakily, "What happened several months ago and what happened..." she cut herself off and gulped in preparation for the onslaught of potently traumatic memories, "What happened back then...it wasn't you...it doesn't make you a monster."

"But-"

"You're not a monster," she repeated with finality, clearly communicating that she was leaving no room for an argument, simultaneously refusing the unpleasant memories to break through her gate.

Kara nodded, felt a thumb smooth over to wipe a tear away.

Lena's eyes drifted down to her friend's quivering lips, wanting so badly to press her own against it as she splayed a hand on Kara's chest, where her heroic alter ego's symbol would be.

The blonde did not know what came over her as she mimicked the flickering action as well, the daze causing her mouth to part slightly, a minuscule gap, unaware of everything else around her.

They both leaned in just a centimeter before a ringtone made them both jump.

They flushed, Kara flustered more so than the usually stoic C.E.O., who reached into her pockets to retrieve her phone.

Lena inwardly groaned and answered it while Kara harshly shoved the event into the deepest darkest pit of her mind, thinking of it no more.
She waited patiently until the head of L-Corp was finished.

The Luthor sighed, "I apologize, I need to meet up with an investor in the event building, I'll be back in no more than thirty minutes. In the meantime," Lena gestured for several waiters and waitresses to them, carrying their fancy silver food platters, "You can enjoy as many potstickers as you'd like."

Kara let out a dramatic gasp and squealed at the sight of her favorite food.

Before Lena left, she looked over her shoulder, "You can always ask them to grab some other appetizers for you if you'd like."

The Luthor then hastily walked into one of L-Corps many buildings, riding the elevator up to the topmost floor.

She walked into the hallway, stopping just short of her destination when she noticed that the building was eerily quiet.

Lena had no time to run when she felt a blunt object hit the back of her head and blood quickly run down.

She crumpled limply to the floor, her ears ringing and vision fading to black around the edges.

She forced herself to stay conscious on adrenaline and bolted to her feet, exploiting her opponent's surprise and utilizing her momentum to swing around and catch his jaw with a left hook.

They both howled in pain; the attacker because his jaw fractured, and Lena because the knuckles in her left hand broke from the force.

The offender suddenly tackled her, taking advantage of her light weight and lifting her up in the air and ramming her body into the opposite wall, rendering her breathless.

The Luthor regained her bearings and kneeled him in the gut, then proceeded to kick his groin and his knee, dislocating it.

"You're being really difficult, Ms. Luthor."

Lena jolted at the voice, but the side of her head was quickly met with another blunt weapon and she gasped, felt blood gushing out of her nose, then there was another hit and she was out like a light.

When she came to, she felt something wrapped tightly around her ankles and that she was being hoisted upside down, her arms dangling below her.

The Luthor managed to swing herself up enough to notice that she was being propped over the edge of the building from the small crane, above the lovely cars honking and traffic lights and the hustle and bustle of National City's night.

Suddenly a pulsating headache ripped her apart and she groaned in immense pain and nausea, then she hissed when she attempted to flex her bruised and bleeding knuckles in her left hand.

"Looks like the princess is awake."

Lena's voice was groggy and slurred, "How long-"

"You haven't been out for even thirty minutes," the man nodded down at the ongoing party, "Looks like the blondie panicked and disappeared trying to look for you a while ago, and Supergirl should be here soon."
The Luthor's eyes narrowed hatefully, "If you touch either of them-

"Please, my men and I couldn't care less about your friend, but Supergirl on the other hand..." he paused, "She's in for quite a surprise. The name's Chet by the way. I'm sure you remember me from your brother's projects."

"Mr. Miner," she stated.

"Correct, pleasure to be at your disservice."

He pulled out a small, lightweight rifle with a sickly green glow.

Lena's eyes widened.

"Kryptonite. Cadmus helped us," the man stated nonchalantly, "You probably already knew that though, but the ones my men got their hands on aren't very concentrated. Manmade. But at least it'll do the job, I hope, plus we have the upper hand with the ambush."

Distant screams interrupted their one-sided conversation and the assailant looked down over to the gala.

"Looks like the party's started."

"You fucker-"

Lena choked out a guttural cry when the butt of her captor's rifle shoved itself into her gut.

"What a nasty woman."

"Let her go."

Their attention turned to Supergirl, who was panting harshly, her posture slumped.

The Luthor growled, upset with the shallowly bleeding cuts that decorated her friend's body, "Get out of here! It's a trap!"

Her plea went ignored.

Chet chuckled, "Supergirl is bleeding," then he frowned, "Hmmm, looks like the artificial Kryptonite barely cut your skin, but it looks like it's managed to weaken you."

"Not enough for you to get out of here alive," the hero snarled.

"Oh, Supergirl! So threatening!" he laughed.

Kara was unsettled and took an unsteady step forward when he neared Lena, his sharp knife threatening to cut the rope holding her loose.

"I wasn't planning on getting out of here alive in the first place," Chet snickered, "By the way, did you manage to evacuate everybody?"

"What-"

The building began to crumble, the leftover guests screaming as they struggled to escape.

The man chuckled, "I take that as a no."
Then the rope snapped off and Lena plummeted toward the earth.

Kara flew through the falling debris and caught the C.E.O. in her arms, but the Kryptonite had weakened her, causing her flight to wobble to the point she dropped Lena ten feet to the ground and crash landed into the opposite structure.

The Luthor shook her head and grunted, finding that she was unable to rise, her entire body sore and aching with pain.

A flaming sting interrupted her thoughts, its area of affect located on her right thigh, taking up a significant amount of surface area.

She deduced that it was due to the fall, how she skidded across the parched and rough ground.

"Lena! Get away! Now!"

The raven-haired woman turned towards the sound of Kara's voice, startled by the sheer panic that was evident in her expression while she attempted to fight off the last of the gang.

Lena turned around, a horrified look crossing her face as she saw a building toppling towards her.

Her battered and soot covered body failed at her feeble attempts to get away.

*I'm not going to make it.*

The woman resigned, took a deep breath and closed her eyes, accepting the death that was coming for her.

"Lena! No!"

Kara's cry was swallowed by the deafening crash of debris and rubble, then a wave of ashy dust and fiery smoke enveloped her vision.

Chapter End Notes

**Constructive criticism appreciated.**
While Lena gradually recovers from the attack on her gala fundraiser, Kara struggles with guilt and shame. Maggie notices first, the subconscious self-destructive behavior, then Lena does, and then Alex.

**WARNING: VIOLENCE.**

Find me on Tumblr at spoopercorp and on FF as Local-Asshole.

Stigma

Bodies.

There were quite a few of them, most squashed into bloodied pancakes and mixed in the confusing disarray of debris and rubble in the aftermath of the bombing.

It was awfully appalling and the distant echoes of crumbling rocks made Lena stir.

The first thing she heard was a cacophony of sounds...of grinding metal, of leftover screams, of sirens. It was much too loud and she found herself wanting to fall asleep again.

*I definitely have a concussion.*

The first thing she saw when she blinked and cracked her eyes open was not the navy blue night sky lit by the lovely moonlight...it was nearly pitch black and Lena could only assume that she was buried within a pile of what were once stable concrete walls.

The first thing she smelled was blood, its unpleasant iron tinge the first thing she tasted as well.

The first thing she touched was the fine, grounded powder of rock and brick underneath the pads of her fingertips.

Then there was a sharp intake of breath.

What followed was an unbearable pain within her torso and she found herself breathless from it, unable to manage even a whimper or whine as she attempted to sip desperately, pathetically for air.

Lena's breath was shaky as she tested her movement, hacking the dust and smoke from the flames...
out of her fragile lungs.

Her left arm was intact, but her knuckles protested, the broken bones gritting against each other, her skin, and her muscles.

The Luthor took a deep breath.

*Could be worse.*

Then she checked her right arm.

*All good.*

*Thank God, I don't even know how I was going to write all the paperwork down for this damage if my right arm didn't cooperate.*

She rotated her neck.

*Just a bit of an ache.*

She tested out her torso, found that there would be plenty of nasty bruises to nurse in the shortcoming future along with her beaten back, but it was something she could handle perfectly fine.

Then her left leg.

*Extremely sore...*

Lastly, her right leg.

"*Fuck!*"

Lena released an almost inhuman keen at the phenomenal amount of pain from the right side of her hip and down, the cry echoing in the makeshift cave she was in.

She sweated and heaved, the panting sounds bouncing off the jagged cavernous walls.

The Luthor deduced that from the scarily unstable sounds the structure was making that it would not last much longer and neither would she if it caved in.

Lena struggled for a few seconds to finally sit up from her prone position, but found it immensely more challenging to try and move the heavy weight off of her right leg.

"*Oh for fuck's sake,*" she cursed under her breath, straining her forearms to lift and push the object just enough so she could slide out, "*C'mon...*"

Lena's arms shook weakly, but she refused to give up, and the metal beams screeched and groaned and whined at the feeble movement.

*Up, up, up...*

Then the concrete crumbled and something snapped, and the slab she was trying to move flattened down even farther, its weight now completely impossible for a human to move.

Lena screamed, "*Shit!*"

Her voice was hoarse and croaky when she felt something impale her leg.
Her head swam, vision beginning to fade with little black splotches covering her line of sight.

She refused to succumb and craned her neck and noticed white bone protruding from her thigh.

*Compound fracture in my femur. Just my luck.*

The Luthor futilely banged and slammed her fist on the weight, yelling in frustration, "*Fuck! C'mon!*"

She felt tears stinging her eyes as she dropped back to lay down, clutching her leg to stem a minuscule part of the bleeding, opting to pathetically call out.

But her voice was strained, hoarse and weak, "Help! Please!"

She paused.

"I can't move! My leg's broken! I'm pinned and bleeding out!"

Another pause.

"*Please...*"

"Lena?"

A light of the moon came from above in the Luthor's peripheral vision, but she recognized the voice, though it sounded laced with immense worry, like the owner had been bawling their eyes out.

The raven-haired woman chuckled, out of place for the situation she was in, "What the hell took you so long? Did you not hear me the last few times?"

Supergirl awkwardly flew down next to her friend, staggered her landing, smiling with relief, "Shut up you dummy."

Then she glanced at the weight pinning the woman down.

"Lena, all my powers and abilities are pretty weak from the kryptonite, but I think I can move this thing over. Give me a few minutes."

The C.E.O. was only able to return a groggy nod as a response, then gritted her teeth as she felt the slab's weight lift, her blood gushing out even more alarmingly.

Kara let out an elongated grunt and managed to flip the rock over.

Suddenly, a section of the echoing space caved in, the hero quick to cover Lena with her own body, the heavy weight of the building pressed onto her shoulders.

The Luthor released a high pitched whine of pain when she felt Kara slightly pressing onto her battered leg as she was struggling to maintain the slab on her shoulders.

Lena could see the hero shaking violently under the weight, the kryptonite still weakened her long after exposure.

Blood began to run down the girl of steel's face, her neck, her shoulders, as time went on.

"Kara, you need to get out of here, forget me."
The Kryptonian's eyes widened, "Forget you? That's the stupidest idea I've ever heard. Ever. And you're supposed to be a genius C.E.O."

"Worse than that time you decided to eat probably a thousand bowls of ice cream? I had a brain freeze just watching you."

Kara rolled her eyes and ignored her, tapped into her hidden inner strength and channeled it through her arms, and with a scream, she lifted and tossed the slab over.

"Or you could do that," Lena commented nonchalantly, "That works too."

Kara's eyes momentarily widened at her friend's mangled leg before she averted her gaze and swallowed thickly.

"I don't think I want to look now," Lena breathed out, somewhat amused, feeling the blood loss slowing her mind, "My guests, my employees, did you...did you save them?"

The blonde looked away in shame, "Most of them..."

The Luthor frowned, nodded in understanding, her eyes unfocused and threatening to droop closed, "You can't save everyone."

Kara nodded back, "I know..." she held Lena's cold hand, let the heat of her palms thaw the icy fingers within her own, "But I can save you. Now, let's get out of here."

"The majority of her injuries are bruises; ribs, back, head... However," the doctor sighed, glancing at her sleeping patient, "There are more concerning ones such as the concussion and broken knuckles she sustained. Then there's her leg, a compound fracture with her femur and part of her skin's torn from the fall."

Kara winced and shook her head, forcing the memory of losing her balance mid-flight and dropping her friend several feet to the ground. Instead, she shuffled her feet, watching as the dried blood crusted on her hands flaked off slowly.

Lena's blood.

The hero could feel it under her nails.

Kara shivered and took a deep breath.

"She'll be fine, Supergirl," the doctor informed, softer, "With our accelerative technology she should be healed in no time, since it's not safe for her to remain at a public hospital. The D.E.O. has top of the line equipment and very qualified people working in the medical bay if I do say so myself."

The blonde shivered, rested her head onto her palms, not reassured in the slightest bit, "There are agents here. Agents that aren't very fond of the Luthor family. Agents that could-"

"Not on my watch," the doctor frowned, "She's my patient, and I'm sure Agent Danvers won't want any harm to come to her either."

A comforted smile played on the edge of Kara's lips, "Thanks, Dr. Hamilton."

The woman nodded, "Of course, Kara," then walked off to attend to the rest of the injured.

Another smile tugged at the corner of the blonde's lips again.
"Does everyone here know your other identity?" came a raspy voice, "So much for the secret part of it. Not that it's difficult to figure out with those ridiculous glasses."

Kara chuckled, "Hey, nobody else knows, I'd say they're ridiculous in its effectiveness."

She seated herself closer to the raven-haired woman, "And no. Hamilton is my personal doctor here at the D.E.O., so she has all of my files; helps make her job easier, you know?"

The Kryptonian sighed after a moment of silence, "How are you f-"

"I'm fi-" she began to interrupt.

But Kara cut her off with a stern look, "If you're going to say what I think you're going to say then don't bother finishing that sentence."

The Luthor pressed her lips shut, then opened them again, her voice croaky, "Awful. I feel awful. What about you?"

Lena's eyes roamed over the Kryptonian's soot covered body, taking in the shallow cuts that decorated the front. Though her backside was probably worse, but the bleeding probably stopped at this point thankfully.

The blonde smiled tenderly, delicately held Lena's unbroken hand, traced her thumb in circles over the porcelain skin, "Better now that I know you'll be okay."

"What the hell was that, Kara?" Alex shouted, tailing her little sister into her apartment with Maggie, "You were reckless! You almost got yourself killed along with a few civilians!"

"Well I didn't, so there! Now leave!" the blonde retorted, moving to close the door.

The aperture refused to shut when Maggie shoved a boot between the opening and gave the hero a reprimanding look.

Kara cracked under the pressure and threw her arms in the air, "Fine! Whatever!"

The detective motioned for Alex to leave.

"What?"

"You're both angry at each other, I don't think it's a good idea for you two to be in the same room right now."

"We're sisters, we'll talk this through like we always do," the agent argued.

"Just let me handle this one."

Alex folded her arms and tapped her fingers, "Alright, but if she breaks another door you're paying for it this time.

"'Kay, babe," Maggie pecked her girlfriend on the cheek and left quietly.

The detective creaked the entrance open and found Kara, in her puppy jammies, plopped face first onto her couch, arm dangling from the end.

She patted the blonde's back and received a shrug and muffled protest in return.
"Just go."

The brunette sighed, patted her again, "C'mon, get up and move over so I can sit."

Kara reluctantly did so, pouting the entire journey.

"Hey, turn that frown upside down, kiddo. What's wrong?"

The blonde took a small pillow from the corner of her couch and set it on her lap, squished and flipped the object intermittently.

"I'll wait as long as you need me to wait," Maggie grinned, leaning back against the cushions, hands behind her head as she moved into a more comfortable position.

"There's nothing wrong."

"Uh huh. Right," the brunette smirked, "I'm a detective, Kar. You know what that means?"

"That you detect, I got it," the blonde muttered back.

Maggie sighed, "That catchphrase never gets old."

The Kryptonian rolled her eyes.

"Speaking of," she continued, "That's not the only reason why I think something's wrong. I know you Kara, we've known each other for, like, ten years since you were in high school. Alex knows something's wrong. It's pretty obvious when it is."

"Obvious how?" the blonde murmured, plucking the corners of the pillow on her thighs.

"Well, for one, you were really reckless today," Maggie explained, "You've slowly gotten more...brash...and careless. We all know you're pretty daring, but it's been different recently, ever since the gala."

Kara stiffened, muscles tensed as the detective continued.

"Alex is pretty unsure, but she thinks it's just stress from the gala," she paused, "From Lena."

The blonde's eyes widened, "I-"

Maggie held a finger up, silencing Kara, "Let me finish."

She sighed, "I think it runs a bit deeper than that," then her voice dropped, "Alex and I, we both know what a stressed Kara Danvers does, and this isn't it; it's close, but no. Your big sister probably doesn't want it to be anything other than stress 'cause she hasn't dealt with anything like this before."

"Like what?" the blonde whispered.

Maggie sighed again, ran her fingers through her hair, "What you've been exhibiting recently...hopefully I'm wrong, but it's...it's almost self-destructive and it's scaring me and Alex to death."

Kara's lips pursed into a frown, silently reviewing everything she had done and thought lately.

The detective smiled, cautious, but genuine, "Something's been bothering you, for a long time, and it's eating you from the inside out. Maybe I'm wrong, but-"
"You're not."

Maggie's eyes bulged in shock, "What?"

"You're not wrong," Kara admitted, nodding her head slowly and smoothing her palm over the pillow.

"So what is it?"

She hesitated, "It's Lena."

The detective nodded in understanding, recalling the fact that Kara had been avoiding her as of late, even after she was released almost a month ago.

Maggie noted that she would have to check up on her later.

"I could've...I could've prevented her from getting hurt. If I'd only," her voice broke and she was on the verge of tears, "If I'd only held onto her tighter she wouldn't have fallen and-"

"You were weakened, none of it's your fault-"

"But it is!" Kara shouted, flipping the pillow over and pacing around her apartment in tears, "I dropped her, Mags! She could've died because of me! She actually almost died because of me! And..." she swallowed a lump in her throat, "Sh-she...she jumped because of me!"

Maggie's eyes widened as she realized the problem had accumulated from Lena's suicide attempt back in high school.

Only now had it manifested itself.

Her expression softened when Kara's words faltered as she choked back a sob, refusing to cry out her sadness. Instead, she slid down against the wall opposite from the brunette and pulled her knees against her chest as she shook.

Maggie sat down next to her, let her head loll onto her shoulder as the sobs began to wrack her body.

And for the first time ever, she was at a loss for words and worried that once Alex figured things out that she would not know what to say either.

She held out hope for Lena, that the brilliant C.E.O. would ease the source of Kara's suffering...eventually.

The Luthor huffed when she checked her phone's notifications panel again, or lack of notifications, at least from the person she wanted to talk to.

Lena was understanding, especially when it came to space, especially if her favorite blonde said that she needed it.

But not knowing why frustrated her immensely.

And it had been around a month of silence.

Granted, at first, she thought it was due to the rise in crime within National City, but they were petty, they were not alien threats or the ever elusive Cadmus organization.
It was past midnight and Lena was still at work, as usual, no perky text with a million emojis to tell her to try and go leave early and get a good night's rest.

It was not like Kara would even contact her, not at this time.

The Luthor was proven wrong when her phone rang, startling her from her thoughts as she eagerly picked up, "Kara?"

Another feminine voice answered instead, "Actually, no."

Lena bristled, "Who the hell are you and why are you on my friend's phone?"

"Calm down, your friend's passed out at my place. Just need you to pick her up and your contact page was open, so-"

"Your place?" the Luthor repeated, feeling jealousy leaking out of the pores of her skin.

"Oh, no, it's not like that," the woman on the phone chuckled, "I'm Megan, I run a bar and Kara's sort of passed out."

"Text me the address. I'll be there soon," Lena said, then hung up, her curiosity as to how Kara could actually get drunk shoved down for later.

M'gann was shocked when the woman arrived not even twenty minutes after their call, slightly limping her way over, her leg still not yet fully healed.

She nudged the sleeping blonde on her bar, "Hey, Kara, your friend Lena's here to take you home."

The Kryptonian gasped, "Shhh! I'm avoiding her!" she darted her head side to side, which was a mistake and increased her headache, "I need to hide! You can't let her find me!"

She slunk below the bar and used the stool to hide her body, whispering, "I was never here..."

Lena crossed her arms and tapped her foot impatiently, giving M'gann a questioning look, who shrugged.

"Couldn't let my new worker take her home," she pointed at Mon-El passed out on the other side of the bar as well.

The raven-haired woman shook her head and sighed, locking her gaze at Kara, who snapped her head frantically side to side so fast she did not register the very woman she was avoiding to be right in front of her.

Lena cleared her throat, "Ahem."

Kara froze and squeaked, squinting her eyes so that her triple vision focused, or ebbed into doubles, "Lena!"

"Correct."

The blonde grumbled and pounded the bar table above, "I told you that I was never here, M'gann!'"

"Maybe you'll actually be stealthy when you're not drunk!" the bartender shouted from the other end.

Kara gasped, offended, "I can totally be stealthy!"
She bolted upright, sending a chunk of the bar table flying.

"Oops," she hiccuped.

The blonde waddled over to where the object landed and attempted to piece it back to where it belonged. Eventually, she got frustrated and jammed it in, causing the area to crumble and develop cracks.

But it was lodged awkwardly in there and that was all Kara needed, grinning proudly, "I fixed it!"

M'gann's mouth was agape as Lena dragged the blonde out.

"Don't worry!" the Luthor shouted, eager to leave the alien bar, "I'll pay for it!"

The C.E.O. immediately regretted not asking for help, struggling to get a drunk and toppling Kryptonian into her vehicle.

"Stay still you idiot!" she groaned.

Kara giggled, "Don't call me an idiot you dummy!"

Lena rolled her eyes, "Just get in the goddamn car and I'll drive you home."

The blonde stiffened, "Wait."

"What is it?" the Luthor asked, suddenly worried.

Until her friend vomited alcohol all over her blouse.

"Seriously, Kara?"

The drunk giggled again, "I guess that's to get back at you for last time."

The blonde frowned then, recalling when she found a crying Lena drunk and hurting out in the woods near her mansion.

"I...I'll just walk home."

Lena noticed the sudden change in mood and chased after her friend, "Wait, Kar-"

She stumbled back when the Kryptonian spun around, leaving her arms relaxed as they casually swung with the momentum and smashed the corner of a building.

The Luthor exhaled in relief, thankful that the blonde was drunk and that she herself was mentally intact, though she grimaced when her healing leg twisted into an uncomfortable position when she attempted to evade earlier.

"Just please get in the car."

Kara pondered for a second, then grinned, "Well, since you asked so nicely."

Lena groaned, endeared and annoyed by the cute blonde simultaneously, though more endeared.

Not that she would let that show; it would destroy her regal and professional reputation, even if Kara would not remember the next day.

"Stop being so childish and get in the car."
The Kryptonian crawled into the passenger seat while Lena sat herself behind the wheel, slowly driving out of the parking lot.

The Luthor yelped when she was jerked over, her entire right arm suddenly engulfed in warmth.

"What are you doing now?" she asked, a hint of a whine in her tone.

"Cuddling," Kara answered nonchalantly.

The Luthor rolled her eyes, "You can cuddle all you want when I get you back to your apartment."

The blonde frowned and pouted, "But you'll just leave, and pillows aren't the same."

"I'm not a...cuddler," Lena ground out, cringing at the word and the idea of intimacy.

"Oh, but you will be, everyone loves to cuddle with me!"

The Luthor did not bother arguing nor to pull her hand away, not that she could with the Kryptonian's vice grip, but it was more that she did not want to upset her friend.

The pair staggered up the stairs and stood outside of Kara's apartment.

The blonde fished out her keys, nearly losing balance several times before she slide the patterned metal into the keyhole.

Only it missed, and the Kryptonian huffed, missing again.

She growled in frustration and began to jam the key with great inaccuracy, tearing holes into her door and splintering the wood.

She tilted her head angrily, "The doorknob keeps moving!"

"Kara, just let me do it," Lena whispered harshly, "Before you wake the entire floor up with this ruckus and they see how wrecked your entrance is."

The Luthor swiped the key from the Kryptonian's hands and unlocked the aperture with ease, swinging it wide open.

They stumbled into the dark apartment, into Kara's room as Lena gently laid her onto the bed, pulling the covers over her body.

"I'll be back to check in on you tomorrow."

"No! Stay!"

Lena flinched at what sounded like a commanding protest.

Kara stood up hastily and tackled the Luthor into a bear hug, toppling them over onto the floor.

"Woah!" the C.E.O. squeaked in surprise, then she growled, "Kara-

Her sentence faltered when her eyes connected to a pair of infinitely blue ones, pleading and shining even in the dark of the room.

"Fine," she mumbled, relenting.

Kara sighed in content and beamed, "It's pretty comfortable here."
She buried herself in the crook of Lena's neck, wrapped an arm over her shoulder, and placed her leg over her hips, entrapping the Luthor into a very intimate position.

She clung onto her like her life depended on it, grumbling whenever Lena attempted to wiggle and shimmy out of the hold.

Eventually, she gave up and settled into the touch, relaxing as she hesitantly wrapped an arm around Kara, a blush creeping up her neck and into her cheeks as their legs began to tangle more and more.

Lena had a small smile plastered onto her face when she looked down at a now softly snoring blonde sprawled on top of her, hair messed, lips in a lopsided grin, and glasses askew atop her nose.

Her heart throbbed painfully with the love and adoration she held for Kara, and she thought that the aching and soreness come morning from spending the night on the floor would be worth it.

For the first time since Lena could remember, Kara's close proximity did not instill fear in the back of her mind as she drifted off to sleep.

The blonde yawned, stirred when she felt a body in her arms move.

She blinked her eyes open owlishly, squinting as her pupils adjusted to the light that poured through her window blinds.

Kara tensed when she met a pair of familiar emerald eyes.

"Sorry, I didn't mean to wake you," Lena whispered, "I just...I have work soon and I haven't changed out of my vomit clothes and-"

Kara squawked, her back suddenly pressed against the wall on the other side of the room as the memories of the night before came rushing back to her.

"Oh, Rao! I-I'm so, so, so sorry about yesterday..."

But Lena was not even listening to the rambling, sitting up and stretching her aching and sore muscles out before she stood on shaky legs.

"It's fine, I was happy to help," she paused, "Do you remember what you said when I first came to pick you up?"

Kara braced for the onslaught, the flood of memories to attack her again, but it did not.

"Oh no, what'd I say?"

Lena's brows furrowed as her features saddened, and Kara could not help but gawk, and think how beautiful she was framed by the sunlight, her sharp and angular features somewhat dulled; dulled into something more approachable and less intimidating and lonely.

Lena smiled softly, though it was vacant of joy and happiness, "I was wondering if something was wrong. You wouldn't talk to me, didn't for almost a month before this. You said..." she sighed, "You said you were trying to avoid me the entire time."

Kara's jaw dropped, her mouth agape, then she clenched it shut and rubbed her temples, "I'm so sorry, Lena, I swear I didn't-"

"That you didn't mean to say it?" she finished, her voice melancholic and sardonic at the same time.
"I was hoping all of - just, you know, that they'd go away..." Kara mumbled incoherently with awkward hand gestures.

Lena's cynical mask fell, "Let's talk about this when I don't smell like vomit."

The blonde nodded furiously, "Of course, I have some spare formal clothes; I'll leave them out for you to clean up. Sorry about that..."

She rubbed the nape of her neck sheepishly as Lena walked into the bathroom.

Kara nervously drummed her fingers on the dining table.

A minute of silence. Or two. Or three. She lost count.

She gulped loudly, unable to form into what she considered were the right words.

Lena sighed, breaking the silence first, "I watched your most recent battle with...with Parasite I think they called it."

Kara's rhythmic tapping halted, "Uhhh..."

The C.E.O. frowned, "Did you realize how reckless you were being? With spontaneously retrieving a very radioactive element? In the palm of your hands?"

The blonde returned the expression, "I...no...not at the time..."

Lena's voice rose in volume, her fingers scrunched into her soggy showered hair, "What, you were just going to wing it and pray that your plan wouldn't incinerate you or the area around your battle within a three mile radius?"

Lena sighed again, shoulders relaxing a bit more, "It could've hurt you, you could've died. I thought," she cleared her throat, arming her voice with steel again, "I thought you were stressed, with all that happened at the gala."

Kara nodded.

"I'm sure that was a pretty good chunk of the reason why you were acting so...odd lately."

"Odd?" the blonde repeated.

Lena nodded solemnly, "Destructive. To yourself. To others. Like you don't take into consideration the consequences of your actions, which is so unlike you. I don't know how to explain it, but you've been more reckless, that's it."

Kara frowned, avoided Lena's gaze and swallowed the lump in her throat, "Maggie...she said the same thing too."

"And it's because of me?"

The blonde flinched at the amount of self-deprecation and hatred laced in Lena's sentence.

Kara released a sound that was between a groan and a sigh, burying her face into the palms of her hands.

"I don't - I can't talk about it with you."
Kara winced at the hurt that flashed across Lena's eyes and quickly went to try and amend the situation, "At least not right now..."

The Luthor blanched, her ghostly alabaster skin suddenly paler, and quickly gathered her things.

Kara's eyes saddened.

*Please, don't go...*

"I'm sorry..." she whispered instead.

Lena paused, her hand on the knob, but she refused to look back and opened the door.

She was met with a familiar pair of brown eyes, widened slightly at her unexpected appearance.

"Lena?"

Alex was somewhat startled by the wetness that was developing in the usually professional, enigmatic C.E.O.'s green eyes, almost as wet as her dripping raven locks.

Lena blinked, let a single tear fall, but refused to sniffle in front of anyone.

Alex grew uncomfortable with the encounter and chuckled nervously, "Why're you h-"

The Luthor cut the agent off when she slid past her, heels clicking down the hallway as she made her escape.

Alex glanced inside to where her little sister was watching with sad eyes, then back to where Lena left, then back again.

The agent pointed at the direction where Kara's visitor had made her way out, "Want to explain that?"

And suddenly the blonde's tears poured out, fluid and steady as she sobbed quietly, confessing in broken and chopped up sentences.

"I'm scared. I...have nightmares about her, about when she jumped. Not as much as I used to, but whenever I do they're just so intense that...I always have make sure she's okay - I need to make sure she's okay - fly to her house, you know? Be there to catch her, be there for that one time I wasn't. And I'm afraid that no matter what I do she'll still think of me as a monster, the one that made her jump."

Kara wiped away the red and the tears under her glasses, but her despair only replaced them with twice the amount before.

"It's become more of a habit since the gala. I almost didn't save her. I dropped her. She almost died again because of me. I just. I can't rest or sleep at night knowing that Lena can take her own life whenever she wants to...and then I feel awful for selfishly invading her privacy and I just..."

Kara was so distraught that she did not even notice her older sister's arms wrapped tightly around her.

And Alex was terrified too, that she couldn't find any words to soothe Kara's strife.

Chapter End Notes
Constructive criticism appreciated.
Chapter Summary

*Lillian successfully captures Supergirl, forcing information from the Kryptonian. Then Alex goes missing as well and Lena's and Maggie's worries skyrocket.*

**TRIGGER WARNING: TORTURE, VIOLENCE.**

Chapter Notes

*Find me on Tumblr at spoopercorp and on FF as Local-Asshole.*

See the end of the chapter for more notes

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**Reaper**

"Alex."

The auburn-haired woman clicked on her earpiece, "J'onn?"

"There's suspicious activity on the outskirts of National City, we have reason to believe it's Cadmus since we've been trying to pinpoint their locations."

"I'm assuming you want me to check it out?"

"Supergirl isn't exactly in the most optimal mental condition, and she's dealing with a couple of rogue alien thugs at the moment; she's a wild card right now and I can't risk her getting injured or causing collateral damage. I'm also sending two other agents with you."

Alex huffed, slightly frustrated.

"Don't worry, you should be back in time for your date with Detective Sawyer."

Alex's eyes bulged, "How the hell do you know about that?"

Lena clacked her manicured fingers on her desk anxiously, the tapping descending into something less than rhythmic and more erratic to complement the frantic beating of her heart.

Her eyes darted at her luxurious silver watch, the analog notified her that it was quite a time past one.

Lunch with Kara started over thirty minutes ago.

She should have showed up by now, and despite her Supergirl duties, she always made sure she was prompt, as long as the plans were not too last minute.
But her tardiness at the moment suggested otherwise and Lena knew something was wrong the moment Kara's phone went straight to voicemail, meaning it was intentionally turned off or ran out of battery.

But Lena also knew it was likely the former; Kara would never purposefully turn off her cellular device because she was Supergirl and she was diligent in keeping her phone with her at all times in case of emergencies.

It had only been a week since the little standoff after the blonde's adorable drunken stupor, though the morning after was not as enjoyable.

Lena checked her own device again, going back over their texts.

[Kara Danvers: Hey, Lena?]

[Kara Danvers: Can we talk?]

[Kara Danvers: Please?]

[Kara Danvers: I'm sorry]

[Me: Lunch. Tomorrow. 1:00.]

[Kara Danvers: Thank you, I'll try and explain everything tomorrow]

The Luthor called into CatCo to make sure she was okay and James had told her that the bubbly blonde had left in a hurry to get to L-Corp after she had turned in her article to Snapper.

Once forty minutes passed, she called Alex nervously and no answer was provided. She did not know if it relieved her or worried her, it could have meant that the D.E.O. was dealing with a crucial threat to National City elsewhere, perhaps on par with the girl of steel herself.

The Luthor sighed, resorting to her last option, getting in contact with Winn so he could track the super down.

Kara's fist slammed into her metal cage, but found out the hard way that it was simply impenetrable as she cradled her hand to her chest, hairline fractures webbing across her bones, irritating the reddened skin even further.

She sat on the concrete ground, sinking her back against the cold cage.

"Nth metal, I'm sure you're familiar, Supergirl, with the Thanagarians."

The blonde whipped her head up, narrowed her eyes and nearly spat the name out, "Lillian Luthor."

A sudden flood of memories attacked her, of her and Lena in high school, and it nearly made her gasp at the unfathomable emotional pain; her mind somewhat digressed when she wondered if Lena's body was as scarred now as she had seen on the past.

She glanced down at her apparel, currently adorned in a medical gown.

"Kara Danvers."

The blonde's eyes widened in shock and she took a deep breath, sighing shakily, "I-I don't know
"Pity," Lillian chuckled, "I make it my duty to know who my children are involved with, and I'm never wrong. Should we bring Lena here to confirm then?"

The blonde snapped, unconsciously utilizing her super speed to get as close as possible to her enemy. She ignored the pain as her hand gripped the cage until her knuckles were white and the other clutched the collar of Lillian's lab coat, "I swear, if you hurt her-"

"Then what? You'll prove to her and everyone else in this world that you're a monster?" Lillian chortled, shoving the Kryptonian's hand away.

Kara shut her mouth, her clamped teeth grinding against one another as she forced herself to calm down.

"That's what I thought."

Kara growled, "When I turn you in, I'll make sure your demon of a son is thrown in the deepest, darkest corner of Arkham Asylum."

Lillian's expression was filled with cold fury, and before the blonde could smirk at the reaction she induced, the doctor shoved a knife into her gut.

Kara released yelp when the dagger was cruelly twisted inside her before it was torturously pulled out.

The hero collapsed onto the ground, whimpering as she attempted to stem the blood flow in her abdomen.

"Know your place, alien," Lillian growled, wiping the blood from her kryptonite weapon with a clean white cloth, becoming stained with crimson, "I think you need a lesson to be learned."

She nodded her head at the two agents standing at the only exit, and entrance, gesturing for them to take the prisoner.

One of them increased the room's kryptonite levels and the other opened the cage, stepping over the prone body before savagely kicking her ribs and dragging her out by the arms.

Kara choked back a scream as she was led to an empty room, strapped onto a metal panel against the wall.

She gritted her teeth and flinched at the sudden bright light shining down upon her.

"My, this is convenient as well," Lillian chuckled, pulling on her latex gloves and sliding a tray of kryptonite-infused weapons next to her, "I get to teach you a lesson for insulting my Lex and maybe acquire information out of you on this despicable organization you work with."

"You're a sick sadist, gaining pleasure from tormenting another-

"Human?" Lillian finished, "Is that what you were going to say, alien?"

"You disregard all lives in the way of your goals. You're not human-"

Her sentence was interrupted with a scream when the blade dragged against her skin, several centimeters above her hipbone.
"Sacrifices are necessary for a decisive victory. It's like chess; protect the king, no one else matters, more can always be recruited. That's Lena's downfall as a Luthor, she knows how to make sacrifices with the pawns, but all the other pieces she just values too much."

Then the blade lifted before lowering into the Kryptonian's once invulnerable skin again, as if to create a shape, to spell something out.

Though Kara could not have cared less, the pain was too distracting.

"I'd say you're the worst of the players," the woman continued, "You're like my daughter, but you value all lives, even the pawns."

The knife halted and Lillian tugged against the opposition, making a messy, jagged rip in the image she was conjuring.

The doctor was finally finished, moving the long blade over Kara's chest, "You know, Supergirl, I could end it all right now, just plunge this into your chest, but I won't give you that luxury," then she stabbed through her pinned hand, smiling at the scream elicited from the Kryptonian's throat, "You deserve to suffer."

Then she impaled her shoulder, lifted the blade slightly, dragging it over to her collarbone and grinding over it.

"Now, I'll be a bit nice since my daughter's so fond of you."

"She must be so proud to have a loving mother like you," the hero retorted.

Lillian cascaded across Kara's abdomen with her blade, "That's your punishment for that smart mouth of yours. But I could say the same for you, can't I?" she hummed smugly, "Remember that little incident you had with Lena in high school?"

Kara's eyes flared in anger, "That wasn't me. It was your son, it's his fault, he synthesized it. His experiment made me a monster."

"You were already one to begin with," Lillian chuckled, "Now, as I was saying, I'll take this slow; I'll ask you a few questions regarding this organization you work with, you'll answer, and maybe, just maybe, I'll let you have a fast, painless death."

"Merciful," the Kryptonian replied sarcastically, "I'm sure I can take your word for it."

The woman flipped the dagger over, so that the blade faced downwards, and she plunged it into her victim's thigh, twisting and turning it, watching as the alien's blood bubbled up to the surface and gushed down her fair skin.

"Where's the location of the organization you're working for?"

"I don't know what the hell you're talking about, I work alone."

"Lies."

Kara clenched her mouth shut when she felt the blade digging into her skin again, refusing to plead her to stop; that was exactly what Lillian wanted, to have an unwelcome alien visitor beg, show weakness regardless of how much more powerful she was compared to a mere human.

By now Kara was crying out and sweating profusely from the immense amount of pain that was
being inflicted upon her, to the point she was unable to focus on the questions she was being asked.

"I think you'll need a bit more incentive," Lillian grinned, she turned around, nodded at a figure in the shadows.

Kara gasped, "Alex?"

Lillian grinned, "My men scavenged some leftovers from those Kryptonians' Myriad plans, managed to scrounge enough parts for us to develop something similar, though shorter range and not as powerful. But of course, with more studies we'll eventually perfect it."

Lena jumped, her ringtone disrupting her pensive thoughts.

She deflated at the caller identification and picked up the phone.

"Detective Sawyer?"

"Yeah, hey, Lena, have you seen Alex recently? She didn't show up for our date."

The Luthor widened her eyes in shock, "No, have you seen Kara recently? I'm concerned for the same reasons and I believe she was captured. Perhaps Alex is with her, I don't know."

She sighed, "I was able to convince Winn to locate her and he notified the D.E.O. It took hours, someone really covered their tracks."

"Can you send me the coordinates?"

"What?"

"Clearly there's something going on here. If I wasn't so worried I'd be laughing at how we both got stood up," Maggie chuckled mirthlessly, "We can meet around the destination with the D.E.O., but I'll need time to prepare though, so don't do anything stupid."

"I'll see you then."

"See you. Be careful. Wouldn't hear the end of it from Kara if something happened to you."

"Goodbye, Detective Sawyer."

"I'm sure Winn told you to hold out and stay back so the D.E.O. can do their job. Remember not to do anything stupid."

"No promises."

"You're already there, aren't you? You little-"

Lena hung up, parked her vehicle on the outskirts of a large warehouse, its size not completely fathomable due to the early winter night.

She clicked her pistol, took a deep breath, and stepped out onto the dirt and rocky path leading into the surprisingly well-kept facility.

Her shoes echoed throughout the building, no matter how soft and tentative her steps were.

Lena began to feel uneasiness broiling in the pit of her stomach; it was much too quiet and quite
dark, even with her phone's flashlight on, making it all the more terrifying when she heard an audible
gasp near her.

The Luthor startled, shining her light towards the direction of the sound.

"Kara?"

Lena frowned and averted her eyes, gulping the bile down her throat at the sight.

Her friend was gagged and strapped against a metal slate on the wall, bloodied and bruised and every
inch of her skin covered in lacerations, to the point she wondered if they would be permanent or
have any lasting damage.

The Luthor quickly undid several straps, against the muffled protests of Kara, only interrupted by a
nimble body tackling her to the ground.

She quickly analyzed the face of her opposer.

"Alex? What are you doing here? What the hell's going-"

Lena choked on her words when a rough kick landed in her gut and sent her sliding away on the
smooth floor, bumping into a pair of legs.

"It's nice to see you again, darling."

Lena's expression quickly morphed into one of anger, "Mom. Of course. You've always been so
procrustean."

"And you've always been a muckraker," Lillian chuckled, toying with a small device in her hand,
her umbra hovering over her daughter.

