What I was living for (all along)

by prettysky

Summary

When a passenger plane crashes at sea and two strangers find themselves on a deserted island, waiting for the rescue to arrive, they inevitably find themselves in a situation they never thought they would be in. Now, Alex and Maggie have to get to know each other, learn from each other, and above all - they must find a way to survive with each other.

Of course, physical survival is vital. But what if they find that they need more... want more?
Will they have to learn how to do more than survive?
The nature surrounding them is full of dangers, weird and unexpected things.
Will they survive... at all?

or

the desert island AU that definitely no one asked for
hello, hello, hello! I'm here, and I have some goodies :)
I wrote this piece with my heart and soul, did research and studies to allow the story to be as real as possible. It's possible that here and there, there will be minor mistakes or things I omitted, but I tried to make the story and the characters act as logical as possible considering the situation.
I hope you will understand everything, and if you find any mistake, technical or other, please come and tell me, I want this thing to be as accurate and enjoyable as possible. have fun, and enjoy the ride!

See the end of the work for more notes
The Beginning

You can’t always put your finger on the exact moment when something happens. Sometimes, it’s a chain of things. Sometimes, a stewardess brings coffee to the pilot. Sometimes, the coffee is too bitter. Sometimes, the pilot gets up and goes to make himself a new coffee, because no one will make him a new coffee. And he really, really needs this coffee. like, right now. And this is just a regular flight, what could happen? Three minutes, a new coffee, continuing as usual.

so here’s the thing, it doesn’t.

Sometimes, the three minutes that take to prepare coffee, can cause passenger plane 27194 to hit an air pocket, tilt sideways, burn a side engine, and all of that, as mentioned, only in three minutes. Three minutes that make a whole flight of a hundred and fifteen passengers from National City to India in Asia to crash at sea, and no one survives.

Well, no one but two.

You can’t always put your finger on the exact moment when something happens. But for Maggie Sawyer, the exact moment she realized she was in trouble when she finally raised her head above the water, took a lungful of air and looked at the wreckage of the plane around her. This was the moment when she realized, That something terrible had happened.

And until they fix it. Who knows.

When the world was flat,
We dreamt of its edges

~

"HELP, HELP!" Maggie almost ran out of air. She had to keep screaming, maybe someone would hear her. Someone, something, anyone... "Help!" She screamed again. She fished in the
water around her to hold herself floating above the water. She was still wearing her jacket and it was heaving on her, and she took it off, letting it sink in with all the wreckage she had seen on her way up in the water. She clutched a plank floating beside her, giving her muscles a rest. Around her, she watched planks, open suitcases, bodies... She tried to ignore her nausea and swam to a larger board of wood. She climbed and lay down on it, gasping from the effort, and closed her eyes. Okay, she thought. Okay, I can do it. There must be something in here that sends a message to the control tower... a few hours... or days... She was horrified at the thought that she was going to stay on this board for a few days, with all those bleeding bodies scattered around. She couldn’t resist the urge to vomit and turned on her side, throwing up into the water. After emptying her stomach, she sat down on the plank, washing her face in the seawater. Okay. Now what. She looked around again, trying to see from a distance.

A bird. Maggie's heart jumped. A bird says there's land in the area, right? She stood quickly, cautiously, studying the horizon. Another bird. At least five. They circled for a few seconds, continuing in the other direction. Maggie squinted, trying to see the horizon. Nothing.

Well, it's worth the shot to move along at least, right?

She grabbed a smaller, longer piece of wood and began to row, moving slowly between the floating things in the water.

Something breaks out of the water. A sound of gasping.

"HELP!"

Maggie turned her head sharply.

Someone struggled to float above the surface.

"Help, somebody, help me!"

"I'm coming!" Maggie shouted, beginning to row toward the voice. It was hidden by a few boards and Maggie pushed them aside, hurrying toward the sound.

A woman with short, chestnut hair and an anxious look patted her hands in the water. As soon as Maggie came into view, she opened her eyes with frightened eyes.

"Help me ..." Her voice was weak.

"Hey, come here." Maggie grabbed her hand and tried to pull her to the board, praying with all her heart that it would hold both of them.

The woman finally lay down on the plank, panting from the effort.

"My leg," she murmured. Maggie now noticed that the woman's right leg was badly crooked, and a large wound was visible on her left tibia.

"Oh no," Maggie panicked. She tried to find a piece of cloth to stop the bleeding but the woman stopped her. "I need... a small piece of plank and something like a... like a cloth." She said as she gasped. She would’ve sounded in a great pain, but there was still a tone of authority in her voice and Maggie listened without hesitation. She tore her right sleeve and handed it to the woman, who tore the piece in two with her teeth. She wrapped the first piece with surprising skill on the wound and kept the other half in her hand. Maggie carefully broke a piece of wood from the edge of the plank that held them, handing it to the woman as well. The woman looked at it for a moment, appraising it, and realizing that she didn’t have many choices. She placed it carefully on her leg and started dressing it along with the second piece of cloth.
When the woman's legs were bandaged she sighed and cradled her face in her hands.

"Do you see any more people?"

Maggie looked around. The view hasn't changed, and she saw no movements in the water. She tried to listen if there was an unusual voice, but she heard nothing. She sat down beside the woman. "Nothing."

They were silent for a few moments.

"Well, we can't stay here forever, it can take days for someone to arrive."

The woman looked confused. "So what now?"

Maggie grabbed her paddle back.

"Now," she said. "we're trying to see how to survive this shit."

Maggie continued to row. The woman lay beside her on the plank, resting. They passed between suitcases and bodies and pieces of planks that were floating there, and eventually, there were hardly any objects around them.

After about ten minutes Maggie stopped. The rowing exhausted her, and she put down the improvised paddle carefully, standing to see the horizon better. Still nothing.

She sat down with a sigh. The woman was still lying, covering her eyes with her hand.

"So?"

"Nothing."

silence.

"I can't believe it's happening. We always hear stories about people who survived this, who was rescued, but that is… completely screwed up." Maggie looked at her. The woman sat down carefully, grimacing.

They looked at each other for a few seconds.

"I'm Maggie." She held out her hand to shake.

"Alex." The woman shook it and nod.

"So, Maggie, do you have any idea how to get out of this shit-hole, because if there's no land in the area, we're going to die soon." Alex would have sounded cynical but Maggie had noticed that there was despair in her voice.

Maggie pointed toward the sky. "Every so often a few birds pass by, and they fly in that direction, I assume birds say there's land in the area so I try to get there until we find something."

Alex nodded. "Good idea."
Maggie took the paddle again. Alex reached out to take it from her. "Let me, I can,"

"No, rest, your legs..." Maggie tried to say, but Alex laughed bitterly.

"It's just... it's fine, I'm fine, I'll live." She took the paddle. "Or not, if we stay here long enough, we'll never know."

Alex began to row with surprising skill, the muscles of her shoulders suddenly visible. Maggie tried very hard to concentrate on the fact that they were probably going to die at sea and not at the fact that this woman had extraordinary arm muscles.

Alex continued to row, and the sun that stood in the sky burned their necks. Maggie figured it was about nine or ten in the morning. She didn't want to spend the whole day there and hoped they would find something before it'll get dark. Or someone would find them. She looked up to look for rescue planes.

They rowed alternately for nearly an hour, then- "Here, there, what is it?" Alex's voice suddenly sounded. Maggie looked quickly at the direction Alex was pointing.

"It's a tree." Maggie stared at it. "fuck. it's a tree!"

"A tree, thank god," Alex murmured and continued to row harder. Maggie tried to help with her hands, and they strode quickly toward the tree, which was now visible to them, and next to it were more trees, stones, and, God, a land.

The island came into view and they came closer and closer to it until they jumped from the plank to the ground, dragged along the shore. Maggie lay on her back, panting. Alex lay a few feet beside her.

"What now?" Maggie said after a few minutes. She looked at Alex.

"Now we're waiting for someone to pass here."

~

The sand was white, whiter than any sand Maggie had ever seen. Palm trees were spread out along the coast, and later on, more trees were seen, and the beach was replaced by flowering shrubs and tropical greenery, followed by a wooded area with dense trees, whose branches formed a green dome. She looked back, where Alex had pulled the big plank to shore instead of leaving it in the water. She went to help her quickly and they both dragged the plank to the beach.

Maggie wiped sweat from her forehead and stood, staring at the horizon. "Should we.. light some fire? you know," Maggie swallowed, "to signal." Alex looked at the horizon as well, studying the sky. "I don't know how to light a fire without a lighter. I guess neither do you." Maggie shook her head. "I once heard that you need two sticks or flints..." She looked at the sand around her and then at the forest. "In any case, if we stay on the beach, they'll see us, we just have to hope that the plane will fly low enough."

They tried to write SOS on the beach, but the words were not prominent enough. Alex suggested writing with leaves but the wind blew the leaves before they could make a word. There were no particularly large stones, and they were looking for something to hold the leaves. The running made them feel the heat more intensely, and Maggie felt a growing headache. She looked
desperately at the horizon. Just a blue sea, all across space, not even an airplane or a ship close enough to see or hear.

"Someone.. someone should know about the crash, right?" Maggie said, gasping with fear. She looked at Alex. “They're supposed to know, they're supposed to send a rescue team, aren't they?” Alex’s eyebrows shrank in the dark, and she looked close to despair but she didn’t give in. She sat down on the beach, burying her forehead in her hand, closing her eyes, and Maggie set down next to her. The sun stood high in the sky and Maggie looked at it, tears rising in her eyes, and she turned to look at Alex, whose face was very serious.

"What are we going to do?"

They were sitting there, looking at the sky and the horizon, trying to see the search team that was supposed to arrive.

"They'll come," Alex whispered. "They must come."

They sat there for more than an hour, and then another, and another.. but there was nothing on the horizon except a few birds circling overhead and into the forest. The heat continued to wear down and Maggie's head began to turn foggy from the heat. Her thoughts never stopped clinging to the words a little longer, just a few moment, they’re close, they would arrive, just thirty minutes... ten minutes... five more minutes...

"Well, we can’t sit on this beach forever," Alex said suddenly.

She stood and looked around. "Over there," she pointed, and began to walk, limping slightly because of the bruised legs. Maggie looked in the direction. On the seam line between the coast and the forest, there was a wave of scattered stones, very large ones, and more trees. Maggie followed her quickly, both of them walking toward the stones, into the forest. Maggie's shoes, fortunately, remained on her feet, even if they were slightly wet. She looked at Alex's feet that still had her socks, but her shoes must have disappeared into the sea.

Alex walked among the stones, checking them and looking around. Maggie felt so lost she could hardly understand what Alex was doing. Alex kept walking around and suddenly stopped. "Like I thought," she murmured. She motioned Maggie to look, pointing at some of the stones. "There's a place here where we can settle until they find us." Maggie looked. There were two or three stones that formed a cave-like depression, the size of a small niche. There was room for both of them to sit or lie down, but not to stand upright, and there were still nine or ten feet inside. But it seemed it was protected from sun or rain.

"Wait, you mean-" Maggie said uncertainly, and Alex sighed. "I don’t like the idea of staying here more than you do, but if we want to survive until they find us, we have to find a place to sit and try to survive." She folded her hands and looked at Maggie. Maggie pinched the bridge of her nose in despair.

"Okay."

"Now, the next step is to find a fresh water source and food to eat." Alex looked at the ground and picked up a rather long branch, leaning on it. "Do you want to come with me, or...?"

"Wait, just... wait a minute," Maggie raised her hands and closed her eyes. She took a few deep breaths. "I need, I need, wait, I have to breathe." Alex approached her cautiously. Maggie buried her face in her hands.

"I can’t believe this is happening to me." She whispered. To be stuck on a desert island? How many times does someone ask you this question? What would you take to a desert island? What
would you do if you were stuck on a desert island? people don’t even take these things seriously.

She tried to breathe deeply. to think. She just boarded a flight to India for a few months' vacation. She wanted to travel, to breathe, to think. She wanted to see new places, new people, climb mountain peaks, breathe fresh air, clean her head... stop thinking about Darla, about her miserable life about everything... Stop thinking, period. She felt so lost in her life, so detached from anything, flying in the void... She was afraid to admit aloud (not that she had someone to admit in front) that she also had hope that after the trip she could start a new life. Find a better job, maybe go learn something... get on that horse. This empty feeling, it must disappear. And now... now she's stuck on a desert island, with no possibility of starting over.

Maggie looked around with tears in her eyes. She looked at Alex, whose eyes were also a little wet.

"We'll find a way to survive, and someone will come to save us, someone will come," Alex said. She tried to sound confident and calm, but Maggie heard a little stress in her voice.

"I understand how you feel." Alex put a hand on her shoulder. "But now we must find a way to survive until someone arrives."

Maggie wiped her eyes and nodded, taking a few more deep breaths. Alex is right.

"So," Alex said again. "We need to find some big leaves, something to eat, and most importantly, fresh water." She leaned against the improvised cane and began to move toward the forest. "You can stay here if you want to, but I'm going to go get these things, and you're welcome to come with me."

Maggie looked at her for a moment. "Alright, alright," she said and started walking beside Alex toward the forest.

"How do you know all these stuff?" Maggie asked as they entered the forest.

Alex studied some trees, knocking them in her fist. "My sister and I used to play this game like we're on a desert island, taking blankets and mattresses and pretending that these were our leaves and cave, balls instead of coconuts, a pile of clothes instead of a bonfire." Alex smiled sadly. "I checked online how to survive on a desert island to make the game more realistic for Kara." She kept walking toward a tree with very wide leaves. "I never thought I'd need those skills in the real world." She studied the ground and picked up a particularly sharp stone. "You have to cut those leaves off the root, and then we can use them." She looked at Maggie. "Find a similar stone and do as I do." Maggie swallowed and nodded.

They returned to the cave after an hour or two, their hands cluttered with wide leaves, branches, and quite a bit of moss that they had pulled out from shrubs and trees. In the forest, they also found coconut trees, from which they managed to knock down some coconuts, and a few small-looking berries, which also collected a large pile. They didn’t go far because Alex’s leg began to ache, and Maggie suggested that they return to shore so she could rest, and so that they could see rescue planes on their way when they came.

Maggie put everything on the ground and sat down. Alex did the same, grimacing.

"Are you sure you-" Maggie began.

"I'm fine," Alex said dismissively, sitting down with a sigh of pain. "I will be fine." She corrected and held her foot. She looked around at the loot.

"I have a feeling that this moss will be more useful than your sleeve," Alex said, carefully
removing the bloody cloth. She cleaned the wound a little with a rough leaf, then covered it with moss, tied it with one of the leaves, which turned out to be very strong leaves.

"You seem to be good at these things," Maggie pointed out. Alex smiled. "I'm a doctor," she said. "Mainly treats head, brain, and spine injuries, but I have other skills among other things, a doctor should know more than they're expert on," she finished tying the impromptu bandage around her tibia and next checked the sprain.

"Hmm, okay." She studied her crooked leg as if it were the leg of a patient sitting in front of her on a table rather than her own leg. She carefully removed the piece of wood. Maggie looked at the leg with apprehension. "I'm gonna need your help," Alex looked at her. "I need you to pull your foot in that direction, as hard as you can."

Maggie turned pale. "You're not really..."

"Yes, I am, come on, I can't do it myself and I don't have any medical supplies here," she breathed heavily. "You have to help me."

Maggie sighed with concern and reached out cautiously. Alex adjusted Maggie hands on her ankle and she took a deep breath. "Wait, wait," Alex said suddenly, putting a piece of wood in her mouth. Maggie looked into her eyes and Alex nodded, closing her eyes tightly. Maggie pulled with all her strength and Alex let out a moan of pain, pounding hard on the ground.

"Sorry, sorry!" Maggie said anxiously, looking at the leg, which now seemed more straight. Alex rose, her face still twisted with pain. She felt her foot, pressing and pulling carefully, and a smile suddenly came over her face. "Good."

Maggie breathed with relief. "Thank God."

Alex smiled at her. "We're a pretty good team, aren't we?"

Maggie was momentarily swayed by Alex's smile, which lit up her slightly dirty face. "Yes," she said, smiling shyly.

~

Alex threw two more branches into the bonfire, which burned pleasantly. Earlier, Maggie went back into the woods to collect some wood for a fire, forbidding Alex to move, commend her to rest. Alex guided her with which trees and leaves were the best, and she emerged from the forest half an hour later, laden with branches and leaves. They were now sitting by the fire, trying to keep warm from the evening that had begun to envelop them.

"I still can’t believe you managed to light a bonfire."

Alex shrugged. "I'm just imitating things I've seen. lucky for us you found dry enough leaves on this damp island." She looked at her hands, which were still slightly red from the effort of rubbing the branches together.

They sat on the beach almost all afternoon, waiting for the sound of a helicopter or even a passing ship, but nothing was in sight. The sun was setting and they hoped that a rescue crew would pass through the area tomorrow. While they waited, they tried to open the coconuts, but without a knife or anything sharp, there was no chance. They threw the coconut, tried to crack it with a large
stone, but no success. They put the coconuts aside in disappointment and ate some of the strange small berries they found, which were small and very unsatisfactory.

Maggie glanced at Alex, the light of the fire reflected in her eyes. She rubbed her hands against the fire, warming her frozen hands. The air around it, which was hot and humid during the day, had grown colder as the sun went down, and now at night, nothing around them had warmed them except for the little-improvised bonfire.

"What are we gonna do tomorrow?" Maggie asked, a slight concern in her voice.