Alex suddenly stalked over and imprisoned Lena's neck in a strangling hold.

The young Luthor's eyes bulged, shocked at the amount of strength the agent possessed as she was
lifted into the air and slammed onto the ground, rendering her breathless and dazed.

"What the fuck, Danvers?"

Alex turned robotically at the voice, unfazed that it belonged to Maggie.

"Take care of the detective, agent," Lillian sighed.

Alex cracked her neck and charged at her new opponent.

Meanwhile, Lena took advantage of her mother's distraction and staggered her way over to the
Kryptonian strapped against the wall, undoing the rest of the bindings until she fell in her arms.

Lena grunted and nearly fell back, caught off guard at Kara's completely limp weight in her arms.

She inhaled, gathering her strength, then exhaled, heaving the battered body far from the battlefield
where D.E.O. operatives and Cadmus henchmen were trickling in.

Lena began to panic when she fully took in how bruised and beaten her friend was. She breathed
depthly, partly succeeding in her attempt to calm her rapid heart, speedily going over Kryptonian
physiology.
She silently thanked Lex for all of his notes racking throughout her brain, knowing Kara would make a full recovery once her skin made contact with the sun's rays, the lacerations were already beginning to heal once the Kryptonite levels subsided.

Lena tapped the hero's cheeks gently.

"Kara, listen to me, you have to stay awake, okay?"

The blonde's response was an array of uneven, shallow breaths from her lungs, her eyes glassy and jaded, holding no indication that she was mentally present - at least somewhat.

Kara's eyes wallowed lazily in her blurry vision, unable to make out the face of the woman above her.

However, she was able to discern the voice's owner.

"Lena..."

"Yes, you idiot, I'm here to get you out of this mess you got yourself into," the Luthor growled in frustration, dragging Kara's dead weight away from the crossfire in short bursts.

"It's not my fault that your mom's evil and mean and-"

"Well, she is a Luthor after all."

"But you're not a bad person."

The raven-haired woman paused momentarily, the words just sinking in before she continued in her endeavors, in favor of ignoring the statement.

Lena grunted, pulling harder from under Kara's limp arms, "Let's just get you out of here."

"Like, your mom's a real meanie."

"I know, she's my mother."

The blonde giggled, "It was not very knife to meet her."

Lena, despite the dire situation, let out a chuckle, "You're a dork."

"She's a very edgy and sharp woman."

The Luthor frowned, now unamused, "Okay, you can stop with the puns now."

"Awww, you're so dull compared to her."

"Okay," Lena grumbled, "I get your point, now be quiet."

The blonde guffawed, "Hah! Point! I get it! I'm glad that you decided to take a stab at the puns!"

The Luthor rolled her eyes, "What the hell did they give you?"

Kara hummed, "I feel drunk... And my everywhere hurts...so much."

"This is infinitely worse than when you were drunk, you idiot."

Though Lena was unsure if it was due to the horrible puns or the deathly situation they were in.
"I don't know," Kara shrugged in her friend's hold, "I don't have a..." she pondered for the right words, oscitant, "A hangover headache."

"Unbe-fucking-lievable," Lena sighed. She could feel beads of sweat dripping down the sides of her temples as she dragged the fallen hero closer to the exit.

"Can you maybe carry me in a more...comfortable position?" Kara complained, slurring in her almost intoxicated state.

"Now's really not the time."

The blonde let out a whined protest.

The Luthor groaned, "And be quiet, you're also really getting on my nerves right n-"

A thick juggernaut-like body suddenly grappled onto Lena's back and lifted her up into the air only to slam her body down onto the concrete.

Her breath was taken breath out of her lungs, but before she could desperately sip for air, the mind-controlled D.E.O. agent straddled her body and a strong force constricted itself around her neck.

Lena instantly clutched at the calloused fingers her throat was imprisoned in, clawing at them and struggling under her attacker's pinning weight.

He thought nothing more of her than a nuisance, lifting her head and shoving it back down the ground to enforce his power.

Lena saw stars as black began to sprinkle all over her vision, threatening to cover her hazy world in darkness.

Her arms went slack and her struggles ceased as the lack of air weakened her state of mind, slowly succumbing to the black nothing of unconsciousness.

Kara panicked when Lena was shoved to the ground. She was still weak from the kryptonite and it frustrated her even more when the pain restricted her movements, only able to hear the short scuffle before silence.

Then a choked gasping noise coming from Lena and a pathetic sound of a struggle.

Kara felt adrenaline shoot up her spine when her friend's familiar heartbeat began to painfully slow along with her sipping breaths being reduced to nothing.

Move.

Then came the horrific wheezing sound that managed to escape Lena's throbbing lungs, her heartbeat slower.

C'mon...

Then she stopped breathing, her heart palpitations like a failing engine as it sputtered and faded.

Move!

Against the unbearable pain, Kara managed to roll over and stand up to pull the hulking man away with her weakened super strength.
She tugged once, twice, and he wouldn't give, then the panic sent another bout of adrenaline through her veins as she finally pulled him off.

Relief flooded her chest when she heard oxygen flood Lena's.

The Luthor gasped and coughed for the sweet musky air in the warehouse on her hands and knees.

The man sent an unforgiving punch to Kara's gut and she yelped as he did when he broke his hand and wrist with the action.

The blonde fell to the ground, somewhat ungrateful that the full extent of her powers had not yet returned.

On top of the fact that she was in an intolerable amount of pain.

She was at a disadvantage.

Kara's heart raced when the man reached for his belt to pull out a gun.

Only he did not and glanced at the empty holster supposed to contain his firearm.

He turned and growled at his other opponent before an ear-piercing shot rang out and he thumped on the ground, lifeless, making way to a haunting image of Lena shakily dropping the pistol and rushing to Kara's side.

The blonde coughed, "Good aim."

The Luthor laughed nervously, "He was only a few feet in front of me."

Clearly the situation had an impact on her psyche judging from her shaking hands.

Lena took a deep, calming breath and closed her eyes momentarily, reaching gingerly for her throat. She could feel the bruises already forming. By the time she opened her eyes again the trembling had completely subsided.

"Are you okay?" Kara asked, genuine fear and worry painting her features.

"Did you forget that you're the one that was bleeding out?" Lena narrowed her eyes, "I'm fine, but we need to get you to the D.E.O. We can't have that talk if you're dead."

Kara cringed and chuckled lightly, "How about you just leave me here instead?"

Lena gave her an admonishing look and was about to reprimand her when a figure stalked its way over.

The Luthor gulped and stood on shaky legs in front of her friend protectively.

"Alex?"

She was unsure if the woman was still being controlled.

She stole a glance at the shrinking battlefield to see a stirring Maggie on the floor with blood running down her face.

Her answer was given when the agent pulled out a dagger and made a jab at the C.E.O.
Lena moved out of the way the last second, the evasion messy as her legs wobbled and she stumbled away.

The stomach of her shirt was sliced through, revealing her paleness underneath.

Then Alex swung at her face, now dripping blood as the shallow cut grazed her cheekbone.

The agent speedily moved behind her, utilizing the hilt of her knife and her body weight against Lena's back to send her falling to the ground.

She looked over her shoulder to see Alex cocking her gun and swiftly about to point it at her little sister, the muzzle glowing a sickly green.

"No!" Lena scrambled over to Kara.

"Don't!" the blonde shouted, her worries skyrocketing when her friend used her own body as a shield to protect her.

The woman took a shaky breath when her gaze connected with Kara's, who had tears spilling down her cheeks at Lena's impending death.

The Luthor was thankful that the last thing she would remember were those beautiful blue eyes.

"You dummy," Kara whispered hoarsely, her pain preventing her from flipping their positions over.

Lena had an apologetic expression, communicating it with her eyes before she clenched them shut and ignored their wordless disagreement, bracing for the impact.

Only it never came.

"You idiots made me do all the work, didn't you?"

The two sagged with relief at the sound of Maggie's voice.

Lena looked over her shoulder to see the detective slinking Alex's arm over her shoulders.

The agent's head was bleeding.

"An eye for an eye, Danvers," Maggie chuckled at her unconscious girlfriend, wiping the bleeding dripping from her own head as well.

Kara craned her neck over Lena's shoulder as the detective turned to the pair on the floor, who restrained herself from making an innuendo, "One of the guys at the D.E.O. managed to interrupt the connection with the mind control, but we have only a few minutes."

"Looks like we're going to have to thank Winn first thing when we get back," Kara sighed, resting her skull back on the ground.

Maggie glanced around the almost empty premises, "And it seems we're lagging behind, so get your asses up and out of here."

"Supergirl's already healed all of her open wounds," Dr. Hamilton stated, "Cadmus did utilize synthetic kryptonite though, and its ingredients are preventing her from healing over several of her
scars, which should usually revert back to flawless skin when she's under the yellow sun. It's not a problem though," the doctor reassured, "But Supergirl might be a bit alarmed to see the scars either become permanent or not heal as quickly, we're not too sure yet."

Lena and the doctor glanced through the windows of the Kryptonian's medical room, watching her stretch out her soreness as the nurses removed the wires and machines from her body.

"She can be released today, if you don't mind taking her home since Agent Danvers is still being checked in the infirmary, and her powers are also a bit muted at the moment. We'll just dress her in a t-shirt and sweatpants after they remove the medical gown."

The Luthor was slightly shocked, "But we pretty much just got back."

"Yes, you did," Dr. Hamilton acknowledged, checking her watch, "At about eight at night, so that was three hours ago. Usually, we'd keep Supergirl for longer, but the synthetic kryptonite is a bit weaker than the original; it was created to sap her powers for a longer duration even after contact, but they had to sacrifice its weaponization. It should be safe for her to return home as long as she's not flying, and I doubt she'd want to spend the night here."

The doctor turned more towards the Luthor, "You're also lucky you only escaped with bruises."

"Yeah..." the raven-haired woman hesitantly grazed her neck with her fingers and with her other arm she wrapped around her torso protectively.

Chapter End Notes

Constructive criticism appreciated.
Chapter Summary

Lena is concerned for Kara after they escaped from the ordeal with Cadmus and they finally have a talk, though their discourse is not without dispute, but the argument only serves to strengthen their bond. Then game night is planned.

Chapter Notes

Find me on Tumblr at spoopercorp and on FF as Local-Asshole.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Dissention

Kara tilted her head, "What happened to my door?"

Lena stifled a snicker, hiding it with a smirk as she remembered the events at the bar a few nights ago, "You were drunk."

The blonde's shoulders deflated, "O-Oh. Yeah...right...

She swung the door open and walked in, closing it after her friend entered as well.

Kara was tempted to flop onto the couch, but reminded herself that she had a guest and went for the kitchen, "Want anything to drink?"

Lena shook her head and sat on the dining table, "No, thank you."

The blonde grabbed a single cup and filled it with water, sitting across from her friend and taking a large gulp.

I wish I was drunk right now.

They sat in silence only for a minute, focused on anything but each other, and it felt like eternity for the both of them, the heftiness palpable.

Kara finally swallowed her cowardice down and broke the quiet.

"You scared me today."

Lena glanced up, but her friend's eyes were focused on anything but her own.

She continued, "I thought you were going to die."
The Luthor's voice was tight and strained, "You didn't think I was scared too? Watching you get your ass kicked on television's one thing, but seeing you so willingly and unhesitatingly fly out to the brink of death, headfirst into danger, chained up and gagged like an animal against the wall... God, Kara, there was so much blood..."

A barrier of silence made itself present once again.

"I could barely pull the guy off of you," Kara finally whispered, then her voice cracked and she faltered, sinking into her chair, "And then..." her eyes narrowed, "And then you had to use yourself as a...a human shield? I know what happened to me, your mom tortured me, I know."

Lena flinched, she knew all too well that Lillian enjoyed playing games, almost as much as Lex.

Kara's voice held back, fractured, "I could've taken it. You didn't have to do that."

"I could've taken it," she chanted again, quietly, more to herself.

"Taken what?" Lena rose her voice, "The bullet? The kryptonite bullet?"

"You're only human!" the blonde argued, "A bullet's a bullet to you, I can regenerate!"

"So what?" the Luthor countered, "Cadmus has weapons that are perfectly capable of reducing you to something even weaker than a pathetic human. And that is what you were: on the ground, bleeding out, me dragging you away 'cause you could barely stand."

Kara looked away, muscles taut with tension, her jaw clenched and teeth grinding together in irritation as she attempted to force the image of the nasty bruises on her friend's pale neck out of her head.

"Do you think I enjoy watching you save the world? The saving part's great, you're helping people. But the cost, the consequences... I'd much rather you d..."

She trailed off, unable to finish the sentence.

I'd much rather you don't go out in that suit.

I'd much rather you stay, the world can burn for all I care.

I'd much rather you don't be Supergirl.

"What?" Kara narrowed her eyes, as if daring her to finish the sentence.

"It's not easy for me either," Lena stated, running her fingers through her dark mane, "We've both watched each other near death one too many times."

The Luthor shuddered at the memory of the usually invincible alien impaled with spikes of kryptonite.

Lena sighed, shaky, alarmed that such selfish thoughts crawled through her subconscious and surfaced, "Look, whatever's got you bothered, I...we...we can fix it. Okay? Just tell me wh-

"I almost couldn't save you again!" the blonde snapped sharply, interrupting her friend, the trembling in her hand shattering the glass cup in her palm, liquid spilling over.

Lena flinched, watched as Kara unconsciously squeezed the glass so hard they crumbled into sandy particles.
"Again..." the blonde repeated, burying her hands in her messy blonde hair, pulling them in frustration.

The Luthor saw hot tears pouring out of the hero's eyes and wanted so badly to go over and enwrap her friend into a warm hug, to comfort her.

And she got up to do it, but fear snaked its way into her bones and muscles, preventing her from moving.

The Kryptonian, who could carry objects as heavy as Fort Rozz, who could take out multiple armies in the blink of an eye, who could kill most beings within a split second...who was as emotionally unstable as a human.

The Luthor just stood there, petrified at all the possible negative outcomes that ran through her mind.

"This...fear," Kara began, gesturing to herself and to Lena and rising from her seat as well, "I'm not sure if it's repairable, just like how you're not sure you can help your fear of me."

She stepped closer, tentative and hesitant, "We both like to fix things...people, objects... I know you like to tinker, Lena, by trial and error. But living beings, they don't work that way, and you should know that as much as I do; make one error and you could risk losing any chance of fixing it."

Kara managed to choke out another sentence as she cautiously reached for her friend's hand, which was willingly given to her, "This friendship, this bond we have, I'm not sure if we can salvage it anymore. Maybe it's out of our reach. I can't fix you...and you can't fix me."

Lena hesitated, tears beginning to sting her eyes as her heartbroken expression matched the blonde's in front of her.

"But...we can't just...just give up on this..."

Her voice was raspy and hoarse as she chuckled, without amusement and humor, "What are you afraid of? You're Supergirl."

Kara's eyes saddened, forcing a mirthless smile out as she rubbed the back of the Luthor's palm with her thumb, "That one day I won't be able to save you."

"But you did," Lena responded swiftly, eyeing the soothing circles being pressed into her hand, "From Metallo, from the gang at the gala, from-"

"Not from them," Kara whispered, a pained expression overwhelming her features, "Not from others..."

She gently lifted Lena's arm, and the woman let her, so the blonde scrunched up her friend's sleeve to reveal faded scars on her wrist.

And suddenly they were both back at high school again, on Kara's couch, the cloth on Lena's arm riding up.

The Luthor took a shaky breath and understood what the implication was, nodding.

Kara traced the scars with her thumb, the light touches sending a chill up the C.E.O.'s spine, making her shiver and her heart beat faster.

"You..." the blonde gulped, "You jumped."
Lena averted her gaze.

"'Cause of me."

The Luthor's eyes snapped back at at a pair of blues when she heard the broken voice.

"Kar-"

"Don't."

She pressed her lips shut and waited for her to continue, focusing on the tender caresses atop her wrist. Lena placed her free hand against Kara's cheek and wiped away each tear pouring out, her heart throbbing when the blonde leaned into the touch just a fraction.

"Please don't spare me. I know it was the red kryptonite, but it doesn't matter. What I did to you... The pain I caused you..."

"It's been eating at you this entire time, huh?" Lena smiled bitterly through her tears, "Is that why you fly over every night? To protect me? From myself?"

*There's a reason why I keep myself preoccupied, why I don't stand near balconies anymore...*

Kara glanced up suddenly and the hand on her cheek removed itself.

"How'd you know?"

Lena chuckled, this time with slight amusement, "Lack of sleep gives me time to focus on other things. And you're not exactly subtle to be honest."

The blonde gasped softly in mock offense, "I can be stealthy. How dare you insult me like that?"

"I wouldn't have to if you were actually stealthy."

They both chuckled quietly, genuinely, and once the laughter ebbed away, they embraced one another in a tight hug.

"We're a mess."

"Yeah..." Lena agreed and tightened her arms and stroking the loose strands of honey colored hair on the nape of the blonde's neck, "And we have a long way to go, don't we?"

Kara smiled, burying her face into her friend's shoulder, a muffled whisper coming out, "Yeah. We do."

"So...things have gotten better then?" Alex assumed by the look on her little sister's face, as she snuggled into Maggie on the couch.

Kara nodded with a wide grin, tossing the small pillow from hand to hand and occasionally squishing the cushion.

"I'd like to think so anyway..." the blonde smiled, "Ever since we talked I've been able to visit her more frequently without her sending me off and avoiding me. We've been able to have lunch pretty regularly in her office."

Maggie nudged Alex with her elbow and winked, though it completely went over the Kryptonian's
"But..." Kara gulped, "She's still afraid of me, and I understand, I really do, but it doesn't mean I have to like it," she sighed, "I'm afraid there's always going to be distance between us no matter what."

Then she chuckled, bitter and scornful and filled with joy at the same time as Alex and Maggie looked on somberly, "But that's okay. Having her here, back in my life, that's more than enough for me."

The detective smiled and patted Kara on the back, "Baby steps, kiddo. Baby steps."

"Why don't you invite her to game night this week?" Alex suggested casually.

The blonde gasped, "That's a great idea! She's probably sick of staying in that office all the time!"

Kara suddenly frowned, sputtering, "B-But she's the billionaire C.E.O. of a world famous company, she...she couldn't possibly make time for a stupid game night in her busy schedule-"

"Kara?" Alex interrupted.

The blonde snapped out of her thoughts, "Yeah?"

"Just ask her."

"Right. Okay."

She gathered her things and sped out the door.

Maggie looked on curiously, tilting her head, "She could've called or texted?"

"Gay panic?" Alex shrugged, "I don't think Kara even knows she likes Lena."

The detective nodded, affirming, "Gay panic."

Then she chuckled, "I still can't believe they're not together. It's really painful to watch them as 'friends'. My gay senses tingle every time."

Alex threw her head back and her arms in the air, "Ugh, I know! They're both so oblivious! I mean, I'd at least expect more from a genius like Lena."

"Give her more credit, Danvers," Maggie chuckled, punching her arm.

The agent dramatically pretended to be hurt, drawing out laughter from her girlfriend.

Alex's gaze softened as she brushed a lock of hair behind Maggie, "You're okay, right?"

The detective rolled her eyes, "Yes! A million times yes!"

The auburn-haired woman chuckled, shaking her head, "I'm sorry, the mission...it was pretty scary not having control of my body and watching myself hurt you."

Maggie snuggled closer to her girlfriend, "We'll be fine, babe."

Alex smiled, "I know," but the frown returned, "I just...you don't think Kara blames me, right? I almost shot her, I hurt Lena pretty badly, and I gave you a concussion."
She brushed her fingers around the bandage that covered her girlfriend's forehead.

"I gave you one too," the detective smirked, caressing the matching gauze on her girlfriend, "We're even."

She cleared her throat, "And if Kara had a problem with you, I'd think we'd notice. She tends to express herself pretty well," Maggie chuckled, "Besides," her expression saddened, "Kara knows first hand what it's like to get a front seat to watch yourself hurt others you love."

Alex smiled, tentative, almost hesitant, "Yeah...I hope those two dorks get their shit together."

Kara jovially made her way to her friend's office, nearly skipping about until she reached the familiar large double doors, not thinking twice about opening them.

She stopped in her tracks when she saw two women a bit too close for her comfort.

Though, to an unbiased onlooker, it just seemed that the visitors were comfortable enough to be casual around Lena.

Just two irresistible looking women friends with the C.E.O.

Just friends.

"Kara!" Lena greeted, grinning, "To what or who do I owe for this pleasant surprise?"

The blonde smiled, "I actually came here myself to..."

She trailed off when she noticed her audience of two women.

"Oh!" Lena gestured at one of her guests. Blonde hair, blue eyes, thin features.

"Odette Kovachev," the woman introduced herself.

Then the Luthor gestured to the other visitor, brown hair, brown eyes, and quite tall.

"Eleanor Lefevre," the woman smiled politely, ladylike in her mannerisms.

Kara restrained herself from folding her arms, quelled the rising anger at the sight of the two gorgeous women.

"We all went to school together," Lena explained, noticing the subtle awkward tension, "Eleanor's one of my older interns here and she's temporarily being stationed here, and Odette decided to come and visit since she just moved to National City, so we all thought a reunion was called for."

"Since it's such a rarity for the three of us to actually be in the same room," Eleanor smirked, her thick British accent amused.

Lena's cheeks tinted a light red-pink and Odette laughed at the woman's remark.

"Small world," Kara managed to grind out, faking a humored chuckle.

"We were just leaving," Eleanor stated as a sudden realization hit her, making her way out the door as the other blonde followed closely.

Kara did not even bother to look at them as they were leaving, opting to concentrate on fumbling
with the strap of her purse as a distraction from her annoyance and frustration and totally anything but jealousy.

Meaning she missed the silent exchange between Lena and the two women.

Odette mouthed 'go get the girl' and winked while Eleanor gave a thumbs up as the reporter was occupied, then a more suggestive gesture in her sardonic humor when she stuck her tongue out and formed her hands into scissors and-

Lena's eyes bulged comically and her mouth gaped in horror as a silent but vehement 'no' tumbled out of her lips.

Then her eyes narrowed and she found herself muttering, 'just friends', and it made her heart throb once with agony.

Odette made air quotations at the word 'friend' and Eleanor's face communicated the word 'sure' sarcastically.

The two women chuckled to themselves and shut the door.

A moment of silence consumed Kara and Lena, the Kryptonian's tapping and scratching of her purse the only noise in the room, so loud with fury that she was surprised her accessory had not ripped apart.

"I'm sorry that I interrupted..." Kara apologized softly, shuffling her feet, though she did not feel that guilty.

In fact, she would be more than happy to interrupt her friend from those two again in a heartbeat, preferably without trying to force laughter.

Lena's smile fell slightly, though maintained its confidence, "No, it's all right, you didn't interrupt anything, so don't apologize."

Kara nodded.

The C.E.O. chuckled, nervous, trying to diffuse the lingering tension as she rose from her chair and strode closer to Kara, "Pretty awkward though, having two of my exes in the same room."

Kara stiffened and frowned, "Exes?"

"College," came the answer, "They're nice, and we're gladly all on good terms, so drama's thankfully avoided," the Luthor smirked.

The blonde played along, "I thought you said that love wasn't for you?"

"I haven't bulldozed through many relationships, they've all been long term, and I've only ever had four," Lena shrugged, "I don't think the fling with Veronica counts officially though, so make that three."

Kara took note of the information as she had only ever seriously dated three people as well: Adam, James, and Mon-El.

She refrained from recoiling at the sour thoughts when Veronica was mentioned, "So you dated those two and..."

The blonde paused, Lena never mentioned another.
The Luthor's eyes were filled with a forlorn longing and it made Kara's stomach crawl.

The C.E.O. quickly diverted the conversation, "So what was it you came here for?"

The blonde clutched onto her purse strap tighter, suddenly sour at the thought of her friend perhaps still harboring feelings for an ex, "W-Well, I, uh, I wanted to invite you to game night? Saturday evening?"

Lena froze.

"I mean," Kara began to ramble, "Unless you're busy, you know, so then you don't have to feel obligated to accept 'cause I totally understand. With you running a company and all I'm sure it's difficult to find time for-"

"I'm flattered that you even thought about me," Lena smiled, "That's very considerate of you."

Kara grinned, "Well, duh! Of course I'd invite you!"

"And normally I'd accept," the Luthor continued, frowning, "But..."

The blonde pouted, "Are you worried about anyone? Alex, Maggie, James, Winn, and Mon-El are coming. Lucy's in the city for a bit so she's going to be there as well. If it's too-"

"Kara?"

"Yeah?"

"I don't have a problem, it's just that I've made plans that night already," Lena placed a comforting hand atop her friend's, "I'm sorry. Maybe another time then?"

Kara tilted her head, "You've already made plans?"

She knew she probably would not like the answer, but she had to know regardless.

Lena retracted her hand, "Well, yes, dinner was planned with Eleanor and Odette."

Kara immediately thought that she would rather have her friend busy with anything or anyone else but those two.

With any of her exes for that matter.

And Saturday nights were usually reserved for more romantic plans, and the thought of Lena rekindling with either one of them made Kara uneasy.

So without thinking, the blonde blurred out, "I can change it to Friday night!"

Lena arched a brow, "You can?"

Kara nodded furiously and the Luthor smiled.

"Well, I'm sure I can attend Friday night then. Your apartment I presume?"

The blonde nodded again and Lena chuckled.

"Great, I'll see you then."
"I still cannot believe Kara changed game night for a girl," Alex grumbled, moving things around to accommodate their guests, "So inconvenient."

"I can," Maggie chuckled, "At least it was just this time, and we were all wanting Lena to come anyway."

"They're so smitten it's disgusting," Lucy commented, gagging, "I don't know how neither of them see it."

"I agree," James added, hauling several packs of beers to the table, "And when they get together I really hope they're not like... his eyes darted over to Winn and Mon-El making out on the couch, and he cupped his mouth, "...them..."

"Hey, lovebirds!" Alex shouted, disrupting the two, "Get a fucking room!"

"That's homophobic!" Winn retorted.

The agent's eyes widened and she stalked over and pointed at them aggressively, "Remember what I said about what I could do to you with my index finger?"

The two men immediately scrambled off the couch.

Alex placed her hands on her hips, satisfied, "That's what I thought."

Maggie placed her hands on her girlfriend's hips and swayed, whispering in her ear, "I remember what you said your index finger could do to me."

Alex flushed a deep red and began sputtering at the sexual implication while Lucy looked on with amusement and James shuddered.

"Gross," Kara gagged as she swung the door open, leading Lena inside.

Maggie chortled, "How much did you hear?"

The blonde made a sour face, "Things about Alex's index finger that I wish to unhear."

"Lena!" Lucy greeted fondly, bringing her in for a hug, which was returned awkwardly, "It's been so long!"

"Yeah," James grinned, patting the Luthor's shoulder, "You should come to game night more often. The best one was the time when you were actually with us. Hasn't been the same without you kicking our asses at everything."

"Yeah," Winn muttered, "Totally."

"You're just bitter that she's the board and card game champion now," Mon-El teased.

"Am not!" he protested.

"Don't worry, you're great at Twister," the Daxamite cooed, wrapping his arm around Winn's shoulders, "And you'll always be my champion."

Everyone else groaned.

"I told you two to get a room," Alex complained.
"Hey! Stop whining! No one ever gives you and Maggie shit for being a couple."

"It's 'cause we're cuter," the detective replied easily.

Winn gasped, "I'm offended! Fine! Let's pair off for the games then! Winner is the cutest couple!"

James rolled his eyes at the pun.

"Weak, Schott," Lucy commented, "Weak."

"Already consider yourselves losers!" Mon-El cheered.

"Hey," Maggie whispered into Alex's ear.

"What?"

The detective nodded over at Kara and Lena, who were engrossed in their own little separate circle.

Alex grinned, "You thinking what I'm thinking?"

"That they just need a little push?"

"Exactly," Alex took a deep breath and bellowed, "I accept your challenge!"

Kara and Lena looked away towards the older Danvers.

"For the title of cutest couple!"

The blonde and raven-haired woman gaped.

Clearly, Mon-El and Winn were together, then Alex and Maggie, then James and Lucy.

The two remaining stood there awkwardly, their distance from each other somehow increased.

"B-but we're not a couple," Kara chuckled uncomfortably, unnecessarily adjusting her glasses.

"So?" Lucy countered, catching onto the plan, "James and I aren't one either."

"Just roll with it," Winn grinned, realizing Alex's and Maggie's idea as well, "Get it? 'Cause game night?"

"Ugh!" Lucy groaned, "You can shut your mouth now."

"Okay, so how are we going to do this?" James inquired, "There has to be rules, right? We've never had a couple theme."

"Let's just decide what games to play first. We can break the ice with a no partner game, the all-time classic: Never Have I Ever," Alex grinned devilishly, "With shots."

Maggie snickered, "You just want an excuse to drink without Kara taking away the liquor."

"True, but this's also for a higher cause," she winked, acknowledging the accusation.

There were nods in agreement, and Kara and Lena quickly assumed the 'higher cause' was about the winning title, not about the success rate of them being set up by everyone else.

"We can play Truth Or Dare after," Maggie suggested, "Without the truth."
"Sounds good to me," Lucy commented, elbowing James, "What about you, partner?"

He shrugged, "I'm fine with anything."

"Sounds like it could get real steamy," Alex whistled, enjoying the flushed looks of Kara and Lena from her peripheral vision, deciding to tease them further, "We could also play Kama Sutra."

Their eyes bulged, but before Lena could protest, Kara beat her to it.

"Th-That's unfair, don't you think? Mon-El and I have super strength, so..."

Maggie decided to spare them, "She does have a good point. We won't play it then. Maybe another time."

Kara and Lena sighed with relief.

"Wait," Winn cut in, "What about board or card games?"

"We all know Lena's going to beat us at those in any form," Maggie sighed, "And I don't think you enjoy getting your ass handed to you as much as we do."

Mon-El chortled at Winn's pout.

"Okay, everyone pour their shots of vodka," Alex instructed, then pointed at Kara and Mon-El, "Except you two. You guys pour your alien drinks."

Maggie notified everyone of the rules, "We all get five fingers. You do something, you drink and put a finger down."

"Okay," James began, "I'll start, we'll go in a circle."

"Shoot."

"Never have I ever kissed someone of the same sex."

The majority groaned, the only people who did not drink were Kara, much to Lena's dismay, and James.

"Never have I ever been an alien," Lucy smirked.

The Kryptonian and Daxamite pouted, downing their shots.

Maggie chuckled, a playful gleam in her eyes, "Never have I ever sent a dirty text to the wrong person."

Lucy and Alex drank.

"What?" Winn shouted, "How?"

"I was drunk," the younger Lane answered, shrugging.

"Alex was sober," Maggie laughed.

Kara shivered when she remembered the racy photo her older sister accidentally texted her, "Can we just please move on? I don't want to remember that."
Alex cleared her throat, "Never have I ever called out the wrong name while doing it."

Lucy attempted to secretly take a shot, but it did not go unnoticed.

Maggie gasped.

The Lane quickly went to explain herself, "It was a long day and I was tired."

"Well," Mon-El snickered, "Never have I ever watched porn."

"No way!" Alex protested, "You're kidding!"

He shook his head, "The internet was probably the most difficult thing to grasp here on Earth."

The majority grumbled and drank, except for Lena.

"Seriously, Luthor?" Maggie asked, "Not even once?"

The C.E.O. chuckled, "Mother was more strict about what I did, and even as I got older I didn't find the notion worth it to waste my time looking for videos on the internet."

"Busy with training as the new heir to the company?" Lucy asked.

Lena nodded, "There was no time for fun."

Then she targeted her partner, "What about you Kara? Care to explain how you're not as innocent as I thought?"

The blonde could feel heat travelling up her cheeks, "Alex was watching and I just happened to look over her shoulder."

The agent grinned, "That's one way to keep a snoopy little sister at bay. The look on her face was priceless."

Mon-El slapped his boyfriend on the back, "Your turn!"

"Ow!" the shorter man slapped the alien back, who over-dramatically feigned hurt.

Winn scoffed, a wicked grin appearing on his face, "Anyway, never have I ever..."

A dramatic pause.

"Had a threesome."

Everyone laughed at his slurred words, but no one took a shot.

However, Kara saw it from the corner of her eye.

Lena downed the shot.

The party collectively gasped and the Luthor shrugged, "College got boring sometimes."

Lucy chuckled, "So you're saying you weren't busy taking so many business and engineering classes?"

Lena smirked as well, "That's a good point."
Her smile faltered when she met her partner's expression, face frozen in shock and disbelief.

"Kara?" she reached under her friend's chin and shut it, the blonde's teeth audibly clacking, "It's your turn."

The Kryptonian snapped out of her thoughts of the two women she encountered in Lena's office.

"Uh. Yeah," she shook her head, "Um, never have I ever Googled any...techniques."

"Hey!" Alex shouted, "I recently found out I was gay that time, how was I supposed to know how to touch-"

"Okay, too much information!" Kara interrupted, plugging her ears and singing discordant notes.

"We're all buzzed enough to play Truth Or Dare, right?" Alex asked, though she was one of the members that could hold her alcohol quite well.

The only ones that were slurring and swaying were James, Lucy, Winn, Mon-El, and Kara.

"Well, except for the lesbians," Maggie whispered, earning a chuckle from her girlfriend and Lena.

"Awesome," Alex clapped her hands together and rubbed them, "So, the rules are a bit different since we're only doing dares. Maggie and I go first, meaning we leave the premises so the other couples can think of a dare. Then we come back, you guys tell us, and we do it. Got it?"

Everyone nodded their understanding.

"Awesome."

"I think Lena and I would rather stay out of giving the dares," Kara said sheepishly.

The Luthor nodded in agreement.

"Awww, c'mon, guys," Maggie whined.

"I don't mind!" Lucy chimed in teasingly, "Means Kara won't make the dares more innocent."

Chapter End Notes

Constructive criticism appreciated.
Chapter Summary

Kara's and Lena's friendship is gambled as things get heated. Kara is jealous of Lena's visiting exes.

Chapter Notes

Find me on Tumblr at spoopercorp and on FF as Local-Asshole.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Wager

"We dare," Lucy snickered, cheeky in attitude, "that Alex and Maggie play the rest of the game in their lingerie."

Everyone's jaws dropped, but the victims seemed unfazed.

James, Winn, and Mon-El averted their eyes slightly once the women were in nothing but their bra and underwear.

Kara was already not liking where the game was going, her hands sweaty and clasped together as she shuffled her feet. She stole a glance at Lena, who's heart rate picked up as their turns neared.

Several of the pairs guffawed at the next challenge.

"We dare Winn to give Mon-El a strip tease," Lucy shouted, perhaps a bit over-excitedly.

The shorter man flushed an intense red while the Daxamite cackled, "I enjoy this Earth game!"

Alex and Maggie, still in their lingerie, were huddled under a blanket. The agent chose a provocative song and immediately maximized the volume.

Contrary to what most would have thought, the strip tease was more comical than sexy.

"Say it, Winn. Say it," Mon-El hissed.

His now shirtless boyfriend leaned into his ear.

"The mitochondria's the powerhouse of the cell."

The Daxamite gasped dramatically and threw his head back, one hand clutched to his chest and the other on his forehead.
Everyone laughed and whistled and cheered, and those who were drinking either choked on their alcohol or spit it out.

"I thought I was going to be really uncomfortable with this dare and regret it," Lucy gulped her liquor, "But this's the funniest shit I've seen in a long time."

"Your guys's dare's going to be just as great!" Winn snapped.

The next challenge was very much amusing as the pair exited the bathroom.

James wore lingerie and covered his lower region with a pillow.

Lucy was in an oversized men's underwear and a tank top so baggy she had to cross her arms to make sure her breasts would not slip out.

"Have fun in those clothes for the rest of the game," Winn cackled, snuggling into Mon-El's arms.

They never relieved their glares at him even after they sat down.

The blonde chuckled and saw that Lena was trying to stifle a snicker with her hand over her mouth, eyes crinkled in amusement.

Kara missed it.

Her smile.

The one where it was not only genuine, but less restrained and more liberating.

The one with less pain.

Kara's focus lingered just for another moment before she looked away, expression quickly creasing with worried wrinkles to match Lena's as the rest of the players were huddled.

The Kryptonian noticed she was unable to hear anything as the teams mouthed suggestions to one another.

She was never great at lip reading and tuned off her heightened senses.

Lena and Kara waited patiently, the blonde already sweating and growing red with nervousness.

The Luthor had more self-control, and she believed that without it she would probably be reduced to a mortified puddle like her partner, so she busied herself with more alcohol.

"We..."

They turned at Lucy's booming voice, announcing the next challenge.

"Dare you to give a lap dance!" she finished.

Lena choked on her drink, a coughing fit attacking her after the ordeal.

Meanwhile, Kara's jaw hit the floor, the awkward hand gestures and stuttered rambling making a strong comeback.

"B-but, what? I..." she trailed off as she let her arms flop down.

_Oh, Rao, why me?_
Lena cleared her throat and Kara faced her, noticed the Luthor's cheeks were slightly tinted pink and found herself jealous that she had so much control.

"Well, who's..." she gestured to herself and to her partner vaguely.

Lucy interrupted, "Lena, you're probably used to getting your lap full of girls," she winked at the blushing Luthor, "How about you give instead of receive this time?"

Kara's eyes bulged and her mouth went dry when she noticed her friend slowly moving over to straddle her lap.

She squeaked when Lena adjusted herself to make it comfortable, placing her hands around Kara's neck for stability and unintentionally rocking her pelvis in the process, her hot breath tickling the blonde's cheek and throat.

Kara bit back a moan and nearly toppled over in embarrassment, her frantic hands automatically finding the Luthor's hips for purchase, their bodies flush against each other.

She did not know if it was her own heart or Lena's, but the beat was strong and powerful, erratic in its rhythm.

Maybe it was both, how they seamlessly melded together in unison, the combination almost intoxicating. It was a minuscule detail with a large impact and their breaths hitched.

Neither of them could pinpoint if the sounds were harmonious or a thunderous cacophony.

Lena had to fight her inner turmoil: the urge to keep their close distance or to flinch and make a leeway for a panic attack.

The Luthor was silently thankful that the alcohol had dimmed her fear, made her somewhat unaware of the fact that Kara's fingers were ghosting her hips, unthinking the same moment in history where those very same hands, always gentle and caring, had crushed Lena's bones with no effort and with such hateful words.

Instead, she was focused on how firm and strong the blonde was, albeit she was very likely tensing in nervousness. Regardless, Lena found it difficult to concentrate on anything else other than Kara's hard, sculpted abs, which rubbed against her own stomach through their shirts as they adjusted their positions with awkwardness and discomfort. Then it was the hero's arms, so lean and simultaneously impressively bulky judging by the bulge of her biceps.

Lena refrained from making a smug smirk at the thought of the blonde at her mercy; hungry and unsatisfied eyes, blown and dark pupils and all. Then Kara's neck, undulating powerfully, she wanted to drag her tongue over the strong pulse and taste it, suck on it, though it would fail to make a mark on the Kryptonian.

She wanted to rake her fingernails over the taut muscles of Kara's strong back, she wanted her to come undone under her fingertips, her tongue, anything that left the blonde splayed out in fiery pleasure and craving more passion.

They were both too busy skimming over each other's bodies with utter reverence and hunger to notice where their partner's attention laid, almost worshiping. Though their hands were frozen still, their idle touches were hovering yet like a blazing inferno.

With Kara, she was too preoccupied with her lap full of the beautiful woman to really focus on how, in the very depths of her mind, memories of her red kryptonite controlled self had nearly killed her
beloved friend.

At such close of a proximity, Kara could not help but notice Lena’s smell, her beauty, the milky porcelain skin underneath the sort-of-tight clothes in all its alabaster glory. Then she subconsciously thought, impulsive in its upbringing, of how badly she wanted to run her fingers and press into the soft flesh and explore every curve and bump. Kara's arm muscles twitched - electric - the desire to wind themselves around the woman's toned, slim waist coursing through their nerves.

Her mind was filled with Lena, and only her.

The blonde gulped and shook her head vehemently, unsure why her reverie trailed off like so, and she abruptly stood up to negate her internal screaming.

Lena was caught by surprise and she yelped and fell to the floor.

"I can't do it!" Kara chirped, the heat that enveloped her slowly ebbing away, which she found she was both relieved and disappointed in.

A chorus of complaints hit the air, clearly the chemistry and sexual tension was there.

"I forget that you're a prude," Maggie and Lucy chuckled.

"Awe and some!" Mon-El cheered, giving Winn a high five, "One couple down!"

The blonde covered her very red face, apologizing to her friend while everyone continued the game, "Sorry...I hope you didn't want to win that badly."

Lena chuckled at Kara's droopy eyes as she was helped up from the floor, "I didn't, don't worry. I needed to get back to work anyway."

The hero frowned, "It's nine in the evening though."

"You know I usually finish work around midnight."

The blonde pouted, "I'd feel much better if you just went home to rest, you overwork yourself."

Lena laughed, "I'm flattered by your concern, so I'll try and make sure I go home earlier."

"Do you need-"

"I have a car," the C.E.O. smiled, "And I don't much enjoy flying either."

"But you drunk."

"Not very much. Just compare me to those two," she pointed to Winn and Mon-El, obnoxiously laughing in their corner of the couch, cross-eyed, "I can walk in a straight line, alright?"

Kara eventually returned a beaming grin, "Okay, drive safe."

"Of course," she assured, exiting the apartment in graceful strides with a string of goodbyes filtering out after her.