Alex sighed, looking away from the fire to look at Maggie. "First of all, we must find a source of fresh water, otherwise it will be very difficult for us keep on surviving." Suddenly Maggie became very aware of her dry throat and remembered that she hadn’t drunk anything since she was on the plane. "I thought we’d try to find a tree with resin, and maybe try to build a receptacle tool for water and food, with leaves and resin." Maggie looked at her in surprise. The idea didn’t even occur to her. "Next," Alex said, not notices Maggie's reaction. "We should try to find a way to fish, to have something to eat." She looked at Maggie. "I hope you eat fish."

Maggie shrugged. "I'm not a big fan of fish, but I guess I don’t have many choices."

Alex shook her head. "I hope we won’t really have to use all these things. I think they'll be coming soon, maybe a day or two tops." She seemed confident when she said these things, hardly worried. "We're not far from the crash site, we'll see them when they’ll arrive."

She took a deep breath and looked at Maggie. "Umm... also I.. I know it'll sound strange and everything, but I think we should sleep together tonight." slight flush rose in her cheeks. "I mean, close, to protect ourselves from the cold, you know." Maggie's mouth curled into a smile. "Of course, good idea," she nodded.

Alex looked back at the fire. "Before I jump into bed with a girl I usually like to get to know her first," Maggie said with a smirk. Alex blushed harder now, giggling in embarrassment.

Maggie reached out a hand. "I'm Maggie, Maggie Sawyer." Alex smiled at her and squeezed her hand. "Alex Danvers," she replied. "Originally from Blue Springs, Nebraska," Maggie continued, then she stopped. What else could she say about herself? Was abandoned at the age of 15 and since then she has learned to live without being dependent on anyone? Working part-time at some bar and can barely finish the month? Abandoned by her last girlfriend less than two weeks ago? She closed her mouth and shrugged. "That's.. about everything. You?"

"Originally from Midvale, California. I live with my sister in National City, she's studying journalism at National City University and I'm a doctor at National City’s general," She was silent for a moment. "I actually did an M.A in biochemical engineering, but after a few years, I decided that I wanted to be a doctor who cures and heals, and to do more than sit in the lab all day... I believe that there is no higher calling than helping others. So I went back to med school and studied medicine, and now I'm a doctor at the hospital. That's where I met this guy, James, and since then we've been best friends. " She smiled sadly and bowed her head. "When I happened to meet him with Kara, they both started talking and... it wasn’t long before they decided to be together." she shook her head when she remembered. "My sister and my best friend. most people wouldn’t let it happen to them, but when I saw them together, I had no doubt they were meant for each other." Maggie tossed two more branches into the fire, listening carefully. Alex sighed, a sad look in her eyes. "Kara. She must've heard of the crash already." She looked down again, closing her eyes. "She must be terribly worried." Maggie felt the need to put a hand on Alex's shoulder.

"They'll find us," she told her, repeating the words Alex herself had told her a few hours ago.
"So," Maggie said, trying to convey the murky atmosphere that enveloped them. "What did you do on a plane to Asia?"

"My department received a letter from this clinic in India with a few difficult cases, and we decided to send a delegation there, and I was supposed to board everyone's plane two days ago. I was delayed because of a patient, and I planned to get there late." She buried her face in her hands, holding back tears. "God, I can't believe it happened to me." Maggie looked at her compassionately, moving slightly to approach her, placing a hand on her shoulder. Alex wiped her tears with the back of her hand. "What about you?" She said weakly, clearly trying to divert her attention.

Maggie cleared her throat. "$\ldots$ umm.. I went on a vacation. I wanted to go travel, see new places, new people... clean my head a bit." Alex nodded at her. "Well," she shrugged. "You can't say you didn't get what you wanted."

Maggie smiled at her, and they looked at each other for a moment. Maggie noticed that Alex's face was pale, and beneath the layer of dirt were delicate, soft freckles. Her eyes were dark, beautiful, and Maggie found herself sucked into them. She stopped herself quickly, clearing her throat again, embarrassed. Alex moved a little, hugging her knees harder.

"We'd better go to sleep."
Maggie woke up slowly, with a strange sensation.

First, she wasn’t in her bed. Second, not only she wasn’t in her bed, she was lying on the least comfortable surface she ever laid on. Third, she felt extremely filthy. A few seconds later, she remembered. She’s on an island, in the middle of nowhere, and... a girl's arm wraps around her waist. Of course. Not only is she stuck on an island in the middle of nowhere, she's also stuck there with a pretty girl. Wasn't the thought occurred to her once? If you could take one thing to a desert island, what would it be? The ultimate answer, of course, would be 'A beautiful girl'. Although it's better when she’s not snoring into your ear. Maggie swallowed a smile and carefully removed Alex's arm from her waist.

She got up cautiously, stepping out of the cave. The landscape looked amazing, the white sand spread out along the shore, and the sun was already in the sky. Maggie figured it was about nine in the morning. She stretched out, sitting on a nearby stone to look at the view. It hypnotized her. The water was clear blue, and the view was stretched out along, reaching infinity.

She sat there, enjoying the pleasant air before the sun began to make its mark, and suddenly she heard a voice behind her. She turned and saw Alex coming out of the cave and walking toward her.

"Good morning," she said.

"Morning," Maggie replied.

Alex sat beside her. "You didn’t hear rescue planes at night, did you?"

Maggie shook her head. They looked at the horizon, Maggie suddenly aware of its despairing emptiness. "I don’t see anything from the direction we came from, either."

They sat in silence for a minute or two, wondering how to keep on their day as they waited for the rescue planes. Maggie started to fear that no one would find them, or see them from above, or even notice their disappearance... Alex, on the other hand, was pretty sure of the arrival of the rescue planes and it didn’t seem to bother her.

"Well, then," Alex said. "I thought that..

"I'm sorry to interrupt, but before you say what you're offering, I have to say I feel really dirty. Maybe we'll find a place to clean ourselves?" Maggie said almost pleadingly. Alex smiled at her. "That's exactly what I was gonna say," she said.

"Oh," Maggie said, a little embarrassed. She looked at the sea again. A few birds circled overhead, continuing toward the rest of the island.

She looked at herself. She was wearing jeans and a plain blouse with its right sleeve missing because it used for a bandage for Alex's wounded leg. The jacket she had on the flight was already at the bottom of the ocean. She had no pockets and suddenly felt panic, realizing that the clothes on her body were the only things she had in the world. She looked at Alex, seeing that she, too, was wearing a T-shirt and knee trousers, and nothing else to cover. She sighed desperately. Alex put a comforting hand on her shoulder.
"Hey," she said. "It'll be alright, let's go," she stood up, reaching out to help Maggie get up. Maggie rose, holding Alex's hand. It was pleasant to the touch. She held it for a few more seconds before Alex began to walk, and Maggie followed.

They walked along the dividing line between the vegetation and the wide beach. A big stone blocked their way after about six hundred feet and they climbed atop of it to look around. Maggie tried to look to the horizon to find a plane, a ship, or some other island or land, but there was nothing.

They explored the island a bit more deeply, since yesterday they entered the forest only to look for bare essentials. It seemed that the island wasn't very large, in its center were moderate hills laden with trees and vegetation, and around it was a strip of beach. Maggie guessed that its diameter wasn't more than a mile, maybe two. They circled almost all around it, and the noon sun began to clap on their heads. Maggie wished she had a hat or sunglasses.

They walked along the beach. "Look," Alex said suddenly, pointing to the distance. Maggie looked. They saw a medium-sized, pleasant-looking lagoon. They approached it, Maggie putting her hand in to feel the water. They were pleasant and cool and she turned to Alex, smiling. "What do you say?" She asked.

"I say I have to get in here right now," Alex laughed, and with an elegant gesture she took off her shirt. Maggie froze. She tried not to give away the fact that her heart started to beat much faster at the sight of this woman, shirtless. Alex stood in front of her with bra and panties, and suddenly she caught sight of the situation and blushed at Maggie. "Sorry, is that okay.."

"Of course, it's alright," Maggie said with an embarrassed smile. "It's like a swimsuit," she shrugged, but her heart thumped. Alex nodded. She sat down on the edge of the stone, stepping into the water carefully. Maggie took off her clothes too and went into the water, dressed in underclothes.

Alex dived out of the water, Shaking her short hair that danced drops everywhere. She sighed with relief and kept swimming, diving in and out. Maggie looked at her with wonder, and with a smile, and dived into the water as well. The cool water refreshed her and she continued to swim beside Alex, both smiling at the temporary calmness.

Their clothes were still on the stones, and Maggie thought they should be cleaned them a little. "Do you mind if we clean our clothes?" She asked Alex. Alex shook her head. "No, that's a good idea." Maggie took the clothes and put them in the water, rubbing them a little to get as much dirt as possible. She put her clothes on a close rock to dry them, and with the bright strong sun outside she assumed it wouldn't be long before they dried up.

She went back to the water, sitting on the edge of the lagoon stone while Alex continued swimming like a fish in the water.

"You look really natural in the water," Maggie remarked. Alex smiled. "In Midvale, we lived right next to the beach, I was swimming a lot, and surfing, too. since I moved to National City, I've hardly ever been swimming. not at sea at least." She dived again and came up from the water, suddenly very close to Maggie. Maggie's heart jumped and she looked at Alex's face, a little sunburned, wet, calm. She felt something swelling in her, and couldn’t explain it to herself. She pushed it aside, trying to ignore it.

Maggie's belly suddenly gave a loud rattle and she suddenly remembered that she hadn't eaten anything serious since twenty-four hours ago, on the plane. They looked at each other, and Alex sighed, stepping out of the water and sitting down beside Maggie.
They put back on their clothes, which were dry now and a little cleaner, and began walking into the thick of the forest. They walked among the various trees, talking and checking some fruit, exploring the different types of food that the island had to offer them. They found a large tree, laden with mango fruit, and sat down beside it, trying to peel off the bark to taste the sweet fruit. Maggie chewed carefully while Alex looked at her apprehensively.

"Well?"

Maggie closed her eyes and nodded. "At the moment, anything edible feels like a fancy meal, so the score is ten."

Alex grinned and took the fruit from her hands, biting it herself. "Damm, that's amazing." She took another bite and Maggie watched her, amused. She took another mango and peeled it too, and they both ate a few mangoes each.

Maggie leaned against the tree with her back. "Well, that was very delicious, but I'm crazily thirsty." She looked at Alex, who nodded. "Me too."

"Do you think there's a lake somewhere around here?"

Alex looked thoughtful. "I hope, without water, we won't survive much longer."

Maggie looked around. The air around them was damp and she found herself wiping sweat every few minutes. She wasn’t used to this amount of moisture, which made her feel a bit grim. She was thirsty, hungry and weak, and a sense of despair flooded her again. She sighed and wiped her forehead again, closing her eyes.

Alex got to her feet slowly. She looked even weaker than Maggie. "Do you want to move on with me or stay here?" She asked. Maggie looked at her. "Go, I'm staying here." She couldn't bring herself to get up.

Alex nodded and began to move forward into the forest, walking slowly, bit limping. Maggie realized that her legs were barely carrying her, one wounded and the other was strained for a few hours, and she was wearing only socks, and her feet could have been injured... "Wait!" She called, and suddenly she found the strength to get up. Alex turned to her and she found herself leaning over and taking off her own shoes. "Take it." She handed Alex her shoes. "Wear them, you look like you're suffering." Alex looked grateful. "Are you sure?" She hesitated for a moment. "Completely sure," said Maggie, pushing her shoes into Alex's hand. "We'll share them." Alex leaned over and put them on. They were a bit small on her feet but she looked relieved and smiled at Maggie. "Thank you," Maggie shrugged and sat down again in the shade of the tree, watching Alex move away. She wondered how such a small act on her part for a woman she knew only a day and a half would lead to such heart palpitations that she couldn’t remember when she had last felt them.

Alex came back after a while, carrying a strange-looking pile of fruit in her hands. "I found them on a tree. I punched the branch and they fell right off." She put them on the ground beside Maggie. "They look edible."

Maggie peeled the fruit with her fingernails, which was green with soft thorns, and inside there was juice and fruit flesh. The taste of the fruits wasn’t very sweet, but they quenched the girls’ throat. Maggie ate two of these, and Alex had three more. They remained seated under the mango
tree, still tired and weak.

"Couldn’t find any water source?" Maggie asked in disappointment.

Alex shook her head. "I couldn’t get too far with my aching feet. the air is very humid but I couldn’t find any lake or anything." She sighed. "I'm beginning to hope it’ll be raining soon."

It was afternoon, and they decided to return back to their cave, carrying a few fruits each. The weakness of the lack of drinking and food began to subdue them and Maggie almost fell on the hard sand floor, falling fast asleep. Her stomach wasn’t yet full and her head was spinning. She felt sick and tired and hardly heard Alex’s, who spoke to her before she fell asleep.

She awoke a few hours later, still fuzzy, from tiredness or weakness, and the sun was almost down. She comes out of the cave, finds Alex sitting by a small fire, her legs folded to her chest. Alex looked almost exhausted as Maggie, dark circles under her eyes, which looked a bit red. She reached for the fire, trying to keep warm from the cold that began to envelop them. Maggie sat down carefully beside her.

"How do you feel?" Alex asked quietly. Maggie shook her head. "Tired, thirsty, hungry, weak, forgot something?"

"No, that's pretty much the situation," Alex said. They both looked at the fire, which was beginning to wane slightly because of the wind. Alex threw in a few branches.

"How did we get here, Maggie?" Alex whispered, her eyes still on fire. Maggie closed her eyes, sighing desperately. "I don’t know."

"I tried to go a little farther while you slept to look for a source of water, but I didn’t find anything, the island is not big, but I feel like there is another part we haven't found yet." She looked at Maggie. "There are all kinds of areas that are blocked by vegetation and it’s very difficult to cross without a knife or something sharp that will cut through the bushes." She sighed and paused for a few seconds. "I heard birds and monkeys, and there must be more animals here, how come they don’t need water?" Maggie reached for the fire to warm herself, shaking her head. They were at a loss.

I can’t believe I survived. The fire burned her palms, which she supposed was too close. Of all the people on this plane, I was the one who left alive. I, who have nothing to live for, continued to live, while all these people died. She shook her head, feeling disgusted and guilty. In what twisted world the person who needs to live is dead while the person who has no reason to live keeps on living. Try to see it as a second chance, a high, irritating voice rising from behind her head and she pursed her lips. There is no second chance, no one comes to save us. On second thought, maybe it's better that I survived, that no one suffers more than they deserve...

Next to them lay a few fruits they gathered earlier, but Maggie was too powerless to try to open them. She found she wasn’t very hungry, which was very strange. The weakness still dominated her. She glanced at Alex for a moment, and suddenly her heart began to bang fast. That is, too quickly for one look at Alex to be aroused from.

"My heart ..." She put a hand on her chest, trying to feel it. Alex looked at her nervously, putting her hand on her shoulder.

"Breath deeply, try to relax," she said quietly.

"I don’t understand, what is it?" Maggie said, trying to soothe her breathing.

"An anxiety attack... or a sign of dehydration," Alex said, placing two fingers at Maggie's pulse.
They sat like that for a while, Maggie watching Alex murmuring quietly, apparently measuring her pulse.

"I couldn’t measure accurately without a watch," Alex said, taking her hand away, shaking it, Maggie guessed her watch fell at sea. "but your situation seems not to be critical."

Maggie nodded. She felt her heart coming back to regular beat, and she began to breathe in and out, slowly. Alex looked back at the fire. "I'd tell you to drink lots of water, but..." She clenched her teeth, painfully aware that they hadn’t yet found a source of water, and too weak to look further.

“What are the signs of dehydration?”

"Loss of appetite, lack of desire to urinate, dry mouth."

"I have them all."

"Me too."

"How long can we keep going without water?"

"Three days, maybe less."

Maggie suddenly became aware that they were on the island for more than twenty-four hours. She felt bad.

"They'll come tomorrow."

She looked at Alex, who seemed resolute in her statement. "My sister, she'll make a mess over there, she won’t rest until they’ll find me."

"Alex," Maggie was afraid to say it aloud. Alex looked at her. "I don’t think they know we survived." She managed to say, a lump in her throat. She saw tears springing in Alex’s eyes.

"No, don’t say that." Alex shook her head. "They will come, they must come, Kara-"

"Have no idea you’re still alive," Maggie said, her voice is broken.

Alex looked at her in disbelief, shaking her head.

There was silence.

"You don’t have anyone to come back to, do you?"

Alex’s voice didn’t exceed a whisper, but Maggie felt as if something had grabbed her empty stomach and turned it over. She got up and went into the cave.

"I'm going back to sleep."


Maggie woke abruptly, frozen. She shrank and turned to her side, bumping into Alex's sleeping figure. Maggie rubbed her eyes and looked at her. Her face was dusty and pale, but beautiful.
Maggie felt her heart stop again. She sighed, covering her eyes with her hands. She lay there a few minutes, her eyes wide open, her thoughts are running, her throat is very dry. She looked at Alex again, whose quiet snorting filled the void. *Dammit, she's just beautiful.* She couldn’t stop herself from thinking and immediately ordered herself, *stop. This is not the time nor the place to fall in love with girls, it's time to try and see how to survive on this fucking island.* She grumbled to herself quietly. *Not that you had anywhere to go back,* she repeated Alex's words. *Enough. Go back to sleep.* Outside the cave, she heard the cries of monkeys and parrots, loud and screaming from a distance. She winced and brought her knees to her chest, shivering a little. The faint light outside the cave showed that it was early morning time, and Maggie was still too weak to move. She closed her eyes, quickly sinking into a nightmare sleep, full of clear springs dissolving as soon as she bent down to drink from them.

~

"Get up."

Maggie raised her hands defensively. Alex sat beside her, her hands full of mangoes and green fruit. She dumped the loot beside Maggie and urged her to straighten up.

"Come on, I know you're tired and weak, but you have to get something to eat." Alex sounded firm, but Maggie heard the fear in her voice. She turned to the other side.