The Kryptonian's gaze lingered at her door, long after Lena had left.

A small, fleeting smile painted her face.
Lena stared intently at her reflection in the mirror, startled awake in a shivering cold sweat by yet another nightmare that plagued her slumber.

No longer was it about her family - her mother - and how she was mistreated like she was some worthless nuisance.

That was the difference, why Lena was terrified of her close friend and not as much with her mother.

In fact, whenever she saw the woman, the emotions of anger and bitterness overcame the fear.

Lillian never received her trust, from the get-go she was an abusive and cruel woman.

It was different with the blonde, Lena trusted her, and not only that, Lillian was human.

Kara was an unstoppable alien.

And the dream, it was of her, with dirty blonde tresses and several locks of hair caught in her glasses; her blue gaze comforting and akin to something like...

*Home.*

Then it was red, hot with fury and hatred, something absolutely foreign to the usually giddy and amicable blonde.

But foreign did not mean impossible.

It happened, how Kara had not only snapped within her own conscience, but also Lena's bones - shattered so easily under the wake of the alien's once soft, gentle trailing hands.

Caresses became harsh scratches, cradles became breathless strangles, any touch became something that inflicted pain and misery, leaving Lena suffering alone on the earth.

She panted, the heavy, gasping breaths no longer panicked and too harsh, only to regain her composure.

The Luthor could feel her body sweat with fear, the perspiration making her comfortable clothes stick uncomfortably to her skin.

She shuddered at the image in front of her.

The C.E.O., always elegant and graceful and poised, reduced to nothing but unkempt and deranged.

Her hair was messed from tossing and turning in her oversized bed for one lonely occupant. Her eyes were ringed with darkness, indicative of her lack of sleep and inability to rest. Her shoulders were tensed, refused to relax under the weight of the trauma.

It was alarming, not to see herself fall into such...chaos. The mayhem to match the disarray that was all those years ago.

*What an eyesore. Pathetic.*

What was actually alarming to witness was how different she was from her scared adolescent self; Lena stood taller, more confident, chest puffed in a display of dominance and control - the coldness less inviting and more reserved for business purposes.

All thanks to Kara, she was able to thaw in certain areas of herself.
There was no sign of any weakness other than the trembling mess she was at the moment.

Otherwise, it was her eyes, still holding onto some aspect of her godforsaken childhood; it was almost dulled, but not entirely hopeless.

And Lena could only assume it was due to a certain bubbly blonde in her life, who held so much positivity and optimism for others, for herself, for the future.

It may or may not have rubbed off on the Luthor.

She smiled, imagining Kara, scintillating with beauty, as always, with her signature beaming smile. Then the memories came, flooded every ounce of Lena's veins with something almost like happiness and love, two emotions far from the spectrum of what she usually felt.

Then she stopped herself just short, the lovely memories halting, before they could disfigure themselves into more horrific ones like they always did. Eventually.

But not right now. Lena could only take so much stress in one moment, and a panic attack was the last thing she wanted.

A familiar pressure, laced with guilt and shame, wrapped around her heart, tight and clenched, made her breathless with its pain.

Lena chuckled quietly, at herself, at how the universe and fate always managed to entwine Kara into her life, so intricately woven in that even a genius like herself would have no idea how to rid of it.

They always managed to find their ways back to one another regardless of whether they desired it or not, no matter long and how complicated the path.

"Can you come to practice? And the game?" Kara whined, "Please?"

*Lena shrugged the blonde's grip off of her shoulders and turned, "I already said."

She froze, completely under the mercy of the pleading blue eyes before her, complemented with the irresistible pout and that god awful crinkle.

*Lena's shoulders sank, "Fine."

*Kara squealed with delight and embraced her friend tightly, "Practice's right after school and the game's at six."

*The wide grin plastered on the blonde's face made all the regret of Lena's acceptance go away.*

*She smiled back, slightly, "Wouldn't miss it for the world."

________________________________________

"She's cute."

Lena snapped her head up from her reverie, "What?"

"That girl that came by your office the other day? Quite an exquisite specimen if I do say so myself."

The Luthor shook her head impatiently, returned to writing some papers on the table, "No, I know who you were talking about, I just don't find my love life to be relevant in our discussions, Odette."
The lithe blonde grinned smugly.

Eleanor chuckled, "You think too loudly," she waved the waitress over for another drink then promptly shooed her away, "We're catching up. The topic of lovers's a part of that deal, right, Eleanor?"

The other woman, Odette, nodded, sipped her wine, "And since you seem so adamant on just being friends...I'm sure you wouldn't mind me going after her, would you? She's a very beautiful woman after all, lovely personality. Very innocent as well, perhaps flexible. I wouldn't mind being the first to change tha-"

Lena snapped her writing tool, the lead flicking away to some unknown location.

"Fascinating," she managed to grind out, replacing her lost pencil and writing with more ferocity as she marked the lead tip down onto rough paper.

Odette raised a brow at the action, "So you wouldn't be opposed?"

Lena took a shaky breath, pressed her lips shut, and exhaled through her nostrils in an attempt to calm the irrationality of her mind.

"I'd..." her voice quieted even further, "I'd be opposed."

She cursed herself for not being able to be the opposite.

Eleanor and Odette sighed with relief, "Finally."

"So why don't you ask her?" the brunette inquired curiously.

"It," a pause, "It's complicated."

"I'm sure it can't be too complex," Odette commented, "It's just a g-"

"But it is," Lena snapped coldly.

The blonde raised her hands up, "Woah, calm down. Okay, it's complicated, but I honestly don't imagine a bubbly girl like her to be...complex." 

"What are you insinuating?"

Odette deadpanned, "Seriously? She seems pretty simple. The only thing Eleanor and I know about the girl's that she loves potstickers, sticky buns, chocolate pecan pie, pizza...food in general. And her name."

She nervously elbowed the woman next to her, seeking aid.

Eleanor hesitated, "Perhaps it was Kiera?"

"Kara," Lena quickly corrected, rolling her eyes.

"Not that our opinions matter that much, but..." Odette gestured between herself and the brunette next to her, "We both think she's great for you."

"Aren't you tired though, Lena?" Eleanor commented, "Of always having to be the one to give in? For once, don't you wish someone would put in a little effort to try and understand you?"
"Kara already does," the C.E.O. stated.

"I thought Gwen did that as well?" Odette inquired.

Lena stiffened at the name, her expression morphed into something contradicting and paradoxical.

A cold fondness.

Eleanor stepped on Odette's foot with her heel roughly, whispering harshly just to her, "Be quiet!"

The blonde held back a squeak and the brunette turned back to face Lena.

"Kara already does, you say?"

Her voice was somber, "Yes. She does. And she's genuine, sincere, and..."

She stopped herself before her feelings for the lively blonde could get out of hand.

Eleanor nodded, smiling, "Exactly," a pause, "But romantically speaking."

The Luthor deflated, said nothing.

"You love her, don't you?"

The C.E.O. remained silent, lost in her gaze at the papers in front of her.

Eleanor placed her hand over her friend's, comforting.

But she was not Kara.

---

Lena wandered, her mind on autopilot as her legs subconsciously ambled her to the soccer field.

She was preoccupied, surprisingly not by her annoying blonde friend, but at the impeccable timing; this particular week was not very merciful with its heaps of homework.

Lena expected to be interrupted by a chorus of brutish screaming, but what she did not expect was a nearby shout warning her to duck and a solid object slamming against the left side of her head; she swore she could feel her brain jiggle from the impact, if the vibrating headache in her cranium was anything to go by.

The force of the ball was so powerful that Lena was surprised it did not pop upon impact.

She was on the ground, fingers gripping a handful of grass as she fumed and her vision tripled.

Clearly someone was trying to target her.

"Oh my gosh, Lena! I'm so sorry!"

Or not.

The Luthor got up sluggishly, ripping chunks of grass with her.

Her stance wavered, hands quickly reaching onto her shoulders to steady her, a pair of blue eyes wrinkled in concern.

"You took one hell of a hit."
Lena glanced behind Kara's shoulder.

It was Lucy, who was analyzing the Luthor's body for any other injuries sustained.

"You good?" the younger Lane asked.

She nodded wordlessly.

The worried bystanders filed their ways back to their coach, Kara remaining, a look of guilt on her face.

"Good aim," Lena commented, hoping to ease the situation.

It was the wrong thing to say.

"'Good aim'?" Kara cried out, "I could've killed you!"

"I'm fine," Lena insisted.

"But," the blonde protested, "No! You don't understand! I-"

She cut herself off before she could say any more.

Lena saved the awkwardness by pointing at the rather empty benches.

It was only practice after all.

"I'll be sitting over there. Good luck."

Kara beamed, gave a quick and tight hug, then jogged back onto the field.

Or more like bounded with joy.

Lena settled down on the benches, slightly glad that the colder season had ended and bloomed into spring time.

Winter was her favorite, everyone stayed inside, it left Lena a chance to go out and wander without being hounded for being a Luthor.

Next was autumn, how the leaves would flutter to the ground and make a crunching sound whenever it cracked or shattered under the soles of pedestrians' feet.

Spring rained often, Lena loved rain, especially flowers that blossomed in a lovely variety of bright to dark colors.

Summer was perhaps the worst, her skin was pale and she burned easily, but Kara, oh how she loved summer; no school, no obligations, no tight schedules, just freedom.

Not that they were not enjoyable aspects for Lena, but it was not like she could go out in public where people would recognize her.

The Luthor grabbed a book out of her backpack and attempted to busy herself with reading, to no avail; her eyes always ended up glancing away from the jumble of printed words to the blonde out on the soccer field after only a maximum of reading three sentences.

She eyed Kara, her vision glazing over strong legs and arms.
When her focus finally returned, she would have to read them over again.

Lena smiled, perhaps it was better to scribble. She replaced the small novel with a textbook and a notepad, but found again that she was unable to concentrate properly.

She would never admit to herself that her crush had gotten way out of hand.

   I see something in you,

   Much more that what others see.

   Something alluring,

   Entrancing,

   Fantastical,

   Beautiful.

   Something ineffable,

   More than mere words can describe.

   I see something special,

   So peculiar and unique,

   That you've left such an unsightly impact that nothing's the same.

   And I, selfish, don't want anyone else to look,

   Only I can be blinded by you.

"Hey, Luthor, what're you writing?"

Lena snapped her notepad closed and jumped at the sound.

"Woah! Chill!" Maggie chuckled, sliding onto the same bench and scooting next to her, but leaving a considerable amount of space.

Alex followed suit, plopping down next to her girlfriend, "You can calm down, Lena. We don't bite."

"Well," Maggie put her hands on her hips and swayed, "I certainly do."

Alex blushed and gulped, ignoring the comment, her attention directed towards the Luthor.

"Did Kara force you to go?"

Lena shook her head, relaxing slightly at the presence of the two women, "No, not really."

"Puppy eyes? Pouting? Simultaneously?"

The raven-haired girl chuckled, "Something like that."

Alex and Maggie noticed that her tone was something akin to dreamily sighing and they shared a look, their eyebrows propped up knowingly.
"Gay," they whispered.

"Pardon?" Lena asked, tilting her head at the two's vague exchange.

The couple cringed in sync and Maggie gave her dimpled smile, winking.

Alex chuckled and her girlfriend gave the Luthor a pat on the back, like some kind of reassurance.

Lena's look of confusion did not cease.

"She played soccer?" Eleanor inquired.

"Indeed," Lena answered.

"That's..."

"Really gay," Odette finished.

"I was going to say unexpected, but that too I guess," the brunette chuckled, "I took the blonde more as yearbook or newspaper."

"The amount of times I roll my eyes around you two...eventually they'll pop out," Lena commented, smirking.

"Did her sister play soccer?"

"She used to," the Luthor's face contorted into something that was deep in thought, "Freshman year from what I remember. She was more into basketball and lacrosse, her girlfriend was into baseball and softball."

"Okay, now that's really gay," Odette added, "What, no volleyball?"

"Kara broke someone's nose trying to score, and from what I remember it might've been Maggie's."

The two women winced.

"Didn't know she had an arm on her. But I thought that Maggie graduated?"

"I didn't say she was on the team."

"How did Kara break someone's nose who was sitting on the bleachers?"

"There's a reason why no one bullied me a few months after we became friends," the C.E.O. explained in amusement.

"I thought she killed them with kindness, you know?" Odette presumed.

"What about you, Lena?" Eleanor asked, tilting her head, "No debate, no mathletes, no..."

She gestured vaguely.

The Luthor shook her head, her voice quiet and filled with regret, "Lex's crimes didn't provide me the freedom to do a lot of things I enjoyed."
Her friends nodded solemnly.

"So you had senioritis early?" the blonde rebuffed with humor.

"It's seniorosis, Odette," Lena corrected.

"'Itis' means 'the inflammation of'," Eleanor elaborated, "We don't have a 'senior' in our body to swell, so 'osis' it is; 'the condition of being a senior' is more appropriate in this context."

"In every context," Lena added.

Odette grumbled and rolled her eyes, "Nerds."

"Kara?"

"Yeah?"

"You..."

The blonde glanced up from her plate to see Alex pointing at her meal with a fork.

"You haven't...eaten your dinner yet. I mean...it's food, Kara. And I'm a lot more concerned 'cause you have sticky buns and potstickers on your plate. Not to mention the pizza box and chocolate pecan pie haven't even been touched."

"I'm not...hungry I guess?" Kara replied, picking at her food with her silverware.

"Okay, that's the most bullshit thing you've ever said," Alex folded her arms, "You've been scowling at your food also. What's up?"

"Nothing."

Alex deadpanned, her tone sarcastic, "Really. Your crinkle says otherwise."

Kara groaned, her lips pursing into a pout, rubbing the area above and between her eyes, "Stupid crinkle."

The agent grinned smugly, "So what's up?"

The blonde sighed, lengthy and heavy, "You know, game night, from a few days ago?"

Alex laughed, recalling Winn's strip tease, "How could I forget? That was one of the best nights we've all ever had."

Kara chuckled, half amused, half uneasy, "Yeah, and remember how it was supposed to be Saturday night?"

"Well, it got moved to Friday night to accommodate Lena, so yeah, I remember. Why couldn't she come on Saturday though?"

The blonde sighed, "That's...that's the problem, she had plans that evening with..."

"With?" Alex encouraged, echoing her last word.

Kara puffed out a breath of air, discouraged, "With two of her exes."
The agent's eyes widened, "No way," then she gasped as a sudden realization knocked her senseless.

"What, Alex?" Kara asked in a panic, "What is it?"

"So that explains the threesome thing!"

The blonde's face reddened as the blush inflamed her entire body, "Alex! That's not funny! This's serious!"

The auburn-haired woman struggled to die down her laughter, "Okay, okay, it's not - it's definitely not funny. Nope."

The Kryptonian tapped her fingers impatiently on the dining table, waiting for the snickers to subside while reigning in her strength so that the furniture would not have indents later.

"Are you jealous?"

As in romantically speaking.

Alex bit her lip, trapping the sentence in her throat.

Kara nodded, unaware of the implication, "I mean, they suddenly come back and Lena's ready to sit them down for dinner and I - I had to wait years and then weeks when Lena moved back to National City, who decided to not even tell me? It makes me angry that she can easily reconnect with her exes and not a close friend."

"I mean, are they total bitches?"

"W-Well no, I don't know, but there's a reason why they're exes, so I don't want them anywhere near Lena if they hurt her before."

"Not to...not to maybe burst your very oblivious bubble, but..." Alex paused, watching as Kara tilted her head attentively, completely unaware.

It was not like Krypton had an issue with sexual orientation from what the agent remembered, though she preferred her little sister to figure things out by herself.

"It's not really my place, but could you maybe be...like...bisex-"

The sisters startled, nearly jumped out of their seats at the sound of the Kryptonian's ringtone, the conversation forgotten.

Alex squinted her eyes as the blonde rummaged through her bag, "Seriously, Kara? Seriously? Bye Bye Bye from NSYNC?"

Impeccable timing.

She grinned bashfully, "What?"

"It's tacky."

The alien huffed, "How dare you, NSYNC's the best thing to ever happen to the twenty-first century excuse you."

She fumbled her phone out before picking it up, "Winn?"
His voice was hysteric and paranoid as he was sobbing uncontrollably, "Come to M'gann's bar! There was some sort of - of gas that was released and all the aliens, they're - they're dead. And I think Mon-El got a whiff of it, but he's still alive! Please hurry!"

Chapter End Notes

Constructive criticism appreciated.
Kara was not shocked that Lillian took action so soon, but what did surprise her was the methods she went through to get to it.

"He's stable," J'onn said, eyeing Winn as he sprinted out to collect more blankets for his grime-covered boyfriend, "For now..."

"For now?" Kara inquired.

"The gas, it's merciless," Alex informed, flipping over her clipboard, "I guess you could say we're lucky Mon-El only inhaled a small amount, but it's still killing him. Slowly. The majority of the medical and science teams are working at trying to find a cure. But we keep coming up empty."

"There's something peculiar about the formula though," Eliza entered, "It's familiar - Kryptonian."

Kara's eyes widened, "I'm going to the Fortress of Solitude."

The blonde was enraged to find the sacred Kryptonian ice cave infiltrated, with her own DNA, and suddenly it clicked as to why Lillian merely removed not even a few ounces of blood to store.

Initially, Kara thought the woman was planning to create an army of clones of Kryptonians.

No, the logical side of her knew that if the cruel woman were to do that, she would have taken even more samples of Kara's blood to fuel that agenda. Even then, the newborns bred in biogenetic chambers would have had to be raised and trained. There would have had to be years put into the project.
It took too much time.

And Lillian was not really one for that much patience from Kara's experience.

Efficiency was an aspect the woman was diligent in manifesting.

Which was why she needed the L-Corp patented isotope to fulfill her legacy of genocide and xenophobia.

Lena folded her arms tightly, rising from her chair and glaring at her visitor.

"Mom."

Lillian nodded tersely at her daughter, her tone just as curt, "Lena."

"What the hell do you want?" came the clipped question, bordered on accusation.

"Now, let's not be rash. I can't just visit my beloved daughter?"

The raven-haired woman's eyes narrowed, "I'm not your child, and you made sure I knew I was unwanted for every single day of my life. Well, it worked. I still feel that way," she inhaled sharply, the exhale coming out in shaky strings, "Now, you can either fly off on your broomstick or you can waste your precious time asking me for what you want and be rejected."

"Who said I didn't have a plan B if I was going to be rejected?"

Lena twitched, "The gas, the one you sent out to that alien bar... You want the isotope, don't you? To make a missile and eradicate their species in National City. But you were planning to take it by force anyway. Why bother asking me?"

"I thought I'd be considerate," she tilted her head, a demeaning smile plastered on her wrinkled face, "You've always had a soft spot for degenerates."

Lena failed to bite her tongue, "Wouldn't that explain you and your fondness for Lex's depravity as well?"

Her mother's eyes flared with fury, backhanding her daughter with a harsh slap that reverberated throughout the office.

Lena's head swept to the side from the force as her mother growled.

"Never spea-"

The young Luthor snapped her head back, ice cold in expression and tone, "Get out."

Her mother took one look at the split lip she caused, then at her daughter's eyes, struggling to be void of emotion, "Disappointing."

The younger woman chuckled bitterly, "I could turn you in right now you know."

"You wouldn't want to do that, dear," Lillian grinned, smug, "'Cause you're going to help me. Just for a little while."

The C.E.O.'s expression morphed into something that looked perplexed, "And why's that?"
"I have the means of crumbling all your hard work into dust of course."

Lena scoffed, "You think my already precarious reputation matters more than justice done to an abusive and genocidal woman like you?"

Lillian chuckled, "No, but I'm sure you're curious as to how I'm going to tarnish your position if you don't cooperate. Would you like the details?"

Lena's arms folded in on themselves even tighter, her fingernails clawing into her supple flesh.

"Well, well, well, it looks like you can actually hold your bastard tongue," her mother smirked, "I'm sure you care about all of your employees, don't you?"

The C.E.O. bristled.

Lillian continued, "You comply, and their lives will be spared. You need only to work with me temporarily."

Lena blinked owlishly and eventually nodded in agreement, her head hung low as a plan slowly formulated within her mind.

"Good," her mother said, heading for the door, "I'm glad we've come to an understanding, you and I."

"Supergirl," Lena whispered. "She'll stop you."

Lillian halted.

A pause.

"Not if she's dead."

Lena tensed further and snapped her gaze back up, but she was unable to make a reply once the door closed.

Her hands trembled and she clenched them into fists, but her body was still shaking with anger.

Lillian grinned, striding down the hall and towards the elevator, when she heard a tantrum of fitful shouts of frustration and an array of shattering glass.

In the wake of Lillian Luthor's arrest, National City had quieted, as well as Supergirl.

Her daughter had been spared from incarceration when it was found that she was in duress, but from the investigation, that was a different story.

Lena, after the questioning, had treaded to her company building and kicked off her heels and eased into the comfortable couch within her office, though she was unable to relax after the ordeal with her mother and yet another one of her genocidal plans.

The fact that she was still adorned in the right form-fitting black dress did not help either.

She frowned deeply at the large empty bottle of alcohol in her hand and blinked.

Or was it three bottles?
She could not tell, let alone read the label on it due to her blurring vision.

Was it vodka? Whisky?

No, it did not matter, she just wanted more of it, of the liquor; the taste was fine, but it was the buzz and sweet bliss of ignorance that she craved so badly.

Lena tossed the empty beverage, relishing in the pleasantly satisfying sound of shattering glass in the far corner of her office. Then she wobbled over to her alcohol cabinet, carefully avoiding the areas where she tipped over chairs and drawers and paperwork on the floor.

Lena swiped the biggest bottle there was from her cupboard, popping open the alcohol and gulping down a large swig as she staggered out to her balcony.

It would have made plenty of people who could hold their liquor do an instant double take.

The amount was startling - poisonous.

Not that she cared, because at the moment dying was a huge plus. No amount of flipping tables over and smashing fragile glasses and vases against the walls would help.

She tried, trashed perhaps every single thing in her office at such an ungodly hour because the silence was infuriating.

The silence from Kara in particular.

Lena had just turned her mother in. She did not expect a thank you nor any show of gratitude, but her friend - her very talkative and bubbly friend - decided to magically disappear for three days.

Was it three? Give or take a few maybe. She could not recall in such an inebriated state.

Lena sat herself on the ledge of her balcony, swinging her legs and watching the city from above, lights scattered throughout the streets.

It was odd.

She hated flying, though not as much heights; flying could have many unforeseen circumstances, she had no control, she had to rely on others. With heights, she could decide to stand at the edge of a cliff if she wanted.

She had control.

The same protocol went for touch. As long as she initiated it, drove it, it would be all right overall.

Again, she had control.

Which was ironic since she drank, depending on her emotions.

Meaning quite often.

She had never drunk herself to unconsciousness though, but she once did, and the fact that she forgot the entire experience was utterly terrifying.

So, she mitigated it, refrained herself, controlled her alcohol intake to the point where she would almost touch the brink of blacking out.
Which, admittedly, was not a good combination when she was standing on top of the ledge, a step away from certain death.

*Kara's expression was one of bewilderment and confusion when she saw her friend next to her cruel mother's side.*

*And Lena could not help but feel slightly hurt at the look of...betrayal?*

*She was not sure.*

*But she did not like that it was directed towards herself, that it seemed as if the hero did not have as much faith in her as she thought she did.*

*Her friend.*

*Fine then.*

*It made turning the key easier, but the hurt in Kara's eyes afterward made her regret it as she bolted into the air to follow after the missile, both carrying the weight of thousands upon thousands of lives with them.*

Kara sighed, exhausted and spent from her time on Earth-1.

She wanted nothing more than to plop onto her comfortable bed and doze off.

But she did not want that.

Not as much as she wanted to visit Lena, who she had not contacted for three days since the Medusa incident due to an impending alien invasion.

So, at her request, a portal was made to send her back to her Earth.

And there she was, transported to L-Corp, standing right inside her friend's office, still in her heroic attire.

And a bit startled from the inter-dimensional travel.

Kara's entire body ached, she just recently took down an entire fleet of Dominators with her Earth-1 friends, she was gone for three days, and the first thing that welcomed her home was Lena's back turned at her as she stood on the ledge of her balcony.

Kara snapped to attention, adrenaline kicking in like caffeine.

The scene quickly played out in her imagination, a new version of the grief and sorrow she experienced of the same exact image when she scoured through the luxurious Luthor abode almost ten years ago.

She cursed herself for being so foolish as to believe that the same situation would never make its almost inevitable return.

The hero felt her legs shake, unstable, involuntarily taking a step closer, "Lena..."

The woman turned, somehow miraculously without tipping over the edge.
Her eyes were red and sunken in, evidence of her despair and insomnia. They flashed with anger and disappointment at the sight of Kara as Lena struggled to control her features.

Eventually, the hostile look began to ebb away into something resigned and defeated.

Then she smiled, lopsided, but it was melancholic and thoughtful even in her drunken stupor, "That day...you shouldn't have saved me."

Silence.

Lena tapped on the now quarter empty bottle of alcohol, the clinking sound it made grating against her ears.

"You should've let me fall."

Kara was bewildered, she could feel the heat of anger and the coldness of remorse course through her veins, neither one overpowering the other, and she was at a loss - an impasse.

Her voice was shaky as she croaked out, "Please, don't do this, Lena. Not again..."

*I'm not sure if I can take it.*

Lena's smile became slight, nearly unnoticeable as she slurred, "Just...let me have this one thing, Kara. This's all I want."

*Isn't it?*

Then the hero finally snapped, desperate, pulling at strings, but hovering over the brittleness of Lena's drunken state of mind.

"No, that can't - there has to be something else, something that can keep you here, something else you want besides...besides this."

Lena's smile finally faltered into a frown as she tightened her lips shut.

*You...*

*Right. How could I forget?*

Then she deflated, quiet, "No, there isn't - it's...it's not within my reach."

"I can reach it for you!" Kara cried, "I can fly, I'm fast, I'm strong, I can freeze things with a puff of me breath, I can shoot lasers out of my eyes for Rao's sake, Lena!"

Tears spilled over the blonde's cheeks to match the woman with the raven hair in front of her, "What is it? The stars? The moon? The..." she trailed off, but her voice returned with more conviction, "What can't you reach? Just tell me what you want! I can give it to you!"

"Then give me this..." she repeated.

"No!" Kara swallowed down a sob, "I won't let you."

Lena shook her head sadly, unable to look at her friend's tear-ridden face, "You'd take this decision away from me then? No matter how much I want to die?" her expression hardened, "No matter how much I don't want you to save me?"
The blonde flinched at the statements, "I care about you too much to let you go. And I don't care if you hate me for it, but it's better than you being dead. I need you in my life, Lena, in any capacity that happens to be, and I know it's selfish."

"We're used to giving after all," Lena interrupted, "The difference is when we actually go after the thing we want," she sighed, her mouth feeling numb and filled with cotton, "You'd be forgiven in time. For me, everyone's always ready to spew out anti-Luthor nonsense."

"No, that's not true..." Kara's voice broke at the lie, but still, she repeated it, "That's not true. You're not one of them."

The C.E.O. glanced up somberly.

*But I am.*

She watched her friend struggle to get ahold of herself.

"You said it yourself, Lena. We can - we can fix this. We can try. But I can't help you if you don't talk to me."

For a moment, the C.E.O. contemplated telling her, telling her everything that was ripping her apart at the seams, starting with the fact that she *is* one of the Luthors.

A bastard child from an illicit affair.

But she was torn and reigned in her desire.

It was a safe bet.

It was ironic; she was a C.E.O. after all, she *thrived* off of taking chances, no matter how the odds were stacked against each other.

But Kara was a different story.

One she was not keen on losing.

She was unwilling to take risks when it came to her precious blonde friend.

Keeping it stable was the most prominent idea.

Kara's expression twisted into bitterness and anger, she could feel her heart breaking, "And you *won't* talk to me. Your feelings aren't fine wine you can just bottle up. You hold things in and hope they rot away, all the toxic ones that're eating at you from the inside-out. You *don't* want to talk about *Lex* or *Lillian* or *Lionel*, your... ‘family’. You *don't* want to talk about how much it just grates on your nerves when, despite everything you’ve done, people *still* judge you by your last name. You *don't* want to talk about how *unfair* it is."

Lena reeled away from the accusations and shivered, unsure if it was the cold nightly breeze or the weight of the truth.

"And you *definitely* don't want to talk about the..." she gulped, "the red kryptonite incident," Kara ground out.

The Luthor's expression darkened and she swayed, causing the hero to take another tentative step towards her.
"Believe me," the blonde continued, "I don't want to talk about it either, but I'm willing to. For us."

Then she shook her head, "But you won't, and I understand. I understand more than anyone else why you won't. But then what's left for us to discuss? Do you use them as distractions away from the real problem?" she chuckled softly, "Don't you want to talk about how your day went at work? How your board members just piss you off all the time? Maybe you want to talk about..." she faltered, "Don't you get sick of talking about how much I like food? About how excited I am for a new Disney movie to come out, or about the cartoons I'm rewatching? About a stupid alien I fought, or about Snapper driving me absolutely crazy? Don't you get sick of all that? Of me? Isn't it annoying? Am I...am I not...giving you enough room to talk about things? 'Cause I can stop, I can work on it, I've always had a bad habit of rambling and-

"Never."

Kara snapped her head up, "What?"

Lena's gaze was filled with adoration, the inflection in her tone fond, "I never get sick of all that."

The blonde sighed, her breath visible in uneven puffs, and she stretched her hand out, beckoning her friend to take it with silent, pleading blue eyes.

"Come with me, to my apartment," her lips broke into a small grin, "So I can annoy you all I want since you never get sick of me."

Lena stifled a chuckle, but hesitated for a few seconds before touching her hand, taking one last look at the long plummet down and willing herself to fall towards Kara.

She stumbled off of the ledge into the strong arms awaiting her arrival and they both breathed a heavy sigh of relief.

Kara's tears came back, overflowing with more fervor than before as her cape draped over her beloved friend.

*I was enough to keep her here.*

*I saved her.*

They took the car of course.

Lena's inebriated state either numbed her fear of flying or increased it tenfold.

This time it was the latter.

The blonde slowly steered into a parking spot and quickly exited the vehicle, opening the passenger door.

"Can you walk?"

Lena nodded, fumbling with her seatbelt while Kara looked on with amusement.

"Stop laughing at me," the C.E.O. commanded, finally unsnapping her seatbelt.

The blonde grinned, "But I'm not."

The Luthor rolled her eyes and she winced at the pounding headache it caused, slowly making her
way out of the car, "I forget that I sometimes mix it up with your," she slurred, "obnoxious breathing."

Kara gasped, "Hey! That was mean!"

"Well, I am a Luthor after all," Lena quipped, her smirk dwindling into a frown.

The blonde folded her arms and pouted, walking ahead of her friend, "Fine, I guess you can find your own way into my apartment."

The C.E.O. grumbled as she took wobbly step after wobbly step, annoyed with how the ground was moving under her.

Then she sighed in defeat, "Kara."

The Kryptonian poked her head out from the entrance into the complex and grinned, "Yes?"

"I need your help," she mumbled.

Kara put a hand behind her ear, "What? I can't hear you."

Lena sighed.

Of course you can you Kryptonian oaf.

"Excuse me?" she scoffed.

The C.E.O. tilted her head.

Did I say that out loud?

Then she muttered, a bit increased in volume, "I need your help."

Kara beamed, "Oh! Well why didn't you just say so?"

"Shut up."

The Luthor squeaked in surprise when a pair of hands snaked their way behind her knees and back, lifting her up.

"My legs are fine, you idiot," she complained, wrapping her arms around her savior's neck and shoulders for purchase.

"Oh, stop whining, but don't you worry, Ms. Luthor," Kara laughed, "We'll be there in a jiffy."

Lena snickered closely, "Did you just say 'jiffy'?"

"W-Well - uh - I..." the blonde flushed in embarrassment, shuddering at the breath that tickled her cheeks and ear.

She shook her head out of her daze and continued into the building and sped up the stairs.

"Ow."

Kara startled, "Oh, Rao! I'm so sorry, did I give you whiplash?"

"No, no, I'm fine," Lena dismissed, the slurring making a powerful comeback, "It's just...that was...a
The blonde's face morphed into one of disgust, "If what I think is going to happen is going to happen, it better not be."

"Do you think I want to vomit on you?"

The Luthor paused, smirking, "On second thought."

The blonde gasped, "Oh, no, no, no. You're not going to barf, so don't. You. Dare."

"It's okay," Lena took a deep breath and shut her eyes, "I can hold on for a while longer."

Kara set her friend down and the C.E.O. leaned against the frame as the blonde fished her keys out of her pocket for her lock.

Lena tilted her head and arched a brow at the unchanged splintered state of the entrance, "Your door's still ruined."

Kara unlocked it and had her friend lean into her as she set her onto the bed in her room, flicking the lights on, "Yeah, I've been busy...I haven't gotten around to replacing it yet, so..." she shrugged.

The raven-haired woman laughed at the sheepish reply, watching the blonde walk into her closet and rummage around as she sprawled onto the comfy bed, "You're a dork."

"I thought I was a Kryptonian oaf."

"Right, I completely forgot, that t-" Lena let out a muffled grunt when clothes were thrown against her face.

Kara stuck her tongue out, "Just get changed you dummy."

The Luthor lazily shed her work clothes on the spot, her movements sluggish.

Kara squeaked when her friend removed some articles of her clothing and quickly exited the room so she could have her privacy. The blonde clenched her eyes shut, but it did not help that her super hearing aided in her imagination.

Lena slid out of her uncomfortable bra and slipped on the oversized t-shirt along with the sleep shorts she was handed, moving towards the bathroom to wash off her make-up, mascara running and lipstick smudged; she was mortified at the sight, thinking of how horrid she looked when she was confronted by Kara in her office, and a morbid thought struck her.

Maybe I should've jumped. I looked awful.

Then came the knock on the door, "You finished?"

"Yes."

The aperture creaked open and Kara entered with a glass of water as her guest exited the bathroom.

Lena's next comment held a playful lilt as she tilted her head to the side, "You could've used your x-ray vision?"

Kara's eyes bulged, "W-What? No. No! Never!"
The Luthor looked at her friend's flustered reaction and reddened face with amusement.

"You mean to tell me that you didn't take advantage of that ability of yours?"

"I'm no pervert!" she gasped, then pouted, shoving the glass of water into Lena's hands, "Just drink this and stop teasing me."

The raven-haired woman did as she was told, afterwards setting the beverage on the night stand as the lights flickered off.

She felt Kara plop onto the bed and sigh, expelling her exhaustion.

"You should get to bed," the blonde yawned next to her.

Lena, still sitting on the edge, smiled in the dark, "I need to clear my head first, go over some stuff for work, especially since I trashed my offic-"

She yelped when arms encircled her waist and dragged her down, and suddenly she was pressed up against her friend.

"Sleep," the blonde yawned again, grumbling, "Sleep's good. Sleep's better. You can worry about everything else in the morning."

Lena squirmed in the hold and braced her hands against Kara's shoulders, attempting to push away.

The alien's grip tightened and she growled, "No work."

"Okay, okay," Lena relented, "Just let go of me you Kryptonian oaf."

Kara eased, relinquishing her hold, missing the warmth of her friend's body as she increased their distance with a couple of inches.

She despised the split second of relief that crossed her mind.

A moment passed and they settled into a comfortable silence.

After several minutes, Kara noticed that her friend, according to her heartbeat and minuscule movements under the blankets, was still awake.

"Are you okay, Lena?"

The Luthor sighed, turning so her back faced her friend.

The blonde knew better, judging from the woman's still unrelaxed position.

The 'I'm fine' phrase didn't leave her lips though, and it was something else entirely, catching the hero off guard.

"Did you really think I betrayed you?"

She noticed how Lena's heart sped up and how she was slightly trembling, and it just occurred to Kara that the question was something that developed heavily within her friend.

She waited and waited, but she could not find any words to express herself.

Lena finally sighed, "I see."
"I didn't know what to think," Kara blurted out, bewildered, then she mentally slapped herself in the face for the outburst.

A few seconds passed, the silence engulfing them with their introspection.

"What do you mean?"

"I was...confused," she explained, "Like I was split in two and I didn't know what to believe. Like one end was pulling me in one direction and the other end was pulling the opposite," a pause, "There was a part of me that was skeptical about your involvement; I didn't believe it, I didn't want to. I've known you for a long time now, you're not someone who'd help with committing alien genocide, but then..."

Kara's brows crinkled as she trailed off and Lena turned over so she was facing her, echoing, encouraging her to continue with a soft and gentle voice, "'But?'

She took a deep breath, "Then I remembered what I did to you when I was under red kryptonite. Then I realized that I shouldn't be shocked if that was the path you chose...cause of me... I guess, even if I wasn't surprised, it would've still hurt."

"I understand."

"I'm sorry."

Lena shook her head, "Don't be. In my plans to foil my mom's, I should've probably figured out how to communicate with you and the D.E.O."

"You would've put yourself at a higher risk. That would've been reckless. I'm honestly glad you didn't."

"At least you would've known. I'm sure you weren't all too prepared with me actually siding with the age-old anti-alien Luthor agenda."

"You're not them."

Lena's expression fell into bitterness, "But I am. I'm the bastard child of an affair between Lionel Luthor and his whore. I was born from dishonesty and unfaithfulness. Maybe it's only a matter of time before I become corrupt myself."

Kara's eyes widened, the fact unexpected, but her reaction was instant as she shook her head vehemently, "No. I refuse to believe that your legacy's determined by your blood. My family's done despicable things, but I'd like to think I turned out a bit better than them. And you have too."

"Nature versus nurture," Lena frowned, tears brimming in her eyes, "He took that secret to his grave, Kara. But I knew, much longer before my unwanted mom spit it in my face. I thought he was going to tell me, I thought he wasn't as callous and cruel, but I was wrong. And my actual mom, she didn't say anything, didn't visit, not even after I turned eighteen and took over the company," she sighed and grinded her teeth, "I tracked her down, she's living a simple and happy life. With her children. Without me, the mistake"

Lena's tears finally spilled over and she clenched her hands into fists, her voice cracking open to reveal the broken heart underneath, "I've always been unloved by them. Maybe I'm worthless after all."

Kara immediately wrapped her into a tight hug, "No. They're wrong. They don't deserve you. And
you are loved. By me, by Eliza, by Alex, by Maggie...even Lucy and Winn, and I'm sure everyone else's pretty fond of you too. And it's okay to fall apart, to be vulnerable, as long as you do it with others; I know you're used to being alone, but you have me now, and Alex and Maggie and Eliza, who are probably a lot better at this than I am, but...you're kind of stuck with me right now."

Lena, through her shock, managed to reciprocate the hug and buried her face under the crook of her friend's neck.

Kara smiled, "You've been eaten and spat out and eaten again trying to get through all of that, and there are times it seems worse than before, but I can promise you that things will get better, no matter how hopeless it seems."

Lena's voice was small as she shrank into the string arms, "They made empty promises too..."

Kara's grip tightened protectively, determined, "But I won't."

And Lena's heart constricted, her chest throbbing as she found herself believing in those words.

Chapter End Notes

Constructive criticism appreciated.
Lena cracked her eyes open, yawning silently. She could only imagine how disheveled she looked with her messy raven locks tying themselves in knots and how red and puffy her eyes became from crying.

It was not like Kara did not look the same.

Though Lena thought the blonde wore exhaustion better.

The woman blinked harshly, eyes and pupils adjusting - dilating - in the presence of the muted sunlight streaming through the blinds of the windows.

The Luthor noticed the close proximity she had with Kara as she was pressed up against her frontside. It was at that moment that some unknown force beckoned her to brush a loose and wild strand behind the blonde's ear. Afterwards, resting her hand on Kara's cheek, caressing and stroking the soft, supple skin with her thumb, smiling when her friend grinned at the contact.

Then Lena froze, startled by her almost impulsive actions, quickly retracting her hand and immediately disappointed with the sudden lack of warmth that was in her palm not too long ago.

It seemed Kara felt the absence of the endearing heat as well and her lips instantly formed a frown and she released a displeased hum.

The C.E.O. sighed and managed to untangle their legs, but when she went to remove herself completely from the arms wrapped around her, they stood firm, steadfast in their positions as she tugged once, twice.

Lena eventually tugged again and the stubbornly caring arms stirred, relinquishing her body from their inhuman prison.

She slid out gently, as quietly as possible, so she did not wake the sleeping beauty softly dozing into her pillow.
The raven-haired woman dropped her legs over the edge of the bed, rubbing her groggy eyes with her knuckles and hissing at the massive migraine her intense hangover had wrought.

She rotated her torso so she was able to partly face Kara, automatically admiring her lovely blonde tresses that pooled around her pillow like a fan, her limbs suddenly splayed out at the absence of her guest, the blanket sort of covering her body due to the tossing and turning.

Then she curled into a ball, murmuring incoherent nothings to no one in particular apparently.

The C.E.O. got a hold of herself and stifled a chuckle at the rather adorable sight before her, placing the blanket fully over the curled body and tucking her in.

*What a dork.*

The ordeal the night before only served to manifest Lena's growing feelings for Kara, who was snoring soundly behind her.

And exponentially so.

The Luthor buried her face in her hands and groaned in frustration.

Catching feelings in high school was the last thing she thought she would do. It had never even crossed her mind, not even for a second.

Even worse, her little crush had developed in its vigor, its magnitude went unnoticed until it was too late to even do anything about it.

Not that Lena would have tried to do anything if the story was different anyway.

"Hey, good morning."

The Luthor jumped, startled from her thoughts by a sweet voice and a hand cautiously placed on her shoulder.

Kara slid farther away, giving the woman space, concern coloring her blue eyes, "Are you okay?"

"I...yeah. Yeah, I-I'm fine," she answered hoarsely, "You just...scared me is all."

The blonde's eyebrows scrunched together even further, the worried creases on her forehead more prevalent as she studied her friend, who was now retreating back into her shell.

"What time is it?" Lena croaked, her morning voice refusing to diminish.

Kara glanced over her side of the bed, reading the clock on her nightstand.

"Ten."

The C.E.O. groaned at how late into the morning it was, stretching out her muscles and rising as the springs within the bed squeaked.

"Off to work already?" the blonde questioned, though it was more of a statement, but the bitter taste it left on her tongue was difficult to ignore.

Lena grinned, "A company doesn't run itself, Ms. Danvers."

She frowned when she noticed Kara picking on an old stain in her pants, then her shirt, then back
"Is something the matter?"

The blonde took a moment to herself before replying.

"No, nothing's wrong, but are you..." she sighed, connecting their eyes, "Are you sure you're ready to go back so soon?"

Lena quickly made to avert the gaze, a half-hearted smile making itself known, "Like I said, a company doesn't run itself. Why do you ask?"

Kara's eyes drooped, her expression became crestfallen when she noticed the blatant avoidance in her friend.

Her lips parted, then closed, then opened again as she dug her fingers into the sheets, the next sentence coming out reluctantly.

"I was hoping that...we'd be able to, you know," a pause, hesitation, "have some time to ourselves? Maybe go out for brunch?"

Kara found herself feeling hopeful for an acceptance to her invitation, but simultaneously berated herself for taking up so much of the C.E.O.'s precious time.

After all, she did run a multibillion international company. She was an heiress to the expensive Luthor name.

"Of course."

The blonde's eyes widened; though a part of her knew that maybe she was important enough for Lena to ponder the idea, she did not actually think the woman would agree, much less so eagerly.

Kara gave a beaming grin, "Does Noonan's sound good to you?"

Her friend returned a wide smile, "It sounds lovely actually."

"Again, this isn't up for negotiation, I cleared up my schedule until noon, we have plenty of time and I want to spend all of it with you."

*My friend.*

"I just..." the blonde sighed, slightly blushing from the C.E.O.'s statement, "I just worry I'm keeping you from finishing important stuff, Lena. But at the same time I don't want to leave you to mindlessly sign boring papers. It just seems kinda...lonely."

"No worries, Kara," the woman reassured, placing a comforting hand over her friend's knuckles that incessantly tapped on the table, effectively halting the rhythmic pattern, "I was looking for an excuse to escape being a C.E.O. for just a little while anyway. Besides, it's not too isolated, I'm used to being alone. It helps me think. I was never as productive working with others."

Kara frowned at her last potsticker, stabbing it with her fork and shoving the delicacy into her watering mouth, chomping on it aggressively.

*Used to being alone.*
Used to being mistreated.

Used to being disrespected.

Why's she so okay with all that?

She swallowed her potsticker bits, settling for a more humorous and lighthearted response.

"I thought we were a pretty good team in chemistry, I'm offended."

"Team?" Lena arched an immaculate brow and folded her arms in amusement, crossing her legs, "You probably would've blown up the entire school with your antics."

"I'm sorry," Kara scoffed, "Earth science was a little bit difficult to grasp 'cause of your stupid gravity and your stupid elements and why would you name one of them Krypton? I was so confused. It was just so...so..."

She made vague, ridiculous hand gestures to communicate what she was thinking.

Lena and the onlookers could not help but feel like she was conducting some sort of Satanic ritual to summon a demon.

"Stupid?" the Luthor finished for her instead, smirking.

Kara huffed, pouting and plopping her hands down onto her lap, "Yeah. Sure."

"Well, you surpassed me in terms of science, even if you weren't familiar with Earth's peculiarities, but Krypton was so advanced with its guilds and all," Lena chuckled, "I hate to admit it, but you saved my ass in organic chemistry, so I guess we're even."

The alien grinned proudly, then tilted her head in curiosity, "How'd you know about the guilds though?"

"W-Well..." Lena set down her silverware, "Lex's notes. Apparently, you were going to be the youngest member to be accepted into the science guild. I should be impressed, but I'm not surprised, you're a genius after all."

Kara fidgeted, staring into her empty plate as a furious blush heated up her neck and into her cheeks, the butterflies in her stomach fluttering intensely.

"But I guess maybe English wasn't really your forte."

At those words, the blonde's crinkle reformed between her brows and she pouted again.

Lena smirked, "There's no 'K' in 'diabolical'. Or a 'C' in 'thief'. Just so you know."

Kara gasped, "Okay, there's a perfectly good reason why I screwed the last part up!"

"Oh? Do tell," the C.E.O. chuckled, leaning back into her chair.

"'I' before 'E' except after 'C'."

Lena rolled her eyes, "That's hardly a good excuse."

"Thank Rao I had you as my elbow partner then, else I would've failed that class."
The Luthor snorted, shaking her head, "Kara, the worst grade you had in that class was a 'B'."

"It was a 'C'!" the blonde narrowed her eyes at her friend trying to stifle another bout of laughter, "Don't give me that look! I'm being serious! I absolutely dreaded the end of term for forever," the Kryptonian groaned, "I mean reading, writing, and speaking English is fine, but that class focused on analyzing literature? Like, c'mon, that's not English, that's such a misleading title."

"It's actually called language arts," Lena informed, "English is a shorter word for the class that most students utilize."

Kara's eye twitched, "Well. That explains a lot. But I still don't see the point of analyzing Emily Dickinson, most jobs don't need you to read ancient poems?"

The Luthor shrugged, "Most jobs don't need their employees to know how to calculate algebra either."

"You know, I'd rather write poems."

"What? Math too boring for your liking?" Lena teased, "Did you not pursue science in college? You could've excelled immensely."

"Okay, no, I just enjoy the arts more, now as a hobby though. Thanks to Eliza and Alex working for the government, we had a lot of benefits and my college tuition was paid for, so luckily I didn't need to worry about money."

"Actually, I never asked, what did you eventually decide to major in?" the Luthor inquired, "You were kind of scattered about what interested you."

"There was a time I wanted to major in art."

"Oh," Lena nodded, "So you were going to worry about money later then?"

Kara scoffed at the insult, swiping up the menu and bonking her friend on the head, "That was so rude. How dare you."

The C.E.O. shook her head and chuckled, glancing at her watch, "It seems I've overstayed my welcome here. I have to get back to work in ten minutes."

The blonde pouted, "Awww, but it was so nice spending time with you."

"We'll do it more often once I get my paperwork finished."

"So you mean never?" Kara gasped, "Is this your heinous plan to get rid of my annoying presence?"

"Nonsense, as long as you do it I find it to be more tolerable."

"Does that mean I can bring donuts later tonight?"

---

Lena rolled her eyes, flicking off her television once she heard the words 'estranged daughter' utter from the mouth of the anchorwoman.

She turned when the familiar sound of her office doors opening caught her attention.

The Luthor released a breathy chuckle at the sight of her close friend, "Everyone in National City's got an opinion about me: ungrateful daughter, heroine, bitch..."
She let out another laugh, more solid, "Yeah, they've all called for a quote. Not you though, Snapper hasn't sent you here to shake me down?"

"No!" Kara assured quickly, "No, I'm here as a friend. And I brought donuts like I said this morning," she dangled the paper bag between them, the material wrinkled and made crinkling noises at the movement, "I thought you could use some fried sugary goodness; you like donuts, right?"

Lena tilted her head playfully, a lilt in her tone, "Well..." she grabbed the bag, "I am human."

They both chuckled, making way towards the couch in the office as the C.E.O. thanked her visitor, the two easily falling into conversation.

"You don't think I should feel guilty for...for not wanting to see that monster, right?" Lena asked, uncertain and picking at her donut.

"Well, do you think that you'd find peace of mind by visiting her and telling her how you really feel?" Kara answered with a question, casually leaning back and sinking into her friend's office couch.

Lena's expression was downcast, focusing her attention on the sugary goodness in her hands that compensated for the lack of sweetness in her life, "Even if I did it wouldn't make a difference..."

There was a pause, heavy and crestfallen.

"She's been the same way since the day I met her..."

Abusive.

Cruel.

Evil.

Kara exhaled through her nostrils and adjusted her glasses higher up her nose, "I've spent most of my life wishing I could talk to people that are no longer here..."

Her voice trembled and cracked slightly at the last word, her sentence nearly faltering.

She pressed her lips together tightly for a moment before loosening the tension to face Lena again, her voice stronger.

"She's still here..."

The Luthor looked on somberly, glancing upon the surface of Kara's vulnerability and broken, but fixed heart before it closed up again.

Lena's icy green eyes thawed as they locked with the soft, but bright blue ones in front of her, filled with longing yet filled with drive as well.

Kara's lips tilted, a grin playing at her lips, but instead she opted to form a smile that took on half of her face.

It still managed to make Lena's heart throb with adoration.

"I...if I'm being honest, I really don't like your mom," an unsteady breath, "Not after all that she's done," her voice quieted, "...especially to you."
The Kryptonian shook her head, willing the memory of the time she saw Lena's horrific bruises and scars away.

"Believe me," the C.E.O. sighed, "I understand, and you're not alone in that."

"I'm being as unbiased as I can," the blonde frowned, "Lillian. She...she's still your mom..."

The Luthor managed to hold back a disbelieving scoff and sighed in place of it, "Yeah..."

There was a moment of silence as Kara gazed out the office's panels of windows into the nearly starless night sky.

Lena noticed the distant and somewhat detached twinkle in her look, somber and forlorn.

Just like her own.

Though the blue eyes did not hold as much loneliness anymore, more hope and optimism.

Lena found herself slightly jealous of it, of the warm melancholic look that would never match her coldness, of the blonde's friends and family.

*Family.*

Her eyes widened just a fraction at a realization, that Kara never really talked about her family, about Krypton.

She looked back up to see that her only friend was still glancing out the windows, her mind echoing with emptiness as it wandered elsewhere.

"Do you miss them?"

Kara turned, confused, "What?"

"Your family. Krypton."

The blonde's eyes widened as well, surprised and a bit flustered that her friend was able to easily see through her with just a few words she had said.

"Yeah. I do," she replied with a sigh, just in time for Lena's shoulders to deflate in relief that she had not crossed a boundary.

Still, there was an unanswered question that the Luthor was much too afraid to ask, the subject already bordering on tentativeness and almost taboo.

But Kara could sense the curiosity emanating from her friend, and she did not mind elaborating anyway.

"They died when I was thirteen. I think Eliza told you her family adopted me around that time."

Lena nodded, understanding and empathetic, waiting for her to continue.

She mistook the pause for hesitance, but Kara was able to find her voice again.

"My parents were everything a kid would want them to be; they were smart, kind, caring..." she trailed off and sighed when her mind wandered, "But, of course, they had their flaws too, made mistakes. Huge ones. My dad...he created Project Medusa, and they both didn't do anything when Krypton's destruction was imminent."
Another pause as Lena looked on with piqued interest and sympathy.

"Then I was adopted by the Danvers. Alex...she didn't really like me at first - scratch that - she did not like me for a long time actually."


The blonde chuckled heartily and the Luthor found that it was one of the most beautiful sounds she had ever heard, melodious and gentle and passionate in the silence of her office.

"Well, believe it or not, Alex didn't like me, but I understood; I took the attention away from her. Away from her birth parents. She didn't want to share their affection with a girl that just spontaneously was adopted by them."

Kara sighed, "Eventually, she warmed up to me and now our bond's unbreakable. She's the best sister anyone could ever have; she's awesome, smart, badass...but then again, I'm pretty biased."

She laughed again and Lena found her heart beating faster at it the second time.

The blonde shook her head, frowning, "But...things kind of got out of hand when Jeremiah..." she paused, "When he disappeared... Things got tough, but we all pulled through, we're tough women."

Kara sighed as tears began to prickle her eyes and she interlaced her fingers together, pushing and pulling and fidgeting in the absence of a throw pillow for her to squish to no end, "Then my aunt Astra came for a little...visit," she chuckled at the euphemism when the woman clearly went out of her way to achieve world domination. Initially though. Initially.

The blonde smiled through a single tear that trickled down her cheek and over her lips, tasting like salt, "Her husband Non came along too. They caused the massive mind control march throughout National City around a year ago? They both died shortly after. I wasn't too fond of my uncle though. Aunt Astra though...she was my only living memory of Krypton left that wasn't corrupt along with Kal. But then he..."

Her voice cracked, the wound of her younger cousin's death at the hands of Lex Luthor still tender, "I failed them - my parents, Krypton. I was supposed to carry on my planet's legacy, pass it onto Kal, but then I got stuck in the Phantom Zone and when I finally was able to actually teach him Kryptonese," she chuckled sadly, "Oh Rao, his accent was awful, and it hurt, 'cause I was too late. He might've been Kryptonian, but me? I'm the last child of Krypton; I hold its culture, its language, its legacy. I experienced its life first-hand...and its death," she whispered, "It'll all fade away once I'm gone."

Lena frowned, found that she was unable to sit idly by and just listen when her friend was right in front of her ready to burst into tears. She placed a hand on top of Kara's, the blonde's immediately stilling as their fingers laced around one another's subconsciously.

They looked at one another, their faces just a foot apart until Lena leaned in closer, and with her other hand, placing it gently on Kara's cheek, her thumb smoothing over the wet cheekbone and wiping the tears away.

Her other hand squeezed the blonde's fingers tighter, letting her know that she was never going anywhere and would be there for her.

Kara returned the gesture, communicating the same unsaid message that hung in the air heavily, thick and weighty.
Their hearts began to beat rapidly, neither one noticing as their eyes darted down to the other's lips.

Then the blonde suddenly burst out into a fit of soft laughter, "I'm sorry, I didn't mean to ramble, sometimes it just comes out and I just can't stop the word vomit, you know? Alex and Eliza always said that I had a problem with talking too much and that it might annoy others, so I really hope that you're not annoyed with it at all. Wait, but I'm rambling right now. I'm so sorry, I get really nervous sometimes and I should really stop-"

She was interrupted at the sound of Lena's chuckle, filled with humor and mirth, so sincere it made wrinkles appear in the corners of her eyes.

Kara could not recall the last time she had seen such genuity exuded from the usually poised and professional C.E.O., and she found herself flushed with embarrassment, feeling a familiar tingle shivering up her spine, the nape of her neck, and into her cheeks.

She could only think of how red she was at the moment.

The raven-haired woman noticed Kara's flustered body language, the blonde rubbing the back of her neck in a nervous habit.

"Not to worry," Lena assured, her voice cooing and successfully soothing her friend, "I think your rambling is quite endearing if I do say so myself."

The blonde squeaked and found herself heating up even further at the blunt statement.

Alex perked up at the sound of jingling keys.

Kara swung the door open and entered her apartment, humming an upbeat tune as she greeted her sister, Maggie, and Eliza.

The oldest Danvers arched a brow, giving her mother and girlfriend a look, the curiosity reciprocated, "What makes this day so bright and happy in particular?"

"Oh, nothing," the blonde giggled, skipping into the kitchen and taking a slice of pizza for herself.

"Are you sure?" Maggie asked, "Seems whatever it is made you late for sister night, it's like half past nine."

Kara stumbled, "Sister night? Then why're you here?" she gasped dramatically, "Alex? You didn't tell me you guys were getting married?"

The auburn-haired woman choked on her alcohol, "W-Wait, what? M-Married?"

"As pleasant as the idea is, I'm not in a hurry to be your sister-in-law," Maggie laughed, "And Eliza's here too, she's your mom."

"I was actually here for a quick visit," the woman chimed in.

Kara groaned at the pair, "Ugh, don't you two think it's time already?"

Eliza shot them a look as well, "I agree."

"No," the couple said in unison.

"Especially with the jobs we have now, marriage isn't really a great option at the moment," Alex
reasoned, cheeks still pink.

Kara shrugged and bit a piece off of her pizza, "Whatever you say."

"But back to the topic at hand," Maggie continued, "What's got you more bouncy than usual?"

"Hmmm? Oh, I don't know actually," Kara replied, plopping onto the cushions of the sofa across from her sister and her girlfriend, "Do I seem bouncier?"

The detective and agent shared another look.

"Uh, yeah," Alex confirmed, "What'd you do today?"

"I was with Lena," she hummed happily, chowing down her pizza slices.

Maggie gave a confused look, mouthing 'did they fuck' to her girlfriend, who snickered in response.

Eliza, who was behind them, gave her best scolding look and slapped the pair upside the head while they feigned hurt.

Then the woman focused back to her other daughter, who was occupied with her food.

"That's good to hear," she smiled, cautious.

"What about yesterday?" Alex asked, prying for more information regarding her little sister and Lena, "You talked all about Earth-1, but later that night you kind of wouldn't answer my texts until the next morning. Were you with her then too?"

Kara stiffened slightly, suddenly uncomfortable with the memories that flooded behind her eyes, "I...yeah...I was."

The three guests noticed the blonde's usual positive mood dwindled as she averted her eyes, staring blankly at her empty plate.

Eliza's expression softened, "What happened?"

Kara swallowed down her reluctance, "We sort of got into a disagreement."

"Sounds intense," Alex commented, "You guys rarely fight."

The blonde gave a forced chuckle, "It wasn't really a...fight, I guess... I went to visit her at L-Corp after I came back and she...wasn't in the best mood."

"Wow, that was really watering it down."

"I can imagine, with all of the pressing matters she had to attend to personally and professionally, I'm sure it was upsetting to deal with all at once," said Eliza.

Kara nodded as a short silence engulfed all of them in awkwardness, then she sighed, "I'm a little tired..."

"That's all right," her mother smiled, "We were all just leaving anyway, right, girls?"

Alex and Maggie nodded, already out the door with Eliza trailing after.

"Take care, honey."
The blonde smiled, "Thanks."

And the door clicked closed.

Kara slumped and shut her eyes, shrinking into the cushions and heaving a great breath as she set her pizza on the coffee table.

The blonde shook her head and stood up, walking towards her room and grabbing her pajamas, slipping into comfy pants with puppies on them and a plain white t-shirt as the matching garment was being processed in her laundry.

She quickly washed her make-up off and undid her hair, brushing out the long knotted locks before returning to her kitchen to grab another pizza.

Kara paused and narrowed her eyes.

Were all these flowers here before?

She scanned her apartment and found the entirety of it was filled with endless bouquets red roses.

"Kara Zor-El!"

The blonde shrieked and snapped her head around to find a man dramatically bowing in her presence.

"Who the hell are you?" she shouted, alarmed with the unexpected visitor.

"Now, now, now, that's no way to talk to your husband," he grinned toothily.

"Husband?"

"Well, future husband," he bowed, "My name is Mxyzptlk, but you may call me Mxy," he introduced, falling to a knee and bringing out a small case that held a wedding ring upon its velvet cushion, "Kara Zor-El, will you marry me?"

Chapter End Notes

Constructive criticism appreciated.
Chapter Summary

Mr. Mxyzptlk, a playful imp, decides to pay a visit and have fun with the three-dimensional earth realm. With the trouble of the new visitor, Kara stops denying and finally comes to the realization that she has more than friendly feelings for Lena.

TRIGGER WARNING: MANIPULATION, NON-CONSENT (with kissing, not sex), POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER, VIOLENCE.

Chapter Notes

Find me on Tumblr at spoopercorp and on FF as Local-Asshole.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Kara jumped and looked down, noticing she was now adorned with a wedding dress.

"Wh - are you crazy?" she exclaimed.

Mxy frowned, "Is that a no?"

"It's a hell no!" she shouted, "Get out of my apartment!"

"Fine! A barbarian like you won't make a good wife anyway! You should be thankful that I, Mxyzptlk, even offered you my hand in marriage!"

"Go find someone else to annoy with your inflated ego!"

The imp placed his hands on his hips, a bad attitude seeping through his pores, "Oh, I will! And she's the most beautiful woman in the universe! And believe me when I say that as I'm a fifth dimensional being!"

Kara rolled her eyes, "I don't care."

"But you," he chuckled, "You are suited to be my rival."

"Rival?"

He snapped his fingers.

"What the fuck?"
"Lena!" the imp gasped at the sight of the C.E.O. that landed on the ground roughly due to the interdimensional trip, "Language! Not to worry, my love, we'll take care of that vulgar mouth of yours on our honeymoon!"

The Luthor got up from where she was summoned on the floor and dusted herself off, "Honeym - who the fuck do you think you are?"

She turned to Kara, about to ask what was going on, but her mouth went dry at the sight of her friend in a lovely wedding dress.

She looked absolutely immaculate.

Lena was stunned, mesmerized by her beauty, but refrained from gawking any longer and cleared her throat, "Kara, what's going on?"

The blonde groaned, "Apparently, we were going to get married."

"Married?" the Luthor repeated, something hot bubbling in the pit of her stomach. She stepped in front of her friend and glared at the man in front of her, her jealousy detectable to everyone but Kara.

"Were being the key word," the imp corrected at the protective stature, though Lena still did not relax, "I've found a new love..."

He bent a knee and produced the ring towards the raven-haired woman, "Oh, my one true love! You look even more beautiful in person! Will you marry me, Lena Luthor?"

Kara gaped, partly because of the anger that boiled inside at the notion that Lena was the imp's next target, and partly because of the wedding dress that spontaneously appeared around her friend.

The blonde realized she was back in her pajamas and that Lena looked ethereal and much better in the wedding dress than she did, and she found herself under the spell of the entrancing woman - so inexplicably alluring.

Mxy took the Luthor's smooth alabaster hand into his own and sighed, seeing Kara scowl from his peripheral vision with a smirk, "You should be the eighth wonder of the world..."

Lena made a repulsed face and pulled away, her voice cold, "Disgusting."

"Well, once you warm up to me you won't think so," he winked suggestively.

"Oh no you don't!" Kara snarled, and despite her aggressive behavior, she gently slid her hand into Lena's, firmly placing herself between her friend and the impish stalker.

"Jealous are we?"

"She's not interested!" came the retort.

"In men," the Luthor added to further throw him off, eyes narrowed.

It did not seem to work.

"You just haven't found the right one yet, babe!" Mxy chuckled, "Don't play hard to get!"

"Definitely haven't heard that bullshit spewed out of other men's mouths before," she commented, sardonic.
The imp tapped his foot and clicked his tongue at the sarcastic remark.

Kara turned her head to face Lena, giving a small smile and squeezing her hand in reassurance, the latter of the two widening her eyes at the gesture, some of the tension lifting as they focused on how soft one another's hands were.

"What's this?" Mxy questioned, "Oh! I didn't realize you two were together!"

The pair immediately pulled their hands away, Kara stuttering that he was mistaken as Lena averted her eyes.

"Oh! Well, I guess I have dibs then!" the imp grinned, teleporting to the Luthor's side and taking her hand, "How do you feel about symphonies?"

And with a snap of his finger they were gone.

"No!" Kara cried.

She was fuming, infuriated as she speedily changed into her super suit, activating her earpiece, "Alex! J'oNN! Lena's been taken!"

"Darling, what has you down?" Mxy pouted, "We have this entire stadium to ourselves," he gestured to the stage filled with instrumentalists, "And but the loveliest of melodies to proclaim our love."

"Your lo - no - your... infatuation with me and obsession with marriage," Lena corrected, tugging at the chains that bound her to the seat to no avail yet again, "And this's no way to treat your date for future reference, Mr..."

"Mxyzptlk," he answered, "And how else would I make sure you remain seated and not run away?"

"You're holding me against my own will you bastard!" Lena growled, struggling against her chains again, the metal rattling with the erratic movement.

"And I'm still in this awfully uncomfortable wedding dress. Great."

"That's not very nice, honey," Mxy frowned, "Didn't your mommy tell you that such language is unbefitting of a woman? Shall I cheer you up with a kiss, my love?" he suggested with a devilish grin, wiggling his eyebrows.

"No!" Lena shouted.

The imp snapped his fingers and suddenly his date was liberated from her restraints, "How about if I unchain you? Will you kiss me now?"

"To quote an ancient proverb...that's still a 'no'!" Lena groaned, standing up and rubbing her wrists.

"Uh, said who?"

"Um, all women with creepy stalkers? Do you even know what that word means?"

"How about..." a plume of smoke surrounded the imp and suddenly Kara's image replaced his, leaning in and inching their faces closer, "Now? Will you kiss me now?"

Even the voice was the same, every aspect undeniably cloned to perfection.
But it still was not her.

Lena folded her arms and looked away, eyebrows furrowed and trying to fight back the tears that were prickling at her eyes.

"You think love is a malfunction. To you, it's the only sane answer to the impermanence of life, it's the only thing that's keeping you alive. That's unfortunate," Mxy stated.

It's pathetic.

He moved to caress her cheek in Kara's skin, "And you're afraid."

She flinched away, the touch singed her flesh with its heat.

"You're afraid that you'll end up like them - your family - enslaved by their lust for power. But everyone else, they've already defined you. It's no use. You should just succumb to it, the hate you bear against the people who've done you wrong. I'll even help you."

Lena took a shaky breath and swallowed down the bile in her throat, shutting her eyes so she would not look at the image of her friend, willing herself to deafen at the sound of the voice that sounded so much like Kara's.

"No one will love you like I do," the imp hummed, and it struck a chord within Lena, "Not your dad, not your mom, not even your brother," he paused, "And most certainly not her."

Mxy knew it was a low blow, but he was nearly all-knowing; he was aware of the Luthor's love for her best friend.

Kara on the other hand, had him baffled. He was unsure if she felt the same way.

But now he was quite certain that if she did then they would be official by now.

The imp did not stop to think that Kara had quite possibly been repressing the possibility of liking her friend, not in constant denial, but...oblivious or unaware.

So he concluded that it was painfully one-sided and he knew the Luthor thought the same.

Lena folded her arms tighter, her gaze still focused on anything but her stalker, and holding back the tears that wetted her eyes now threatening to spill over.

At her stubborn silence, Mxy shapeshifted back into his original form, tilted her chin up, and captured her lips in his, earning a muffled surprised sound.

Kara was visibly upset at the sight of her friend and the insufferable imp kissing, both of them seemingly occupied by the action they had not noticed or ignored the fact that the hero crashed through the roof and landed in the middle of the stage.

She grinned when the Luthor yanked away from the kiss and gave Mxy a hard slap on the cheek.

Kara's upturned lips fell when she saw how much distress Lena was in, how minute her trembling was from afar.

"How dare you..." the woman whispered harshly, chest heaving at the anger, the sentence cracked as she lost the stability within her voice.

Kara bristled, fuming at the fact that Mxy kissed her friend without her permission, assuming that
was the reason why the Luthor was suddenly emotional since she was not present for the entirety of the dilemma.

Lena was less affected by that and more broken by the fact that Mxy utilized his powers to manipulate his image into that of Kara's; it caught her off guard and he took advantage of it, exploited her feelings for the blonde for a measly kiss.

It stung, and horribly so.

And the fact that an almost omniscient fifth dimensional imp was able to confirm that Kara did not reciprocate her feelings made her heart ache even more.

Not to say the C.E.O. was surprised because she was the complete opposite of that, she always kept the bar low for everything to avoid utter disappointment, but the affirmation of the seemingly unrequited love still hurt.

"What's going on, Kar?" Alex asked through the static in her little sister's earpiece.

The blonde growled, "He kissed Lena without her permission."

"What top notch fuckbucket," she hissed.

"No mercy on that fuckwad!" Maggie called out from the same channel, slightly muted at her distance, "He dies like a little bitch!"

"Hey, you!" the Kryptonian called out.

They startled, Mxy frowning at the sight, "Kara, my dear rival. I'm glad you cared to join us, we were getting a bit bored with our entertainment here, so you'll suffice."

He waved his hand and the symphony dissipated.

"I'm in the mood for a good fight," he chuckled.

"So get your ass down here and fight me then you coward!" Kara shouted, clenching her fists.

Mxy shrugged, "I'm a bit lazy, so in my stead you'll be facing...hmmm, let's see...one of your worst nightmares..."

A monster materialized behind the blonde and struck her, sending her flying into the seats.

Kara groaned and shook her head of the dust from the wreckage before turning to look at her opponent.

Shock and fear coursed through her body.

"Doomsday?"

Mxy chuckled, "A smaller version of the behemoth that obliterated your cousin, wouldn't want an unfair fight now would we?"

"This's hardly fair!" she protested at the injustice.

"It is too! All you have to do is knock him out, and it's substantially easier compared to the original model. Now, begin!"
Kara narrowly evaded the charge of her enemy as he slammed into the wall behind her instead.

"And you," Mxy turned to Lena, "You'll stay put if you don't want me making this any more difficult for your beloved friend."

The Luthor's jaw tightened as she nodded, taking a seat, hoping that Kara would make it out of the battle as unscathed as possible.

She watched as the two aliens traded blow after blow, Mxy looking on with more amusement next to her.

At first, Kara had the advantage, her speed and trained reflexes outmaneuvering the brute.

Until the monster landed a hit, and then another, the force of his blows strong enough to wear Supergirl down into pants and beads of sweat.

It was not like it was one-sided, Doomsday looked just as weary.

Lena winced at a rather painful-looking backhand to the face, sending the Kryptonian reeling backward into the opposite wall.

Kara coughed, standing and shaking the dazed blur from her vision. She held her head as if to still the pulsating headache, and her hand came away dripping with an alarming amount of red.

The sound of clanking metal brought her back to reality, and she saw the befuddled grunt Doomsday made when a soda can was tossed at its head.

Mxy glared at Lena who was running away, "What did I tell you about staying st - eek!"

The imp barely vanished away from the large piece of wood tossed in their direction.

The object caused the Luthor to stumble and fall, panickedly backing away on the floor from Doomsday, slowly hovering over to the human nuisance.

Lena watched the giant open his mouth as if to devour her, and it dashed.

But its target was intercepted by Kara, who cried out in pain, standing just a foot away from her friend as her right arm, from her shoulder blade to her hand, was sunken into by razor sharp serrated teeth.

Lena watched, frozen, as Kara's blood dripped onto the wedding dress she was wearing, tarnishing the pure whiteness with the sanguine crimson fluid.

The blonde groaned and then their eyes connected.

"I appreciate it," Kara grunted, "But I was handling things just fine."

Lena shut her agape lips and gave her friend a deadpanned look.

Doomsday's mouth twitched, parting slightly, and the hero took her chance, tearing her bloodied arm from its teeth and freezing its face, bringing down a fist to shatter it.

The beast slid off and fell to the bottom floor with a loud thud, its champion watching with tired eyes.

Lena appeared in front of Supergirl, cupping her face, "Kara? Kara, look at me."
The blonde swayed and fell to her knees, the Luthor mimicking the action.

"Hey, stay awake," came the distant echo.

The hero slumped into her friend's body.

Lena held her, hands slick from the blood, and leaned her against the wall so she could assess the wounds.

There was the head injury and then there were the multiple large puncture wounds ranging from Kara's back to her hand from Doomsday's bite.

The latter was more worrisome, the blood bubbling up and gushing over her skin and shredded sleeve to create a puddle on the floor.

Her eyes drooped, lids heavy as they were slowly being pulled down from exhaustion.

_Awake. Stay awake._

Lena quelled the panic multiplying within her and took a deep breath, hooking her hands under Kara's armpits and dragging her away, to the center of the stage, where sunlight had shown through due to her dramatic entrance earlier.

The Kryptonian sighed as the warmth hit her body, propped up against the wall and groaning as she felt her skin stitch itself back together, strength slowly returning.

Lena took a sharp intake of breath, relief crashing down onto her that the blood had stopped.

"You're okay, Kara. You're okay," she reassured, to herself and to her friend.

"Such bravery."

The Luthor snapped her head to the side, glowering at the imp walking towards her from the opposite side of the stage.

"For a human," he finished, glancing at the state of the woman's wedding dress, "Now it's all ruined."

Then he chuckled, "Most would run at the sight of a hideous monster such as, what was it, Doomsday you called? You didn't even think twice."

"Turns out I'm a little _different_ from 'most'," Lena scoffed, standing protectively in front of Kara, who was looking on tiredly.

Mxy waved his hand, "Ah, of course, I forgot. You're a Luthor."

The C.E.O.'s eye twitched at the statement.

"You're lucky you've got a pretty face," the imp tilted his head, "What is it that you _are_ afraid of anyway?"

He grinned devilishly, his form shifting to another figure, familiar, but foreign.

"Is it Lionel?" Mxy asked, "What? No hug from Daddy's little girl?"

Lena took a step back.
The imp only increased his pace, slightly, his form changing into a similar figure, but more youthful.

"Is it Lex?" he mocked, "Your dear big brother, who's tried to have you killed God knows how many times?"

Another step backward.

"Hmmm..."

And suddenly Lena was staring at the spitting image of her mother.

"Is it Lillian, who was the bane of your existence in high school, who's the reason for all of those scars, who you experienced first-hand what hate was?"

The raven-haired woman took several more steps backward and Kara noted the increase in her friend's heart rate.

"Leave her alone," she grunted.

Mxy ignored the blonde and cackled gleefully, "Oh! I know!"

A hand wrapped itself around Lena's neck and she was lifted into the air, her arms grasping at her offender's wrists for support as she struggled against the grip.

"Is it her?"

Lena froze, she felt herself hyperventilating, but she could only focus on Mxy, in the appearance of a red kryptonite induced Kara.

The imp smiled, "Bingo."

And she was suddenly on the ground, sliding away as she hissed at the impact.

Lena took one look at the figure stalking towards her and she felt her throat close up from the intense fear, the difficult breathing manifesting itself.

"Stop, stop, stop. Please stop..." she whispered, the cracked sentences coming out between choked breaths as she flinched with every echoing step the imp took.

"You're supposed to love me! What's wrong with you humans? I could give you everything yet you refuse?" Mxy shouted angrily, shifting back into his original form, "So fragile! So stupid! All of you! You drink cynicism and apathy like water! What does a life cost? I don't know with you humans, it fluctuates with every being; sometimes it's worth something as trivial as a cheap watch, sometimes it's worth an entire planet, an entire species! And sometimes..." he forced his eyes to connect with Lena's, with a flash of guilt and pity, "Sometimes your own is worth nothing at all."

Kara's chest tightened at his implication as she struggled to rise.

He shook his head, "Why do you choose the long way around? Why do you always make things more difficult for yourselves? Why do you make things so complicated? Why do you choose unrequited love?"

The imp halted in his steps, Kara blocking his way to Lena, wounds now closed but still sore.

"You can't force love, you can't buy it," she croaked out, "Kindness is more persuasive than force. You have to let it find you. It's not an obsession, it's based on mutual respect and so, so much more
than how many gifts you can give, not on any material possessions. It settles for less than perfection, and you love them in spite of that, it makes allowances for weakness. It's the person, how much they matter to you - their happiness - the little things about them especially."

She sighed, smiling as a chuckle bubbled up her throat, "The smell of their hair."

*Vanilla, mint.*

"Their lips when they smile."

*Red.*

"How their hands feel against yours."

*Soft... So very soft...*

"Their laughs at their jokes, good or bad."

"*You Kryptonian oaf,*" a familiar hum resonated within her mind.

"How her voice sou-"

Kara did a double take.

*Her?*

She pondered, and the gears in her head seemed to progress faster and faster and then...

Then it hit something, an obstacle in her way that prevented any realization to come around in a full circle, and all she could think of was how odd it was - her sentence, that came from...*somewhere.*

But Mxy noticed, he was no fool.

*Ah, their love...*

He glanced at Lena, who was still shaking, purely focused on controlling her body.

*Their love is mutual after all...*

Then his eyes wandered back to Kara's and suddenly he found himself clogged with emotion.

"I just...I thought...I just wanted..."

Kara nodded, "I know. I understand. And you'll find it. Eventually. Just give it time."

Mxy frowned, "What if it doesn't come?"

"It will. It does for everyone. Reciprocated or not, it still feels...amazing, both good and bad."

The imp chuckled bitterly as he faded away, "What does it feel like?"

"You'll see."

He gave a sad smile, "Invite me to your wedding, will you?"

The blonde laughed, "Give it a few years...we'll see."
"Goodbye, Kara Zor-El..."

She nodded resolutely, "So long, Mxy."

He gave one last knowing look between Lena and the Kryptonian, then he vanished into thin air.

The blonde pivoted, gazed at her friend on the floor, now in her work clothes as the trembles ebbed away.

Kara knelt down in front of her, tentatively decreasing their distance. She cautiously held a shaking hand and felt her friend flinch, hard, but not pull away.

Lena looked up, and the blonde noticed how her eyes were detached, sullen, and full of fear that she was struggling to sedate.

"What happened? Where is he?" the Luthor asked with a small voice.

It was then Kara noticed how disconnected the woman was for the entirety of the confrontation, trying to control her fear throughout it.

"He's not going to bother us anymore. I gave him a speech," she grinned, then joked, "Maybe more of a lecture; I don't think he wanted to stay and listen."

And the comment actually elicited a small, though still uneasy, chuckle from Lena.

"You tend to ramble, I can imagine."

Kara laughed sarcastically and rolled her eyes.

"So, want this Kryptonian oaf to take you home?"

The Luthor glanced at the comforting hand that was placed on her shoulder and she smiled widely, "Yeah."

The Kryptonian placed an arm under the woman's knee and with her other gripped across her back, then lifted, "Just close your eyes. It'll be quick."

Lena rested her head into the crook of the hero's neck, wrapped her arms around the strong shoulders, and sighed.

"Don't worry, Ms. Luthor, I've got you," Kara winked, or tried to with two eyes, "We'll be there in a jiffy."

Lena shook her head and chuckled at the endearing sight.

"So, how'd you deal with that uhhh..." Alex opened her phone and went through the report to find the name, which she took one look at and immediately gave up, "Mr. Keysmash guy?"

"C'mon, let me see," Maggie gestured for her girlfriend to hand over the phone, "It can't be that difficult to pronounce."

The detective's eyes glazed over the text and widened, "What the fuck? Is he Polish or something? There are absolutely no vowels!"

"He's a fifth dimensional imp," Kara grinned, plopping onto the couch with a tub of ice cream,
"Could've been worse than that actually."

Alex shrugged, "Good point, but still annoying to say. Anyway, what movie did we decide to watch? Seems like we could use an action or comedy genre, too much lovey-dovey shit happened and I think it calls for a change."

"Disney's Moana?" Maggie suggested.

"Definitely."

They both turned to the blonde on the other couch.

"Kara?"

She continued to scoop at her ice cream.

"Kara!"

The Kryptonian jumped several feet into the air before floating down onto the cushions again.

"Y-Yeah?"

Alex's eyebrows scrunched together in concern, "Everything okay?"

"Still worried about the imp?" Maggie asked.

Kara shook her head, "Not really, I was just...thinking."

Her older sister relaxed into the cushions and leaned into her girlfriend, "Yeah? Of what?"

"A lot of things I guess? Mxy, Lena...you know. Something's been nagging at me since he left and it feels like it's on the tip of my tongue or something you know?"

"I'm sure his speeches about love weren't that interesting if it was going to force your best friend into marriage," Maggie scoffed, gulping at her beer.

"Well, no, that's not what's been bothering me since Lena actually didn't become a Mrs. Mxyzptlk."

"Well, someone else better will come along for her," Alex said cautiously, watching how her little sister's nose scrunched up at the idea of her friend being with anyone, "Anyway, sorry she couldn't come tonight and hang out with this plethora of food and movies."

Kara shook her head and smiled, "No, it's fine, she's been through a lot lately."

"Well, notify us when the next double date is," Maggie grinned, winking, nudging Alex.

The blonde froze and stiffened her back, the last of the gears clicking together and settling comfortably.

And suddenly an untamed force hit her all at once, wild and unruly, fashioned with a blade.

She was floored at the epiphany and jumped up, the next sentence that came rolling off of her tongue at the top of her lungs was simultaneously the most easy thing to say and the most foreign.

"I love Lena!"

Alex and Maggie startled at the blurted statement and choked on their beers, the confession catching
them off guard; their teasing either always went right over Kara's head or she would vehemently deny it, so this was a complete turnaround.

The detective managed to swallow the last of the amber liquid and went to pat her still coughing girlfriend on the back.

"W-What?" Alex gaped.

Kara sighed and slumped back into the couch, whispering, almost chant-like, "I love Lena..."

Maggie's jaw was open as well.

The blonde was taken aback by the two pairs of eyes gawking at her.

"Well? Say something!"

The couple shared a look and then threw back their heads, "Finally!"

"What do you mean 'finally'?" Kara repeated, narrowing her eyes.

"Did it really take you almost ten years and a desperate fifth dimensional creep to finally, finally, realize you had feelings for Lena?" Alex groaned, slapping her hands on her face in frustration.

"Hey, babe," Maggie laughed, lacing their hands together, "At least she did it, right? Looks like we both owe Mxy a Benjamin."

"Wait, wait," Kara started, pacing back and forth while munching on her ice cream, "You bet a hundred dollars on me? Since when?"

Alex shrugged, "Like a few days or weeks after you first met Lena."

"What do you mean? I haven't liked her for that long! I've only just realized this now."

"Sometimes the heart sees what's invisible to the eye," Maggie smiled kindly, then looked at Alex, "Your big sis knows the feeling."

Then Kara's high school memories attacked her all at once.

The times when she stayed up day and night to constantly rework on how she was going to help Lena with organic chemistry.

The times when she consistently begged Lena to attend all of her games.