"I’m not hungry."

"I don’t care, you have to eat at least two-"

"I said I’m not hungry!"

"And I said I don’t care!" Alex reached out to turn Maggie around. "I understand you don’t mind dying on this island, but I do care if you die, so maybe you’ll eat already?" She opened a green fruit with nervous movements and handed half to Maggie. Maggie looked at her, angry.

"Ugh, just leave it," she grumbled and left the cave without tasting the fruit.

It was late afternoon, and she wondered when Alex woke up, and why she hadn’t awakened her earlier. Her head was spinning again and she had to stand for a moment to clear it.

She was angry. With the fucking plane, the fucked-up India, the fucking island, with stupid, idiotic, fucking beautiful Alex. She walked along the beach, still grumbling to herself quietly.

She came to the big stone they found yesterday, which was tall enough to look out over the whole area. She didn’t have the strength to mount it, so she sat down in the shadow of the stone. There were lots of coconuts around her, and she took one in her hand. Anger still gripped her, and she gritted her teeth. Suddenly, she remembered what she was doing in such situations. In National City, there was the 'Basement Range'. She was a member of their club, and she went there every time she felt she needed to get out some nerves out. An hour, two hours, shooting, improving her sniping ability, shooting at everything she ever felt underestimated her or left her or irritated her or made her feel worthless.

She stood quickly in front of the big stone and slammed the coconut with a stone as hard as she could. It helped. She picked up a second coconut, also hurling it at the stone. She went on like this for another ten or twenty more, until suddenly the stone cracked a bit. *Good,* she thought, *at least
something came out of this fury. She continued hurling coconuts at the stone, directed at the crack.

Another one.

two.

three.

She threw the fourth coconut in the crack, and suddenly the stone broke.

A tiny trickle of water came out of the rift.

Maggie stared at it, stunned.

"Holy shit," she murmured to herself, and quickly put her face to the fracture, opening her mouth to wet her throat. It was the most delicious thing she had ever tasted. She drank more and more, wishing for cool water to raise her throat. The water wasn't very cold, but her throat was so dry she didn't even care.

Alex.

"Alex, ALEX!!" She screamed, suddenly feeling the strength in her lungs. "I'm coming!" There were a sound and Alex came running toward her, startled. "Are you okay?"

"I'm great," she said, smiling. She pointed to the fracture. "Look what I've found."

"What..." Alex murmured, looking at the break. "Oh, goodness..." Her eyes widened in understanding and she quickly pressed her face against the rift, doing exactly what Maggie had done moments before.

Maggie looked at her with pleasure, giggling. Alex straightened up, wiping her mouth with the back of her hand. She looked at Maggie in amazement. "How did you do it?"

Maggie shrugged. "I threw coconuts on the stone, then I broke it." Alex looked at the stone again, then at Maggie. Maggie was glad she didn't ask why she threw coconuts on the stone in the first place. She picked up another coconut. "Maybe it's possible to increase the flow of water." She stood far and raised the coconut to throw it away.

"No!" Alex stopped her. Maggie looked at her, confused. "What's the problem?"

"The problem is that we don't know how much water there's inside and it could end soon, and if we don't find a way to collect those water, it can go to waste and we'll get stuck again without water."

Maggie lowered the coconut. "So what do you propose?"

"To find something, a container, or a shell of something, anything that will hold enough water for a long time."

Maggie looked around. "How the hell would we find something like that?"

Alex looked at her, then at the forest. "I think it's time we go a bit deeper into the woods.

~
They walked for nearly twenty minutes, almost to the end of the island. They saw all sorts of trees, fruit trees, and ordinary trees, and heard the sound of the forest animals around them. Maggie sometimes raised her head and saw parrots and other birds, monkeys of all kinds and lizards. She began to get used to this forest, which suddenly felt pleasant to her. Her head was clearer and she looked at the flowers, the trees, and the animals. She looked at Alex, who was walking beside her, wearing her shoes. Alex seemed more calm, too, and walking looked easier than before. Maggie guessed her legs felt better. Suddenly Alex noticed some kind of tree and walked over to it quickly, and Maggie followed. Alex pressed her ear against the trunk, tapping it carefully. Maggie frowned.

"I have a feeling..." Alex said with a smile. She leaned over and picked up a small but strong-looking stone. "That if we check what's inside." She raised the stone and hit the trunk. It was flexible and not easily broken.

A few more blows.

And another.

Maggie picked up another stone and began to help.

They continued beating the trunk more and more, aiming with the sharp part of the stones.

Boom.

One blow of Alex pierced the trunk of the tree, which immediately began to drip.

Resin.

They burst out in cheers, triumphantly.

Maggie carefully licked the liquid. It was sticky and very thick, and hot, and not very sweet. Alex also licked and grimaced. "I prefer mango," she shook her head.

"Increase the hole, I'll bring the leaves," Alex said, moving away to pick from the strong leaves they had found not far away. Maggie did as she said.

They folded the leaves, smeared them with a resin and put them in the sun to dry. It took a few failed attempts, but for the fourth time or so, they found the right formula, and before them stood three tools, not very strong, but if they will keep them good enough they could be used properly.

Maggie looked at the bowls proudly, then at Alex, who smiled back at her. Something in her heart calmed down as if she knew that from now on they would be alright. After all, a few feet away there was water, fresh water, and they have tools to collect the water and plenty of mangoes, and soon, very soon, someone...

Someone...

Someone will find them....
...Right?

She looked at Alex again, her smile fading slowly. Alex looked at her, her eyes wondering.

"Is everything okay?"

Maggie shook her head quickly. "Yes, Yes."

Alex nodded.

"Let's go get some water."

Chapter End Notes

hoped you liked it –
please leave a comment below and/or kudos, those make me so so happy :)

I have to say, thank you thank you THANK YOU for everyone who has read, comment and gave kudos to the first chapter, I was so nervous and the reactions were incredible!! thank you, and I hope I won't disappoint.

I plan to update every two or three weeks, and I hope I'll make it.

keep the reviews, I wanna hear them! you guys are the best :)

have a good day, come say hey at Tumblr I'm at @iwannaplayairplains
Visitors

Chapter Notes

TW: Bodies that were in the water after the crash, as you can imagine what they will look like
also fishing..? idk if TW is needed but whatever

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It was the fourth day.

Maggie lay on her back in the cave, one of the leave-bowls, full of water, beside her. As soon as they made the bowls two days ago, they went back to the stone and dug a little beside it, preparing a small cistern to store the water, covering the bottom with leaves and stones to resemble an artificial lake. It began to fill slowly with the trickle of water, and they could finally breathe easily. Maggie didn’t want to think about what will happen when the water would run out if at all.

She looked at her side. Alex was resting, her face clam. Maggie wondered if she was awake. She smiled a little and went back to staring at the ceiling of the cave. Alex shouldn’t catch her looking. She sat up slowly, taking the water bowl carefully in her hand, and took a few sips. She felt regret for all the times she underestimated water in her life, and it made her chuckle bitterly.

She decided to get out of the cave, to get some fresh air before they began the daily routine of trying to find and store edible things.

They are getting better, slowly. they have mangoes, the green fruit that didn’t know its name but it was quite tasty and sage when they managed to find the ripe ones, and some sweet berries and leaves that weren’t very satisfying, but tasty. Of course, there were the coconuts too, but they couldn’t open them, and Maggie hoped that if she found a strong enough stone it would work eventually. The fruits were fine, but soon they would have to find a way to fish something and cook it. She felt her stomach consistently empty.

She crawled outside, the sun beating her face, and she blinked at the strong light. When she got used to the sunlight, she moved towards the shore, noticed something strange. She rubbed her eyes to be sure. When she realized what she was looking at, the smell hit her.

Five, maybe six or seven.

Bodies.

Half-eaten, missing clothes here and there, very bleeding.

Some are as pale as death.

A few more things like suitcase, bags and metal parts from the airplane.

The beach was crowded with visitors.
Maggie screamed. She tried to fight her nausea; she'd better keep what she could put in her stomach already. Fuck. What are they supposed to do now?

Alex, awakened by the scream, hurried out of the cave. "Maggie, is everything alright?" Alex's voice faded to the sight of the bodies and she looked at Maggie, who was very pale. They exchanged glances and Alex looked at the beach again, stunned. Maggie couldn't stand upright any longer, and fell to her knees, shivering, horrified and shocked. She wanted to burrow in the cave and wait for the waves to sweep all those people away, she wanted to close her eyes and never open them, she wanted the sense of guilt for surviving would stop clenching and shaking her heart whenever she thought about it. Alex ran past her, covering her nose with her collar. She ran quickly to the bags and suitcase, and Maggie realized she had to get what was inside before the waves washed it back to the ocean. It might save them.

Maggie watched wide-eyed as Alex took one of the bags and threw it far away on the beach. She did the same with the second bag and the suitcase she dragged quickly.

Alex hurried back toward Maggie and looked again, daring to breathe. They stayed there, Maggie still on her knees, an uncontrollable shudder still holding her, and Alex put a tentative hand on her shoulder, comforting. She looked stunned and agitated, but not disgusted. Maggie assumed she was used to seeing bodies and blood and all of this.

"What are we gonna do with them?" Maggie's voice was no louder than a whisper. She didn't want to think about it. She didn't want to think about the fact that a plane crashed at sea, a plane full of people, innocent people, and they all died. And she didn't die.

"We'll bury them," Alex said after a pause. "We owe them at least that."

Maggie didn't know how Alex wanted them to take all those bodies and bury them without going mad, but.. she was right. They owe them at least that.

They found two strong, long sticks and began digging. It wasn't far, so they wouldn't have to carry them far, but far enough not to bother them after that. Alex dug vigorously, slamming her stick again and again at the earth, turning sand out of the hole that had begun to form there. Maggie dug a little more gently, frightened, still shaken.

The pit was ready. Alex looked at Maggie, who wiped the sweat from her eyes. "Let's go." She threw her stick aside and started walking toward the beach.

They loaded body after body on a large metal board that was washed ashore and threw them into the pit. Another body, and another, Maggie almost got used to the smell, and noticed that, maybe too late, in horror. Alex's face remained frozen and serious.

They covered the pit with sand and large leaves, finally standing at its side. Maggie looked anxiously at Alex, who sighed and closed her eyes.

"Should we say something?"

Alex opened her eyes. "No." She turned to Maggie.

"I mean, we should, but... I don't even know what to say in such cases."

Maggie shook her head. She took a deep breath and tried to relax.

"I hope that none of them have died in pain or anguish, and I hope that... I hope they had time to tell their loved ones that they love them before they crash... and I hope that anyone who misses
them and never sees them again will find solace... and... I hope that God will protect their souls in heaven." She finished and looked at Alex, who gave her a soft smile. "Was that.. was that okay?"

"It was very good."

They turned away and began to walk back toward the cave.

"I don’t even believe in god."

Alex laughed bitterly.

"Me neither."

~

"We're down to 20,000, sir!"

"Dammit, where's the control tower?"

"I'm trying, there are problems with the connection, sir-"

"18,000!"

"Jack, drive to the right, navigate north-"

"Sir, the whole right wing is burning, it's going to fall apart at any moment-"

"Where's the fucking control tower?!"

"I got it!"

"This is Jim Robinson, secondary pilot, Flight 27194, We're losing hight and we are crashing fast towards the Pacific Ocean, request rescue, I repeat, request rescue!"

"We're at 15 thousand, sir!"

"Dammit, Jack, wheel up!"

"To the right, To the right..."

"The connection has broken, sir, I can't hear-"

"Crashing in two minutes."

"Jack..."

He wiped sweat from his forehead. God. He hadn’t had time to talk to Emma. He didn’t have time to tell her everything. And the baby... God. A lump stood in his throat. He looked at Jim, his eyes wide with terror.

Jim picked up the microphone.

"Everyone, this is the secondary pilot. I ask everyone to wear the life preservers, the nearby land is not close enough, we are about to crash in the middle of the ocean." Shouts of panic and
screams were heard. "I ask, everyone, please, I want everyone to remain calm, the rescue will come." He looked at Jack and the rest of the crew in the cockpit. "May God have mercy on our souls."

Maggie put on her life preserver, her trembling hands tying the rope around her stomach. She looked around. Everyone grabbed their phone, or cried, or hugged the person sitting next to them. The plane went down very quickly and she felt her heart beating hard in her chest. She closed her eyes, tried to breathe deeply.

She had often thought of death. Too many times for a young girl. But that's probably what happens when life is too cruel to you, or When you don't find love, or when your family abandons you, or when you find no reason to live in general.

But now, it's real. She's about to crash at sea. She's going to die, along with all these frightened passengers. A few seats from her side someone began to mumble a prayer in a language she didn’t understand. A woman in the row to her right spoke into her phone loudly. Someone beside her had filmed himself, tears streaming down his cheek.

No, she doesn't want to die. She understood now. Too many times she thought of death, hoping it would take her. She wondered what was the point of her life, but no, it's too close now. She doesn’t want this to happen. Not really. maybe.. maybe she still has a chance to find purpose. She closed her eyes again.

Then the plane exploded in the air.

~

They dragged the two bags and the suitcase into the cave. "I really hope it won’t be a suitcase full of drugs or anything."

"Although it wouldn't hurt me to get high," Alex remarked sarcastically, and Maggie rolled her eyes. She looked at Alex, who was smiling mischievously. She caught her breath for a moment and couldn’t help but smile back.

The first bag contained a large bottle of water, a bath bag, two books and a notebook which were completely wet, an open bag of what used to be fries and now it smelled awful and rotten, and a wallet, with...

“One hundred and fifty dollars, holy shit," sighed Alex, looking at the money. "I don’t believe that for the first time in my life I find money thrown, I can’t even use it." Maggie laughed and took the money from her, waving it. "When we get out of here, I'll buy you a big, fancy meal with that. " Alex smiled at her. Maggie had mentioned the idea of getting out of here even though she didn’t believe in it, just for her, and she knew that Alex had noticed it. Alex took the money back, put it back in the wallet. "deal."

"Thank God for the water bottle, though," Maggie opened it and took a sip, savoring. "Well, it's not as good as our private lake but it's good enough." She handed the bottle to Alex and she took a few gulps too. "I like that we don’t have to be sparing with water," she smiled. Maggie hummed in agreement and went to open the second bag.

Unfortunately, it contained a laptop and a few other mobile devices and a music player that were completely useless because they were shut down. Maggie looked at the pile in sorrow. "I really
want to burn it all up," she murmured. Alex quickly cleared the pile back into the bag. "At least it's here and not at the bottom of the ocean," she said. "We'll try to see if it's useful."

The suitcase, fortunately, was much more useful. It wasn’t large but contained three bottles of soap and shampoo, one large towel, some men's T-shirts and a couple of plaid shirts, and few pairs of pants that Maggie doubted that they would mount on them without falling right off, a sweater, and three pairs of socks and slippers. There was another bath bag, inside which were a lot of pills bottles that Alex studied carefully and announced that they all had painkillers in one way or another.

"Great, we fell on the hypochondriac suitcase, how lucky," Maggie remarked, making Alex giggle. She felt something that reminded her pride, and turned to take the wet clothes from the suitcase to hang them to dry, smiling inadvertently.

Alex emptied the bags and found that one of them also contained a swiss army knife and a small bottle of water, and the bath bag in the first bag contained a toothbrush and toothpaste, a hand lotion and a box of eye lens. She looked at Maggie in frustration. "Half of these things here aren't that helpful at all."

Maggie shrugged and continued to hang the wet clothes. "At least that's something." She nodded at the Swiss Army knife. "It can help us open these damned coconuts already."

Alex picked it up and smiled. They both went into the cave, where all their fruit lay in a heap. Alex took a coconut and handed it to Maggie.

"Put it like this," she instructed her to hold the coconut steady, wrapping her hands carefully. "Exactly."

They looked at each other.

"To my count," Alex murmured.

"One, two, three!" She stuck the blade into the coconut, which nearly broke in half. She moved the knife right and left and the coconut opened wide, pouring out a decent amount of coconut juice. Alex cut a piece of coconut, put it in her mouth.

"How is it?" Maggie asked, taking the knife and half the coconut from her hand.

Alex grimaced. "Bitter then I thought... but it's alright, I guess."

They broke three more coconuts, gathered the juice in one of the leave-bowels, and ate some of the green fruits. They sat now side by side, quietly munching on the coconut, looking at the long piece of the beach across them from the mouth of the cave. Alex cut another piece and handed it to Maggie, then cut another piece for herself.

"We have to start fishing," Alex said. "We need to fish, and start cooking, and take care of our health instead of eating fruit all day." She looked at Maggie. "We have to find a way to get vitamins and proteins and survive like humans until they'll come."

Maggie opened her mouth for a second, but caught Alex's piercing gaze and closed it immediately.

There was silence.

"Thanks."
Maggie nodded, cutting another piece of her green fruit.

"I know you don’t believe me, but they’ll come. they will come, I know it, I feel it."

Maggie kept looking out and said nothing, chewing quietly.

At least one of them still has hope.

~

"Really? Is that your plan?"

Alex straightened up and looked offended. "Why, you have a better plan?"

Maggie raised her hands defensively, smiling slightly. "No.."

"So shut up and let me try." Alex went back to her cane.

Maggie watched her tying a long cane nearly three feet long to the swiss army knife, whose knife was open. When she finished, she had a hunting tool, rather poor, but one that could have skewer fish on it, if they tried.

"What do you say?" Alex proudly displayed her improvised spear. Maggie clapped politely. "The best spear I’ve ever seen."

"Oh, you’re just saying that," Alex waved her hand dismissively and Maggie laughed. She felt she was imagining, but it seemed to her that Alex's cheeks had been painted a light red. Ignore it, she ordered herself. Time to fish.