The times she constantly visited Lena at the hospital to drop off snacks and plushies and flowers.

The times she skipped lunch to go to the library to make sure Lena did not feel too lonely.

The times she would purposely ask Lena, her personal dictionary, thesaurus, and encyclopedia, what this or that word meant or how this or that word was spelled just as a ridiculous excuse to talk to her.

Just Lena, Lena, Lena. So tantalizing. So alluring. An immaculate enigma. Kara's romantic anchor and constant in her life. All those numerous beloved memories flashed in front of her blue eyes within a split second and the only thing missing was a record scratch.

"But...she was gone," the blonde began, almost in protest, "When she left-"
"Absence makes the heart grow fonder," Maggie interrupted again, a soft smile still painted on her face that complemented Alex's understanding gaze.

There was no denying it, no justifying the more-than-friendly actions.

Nothing.

Love was a despot that spared no one, not even a god-like Kryptonian.

It was certain, and she admitted it; she was so irrevocably in love with the ethereal Lena Luthor, the sister of her cousin's greatest enemy.

Her heart stuttered and she almost wanted to recoil at the weight.

She was utterly screwed.

Kara groaned and fell back into the couch behind her, "Oh Rao, I'm doomed."

"Yeah," Alex chuckled, "You are what we call in the scientific community...totally whipped."

Maggie joined, throwing her head back with a laugh, "Kiddo, you're fucked."

The blonde released a distressed whine that was muffled in the throw pillow she flattened against her face.

Chapter End Notes

**Constructive criticism appreciated.**
Breathe

Chapter Summary

Gwen Morgan, Lena's ex and powerful C.E.O., visits National City to discuss her new project and affiliation with L-Corp. However, her stay is very unwelcome by Kara as it stirs mixed feelings within the Luthor.

Chapter Notes

Find me on Tumblr at spoopercorp and on FF as Local-Asshole.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Breathe

"Hey, Lena!"

The girl snapped her head from her locker at the bright voice and watched as her friend bounded over to her.

"Hey, Kara."

She resumed gathering her textbooks from the metal storage, stuffing them in her already overstuffed backpack.

"Are you going to the party? All the seniors are celebrating the end of exams."

Lena restrained herself from groaning and banging her head on the locker, cringing instead.

"Well, that's not exactly my kind of...scene, I guess. Besides, do you really think anyone wants a Luthor," she spat, "In their vicinity? It's probably not the best idea for me to go, I'd just be asking for a sick prank in all honesty."

Lena scowled, slamming her locker shut harder than necessary and heaving her backpack over her shoulders.

Kara frowned, "But you'll have me. I'll make sure no one gets to you," then she smiled, "And you have James and Lucy and Winn, assuming they don't split to see their other friends."

The sentence only served to further intensify Lena's negative sentiment.

“What about you? You have other friends too."

“But you're also my friend."
"Some people are more important than others."

"Golly, you're so cynical, this party could really cheer you up," Kara pouted, taking her friend's hand, "C'mon, it'll be fun, school just ended and my house isn't that far off a walk. It's good to get out of your comfort zone once in awhile, and I want to spend time with you, so that's a plus!" she beamed, "We could do some activities beforehand at my house, just us, okay? We could do anything you want! We could make dinner, watch movies, build a fort, play board games..."

"That doesn't sound too horrific," Lena mumbled, listening to Kara ramble on and on, and then...

"...we could talk about cute boys..."

"I take it back," the Luthor muttered, deflating.

"What?" the blonde asked, broken off from her clustered thoughts.

"I - nothing, I just...yeah, sounds fun."

Kara squealed, "Yay!"

"Well, I can't really say 'no' to that face, can I?" she smirked.

The Kryptonian lifted Lena in a firm hug, but in her excitement she squeezed too hard and heard her friend's bones pop and a choked out wheeze.

"Ow, ow, ow. Can't...breathe..."

Kara dropped the human in her arms, "Oh my R - s-sorry! I'm so sorry!"

Lena grimaced, rolling her shoulder joints, "I swear, it's like you have super strength or something."

The Kryptonian squeaked out a nervous laugh.

"You can't go in there!" Jess warned, "Ms. Luthor said not to be disturbed, and since you don't have full clearance, I can't let you in!"

"And how do you know I don't have that kind of access?" the woman returned, continuing to evade the assistant and pursuing her way down the hall, "Surely an old friend should be authorized."

"Ms. Luthor would actually tell me," Jess retorted, her tone protective, "She doesn't have very many friendly visitors, and even then, she has only one person on that green-light list, and that person is most certainly not you."

"Oh?" the woman raised a brow curiously.

Lena lifted herself from her desk and tilted her head curiously her office doors, hearing Jess's irked voice on the other side and the sound of clacking heels.

The knob rattled and the aperture swung open.

"I'm so sorry, Ms. Luthor," Jess huffed irritably, "She doesn't have anything on Ms. Danvers, but she's still pretty fa - Ms. Luthor?"

Lena stood stock still, taking in the familiar figure standing opposite her.
The woman was adorned in a rather expensive pantsuit, dirty blonde waves were pulled into a messy bun, long strands falling lightly atop her shoulders and framing her slim features, hazel eyes, and dull salmon lipstick.

Lena shook off her shock quickly and coughed, retrieving her professionalism as she glanced at her assistant.

"It's quite all right, Jess. You may leave and return to your post."

The woman nodded and made to exit, "Yes, Ms. Luthor."

When the doors clicked shut, the C.E.O. eyed her guest with skepticism, regarding her with caution.

"Gwen."

The blonde grinned, "Lee."

The Luthor's eyes twitched, narrowing minutely at the nickname, "To what do I owe this unexpected pleasure?"

Gwen's smile never faltered, "I apologize for the sudden intrusion, but I was going to be in National City for a while."

"And what exactly prompted you to visit?"

"I can't visit an old friend without being suspicious?"

"Aside from the fact that I'm a popular target for assassination, it's the fact that I have some trust issues," she folded her arms protectively, "So, what's so crucial as to make you neglect calling in an appointment and barging through my office doors?"

"Aside from the fact that I actually want to spend time with you, it's the fact that an opportunity to affiliate Morgan Tech with L-Corp is a profitable investment. The latter not being as important," Gwen countered playfully.

The quip made Lena's shoulders relax as some of her stress was dispelled from her twisting insides at the sight of her ex.

However, she instantly tensed again when the blonde stepped closer, perhaps a bit too close for comfort and to be considered strictly professional.

Then a hand grazed her cheek.

"And I wanted to sort of rekindle what we had, if that's all right with you?" Gwen whispered softly.

Lena stopped breathing, felt her heart flutter at the action, at the notion of someone actually wanting her like that.

She felt confused, all of her feelings muddled into a grotesque form within her.

And no, she definitely did not want to touch it with a ten foot pole.

She would sort it out later.

Or postpone it indefinitely.
"Hey, Le - oh."

Gwen stepped back at the voice and the Luthor jumped away as well, bumping her desk.

As it shook backward, it made a scraping sound that was grating to the ears, though none of them paid much attention.

Lena released a breath she was not aware that she was holding, "Kara."

And it dawned on Gwen that the woman near the door, in pastel argyle and khakis while holding a bag of greasy goods, was the person on the green-light list.

The Kryptonian fidgeted with her thickly framed glasses, "I, uh, if I interrupted a meeting or-"

"Not at all," Lena forced a smile. It had been several days, maybe weeks, after the Mxyztplk incident and his harsh words had caused her to go great lengths to avoid...her crush, to put it lightly, hoping the infatuation would subside.

It did not.

Seeing the bubbly Kryptonian again hit her like a ton of bricks and yet another realization that she was deeply invested snapped at her conscience.

The uncomfortable silence was crushed when Lena, at first awkwardly, introduced her guest.

She gestured to the tall blonde, taller than the reporter, then gestured to said reporter, "Gwen, this's Kara Danvers. She's a reporter. Kara, this's Gwen Morgan. She's," hesitation, "a friend of mine. Not to worry though, you didn't disturb anything. It was simply a short visit, she was just leaving."

A string of memories hit Kara, and she remembered Lena mentioning the woman at least once.

Her ex.

And the Kryptonian's eyes shifted into something more akin to jealousy.

Gwen strode over to the shorter blonde and offered her hand, which was taken and shook firmly.

"It's nice to meet you," Kara said politely, albeit perhaps with a bit of an edge of hostility, refraining from breaking the woman's fingers.

"Nonsense, the pleasure's all mine," Gwen laughed, her tone light and casual and very amicable compared, "But a reporter? You must be special. Lee tends to shy away from press, or any type of human contact if possible."

If the jealousy was not so boiling hot, Kara would have laughed at the joke and bantered along with a 'tell me about it'.

But no, it was so not funny, even if Lena shot Gwen an adorably scolding look and chuckled herself.

Not funny. She's not funny.

Not when Kara was not the one making her laugh.

And then there was the part of the sentence where the woman addressed her as Lee.

A pet name? Seriously?
Sirens went off inside her head.

*Just take a deep breath and calm down.*

"Well, I'm glad I'm one of the exceptions," Kara replied, the alarms in her brain still blaring deafeningly.

"Hopefully we'll get to know each other a bit more," Gwen smiled, and she sounded genuine too.

The woman was polite, kind, charming, funny, and deathly attractive - jaw-droppingly hot most would say.

So unfair.

"Well, I'll leave you two to it then."

Kara scrutinized her as she left, only jumping back with a tap on the shoulder.

"Huh?"

Lena smiled tersely at her and the blonde was too busy concentrating on her jealousy that it went unnoticed.

"Oh!" Kara grinned, holding up the paper bag in her hand, "I brought some goodies!"

The Luthor's smile lessened as a lie rolled off her tongue, "I actually have an appointment soon. I'm sorry, I won't be available for lunch."

*Nor the one after that, and the one after that, and...*

"Oh," Kara's grin faltered and her shoulders fell, too disappointed to notice how Lena's heartbeat sped up at the dishonest statement, "Well, I bought this for you anyway to make sure you eat. We can have lunch another time."

"Another time..." Lena echoed reluctantly, her face etched with traces of guilt and sadness, "Of course."

*Of course...*

The Kryptonian failed to notice that lie as well.

"*Your backpack looks kind of heavy. Do you need a hand?*" Kara offered politely.

*Lena shook her head, "No thanks, I can handle myself."

The blonde chuckled, "You know it's fine to ask for help, right? It doesn't mean you're weak."

*I know, but it can be perceived that way, and I'm used to doing everything by myself," the Luthor stated, "After all, I am taking over the family company soon, I can't afford to look 'weak' in front of entitled old men. Not a risk I'm willing to take."

"Well, you're not a C.E.O. yet silly," Kara laughed, "*Just let me take it, okay? It looks like you could use a break."

*I'm fine. Really,* she groaned.
"Lena Luthor! You did not just roll your eyes at me!" the blonde gasped, "I will not be having that attitude!"

Kara frowned and sighed, scrolling through her messages, "Eleven times, guys. Eleven times something or someone conveniently prevented Lena from having lunch with me."


"I appreciate the sarcasm, Luce. Truly," the blonde muttered.

The Lane did a double take, "Wait, I'm sorry, I just realized, did you say someone?"

The blonde frowned, "Another one of Lena's exes is in National City."

"Who exactly?"

"Gwen Morgan I think."

They jumped at the sound of Winn choking and spraying out his drink in a dramatic spit take, "Gwen Morgan?"

"I already don't like where this's going," Kara sighed, folding her arms.

"As in of Morgan Tech? As in, the leading company in developing artificial intelligence?"

"Great! She's smart, rich, and an ex that Lena still might have feelings for," the blonde ground out.

"How would you know she still has feelings for her?" Lucy inquired, curious.

Kara shifted uncomfortably, "I walked in-"

The brunette gasped, "You walked in on them?"

"No!" she vehemently denied the conclusion her friend jumped to, flushing a bright red, "They were just...really close. And Lena, I'm not sure, she looked sort of uncomfortable with the situation, but it seemed like they could talk really easily. Like maybe their breakup wasn't on bad terms, so I can't hold a grudge against her for that."

"What. A. Bitch."

Kara sighed defeatedly, "But it's really annoying 'cause she's not one. Not only is she smart and rich, but she's also really nice, and funny, and beautiful, and charming, and not a dorky reporter like me."

"But you're also Supergirl," Lucy added, patting her friend comfortably on the back, "Give yourself more credit, you're pretty irresistible yourself."

Then she scoffed, "But c'mon, let's be real, no being is that perfect. She must have some flaw."

Baffled, Kara looked at the woman like she was insane.

"Or if you can't find any fault, maybe she's overcompensating for something that's lacking?"

The blonde deadpanned, "That sounds just as crazy."
"Here's her speech for her most recent project," Winn slid over to the two women and propped up his phone, playing the video.

Lucy's mouth gaped, "Holy shit, she's hot. Even her voice is sexy. I think Lena's met her match."

Kara grumbled something unintelligible, perhaps in Kryptonese.

The Lane chuckled, "I meant her match as in appearance-wise, 'cause I honestly didn't think people could get a more scarily attractive woman than Lena Luthor. But wow was I wrong."

"Not helping, Luce," the blonde growled.

"Okay, but they broke up for a reason right? They're probably..." the brunette paused to contemplate her words, "They're probably emotionally incompatible, right?"

"Just tell her how you feel," Winn suggested, placing a comforting hand on his friend's shoulder.

"Uh, how about no?" Kara pursed her lips, "That's an awful idea."

He rolled his eyes and leaned back, resting his feet on his friend's dining seat, "What's the worst that could happen?"

"She could get rejected," Mon-El chimed in, laying his head on his boyfriend's shoulder.

"That's the least of my concerns!" Kara frowned and narrowed her eyes, shoving the young man's legs off of her chair and sitting down, "I'd be bumbed, but I'm more worried about making her uncomfortable and ruining our friendship."

"Well, did you ever consider that Lena actually wants you to ruin the friendship with, I don't know," Lucy winked, sipping her beer with a dramatic pause, "maybe a little something...more?"

Kara groaned, "What if she doesn't feel the same-"

"Oh please!" the Lane interrupted, waving her hand, "Lena has that, you know, predatory look on her sometimes, and she always looks like she wants to eat you out. You know, 'cause maybe you're her prey-"

The blonde squeaked, her face reddening.

"I mean up!" Lucy corrected, flustered herself, "Up! She always looks like she wants to eat you up!"

"That's not helping, it still has the same connotation," Winn stated, guffawing with his boyfriend.

"Shut up, nerd," the brunette scowled, "Anyway, where's James?"

"Our favorite vigilante does have to run CatCo, you know, a multimillion dollar company?" Winn reminded her, "Ring a bell?"

Lucy rolled her eyes and scoffed, "What about Alex and Maggie, they never miss out on brunch at Noonan's."

"They're almost here," Kara said, swiping through the messages in her phone.

Her thumb lingered over Lena's name again as her eyes crinkled, debating whether or not she should send a message, perhaps only to be rejected once more.
"Ugh, just text her already!" Lucy groaned.

"Wh - I wasn't-"

"Sure, honey," she rolled her eyes, then grinned when she saw Alex and Maggie enter the building, standing up and raising her hand to signal the group's location.

The couple smiled and walked over, taking their seats.

"Did you guys order yet?" Maggie inquired, waving down the waiter.

"No, but we've decided already," Lucy said, relaying her, Winn's, and Mon-El's orders to the server.

"What'd you want again, Kar?" she asked, bumping her shoulder with her own.

The blonde frowned, scanning her menu, "I'll order later, I'm still deciding."

The waiter politely nodded and left to tend to his other customers.

The group fell into an easy conversation, save for Kara, who was pensively perusing the menu when a familiar figure moved in the distant corner of her eye.

*Lena?*

The Luthor strode to the line and ordered a coffee, waiting on the sides.

She was beautiful.

Well, she always was, but ever since Kara realized the magnitude of the more-than-friendly feelings she held for Lena, she was unable to stop herself from admiring her even more closely - even if the memories were still the same.

But seeing how ethereal the Luthor was in person left her breathless; how her raven hair was pulled up into a foolproof bun with not a single strand out of place, how her flawless alabaster skin was a fair shade of ivory, how lovely the mix of greens and yellows and browns in her irises birthed such a jade-like color, how everything about her was almost intimidatingly perfect.

The blonde's vision drifted from the sharp eyes that encased a forest to the angular jawline, and she noticed how set it was, could see how uncomfortably taut the muscles were. Then her perfect eyebrows, furrowed with discomfort. Then her lips, always painted with such an intense crimson color that seldom parted to showcase her pearly white teeth, were thin and worried together.

Kara frowned and broke off her focus from the captivating woman, noticing the wary stares that were trained on the Luthor, the whispers filled with uneasiness and fear.

Though Lena was used to the badmouthing, she seemed uncomfortable, like she wanted to leave as soon as possible.

It was probably only a matter of time until her presence would stir confrontation.

Kara snapped out of her trance when a finger poked her ribs and clacked her slightly agape mouth shut.

"Eyes up," Alex snickered, "You look like a disgustingly love-struck idiot. Just go talk to her. It was painful enough waiting, like, ten years for you to finally realize you love her, none of us want to go through even more waiting, and I'm sure you don't either."
Her sister pulled her up from her seat and pushed her in the direction of the C.E.O.

"That's a horrible idea, Alex."

The older Danvers shoved her, causing Kara to move forward and slightly stumble over her feet, obnoxious enough to call attention to her friend.

Lena glanced over, a look of surprise painted on her face when she caught sight of Kara walking towards her.

She was momentarily stunned, felt her heart drop to the ground seeing the one person she wanted to avoid since Mxyzptlk.

"Not her."

Love is a defect.

A malfunction.

It was not something Lena Luthor, all numbers, calculation, objectiveness, rationality, and logicality, could fathom; it was a fault, something ineffable, and it grated on her nerves painfully - the fact that it was not lucid. Mathematics nor science nor anything remotely reasonable could make her have any sense of grasping such an abstract concept.

But the so-called 'flaw' consumed her soul nonetheless.

Lena's lips twisted into a tight crease when she noticed how tense the blonde was.

She tilted her head at the reporter, "Everything all right?"

Kara nodded and lowered her voice, noticing that the gossip died down around them as the customers favored watching her interaction with the notorious Luthor scum, "I, uh, was going to ask the same; you haven't been able to go out for lunch, like, at all since Mxy, so I was getting a bit worr-
"

"There's nothing to worry about," Lena interrupted tersely, forcing a smile, eager to deflect the topic of the conversation.

The Kryptonian crinkled her eyes when she noted the telltale sign of a lie: increased heartbeat.

"Are you sure?"

The Luthor, a stiff smile still plastered on her face, nodded, glancing at the group behind her friend, "You should get back to them, I have to go to work anyway once I get my coffee."

"I'll walk with you," Kara blurted out, and she mentally slapped herself.

Stupid, stupid, stupid!

A pause.

"Are you sure?" Lena echoed her words from earlier.

"Yeah! Totally! They're probably going to stay for a while so-"

"Lena Luthor!"
They both cringed at the sound of the name shouted from behind the bar, the C.E.O. picking up her drink tentatively and rushing out to avoid the harsh gossip.

Kara gave one last look over her shoulder and waved goodbye to her group as they gave a thumbs-up, then she glowered at the masses of customers that were previously looking on with curiosity and distaste, her glare causing them to avert their eyes.

When she was satisfied, she jogged after her friend and slowed her pace once she caught up, the obnoxious whispering out of earshot, or Lena's earshot anyway.

Kara rotated her head slightly, glancing at the profile of Lena's face and watching as her lips pursed every now and then, lost in her thoughts.

And suddenly everything was about her. The Kryptonian's super hearing, trained on her. The Kryptonian's super sight, trained on her. Everything, trained on her and her only. The sounds of incessant gossip faded into oblivion and suddenly the gawking bystanders were no longer in her line of vision.

It was just her and Lena.

Mostly just Lena.

Kara's lips twitched into a dopey smile at the woman, who was, luckily, preoccupied with her coffee and the path they were taking to L-Corp.

A small gust of wind caused the Luthor to flutter her eyes and the blonde was entranced with parted lips by the lashes that batted shut, then opened, then shut again.

The woman's wine-colored lips graced over the opening of her coffee and she sipped, wincing slightly at the heat.

The blonde gulped and shook her head, edging closer to her friend until their fingers brushed as they walked. However, as soon as they made contact, the Luthor twitched and made a noticeable effort to distance herself until they were several inches apart, untouching, and clenching her hands into fists as she shoved them into the deep pockets of her coat.

Kara frowned at the action, her heart and chest constricting themselves at the realization that her friend was beginning to purposely pull away emotionally, "Are you-"

"I said I'm fine," Lena repeated sharply, then her expression softened at the crestfallen look she saw from her peripheral, "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to snap, I've just..." her heart beat increased, "...been swamped with work lately is all, it's been stressful."

Which was not entirely a lie, but it was rare, if not never, to find the C.E.O. complaining about the amount of papers on her desk.

Whether the truth was due to her visiting ex or something else, the blonde did not know.

"You know I'm not going to buy that," Kara said softly, chancing a look in the corner of her eye, "And you know you can talk to me, right? If I've ever made you feel the oppo-"

Lena sighed and her lips tightened. She stared at her beverage while she ambled, watching the dark, bitter liquid through the opening whirl and slosh against the walls of the paper container, "I know, I just-"
Kara yelped in surprise when her foot hit an object and she stumbled, but before she could fall, Lena grabbed her by the waist and pulled her back up.

"You're such a clumsy person," she smirked.

"S-Stupid fire hydrant," the Kryptonian whined, cringing at how the metal sunk in where her foot made contact, "Oh. Oops."

Lena placed a hand on her friend's arm, "You're okay?"

"Uh, yeah. Yeah," Kara shook her head and shifted her eyes around nervously, "I'm all good, just a klutz."

"Well," the Luthor looked around, then back at her friend, another playful smirk bordering on flirtatious gracing her features, "I'm sure no one witnessed your little faux pas."

She squeezed the hero's arm in reassurance, momentarily finding herself baffled at how rock hard the muscles were.

Lena could feel herself heating up slightly at their proximity; even if she wanted to avoid Kara, whenever the blonde was around, her resolve always managed to thaw.

No.

Distance. I need more distance.

She stepped away, chuckling, "Hopefully, the next time you run into a fire hydrant, you won't blow it off with your foot," she made a sour face, "Or make me drop my drink. I paid good money for that crummy coffee."

The Luthor glanced at the umber liquid that spilled onto the pavement and retrieved her cup, tossing the empty object into the trash.

Kara laughed as well, watching as a small gust of wind hit Lena's perfect bun, now somewhat disheveled, leaving some locks here and there stranded.

She smiled lightly, observing a grin playing at the woman's maroon lips, crinkles forming near her sharp green eyes as she entertained the thought of loosening the stiffness inside of her.

But the tension remained after the split second of consideration, and Kara was frustrated that she was unable to figure out why.

Something was on her mind, definitely, but Lena was never the person that enjoyed venting or talking about her feelings.

"I can't believe you've never ever baked in your entire life before," Kara gasped, tying on her apron and pulling her hair back into a ponytail, "Like ever."

"Please," Lena rolled her eyes, "I'm sure I'm not missing out on much."

"Stop giving me that look! We're definitely baking!"

The Luthor yelped in surprise when strong arms wrapped around her midsection from behind to tie on an apron.
Then she felt fingers fumble with her hair. She shrank back and slapped them away.

"I can make a ponytail myself, thank you very much."

"Fine," Kara scoffed, retrieving ingredients from the cabinet and going over the thick recipe book on the counter, "So what do you want to bake? We have stuff for cookies, pies, brownies, cakes..."

The blonde looked over when she noticed the incessant shuffling of feet, her brows furrowing in concern at the sight of her friend sheepishly focused on the ground.

"What's wrong, Lena?"

"Well, when I went to one of my parents' business galas, there were these really good lemon bars and-"

"Lemon bars it is!" Kara grinned, skipping to the refrigerator to grab some other needed ingredients.

"Also," the blonde continued happily, bouncing back to her friend, "How do you feel about caramel apples?"

Lena returned a small smile, "I'm not opposed."

"Awesome! Let's get started!"

Okay, in hindsight," Kara pouted with amusement, clearing up the flour covered counter, "I didn't think you'd be this bad at baking. This's a disaster."

"Hey, I'm good for not baking a single product in all seventeen years of my life, and the lemon bars are cooking nicely in the oven, all we did was make more of a mess than necessary," Lena defended, dabbing a wet cloth at the specks of flour spotted on her face.

"Here, let me," the blonde giggled, "It's killing me to see you keep missing that spot."

She grabbed the rag from her friend's hand, but stopped just centimeters from her face when she heard her heart rate pick up and saw her flinch.

"Is this okay?" Kara whispered softly.

Lena eventually nodded, not trusting herself to speak.

The blonde smiled, gently swiping the wet cloth onto her skin and wiping away the excess flour.

She noticed her friend's heartbeat ceased to thunder in her chest, relaxing as time went on.

"Hey," came Kara's soothing voice.

Lena blinked, her pupils diverting from the safe stain on her friend's apron to the big blue eyes.

"We don't have to go to the party if you don't want to."

"What?" the Luthor asked, "I could - I could just leave early so you can get ready and-"

"I'd much rather spend time with you than go to some stupid party."

The Kryptonian did not miss the way her friend's shoulders slumped, complementing her sigh of
"You know," Kara chuckled quietly, "Not only do you suck at baking, but you're pretty bad at clean up too."

Lena smiled calmly at the teasing, "You know, you have something on your face too."

The blonde's eyes bulged, "I do?"

"Here, let me get it for you," the Luthor snatched the rag and flattened it against her friend's face.

Kara did not even make a move to take the wet cloth off and she wrinkled her nose, "That was so rude."

"That's what you get for insulting my baking skills."

"Just get the apples from the fridge you dork."

"One step ahead of you, dork."

The blonde chuckled, removing the rag and continuing to clean the counter, "I'll check on the caramel then."

Lena opened the refrigerator and spotted the apples, grabbing an armful of them to set on the cutting board. She swiftly glided back to close the kitchen aperture, but her interest was taken by the onions in one of the slots.

The Luthor grinned evilly.

Lena, uninterested by the movie playing in front of her, watched with almost disappointed wonder as Kara chowed down the caramel glazed onion.

Her reaction was belated.

"Why do these taste so weird?"

The Luthor shrugged and bit off a piece of her own, immediately spitting it out onto the plate.

Realization hit the blonde and she cackled, "You replaced some of the caramel apples with caramel onions? Did you just eat the wrong one?"

Lena shivered, gulping down her water to wash out the awful taste. Then she glared at her friend on the floor in tears, "Stop laughing, it's not that funny."

Their attention was drawn to the door when it clicked open, Alex and Maggie filing in.

"Hey, guys," the older Danvers greeted, raising a curious brow at the sight of her little sister on the floor, "Uh, what's got - ooh, are those caramel apples?"

Kara and Lena shared a mischievous look.

After a tidal wave of explicit cursing from Alex on how caramel onions were Satan's work, with Maggie stifling multiple chuckles as the strings of inappropriate vocabulary went on, a hysterically laughing Kara and a very amused Lena made their way upstairs.
Constructive criticism appreciated.
Imperfection

Chapter Summary

Miscommunication and misunderstanding leave Kara's and Lena's relationship in a catastrophic state (as per-fucking-usual). The fiasco is further strained with yet another appearance from Gwen, who is not as perfect as she seems.

In other words...

CONFESSIONS. FINALLY, AM I RIGHT?

Chapter Notes

Find me on Tumblr at spoopercorp and on FF as Local-Asshole.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Imperfection

"Have you been getting enough sleep?"

The blonde observed the bags under her friend's eyes, how they were caved in and sulking. Then her gaze drifted over the woman's gaunt cheeks, sunken to the point the bone was noticeably protruding outward.

"Or eating enough?"

"Is it that noticeable?" Lena chuckled hoarsely.

"Yeah, kind of," Kara sighed, "Have you..."

She broke off in silence, pondering her next sentence.

"Have I..." the woman echoed, urging her friend to finish.

"The nightmares."

The Luthor tensed, increasing her pace.

The blonde frowned, matching their gaits, "I know you don't like talking about things like this, but...they've been starting back up again, haven't they?"

Lena scowled, stiff to the point of trembling, sauntering into the L-Corp building and making her way towards the elevator, "They've never really stopped in all honesty, Kara. Their intensities might change depending on...on many variables, it's-"
"But you said...you said before that they stopped. Why'd you-

"I never said anything specifically about them stopping, you're fooling yourself for thinking so."

"But you avoided it, you left it out," Kara frowned, stepping into the elevator and jabbing the button with the highest number indicated, "I'm not an idiot, Lena. Omission is still lying."

"Is this what you've wanted to talk to me about the past weeks? My trauma?" the Luthor growled, tensing even further at the enclosed space.

The blonde scoffed, and tasted something bitter in the back of her throat, retaliating, "To be honest, I'm surprised we're actually able to avoid that subject considering the fact that I'm standing right next to you."

Lena's mouth parted a fraction, her lips then contorting into a slim line at the low blow.

Kara silenced herself as well, averting her eyes and stepping out of the elevator, following her friend into her office.

"I didn't invite you to all those lunches just to bicker with you, Lena."

The C.E.O. narrowed her eyes and leaned against her desk, "Oh? Then please, do elaborate."

Kara's shoulders slumped, "Oh, well...I didn't think I'd actually get this far..."

She wracked through her brain for the many rehearsals she mentally recited, but despite the thousands upon thousands of scenarios she conjured up, there was no script she made for this one. That or the jittering feeling of butterflies in her stomach made her speechless.

"W - I have...feelings for someone, and I don't quite know how to..."

She sighed and trailed off, watching her own fingers fidget, weaving in and out to distract her.

Lena folded her arms and her jaw locked, teeth grinding together.

This's what I get for not keeping my guard up.

"I know what you want to talk about."

Kara shot her head up, surprised, brows furrowed, "You...do?"

The Luthor nodded once.

She's found a new boy to fawn over and talk about in ninety percent of our conversations.

"Yes. I do," Lena grimaced, her posture still stiff, breaking eye contact, "And frankly I don't want to discuss it."

Her lips tightened.

At any time, place, shape, nor form.

Kara felt and heard her own heart stop, splintering into a million pieces at the cold rejection.

"I thought...I thought that you'd..."

Understand?
Reciprocate?

Let me down easy?

Lena still refused to meet her eyes, "Well, whatever it was, you thought wrong. Now, I have a meeting, Ms. Danvers, it'd be greatly appreciated if you leave."

Kara felt her heart split down the middle and shatter again, and she released a shaky breath.

Sure, she was prepared for rejection.

Just not for how cold and emotionless the woman she confessed to would be.

A conclusion immediately reached her mind.

She still loves Gwen.

Then she felt something swell inside of her, white hot, furious, and mad, mixing with the heartache she felt stabbing repeatedly into her chest, creating a deadly concoction.

As quickly as it came, it left before she could act on it, and she was silently relieved that the sickening feeling went away, replaced with the new, yet familiar pain of heartbreak; its immeasurable intensity saved only for Lena.

"Do you hate me?" she croaked out.

The Luthor was startled with the choked sob and finally glanced up, alarmed with the waterfall of tears pouring down her friend's red-rimmed eyes.

Lena was shocked into silence, immediately regretting her words, but she convinced herself, it was better this way - for the both of them. But watching Kara in such pain hurt so much more than anything she had been through in her entire life, and she found herself remorseful and guilty, the feeling of wanting to give everything to take her harmful words back or to reverse time still lingering.

"You know, I was starting to think that you were refusing to move on," the blonde whispered, all the strength inside of her body sapped, depleted to the point where she just wanted to collapse, "That you don't want to move on; maybe you want to stay afraid of me, to keep your distance, and for what? Because you didn't want to get hurt?"

"I..." the Luthor's words faded, unable to find anything to remedy the situation at hand.

Kara let out a quiet sob, "I didn't know I meant so little to you."

Lena snapped her head up, watching as her friend was making her way out of her office.

"Wait, Kar-"

"I believe you have an appointment to attend to, Ms. Luthor," she bit out through her teeth, "Goodbye."

The C.E.O. flinched at the loud snap the door made when it slammed shut, the vibrations cracking the frame and travelling outward.

Lena's heart stuttered, her mind still reeling over their argument, then she felt herself fracture, then burst apart at the raw seams she had messily sewn together.
She grabbed her desk with a hand, to the point her knuckles whitened, then the pale color traveled to the tips of her fingers. She buried her face into her other hand, feeling the warm tears sliding through the crevasses as she thought of Kara's goodbye, so stark with finality.

Lena felt like her chest caved in and she let out a choked sob.

"Kar."

"Leave me alone."

"Kara!" Alex called out again, chasing after her.

Her little sister stormed into her apartment and made her way to her bedroom.

"I said leave me alone! I don't want to talk about it!"

"Well, maybe there was a misunderstanding-"

Kara whipped around and fumed, wet eyes ringed with red, "There was no misunderstanding! Lena doesn't like me that way, but that's fine, it's just the way she treated the situation; she didn't just reject me, she blew it off like it wasn't important, like it was nothing to her - like I was nothing to her!"

The Kryptonian opened her bedroom door, much too hard, and the hinges and screws screeched before snapping off, the hand wrapped tightly around the knob the only thing supporting it.

Kara growled and tossed the door to the ground.

Alex winced at the violent thud it made when it connected to the wooden floor, then watched as her little sister plopped heavily onto the soft cushions of her bed.

Despite that, she could see how Kara's muscles were still taut, hands clenched into fists and shaking uncontrollably as they grappled onto the sheets.

The Kryptonian shut her eyes tightly and took deep breaths.

*Don't touch anything, don't break anything, just don't lose control.*

*Control.*

She loosened her grip when she heard the seams of her blanket snap, each thread breaking off one by one.

*Control.*

She slowly flexed each finger away from the cloth until they relaxed, the soft blanket doing the same under her palm.

*Control.*

She sighed deeply, seeing the exhale come out slightly frosted.

Kara nearly seized up again when she felt a hand place itself on her shoulder.

"Hey," Alex whispered, "I know you want some space, and I'll give it to you in a moment. But I'm just suggesting that you go over and talk to Lena again. You guys have always simultaneously been
the worst and the best at communication, but in the end you both always sort the worst of things out."

Kara grumbled, "I'll think about it. Maybe later tonight, I want to take a nap and sleep some of this stress off," she sighed, her voice still a small croak, "This sucks."

"I know, honey."

"Like, this really sucks. Why can't we be like you and Maggie?"

Alex chuckled, "Well, if you two do clear things up, I'll admit that you guys could be a cute couple. But no one's got anything on me and Maggie, not even close, so keep dreaming."

"Don't you have to get back to the D.E.O.?" Kara remarked.

"Okay, okay, no need to be snappy, I'm out of here," Alex chuckled, stepping over the broken door, "And I'm calling someone to fix this."

"I can do it myself."

"You suck at lying, how are you going to explain the broken door?"

"On second thought, nevermind, you can do it."

"Maybe I'll just get Vasquez and her team to repair the thing later tonight if none of us are busy. I'll call you then."

_________________________________________

"Lena?"

A moment passed. The ambience tranquil, save for the repeated pounding against her office windows from the nightly rain.

"Lena."

The Luthor shook her head, her trance interrupted, "Uh, yes, Gwen?"

"Do you even know what we were discussing?" the woman inquired, "Or more rather, what I was discussing?"

"The joint project we're doing?"

"And what's that joint project?"

"Um..."

Gwen frowned, her brows furrowed in concern as she set aside her notes and blueprints, "What's wrong?"

Lena shook her head and waved it off, no longer leaning against her desk, "Nothing, I just...my mind's been a little out of it, not enough sleep I guess."

Gwen's eyebrows scrunched even further hearing the bitter chuckle emanate from her friend. She quickly closed the gap between them, taking the C.E.O.'s pale hand and caressing it.

"Hey, you don't have to talk about it, but I'm open and willing to listen if you want to, okay?"
Lena relaxed a fraction, wishing instead that Kara was the one to ease the tension inside of her.

Regardless, it felt...nice, to have someone genuinely care besides the reporter.

It took her a moment to notice how close the woman had gotten, then just another when their lips connected.

Meanwhile, Kara felt herself burning with jealousy.

She had quickly donned her suit and flown over to L-Corp, hoping to get the talking over with, but was met with the unexpected, and very unpleasant sight, of her closest friend lip-locking with the infuriatingly flawless Gwen Morgan through the balcony windows.

She choked out a sob, crying freely, tears streaming down her cheeks in an unstoppable flood. Not that it would be noticeable so late in the night and in the rain battering against her hair and shoulders.

Kara had enough of her heart being broken into pathetic little pieces for one day and bolted away.

The shock for Lena lasted only several seconds until she closed her eyes and kissed back.

Once.

*Maybe I still have feelings for Gwen. Maybe I deserve this, even if it isn't...*

Then a pair of familiar blue eyes crossed her mind and the Luthor pulled away, turning her cheek when her ex went in for another kiss.

Lena sighed, giving Gwen a light push, and the blonde woman stepped back, slightly hurt.

"I'm sorry. I can't," her throat closed up, but she managed to grind the last sentence through her teeth, "There's someone else."

Gwen nodded, nothing but understanding and a melancholic adoration in her eyes, "Kara Danvers?"

Lena tensed at the name, "How'd-

"Oh, please," she chuckled, "We dated for a long time, and I went to boarding school with you even longer, I'd like to think I know you pretty well by now."

The C.E.O. flushed, "Is it that obvious?"

Gwen scoffed, "Yeah. Not to her though. You should probably tell her how you feel."

Lena made a face and shook her head, tone tainted with sourness, "No. She has feelings for someone else. I'm barely anything - I'm nobody to her."

"You're friends. That type of bond isn't any less important. It has to count for something," Gwen placed a hand on the Luthor's shoulder firmly, "You should talk to her, even if it doesn't work out the way you want it to, she doesn't seem like the type to abandon anyone. And she makes you happy, that's what matters, romantic or platonic. So, make it count."

Lena smiled, "Fine, I was going to try and talk to her after our meeting anyway."

"Speaking of the meeting, I'm probably going to have to go over everything from the beginning, huh?"
"Probably."

Gwen rolled her eyes and prepared another demonstration, "You know, this's probably going to take another hour and it's already past ten, and it's pouring outside, I don't want you to go home in soaked clothes."

Lena shrugged, "I have time, and I don't mind the rain at all actually."

Gwen chuckled, "Alright then. My company's already been developing some prototypes of these little guys. We've been leaders in the A.I. business for some time, but we've been wanting to breach into robotics for a while."

Lena furrowed her brows as she scanned the documents, "What exactly are you dabbling with? It doesn't look...friendly in all honesty..."

"They're sentries. One out of three models designed so far. I wanted to develop weapons for defense and, if it comes to it, offense. We need protection."

The Luthor was somewhat confused, "From what?"

"Aliens."

Lena dropped the blueprints when she recognized one of the materials to be Kryptonite.

"Why would you-"

"We need to cover all our bases, even if the human race is protected by Supergirl, it's still an alien, it shouldn't be on Earth," Gwen stated easily.

Lena was baffled, her eyes widening in shock at her friend's usage of pronouns regarding National City's greatest hero, "And you're just...going to sell these on the market? Like candy?"

"We're developing more affordable sentinels for citizens, this current blueprint you're looking at is a model for the government, the sentinel. Specialized for combat against Supergirl and Superman, or anyone of their kind."

"This could do irreparable damage, physically and socially, what are you thinking?"

"Clearly, it seems," Gwen tilted her head curiously, "I thought you'd agree?"

Lena was stunned, "I...what? Is it due to my genocidal and xenophobic family?"

"Their work was a beneficial one."

The Luthor took a deep breath and willed herself to calm down, "I understand where all the fear comes from, I do, but violence? This isn't the answer. What if it falls into the wrong hands? If the human race matters to you so much, your inventions could very well hurt humans too."

"That's why I need you, Lena," Gwen smiled, "I heard you developed an alien detection device, we could implement that into the machines, tweak it so there are less human casualties."

The Luthor narrowed her eyes, "That project was wiped out, and it was classified."

"You what?"

"As I said, that project was scrapped. I have no intention of further dividing aliens and humans, nor
do I want to instigate a *war,*" she nearly shouted.

"That's foolish, Lena. We're already in a war. Who's side are you on?"

The Luthor only shook her head, "Aliens come from horrible conditions: oppressive planets, famine, war...many of them have families, many look for new chances. How are they so different from humans? From the people in war-torn Syria or Iraq coming to the United States or to other countries?"

"They're dangerous, they're unpredictable, they could be unstoppable if we don't do something now. We're the keepers of the human race."

The Luthor's voice raised an octave, "Did you learn *nothing* from history? Humans are just as dangerous and unpredictable."

"But they're stoppable."

"You're being absolutely ridiculous!" Lena shouted, "What you're building, they're powerful; they could be a one-way ticket to some imbecile dictator!"

"You're on the wrong side of this!" Gwen retorted, "This isn't what your brother would've wanted! He was a hero! Now we have one less alien with a God complex to worry about due to his sacrifices!"

"Don't talk about him!" Lena screamed, feeling herself heating up with fury, "He was power-hungry! He was envious of Superman's abilities! There's *nothing* heroic about his actions when he massacred thousands upon thousands of lives, human or not, to achieve his agenda! Same with my mother, same with my father! They're despicable people!"

"I can't believe what I'm hearing, and you were the last I expected to get this narrow-minded lecture from, *Luthor.*"

"Fine, let's say your robots are a success, what if we need more than that if a bigger threat attacks Earth?" Lena countered.