By the time the first fish came on their spear, it took them fifteen minutes, and even then, it fluttered so hard that it almost broke the knife off the cane. They stood ten feet from the shore, where fish swam in almost all sizes and didn't escape the sight of two large bodies standing in their water.

"Got it!" Alex pulled the cane again from the water, a fish impaled on the knife. But it fluttered too hard and landed back in the water. Alex tried again, but it was as if the fish supply was beginning to run out. There were far less fish than forty minutes ago, and Maggie guessed that the impaled fish that returned to the water warned their friends that these two new bodies weren’t really friendly. Alex looked at a loss as she tightened the cane to the knife. Maggie wiped sweat from her forehead and tried to think.

"Let me try." Alex handed her the cane and turned to wash her face with the seawater.

Maggie grabbed the cane, looked at the clear water, and tried to find a target. Here it is, the fish with the orange scales. It's not too big, but it's a good start. Maggie watched it carefully. She counted in her head and briskly maneuvered the stick out of the water, the fish impaled on the knife. She hurried to stick it deeper into the knife, preventing it from jumping off. A few seconds of fluttering and the fish gave up, dying slowly.

Alex looked at her with a shining face. "You made it,"

Maggie smiled. "I did."
Maggie caught two more fish until dark, and they both turned back to the shore, holding onto their loot, proud of themselves. Alex began to light a bonfire while Maggie cleaned and cut the fish, putting them in one of the bowls.

"Ruptures starting to form in this one," she remarked, showing Alex the bottom of the bowl. Alex examined the leaves. "Tomorrow we'll try to make new ones. maybe we should use two layers of resin, inside and out."

Maggie nodded and picked up a small stick, beginning to skewer bits of fish on it. They roasted the pieces of fish over the fire and almost burned it, and their hands, but finally they managed to eat a few pieces of cooked fish, and even enjoyed it.

Alex leaned against the stone, licking her fingers. "I've never missed eating something hot like this," she sighed, taking a bite of the last piece of fish she had. Maggie came closer to her, leaning on the same stone. They looked at the starry sky, the moon that was full and shone on the whole shore. There was a pleasant silence as Maggie peeled another green fruit with the knife.

"I'm glad you started eating again," Alex said. Maggie smiled at her.

"Yeah, well, that lack of water kinda put me off, but... Yeah, I'm glad we found water."

Alex shook her head and said nothing.

"Can I, umm," Alex began, her voice slowly dying. Maggie sighed.

"You want to ask me about home, I know." She whispered. Alex shook her head and looked at her inquiringly. "Of course, if that's okay,"

"Yes, I suppose... I, um..." Her voice choked and she coughed in embarrassment, trying to relax. She was silent for a few minutes, trying to find the right words. Alex remained silent beside her. She didn’t dare look at her, certain that Alex's soft eyes would make her cry. "You don’t have to, we can talk about something else," Alex said quietly, calmly.

"No, it's alright," Maggie said, slightly surprised by herself. She took a deep breath. "My parents kicked me out when I was fifteen," she nodded, her throat tight. She hates talking about it. Why is she talking about it. "They found out I was gay. my dad... he couldn’t stand the look of me. he threw me out."

"I was... alone. For a long time. I didn't trust anyone, I didn't talk to anyone. I tried to live from day to day. At some point I moved to National City, still on my own. The only people I talked to were girls I dated for short times or people I became friends with, and even them, eventually they just... disappeared." She sighed, reaching out to wipe away a stray tear.

"I don’t have anyone. that's why I don’t care if I'll survive. that's why I didn’t want to eat."

She didn’t dare look at Alex. She only wiped her eyes again and looked at the horizon, the ocean shining in the moonlight. But she couldn’t concentrate on the beauty usually mesmerized her so much, all she could think of was why just blurt out the summery of her life story to this beautiful stranger here. Perhaps because she knew they weren’t foreign at all, that they were destined to live for a long time side by side. Perhaps because Alex's silence was so inviting, perhaps because she knew she would die on this island and who cared about her foolish problems while they trying to find a way to survive day by day. She stole a glance at Alex, expecting a look of pity. Instead, she found a comforting smile. Alex approached her carefully, and slowly, with a little hesitation, she put her arm around Maggie's shoulders, giving her room to cry on her shoulder. Maggie broke into the touch and laid her head on Alex’s outstretched shoulder. She cried for a while, feeling the pain...
becoming a little slack, feeling Alex's arm around her shoulders more consoling than anything she had ever felt. She held this lump of pain in her chest for so long, without a soul who could give her the place that she needed to give things place for. To feel important. To feel wanted. To feel... valuable.

Alex's arms didn't let go. Maggie let herself cry, knowing she had no one in the world, and that this woman was the only thing she had left, and that she had now. In any way she looked at it, her and Alex's connection has made itself strong and tight, just by the way it was made, even if they know each other less than a week. They sat there, hugged, for a long time, and Maggie slowly let herself go on and talk. She talked about the years on years of denial, and the few people who left her all over again, like her parents before them, and how she never felt like she belongs somewhere. All the anger and the rage, the desire to disappear, and the girlfriends and friends who abandoned her, one by one. When she barely finished high school and college, and left with grades too low because she never cared enough to invest in anything. And how she kept living on the same track, and didn’t worry about anyone but herself, sometimes she didn’t care about that either. She didn't tell her everything. Not at all. But it was a start. And a lot more than anything she ever told anyone.

"But still, after all these years... I have no one." Maggie hugged her knees now, and Alex's arm was back in her lap, though she was still very close to Maggie. "I guess it's because I'm too messed up to make social connections that last more than five seconds." She said the last sentence with mock cynicism. She remained silent for a few moments. "But I try to learn, I try to... make it better. slowly. sometimes I just don't know how." She looked at Alex, who was silent all the time. She never told anyone the full story. not even now... it was just pieces, but she almost gave up on the chance that anyone would listen to her at all.

Alex spoke in a very calm voice. "Well, I think you just blocked every way to the world to try to get to know you,"

"I know that, it's just, at a certain point I get sick of people, they leave me anyway."

"I know."

Maggie looked at her, confused. "You know?"

"No, I mean," Alex smiled, "that you shouldn’t have done that because you seem to be a really nice person."

Maggie blushed and looked at the ocean, at the stars, at the damned palm trees, just not to look at the girl who just flattered her.

"I like you, Sawyer."

Maggie snickered and took the courage to look back at Alex, who winked at her.

"Well, I think I've had enough about myself today, what about you?"

Alex laughed and shook her head. "Well, that's fair. Though my life’s kinda boring."

Maggie kept looking at her, encouraging her to go on.

Alex laughed in embarrassment. "I'm a doctor at National City’s General, but you already know that. I live next to my sister downtown. I love my work, and my sister, and my friends..." She shrugged. "But as I said, my life’s boring, that's all there is to tell, I swear."

Maggie laughed. "I prefer to live a boring life, to be honest."
Alex smiled a little and said nothing.

"Tell me about your sister," Maggie asked.

Alex smiled, her eyes sparkling as she remembered her sister. "Kara... she's amazing. since we were kids, she was my little sister, and she was annoying and frustrating, but she was mine. And when she grew up we started to talk, a lot, and she became my best friend. And when we decided to move to National City, we decided to do it together, and she supported me so much with everything I decided to do. " She closed her eyes and breathed deeply, the longing would seem to injure her. Maggie wondered what it was like to love someone like that, and that they would love you back the same way. "Kara is pretty much the best thing I have in this world, I can’t let her lose me. and I can’t lose her. she's my best friend." She looked at Maggie, one tear streaming from her cheeks.

Maggie put a hand on her shoulder, as Alex had done for her beforehand. She sensed that Alex understands the feeling when you have no one in the world except the one sitting in front of you, and you open up to them without knowing why but knowing that they are the only person you can talk to. She thanked for Alex in her heart and hoped that Alex would also thank for her.

They sat there, illuminated by the moonlight, opening up and talking for the first time since landing on this island. Maggie opened another green fruit, and they ate and laughed, forgetting that they were on a desert island, forgetting the existence of the world, just the two of them on this beach with a crooked swiss knife and an unidentifiable green fruit.

Almost like normal people.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading!! please leave a comment and kudos if you like it :)  
Any notes, comments, or complaints you have, please let me know!  
Have a good day :)

Roses

Chapter Notes

TW: A description of a rotten animal body. It's not too bad, but it can be disgusting to some. If you know that you have sensitivity, there's a bit foreshadowing for the description, and you will know when it comes. It's towards the end though. Also, I have to remark that I wrote this chapter before 3x03, so I didn't know what Alex's favorite color is. I like to think that it's an alternative universe, so some of the preferences of the character could change... so, yeah. anyway, I think that's it.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

It was. so. hot.

Like, hot-hot, hot you sweat from your eyes and wipe your forehead every two minutes and try to find a piece of shade and even then the humidity kills you and it exhausts at a level you don’t know what to do, blazing hot.

So, you go into the water.

"Hey, I'm going into the water, wanna come?"

Alex sat on the floor of the cave, peeling coconut flesh from its shell, eating. She looked up at her.

"it’s just, it’s so hot, I’m roasting ..."

"Yes, of course, you're right, we should cool down a bit."

She put the shell of the coconut on the floor and threw the last piece into her mouth, shaking her hands as she rose.

They began to walk along the shore toward the lagoon. Maggie's feet had grown accustomed to the heat of the sand, and from time to time she felt them with her finger, realizing that they had become harder and stronger. Alex put on the shoes most of the time, because of her leg, which had almost completely recovered by now. When the heat got really unbearable or when they got into the depths of the forest, Maggie would put on the slippers from the suitcase, which were a bit big for her but did the work.

They used the items they found in the suitcase. The shirts were masculine but suited them, and were, as Alex said- "a lot more comfortable than this crumbling shirt." They bathed once in awhile, in the lagoon, trying to save on soap and shampoo, and used the only towel in turns. Maggie had stopped wearing her sleeveless shirt long ago turned it into a piece of cloth. Thanks to normal baths with soap and a towel, she felt much better, and so did Alex. They continued to live in their cave, and from time to time Alex had padded the surface with moss and sand, which was pleasant to the touch and sometimes made them forget that they lay and sat on earth most of the time. They placed the suitcase at the end of the cave, and next to it was a large stone that served as a 'nightstand' with their bowls and bottles. If they tried very hard, it would almost look like a room.

They lived from day to day, eating coconuts, mangoes, berries and green fruit, and from time to
time Maggie caught a fish or two, and they cooked it over the fire. They even discovered some other things they could eat, such as seaweed, which if they roasted on the fire had a salty and delicious taste, or some of the mollusks they could sometimes find, which had viscous texture but next to fish meat were as good as any fish they found. The artificial lake they had prepared wasn’t dried yet, luckily, but Alex had remarked a few days ago that the current was weakening. They stored water in their bowls and bottles, but Maggie feared it wasn’t going to take long until the water ran out.

The lagoon, luckily, was cool and pleasant, and Maggie immediately took off her clothes and dived in, feeling her body relax with the oppressive heat. Alex came right after her, both of them swimming in the cool water.

They came out after a while, when the heat relaxed a little. They dressed and lay on the beach in a shady corner, looking at the blue sky and the calm horizon. From afar Maggie could see a couple of dolphins, jumping up and down, seemed to be playing with each other. She looked at them, hypnotized. "Oh, I love dolphins," she murmured, almost yearning, wishing she could swim to play with them, but not knowing how they would react. Alex hummed something in response, still looking at the ocean spread out before them.

"It's really nice in here," Alex remarked.

"Have you just noticed?" Maggie snickered.

"No, of course I noticed, just... now I'm really looking, and, it’s more beautiful here than our spot."

*The scenery is really more beautiful here,* Maggie thought. The clear turquoise waters were pleasant-looking, and large and small fish swam close to the shore. The sight was breathtaking, and Maggie's heart ached a bit that she couldn’t see such a beautiful landscape in better circumstances. She turned to Alex, who now lay with her eyes closed, and studied her quietly.

In the last month they lived here, Alex's pale face sunburned very much, and her skin was almost gilded. She has grown thin, both her and Maggie, and the muscles of her arms that were visible on the plank that had brought them there were almost gone now. But her skin, which had spent a lot in the sun, had sunburned, and her freckles were more and more noticeable. Her hair got longer, and Maggie's too, and they tied it up with pieces of cloth that they ripped from her old shirt. Maggie looked at Alex's bare legs, their color was almost mocha and, God, she felt a rising heat in her cheeks, and not because of the sun. She didn't watch her thoughts for a few moments and they wandered to places too far away... She forced herself in time and stopped herself from panting too hard. *Jesus, it's hard,* she closed her eyes.

"You're staring at me, Sawyer," Alex murmured, her eyes still closed.

"What.. I'm, I'm not... What are you..." Maggie began stammering, her face reddening.

"You are, don't pretend," Alex opened an eye and smirked. "But It's okay," she added, rising to her feet. "I don't mind," she tossed another mischievous smile over her shoulder and began to walk away, walking confidently on the beach, dressed in an oversized T-shirt and underclothes. *God,* Maggie sighed and closed her eyes. *If nothing on this island would kill me, that will.*
"What do you mean, you stopped looking?"

"It means that everything drowned in the ocean, the rescue came after ten hours, pieces of wood and bodies floated in the water, and they collected what they could, but thirty-two bodies are still missing. I’m sor-"

"It doesn’t help me that you’re sorry, you have to look better, you have to FIND! you have to, it's not a game, it's my sister's body out there! and if you weren’t sitting on your ass all day, doing nothing-"

"Mrs. Danvers!"

Kara stopped screaming and turned to look at the door. A tall man in a suit stood there, an authoritative look on his face. "Mrs. Danvers," he said again, slowly approaching her. He held out his hand. "My name is Maxwell Lord. I'm part of the search unit that looked for your sister's plane."

Kara nodded at him and shook his hand suspiciously. "How do you know my name?"

"I looked at the files of all the missing, you appear on your sister's contact list."

Kara swallowed and looked at him, silent. She glanced at the frightened clerk she had screamed at a moment before, waiting for Mr. Lord to get away so she could go on.

"Can you come with me, please?"

She sighed deeply and turned to leave, Mr. Lord coming out right after her and closing the door. He led her to an office down the hall, and they went inside. Max sat down and Kara followed, sitting in the opposite chair.

"Water?"

She shook her head. He crossed his fingers and looked at her for a few seconds, silent.

"Miss Danvers, I would like to explain some things about your sister's plane," he said finally, leaning forward. "If that's alright with you."

"Go ahead," her voice quivered, but her eyes were steady.

He took a few papers out of one of the drawers beside him and handed her to look. She studied them as he spoke. "The plane was hit in the right engine by an air pocket, causing the fire, which causes the entire right wing to burn and disengage from the plane, which began to crash rapidly towards the ocean. They tried to contact the control tower, but the connection was too distorted and failed. In those cases, the pilot flies the plane to the nearest land, but there seemed to be no land close enough for such a landing." He crossed his fingers, still authoritative. She nodded.

"The plane exploded in the air and landed in the water, killing a large part of the people. The people who survived the explosion landed in the water, but were drowned or got eaten by sharks. When the rescue team arrived, they pulled everything they could pull out of the water, but… thirty-two bodies are still missing. we estimate they were drowned or got eaten until there was nothing left of them."

Tears were running down Kara's cheek. "So you say that..."

"I say that no one survived this crash. it's been six weeks, and if someone had survived, they
would have made contact until now." He looked into her eyes, his gaze softening. "I'm very, very sorry, Mrs. Danvers, I'm afraid your sister is no longer alive."

She nodded, lowering her head. "Thank you for all your efforts, Mr. Lord."

She got up from the chair, sniffling. He nodded and stood up to escort her to the door. She stopped abruptly, turning, looking at him with her piercing, blue eyes.

"Mr. Lord, do you have a family?"

He shook his head, his eyebrows furrowed. "No, I don’t."

She let out a bitter laugh and looked at him. "Well, I’m sure that you are a very talented person in your position and that you know how to do your job properly and that you are very appreciated and good. But what you don’t know is that my older sister, part of my blood, crashed at sea, and you think she’s dead. Well, let me tell you something, Mr. Lord. Alex didn’t die. I don’t know where she is, I don’t know what’s going on with her, but she’s alive. Because if she were dead I would feel it. And I feel she's alive, I feel it with every bone in my body.” she took a deep breath, her gaze still piercing, her eyes red. "She is alive, and I'm going to do everything I can to find her."

She stormed out of the office, walking briskly away.

Maxwell watched her until she disappeared and sighed quietly.

~

They had been on the island for four months when October arrived. They found a plank that was washed on the beach and was of sufficient size, and Alex strictly kept indicating how long it had been, and so they followed the months. So far, the summer had hit them hard, hot and fiery during the day, and at night it was cold. Now it was still hot during the day, but less, and at night it was colder than usual. Alex claimed that the rainy season would soon begin, and Maggie wondered worriedly how they would defend themselves.

"At least when it'll rain we won’t have to worry about the water," Alex said as they sat in the water one afternoon, few feet from the shore, waiting for the fish to pass by.

Maggie didn’t answer and just looked at the horizon. October. She was supposed to be back in National City by now, and maybe trying to start over after her trip... find a better apartment, a better job, maybe think about studying? She knew that she wanted to learn a profession, to work in a respectful place, to do things for the public, to provide service... to help people who need her. There was a fear in her that she wasn’t talented enough for it. The same voice that kept telling her she wasn't good enough. That she will never be good to do what she really wanted to do. In any case, she knew it would require forces she didn’t know if she has, and she was afraid to check. And now... She lowered her head to the water. None of these things are going to happen soon anyway.

She sighed and shook her head, returning to look for fish. One of the hardest things on the island was the boredom. Of course, they were looking for firewood and food, they went fishing and swimming once or twice a day, but they still had a lot of free time. So they talked. a lot. Maggie hadn’t met many people in her life that it was easy for her to talk to them, and more than that, it was easy for them to talk to her. She liked talking with Alex. It made her feel good, liberating. She
loved Alex's jokes, and the laughs, and the deep talk too, and the fact that they found a pleasant side in the one another, an easy side to connect with, and the fact that Alex found a real friend in her, just as she found Alex as a friend. She knew, in her heart, or at least convinced herself to it, that the openness with Alex wasn’t because they were alone, but because of who they were, and because of that they knew they had found a good friend. There were silences, too, but Maggie loved the silences almost as much as the talking. These were pleasant silences, and she learned that it was easy for her to be quiet with Alex almost as easy as talking to her. She felt Alex feel the same, and it made her feel good in the stomach. She had never met anyone like her.

Alex tried for the fifth time to poke the spare in the water, and she couldn’t catch a single fish again. If there had been a lot of fish near the beach before, now there would have been fewer, and it would be harder to get fish. Maggie thought of trying to build a fish pond by the shore, so it would be easier to get them. She brought it up to Alex, and she agreed, and they went to plan the building.

A few hours later, a deep scratch on Maggie's arm and a few juicy curses, they formed a small pool made of several large stones that they dragged into a shallow small bay. They built a breakwater wall with great effort, throwing in rocks and big coral lumps until finally, they managed to make a wide, good pool. There were many cracks left between the rocks, but they left them to allow passage of fish into the pool. Alex crumbled some remains of bloody fish and mango peels into the water, and the fish were drawn inside from the surrounding area. At last, they sat at the end of the pond, looking down proudly at their work. Now it would be much easier for them to get fish. They looked at each other, smiling.

"Good job," Alex said, and laid her head on Maggie's shoulder, sighing with satisfaction.

Maggie froze for a moment, then softened. Alex is no longer a stranger, she's a friend. A person with whom she had shared most of her secrets. She carefully reached out her arm and wrapped Alex’s waist around the back. Alex didn’t seem to mind, and she even got closer to her. They sat there for a while, watching the horizon as the twilight began to envelop them, at the fish pond they had built with their own hands.

Maggie felt relaxed, as she hadn't felt in a long time. but something was still on her mind.

"Alex?"

"Hmm?"

Maggie held her breath. "Nothing."

Alex raised her head. "What is it? You can tell me anything."

Maggie shook her head. She didn’t know how to even begin to describe what she was feeling. That... thing, that caught her stomach and turned her ribs and blend her mind and made her be... something that she wasn’t for a long time. Something she couldn’t remember she could become. Alex made her feel all this, and more. But she didn’t have the courage to try to explain that to Alex. They were friends, and she couldn’t tell her that she wanted to be... more than a friend. A terrible fear gripped her, that everything would get messy, that she would destroy everything, as always. she couldn’t let it happen. not here. not with her.

"No, it's nothing."

Alex watched her for a few seconds, then put her head back on Maggie's shoulder.

"Okay."
They sat there until the sun went down. Maggie looked at the beautiful sunset scene, and the sky looked like an inspired painter, a genius madman, brushed all the colors under his hand indiscriminately, and suddenly someone stopped him in the middle of the work and the picture remained like that, frozen and stunning.

She felt full, and still lacking.

~

"Do you think they made us funerals back at home?"

Alex opened one eye.

"I thought about it, and I hope they made a funeral for me." Maggie continued. "It will make all the people who hurt me say how sorry they are for hurting me, how wrong they were, and now they can’t ask for my forgiveness." She stopped for a moment. "I hope they’re sorry." She looked at Alex, who was still looking at her with one eye, her gaze frozen. Maggie sighed.

"It has been more than five months, and no one is looking for us anymore. They probably think that-"

"Don't say that." Alex closed her eyes again.

"I'm just saying that-"

"Don’t. say that."

Maggie looked at her. She lay beside her on the sand, both drying out of the short bath they have taken a while ago.

"Listen, it's already clear that we aren’t on any flight route to any inhabited island, and there is no guarantee that an airplane or a chopper or.. anything really, will pass here." She sighed again and looked back at the blue horizon. "I know no one will come."

Alex opened her eyes, finally. She looked at her, her gaze angry, her eyes wet. "You can’t say that. they’ll come, they have to."

Maggie watched her wearily. "Danvers, you can’t pretend anymore.. they won’t come."

Alex's face twitched in hurt. She took a deep breath and Maggie saw that she was searching for words. She began to regret that she had even opened her mouth in the first place. An apology began to pave its way out, but Alex was already getting up quickly.

"I'm going to look for something to eat." Alex shook the sand off of herself, turning into the forest with quick, barefoot steps.

"Danvers, wait-"

"Leave me alone, Maggie!"

She walked away quickly, and Maggie gave up, leaving her alone. She watched her walk away. You're such a fool, Sawyer, she thought. You're a fool with a big mouth. She looked at the empty, unbearably empty horizon. a fool with a big mouth... and vain dreams.
She returned to the cave after a while, finding Alex eating mango, her eyes red. She took it upon herself not to talk about the subject in any variation, never, so as not to upset Alex. She wished she hadn’t said it in the first place, but she was still afraid to ask for forgiveness. Now they ate their dinner in silence, chewing on the roast fish and seaweed Maggie had made.

Maggie tossed the bones and the shells aside and turned to wash her hands with the water bottle. Usually, after dinner, Maggie would peel some fruit and they both would sit and talk. They could talk for hours and never get tired of it. They didn’t speak for a whole afternoon and Maggie already missed it, but she knew she should give Alex time. She put the bowls on the stone inside the cave and went out again, watching Alex that set by the fire that was still on and looked into it.

"Alex," she said gently. "I'm going to sleep."

Alex didn’t answer. Maggie guessed she had heard her and she bent down, turning back into the cave.

"Roses."

Maggie froze, confused. She turned to look at Alex.

"Roses," Alex repeated. At last, she turned to look at Maggie. "I always liked the color red. most of my wardrobe is black, and at work I usually wear blue, but I've always loved red. There's something lively and rough about it, and very presence." She stopped for a moment and looked back at the fire. "My favorite flower is roses. red roses."

Maggie kept standing there for a few seconds, then sat down slowly beside her, silent. Listening.

"At my funeral," Alex's voice quivered and she tried to hold it. "There were roses, In all shapes and sizes, only red roses, to let it be known who I was, who I am. Kara... she wore a rose on her chest. James and my mother too. Everything was full of roses." She turned her wet eyes to Maggie. tears went down in an unending stream, but she didn’t cry. "The priest said a few words, and then Kara came up to talk. she looked stoic and strong and didn’t shed a single tear, but it was only because she was running out of tears. then my mother, then James." She took a deep breath and wiped her cheek. "They said how good I was, as a sister, daughter, friend, as a doctor, they praised my skills, and my smile, and my ability to withstand stress, and my ability to express myself, and my loyalty and determination." She was silent for a few seconds, then looked at Maggie, her eyes keep streaming with silent tears. "It was a perfect funeral." she whispered.

Maggie listened, thrilled. She couldn't look away from Alex, who started crying now, sobbing, and quickly wrapped her arms around her, whispering comforting words into her ear. Alex broke into a deep sob into Maggie and she held her for a long time, letting her take it all out. Maggie knew that now all the hope and confidence Alex had, everything had vanished and replaced by desperation, and it was unfamiliar to her, and Maggie held her while the crying continued and continued and didn’t stop and she held Maggie tightly, holding on to the last thing she had left in this world, letting the understanding to seep, the understanding that no one will come. The understanding that everyone had given up.

And Maggie held her until she calmed down, and they stayed hugged for a long time. And Maggie wondered how she'd let herself fall like that, how she'd let the walls she had built for years
to break apart like this, and finally stand up to herself and say full heartedly and confidently- this woman had broken me completely. She took me apart and gathered what was inside, and now, I'm hers.

～

The rainy season began around December. It began slowly, dripping here in the morning, drizzle there in the afternoon, a serious rain in the evening, which began to descend abruptly and made them huddle in the cave, shivering with cold, giving up the dinner of two fried fish and seaweed. After a few days they had already caught the hang of it, and each time it began to trickle they entered the cave quickly, covering the doorway with palm leaves that they tied together and formed like a cover that had been tied over the entrance to the cave. Of course, it didn’t protect them completely, but it was the best solution. They began to light the bonfires inside the cave itself, keeping piles of branches and twigs on the side, since everything got wet every time it rained.

Although sometimes the rain had its advantages. During one storm at night, when outside it sounded like war, they huddled closer to each other, warming in each other's warmth. Alex squeezed her eyes every time there was thunder, and Maggie carefully placed a comforting hand on her hip, as if to say without words it’s gonna over soon, I'm here with you. She felt her heartbeat rise, and she thanked every drop that’s falling from the sky right now that made them closer than ever. Alex fell asleep after a while and Maggie stayed awake, watching her breathe slowly, her heart pounding hard in her chest, and her thoughts won’t let go. She closed her eyes and tried to convince herself that it wasn’t worthwhile and that Alex wasn’t even interested, and maybe she should try not to destroy everything as she always does, and then a small voice came from the back of her head and said quietly but here, you're on an island, and it's only you and her. And you want it so bad... Give it a chance. And she eliminates all the voices and turns around to the other side, trying to fall asleep. And then everything is ruined, because Alex clings to her from behind, to defend herself from the cold, and she’s lost, all over again.

The rain, however, did not stop.

"We've got to find a solution," Alex sighed after a couple of weeks. Maggie agreed with her. The rain became unbearable. The cave was not rain-proof, and the rain almost always surprised them. They just sat most of the day in the cave, going out from time to time to collect fruit or fish to eat. Although their artificial lake was always full and even overflowing, and they sealed it with more leaves and stones, cleaning it so the water would be good for drinking, but when the rain came down they simply huddled in the cave, defending themselves from the cold, waiting for it to end.

They had other problems too. The swiss knife was excellent, and it contained screwdrivers and scissors and of course, a big knife, but the repeated use for the fish hunt, which didn’t fit the knife structure, simply worn it out almost completely, and now it was very hard to catch fish, not to mention cutting them. They returned to eating only fruit, although the seaweed, which required a small fire to roast, was a refreshing addition. The few fish they managed to catch were good, but it was hard to dismantle them with the crooked, worn knife.

Without proper shelter and food, Maggie felt weak again, and spent most of her time in the cave, lying on the moss mattress, listening to the sound of the waves, hardly eating or drinking anything.

Alex wasn't pleased with the situation either. She was still looking for fruit and catching fish, but she did everything alone, and Maggie filled the air with murky silence.
A few days later, Alex came into the cave, holding green fruit and two mangoes.

"Mags," she said gently. Maggie turned to her, a tired look on her face. Alex sat beside her.

"Maggie, you have to eat something." Alex struggled to peel off a mango handly and handed her a piece. "please."

Maggie sighed. She couldn’t refuse to Alex even if she tried. She got into a sitting position and picked up the piece, put it in her mouth, chewed reluctantly. Alex smiled a little. "That’s better."

They shared the mango and then the second mango and green fruit, and Alex forced her to drink from the water bottle, too.

Alex folded the knife and looked at Maggie with a soft look. "Hey."

Maggie couldn’t help but smile back.

"we’re gonna be okay."

Maggie nodded. I’m always okay when I’m with you, she thought. After her stomach was filled a bit she felt better, and a some of her strength returned to her.

"I’m sorry for being an asshole, I’m just," she sighed. "I don’t like this situation."

Alex nodded. "Me neither." She reached out to grab Maggie’s hand.

"But we can make it through. Together."

Maggie gave her a faint smile. Alex didn’t know that the only thing that kept Maggie alive was her.

~

Maggie lay on the beach, looking at the cloudy sky. The cold wasn’t too strong and the wind was rather pleasant. She looked up at the sky, clouds of various shapes on the horizon, and she tried to find different shapes in them. Alex sat a few feet away, trying to carve something out with the worn knife. Always when Maggie let her thoughts wander, she found herself thinking about the crash. A thought came to the surface and she let it out.

"We didn’t die."

Alex turned to her, confused.

"what?"

"We didn’t die."

"Glad you noticed." Alex went back to carving the piece of wood.

"No, I’m serious! we were on a plane full of people that crashed at sea, and we didn’t die. do you think it’s a part of fate?"

Alex snickered scornfully. "I don’t believe in fate."
"But you do believe that they will come to save us." Maggie wasn’t a big believer in fate either, but she thought Alex was.

"It has nothing to do with fate, it has to do with my belief that my sister is out there, and she knows I'm alive, and she'll never give up on finding me." Alex attacked the piece of wood in her hand a little too hard. "And she'll find us."

Maggie shook her head. "How can you be so sure?"

Alex took a deep breath. "I just know."

Maggie was silent for a few moments. "I thought you... gave up on..." Her voice died under Alex’s icy gaze. "That you don’t believe in that anymore." She finished hesitantly.

"I believe that Kara believes I'm alive, and I believe she will search for me until the day she dies. I believe I will get out of this island one day." She closed her eyes. "I also believe that everyone throw me a fucking funeral full of fucking roses and then returned to their fucking life without thinking of me again." She turned dump eyes at Maggie. "But Kara is out there, and she knows I'm alive, and if I don’t believe it myself I'll stop trying to survive." She continued carving. "And I have to survive, for Kara."

Maggie didn’t answer, and lay back on the ground, letting her thoughts run around again. They sat there for a while when the light breeze has become heavier and heavier, and the air was filled with a strange smell. Maggie tried to ignore it but the smell grew and she straightened up.

"Do you smell that?"

Alex raised her head and scrunched her nose. "Like a cadaver."

"Yeah." Maggie looked around. "I wonder where it comes from."

The smell reminded her of the smells of the bodies they had found six months ago and made her shudder, but she was curious to know what's the source of the strange smell, which grew stronger with each breeze that passed by.

She took the knife from Alex. "I'm going to look for whatever it is."

Alex looked at her for a few seconds, then got up, and they both went together.

They walked along the coastline, circling the island. The smell grew stronger by the minute, and every once in a while one of them gave a cough, the unbearable smell made them choke. They went on and on, and suddenly-

"Look." Alex put a hand on Maggie's arm. Maggie looked.

A huge, enormous body of a whale lay on the beach. The sight, of course, was horrible. It rotted for several days, apparently, and insects and scavenger birds were around it, eating what was left.

"Wow." Maggie was hypnotized. She never imagined that a living body could grow to such proportions. It was about fifty feet long and more than ten feet tall. The great gray thing lay stretched out before them, and Maggie felt a strange desire to get closer and closer, to touch and understand that silent intensity.

They approached carefully, lifting their shirt collars up over their faces to protect against the growing smell. Maggie walked around, occasionally reaching out and pressed on the cold layer of
skin. It was damp and greasy, and she felt queasy nausea.


They surrounded the huge mass, still mesmerized. The tail area and the left side of the body were full of giant bites, and they made up most of the stench. Maggie guessed that sharks had gnawed at it after its death and she shuddered at the sight of the perfect, accurate bites. Rotten flesh dwindled from here and there, and big birds pecked at the animal's head, shouting loudly. She moved away a little, careful not to step on anything backward, when something suddenly caught her eye. In the back of the whale was a small wedge. She climbed carefully over the carcass, trying not to breathe the stinking fumes, and gently pulled the rust-eaten end. The dead skin burst open, and in it was a double whale harpoon that had been preserved, new and shiny, in the layer of whale fat. The length of the main blade was about fifteen inches long, and its tip split at a sharp angle, the shape of an upside-down arrowhead, another two blades about four inches long each, designed to prevent the whale to be loosed from the harpoon. She studied the weapons carefully. The metal was a simple handwork, and the blades were still very sharp. This harpoon was must be imposed sixty, maybe eighty years ago. She turned quickly, looking at Alex, that was worriedly watching from below. She raised the harpoon carefully, a broad smile on her face.

"Holy shit," Alex said, stunned. Maggie carefully dismounted from the top of the whale and handed the harpoon to Alex, who studied it carefully.

"Maggie..." She looked at her, her eyes suddenly brightening. "Maggie, it's perfect!"

"I know, right?" Maggie's smile widened, and she almost forgot about the terrible smell that still enveloped them.

They washed the harpoon carefully in the seawater, gently cleaning it so as not to be cut. Alex began to walk away, still holding a harpoon, expecting Maggie to follow her. She turned to find Maggie still looking at the whale.

"Mags? Can we get out of here?"

Maggie shook her head slowly. "Wait." She turned and took off the harpoon from Alex. "I have an idea."

She went over to the carcass and determinedly stuck the harpoon in the layer of skin, pulling up and down and sides. With a marvelous ease, a layer of fat and skin separated from the body. She continued and slowly cut five such heavy sheets, about six feet by eight feet each, Alex watching curiously. "Whale skin is a strong material, we can take it and make us shelter from the rain." She explained as she worked.

Alex smiled. "It's a great idea," she walked over to help Maggie put the straps on top of each other. They made a pile and then carried it back to their cave.

"You know, I think it's a good idea that we move into the woods," said Alex after a while. They were fishing three fish today and picking up a large pile of green fruit (the rain made them grow faster and more delicious) and now they sat on the beach, Maggie grasping a stone and trying to carefully break the harpoon to separate the knives. "I mean, even if it rains on the camp we'll build in the forest it won't be as strong as the rain that fell on the beach, right?"

Maggie nodded, still concentrating on the harpoon. "You're right." She looked up. "Tomorrow we'll go look for a suitable place."