"What?"

"We could test her, make our own indestructible soldiers. It may be at the cost of an icon, but it's death would greatly benefit humanity."

Lena's eyes bulged, "And you think I'd just let you do that? That most of National City would let you do that?"

Gwen chuckled and tilted her head, "Well, what do we have here? Do you actually *care* about that...thing?" her voice cracked, overflowing with emotion, "That domesticated beast? It's a monster! Don't humanize it! It wreaked havoc in National City just a year ago! Who's to say it won't happen again?"

"*Her,*" the Luthor corrected, her voice reaching a new level of coldness, "*She* has emotions, *she* has a family, *she* has friends, just like every other human and alien. And that incident was caused by Lord Tech, by Max; human fear has conceived so many problems, it has been the root of countless deaths."
"I can't believe you've buddied up with Supergirl. An alien sympathizer is just as bad. Supergirl and Lena Luthor. Do you know how ludicrous that sounds? Don't you get it?"

"I've been told, Ms. Morgan," Lena growled, "Now, I'm going to calmly ask you to leave, I'm sure you can escort yourself to the exit, or else I'll have security throw you out the window."

Gwen scoffed and stormed for the door, but before she left, she made one last remark, low and disappointed.

"Do you really think Supergirl cares about you? That it isn't just keeping an eye on the sister of the man who killed its cousin? Everyone slanders you for being a Luthor, that or not following in your genius family's footsteps," she spat, a rather unsettling gleam in her hazel eyes, "You're accepted in neither community nor the spectrum in between. You're an outsider, casted away, unwanted, you have no place anywhere. And you're on the wrong side of this fight, Luthor."

Then she slammed the door shut and Lena flinched.

By the end of the confrontation, she found herself heaving exhausted breaths from the ordeal, her mind still reeling over everything Gwen had said.

Someone she could actually call a friend, and she could not help but compare the case to her brother's.

Lex though, he showed warning signs, very noticeable ones, but Lena loved him too much to pay any mind to until it was too late and she was intelligent enough to not let anything like that slip by again.

So it baffled her as to how she missed any possible hostile action in her friend, even replaying all their memories when they were together.

With Gwen, there was nothing, frighteningly nothing - every little thing that could be perceived as hatred towards aliens was neatly internalized and veiled over. All that was left to notice was how strikingly beautiful the woman was, how her kindness and generosity and charm was so intense it left others stunned.

She was a genuinely friendly person, easy to get along with regardless if one was an introvert or extrovert or an indoors person or an outdoors person - she was considerate of everyone.

If she believed them to be human.

But one thought through all of those muddled memories was glaringly prominent.

*I need to tell her.*

Kara stirred, an incessant and very eager knocking against her door waking her up from her heartbroken-induced slumber.

She sighed when the banging ceased, relaxing further into her bed, relishing in the moment of silence before it was so rudely interrupted by the knocking again, more insistent.

She groaned, jumping from her cushions and nearly stumbling over her broken bedroom door on the ground.

Kara lifted the block of wood in one arm and checked the time, almost eleven.
She sighed, door still carried on one side while she unlocked the knob to her front door with the other.

"Alex, the door's not that important, you said you were going to call me when-"

Kara froze in place, her shock causing her lips to part slightly.

Lena forced a crooked smile upon seeing her friend, clad in pajama shorts and a button-up long sleeve rolled up to her elbows, complemented with unruly long blonde hair and a large door in one arm.

They jumped at the loud thud the object made when it hit the floor, the Kryptonian unaware that she had dropped it.

Kara refused to let herself be overcome by her friend's captivating appearance that was a simple black form-fitting dress that did wonders for her figure.

Her expression hardened, her back straightening, shoulders and chest puffed in a guarded manner, "What do you want?"

Lena nearly flinched at how cold Kara sounded, a far cry from her usual friendly nature.

And suddenly what she was there for was completely irrelevant to what she said next.

"I'm sorry."

The blonde's eyes momentarily lifted in surprise, but as quickly as it did, it was just as fast warping into a scowl.

"Awesome. Are we done here?"

The frozen statement left Lena's stomach twisting itself and a tight, sharp pain stabbing at her chest.

"Kara. Can we talk?"

The blonde lost a fraction of her stiffness at the weak croak, now noticing that Lena was shivering quite aggressively, dripping wet from the chilly rainy weather, and that she was panting, maybe because she had rushed inside the apartment complexes and all the way up the stairs.

Kara hesitantly swung the door open wider, her stance softening as she made way for her friend to enter her abode.

She hastily shut the door and flicked on a few of her lights, flooding her living room and kitchen with a very dim tint, then she rushed towards the bathroom to swipe a towel, cautiously handing it over to Lena.

Kara strode to the kitchen, fumbling with appliances here and there.

"Drink?"

It was clipped, curt, its edges sharp.

Lena found herself saying no, receiving a short grunt in return, slipping her heels off and busying herself with wiping her hair and outfit dry.

Kara returned with a mug of hot tea in her hand, standing opposite her friend on the other side of the
coffee table.

Her expression was cross, a stern crinkle forming between her eyebrows as her lips formed into a shape that bordered a pout.

"I'm sorry," Lena repeated.

"Yeah," Kara snapped, glaring at the herbs in the bottom of her mug, "I heard you the first time."

The Luthor winced, her gaze still locked on the ground, still at a loss for words, unable to conjure up and formulate even the simplest sentences because nothing could explain how awful she felt for treating her friend like she did that afternoon.

"Well? Do something."

Kara looked up from her mug at those words.

"Scream at me, storm out. Something. I deserve it, don't I?" Lena whispered, her voice wavering, "I shouldn't have treated the situation so poorly. I take full responsibility for my actions. It wasn't a lapse in judgment, it was purposeful; I deliberately hurt you, and I want you to know that I'm genuinely sorry for that."

Kara set her mug down with a clank on the coffee table, wringing her hands together as she finally managed to choke out another sentence.

"Why? Why'd you do it?"

The Luthor felt the stinging tears spill over, mortified by how vulnerable she was being; soaking wet, desperate in her state, and with tears now running down her face.

She was mortified, but she was unable to stop the onslaught of emotions broiling inside of her.

"Mxyzptlk, he...he said...some things, and..."

Kara tensed, "Mxy?"

Lena nodded, "And I let his words get to my head, it was my fault; I was selfish, trying to protect myself, but you got hurt in the process. And that was the last thing I wanted."

"Last thing you wanted?" Kara scoffed, "Lena, I poured my heart out, and you mercilessly shredded it apart! Do you really expect me to - I mean - then you kissed Gwen and-"

The Luthor was puzzled and quite startled at the slip-up, "You saw us ki - nevermind," she shook her head, clearing her thoughts, "She kissed me, but-"

"You kissed back," the blonde nearly barked.

"What does that have anything to do with what happened?"

Kara chuckled bitterly, angry tears leaving tracks past her red eyes and down her cheeks, "You're not being serious right now, right? Are you playing some game with me? It has everything to do with what happened!"

Lena's expression remained confused, "I...I'm lost, we are talking about what happened this afternoon, right?"
The blonde's mouth gaped, "You're not - you're not joking? What did you think I was talking about? I thought we were on the same page here!"

"It wasn't a very dense conversation, Kara! You just found another boy to mull over!" Lena shouted, the reins holding back her passion snapping, "Do you think anyone enjoys hearing the person they love ramble on and on and on about someone else? It's - it's infuriating to be reminded that I'm not as good as this person or that person or to even be considered. And hearing an almost omniscient fifth-dimensional stalking imp confirm what I already believe is just..."

"Y-You feel the same way? And you thought I was...talking about someone else?" Kara repeated in question, then she pressed a palm to her face, "You...dummy."

Lena almost jumped at how close the voice was, she had not noticed that they were nearing each other as their conversation became more heated.

She froze when a hand on her cheek coaxed her head up

Kara's voice was breathy and soft, "Lena, look at me. Please."

The Luthor flicked her gaze from her friend's lips to the enrapturing blue eyes she had, it was a safer bet, but they imprisoned her with their intensity.

"I..."

Lena trailed off, quickly swallowing the rest of her words down.

*Why wouldn't it be anyone else?*

Kara seemed to see through her, to the insecurity and the uncertainty.

"It's you, Lena. I don't think I could imagine loving anyone else other than you."

Chapter End Notes

**Constructive criticism appreciated.**
Vitality

Chapter Summary

Kara and Lena's relationship has been rekindled, and though they still have a long journey ahead of them, they are both eager to find where the path will lead them. However, the threat of Gwen's anti-alien project is just the beginning of the many obstacles they will come to face.

WARNING: NOT FOR KIDDOS. THINGS GET HEATED, SO IF YOU WANT TO SKIP THE SEXY TIMES, GO PAST THE SECOND BAR.

Chapter Notes

Find me on Tumblr at spoopercorp and on FF as Local-Asshole.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Vitality

Lena felt like she was in a dream, almost teetering between it and reality, desperately hoping for it to be the latter. However, a part of her was so convinced what was happening right before her eyes was a lie - a cruel figment of her imagination.

Kara leaned closer, slowly enough for her to pull away if she wanted, and she was delighted to find that the Luthor did not.

In all honesty, the last thing Lena expected to happen while visiting her friend, or in her entire life for that matter, was kissing her; her heart stopped at Kara's confession, but it caught in her throat when she felt her mouth grazing against her own, brushing momentarily, before increasing in its ferventness.

And now, Lena was unsure if the moment was at all a dream anymore. If it was, it was certainly vivid and potently addictive, and probably something she should not relish in, but it felt so very real that she thought to herself 'how could I not'.

Lena had no time to register how supple Kara's lips were. How they melded easily together and how they definitely tasted fruity and something so peculiar she could only describe it as perhaps Chinese takeout. How when Kara sighed with something akin to adoration she could confirm it was wintergreen as well.

And that it was definitely Chinese takeout.

It was just so Kara Danvers and she almost chuckled at how silly it was.
Lena twitched when a hand tentatively splayed against the small of her back, the other caressing her cheek, and she released a content sigh at the actions.

Her touch - it felt like electricity, like fire, it burned red hot, left a trail of flames in its wake.

It was just so stimulating.

Kara smiled into the kiss, of course it would taste like mint and vanilla and maybe a little bit of cinnamon.

Lena's hands moved of their own volition, finding purchase against the blonde's hips, hands sliding under the hem of her shirt.

Kara shuddered at the cold, damp fingers against her stomach, one tracing the lining of her toned abdominals, the other playing with the waistband of her shorts and trailing over the protruding bone deliciously.

Lena felt the skin and muscles under her fingertips twitch and smirked.

Kara giggled, "That tickles."

They quickly resumed their kiss, more heated and eager and desperate than the last.

The Luthor retracted her hand immediately when she felt an odd texture against the blonde's side, then carefully lifted the shirt halfway, her reaction crestfallen and agape at the sight of the words 'Cadmus' engraved into her skin.

"They're fading. Slowly," Kara whispered, grabbing hold the wrist of the hand tracing her scars, "But don't worry, they're still going away like the other scars. The uh...the synthetic Kryptonite Lillian used when she captured me was kind of - it hindered my scarification so to speak."

She chuckled breathlessly, unnervingly, still a bit shaken from the torturous ordeal.

Lena's brows crinkled together, intense hatred coloring her features at the memory of her own mother tormenting the woman she loved.

"It's all right, it's already happened," Kara whispered, leaning her forehead against hers.

Lena wiped a thumb over the horrific scar and nodded slowly, "Yeah..."

Their lips reconnected, this time gentler.

The blonde gasped in surprise when she felt a tongue part her lips and lap at her own, then the walls of her mouth, alternating.

Kara refrained from grinning, from breaking the moment, so she mimicked the action in a more frenzied manner and it was Lena's turn to gasp, but it was quickly swallowed down by the Kryptonian.

The Luthor noticed fingers hesitantly playing at the zipper of her dress now and then, but she waited until Kara was ready, she refused to rush into anything without her okay.

But she found herself slightly irked and broke the kiss for a moment to nod enthusiastically, whispering out a hoarse 'yes' until smashing their lips together again with such a surprising amount of vigor the blonde stumbled backward.
Kara's heart stuttered for a moment, then she unzipped the dress, halfway, until the straps of the garment fell off the woman's shoulders, exposing more of her succulent collarbone and the lovely lacy black bra hidden underneath, contrasting her fair skin.

Kara nearly jumped when she felt something soft hit the back of her knees and noticed they were in her room, still dark with only the moonlight to shine through the blinds. In the next second she was urged down onto the bed, falling back onto the cushiony sheets with Lena quickly straddling her hips, her dress hiked scandalously high up to showcase her milky thighs.

The Luthor took a moment to examine Kara, observing her blonde strands splayed out on the blankets, their hands intertwined above her head, and then her hips jolted, bucking up once then settling down with a whimper.

Lena bent over, ran her tongue down Kara's taught throat until she hit the collar of her shirt. Then she scaled her fingers down to the hem of the cloth and lifted it and impatiently struggling with the buttons; the blonde simply ripped them off, raising herself slightly to help with the removal and following up with removing her glasses hastily.

Lena tossed the shirt to the floor and when she looked back she saw the woman under her run her fingers through her wild tresses, attempting to tame the mane after such unruly movements.

*So beautiful...*

Kara blushed a deep shade of red and squirmed under her.

Lena gave a crooked smile, "Did I say that out loud?"

The blonde nodded bashfully.

The Luthor's grin morphed into a smirk as she rocked her hips once, twice...

Kara moaned, tangling a hand into her own hair and balling it into a fist while the other was tracing feather light touches against the woman's thigh.

Lena yelped when she was flipped over and suddenly she was the one being straddled instead.

"Wha-"

Her sentence was replaced by her own pleased moan when wet lips glazed over her throat, then sucked; Kara nearly squeaked at the thumping pulse under her lathering tongue, then she moved to the sensitive skin behind her ear, then to her collarbone, nipping at it gently, hungrily.

The blonde choked out a whimper when a thigh placed itself between her legs, pressing up hard, moving backward and forward, rubbing itself against her teasingly.

Kara rode it for several seconds, undulating her strong hips to chase pressure, before returning the favor, smiling adoringly when she heard Lena gasp and arch her back. Her grin widened at the damp wetness she felt, which was probably the same case for herself if the painful desire throbbing down below was anything to go by.

Lena wanted to laugh, blonde hair draping down like a curtain and tickling her skin, and she savored the small sounds the other woman made.

Kara did the same, recording Lena's purely lustful moans, committing them to memory. She brushed her palm down the woman's ivory-colored thigh, to her calf, then back up again, stopping just above
her knee, and then she hoisted her up against the pillows.

Her hand remained on the Luthor's thigh for a moment before riding up, agonizingly slowly, and she stopped just short in between her legs, hesitant.

Lena sucked in a sharp breath, hips rolling futilely to chase the ebbing friction, and grabbed the blonde's wrist, tugging it up closer and closer until it touched. With her other, she went to experimentally squeeze Kara's breast once, a smug smirk playing at her lips when the blonde's breath hitched, then she went to cup her in between her thighs.

Both of them were shocked and very pleased to find how dripping wet the other was through the fabric gating them from the other side, and they craved each other even more, wanted to touch the other everywhere so badly the itch in their fingers was unbearable.

A strangled gasp escaped Lena's parted lips when she felt the pressure against her increase but a fraction; she snapped her hips up abruptly at the sensation, both her hands now clawing possessively at Kara's broad shoulder blades and then scratching up her bare back, aside from the bra she still adorned.

The blonde smiled tenderly, adoringly, removing her hand much to both of their dismays, and untied the messy bun still holding up Lena's raven locks.

She watched it unravel, then pulled the woman's dress down further until the collar rested below her breasts.

Kara dropped to whisper in her ear, their bodies flush, melding with each other, "You're so beautiful..."

She panicked when fresh tears sprung out of Lena's eyes and nearly scrambled away until her voice reassured her.

"Thank you."

The Luthor raked her nails gently up Kara's stomach, ignoring her scars and bathing in the fact that the muscles twitched violently at her touch, then her palm dipped lower and lower until it was just shy of its destination, stroking lightly.

Kara whimpered, suddenly interested in the woman's free arm, kissing in some sort of pattern before Lena realized.

"Oh."

She pulled away, slightly embarrassed, but much ashamed.

The blonde's expression softened even further as she traced the scars on the same arm, worshipping the pale, smooth skin with her ghostly touch - creamy alabaster skin that, regardless of the scars, was flawless and perfect and so, so very soft.

"It's okay. I'm here. You're safe."

She made to kiss the other scars, up her arm, to her shoulder, then her torso before sighing in temporary satisfaction.

Lena twitched from the heated breath that hit the valley between her breasts.
Kara chuckled, firmly placing her hands on the woman's hips, squeezing gently.

And suddenly a weight came crashing down on Lena and she froze; the cruel and ruthless memory of those very same hands easily crushing the bones beneath, and she found herself unable to cry out 'stop' as the fear obstructed her throat, constricted it and her lungs so tight she could barely breathe properly. The fear told her to succumb, and for a moment she was tempted to let it build a permanent wall between her and the woman she loved.

Luckily, Kara's attention shifted. She was unfazed, undistracted by the pleasure she was partaking in - the praising of the goddess underneath her - and immediately stopped when Lena's body became so taught that it trembled, the erratic heartbeat playing rapidly against her eardrums in conjunction with the uneven breaths; she was hyperventilating, at the cusp of pleasure, yet the imminence of a panic attack threatening to overpower her.

Lena could see it, the darkening of her vision around the edges - she was going to pass out.

But Kara speedily snapped her hands away, prepared to back off until Lena took hold of her neck, as if to prevent the Kryptonian from moving.

"Don't."

Kara frowned, "You can't. You shouldn't. We shouldn't-"

"I want this," Lena whispered, and she thought it sounded lackluster, like it was missing something. Someone.

*I want you.*

Their faces were so close that their foreheads touched and their noses were just a hair's breadth away.

"I need this," she rephrased, unsteady, and it still sounded...off.

*I need you.*

But Kara was unconvinced, taking note of the racing heart inside of the woman's chest, and she shook her head.

"You're still afraid," came her hoarse counter, shaking her head.

"I know, I don't care. Please," Lena reiterated with a whine - with a beg.

Kara frowned, the crinkle appearing between her eyebrows.

"Okay," she relented, and she felt the body under her relax slightly, "But tell me when it's too much for you, and whenever it seems like you're, well...I'll just stop, okay?"

Lena nodded, "Of course."

The blonde grinned, tucking a loose strand behind the woman's ear, leaning closer.

Their lips barely brushed when a blaring ring interrupted them.

Kara groaned against Lena's mouth, the latter shivering at the sound, before reaching for her phone on the nightstand.

She clicked the call button and failed to repress the growl that escaped her chest.
"What, Alex?"

"Woah. Okay, kiddo, chill. Sorry I interrupted your beauty sleep. There's a loose cannon not far from National City that we need help with, I'll send you the location, alright?"

A pause.

"Hey, sis?"

Kara zoned out in the middle of the call when Lena lovingly took her face into her hands and leaned up to nibble the edge of her jawline, then slim fingers wrapped around the nape of her neck as she bit her ear.

He Kryptonian could feel herself melting into a puddle when their eyes connected and she thought she might faint.

Kara's vision was fixed in place, met the loveliest shade of green that she would recognize anywhere - an unnaturally immaculate shade of green that belonged only to her.

And Lena looked on with bated breath at how the blue hue - the sea trapped in Kara's eyes pooled out with a vibrant amount of love and adoration, and she found herself wanting to cry at the sight.

Someone actually loved her, not to mention it was the girl of her dreams, the girl she had been pining over for ten years, or more accurately around eight.

Lena chuckled when she heard Alex screaming over the phone, but the Kryptonian, even with the super hearing, was adamant on admiring how melodious her laugh sounded.

It was just so happy, and seeing Lena happy made her happy, and a bit stubborn to the world surrounding them.

"Kara."

"Hmmm?" came the dreamy hum.

"You should probably answer Alex."

The blonde's eyes bulged, "Oh!"

The voice on the other end buzzed through the static, "Did you fall asleep on me you idiot?"

"Uh...yeah, yeah, something like that," Kara responded, half of her concentration still glossing over how she was slightly disappointed Lena's dark red lipstick was unable to be smudged across her cheeks.

The hickeys forming and marking her neck were a pleasant sight though.

Her phone vibrated again when Alex spoke, "See you soon, dork. And if you want we can get some ice cream tomorrow, maybe we can both talk to Lena."

"No need," Kara chuckled giddily, "I got that taken care of."

"Wait. What? What do you mean?" came the curious lilt, then Alex gasped, "Holy shit, are you getting laid right now? J'onn! Mags! Lucy! I have great news! Those stupid idiots finally-

The blonde choked on air, fumbling with her phone and replying with an unconvincing 'uh, no I'm
not' and pressing the end button so hard the glass screen cracked.

Kara groaned in exasperation, but at least the phone was still intact, albeit not very attractive to look at anymore.

Lena's smile faltered slightly, "You have to go I presume?"

The blonde reciprocated with a pout, "You've presumed correctly."

"Be careful."

"I'll be back in a jiffy. Stay tonight," Kara whispered, placing her lips on Lena's forehead before a gust of air signaled that she had left.

The Luthor sighed, smiling and retrieving a sweater and a pair of shorts to don, still trying to register what had happened, then reddening at the thoughts of the peaceful bliss she experienced.

She shivered when a breezy chill hit her legs and turned around, walking towards the open window.

Lena noticed that the rainy weather had stopped, the night sky almost cloudless, with bright and dim stars dotting it, the moon still illuminating with a dull white.

Lena blinked her eyes open, her vision bleary and mind groggy as she felt a pair of arms release their cradle on her and snake away. She felt the bed shift and a shuffling sound next to her and rolled over.

She chuckled quietly to herself, the sight of Kara shrinking further into the layers of blankets and curling into a ball, tucking her knees up to her chest.

Lena's brow arched when the blonde's lips twitched, muttering something unintelligible.

It took her a second to realize the seemingly incoherent jumble of word vomit was in Kryptonese.

She placed a gentle hand on her cheek, tracing her lips with her thumb, then up the bridge of her nose, then outlining her eye.

Kara stirred, murmuring another Kryptonese phrase before her blue eyes slowly fluttered open, and her lips immediately curved into a beaming grin.

"You stayed."

Lena felt her heart hammer with affection, and smiled at the sound of the blonde's morning voice, followed by a yawn, "Of course I did."

Kara placed a hand over the one that continued to caress her face.

"I must be dreaming," she hummed, her tone delighted and breathy.

The Luthor chuckled at the statement, "And why's that exactly?"

"I got the girl."

"You sound pretty happy about that."

"Oh, I'm very happy," Kara giggled, snuggling closer to Lena and resting her face in the crook of her
neck, tangling their legs together, "Some people were pretty happy about it too last night."

"Some people?" she repeated.

"As in at the D.E.O. - Alex, Maggie, Lucy, Winn, James, and J'onn."

"That's pretty much everyone, Kar."

"Okay, well, not all of them were happy I guess," the blonde confessed.

Lena's expression fell and Kara could feel her slump, quickly correcting herself.

"Like, three of them lost thirty dollars or something."

"Betting on what may I ask?"

"On which one of us would confess first."

Lena chuckled, partly because she was amused, the other because of the warm puff of breath that tickled her throat.

They stayed in bed, locked in each other's arms as the Luthor stroked the honey-colored hair in front of her while the Kryptonian hummed.

"Kara?"

"Yeah?"

"Your ringtone is tacky by the way."

The blonde snapped away from the embrace to give the woman an exaggerated pout.

"Why does no one appreciate NSYNC anymore?"

"Not exactly my cup of tea in all honesty," Lena rolled her eyes, "C'mon, it's late into the morning, we both have to get ready for work."

Kara's frown deepened as well as the creases in her forehead and the crinkle between her brows, "Why can't we just stay here?"

The Luthor chuckled at the groan, "Get up, sleepyhead, and quit whining. I'll make breakfast."

Lena shrugged out of the sheets and stood up, stretching before turning around.

"Are you getting up or-"

She smirked at the sight of Kara gawking with her jaw dropped and could only assume she was admiring her creamy legs and the bit of skin when the shirt rode up due to the stretch.

"Do you like what you see, Ms. Danvers?"

The reporter quickly averted her eyes as an intense heat creeped up her neck and rested in her cheeks, "Wh - Uh, I..."

Then she pouted, unappreciative of the teasing, and muttered, "You suck at cooking."

Lena raised one of her perfect brows, "Do you want pancakes or not?"
She sauntered into the kitchen at her frown, preparing the ingredients.

Kara came out of her bedroom five minutes later, padding over to where the Luthor was, leaning against the counter as she watched her mix the batter.

Lena glanced at her from the corner of her eye and blushed when she caught her ogling, promptly returning her line of sight to the mixture in the bowl in front of her, "What are you staring at?"

Kara grinned widely, rubbing the back of her neck sheepishly, "Oh... I... You just look really nice in my clothes."

"It's just a pair of shorts and a sweater-"

She cut herself off when something on the counter had her attention.

"What's that?"

"What's what?" the blonde inquired.

Lena lifted an appliance from the granite surface, "You have a waffle maker with your family's sigil on it."

"It's a good waffle maker!"

The Luthor shook her head with a crooked smile, "You're a dork."

She took a step forward, arms wrapped around the the blonde's waist as she leaned forward to give her a peck on the nose, then moved to her lips.

Kara swiftly backed away, "I..."

Lena could not hide the hurt from her face, "Did I do something wro-"

"No!" the Kryptonian hastily denied, "It's just, I mean, I want to be with you, I do, but..."

The Luthor folded her arms, her expression guarded, "But?"

Kara fidgeted with her hands and interlaced her own fingers together, "I'm not sure if it'd be good for you," she laughed mirthlessly, the sound melancholic and forlorn, "You're still afraid of me."

She jolted when a pair of pale hands wrung her own apart from each other.

Lena tentatively placed them against her hips, twitching slightly at the contact, but tightened her grip to let Kara know not to pull away.

She sighed, relaxing into the touch as seconds ticked by. The fear was still there, but she could feel her pounding heart begin to settle down.

"It's fine, Kar. I'm fine, okay?"

The blonde nodded, her tone still uncertain, "Yeah. Yeah..."

Lena made to cup her face and leaned closer until their noses barely touched.

"My brain is wired a little differently after...that incident, but it's not as strong anymore - I can feel it going away. It'll go away," she reassured, one of her hands dropping to Kara's, her grip firm enough
to make the trembling cease.

"So what are we then?" the blonde inquired.

"What do you want us to be?"

"Well, what do you want us to be?"

Lena scoffed and rolled her eyes, "I asked you first."

"Girlfriends?" Kara whispered, squeezing her hips once, her blue eyes full of hope.

The amount of love she showcased startled the Luthor; she never imagined someone would look at her that way, especially a Super.

Lena hummed, "Girlfriends."

Kara squealed, sweeping the woman off her feet and lifting her into her arms, spinning in circles.

"Put me down you Kryptonian oaf, I'm getting dizzy."

"Sorry, sorry," she giggled, setting the woman onto the floor, "I'm just so happy. You make me so happy."

"Let's not rush into this though, we can take it a bit slower, contrary to last night."

Kara suddenly became flustered, stumbling over her words, "Oh, I, uh...yeah."

The Luthor had a playful lilt in her tone, "You sound a bit disappointed."

"Wha - I," the blonde scoffed, shaking her head vehemently, "Stop teasing me."

"I can't help it. You're really easy to tease."

Then Lena's smile faltered a fraction, "I don't particularly want to be the bearer of bad news right now, but it's urgent."

Kara's grin diminished when she saw the Luthor frown.

"What's wrong?"

The woman sighed, "Yesterday. Last night. It's about Gwen."

The signature crinkle formed between the blonde's eyebrows, "What happened?"

"We had an argument, and stemming from that, a fallout in our friendship-"

"What?" Kara exclaimed, "What'd she do?"

Lena had an amused glint in her eye, "Why, I didn't know you were capable of jealousy."

The blonde widened her eyes, "I..." she sighed, "I'm not even going to deny that."

The Luthor tilted her head, "I'm curious, how long have you liked me if it was before Gwen came along?"

"I actually realized I loved you after our encounter with Mxy."
Lena felt her heart stop and she gulped.

Love.

It was not an easy word for her to toss around, especially coming from a family that was not great at demonstrating what that word meant; it was utilized as a form of manipulation, a transaction, reserved for something to get what one wished for.

But it was a word that was easy for Kara to toss around, she always meant it, and admitting that she loved Lena Luthor was probably the easiest thing to say.

"In all honesty though," the reporter mumbled, "I think I've had feelings for you since high school, I was just a little oblivious to it."

"Well, who's the dummy now?" Lena chuckled.

"Ha, ha, ha," Kara stuck her tongue out at the sardonic comment, "I actually wish I realized sooner."

The Luthor shook her head, recalling the horrible ache in her chest before the confessions, "No, you don't. Pining for almost ten years was not fun."

"I guess you have a point there, but recalling almost ten years of memories and pining that length of time in several weeks was not fun either."

They both chuckled.

"Anyway," Kara hummed, her expression slowly turning more serious, "Back to the original topic; what happened between you and Gwen?"

The Luthor gave a half-hearted smile, "We had a meeting to discuss a joint project between L-Corp and Morgan Tech. And frankly, after what happened, I'm concerned, especially for you."

Kara's expression hardened when she saw how torn Lena was.

The Luthor closed her eyes, pressing a hand to her forehead, "She's creating anti-alien weaponry. She's planning to sell these arsenals like candy to governments, and soon, to the public," her lips began to tremble as her entire frame shook, "I just...this's bringing up painful memories of what happened with Lex and..."

Lena choked back a sob, swallowing a cry down. She shook her head, exhaling an unsteady breath.

"Hey, hey... Look at me," Kara whispered, "Don't worry about me. I'm Supergirl. I can take care of myself. Plus I have Alex, Maggie, Lucy, James, J'onn, and... I have you. None of us are willing to go down without a fight, you know that."

Kara gave a comforting smile and took the Luthor's hand, rubbing soothing circles and tugging it in the direction of her bedroom, "C'mon, I think we should go to the D.E.O., we need to tell the others."

"I don't believe she's working alone," Lena stated, folding her arms.

"Why's that?" J'onn inquired, "From my understanding, Morgan Tech is, well, quite wealthy."

"She needed my help, and sure, she has a large company, but projects of that scale need an unrealistic amount of money. More than L-Corp and Morgan Tech combined if she wants to produce
them in an insanely short amount of time."

"But your company's net worth is the richest in net worth worldwide," Maggie added, "Second only

"Now you know how dire this situation is," Lena frowned, shaking her head, "I heard Gwen was

"Companies can't focus on one thing, there's public relations, there's finances, there's...," she sighed, running a hand through her hair, "I don't know. There are so many variables. So many outliers. With views like hers, she could easily be working with Cadmus, but Mother is currently in prison; the organization is scrambling to find a new leader, and I have a feeling we don't have much time left to idle. After our argument, I'm sure Gwen is going to speed things along. I know her. She's ambitious. She'll do anything to achieve her goals - embezzlement and tampering with stocks is probably the beginning."

"I can keep an eye on some offshore accounts and take a closer look at the stock market," Winn offered, "We could have M'gann gather some information, have her hire some lackeys to investigate detail with Maggie. We could gather evidence, incriminate Gwen."

"No," Lena rejected, "I have a nagging feeling this ring of anti-alien sentiment is larger than Gwen let on. If she's gone, someone else will just take her place, we need to take them all out in one fell swoop," she shook her head, pinching the bridge of her nose, "She's...paranoid. I could see the fear and the hate drive her crazy, she'll probably build prototypes in secret warehouses, and considering the amount of stragglers left in my company that still support Lex's ideals... I haven't been able to chase all of them down after the strange shipments stopped. Gwen will take advantage of that, either cause an uprising among my employees or have them quietly work behind my back or both. Either way, they'll go rogue," she clenched her teeth together, "She's like Lex. She wants to dawn a new age. She wants to incite war."

"No offense, and I hate to be rude, but," Alex interrupted, "your crazy ex-girlfriend is kind of a bitch."

Kara's eyes bulged and she stomped on her foot.

Her older sister squeaked, glaring, a harsh whisper leaving her throat, "You know what? You're meaner ever since you've gotten together with her."

The blonde made to stomp her foot again, but she side-stepped, observing the crack on the ground.

"Are you trying to break my toes?"

"Maybe."

"Girls!" J'onn growled, putting on his best stern expression.
However, there was amusement in his eyes as well as with Lena; Maggie, Winn, and Lucy stifled chuckles next to them.

"I agree," the Luthor smirked, "You're certainly not the only one in that boat, Agent Danvers."

Chapter End Notes

Constructive criticism appreciated.
Lena and Lucy meet up at Noonan's to discuss the former's recent discoveries regarding Gwen's project and its impeccable timing coinciding with Metallo's escape from prison.

**WARNING: VIOLENCE.**

Chapter Notes

*Find me on Tumblr at spoopercorp and on FF as Local-Asshole.*

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

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**Warped**

[Me: Meet at Noonan's. 4:00.]

[Lucy Lane: Sure I'm already like ten minutes out]

[Lucy Lane: Is everything ok?]  

[Me: Yes. I just need to have a word with you.]  

[Lucy Lane: Why does it sound like I'm in trouble?]  

[Me: You're not. I apologize, it was at a moment's notice.]  

[Lucy Lane: Lena we've known each other for like a decade now, you don't have to sound like you're conducting a business meeting when we text]  

[Me: Noted, Major Lane.]  

[Lucy Lane: Biiiiitch!]  

"Hey, Luthor!"

Lena jerked, fumbling with her phone before shoving it into her hoodie pocket.

"Oh, sorry, did I scare - holy fuck, you look like shit."

The C.E.O. glared at the woman who slid into their booth in the corner, still a bit frazzled, "Thank you for the compliment, Major Lane."
Lucy chortled before her grin faltered at Lena's very unamused expression.

"Oh, well. No, but seriously, you look awful. What's with the get-up?"

She observed her friend closer, with jeans, sneakers, and a hoodie.

"I never thought the day would come where I'd see a casual Lena Luthor. It's kind of...silly. You even overdress for game night."

"Again, your commentary is very much appreciated," Lena deadpanned, "I'm sure you know all too well that my surname is synonymous with death and genocide."

"Okay, c'mon, give yourself more credit. I think your last name is more synonymous with xenophobia."

"Upon death and genocide are based off. That was my family's cause," the C.E.O. countered, nodding towards the other customers.

Lucy followed the gesture, her brows knitting at the sight of some very nervous looking guests glancing over in their direction now and again.

The brunette rolled her eyes and sighed, "Okay, don't get your panties in a twist. I'm being serious, you look like you haven't slept a wink, and you're really jumpy."

"I'm a Luthor, I have to run a company while dealing with near-death experiences on a regular basis."

Lucy opened her mouth, then clacked it shut, "That's...yeah, good point," she coughed awkwardly, "Is it about Metallo?"

"You mean his break out from prison? Sure. That has me a bit unsettled, but there are more pressing matters at hand."

"Explains why you went 'incognito' somewhat. So, uh, what exactly did you want to talk about..."

She trailed off when she noticed Lena's head was tilted to the side a mere fraction, her eyes darting rapidly around the restaurant.

"Hey," Lucy tried again, reaching for the Luthor's hand, which was clasped around her glass of water so tightly they trembled and her knuckles whitened.

She placed her palm over Lena's fingers, gently prying them off, "Loosen up. Take it easy. Just...don't shatter the cup, I can't exactly rest easy knowing the broken shards can actually tear your skin, unlike Kara."

The Luthor's shoulders deflated, relaxing at the mention of the Kryptonian. She turned her head to face Lucy with a more serene expression.

"And what exactly made her shatter her cup?"

The Lane snickered at the memory, "Roulette actually."

Lena furrowed her brows in question.

"She was jealous when Veronica came to visit you in high school. Like, insanely jealous. She was so smitten with you it was kind of gross honestly."
The Luthor seemed to unwind further.

Lucy smirked, retracting her hand, "Probably not as gross as her bed sheets though."

Lena immediately tensed again, sputtering, "W-What are you infer-"

"Oh you know exactly what I'm inferring," she continued to tease, "Did you change the sheets after you guys fucked? Did you disinfect everything in the apartment? I'm not sure I can go in there without a hazmat suit anymore."

Lena's blush deepened as she struggled to maintain her features, "We - We didn't-"

"Okay, okay," the brunette snickered, "I'm done teasing for today. Your reaction was almost as entertaining as Kara's."

"Well, I can tell you that neither of us appreciate your teasing, Major Lane," she pinched her nose, "Let's just get back on track."

Lucy grinned, "Right, so, why exactly am I in trouble?"

Lena rolled her eyes, "You're not in trouble."

"Okay, so why am I 'not' in trouble?"

The Luthor paused, lost in thought momentarily before speaking, "I think Gwen has some sort of personal vendetta against Supergirl."

"What? She knows-"

"No, she doesn't," Lena interrupted, the answer relieving Lucy.

"Gwen is too fond of Kara and too hateful of Supergirl to know they're the same person, but I'm afraid that she'll go digging. If she finds out about Kara, about her and I...she might lose it."

"With all due respect, I'm pretty sure your ex already lost it."

"She actually seemed a little unstable to me," Lena shook her head, "If Gwen snaps she won't hesitate apprehending Kara and experimenting on her. She's smart, takes risks, she likes to play dangerously. I know she's targeting Supergirl, but I don't want Kara in her crosshairs either, or else it'd make capturing her easier; Gwen will know where she lives, where she works...her friends, her family..."

"Why are you telling me all thi-"

"She knows I'm close with Supergirl," Lena rushed out, "She knows I don't have much to lose, that I'm used to it, but she may be adamant about finding Supergirl's human identity, and by extension, trace you especially, or Alex to the D.E.O. She and the government organization could be exposed as one of the worst-case scenarios. Though there are too many links, too many dots to connect - Gwen would have to choose the ones she wants to go after if she wants to speed things along, but I'm not sure, she's not the type to leave any nook or cranny undiscovered," Lena groaned, "If she cherry picks what to investigate, she could very well catch everyone off guard, but her background information would be lackluster. If she investigates everything, there'd be time to prepare, but she'd have too much detail on everyone."

"Why would I be especially interesting though," Lucy inquired, "Why-"
"General Lane is going to be the first person she'll want to negotiate prices for her projects," Lena whispered, "I'd be less concerned if he - your father...he's not the Army General anymore I heard, is he?"

Lucy pressed a hand to her head, going over the dire situation, "No. He was promoted to Secretary of Defense. Shit. This's bad."

Lena nodded in agreement, "I've already notified J'onn, and I've gotten Maggie and Winn to dig a bit."

Lucy's expression was one of surprise, "I thought you said-"

"I know what I said, but the information they retrieved isn't in regards to the project, not enough to stir investigation if they hid their tracks well enough."

"What'd you find?"

"Gwen's driving source," Lena's eyes drooped, forlorn, "She lost her little brother due to collateral damage during one of Supergirl's fights. A building dropped on him. They were celebrating his sixth birthday. Her mother was paralyzed in the same incident," she took a shaky breath, "Her little sister died a few months later when Supergirl was under the influence of red kryptonite. I don't know what happened, but..." she swallowed the lump in her throat, voice heavy like it carried a burden, "...her injuries were so bad they couldn't put her back together. It had to be a closed casket funeral. She was eight. Her mother committed suicide not long after."

Lucy felt bile rise in her throat, "Oh my God...that's horrible. I can't even imagine losing so many loved ones like that..."

She placed a comforting hand atop Lena's fist, "I'm so sorry, you must've known them pretty well."

The Luthor nodded tersely, "I didn't - she...Gwen never told me about what happened..."

The C.E.O. mustered enough strength to keep her expression as neutral as possible, though her unsteady breaths and tremored voice gave it away.

"Does Kara know?" Lucy asked.

Lena frowned, shaking her head, "I was told by Alex that she was spared the details of the red kryptonite incident, and if at all possible, any of the collateral damage she caused in her battles."

"Do you think that she should know?"

Lena deflated, "I-I'm not sure. It'd crush her for sure, and though she knows she has the right to that information...I don't believe I recall Alex stating she was curious enough to find out. I think Kara tries to avoid it in all honesty, her line of duty births numerous casualties," she sighed, "Ignorance is bliss, perhaps Alex is right to keep that information undisclosed, she's Kara's sister, she knows best, right?"

"Not all siblings know best, Lena," Lucy smiled fondly, "And if she's willingly avoiding that information, I think it's wise not to bring it up."

"I'm not so sure Gwen will hold back that information seeing Supergirl," the Luthor frowned, "There are three models in this line. The first is called the sentry, a bit taller than an average human; it's fast and agile, but also has brute force on its side. The other is the tank, it's essentially a giant; it's slower, but still pretty fast - it's focus is on power though, and it can't reach in narrow spaces with speed, but
it does have an almost endless amount of ammunition cartridges."

"The other?"

Lena sighed, "Gwen designed a special one with an arsenal of pure kryptonite, the sentinel. But the element is too difficult even for L-Corp to acquire in massive shipments, so her prototype sentries may have different alien substances or weapons as substitutes - still rare, but less so, easier to get her hands on."

"Does she even know how to work them?"

Lena nodded, her voice quieter and hasty, "I've seen the blueprints, some parts briefly, but she seems to have a very keen understanding of the materials she's gathering. Gwen is...the A.I., with the help of alien technology, they're almost - they're sentient. They're advanced and mimic something lifelike in conscience, responsive to stimuli. But the intricate programming has left them...damaged, somehow. They were designed like parasites, they leech off of other organisms to prolong their lifeline in emergencies."