Alex looked at her for a few seconds, smiling a little, and turned to make a heap of twigs to light
them on. Maggie tried to pretend she hadn’t noticed the smile. She took a deep breath and turned all her attention to the little knife, which had begun to break from the base of the harpoon. Soon, everything is going to be alright. She glanced at Alex, who hummed softly to herself.

Well, she hopes.

Chapter End Notes

thanks for reading! make sure to leave a comment and/or kudos if you liked it :) if there are any mistakes or things you find weird or unclear, let me know! I would love to hear it and explain or fix if needed. come visit me at @iwannaplayairplains at tumblr, i've made a little aesthetic thingy for this fic ;) it'll be on 'wiwlfaa' tag (who let me name things for god sake)
Christmas

Chapter Summary

It's Christmas, what else?

Chapter Notes

Say hello to this-chapter-and-those-after-guest: Lena Luthor!
she won't be here long, and as I said, she might come back, but in the meantime, she's here, and she's trying her best.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

They moved into the forest. A matter of a minute or two walking from the beach, there was enough space between the trees to build a relatively large room. With some strong branches that they cut down with the big knife they now had and the whale skin they cut off, and they worked day and night to prepare everything for the perfect house. Finally, after about a day or two of strenuous work, stood in front of them an honest to god house, four walls and a ceiling, with pillars stuck deep in the ground and whale skin that had dry and harden, and flexible bamboo pieces and strong leaves tying the sheets and pillars to each other.

They stood and looked with satisfaction at what they have done. Maggie wiped her sweating forehead and glanced at Alex, who smiled broadly, the wrinkles on the sides of her eyes shining to her from happiness.

"I think we should throw a party." Alex turned to her. "You know, celebrate our new home in the address..." She looked sideways, "Mango street and eucalyptus." Maggie laughed.

"It's a great idea, tonight?"

Alex smirked. "Tonight sounds good. I'll wear the blue dress with the cleavage." Maggie laughed again. When Alex is in a good mood she can be very funny, and Maggie sometimes wondered if she wasn’t as funny as she had made her be in her mind.

Alex turned back to the shore to fish and Maggie came inside, organizing the bit messy room. They’ve put a large flat stone that used as a handstand, and on which they placed the leaves-bowls, the water bottles, the knives- which for them they have built strong handles of bamboo sticks- and the wash bag that contained all the remaining toiletries and the pills bottles. Beside it stood the suitcase, containing the few clothes they had; the jeans and knee-pants they came with, and the clothes they found in the suitcase, which had faithfully served them- the sweater and the socks on the cold days, the shirts they wore every day and sometimes changed, and even in the pants they found occasional use, though they were quite large on them, and they tied them up with straps of cloth like belts. On one of the wall, Alex decided to install hooks to hang the two backpacks, which were emptied and referred to their use. When they sometimes went for a walk in the forest, they took the bags with them, carrying equipment instead of carrying it in their hands, which was useful. On the side, they build a new bed out of wide leaves and mildew, much larger
than the last bed. There was no reason to make two separate beds as they had gotten used to sleeping together, and Maggie was glad to be sleeping next to Alex. The room was relaxed and pleasant, and Maggie lay on the mattress, sighing with satisfaction again.

She had no reason to want to be anywhere else in the world right now.

~

"Well?"
Kara put the phone down on the coffee table beside her and sighed. "Nothing."
James sat down next to her and put his hand gently on her thigh. "We will find her, Kara."
Kara turned wet eyes at him. "I'm not sure anymore..."
He wrapped her in his arms. "Hey, hey, calm down, take a deep breath." She sniffed and did as he said. He held her shoulders and looked at her. "Now, close your eyes."
She did as he said again, feeling more relaxed.
"What do you see?" His voice was deep, calm.
She was quiet for a few seconds. "She's on some distant place, where she can't make contact with the world. she is in a good place, she manages to survive." She stopped again for a few seconds and then went on. "She... feels good, wants to go home, but she's okay now." She opened her eyes and looked at James. "There's something else."
"What is it?"
"There's someone with her. she's not alone, she's with someone else, they're helping her." Kara smiled slightly. "She feels good with them, she's safe."
James smiled at her. "You see, there's nothing to worry about, she's waiting for us."
Kara buried her face in his shoulder.
"And we'll find a way to reach her."
They remained hugged like this for a while. Kara felt her muscles relax at James's warm touch, who was wrapping her in his arms. He had been her safe place since Alex disappeared. To be honest, long before that. He helped her with everything, and she knew he would stay with her as long as she needed it, and for that she was grateful.

She did need support. She felt like there was a hole in her chest since the crash, a hole that grew larger with each day Alex didn’t come back. Of course, there was support from all over her. The families sued the airline and received a considerable sum of money, but no amount of money would bring back Alex. Everyone was talking about her as dead, and Kara was afraid to say out loud what she knew for certain- that Alex was alive, and she needed her help, and she knew she wouldn’t rest until they found her. Until she finds her. For now, James believed her, and Eliza was attentive to her, and that was enough.

Suddenly the phone rang and Kara jumped up.
“Hello? Yes, oh, thank you so much for calling back... yes... I would like to make an appointment with Miss Luthor... Yes, Miss Lena Luthor... Yes, I understand she’s very busy, you need to tell her it’s Kara Danvers. yeah, Kara Danvers, with K... Yeah, I'll hold,”

James squeezed her hand sympathetically, and she squeezed his back, almost breaking it. He grimaced.

"Sorry," she whispered.

"Kara Danvers."

"Lena?"

"Well, it's been too long."

"Can you blame me? a CEO of a big technology company at such an early age, you don’t have time for boring young journalism students."

"Well, for you, I can make an exception."

Kara smiled. "Lena, I’m sorry for dropping on you like that, but... I need a favor."

Kara heard Lena smile. “What is it?”

“Well... we'll have to talk in private."

There was silence. "How about tomorrow? two o’clock?"

"Tomorrow is excellent."

Lena's voice was dull now. "Jess, clear my afternoon tomorrow, I have an appointment."

Kara's smile widened. Finally, she’s getting along.

~

Maggie rose from the bed and looked at the board where they marked the days, which Alex had hung on one of the walls. It was the end of December, and Maggie tried to calculate the exact date.

Christmas, she suddenly thought. She calculated the days again to be sure. It can’t be. tonight? she scratched her head in embarrassment. Should she bring something to Alex? And even if she did, what could she bring her? She sat down on the bed, thinking frantically. What could she bring to Alex that she didn’t already have. A flight back home. She chuckled bitterly. I wish. Her head was shrouded in attempts to find something suitable that she hardly heard Alex's scream.

"MAGGIE!!!"

Shit.

Maggie jumped to her feet and hurried to the beach, from which came the scream. Please don’t let something happen, please, don’t let it be a shark or a scorpion or something else, it can’t be,
"Are you alright?" she asked Alex panicky, who was standing with the big knife beside the fish pond. Maggie examined her quickly, looking for a wound or an injury or any sign of something that had hurt her. But Alex looked safe and sound, and even a little excited. She pointed to the end of the pool, on the lip, where there was, comfortable standing, a crab.

Maggie looked at Alex, then at the crab, and at Alex again. She widened her eyes. She wanted to be angry with Alex for frightening her, but it wasn’t the time. If there’s a crab in here, they should catch it, and now. Without words, using their hands and eyes only, they encircled the crab, and Maggie, with a quick hand as always, managed to spawn him from the belly on the big knife, Alex hitting his claws so it wouldn’t pinch them. Within a few minutes, they had a very fat and very dead crab, and Maggie could already feel the drool dripping from her mouth. They looked at the corpse of the crab.

"I feel kinda sorry for that crab," Alex murmured.

"I don’t know how sorry you will feel after we finish up this thing," Maggie said. She sighed. "Too bad we don’t have butter."

"Since when did you become the fish lover here?" Alex raised an eyebrow.

"Since I've eaten nothing for six months and I’d rather eat crabs than go on eating roast mangoes for dinner," Maggie declared, lifting the crab in her bare hands, examining it. She turned to Alex.

"Did you know that today is Christmas Eve?" she asked. Alex smiled a little. "I knew." She looked away. "I was going to surprise you." Maggie grinned and shook her head.

"How did you find out?"

"According to the board that marked the days, Dummy," Maggie laughed. Her heart skipped with joy. "So it really is Christmas Eve." Alex’s smile grew wider. "This crab came just in time," she said.

"Damm right," Maggie smiled back and looked at the horizon, trying to assess the time by the sun, which still stood in the sky but pointed to the late afternoon. She moved away in the direction of the whale house.

"I made reservations for eight o’clock!" She shouted over her shoulder. She didn’t have to check to know Alex is watching her walk away, probably giggling to herself.

A large pile of red and brown shells lay under the tree when Alex returned, carrying a big leaf with four large fish and a pile of seaweed inside. Maggie had already taken to pieces the crab meat into one of the bowls, and now she was piling branches into the fire so that Alex would light it up. Alex put the fish in the other bowl and sat down next to Maggie.

"I want to take a bath before we eat," Maggie said, not looking away from the last piece of shell that she had peeled off crab meat. Alex hummed something in response and turned to light the fire. They sat in pleasant silence, cleaning and cutting the fish for the dinner, Alex is humming quietly to herself. Maggie felt a thrill in her, of a pleasant, natural, relaxed atmosphere. When she was next to Alex, she couldn’t feel bad even if she tried. She finished cleaning and cutting the fish quickly, and got on her feet.
Maggie bathed in the lagoon before dinner. A diner-party in honor of the new whale house along with Christmas Eve dinner is an event worth bathing for, especially when you’re on a desert island. She even used the soap and shampoo they had, in which they tried to save as much as possible and used it only for special cases. Tonight was a special case, and Maggie came out of the lagoon after bathing, feeling particularly clean, wrapping herself in the towel. She bent to pick up the clean clothes to dress up when she heard a voice behind her. Alex went down to the lagoon with a pile of clothes in her hand. She looked embarrassed.

"I.. umm.. also want to bath before dinner, I hope it doesn’t bother you..."

"Definitely not!" said Maggie with a slight smile. she clenched the towel to her chest, feeling her heart vibrate. All the time they were on this island, and she’d never been like that before Alex. Somehow, they never bathed at close intervals. Alex smiled and looked down, so as not to embarrass Maggie in a towel, and Maggie thought it was adorable. She quickly picked up her clothes and got up to go.

"I'll go and get dressed behind the bushes. go inside and I'll pass you the towel."

"Alright," Alex said, walking toward the water. Maggie moved away in the direction of the bushes, dressed quickly behind them. Of course, they didn’t have too many choices, and they both wore the same clothes over and over, T-shirts and buttons, and barely wearing pants. Maggie folded the long sleeves of her green shirt and hurried out from behind the bushes back to the lagoon. Alex was already in the water, still in her underclothes. Maggie blushed and swallowed, walking in rapid heartbeat toward the water. It was irrational, for she had seen Alex countless times in underwear, but something in the sunset and at the approaching dinner party that made her feel like something different in the air.

Alex noticed her approaching and stood at the edge, smiling at her. Maggie smiled back faintly.

"The towel is here," she informed her. Alex nodded. "Thanks,"

Maggie remained standing there for a few seconds, and suddenly she caught herself and coughed in embarrassment. "Yeah, so I.. um... I'm going," she said, and Alex nodded again, stepping back into the water.

Maggie hurried to the whale house, rocking her head to concentrate. She held in her hand what she had planned to bring to Alex tomorrow morning as a Christmas gift, a beautiful shell she had found in the lagoon while she bathed. She took it out, looking at it for a long time. It was quite special and unusual, with twists and curves, and most of all reminded her of a flower. She studied it for a few moments and quickly put it aside, inside the black backpack. She’ll take it out when the time comes.

A wave of excitement struck her and she smiled broadly. She was going to give Alex a Christmas present and spend Christmas with her, and... well, it's Christmas!

To be honest with herself, she never really liked this holiday. She never had a chance to celebrate it properly, with family or friends, like everyone else. She would always find herself wandering the streets, wrapped in a coat, hearing happy music and laughter and talk from every window, but she had never had anyone close enough to celebrate with. But this time she has, she has a friend, almost like a family with whom she will celebrate Christmas (as much as one can really celebrate Christmas on this kind of place, she thought) and it will be amazing.

Alex came back, and they ate on the beach, at their usual spot on the big stone near the cave.
Luckily, the usual cool weather wasn’t very cold tonight, and there was no rain on the horizon. The food was great, roast crab meat on the fire and three fish, plus seaweed, and Maggie leaned back and felt full like she hasn’t for a long time. She looked at Alex with a sleepy smile, and she smiled back.

The sky was strewn with stars, spread out to the horizon, and Alex looked at them, recognizing constellations and showing them to Maggie, the moon giving light on the water, spreading along a path that reached the horizon. Of course, such scenes were not strange to them. Every night the stars were spread out all over the sky, but Maggie felt that every time anew it gave her an infinite feeling, a feeling that she was so small on earth, a tiny comma in all the subsistence of the creation. Sometimes this feeling wasn’t despairing as she might have thought but made her wonder, and she always listened when Alex explained about the various constellations, astonished.

"I can't believe it's Christmas," Alex finally sighed, looking at the horizon. Maggie knew that everything reminded her of home.

"You're thinking about Kara, don’t you?"

Alex grinned bitterly. "Am I that obvious?"

"Sometimes."

Alex took a deep breath. "We always spent Christmas at National City. Mom would have come to sleep with us and we would decorate the apartment and play games and listen to music. just the three of us." The memory made her smile. "Last year James joined in. It was the best Christmas of my life... since Dad died."

It wasn’t the first time Maggie had heard of Alex's father, but she still felt a twinge in her heart for Alex to the thought. She carefully placed her hand on Alex's hand, that tears were in her eyes.

"Next year," Maggie announced. "we'll be in National City and you will celebrate Christmas together with your family." She squeezed Alex's hand tight. "I promise."

Alex wiped her eyes quickly. "You don’t really believe that."

Maggie was silent for a few moments. She really didn’t believe it. She had never thought that there would be something that will pass through the area that could save them. But Alex's faith was so strong that sometimes she almost felt like her. She knew that from day to day Alex’s faith was getting weaker and she had to help her keep it if she wanted Alex to stay alive.

"I do," she said slowly.

Alex looked at her. Both of them knew she wasn’t exactly telling the truth, but she knew Alex was grateful she's doing it for her. Maggie's heart ached inside as she stopped herself from telling Alex how much she really mattered to her. She was so afraid. The number of rejections in her life caused her to recoil from any expression of affection she wanted to express for other people. But Alex... She was looking at her brown, still slightly wet eyes. Alex was more important to her than anything that’s ever been... hers? before she could scold herself and get those thoughts out of her head, Alex got up abruptly. "Wait here." And before Maggie could say anything Alex disappeared into the woods.

She returned two minutes later with the black backpack, placing it on the ground between them. Maggie was a little surprised but said nothing. Alex took a deep breath and took a piece of carved wood out of the bag.

“I know that gifts are usually given in the morning, but, umm... anyway, this, this is for you. I
mean, I'm not so good at carving, and I did most of it from imagination, but I remember you said you love dolphins, and... I'm not sure I did it right..." She stammered and her voice grew fainter by the minute. She held out the carved animal to Maggie, who examined it with a smile. It was far from perfect, but she could see the split tale, the nose and even the fins in the back. Maggie rolled it a few times in her hand and looked at Alex, who looked a little frightened.

"It's nothing, it's really nothing." Alex waved her hand dismissively. "I didn’t even work that hard, it was just..." Maggie leaned forward and kissed her cheek to silence her. Alex fell silent immediately and blushed.

"I love it." Maggie gave her a big smile. "Thanks." Alex nodded, smiling back.

"Actually, I brought you something too." Alex raised an eyebrow. "That was fast."

Maggie shrugged and opened the backpack. "Yeah, I found it earlier, and it reminded me of you."

She took out the shell and cleaned it a little. "Although I didn’t make this, but, umm... yes, it's for you. it reminded me of you." Now it was her turn to be embarrassed and she blushed, handing Alex the shell. Alex took it with a slight smile, her eyebrow bit raised. She didn’t look at the shell but at Maggie, a look of surprise, and joy.

She turned it over in her hand, running her fingers over the curves. "Thank you, Mags, it's gorgeous."

Maggie smiled broadly at her, proud of herself. Alex came closer and hugged her, and Maggie hugged her back, squeezing her tightly. She knew she could never be a good enough substitute for Alex's family, but she could try. She ran her hand up and down on Alex's back.

"Merry Christmas, Alex," she said quietly. Alex buried her face in Maggie's shoulder. Maggie felt some wetness on her shoulder and squeezed Alex closer to her. Alex trembled in her hands, and Maggie knew that the longing is hitting her.

"You miss them." Alex didn’t answer and just nodded, her head still on Maggie's shoulder. Maggie stared at the black ocean, wondering what National City looked like this year, whether it had snowed this year, whether the streets were ornate, and whether she would still feel the spirit of the holiday in the air, even though she had no one in the world.

"Merry Christmas, Maggie," Alex said suddenly. She looked up at her. "Thanks."

And Maggie felt, not for the first time, that she didn’t know what she would have done without this woman in her life.

"Thank you," she whispered, and they stayed there, facing the ocean and under the stars, talking, and spending their first night in the whale house, outside of it.

~

Kara sent the waitress away and picked up the menu to look at it. Kale salad? Jesus Christ. She twisted her face in disgust and put down the menu, turning to look around. The restaurant that Lena chose was a small and pleasant place, quality, but not too prestigious. She glanced at her watch. Two more minutes.
She knew how Lena looked today. She was the CEO of a big techno company, her face was in every feminist magazine she knows every few months. Since high school, of course, quite a lot has changed. She's grown up, the glasses were gone, and she always looked made-up and in a flattering feminine suit. Yes, it was clear to see that high school Lena Luthor has succeeded in life, big time. Leaving Kara far behind.

Leaving Kara behind? No. Of course not. Kara smiled thinly to herself and shook her head. She was just moving forward. She didn’t owe me anything. It was a few months’ romance, that's all, she reminded herself, breathing deeply, straightening in her chair. Back then, in junior or senior year, Lena courted her for a while, making notes and glances, but never officially asking her out. Until one night, at some horribly ordinary high school party, she found herself making out with Lena in the hallway, and from there they moved into the bedroom, and it wasn’t long before she found out she liked Lena Luthor. Kara looked down, smiling at the memory. But it didn’t last long, and what was a dizzying summer affair that continued into autumn and winter, became a sticky paste of something unclear, and at some point they stopped seeing each other. And at the end of high school... Well, each went their own way, and Lena managed to inherit the big technology company of the family at the age of nineteen and make it even greater, while Kara spent her time at the university, from class to class, still learning her way in the world.

Kara glanced at her watch again, her leg moving impatiently. It's been one minute since Two. She stole a glance at the door, her heart suddenly knocking quickly. Well, well, the fact that you have a boyfriend doesn’t mean you can't have a quick heartbeat when you're meeting your high school sweetheart. Especially when you know she looks like- WOW.

Lena came into the bistro, taking off her sunglasses. She was wearing a tight, elegant blue dress with a gray coat over it, and her hair loose. Kara was speechless. She glanced at herself for a moment, embarrassed at the yellow shirt and plain jeans she was wearing. Lena looked around, and when she saw Kara her smile widened and she went over to her. Kara stood up.

"Well," Lena said, her smile still wide. She studied Kara from head to toe.

"Hello, Lena," said Kara, smiling a matching smile. They embraced briefly and sat down.

Lena leaned back in her chair. "I must say I was a little surprised," she said, smirking, taking off her gloves. Kara smiled sheepishly.

"Well, like I said, I need a favor. but it's a good opportunity to catch up."

The waiter reappeared, and Lena ordered a salad. Kara studied the menu again and fortunately, she found the one thing on the menu that was made of potatoes (she was disappointed to find out that it was baked and not fried) and ordered. The waiter walked away with their orders and the conversation continued.

"How's your brother?"

"Oh," Lena waved dismissively. "Charming, as always. finds his way from one corruption scandal to another. he and my mother. luckily, I worked too hard on my reputation for people to make the connection between us, so I just watch them from afar. " She sipped from the glass of water the waiter poured them. "But we're not in touch."

Kara nodded. "It's always so nice to hear about all the things you're doing, it's truly inspiring."

"Well," Lena almost blushed and shrugged with a smile. "I'm happy to help and be a role model for young girls and women, it's truly an honor."
They kept talking while their dishes arrived, and they ate, and the dessert was ordered, and the conversation flowed and flowed, and Kara almost forgot how much she enjoyed talking to Lena.

"This is some place you brought me," Kara took another bite.

Lena shrugged half-apologetically. "I love this place. it's quiet and pleasant, and the food is for my taste."

"It's quiet here because no one eats this food, Lena."

They broke into a low laugh, which died slowly a few seconds later, and Kara found herself looking at Lena a few seconds longer.

"What happened to us, Lena?" She asked with a slightly sad smile.

"We were teenagers, and we didn’t know how relationships worked." She stopped for a moment, wondering. "I liked you very much, I don’t even remember why we broke up."

"I don’t even remember we broke up."

Lena smirked again. "Well, so technically, you could say..."

"I have a boyfriend, Lena."

Lena sighed and took a bite of her ice cream. "Well, I tried."

Kara laughed. "you're cute."

Lena watched her for a few seconds. "Well, but if he's stupid enough to dump you..."

"I'll make a call to your secretary, noted," Kara smiled at her. Lena's eyes lit up and she looked down at her dessert again.

Kara sighed. "I hate to ruin the mood, but I have to ask you for that favor."

"Anything."

"It's my sister... you remember Alex." Lena nodded and Kara continued. "Six months ago, she was on a plane that was crashed at sea and since then has been declared as dead. her body and thirty-two other passengers bodies have never been found, but the Foreign Ministry is convinced that everyone is dead." She stopped for a moment. "Everyone is sure she's dead."

"But you think she's not."

"I know that, Lena." Kara's gaze was determined and she leaned forward. "I know my sister, and we have this kind of... bond. and I know she is out there, somewhere. on an uninhabited island, or in some connectionless village, or in the middle of the desert, I don’t know where she is, but she’s alive. and she can’t find a way back home. " Kara took a deep breath. "I need you to help me finance a search mission."

Lena looked at her for a few seconds, nodding slowly.

"I wouldn’t ask if I had no choice," Kara went on. "There were a few search teams in the area and inside the sea, and they didn’t find anything, they gave up."

"But not you."
Kara's blue eyes looked pleading. "I will not rest until I find her."

Lena reached out to grab Kara's hand. "I'm here for you, Kara, whatever you ask."

Kara nodded and breathed deeply. She squeezed Lena's hand back, feeling momentary relief in the dreadful, constant pressure in her chest.

"There are a few islands... They are quite far from the crash spot, but I want to check them out... to see if she’s there... a helicopter, and some crew members..."

"I'll make a few calls, look what we can arrange."

Kara took a deep breath for the millionth time and gave her a grateful look.

"We'll find her, Kara."

~

Maggie clung to the high branch with all her strength and steadied herself high above the ground. She climbed carefully until she reached a satisfactory height and began to hit the branch that held the coconuts. She swung the big stick over and over, aiming as high as possible. She hit the branch, and it swayed from side to side, and fortunately, three small green coconuts fell from it. Finally, she thought. She threw the stick to the ground and began to descend cautiously from the tree. Suddenly, she missed a small branch on the way down and within two seconds she found herself on the ground. She lay there for a moment until she realized that her left arm was hurting. Very. Oh, oh no. It really hurts. She tried to get up, the left side of her back betraying her, also very painful. She rose cautiously, with moans of pain, and began walking toward the whale house. Alex was sitting outside, leaning her back against the wall, carving something with the little knife. When she saw Maggie, a worried look appeared on her face, and she rose quickly toward her.

"What happened?" She noticed Maggie's crooked arm.

"I fell..." Maggie murmured, her hand still sending throbs of pain to her body.

Alex carefully helped her sit on the ground and began to perform tests along Maggie's back and hand, pressing, fingerling, examining her arm and her back.

"I don't think it's broken, but there's definitely something sprained there." She looked at Maggie with concern. "I'll get you something to dress on it," she got up and went into the whale house, returning in a few seconds with a shirt, some painkillers, and a bottle of water. She carefully put Maggie's hand together with a long stick that kept her hand straight and gave her painkillers to swallow. Maggie couldn't speak except for occasional cries of pain. Alex finished and looked worriedly at Maggie.

"Why don't you go rest for the rest of the day, I'll go fishing something for dinner." Maggie nodded, fuzzy, and went into the house, lying carefully on the bed, full of pain tinglings.

That night Maggie awoke suddenly, feeling a wave of pain washing her. Alex woke her up a few hours ago to eat a short dinner and she ate half the fish she had brought her, staying in bed as she had been ordered to do. Alex gave her two more pills and soon she sank back to sleep. Probably there was something that made her a blackout in the painkillers because she felt very blurred. But
still, with all the blurring, her arm burned with pain, and she tried not to make noise so as not to wake Alex. Unfortunately, it didn’t work, and Alex turned quickly, her eyes wide open as if she'd been awake all this time.

"Are you okay?"

"No..." Maggie groaned. "My arm..."

"Shhh. It's alright..." Alex leaned over her, reaching for the water bottle, tilting it to Maggie's mouth, who sipped in thirst. "Show me."

In the faint light of the coals, Alex studied the arm, which had swelled up. Maggie still gave a faint whimpering of pain.

"I don’t want to try to fix it because I'm not sure I'll do more good than harm." She looked at Maggie in the partial darkness, a sorrowful look on her face.

"There's nothing to do but wait." Maggie nodded, her face still twisted in pain. Alex helped her lie more comfortably on her right side, her left hand tight as the makeshift bandage.

"Try to sleep," Alex whispered, putting a soothing hand on the sprained arm.

With Alex's hand on hers, and her silent snoring filling the air, Maggie fell asleep again, and the pain diminished with every moment Alex's body gave her from its warmth.

It took several weeks for Maggie's arm to return to function, and all the time Alex checked her on an hourly basis, ordered her to lie down, gave her pills, food, and water, and generally observed that she wouldn’t make any effort.

"Alex, you've got to stop bothering so much." Maggie sighed as Alex entered the house with a bowl of cooked fish and a bottle of water. That morning she didn't stop working and was already picking up a decent amount of fruit, fishing for some fish, cooking them, and going to fill new water from the lake, all alone. Alex shook her head and sat on the mattress.

"You have to rest to heal faster. I don’t want you to get an infection just because I wasn’t careful enough to guard you," Alex said seriously, handing her the bottle of water. "Drink."

Maggie rolled her eyes and drank a few big gulps. she really was thirsty.

"Lunch!" Alex announced, handing Maggie the bowl of fish.

"What about you?" asked Maggie, surprised. Alex waved her hand dismissively. "I'm fine, I've already eaten."

Maggie looked at her reproachfully. "Half a mango is not lunch."

Alex stood now, cleaning and arranging the handstand-stone without looking at Maggie. "I'm fine, Sawyer."

Maggie looked at the bowl in front of her. The food looked great, but... She looked at Alex, who had black circles were under her eyes. In the past week, Maggie's hand felt better, and she had returned to an almost normal routine, but she wondered how often Alex lay awake at night, ready for the moment when she would get up in pain to be there for her, to help her feel better. Alex neglects herself, she thought, to watch over me.
"Alex, come here." Alex looked at her, shaking her hands off the dirt, and went to sit next to her. "Is something wrong? Are you in pain?"

"No. Everything is fine." She picked up a piece of fish. "Please eat with me."

Alex raised her eyebrows in surprise and shook her head. "No, it's your food, I've eaten already..."

"Alex," Maggie's gaze was piercing. "I'm asking you to eat. you haven’t slept or eaten properly for a couple of weeks, and my arm feels fine, look, I can move it a bit,” she demonstrated. Alex smiled a little.

"You see, I'm fine." Maggie pushed the bowl toward her. "Eat something."

Alex took a piece of fish hesitantly and bit into it. They shared the food while Alex began to talk about other things that had nothing to do with Maggie's arm. Stories about the hospital or about Kara or James, the ones she always had to pull out. It seemed like what Maggie said had reassured her a little.

Maggie knew she couldn’t survive without Alex. But she was beginning to think that maybe Alex couldn’t live without her either.

Chapter End Notes

If you liked it and if not, make sure to tell me what you think via comments and\or give kudos... I wanna hear what you guys think
I also wanna say thank you so much for all the awesome people who have been commenting and liking my story! I'm doing my best to write the story that's in my head the best way I can, and you guys are making it all worth it, so thank you :) 
Come say hello to me at @iwannaplayairplains on tumblr
Happy holidays for everyone who celebrating it :D
that's right, the angst party has come to town.
or
(look at me, I made angst)

This is one of the turning points of my story. There's a very specific direction to which I want to take the story, and I hope that anyone who reads it will understand the direction and the process I'm trying to build.
Second, I try as much as I can to bring you the story I have built in the best and most understandable way I can. There are mistakes, I know, and most of them I try to erase and change so that the story will be clear. But since I'm not a perfect writer, and since I don't speak English as a native language, I feel that there is still a small part that I still can't quite bring. I hope you'll forgive me, and you'll be able to read the whole story even if it's not perfectly built as I would want to.

This specific chapter is a bit shorter, but the next ones are gonna be longer, I promise.

Thank you for waiting for this update, it took me some time but I made it

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The chopper’s airscrew noise roared into Kara’s ears as she sat in the cabin along with Lena and James. She was as stressed as she hadn’t been in a long time. They were preparing for this for several weeks, checking possible locations around the crash site and survival options. So far she had tried and tried to talk to people who will help and support the search mission, but she hasn’t managed to get anyone to cooperate. She didn’t have the money to fund a search mission herself, and no one believed her there was a chance for such a mission to come back with results. Luckily, Lena agreed to help, and James was on her side all along, and at the moment, that was enough for her. She looked at James sitting across from her, big earphones covering his ears, like the rest of the people in the chopper, looking out at the endless ocean below them.

they were headed towards the direction of four islands, all within a reasonable distance of the crash, and another island far from the rest, though pretty far away, but Kara insisted that they try there as well if they won’t find anything.

James turned his gaze to Kara, who twitched her fingers with fear. He leaned forward and held out his hands to her, smiling tenderly. She gave him a small, nervous smile, and took his hands in hers. Lena also felt the pressure Kara felt and she put her hand on her shoulder. Kara took a few deep breaths, letting her friends touch calm her down. They couldn’t speak, because the sound of the chopper masked every sound around, but she knew that if they could, they would whisper good and comforting words to her, that everything would be alright. They are going to find Alex.
"Two minutes to the destination!" She heard the pilot shout.

The plan was to patrol around the islands and look through binoculars, and if there was any movement or identification sign, let the chopper land. A more complicated plan, which included landing in every island and searching all over the island, was expensive and required resources and money that Lena couldn’t afford. But she did her best to arrange a plan along with Kara to help her enough. They approached the first island and Kara pulled out the binoculars.

They’ll be here all day if they have to.

~

"Dare."

"Chicken."

Alex stuck out her tongue, and Maggie laughed. They were sitting in the whale house, Alex is carving something with the small knife. Since she brought Maggie her first work - the dolphin, she continued to carve more and more with the new knife, and now there were several pieces of her works on the stone dresser, improving from one to one, like a flower, a small bowl, and a faint experience of an elephant that looked more like a lump with a trunk.

"Carve me something else," Maggie said, referring to the dolphin. Alex blew out the last wooden chips and showed Maggie the piece. It was a piece of oval-shaped wood that Alex had left as it was, but she shaped it a bit and carved designs over it. Maggie took the piece from her hand.

"It's beautiful! can I have it?"

"You kinda forced me into giving it to you anyway, so..."

"Oh,"

"Just kidding," Alex laughed. "You can have it. I kinda made it for you anyway." Maggie's heart jumped at this, and she smiled at her, her dimples popping. "Thanks."

Alex shrugged.

"Okay, my turn"

"Truth or dare?"

"Truth."

"Hmm... let's see... have you ever got so drunk that you had to throw up?"

Maggie grimaced. "Once or twice, yeah, when I was a rebellious youth and wanted to do everything the opposite of what was permitted, I sneaked into all kinds of parties, drank too many drinks and slept with too many girls.” She shrugged. "So yes, not good times, but I suppose whatever happened, happened."

Alex raised an eyebrow. "You seem to be more experienced than I thought.." Maggie rolled her eyes and gave her a small smack on the shoulder. "Shut up." Alex giggled.
"Your turn, truth or dare?"

Alex puffed her cheeks. "Mmm... dare?"

Maggie gaped. "Came on, Danvers, this is your third time!"

"What can I say, I'm a coward," she said, closing her eyes, leaning back. "Do you have a dare to give me?"

"Let me think of something irritating..." Maggie said, waiting for Alex to open her eyes so she could laugh.

She thought for a few seconds when suddenly she heard a dull noise. It was strange because the noises she was used to were the noises of monkeys, reptiles, and waves, and that noise, there was something... almost mechanical in it.

She looked at Alex, who was also squinting in confusion. "Do you hear that?"

"Yes, but I'm not sure..."

Alex's eyes suddenly widened. "chopper, Maggie, it's a chopper!"

Maggie's heart stopped. Her eyes widened like Alex's and she jumped quickly to her feet.

"Oh my God," she murmured. They both burst out of the whale house, running toward the beach.

Maggie couldn't think. She ran as fast as she could toward the beach, her bare feet carrying her fast, and she jumped over rocks and kept running, not a single thought in her head. As if it had emptied the moment she heard the sound of the chopper overhead, as soon as she saw hope flood Alex's eyes.

~

“Okay, we're done here."

Kara took a deep breath. It was the third of four islands. The next island, three minutes away, was the last one, and then, if they'll found nothing, they would fly to the farthest island, the least likely to find anything on.

They had a good look at the islands. Kara herself watched with the binoculars with James and the other guy they hired, Sean, who was an expert in rescuing travelers and survivors. He explained to them that going down to the beach would be pointless and that looking up with binoculars would be more effective, and would give them more information about what was going on on the surface.

They covered every visible piece of the islands, which were small-looking and extremely, annoyingly empty. Kara leaned back in her seat, fumbling with her binoculars. She was still, despite all the reassurances she had made and which James and Lena had given her, was nervous.

She has been very practical lately. Making phone calls, finding, talking, wearing a respectable outfit, go to meetings, writing letters, get recommendations, everything was very exhausting. She even tried to talk to some of the news networks to publish her story, to get more support. She
worked so hard to try and find every possible way to save her sister, and sometimes she had a
feeling that she was forgetting the most important thing. She looked outside, sinking into the blue,
mesmerizing ocean. She just misses her sister. She misses sister night, sitting down and eating
pizza or dumplings or ice cream straight out of the box and watch a movie, she misses coffee with
her sister, talking about boring things and interesting things, hearing crazy hospital stories and
telling even crazier journalists stories, and go visit mom in Midvale and just be with Alex. A stray
tear fell from her eye and she dried it quickly. Between all the running and the searches and the
bureaucracy, she almost forgot what she was fighting for. She was fighting for Alex. The longing
struck her like an arrow, sharp and stinging, and she breathed deeply, again. She knows what her
purpose is.

"We're here, it's right here," Sean said.

And she will get it.