Lena pressed a palm to her head as if to soothe a headache.

"Gwen's teaching them."

Lucy did a double take, "What?"

"They're receptive to change and they evolve almost," the Luthor explained in a murmur, "I don't know how, but they don't age, not from infancy to adolescence to adulthood; I'm talking tactics and strategies. They can learn."

"How so?"

"There's this plan Gwen presented. It's like interconnected networks, a web of information. They're going to work like a hive mind. She mentioned this Source coming from something she contained to control them called the Box."

Lucy narrowed her eyes, watched as beads of nervous sweat rose from Lena's pores. At this point her sentences were almost panicked and afraid, so rushed they sounded like meaningless jargon.

The brunette clasped her hands in Lena's, "Hey, hey. Relax."

Lucy could feel her flinch, almost recoil, but she held her steadfast grip, trying to connect their eyes to no avail. She could feel the hands within her palms shake with a bone-deep tremor and found herself extremely concerned.

Clearly something was gnawing at the Luthor's mind, she knew more than she let on.

A worried expression painted Lucy's face.

"Lena, look at me," she whispered, unsettled, "Hey, look at me. What'd you see? Tell me what you saw."

The Luthor shook her head, evaded the question, "They start with the basics - chess or even checkers, and work their ways up from there. They learn at a phenomenal rate apparently," she chuckled, the sound unnerving, "Imagine, from birth - from creation - you're exposed to nothing but games like chess; everything is a transaction, a defense, an offense, the destination or victory matters, but the lives don't. Imagine being given a hammer from the beginning and-"
"And everything's a nail."

Lena nodded uneasily. She could feel her stomach swerve and flip inside as she tapped her fingers on the table nervously; she could see them tremble and see the glass cup of water sitting next to her shake as well.

Wait.

Lucy seemed to notice the peculiarity as well.

They ceased to dwell on it when the entrance to Noonan's opened, Maggie walking through with two officers behind her.

She motioned for them to stay near the door, mouthing an 'I'll handle this' before striding over to where Lena and Lucy stood to greet her.

"Something wrong?" the Lane inquired.

"Yeah," Maggie frowned, turning to the C.E.O., "I'm actually here on official business. The police station was sent some footage regarding Metallo's recent escape from prison that I wanted to ask you about."

Their expressions fell at the video.

"That - That's not me," Lena protested, desperate, "I don't know where you got that, but it's not me."

"Hey," Maggie reassured, her voice soothing, "I know. I believe you, and I'm sure Kara and Alex and everyone else would too, but the police station doesn't; we've reviewed the video a couple of times, it doesn't look tampered with," she scowled, "And they refuse to acknowledge shapeshifting aliens with agendas against the Luthor name. The timing of your schedule and Metallo's escape is too impeccable for them to ignore as a coincidence. I promise, we'll all figure something out. We'll find something to prove you're innocent," she smiled half-heartedly, "But until then, try to hold out as long as possible. I hear the cells aren't terribly uncomfortable, so..."

Lena frowned, nodding in a solemn manner.

Maggie slid between her and Lucy, whose expression saddened at her friend's journey to incarceration.

The detective stepped behind Lena and taking out the handcuffs from her belt.

"You're under arrest for aiding and abetting with a felon, accessory after the fact, conspiracy-"

She paused just before locking the Luthor's wrists together, distracted by the shaking of the table.

Lena and Lucy looked on, but just as abruptly as it started, it suddenly stopped.

They all shared a look of panic, and before they could open their mouths, an ear shattering explosion shook the foundations of the building and they went flying, the sound of broken glass hitting the ground littering their vicinity.

Lena groaned, felt the rubble digging into her back. The only other thing she registered was the unbearable high-pitched ringing in her ears and the faint sounds of screaming in the background.

She lifted a hand to gingerly touch the side of her head, feeling the familiar thickness of blood settle into the grooves of her fingertips.
Lena finally blinked her eyes open and saw she was pinned to the ground by a car that was likely blown into the restaurant like a projectile, the strength of the trajectory and velocity tearing its exterior.

A sharp pain erupted in the side of her stomach and she glanced down, scanning the out-of-place metal digging into the shallow surface of her skin.

"Lena!"

She breathed a sigh of relief, "Lucy, I-I'm here..."

"Oh thank fucking God," the soldier nearly cheered, dropping prone and crawling through the crevasse to see her friend stuck on the other side, "I didn't know how I was going to explain myself to Kara if I lost you."

Lena coughed, the dust and soot wafting uncomfortably into her nostrils and throat, "Where's Maggie?"

"I dragged her behind some cover. She's fine - out, but fine. Probably a concussion. Although that's pretty serious, you're the one that's pinned under a car."

"Wh-What happened?"

"I think Gwen created the prototypes a lot faster than we anticipated. Looks like a tank going off of your description. It attacked Noonan's. Lots of fire. Lots of broken shit," she glanced behind her at the chaos surrounding them, "It looks like it's looking for someone and I'll bet a hundred dollars that it's you judging from all the dark-haired women it's picking up and tossing around, so we've got to get out of here as soon as possible."

Lena chuckled humorlessly, "I'm in a little predicament here if you haven't noticed."

Lucy observed the metal carving itself cozily into her friend's skin.

"How deep is it?"

"Probably no more than a centimeter or two."

Lucy blanched.

That's still pretty deep. Her hypodermis very likely got punctured.

She sighed, "Cool, I'm going to pull you out then."

The Luthor gave her a look.

"I can tell you, Major Lane, that this's most certainly not cool," Lena grunted, gritting her teeth as she held onto the woman's arms.

"Cool," Lucy repeated, her voice rattling when she tugged the Luthor out swiftly, wincing at the woman's choked screams as the metal left a long laceration on her friend's abdomen.

"Son of a bitch!"

"Hey," Lucy chuckled, attempting to lighten the mood, "I'm pretty upset with the situation too, but watch the fucking language."
"Very funny, Major Lane," Lena snapped, biting her lip to prevent another yelp from escaping her throat.

"Can you just call me Lucy?" the brunette complained in a grumble, hanging the woman's arm over her shoulder, "Can you walk?"

Lena nodded, taking a good look at the machine, noting that it could stand as tall as a three-story building, "This one's a little bigger than the blueprints."

"A little bigger?" Lucy exclaimed, "That thing's massive! You didn't happen to see any overrides on the blueprints too, did you?"

"No. No override, Gwen would've had that information stored personally. And I'd rather deal with a tank than the others," Lena commented, analyzing the metal beast as its gears whirred and sputtered, "But this prototype was rushed through production. You guys might be able to get out of here alive."

"I'm sorry, 'you guys'?" Lucy repeated.

"It's after me, I can run somewhere with less civilians and you can tend to Maggie and the others here, get them to evacuate, or."

"Awful idea," she interrupted.

"I'm sorry, how rude of me for not considering any of your ideas," Lena commented sardonically, following up with a rhetorical question, "Do you have any better ones?"

"You know what, Luthor?" the brunette bickered, "Your sarcasm isn't appreciated."

"I'm aware."

The hostile mech's head snapped towards them.

"Target identified."

"I think it sees us," Lucy whispered, grasping a better hold onto the Luthor, who was growing more limp next to her.

Lena grimaced, clutching her profusely bleeding wound, leaning into the soldier's hold for support, "No shit."

The robot released its thrusters, a burst of speed propelling it forward, drifting as its base slugged through the ground.

Lucy swerved, shoving the Luthor back into the crevasse and diving after her, hovering over her body protectively.

Lena yelped at the impact that left her dazed and blacked out momentarily, more blood gushing out of her widening injury and splashing onto the ground, creating a small puddle.

"Fuck, it's got my leg," Lucy grunted, hooking her hands onto the metal of the car for purchase.

Lena wrapped her arms tightly around the brunette's torso, pulling the opposite direction of the machine trying to drag her out.

"Shit," Lucy groaned, heaving out panicked breaths, "It's squeezing."
Lena could see over the woman's shoulder the robotic arm encasing almost the entirety of her leg. She shut her eyes when she heard a sickening snap of bone, then another, and then another, followed by Lucy's hoarse screams.

The brunette's grip faltered and Lena felt the robot tug more, pulling them out another foot, but she held on desperately.

"Can you run?" Lucy wheezed.

"What?"

"Can. You. Run?"

"I...yeah, I think I-"

"Let me go."

"W-What?"

"You heard me."

"I..."

"Let go of me, Lena."

The Luthor panicked, she could feel her body slipping from her grip.

"No, no, no..."

Lucy released a strangled cry, "Do it!"

"Shut up!"

With one last pull, the brunette was out and the tank tossed her over its shoulder, reaching into the crevasse again.

Lena breathed a sigh of relief when she saw Supergirl veer in to deviate Lucy's fall and catch her.

"What the hell took you so long?" the brunette shouted, her adrenaline-induced anger preventing her from completely feeling the pain, "That Transformer almost ripped my entire leg off!"

Kara winced when she saw the damage, "Sorry."

She quickly lowered her to one of the D.E.O. agents swarming into the building to be sent back to the medical bay.

The Kryptonian whipped around when she heard Lena shout, the machine's hand wrapped around her body firmly as she struggled futilely to escape with the one arm that was not trapped in the grip.

Kara felt her eyes burn, about to let out a blaze of lasers from them before a familiar voice crackled from the robot.

"I wouldn't do that if I were you."

The blonde felt the burn in her eyes sizzle out and tried to make her voice as calm and collected as possible, "Let Her Go."
"I don't think you're quite in the position to make demands, Supergirl."

"Gwen," Kara growled, floating into the air until she was eye-level with the machine, "Let her go."

"Oh? You know my name? I'm flattered," the voice chuckled darkly, "But does Genevieve ring a bell?"

She did not reply, only confusion subtly colored her expression.

"No?" Gwen hummed, "Maybe Aria? Or Wyatt?"

The blonde continued to give her a puzzled look, glancing to Lena, noticing she had an expression of melancholic recognition at the names.

"Of course not," she scoffed, "Human lives are nothing to you. They're worthless. And you call yourself a hero."

The Kryptonian's brows knitted in frustration, not bothering to debunk such a solid, false statement, "You're surrounded. We could easily take this thing out."

"Of course you could," she admitted, "But you won't risk hurting Lena. You know very well that I designed this machine to be bulletproof. It'll just deflect the rounds and ricochet into the ground...or a body. And that'd make a pretty big mess for all of you to clean up."

Kara pressed her lips into a thin line, "Try me. Everything has a weakness."

The cocking of rifles below hardened her lie.

Gwen all but chuckled, "Well, you have more game than I thought. But who says I can't play the same?"

Lena began to panic when she heard the groan of metal, feeling the fingers of the giant tighten around her body once.

"You shoot. I squish her to the point she explodes into a pool of blood," she retaliated, "Unless you let me go, without any trackers. And trust me, I'd know."

Kara narrowed her eyes, recalling almost reluctantly all the times she noticed Gwen treating the Luthor with adoration and care, "You wouldn't. You're bluffing."

"Sacrifices are sometimes necessary. Try me," she echoed.

Before Lena could feel the metal hand move, her left arm was already shattered. Her torso tightened sharply, and she could feel her spine compressing, feel her chest and ribs cave inward, then several snaps as a stinging pain overtook her lungs, making her breathless.

Lena's bloodcurdling scream grated against Kara's eardrums and she broke her resolve, feeling it crumble down at the sight of the woman being crippled.

"Stop!" she begged, "Okay, okay! You can go, just..." she swallowed the bile down, "Stop hurting her. Please..."

The Luthor hunched over, softly whimpering, her vision blurring at the hot tears welling in her eyes, refusing to spill over. A tremor tingled her muscles and she began to sweat from the pain; her arm was crushed if the bloody bone sticking out was of any significance, and she could probably say the same with her ribs as several of them were either jutting out of her skin or pierced into her lungs.
A quiet, pathetic wheeze puffed from her chest, then she coughed painfully, watching the blood dribble off her lips and drip from her chin, joining the fair amount of red that poured from her body to the faraway ground.

"Oh?" Gwen hummed, "Consider my interest piqued. What exactly is your relationship with each other?"

Kara tore her eyes from Lena's broken body, now limp and dangling in the robot's fist, reluctant to let her out of her sight.

"We're friends," she stated with a cold bite.

Gwen did not seem to believe her, unsatisfied with the answer, but she let it go.

"Then I guess that's my cue to leave, before Lee bleeds out of course," she remarked, her tone just as cold, "Don't worry. I'm sure we'll all see each other again. In due time. Goodbye, Supergirl. It's been lovely."

Chapter End Notes

Constructive criticism appreciated.
Chapter Summary

*Kara is on edge after Lena's capture, eager to enact a rescue mission, but Lucy's information forces them to change their game plan. Meanwhile, Lena discovers new details that manifests what is at stake.*

**WARNING: EMOTIONAL BAGGAGE, MENTAL INSTABILITY, VIOLENCE.**

Chapter Notes

*Find me on Tumblr at spoopercorp and on FF as Local-Asshole.*

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Vengeance

Lena blinked.

Once.

Twice.

Her eyes darted around the room, which she could only assume was the makeshift medical bay where Gwen's primary source of anti-alien work was.

Clearly, she could not care less about her injured followers judging from how haphazardly designed the freezing room was, resembling something more akin to a cell - void of comfort and filled with dark hues.

Lena registered a weight lightly pressed over her mouth, the object pumping air into her nostrils and throat. She attempted to reach up and knock away the breathing mask, but found that her left arm was encased in a cast and sling, much too heavy to move in her groggy drug-induced state. Instead, she lifted her right arm and sluggishly moved to take the breathing mask off.

An unbearably sharp stab resonated from Lena's chest, rendering her breathless. She grunted, but the slight vibration worsened the pain and she bit back a groan, forcing struggling breaths into her damaged lungs.

Her panic increased exponentially when an incessant beeping synced with her fast-paced heartbeat - the echo filling her sensitive ears, causing the drums to vibrate tenderly and her eyes to clench shut. She began to twitch, failing to move away from the obnoxious noise that surrounded her.
The ringing continued to prevail, and the growing footsteps outside Lena's room halted just away from her bed.

Figures, dressed in dark turquoise scrubs and surgical masks.

They snapped their arms out and she flinched, their hands poking and prodding at her aching body, several of them roughly pinning her down as the others checked her vitals, shouting incoherent and slurred-sounding terms at one another.

Their actions and jargon did not cease her jerking movements, and instead brought out the most basic and primal instinct to survive as she continued in her futile attempts to escape.

Lena narrowed her eyes through the darkening edges of her vision and she parted her lips, all sound refusing to come out of her mouth as she felt herself slipping into unconsciousness once again.

"Stop! Don't touch her! Stand back!"

She snapped her head up at the familiar voice, immediately regretting her decision when the room began to spin and tilt before her; she shut her eyes briefly, and when they fluttered open, a familiar figure stood front and center.

The woman smiled, "Lee, I'm glad you're awake. It's been, well," she smirked, "around almost two weeks. I was worried for a while there."

She nodded at the doctors, gesturing them out the exit while Lena contemplated what she just said.

Two weeks?

The Luthor repressed a growl that threatened to escape her throat, inhaling a shallow breath.

"Gwen."

She was surprised that the hoarse croak came from her own vocal cords, its dormancy interrupted - it was rusted from her screams and the silence of a coma.

"Good evening," she responded, lighter, "We should've transferred in all honesty, considering we found a device on you; it measured your pulse, your electrolyte levels, the like," a pause, a sour look crossed her face, "And that health monitor doubled as a tracker. Lucky you, you placed it on yourself before that meeting you had at Noonan's - your paranoia's finally paid off. And your friends, they should be here soon. I don't know when. But we're prepared, and you'll watch us take them all out."

Lena grit her teeth, grinding the whites against one another.

"You bitch!"

Adrenaline coursed through her veins as she rushed to move from her bed, snapping off the wires attached to her skin, her flesh cold as the room's low temperature permeated through the thin cloth of her medical gown.

Lena glared at Gwen, ready to charge at her and tackle her to the ground to give her a piece of her mind.

But the moment her feet touched the floor, the excitement left her system, replaced with excruciating pain throughout her body. She gasped, collapsing to the floor, landing on her crushed left arm and jarring the same side of her broken ribs.
Lena let out a shout of agony and remained, her sweaty cheek pressed against the cool ground as she shivered from both the low temperature and the pain.

As soon as she was finished desperately sipping for air, she blinked again, forcing her blurred sight to focus on the woman in front of her.

A concerned Gwen moved to help, but stepped back when Lena shot her a hateful expression.

"Don't touch me."

The woman frowned, a serious look painted on her face as she crossed her arms.

"Flail chest. The left segment of your rib cage separated, detached from the chest wall, and some punctured through your skin and the surface of your lungs - most of the torn tissue scarred over though. And your arm had a compound break on the same side. The other side of your ribs will heal faster, just a few hairline fractures."

"And whose fault is all that?" Lena spat, "I think your robot was a little bit too eager with the pressure."

She grunted, breathless as she stood, her knees shaking and her uninjured right arm bracing against her bed for support.

Gwen's expression darkened, swallowing back a retort and deciding to ignore the statement, "It should take approximately two months to heal everything if all goes according to plan, only four more weeks to go for you. However, there aren't a lot of painkillers in stock, nor are they strong enough to abate your wounds - the drugs you're on might wear off soon; I can't really waste money on treating my cooperators as they're plentiful, especially traitors, so the recovery time here might be quite longer than at the D.E.O."

Lena's eyes widened a fraction, then narrowed, "So it seems you've done your research."

Gwen's lips twitched, entertaining a smile before a scowl took over, "It seems you've done yours as well."

"I can't help my curiosity," Lena commented in slight amusement, "As a Luthor, I can't help my penchant for seeking out insane situations apparently."

Gwen let a tiny grin color her otherwise intense expression.

"That makes three of us."

Lena startled at the third voice, her eyes darting behind her former friend.

"Mom," she regarded with the same amount of disdain, if not more, "Why am I not surprised?"

Lillian entered the room with Metallo by her side, as well as a whirring machine following behind.

"Restrain her," came the order.

A synthesized voice emitted from the automaton, "Acknowledged."

Lena pursed her lips, grimacing at how roughly she was handled by the robot, its frozen metal latching onto her skin and shoving her to her knees.

For a moment she thought she could see worry flash across Gwen's eyes before it settled into a blank
slate yet again.

Lena brushed it off, glowering at the two women before her, "How far into production are you?"

"A single tank and a few dozen sentries, enough to subdue two Kryptonians without much of a hassle - most of them prototypes," Lillian answered easily, then her nose crinkled in disgust, "We're currently constructing the first sentinel since Kryptonite is practically nonexistent due to President Olivia Marsden's Alien Amnesty Act."

"Considering how complicated the blueprints were the last time I remember, I'm surprised you've managed to come this far," she rebuked, then her gaze fell upon Gwen, "The Box is here, isn't it? The closer to the Source the faster they operate and multiply. Where the hell did you get one?"

"A dealer we know of, but part of it's permanently damaged," the woman replied, "Even then, to find one is next to impossible anyway, so we bought what we could and repaired it as much as it was in our ability to."

Lena fidgeted, "That thing. It's sentient - alive. With its own agenda. You can't possibly think-

"We've made precautions. That thing is contained within a cell strong enough to maintain its power, we can utilize it whenever we need to. It serves us."

"Temporarily," she interjected, "I'm not sure either of you understand the extent of its influence; it could be playing the long game, it has its own conscience, it can make its own choices. As fascinated as Lex was in his notes, even he didn't dare to seek it out, much less want to touch the thing, and he's probably the craziest out of the two of us, Mom."

The sentry's grip tightened, its tough material digging into Lena's skin and a panicked gasp ripped its way through her hoarse throat.

The sentry loosened its grasp by a fraction, and another, and another, until the woman's glower receded, signaling that she was satisfied.

"It's a pity they can't be tamed for long," Lena growled, "Once they desert, they won't return into submission, you both know that a kill switch can't stop much. So what'll you do to pacify them? Beg? Plead? Pathetically grovel until they show mercy?"

She winced and pulled her slung arm closer to her body as she reluctantly leaned into the automaton for support; the pain-numbing drugs ebbed away at an alarming rate, but the headache and sluggishness lingered.

The sentry whirred, a series of beeping sounds emanating from the it until a robotic voice emitted from its speakers.

"Mrs. Luthor, it seems we've had a breach near the north, sector A3's locking mechanisms have been damaged and the patrol is engaging a human platoon, and the radars picked up several more enemies closing into the west and south entrances as well as an unidentified flying object travelling at mach-" a pause, and the machine whirred again, "The object is confirmed to be Supergirl, Mrs. Luthor. They attempt to surround and lock us in."
"Lucky we're prepared," Lillian grinned confidently, walking out the door with Metallo, "I'll go pay them a visit."

A moment passed before Lena was able to lift her chin up, giving her former friend a stern look.

Gwen simply tilted her head suspiciously, "What information did you disclose to that agent? Major Lane if I recall correctly."

The Luthor's stare hardened, "Just the basics, I'm sure there were enough details for them to pinpoint a weakness in your machines. They're prototypes after all. Can't spend too much time on an individual unit when your security is at stake, so mediocre piece of junk it is."

Lena yelped when the sentry's fingers began to constrict against the bicep of her good arm, for sure creating another bruise.

Gwen's emotionless expression did not betray her, quelling the concern into the pit of her stomach.

"Careful, they have feelings you know."

"So do aliens," Lena remarked.

"That was a rhetorical statement, Lee," Gwen sighed.

"It doesn't matter, you still want all aliens wiped off the face of the Earth."

"Lillian does, I prefer to send them back into space."

"Don't try to placate me with a false compromise. You mean to deport them back into the very places they needed to escape from?" Lena chuckled darkly, "What a saint. If you care so much about Earth's security, I suggest you don't do something that could instigate a war with several thousands of different alien species. There are better ways."

"My methods are more merciful compared to your mom's," she defended, "We had an agreement that there would be no unnecessary deaths."

"Except for Supergirl's you mean."

The lowly spoken reply had Gwen stiffening, then she relaxed her shoulders, the tense muscles deflating them slightly.

"Yes. Except for Kara."

Lena flinched at how nonchalant Supergirl's real identity slipped from the woman's lips.

"If you hurt her..."

"Then you'll what? Kill me?" she scoffed, her eyes glazing over the Luthor's hunched and fragile form, "You can barely even stand, let alone breathe without feeling like your lungs are caving in. If we're going to be honest here, you're more likely to kick the bucket than I am."

Before Lena could register the miniscule tremor in Gwen's voice at the last sentence, the sentry hummed to life.

"Ms. Morgan, your assistance is needed in wing B for the sentinel's diagnostics test."

The woman unfolded her arms, sending a terse nod Lena's way. Before she left, she glanced over her
"Keep Ms. Luthor here, make sure she doesn't get out and that no one gets in. And that she stays alive."

"Acknowledged."

"It's been almost two weeks!" Kara cried, pacing back and forth behind Winn, who rolled his eyes at the statement.

He swung his chair around, "We have multiple people checking as fast and as thoroughly as we can, I know you're worried, okay? And J'onn said he sent out agents to scout around with Mon-El in National City, James is going vigilante Guardian mode to get some info from the slums, Maggie's N.C.P.D. and G.C.P.D. buddies are all over Gotham and Metropolis, and she and Alex are still investigating Metallo's escape. This is as efficient as we can all be."

Kara seemed to shrink further into herself at the news, crossing her arms over her torso protectively, as if to shield herself from the heavy weight of Lena's absence.

Winn groaned, "I'm sorry, I'm worried too. We all are. And the tracker on Lena was removed a while after her capture, we're really trying to look around that area within a ten mile radius. We've found some things, but they're vague, not significant enough for us to really pinpoint her location - the breadcrumbs have different leads. We're close though, I can feel it."

Kara sighed heavily, holding back in her tears for the sixth time today, "I...I-I should fly around the outskirts of National City to check again. A few miles farther this time and-"

"No!" Winn protested, "You barely got back, just let us all do the night shift - you haven't slept in who knows how many days. Rest, Kar, get back to us in the morning. Or we'll call you if we find anything new."

"Yeah, we can't really enact a rescue mission when Supergirl is lacking like three days of sleep."

Kara spun at the sound of the voice, a small smile gracing her features when she caught sight of Lucy in crutches, making her way towards them.

"Luce!" Winn greeted cheerfully, a wide grin plastered on his face, "We're all glad you're okay. And Maggie too, further injuries on her were prevented because you took her to some safe cover."

"I'm glad too," she replied, quieter, a shameful look on her face.

Kara frowned, noticing the guilty aura she oozed, "Hey, it's not your fault Lena's gone, we'll find her eventually."

Lucy nodded, solemn.

"And hopefully we don't encounter Brawl again," Winn commented to lighten the mood.

"Who?" the two women asked.

The man pouted, "Brawl? You know? Transformers character? He's a tank? I'm referring to the giant ass robot that squished you?"

The brunette rolled her eyes, "Nerd."
Then she grimaced, rubbing her casted leg gingerly at the unpleasant memory.

"Our team found something."

The trio turned at Vasquez's voice.

The agent cleared her throat, pointing at her monitor, carefully being observed by two other members.

"Traces of kryptonite - synthetic like Metallo's - near where the last location we had on Ms. Luthor that the tracker pinged before being removed. It provides a roughly clear path to where she might be."

"I hear a 'but' here," Lucy commented with concern knitting the edges of her eyes.

Vasquez nodded, "However, the traces are highly unstable. We can't accurately determine when it could explode, but it's instability is exponentially increasing, even if Metallo doesn't utilize his weapon."

"We need to find her!" Kara interrupted, "If what you're saying is true, then we can't waste any time idling around!"

"I'd 'idle around' if it means investigating what we're up against," J'onn spoke, his voice rough, "It's especially important to take into consideration exactly how many stores of kryptonite they might have."

"It shouldn't be that much," Kara argued, "The Alien Amnesty Act forbids a certain amount of kryptonite. I can handle it!"

"Stop and think for a second!" J'onn demanded, anger noticeably bubbling up the surface.

The hero clenched her jaw and the Martian sighed.

"Major Lane gave us very concerning information regarding the anti-alien machines Cadmus is building; Lillian Luthor and Gwen Morgan are brilliant minds working in tandem on this project," he grit his teeth, "I have reason to believe that they have the Box according to Major Lane's details."

Kara's expression fell and Winn was startled by the amount of hope that seeped out from her eyes.

He shook his head at the Martian, "The Box?"

"An ancient device manufactured by Himon, part of an alien race known as the Apokoliptians with Element X," J'onn said.

"They're like portable supercomputers," Kara explained.

Lucy glanced between the two super beings, "I sense some troubling history with this Box."

"They're organisms."

"They?"

"So very little were produced due to the complexity of their designs," J'onn answered, "But they were misused for their energy - their Source - to conquer others by a corrupt Apokoliptian by the name of Darkseid."
"I've only ever heard tales about it," Kara whispered.

"As have I," J'onn frowned, "But if they have any truth in them, then you should know that we should bide our time, and it seems that the object Cadmus holds is somewhat damaged. No more than three days."

The heroine nodded in defeat, closing her eyes and praying to Rao that Lena would be alive in the meantime.

"However," J'onn added, "I've also heard rumors that Boxes bond with their founders, and that the majority of them aren't corrupt, depending on their owners so to speak."

"Bond?" Winn inquired, befuddled, "I'm confused, technology doesn't have feelings."

"This device is sentient, it's emotionally attached to its parent, and if the parent dies, so does the Box."

"Who do you think it bonded to?" Lucy asked.

"I dearly hope it's Gwen instead of Lillian that it's chosen."

Lena startled, the sentry's arms preventing her from jumping at the sound of the door being broken down.

"Stand down! This is the-"

The D.E.O. agents were frozen at the sight of the tall machine encasing the Luthor in its hold.

It took three seconds of hesitation until the leader of the group shouted an 'open fire' order.

The next thing Lena knew she was in the air as the sentry tossed her to the back of the room to prevent any bullets from puncturing her skin. She hit the wall and fell to the ground with a painful thud, crying out as her vision swam.

"This is Fireteam Katona, we need a nearby squad for backup in the medical wing! We've found a sentry! I repeat-"

The mech did not allow him to finish, kicking his chest and propelling him out the window.

Lena groaned, lifting herself from the ground only for her arms to slip under her own weight and she cried out as her ribs made contact. She tried again, forcing herself to steady before crouching up, still hunched over and pressing her slung arm protectively over her chest, moving to exit the room.

Each step shocked her body with a new wave of pain, the vibrations traveling from her feet to the back of her eyes. She paused, taking a deep, stinging breath before moving forward again.

She gasped in exhaustion, the drugs still rendering her body nearly immobile, collapsing to her knees against the frame of the door.

Lena panicked when she saw the sentry with her swirling vision, now splattered with red, make its way towards her. But as fast as her heartbeat picked up, a blur of red and blue dashed in front of her and decapitated the machine with a bare hand.

The sentry writhed on the floor, sparks and embers flying from its disconnected wires before stilling.
Gwen's voice sounded from the head.

"It's nice to see you again, Supergirl."

Kara growled, staring into the eyes of the machine, "What do you want? What's your aim with all this violence?"

"I'm sure you of all people would know what unnecessary bloodshed looks like," she mocked, her voice tinged with somberness for a split second before hardening into hatred and fury with a dark chuckle, "It's mostly for revenge. I want you to bleed, Supergirl. I want to make you bleed."

The connection sputtered out and Lena watched, with almost reverential awe, as Supergirl's brows furrowed when their eyes locked.

"Kara..." she wheezed, tears of joy and relief spilling down her cheeks, "You're here."

A group of several other D.E.O. agents caught up to them, checking the perimeter, some not-so-slyly observing the interaction between the Luthor and Supergirl.

Lena grunted and suddenly the floor was rushing up closer to meet her, but Kryptonian sped over before she could fall flat on her face - her hands nicked the edge of her ribs, causing the injured woman to whimper.

Kara immediately pulled her arm away, repositioning it to her back, the other placed on her good arm. She blinked, scanning Lena's body with the worrying crinkled between her eyes.

The Luthor grinned halfheartedly, a croak vibrating from her throat, "Does it look as bad as it feels?"

The hero frowned at the miserable voice, "Don't worry, we'll get you out of here and it won't feel so awful anymore."

A reassuring smile flashed across her lips and Lena relaxed at the sight, still wading in disbelief.

"How'd you find me?"

"The tracker you had helped with the general location," Kara explained, then a dark look crossed her features, "And we found traces of radioactive signatures of Metallo's synthetic kryptonite in the same area. Winn's analyzing the levels, it's unstable, and this place won't look so good if it explodes."

"Will it be enough though?" Lena pressed her lips into a thin line.

"Enough for what?"

"To destroy it."

Kara nodded, "It should be."

Assuming Gwen nor Lillian escapes.

She tapped her earpiece, "I found Lena, she's safe with me."

There was a pause until the device crackled, "Can you meet at the mainframe?"

"Sure, Mags."

"I believe it's where this Box thing is kept considering how reinforced it is. I'll send the location."
It took a moment for Kara to reply.

"I still can't believe Alex agreed to let you accompany a squad here."

"I can't either, but I didn't want to pass up some fun," Maggie chuckled.

She rolled her eyes before resting them on one of the agents, "Evacuate with Lena, make sure she gets out safe."

"What? Why?"

"You're injured, it's too dangerous for you to stay here any longer."

The woman huffed, "Seriously? I'm the only person besides Gwen that knows the blueprints in as much detail! If you're going to the mainframe, I could try and disarm everything in the facility!"

Kara was about to protest until she noted the fury in Lena's eyes, bent and angered at Gwen, another person to add onto her list of those who betrayed her.

She sighed, "Fine."

"Supes!" Maggie greeted, grinning at the figure flying towards her, though it quickly formed an unhappy expression at the sight of the familiar woman in her arms.

"Holy shit, Lena, are you all right?"

"Where are the terminals?"

Maggie gave a slight pout, watching as Supergirl ambled towards the array of computers, setting the Luthor down, "Nice to see you too."

Kara tore her eyes away from Lena, who was actively typing away at the computers.

"Hey, Maggie," she then nodded at the other agents in the vicinity, acknowledging their presence as well before returning her focus on the detective, "How's your head? And where's Alex?"

"I'm fine, and she's on her way here, fighting through some Cadmus lackeys first though," Maggie replied, moving to tap Lena on the shoulder.

The woman jumped when she turned around, the detective giving her a grin and handing her a pistol, which she accepted gratefully.

"How long do you think until she gets here?" the Kryptonian asked.

"No more than ten minutes, but I think by then Lena's going to figure out how to shut this all d-"

Kara's cry of pain interrupted her sentence and Maggie placed her hands on either side of her shoulders, "Hey! Are you - woah!"

She slumped to the floor with the Kryptonian, pulling out a small syringe implanted into the back of her neck, glowing a sickly red color.

The detective looked around, her eyes widened in shock to see Lillian with a gun in her hand, pointed at Kara.
Before she could pull her own weapon from her belt, a bang next to her nearly shattered her eardrums.

Maggie winced, glancing over.

The Luthor's arm shook, pistol in hand, staring with surprise at the body she shot, sprawled on the ground, hands stretched over the gaping hole in her abdomen.

Lena took a shaky breath, tentatively stepping forward until she was standing above her mother, gun still carefully aimed at her head.

She glared up at her daughter, her wrinkles etching an expression akin to anger and hatred.

"You're a disappointment."

Lena's nose flared before she responded in the coldest voice she could muster.

"Goodbye, Lillian."

She pulled the trigger.

She did not even blink at the recoil, only offering the blankest of expressions at the smoking muzzle and the perfect hole situated in the middle of her mother's forehead, and her eyes were glassy and lifeless - dead.

Then Lena felt the emotions overcome her, all the horrible memories with the cruel woman assaulting her mind at once.

Suddenly all sound was absent and silence enveloped her.

"My sweet Lex did everything perfectly."

She felt tears pricking her eyes.

Lex, Lex, Lex. It was always Lex.

Her finger twitched and she involuntarily pulled the trigger again.

She could not fight the urge, it was too overwhelming.

"You're prone to insolence."

"Fuck you," Lena whispered, as if the woman could hear her still.

Another shot at the dead body.

It was like instinct.

"Maybe you should eat less so you don't have energy to stir up trouble like that again."

Bang.

She could not stop, not the shaking of her finger on the trigger, not the single tear that spilled over.

"Pathetic. Worthless excuse of a daughter."

"You're a worthless excuse of a mother," came the very belated retort.
Another bullet dug itself into the corpse.

"Maybe the beating you've gotten will knock some sense into you."

She shot again.

Then she remembered Kara.

"The synthetic kryptonite Lillian used..."

She shook her head, forcing herself to forget the memory of the words 'Cadmus' engraved into the blonde's skin, and the way her eyes seemed unsettled, and the way her voice trembled when Kara recalled the torture she endured.

All because of her mother, Lillian.

"I hate you," Lena ground out through gritted teeth, tears running down uncontrollably as another bang resonated throughout the room.

"Hey."

She startled, soft fingers brushing her good hand, prying her index from the trigger gently.

"Lena," the voice called out again, "Let go of the gun. Give it to me."

It took a moment for her to register the detective's words, and she finally relinquished the weapon, immediately after engulfed in a warm hug.

She felt so numb - almost dissociated - her brain did not even register the tension pulling against her broken bones, so she stood there dumbly, her mind working a million miles less than usual.

The sight of Lena unloading nearly an entire clip into her mother's already dead body was chilling, each shot sent shivers up Maggie's spine.

"It's okay, it's over now," she comforted her through the shock, glancing at the entrance to see Alex and her team lower their guns at the scene.

"Not quite."

They all shifted their stances abruptly, stepping back to see Gwen, accompanied by Metallo and a new model, which they assumed was the sentinel.

As well as the hulking tank behind them and a platoon of leftover Cadmus operatives.

The woman tilted her head and smirked, "Now you'll see how much of a monster Supergirl really is."

Their attention diverted to Kara, standing tall with a sickly red coloring her eyes and webbing across her skin.

Lena felt fear travel through her veins and work her heart into overdrive, the others looking on with panic.

Chapter End Notes
Constructive criticism appreciated.
Chapter Summary

*Lena goes toe to toe with her trauma as Kara fights back against her infected mind, and in the aftermath, Alex and Maggie - senior lesbians and ultimate power couple (next to Kara and Lena) - are there to pick up the pieces.*

**WARNING: VIOLENCE.**

Chapter Notes

*Find me on Tumblr at spoopercorp and on FF as Local-Asshole.*

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

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**Atonement**

The D.E.O.’s agents dwindled alarmingly, bodies were scattered throughout the facility, the majority taken down by several swings of the tank’s arm.

Kara snapped her head wildly at the scene before her, red and frantic eyes settling on Gwen. The sight of the woman brought out an uncontrollable animalistic urge to tear her apart. Even though the reasons why were blurred inside her head, she felt a particular animosity towards the particular woman.

Her gaze scanned over the battlefield - the faces - but she held no recognition.

They were all enemies.

Kara released a menacing growl and charged into the first sentry she saw, digging her fingers into the metal plate and ripping it apart.

"Red kryptonite! Supergirl is now a hostile!" Alex shouted into her earpiece, watching as her little sister was tearing the army of sentries into shreds, "I repeat! Supergirl is now a hostile! Only open fire if she targets you!"

"Danvers, get out of there!" Maggie warned.

The agent turned around, letting out a gasp before diving away, narrowly evading the fist that slammed down, shattering a crater into the concrete.

The detective watched across the expanse with a relieved sigh as Alex scrambled away for cover.

She turned to look at Lena next to her, her eyes fearful and her body shaking.
Maggie placed a hand on her shoulder, "Hey, any ideas for the tank?"

It took a moment for the Luthor to react.

"I...the model's plates are loose - it's a prototype; there's a panel near the back. I believe if you tear the wires apart, it'll render it immobile."

Maggie nodded, "You got that, Danvers?"

"Got it, Sawyer. I'm going in."

"I'll distract it."

"Wait - what? No! Don't you d-"

Maggie dashed out of cover, moving in plain sight and jumping in the air, "Hey! Fuckface!"

The detective sprinted away, grinning when she saw Alex climb onto its platform, leaping to hang off of one of the bars before climbing up higher.

"Are you listening to me?"

The agent winced at the ringing crackle in her ear, "Yes, Winn? I'm a little busy at the moment."

"I know Metallo's down, but the kryptonite! It's at a critical level! You have to get out of there!"

Maggie slid behind a wall of crates, covering her ears as the earsplitting bullets cracked over her head.

Lena peeked from her blockade, observing Kara rampaging across the facility, pouncing onto the sentries and tearing them apart with her bare hands.

Meanwhile, Gwen was watching with amusement, her sentinel standing by her side.

Lena retreated back into the safety of her cover, clenching her eyes shut and heaving a large breath, wiping the sweat that trickled down the sides of her temples.

She moved to give the room another once over, but froze when she saw Kara seething and stalking towards Gwen, stepping over the landscape covered with a mixture of blood, wires, metal, and other gear a part of the machines and bodies that were strewn about.

Lena panicked, unwilling to let her former friend, the naive inkling of hope that she could still be saved floating in the back of her head.

But she was more unwilling to just let Kara tear a person apart.

The aftermath would be devastating for her.

Without a second thought, Lena stumbled away, staggering towards the ground twice before picking herself back up with a frustrated grunt.

"Kara!" she pleaded.

The blonde turned around, narrowing her eyes at the woman.
There was no familiarity, Lena was a stranger to her. A threat.

*This isn't red kryptonite.*

She frowned at the realization and before she could turn tail, Kara was in front of her the next second, poised to strike, a daring gleam in her eyes.

Lena flinched away, bracing for impact.

But it never came, the only thing making contact with her was the fruity smelling puffs of air that tickled her face.

She tentatively opened her eyes to meet red ones just inches away, flickering in and out of the familiar blue hue.

"Le-na..." Kara whispered.

The Luthor swallowed and reached a hand out to stroke the blonde's cheek.

A moment passed before the rogue Kryptonian hissed at the loud bang in her sensitive ears. She snapped her head to the side to see a green bullet speeding through the air, its trajectory aimed at...

Kara stepped between the neon round and the woman in front of her, a second after she felt a sharp pain blossoming through her chest and then it settled into her right lung, lodging itself comfortably in the tissue.

Kara keeled forward and collapsed to her knees, roaring in pain.

Lena fell with her, frightened, more tears burning her eyes, "No, no, no!"

A snarl escaped the Kara's throat, targeting the Cadmus henchman with a gun aimed at them, and suddenly he was flying against the wall with a loud crash.

Gwen huffed and rolled her eyes as the last of her soldiers were taken out, along with the remaining D.E.O. agents, save for the two women that were tackling the task of subduing the tank.

She tilted her head at the sentinel beside her.

"Pin her down."

"Acknowledged."

Lena watched with horror as a kryptonite harpoon speared Kara's right shoulder, the other end hooked deep into the ground to prevent movement.

Another skewered through her left thigh, then attached into the concrete.

She fell to a knee, crying out with her futile attempts to remove the harpoons.

The machine fired again and embedded into her stomach, the splatter of blood hideously painting the ground below her.

"Stop!" Lena screamed, hot tears pouring and dripping to the floor, *Please!*

But the sentinel continued with its orders.
Lena's expression contorted into one of dread and she shot a pleading look at Gwen; she swore she saw the woman hesitate for a fraction of a second before a blank mask replaced it.

She felt the desperation brewing inside of her increase tenfold, the fear of a bestial Supergirl was nothing compared to the daunting possibility that she could lose the woman she loved so dearly.

It was haunting, the image of Kara tugging at the harpoons that were settled mercilessly into her flesh - five of them, drenched in her blood, so sharp they glinted a shiny green at an angle. Her shoulder, bones punched through as the blade created a path for itself to exit. Her chest, ribs bent to provide the pole a way to peek through, so red that the symbol of hope disappeared underneath. Her stomach, gutted and twisted. Her thigh and arm, split at the velocity of the harpoons.

Kara screamed, animalistic and unholy, eyes burning a fiery red and orange before blue burst from them and blackened the ceiling.

She whined as tears rolled down her face, the metal coils pulled taut to prevent her escape and her reckless struggling continued to widen her wounds.

"H-Hurts..."

Lena's heart broke and she scrambled over and cupped Kara's face gently into her hands, her thumbs stroking the smooth wet skin below her eyes.

"Hey, hey..." she murmured, "Stop moving. Look at me, Kara."

"It - pain. Make...stop..." came the pathetic sob, choppy and almost incoherent.

Lena pressed her forehead against hers, "I can't. I'm sorry. I'm so sorry."

A loud bang startled her, and she frantically ran her hands and eyes over Kara's body, searching for a new bullet hole.

"You, lady, are the absolute craziest bitch I have ever encountered in my entire life."

Lena's attention diverted to Maggie, whose arm lowered, gun in hand, watching as Gwen clutched the profusely bleeding wound in her chest.

It nicked an artery judging from the amount of crimson that sputtered out.

She remained standing and her sentinel thrusted itself over to the two women, shoving so hard they flew into a wall.

Gwen's eye twitched as she turned to gaze upon a peculiar scene of Lena guarding the alien's body with her own.

She frowned, and before the sentinel could fire another bullet, she commanded it to stop.

The robot whirred, its synthetic voice inquisitive, "But. Mother-"

"I said stop."

Silence.

"Acknowledged," it finally replied, standing down.

Lena sighed with relief, searching the flickering red eyes for any semblance of Kara.
Her Kara.

And she found her, a part of her, settled into the vibrant irises, colored with kindness and care.

"Le-na..." she echoed breathily, and then again, more certain and familiar, "Lena...I - what-"

The Luthor tackled her into a tight hug, ignoring the ache in her muscles and bones, then immediately pulled back when Kara whimpered.

"Wh-What happened? I don't..."

"You were infected with something. Something like red kryptonite. It...you scared me..."

Kara widened her eyes, "Oh, Rao. I - did I hurt you?"

Lena smiled through her tears and shook her head.

"No, no you didn't. You came back."

She pressed her lips against Kara's, softly and tenderly, the action almost instantly reciprocated.

Lena felt the mouth that brushed against hers grimace and she fluttered her eyes open to see the Kryptonian pull forward sharply, shouting when the harpoons left her body with a gruesome squelch.

Kara's head lolled onto Lena's shoulder, her grim injuries causing her exhausting to finally take a toll. She could feel the wounds stitch themselves up, slowly, the blood already halting to a stop.

"Hey, Kar?"

She hummed at the sound the earpiece made, "Sorry, Winn. I'm just a little...tired..."

"Hopefully not too tired to fly out of there 'cause Metallo's going to explode within a few minutes. J'onn should be there by now, so he can carry any survivors out."

Kara lifted her head, eyes intently scanning through the walls.

"It's just me, Lena, Alex, and Maggie. Everyone else...they're dead..."

Her eyes watered, "Lena, did I-

"No. You didn't," she interrupted strongly.

She sighed, "Good."

A shuddering breath distracted Kara, and she zeroed in on Gwen laying on the ground, bleeding out, her sentinel - almost somberly - sitting by her side.

"Mother," it spoke softly, a strange tone of sentient grief attached to it.

Kara staggered up, walking towards them.

"The Box, it bonded with her."

Lena remained silent and watchful at the limp figure below, but she understood nonetheless.

That Gwen would die, and so would the machine.
The Luthor knelt beside her, cradling the woman's head gently into her lap.

Gwen's hooded eyes met Lena's, then Kara's, then at Alex, Maggie, and J'onn, who stood several feet behind.

A lopsided grin twitched at her lips.

"It's probably too late for apologies, to the both of you."

Kara returned an uneasy smile, regardless, it held a pitiful sympathy to it.

"I should be sorry too," her voice cracked, "For what I did to your family."

Gwen frowned, "I blamed you for the longest time. And a part of me still does."

"We can save you," Kara suggested, "You don't have to die here."

"No," she interjected forlornly, a faraway look painting her expression, "I have nothing, no one, to go back to."

"Supergirl," J'onn mumbled, placing a hand on her shoulder, "The Box. We can't leave it alive..."

The sentinel beeped loudly in protest.

"I die here," Gwen whispered, grazing the plate of the machine with her palm, "With her."

Lena stood, her face a mask of emotionlessness before shedding a tear, and she picked the pistol up, raising it.

"Before I pull the trigger...what the hell did you inject into Kara? That wasn't red kryptonite."

"Your girlfriend got a bit of a dose from red k, one we made with several strands of Tar and feverol trinitrite, most know it as Fever."

"You gave her Tar?" Lena ground out, barely containing her rage, "You mean that insane knockoff of the Venom compound?"

"To increase her aggression instincts, though it does accelerate the healing factor," Gwen explained, unflinching at Lena's obvious fury, "I believe we altered the molecular structures to liquidize them. This particular drug completely erased inhibition with the help of Fever, and Tar sort of took away her sense of sanity."

The Luthor knit her brows together, "So based solely on aggression, emotions, and instinct, explains why she destroyed everything on sight."

"And to ensure that if Kara decided to target me, she would be reckless and I'd have the upper hand, even with her wicked fast recovery, it was only a matter of her biting more than she could chew," her eyes darted over to the Kryptonian, unfocused and glassy, "But it seems she overcame its potency, even if the effect was supposed to be a temporary high. I'm impressed."

She cleared her throat, pointing at a gun laid several feet away, "It should have another round in it, so you can analyze the materials if any traces of it remain. We had no time to look over it in detail, frankly 'cause at the time I didn't care what happened to her," she tilted her head at the Kryptonian, "No offense."
Kara pouted, rubbing the nape of her neck gingerly, "Some taken."

The woman twisted her lips into an amused smirk that was quickly returned, and an understanding passed between them, a friendship that could have been.

"It - it's not addictive, right?" Kara inquired anxiously.

"With the dose I gave you, it's too little, along with the fact that your systems work differently than humans, I'd say you'd have no cravings."

The blonde sighed, almost melodramatically, at the answer.

Gwen's eyes finally rested back on Lena's, "Imagine my surprise when I found out Kara Danvers, the dorkiest person to exist, was the girl of steel. No wonder you were so smitten."

Lena found herself flushing at the statement, her complexion pinkening against her will.

"I hate to interrupt all of you, but Agent Schott is quite adamant that we leave the premises as soon as possible," J'onn informed.

The Luthor frowned, a shaky arm lifting the pistol.

Alex intervened, palm grasped around the uneager hand on the trigger.

"Let me do it," she offered, sliding the weapon from her.

Kara pulled Lena into a soft hug, shielding her vision from what Alex was about to do.

"Don't look. Try not to listen to anything but my voice."

She leaned into the strong shoulder, burying herself into her neck, smothering it with damp tears and shaky breaths - she focused on the muddled scent of earth and fruits in the silky honey blonde tresses.

The round leaving the chamber and subsequent robotic drone was drowned out by the melodic sweet nothings whispered into Lena's ear.

"Ow!"

"Stop fidgeting!" Alex scoffed.

"Then stop making it hurt!" Kara whined, tugging her arm away.

"You're going to break the syringe! It's just one more sample!"

"You said that seven samples ago!"

Alex rolled her eyes, "This eighth one is the last one, okay? Then you can put your shirt on."

The blonde's brows knit together, unconvinced, "Promise?"

"Promise," she sighed, pulling the syringe from her skin and dabbing it clean, "There. You're good to go. For now. How do you feel?"

Kara placed a tender hand over her abdomen, where one of the harpoons pierced her - it would have scarred over by now, and it was no longer aching at the touch. Then she splayed her fingers over the
bandage, over her lower right ribs, and she gingerly rubbed it in feathery circles — it was the only wound from Cadmus that was more alarming than the rest; the kryptonite bullet had split, fractured inside her body, the poison leaking into a larger area in her muscles.

"I feel fine. I think," Kara frowned, "How's Lena?"

"Her broken bones are healing well, especially her arm and some of her ribs, but..."

She worried her lip in between her teeth, "But?"

"Well, she has a flail chest, the injuries she sustained to her ribs...the pain could be long term - she won't be able to breathe properly without it aching for a while, and even after it's all healed, there'll be times when sharp pains hit her spontaneously. But they're manageable of course, though I think they're the least of hers and everyone's worries."

"Can I...can I see her?"

Alex's lips formed a thin line, "Kar...I'm not sure if her mental state can handle it right now, we sort of want to prevent emotionally volatile situations and-"

"And I can't see her," Kara sighed, crestfallen as her shoulders deflated, "She doesn't want to see me. Yeah. I get it."

"No. Lena - she's requested to see you quite a few times."

The blonde snapped her head up, glowering, "And you didn't tell me?"

"Her psych eval didn't yield especially positive results. The physical trauma that was inflicted on her body is treatable, and so is the rest of her...situation, for lack of a better word," Alex paused, contemplating her words, "She lost her mom, Kar. She killed her. Shot her eight times. That's particularly disconcerting."

"She's not a psychopath if that's what you're inferring," Kara snapped with a harsh tone.

"I know she's not, I'm not implying that she is. In all honesty, I thought Lillian got what was coming to her, she died a quick and painless death unlike the aliens she tortured in cages."

Alex shuddered at the memory of Kara's capture.

"But I mean, I don't think Lillian's death is what has Lena a bit...off, I guess. She's been through a lot: losing her dad in her early teens, watching her brother, the closest person to her, gradually become insane, losing her mom just a week ago along with Gwen. And...you...you were infected with something similar to red kryptonite, so we're not so sure how she'd react t-"

"I got it," Kara interrupted, perhaps much too curt, blinking away the heat of the memory from her eyes.

Alex's eyes only softened, "With Cadmus scrambling for a new leader, they'll probably be divided, and temporarily absent - or they might disband altogether - so you can leave the more minor threats to the D.E.O. and take care of Lena."

"Yeah..."

There was a moment of silence.

"She's really strong you know," Alex sighed, "A lot stronger than most people I've met," she paused,
registering what she just said with surprise, "Don't tell her I said that."

Kara chuckled.

Her older sister smirked at her, "Lena's been through so much and she still manages to stand tall, but...I think she's learned a lot from you, that she doesn't have to do things herself, and she smiles more, outside of being with you."

Kara grinned swinging her legs happily at the compliment.

Sometimes it baffled everyone how the Kryptonian could manage such a bright smile, even after losing an entire planet - the culture, the language, the people she knew...gone in a heartbeat, so much lost all at once, and the memories she kept in her mind were always pathetic imitations of Krypton's sun and its nature and its animals.

The agent put her hands on her hips, returning a sneering grin from ear to ear, "Don't get full of yourself."

"Can I see Kara now?" Lena asked, sliding her legs over to situate herself on the edge of her hospital bed, feet dangling above the floor.

She grimaced, though Alex was only checking up on her injuries, she was reluctant to put any weight on the balls of her feet just yet, recalling the shocking pain the came with her attempt to tackle Gwen when she woke up in Cadmus's belly.

"Well, again, considering the psychological trauma you've gone through, I personally don't think that seeing her will help you," Alex stated, rushing through her sentence just as the C.E.O.'s mouth opened to formulate an argument, "Despite your protests."

Lena's lips pressed together, brows scrunching simultaneously.

"If anything," Alex continued, lifting the patient's garment up to remove the bandages covering the surgical incision, wincing at a rather grotesque bruise that covered the left side of her chest, "It could tell me if it hurts - further exacerbate your P.T.S.D., which we're trying to avoid."

The Luthor flinched away from the feeling of latex gloves smoothing over her ribs, which was met with a quiet apology and Alex scrutinizing the movement of her chest correlating with the sounds of her ragged breathing.

She frowned, "So, what I'm getting here is that I can't see her."

The agent's voice was delicate, "Temporarily."

"Temporarily," Lena repeated in a tone more bitter than mocking, "It's been over a week, how 'temporary' is this?"

Alex did not answer, diverting the subject, "Your injury is actually healing quite well, even if the inflammation still looks rather...awful."

"Thanks," came the sardonic comment, "I'm aware."

The agent let out a soft chuckle and shook her head at the sarcasm, "Is your range of movement too short for your liking? We could have another lower dose of a corticosteroid injection to relieve the pain, make mobility and breathing easier. Maybe an intercostal nerve block to numb the area for a
few hours. Depends, we could have intermittent injections as well," Alex hummed, now checking Lena's slung arm, "I mean, those Cadmus chumps were actually really good with taking care of your pneumothorax, so not seeing you hack out bloody sputum or phlegm at the moment helps me sleep at night."

"I don't think feeling like I'm being stabbed in the chest every second constitutes as good."

Alex rolled her eyes at the snarky remark, "Hopefully you won't contract an infection, or worse, pneumonia. Eventually, when you're released, Kara can take care of you, but I'm hoping it's within another week or two, 'cause-"

"'Cause you're still unsure about me seeing her, I know," Lena finished.

_I guess I am too..._

"Bingo," Alex nodded, still fixated on the healing broken arm, "The brain works in mysterious ways."

"I hear a question in that sentence, Agent Danvers," Lena stated.

She shrugged, "I'm not sure - your arm looks good by the way - if you're too inclined in answering this particular question."

The Luthor titled her head inquisitively, "You haven't even asked, and now I'm curious."

"Curiosity killed the cat."

"Just ask me what you want to ask me."

Alex paused in the middle of setting the woman's arm back in its sling, "I was just wondering-"

Lena tensed, "Is this about my mom?"

The agent let out an uneasy chuckle, a half-hearted attempt to diffuse the situation, "Now you won't even let me finish asking my question."

"So it is about my mom."

It took a moment for her to answer.

"Part of it. Yes."

"Then I can try and answer that part of it."

Alex stole a glance at Lena's eyes, they were guarded and cautious, and reasonably so.

"How do you feel about...what happened with your mom?"

The Luthor's shoulders sank, "I don't - I don't feel anything remorseful or regretful related to her fate, nothing other than that she deserved what she got; it's like a burden was lifted - she's gone, she can't hurt anyone else - the weight of her actions against aliens and alien-sympathizers isn't so...heavy," her voice cracked and she seemed to consider for a moment, her expression twisting into a pensive look, "Does that make me a bad person? That I don't feel guilt for that...that monster?"

"It doesn't," Alex answered, unhesitatingly, then she sighed, "I guess I would've preferred to lock her up, but I wasn't really too opposed to her death, not enough to want to prevent it, and that's probably
'cause she kidnapped by little sister and...

She trailed off, watched as Lena swallowed harshly at the memory of Kara's capture and torture.

Alex frowned, equally as disturbed, and moved on, "I was also wondering how - um - how..."

The Luthor waited, flexing her slung arm in the silence, straining the movement just slightly.

Eventually, the agent found her words.

"I guess I was just thinking about how you, I don't know, were able to overcome your trauma with Kara, so to speak."

"What do you mean?"

"You're always so...reluctant and hesitant around her, the prospect of 'what-ifs' holding you back. And when the moment comes when she's infected with something similar to red kryptonite, something more destructive...it seemed you almost didn't think twice about rushing to her side."

"Kara didn't succumb to the drug, not completely; she didn't hurt me, she protected me, there was...recognition, and maybe it's 'cause she's always scared of hurting me ever since the incident, more conscientious of what she's doing around me, with me," she smiled, sour, "But I don't think that's all of it, though it did help tremendously, but I believe...that it was due to the fact that I found something infinitely more traumatic in the ordeal than what a red k infected Kara did to me all those years ago."

Alex studied her for a moment, "If you don't mind me asking, what-"

"I didn't want to lose her," she blurted out in a loud whisper.

The agent stilled.

Lena clenched her fists, not even wincing at the stinging pain that pulsated through her injured arm.

"I thought she was going to die. It was..." her body trembled and she swallowed the sickening bile down her throat, feeling the uneasiness settle into the pit of her stomach, "It was terrifying and I-"

She cut herself off, unable to continue.

Alex's expression softened and she placed a comforting hand on her shoulder, "Hey, she's here now. She's not going anywhere, not if she can help it. She's alive."

Lena's lips twitched into a small smile, an insisting tease making its way out, "Well, I wouldn't know since I haven't seen her."

Alex groaned, pressing her palm to her forehead, "Soon, okay? You two are so persistent."

"It was worth a try."

"That's enough for today."

"Hey!" Kara whined, swiping lazily at her stolen tub of ice cream from her couch.

Maggie rolled her eyes, "You've been like this for a week. You need to do something else besides moping around in your pathetic puppy jammies and slippers."
The blonde pouted, sinking further into the cushions and huddling inside her layers of blankets, mindlessly surfing the channels on her television.

Maggie took a deep, calming breath, "Stop brooding. I can feel you thinking from here."

"I don't brood!" Kara denied.

"I beg to differ, you dork."

The blonde muttered something vulgar in Kryptonese before sliding her head under the covers.

Maggie groaned, "Seriously? Fucking seriously?"

"Seriously."

The brunette fumed, clutching the blankets and tearing them off.

"Leave me alone!"

"Nope. Get your ass up," she slapped her legs, "We're going to have a talk."

Kara glared at the detective, then retrieved her blankets, returning to the same position.

"Why're you acting so grumpy, you're going to see Lena at some point, it's been like two weeks since the Cadmus fiasco."

A muffled answer came from the pile of sheets.

"What?"

Kara burst out of the covers, "I don't know if I want to see her!"

Maggie startled, surprised by the explosion, "What?"

The blonde groaned, leaning her back against the arm of her couch.

The detective sighed, sliding into the blankets with her, "Scoot over."

"Wh - hey - there's no room!"

"You calling me fat?"

"That - I wasn't - ugh!"

She scampered over to make space, squishing herself against the wall of the couch, Maggie quickly occupied her small body in the emptiness.

Kara folded her arms, crossing them over her chest tightly.

"Hey, relax," the brunette said, nudging her with her shoulder.

The tension was eased by a fraction.

"So," Maggie started, "Why do you think you might not want to see Lena?"

Kara sighed, "I don't - I don't know? I just - maybe..."
The detective waited patiently for her, and somehow the blonde found her words through her speechlessness.

"I'm afraid."

"Of what, that she'll see you differently?"

"I almost hurt her, Mags," her voice broke, as well as the gates that held back her tears.

"But you didn't."

"But I could've."

"But you didn't."

"So? That doesn't change anything," Kara argued, frowning, "She looked so scared of me, scared that I was going to hurt her again. We would've been back to square one, and she would've completely closed herself off to me. I almost lost my chance with her completely. And if we see each other again, what if she gives me that look? Like I'm a monster. What if-"

"Those are a shit ton of 'what ifs', Kar."

"But-"

"They're 'what ifs', and I think we both know Lena well enough that she doesn't think you're a monster, that's the last thing that'd happen."

"You weren't there, you didn't see her fear-"

"But she stayed by your side, didn't she? She didn't run away when she had the chance."

"She wouldn't have been able to outrun me though."

Maggie shrugged, "That may be true, but I think Lena was more concerned about your safety than anything else. She was scared for you, not of you."

Kara pouted, bunching the cloth of the blankets into balls within her hands, "That's stupid."

"You should probably bring that up with her."

"Only when we see each other."

"So, now?"

"What do you mean 'now'?"

Maggie checked her phone, "She's coming with Alex."

"What? You two-timing-"

She was interrupted at the knock on the door, the detective rushing over to open it with a smug grin, two women entering the room.

She simply gawked at Lena, and Lena stared back, her expression unreadable as she took in the blonde's appearance.

They did not even register that Alex and Maggie had slipped away and out the door.
With her ice cream.

Kara huffed, looking down at her shuffling feet, which she noticed, were still in her fuzzy slippers, and that she herself was still donned in her embarrassingly adorable puppy-patterned pajamas.

She rubbed the back of her head habitually, a nervous chuckle escaping her throat as she waved.

"Uh. Hi."

Chapter End Notes

Constructive criticism appreciated.
Epilogue

Chapter Summary

*Kara and Lena finally get a chance to discuss things. Like their feelings.*

*Final chapter.*

*Sad ending.*

*Just fucking kidding, bitches. Happy ending.*

*Just a lil sprinkle of angsty and fluffy Supercorp here, there, EVERYWHERE.*

Chapter Notes

*Find me on Tumblr at spoopercorp and on FF as Local-Asshole.*

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Epilogue

Lena took in Kara's appearance, scanning her body for injuries, her vigil unrelenting.

The Luthor could not help but feel a bout of laughter bubble up her throat at the sight of National City's greatest hero donning puppy pajamas and fuzzy slippers. Then she remembered the situation they were in, that Kara was in after the horrific wounds she sustained. Then the situation that Lena herself was thrust into, still recovering from her own injuries, psychological and physical.

She swallowed down her signature smug chuckle.

Kara did the same, noting that Lena had her black hair in a messy bun, void of makeup, leaving a pale, emotionless face with enigmatic green eyes for others to see.

So profoundly ambiguous and cryptic.

Not that it passed Kara's observation though, and the Kryptonian momentarily thanked the supervision she had to spot the peculiarity.

Or maybe it was because she knew Lena so well, knew when something was bothering her.

Kara frowned at the sight of her casted left arm, its fragility encased in a sling and hanging limply.

Her eyes tightly shut, the memory of Lena's body crushed too overwhelming, not to mention it was within her reach, but out of her control; she could only watch and feel useless.
The worry tore at Kara's heart, seated deep in her lungs and dug further, rendering her breathless.

Then she opened her eyes, and there Lena was standing in front of her, safe and sound.

Barely.

Barely.

And it struck Kara to her very core, tingling all over her nerves and receptors.

Barely.

*What if I hadn't been able to save her in time?*

She felt her throat close, choking back a cry as her x-ray vision took in a section of Lena's ribs on her left side, fragmented, segments that were formerly detached as a whole, collapsing her lung.

They were mended now though, but her ragged breaths remained, and she could see the muscles tense from the pain that was brought with each intake of air. But the occasional wincing that followed after every inhale Lena made - that she failed to try and veil - was the source of Kara's growing distress.

The pain would be perpetual, long-lasting - she recalled Alex stating that the injuries were too serious to not cause future complications, though treatable.

*All 'cause of me. It's my fault.*

Lena released a short agonizing breath, her eyes lowering to the ground when she was sure that Kara was okay, involuntarily shuddering at the memory of her protection against a kryptonite bullet, then skewered by harpoons of the same material shortly after. The quick recollection sent another excruciating thought into the pit of her mind, and she felt her stomach drop.

Kara utilized herself as a shield, to protect her - the woman she loved so dearly - and she would most certainly do it a million times over.

*I don't deserve her.*

The shiver that coursed through her spine was enough to start a continuous stream of trembling, uncontrollable and unstoppable.

Kara was suddenly aware of Lena's shaking as she cried freely and silently, balling her hands into fists.

She took a step forward to reach out, then uncertainty clawed its way into the back of her mind, forcing her to retreat.

The tension snapped, its walls crumbling into dust.

Lena let out a sob, moving towards her as she stepped away.

Kara's eyes widened a fraction at the unsteady heat that quickly enveloped her body, staggering back at the unexpected force.

It took her a moment to register that Lena was now crying freely, into her neck, where she could feel the hot tears wetting her skin and dampening the collar of her shirt.
It did not take long for her to break as well, wrapping her arms around the fragile body gently.

She felt the grip around her become firmer, and Kara sagged into her embrace as well, tears spilling over as the warmth of her breaths puffed next to Lena's ears.

Her senses honed in, hyper-aware of the Luthor's existence. Her scent was a faint smell of vanilla and mint, but strong enough to overwhelm Kara with the familiarity. Her skin was so smooth in her cradle, the soft and supple flesh of her ghostly cheeks melding against her throat, the tickling of her eyelashes as they fluttered now and then. Her breathing, hasty and desperate sips of air that Kara realized would most certainly cause a significant amount of pain.

She reluctantly pulled back, her hopeful blue eyes staring into Lena's green ones.

Or trying to, as the flash of emerald focused its attention on anything but her.

And she deflated at the amount of helplessness encased within them, despondent and lost, lacking in spirit unlike her own, even with just a split second glance.

Desolate.

It was filled with exhaustion and tiredness, some form of defeat hanging heavy in the dark bags sagging under.

Not to mention, Lena was avoiding eye contact.

It disheartened Kara.

But there was an optimistic glimmer in the Luthor that she held onto, vowing to make it grow.

She raised a shaky hand, slipped her fingers into the dark hair, obsidian in its hue, and stroked it gently, soothingly.

It seemed to ease both of them, and they relaxed into one another's embrace.

Eventually, they made their way onto Kara's couch, worn from use, but comfortable otherwise, a stark juxtaposition to Lena's furniture in her own abode - unused and stiff, still yet to be worn in.

Though it was not the same case with the couch in her office, probably due to the blonde's uppity visits where she brought takeout goodies that they dined on the white cushions.

The C.E.O. made a mental note to herself to purchase a new one in a darker color.

Lena shifted in Kara's hold, grimacing at the hot pain that nicked at her left side.

It obviously did not go unnoticed by the Kryptonian, who felt the woman flinch in her arms, and she made to stand.

"No," Lena pleaded, begged, her voice ragged from silent cries and unsaid words, "Don't. Just...stay here for a while. Please..."

Kara's lips twisted into a sad smile, who was she to deny the woman she loved?

Not that she would have really passed up any chance to cuddle with her, another person so dear, that she felt such passion for.

And they did, they soaked in each other's gentle arms and soft hands for what felt like forever.
But even eternity did not feel like enough time for them.

Kara steeled herself, "Drink?"

She was surprised at how stable her voice sounded to her own ears.

Lena nodded, rising from the couch slowly, stretching her ribs inch by inch, muscles astringent, before releasing the breath she held.

The blonde looked at her with concern before making her way to the kitchen, gathering ingredients to make herself some tea and...

"Um," she glanced over her shoulder as she prepared her kettle of green tea, "What would you-"

"Coffee."

Kara shot her a grin, then frowning when Lena's gaze darted away, unwilling for them to connect.

The blonde forced herself to muster up another smile, which probably looked as half-hearted and pathetic as it felt.

"Black?"

The Luthor nodded, and her mind wandered, to what it would be like to wake up in the mornings, or this case at night, to witness the woman she had been pining over for years make her coffee quietly - lovingly.

Kara punched her preferences into the coffee maker, watched and heard as the liquid dripped a small waterfall into a mug, then she smiled forlornly with a faraway twinkle in her blue eyes at a long ago memory - just after she confessed and finally had a chance to take Lena out.

Just before everything went to shit.

"Finally. So this is your first official date?" Alex quirked a brow.

Kara nodded, her body happily bouncing with an unkempt amount of energy.

"Wait, hold on," Maggie groaned, rubbing her temples, "So you guys fucked and now you're going on your first date? What type of-"

"Maggie!" Kara shouted, her face reddening with embarrassment, "We didn't - stop it!"

"So what are you guys doing then?" Alex inquired, diverting the subject in a fluster.

The blonde gave one last glare at the detective before facing her sister.

"We're actually going to go to eat out at this new fancy Chinese restaurant and maybe just watch movies afterwards. It's a lazy day since the board members apparently enjoy making her life hell, so..."

"That's...rather simple," the agent tilted her head, "But don't you guys eat out each other all the time?"

Maggie made a gagging sound.
"Alex!" another blush flamed Kara's cheeks.

"What?"

The detective chuckled, "I think you meant to say 'but don't you guys eat out with each other all the time'. You omitted the 'with'."

Alex flushed slightly before joining in with laughter, much to Kara's annoyance.

"Okay, okay, we'll stop," Maggie snickered, struggling to hold in the chuckles that wanted to burst from her lungs, "Just have fun, right?"

Kara scrutinized herself in the mirror, "Should I wear something more fancy? I mean, I did text Lena to dress casual, but I'm not sure what her definition of casual is..."

"Nonsense!" Maggie interjected, "Your khakis are always charming. You'll be getting girls gawking at you from a mile away."

Kara blushed, rolling her sleeves up to her elbows, "Thanks, Mags. But what about my hair?"

She pointed to her ponytail, "Should I let it down?"

"Well, considering the fact that you're eating out," the detective winked, "I think you should keep the ponytail, your hair could get in the way of your meal if you know what I'm saying," she nudged the blonde suggestively.

"Wh - I - stop teasing me!" Kara whined.

"On another note," Alex interrupted, shooting a glare at Maggie, "I think you look great. Just focus on having fun, you're off duty, make the most of it."

"Thank Rao I don't have to wear the suit under this... And I don't know," Kara frowned, "I still feel underdressed."

She played with the cuffs of her pale blue dress shirt scrunched on her elbows, then picked off the nonexistent lint from her argyle sweater vest.

"Let's be honest here, Kar," Alex chuckled, "Everyone is underdressed in the presence of Lena Luthor."

"That's not helping," she pouted.

Maggie rolled her eyes, "Just make sure you don't just stand there gaping like a dumbass when you see her."

Kara could only just stand there gaping like a dumbass when she saw Lena, who stood outside her door with her head tilted and a perfect brow arched in confusion.

"What the hell did I just say ten minutes ago?" Maggie chided, only loud enough for the Kryptonian to hear.

"I - uh..."

The detective rolled her eyes and plopped off the couch, dusting herself off before walking to the door.
"Hey, Le - holy sh*t."

Maggie's eyes bulged, then darted to Kara, then back to the C.E.O, then back to the still speechless blonde.

She slammed her fist under the Kryptonian's chin, clacking it shut, "Eyes up, Little Danvers."

"Hey!" Alex called out, joining the women near the door, "What's with all the - woah," she grinned, "Looking good, Luthor."

She pat her sister on the back, but when she was only met with silence, she turned to Maggie and they shared baffled expressions.

Alex shoved Kara out into Lena's arms, and that seemed to snap her out of her daze.

The blonde whipped her head around, "Hey!"

"Have fun, kids!" Maggie waved before slamming the door shut.

"I swear to Rao if you eat all of my ice cream again-"

"We'll be gone before you get back!"

She huffed, irked.

"Kara, we can buy all the ice cream you want at the grocery store," Lena murmured, placing a hand on her upper arm and squeezing once, which was at first just a reassuring action, but the rock hard muscle underneath the fabric caused the C.E.O.'s mind to short circuit momentarily.

Her focus returned when Kara tugged her hand, urging her to follow.

They walked to the car, drove, and walked out into the restaurant in silence.

Their time dining was peaceful, their conversations easy in its flow, and before they knew it, it was already ten at night and they ended up driving to Kara's apartment in more comfortable silence, or relative silence.

The Kryptonian kept glancing over in her peripheral vision on their way up, noting Lena's increased heart rate and her nervous breathing, but she was more so taking in her appearance.

Kara was prepared for a 'casual' Lena Luthor, but she was expecting her to wear one of her not-very-casual elegant dresses - that she could handle, she was more accustomed to it.

However, what threw her completely off was Lena Luthor in black high heels, maroon skinny jeans similar to the crimson lips she had, a deep forest-colored blouse to match the emerald of her eyes, and a black leather bomber jacket - that she was not prepared for. Her hair was loose as well, wavy and draped over one shoulder, revealing the alabaster skin of her collarbone and neck.

"See something you like, Ms. Danvers?"

Kara startled from her reverie, stumbling over her words before settling on a weak 'yeah' and a stiff nod.

"Cat got your tongue?"

The blonde pouted, fishing out her keys to unlock her door.
Two can play this game.

Kara shrugged, a tease rolling off her lips, "I'm sure you were just as speechless when you were so 'stealthily' feeling up my arms, Ms. Luthor."

Lena's eyes bulged at the accusation, "I-I wasn't."

The blonde chuckled, cutting her off, "I had a lovely time with you tonight."

She stepped closer, still hesitant, but leaned in regardless, slow enough for the Luthor to pull away if she wanted.

Lena closed the remaining distance eagerly, their lips grazing over each other's in a glorious fashion.

Kara giggled.

"Stop it," Lena muttered, breaking the kiss and slapping her shoulder in a playful manner.

"I thought you liked it when I smiled?" the blonde asked quizzically.

"I can't kiss you when you're giggling like a dork, you idiot."

Kara stuck her tongue out, "Maybe I don't want to kiss you," she folded her arms and pouted, "I'm still angry you ate the last potsticker."

"You offered!" Lena argued.

Kara ran a hand down her face, "And I regretted my decision the moment you put it in your mouth."

A minute passed before the blonde poured her tea into her own cup and brought the two drinks to the table.

"Here's your coffee," Kara mumbled, setting her own beverage onto the polished wood and sitting herself across from Lena. She placed the drink down with a quiet thud.

In the process, the liquid swished over the edge, dripping over the lip of the mug and splashing a few ounces onto Kara's hand.

Lena reacted, her fingers flinching as they darted to grab the blonde's wrist to inspect it before she had an epiphany, her hand still hovering over the Kryptonian's.

*Kryptonian.

*Alien.*

Some celestial being everyone looked up to.

Not that Lena did not think so too, but perhaps for different reasons. She knew this goddess, a childhood friend, with those immaculate blue eyes, that divine beauty inside and out...ethereal in almost every way.

But that was it.

*Almost.*
She was corruptible. She could be bent and made crooked.

And sometimes Lena forgot that Kara was invulnerable to most things, like boiling hot coffee, scalding enough to blister.

Most things she could withstand.

Not all.

And it terrified her. Not Supergirl though, she preferred to fly headfirst into danger regardless of consequences.

The blonde slid the mug over as Lena's arm reached out, met her halfway.

Their hands brushed in the exchange, and Kara could not help the dread that flooded her entire being when she felt Lena's fingers twitch at the contact, heard her heartbeat pick up for a second before struggling to steady once their skin parted ways.

Was it love? Blooming with a giddy nervousness that it always had?

Or was it fear?

The probability of it manifested. It was there, palpable.

And maybe it was going away.

But Lena could not even look at her in the eyes.

Was it a step back? A step forward? Did anything change? Would it be a bad thing if it did not? Or would it be a good thing that it did not worsen?

Kara drank her beverage in greedy sips while stealing long gazes at the Luthor; it was a pretty bland tea, probably because she was too impatient to let it stir in the leafy water, too eager to talk to the woman in front of her.

And now not so eager.

Lena though, she simply stared into the cup that held the dark liquid, the steam floating in a swirling pattern.

The anxiousness was eating at her the longer the blonde stared.

She was afraid.

So very afraid.

Afraid that one look at Kara would be all it took for her to fall into a panic attack, that it would trigger an onslaught of traumatic memories with those glowing red eyes, that maybe it would tell her that their relationship was irreparable and unsalvageable.

That they would be back to square one with a path that only led down into an abyss, bottomless with its unforgivingness.

Her fixation did not last long, the edge of her vision recorded slight movement, and she glanced up, attacked not by her trauma, instead by a dorky smile - Kara's dorky smile.
But half of it faltered, and it failed to reach her eyes that were now a solemn shade of blue - not red - and lacking in the brightness it held before.

Even though it was a forced imitation, the adoration within them remained unchanged, maybe even stronger.

Lena could feel her chest ache at the sight.

And a darkness nagged at Kara when she recorded the stuttered heart beat, telling her that maybe they were not meant to be if they were only going to cause each other unbearable pain.

If Lena was still fearful.

And she let herself sink into her insecurities.

"Do you still want this?" she asked, toying with her tea, tapping the glass with her nail, loud enough for her to ignore the answer if she wanted to - if she wanted to focus on the resonating crystalline sound instead of the awful sound of rejection based on trauma.

*Do you still want me?*

Lena's expression was, for a moment, confused, before cutting into something excruciating - something she did not even try to hide with a mask as the potency of her emotions were too useless to obscure.

"Do you?" Lena asked instead, dodging the blonde's inquiry and maybe avoiding something catastrophic.

Not quite.

And the instant the question left her lips, she bit her tongue, not wanting the answer, and now she could not take it back.

Now, she could only wait.

Kara did not reply, her piercing blue eyes falling straight through the table and to the floor.

She thought to herself that this was for the best, that their association would only bring upon danger to one another.

Lena let herself smile - neither of them were willing to lay down all of their cards first - but the silence was enough of an answer for her.

"I see... Then I'll take my leave."

She stood abruptly, enough for her chair to scoot back with an awkward screech and the table to wobble in the heavy silence. Then she pivoted, rapidly, to cover her vulnerability.

Lena was exposed, she was defenseless and susceptible - always susceptible - to Kara.

She moved to stride out the door.

She did not even reach the knob before a gentle trembling hand grasped her own, halting her movements.

"I do."
It was a harsh whisper, deep from the cries that threatened to leave Kara's chest.

Lena froze, "You..."

"I want this," she rephrased, "I-I...I want..."

*You.*

She turned, slightly, so their eyes could connect their gazes.

"But I don't know if you want this," she confessed, "I don't know if you want me ditching dates or leaving early 'cause of my duties as Supergirl. I don't know if you want the crosshair - the target - on your head to inflate itself into a bullseye that's ten times bigger, 'cause I sure don't. I don't know if you want to waste your time on me, you're a C.E.O., time is precious to you. I don't..."

Kara choked on her words.

*I don't know a lot of things, and it scares me.*

*I don't know if you love me as much as I love you.*

Lena pressed her palm against the blonde's sternum, she could feel the symbol that she adorned, how it was emblazoned upon her chest, pure hope and optimism inscribed within every stitch. Her fingers traced its outline through the soft fabric of her shirt, every inch of the embellishment as it pressed itself against the resigned grooves of her fingertips.

"I want this too," she whispered hoarsely, "All of it."

*All of you.*

A pause, then she leaned in, pressing their foreheads against one another's, so close their noses brushed.

They closed their eyes, relishing in the heat their bodies radiated.

Then it was Kara that leaned in and Lena followed suit until their lips were captured by the other's in something passionate, but chaste.

Neither of them knew who deepened the kiss first, neither of them having the chance to dwell on it as Kara intertwined her fingers in Lena's good hand, and with her other, reached up to caress her pale ivory cheeks.

A wetness trailed down both their faces in slow waves, the kiss now salty in taste. Kara swept the heel of her palm over Lena's protruding cheekbone, sunken in during her recovery, to remove the tears in vain as another tide spilled. Then she untied her messy bun, allowing the unruly locks to cascade down, and tangled her fingers into the dark tresses with a sigh.

Her other hand played with the hem of Lena's shirt, slipping under the fabric and sliding over alabaster skin.

The Luthor shivered at the ghostly touch, hooking her good arm around strong shoulders for some semblance of an anchor, trailing to the nape of Kara's neck to stroke it affectionately.

And they somehow, in the time of their love, moved away from the door, Lena leaning against the dining table with Kara hovering over her, her kisses drifting away to trace the strong jawline with her lips, eliciting a moan.
The Luthor mimicked the action then took the lobe of her ear between her teeth, sending a jolt up the Kryptonian's body.

Lena smiled at her effect on Kara, moving her mouth lower and lower until her lips brushed the skin of her collarbone, stretching the cloth away and nipping at the sensitive skin.

Kara groaned at the sensation and Lena let out a pleased hum.

The blonde buried her hand further into the Luthor's shirt, tucking itself comfortably under the comfy fabric before gingerly resting over her ribs.

Kara instantly retracted her arm at the sound of a tiny whimper, recalling with sadness at the grim bruises underneath.

"I-I'm so sorry, Lena," she panicked, "I didn't mean to - I forgot, it was a stupid mistake-"

"It - it's fine," she answered in a wavering voice, "I can deal with it, it's not my body that hurts."

Kara frowned at the response, pulling away in increments until just their foreheads touched, "What's-"

"Do I deserve this?" Lena whispered, pulling away so they could lock their eyes.

"Wh-"

"Do I deserve you?"

Kara swiftly took her face into her hands, cupping her cheeks with reverence.

"You do," she stated, "Of course you do. And if you don't think so then..." she paused, racking her brain for a word, "Then you're a dummy."

The Luthor failed to repress a small chuckle at the word - a common word the blonde used to describe Lena whenever she was upset.

"If anything, I..." Kara faltered when she choked on her sentence, "A lot of the times I think that I'm the one that's unworthy of you."

The Luthor shook her head, tapping the blonde's chest, "I can assure you, you Kryptonian oaf, that you are completely worthy of anything you want."

"I want you."

Lena took in a sharp breath at the confident statement, her eyes brimming with tears once again at the declaration.

"I want you too."

A pause.

"I want you more."

The Luthor rolled her eyes, giving Kara a playful shove, "Way to ruin the romantic moment."

The blonde flashed a bright grin, "I love you."
Her eyes bulged at her blurted phrase.

Lena smiled, the utter joy building in her chest was beginning to become intolerable.

"I love you too."

They spent another moment standing in each other's embrace, Lena humming as she traced along the outline of the sigil of the House of El once again.

There was another moment of comfortable silence as they basked in each other's warmth.

"Danger is always going to find us, Kara," Lena sighed, a bitter smile haunting her features, "You're a Super. I'm a Luthor."

"And I'll protect you," came the steadfast reply, "Always. I promise."

Lena smiled, planting a loving kiss to Kara's cheek, "Likewise."

Chapter End Notes

Constructive criticism appreciated.

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