~

"Help!! We're here!" Alex screamed as loud as she could. Maggie came panting, almost two
seconds behind her. Alex jumped up and waved her hands, searching around the for a chopper.
They could still hear the faint murmur, but they didn’t see it.

"Where is it? I can still hear it," Alex said, her face red with effort and stress. She ran back and
forth on the shore, surveying the sky.

Maggie didn’t answer. She scanned the sky as well, trying to find the source of the noise. They
stood there, searching, listening.

"It’s coming from that direction," Maggie said, her mind still blank. She pointed the other way, to
the farthest end of the island.

Alex looked desperate. Maggie still couldn’t think. All she was concentrating on now was
worrying about catching the fucking chopper. but how? what for? why? All these were questions
she couldn’t think of an answer for. She remained frozen in place, waiting for Alex to speak.

"We'll wait here, it must pass above us at some point. We stand out from the beach, they'll have to
see us."

Maggie nodded and swallowed. Though her mind was paralyzed, her heart beat rhythmically, and
sweat dripped down her back.

~

Kara held the binoculars to her eyes. The island was beautiful, like all the other islands they saw.
It was relatively large for the rest of the other islands, with a strip of coast that surrounded it, and a
large forest in the middle. The forest seemed to form a kind of hill, and bays were visible along the
coast. She looked at Sean, who was studying the island too, aware of every occurrence or sign of
human life.
"Let's get to the other side, we can’t see anything, go around it," Sean shouted to the pilot, and they continued along the island.

~

They stood there for another minute, still scanning the sky, the sound of the copper still in their ears, distant.

"I can’t take it anymore," Alex blurted out, putting her hands on her forehead in frustration. She looked at Maggie. Maggie didn’t know what to say, she didn’t know what to think, she didn’t know what to do. She usually worked well under pressure, or at least she usually tried to, but this time she felt frozen, unable to move.

"I'm running over to the other side, maybe they're going to stay there," Alex said, and start running. She stopped after a second. "Are you coming or not?"

"Yes," Maggie said without thinking. Both of them began to run quickly to the other side of the island, on the quickest route, straight through the forest.

~

Kara scoured the island, as she had done in the previous three islands. Along the shore and in the fringes of the forest there were signs she hurried to interpret as signs of settlement, like footprints on the sand or tow marks, but Sean explained that many animals lived on these islands and they might be the source of these signs, and that there were still no definite signs for people on this island.

She continued to scan the beach while the chopper passed along the coast and over the forest.

~

Maggie kept on running, her gaze fixed on Alex's back. They ran through the forest, skirting rocks and trees, while the noise of the chopper began to grow stronger.

"They're right here, I hear them," Alex said, panting. All Maggie was able to concentrate on was running, running, running, reaching the other side.

The beach on the other side of the island was much smaller than the beach on their side. Alex jumped and waved. "Hey, hey, we're here!!" She screamed. The chopper was on top of them, and continued to fly... exactly in the direction from which they had come.
They passed over the island, from one side to the other. James, Kara, and Sean, all of them with binoculars, scrutinizing the beach and the forest meticulously. There was no visible sign of life. Kara thought she saw something running, but the chopper already moved on. she blinked and looked closer with her binoculars. something that looked like a monkey has shown up there and she took the binoculars down, disappointed. The chopper’s airscrew kept roaring in her ears.

~

"No! We're here! Help!" Alex screamed lungfully, waving her hands. She started to run after the chopper, but it flew too fast, and she watched it fly away, wide-eyed, desperate.

~

"Stop!" Sean shouted to the pilot. The chopper stopped almost in place, remaining in the air. They watched the island on the other side, after having gone through it all. Sean looked at Kara.

"We've been through in all four of them. You saw it yourself, we didn’t find anything." He didn’t say it in the sarcastic, painful tone people used when they tried to motivate her to go to the search. He said it sorrowfully, sadly, worriedly. She knew that if he could, he would have done more. But he couldn’t. No one could.

Kara wanted to protest. She wanted to scream. She wanted to land on every island and tear every tree to shreds and turn over every single stone to find her sister.

But she knew it was impossible. She saw it with her own eyes, that's why she wanted to go on this journey. She wanted to see for herself.

And now she saw. She saw that there was nothing.

She looked at the island below. It looked irritably quiet. If Alex had been there she would have seen her.

She looked at Sean, then at Lena, then at James. Everyone gave her comforting, sympathetic, horribly painful looks. And she knew there was nothing more to be done.

"Okay."

~

Alex kept on running, and Maggie followed. They ran on the coast now, hurrying toward the chopper that was now just on the other side of the island where they had been standing just a few minutes before. It would sound as though it had stood up in the sky, just as it had done on the other side.
"Please don’t go, please, please, stay here, just one more minute, please..." Alex murmured desperately.

"Please...

~

Kara leaned back as the chopper set off. James leaned forward and took her hands, smiling at her comfortingly. "It's going to be okay," he said. "It's not over yet, there's still one more island."

She didn't want to look back at the island as they flew over the ocean, and instead, she closed her eyes. her heart struggled to hold on to the thought that had gripped her for the past six months.

She will find her sister.

~

"Hey!! Wait!!" Alex screamed at the top of her lungs, waving her hands at the chopper, which was flying away. "NO!!!"

Alex collapsed on the beach, kneeling, watching the chopper go on its way. "No... no, no, no..."

Maggie moved cautiously toward her, panting from running around the island. Her mind began to thaw, and a single, lonely thought came to mind.

Crap.

She put her hands gently on Alex's shoulders, which was still on her knees. she looked at the little spot that was the chopper, which now couldn’t be heard at all. Maggie leaned over beside her, her hands still on her shoulders.

Alex turned her big, wet eyes to Maggie. "They're gone, Maggie, they went off, they didn’t see us..."

She still couldn’t say a word. Alex curled up beside her, shrinking, broken. She cried aloud, making agonizing noises and moaning of pain, Maggie still holding her shoulders. "I can’t believe it," she whispered.

"It hurts, God," she straightened up, holding her chest. "It hurts, so bad..."

"Shhh... Alex, that's okay, we'll be okay..." Maggie said, her voice is breaking too.

They sat there, against the open horizon, Alex still whimpering into Maggie's knees, who sat there and tried to figure out what had made her freeze for those fifteen minutes when Alex needed her most.

She could have stayed on the other side to wait for the chopper. She could scream and jump and wave her hands the way Alex did. She could run to another side of the island where the chopper
was passing. She could have done a thousand other things. But she didn’t.

She knew why. The island was the best thing that had happened to her in five years. Hell, her whole life. She couldn’t give it up. She finally found someone, a friend, a soul that could understand her, and know her, a friend that couldn’t leave. A chopper that comes to the island to save them could destroy everything. For her. For Alex… She watched the waves crashing loudly on the shore, only slightly masking Alex’s crying. For Alex, it was exactly what she had wished for every night since landing here. Maggie felt disgusted with herself, a feeling that wasn’t strange to her, but she felt it as powerfully as she hadn’t felt in a long time, and a shiver ran through her. How could you do that, you selfish moron? Do you love Alex? Probably not, if you did such a thing. If the thought even crosses your mind.

Alex continued sobbing, her big tears wetting Maggie’s bare knees, and stayed in her lap for a few more moments. Maggie’s head was full of thoughts, they filled her mind, breaking through the barrier they had before. Everything inside was fussy and a clatter, and baffled her head, but one single thought floated above all of them.

I can’t stay here.

"I’m sorry, I have to go." She murmured, shaking Alex off, who stopped crying for a moment and looked at her in confusion as she ran away into the damn forest.

~

The smell of fish reached her nose as soon as she entered the whale house area. She snickered bitterly to herself, wondering how Alex had managed to get herself up, go fishing, and cook. How does she even have an appetite? I know I have no appetite at all. not quite a bit.

A day passed. The chopper didn’t come back. They slept separately for the first time since landing on the island. Alex, she supposed, on the mattress inside, Maggie, Well. Maggie didn’t really sleep. She wasn’t sure Alex has managed to sleep either, but Maggie didn’t even try. She returned to the whale house after spending the rest of the day in the woods, then the night, and the day after. She was worried about Alex, but couldn’t bring herself to approach her. The thought of it was simply too much.

Anyway, she decided to return the following evening, just so Alex wouldn’t think she was dead or something.

Alex sat on the ground, hugging her knees, staring at the fire that stood out on the dark night. Her eyes were swollen and red. Maggie’s heart ached as she thought of Alex, sitting alone all day, crying to herself.

"Where were you? I was worried," Alex said in a monotonous voice. Maggie sat down slowly in front of the fire.

"I walked, and lay down, too, I think." And cried, and screamed, and hit a tree, and folded on the ground and thought self-loathing thoughts. she didn’t tell Alex that. The last day was vague anyway, she didn’t really remember herself.

She turned her gaze to Alex. All her hope, all her strong desire to go home, all the light she had in her eyes when she was talking or thinking about home, all that was gone. All Maggie could see now was swollen eyes and an ached heart with frustration, with despair. Tears rose in her own
"Alex, I'm so... so sorry, I..." She wiped her eyes. "I'm so sorry, I should have done more..."

Alex shook her head. "It doesn't matter now." Maggie's heart stung again, and she felt even more guilty. She considered returning to the forest again, staying there forever, it didn't matter now anyway, nothing is-

"Are you going to eat that?"

Alex handed her a leaves bowl with the fish she had cooked. Maggie was speechless, trying to understand.

"Aren't you mad at me?"

Alex still refused to look into her eyes. "I'm not... mad, no." She took a deep breath. "I also don't blame you, if they didn't see me, they wouldn't have able to see you." She stopped for a moment, still staring at the fire.

"I don't blame you for not believing they'll come. I know I'm the crazy one and I can't blame you for that, either." She stopped. "I know you feel guilty anyway because that's who you are," she added in a whisper. "So don't." Maggie wondered how Alex could tell what she was feeling without taking one look in her eyes.

"It's not your fault, but it still makes me feel like shit."

"That makes two of us," Maggie murmured.

"You know what, I'm just gonna go to bed, I'm not sure if I'll ever sleep again but I think it's a good idea." Alex got up quickly and walked into the whale house without another word.

_She can say whatever she wants_, Maggie thought, and her heart panged to the thought. _I know she's mad._

Maggie sat there until the fire went out, until the sound of the forest drowsed slowly, until the first rays of the sun came through the treetops.

She could still hear Alex's muffled cries through the whale house's walls before she fell asleep, hours ago.

~

It's been a couple of days, and things didn't get any better. Maggie continued to wander the forest, getting to know it better as she lived there. She couldn't sleep much, since her dreams were full of choppers flying over the island and never landing, and Alex, standing beside her, hands stretched out to the sky, screaming.

Alex's screams were what usually woke her up. She couldn't go back to sleep after that.

And other dreams. About things that happened. Her father, a furious look on his face, his fists flapping. Her mother, crying into her apron, looking at her with pity and repulsion. Girlfriends and friends she had had over the years, all of them were there, looking at her with contempt, anger,
disgust, in all the looks she had never been able to shake off.

And finally Alex. Alex, her freckles protruding on her dusty face, her hair tangled, her eyes glowing. Looking at her in feral disappointment through tears.

Maggie always woke up with a trail of tears on her face, never remembering the crying.

She would return to the whale house area sometimes since the lake was there. She took one of their bottles with her, letting Alex see her, so she wouldn’t worry, and went back to the forest. They didn’t speak. Anyway, Alex was always busy. She had to occupy herself, of course. Fishing, cooking, carving, building new tools. Maggie longed to talk to her, to be by her side, to help her, but she just couldn’t make herself getting any closer. She looked so broken. She was afraid that with one touch, with a glance, she would break her even more.

Until the rain.

As soon as a few drops began, Maggie remembered that it hadn’t rained for days. I can’t believe it, she thought bitterly. She began to run as the rain grew stronger. The whale house was at least two minutes away from running fast, and she hurried there, trying not to slip on the muddy ground. The rain continued to strike her face, even though it was under the trees, it penetrated into the forest with big drops, washing her to the bone. She tried to ignore everything and keep running, thinking of nothing but taking cover.

"Maggie!"

She's making it up, for sure. Her head lets her imagine things.

"Maggie, where are you?"

No, she doesn’t make it up.

"Maggie!!"

"I'm here!" She managed to call aloud, hoping Alex could hear her.

She got closer and closer to the whale house, spotting Alex's blurry figure standing outside, in the rain, in the cold, waiting for her.

At last, she stood in front of her, both wet to the bone. Alex's eyes were dark under the veil of dimness and rain. Her tangled hair was wet and fell in lumps on her forehead, and Maggie noticed that it was much shorter than it had been the other day. Still, she had never looked more beautiful. Maggie struggled with the urge to pull her close to her, to whisper that she had never wanted to hurt her, to tell her how sorry she was, how much she lo-

"Quickly, let's get in," Alex hurried to pull her into the whale house, which, as expected, held out and remained dry and warm, thanks to the little fire Alex had lit in the corner.

"Here," Alex handed her a towel. Maggie hurried to soak her hair, taking off her clothes to dry herself. Alex did the same.

In new dry clothes, Maggie sat down on the ground near the fire, trying to get warm. Alex sat down on the mattress, looking at her.

"Maggie, there’s-"

"No." Maggie heard herself say. "Me first."
She took a deep breath, trying to concentrate. She needs to do it right.

"Alex, I'm... so sorry, I... I spent the last few days in the forest thinking about how wrong I was, and how badly I acted, and I was selfish, stupid, and inconsiderate."

"you're not-"

"Let me finish." Alex closed her mouth.

"I know I'm not, I'm just used to thinking things that other people have been trying to get me to think for years, but I know I'm not. It's just a wrong decision I made because I didn't think the right thing, and that led me to hurt you." She looked at Alex now, her eyes a little moist.

"So, I'm sorry, I know that what I did was wrong, and maybe made us miss our only chance to go home, maybe not, but either way, I was wrong. I didn't think... logically. I was frozen, I couldn't... move. I couldn't make the right decision at the moment." She took another deep breath. "And I'm sorry, it won't, it won't happen again. I promise."

Alex was silent for a moment.

"I don't blame you, if they didn't see me, they probably hadn't been able to see you." Her own eyes were moist too. "I'm not angry." She swallowed. "I'm angry with myself, I'm angry at the people in the chopper, I'm angry at the universe, but not at you."

Maggie chuckled bitterly. "I'm the only one you can be angry with."

"Still," Alex's eyes were suddenly clearer than ever before. "Still, I can't be angry at you."

Maggie's breath stopped, and she wondered what all of that means, while the rain continued to knock on their roof, whistling its wet whistle.

"It's true that you could've done more, but I don't think it would've made a lot of difference." She took a deep breath. "I just... can't believe we missed it," she buried her face in her hands. Maggie rose slowly and walked over to her, sitting down next to her, hugging her carefully. The warmth of Alex's body, that was so lacking in the last few days, was like a pleasant breeze on a hot day. They stayed that way for a while.

"Come back." She heard Alex's muffled voice through her shoulder. "It's much less fun here without you."

Maggie was silent.

"Also the fish are really disgusting, you have to go back cooking."

It made Maggie laugh, and she looked at Alex, who was smiling and wiping away her eyes.

"Your hair is shorter."

"Yeah, I cut it with the knife, it started to get really annoying and long and I'm not used to long hair, and I'm tired of taking care of it, and-"

"I love it."

Alex fell silent and ducked her head, smiling. Maggie ran her hands through Alex's hair, feeling it. "It's nice." They stayed like that for a long moment.
She had slept in the whale house that night, for the first time in a few days, and the rain was still pounding on their roof.

Alex slept beside her, her face calm as she hadn’t seen in a long time.

Chapter End Notes

I have this thing, this "problem" where I can't let the character suffer more than one chapter at the time. it just feels wrong for me to make more angst than fluff. maybe someday I'll change, but today is not that day :)

Thank you for all of your support, I see all of your comments and kudos and couldn't be more pleased to know you all loving my story. thank you so much, you guys are the greatest. please, if you have something to say about my fic leave a comment below, i wanna hear what you guys think. and if you liked it you're welcome to leave kudos

come find me at @iwannaplayairplains at tumblr, search the tag 'wiwlfaa' or 'desert island au' for this fic related stuff
Chapter Notes

"Dr. Olsen, Kara Danvers is looking for you,"

James sighed and looked up at the nurse. "I'll be right there."

He finished sewing the boy's knee and told him to stay put. He hurried to the phone.

"Kar, it's me, honey."

"James, when are you coming home?"

James sighed again. "I told you in the morning, baby. I'll be out of here in two hours."

Kara's voice was hoarse on the phone. "Maybe you can leave sooner?"

James was silent for a moment. "Isn't Lena there with you?"

Lena and Kara had begun to spend more and more time together recently, but Kara was still in a state of melancholy after the failure of the search mission. Lena helped and stayed as much as she could, but...

"She had to leave. some business conference call or something."

James looked around the emergency room. The mood was quite calm, but he couldn't risk it if there would be a car accident or a fire in half an hour from now, and as the man in charge that day he couldn't leave the place unattended.

"I'll talk to Scott, see if he can come early for me."

Kara sniffed. "Okay." Her voice sounded very small.

James closed his eyes. "Hold on, okay? I'll be there soon."

She'd done that almost every night for the past two weeks. She had taken a long vacation from work and school a long time ago for the search mission and when they came back home after founding nothing, she didn't bother to go back. She often cried herself to sleep, or while reading, or watching TV, hardly ever noticed the tears that began to fall on her cheeks. James stayed with her at home for a few days to make sure she was getting along, but at some point, he had to go back to his job at the hospital. He would be gone in the morning, leave her in bed, almost always asleep, and return when she was in the same state.

Obviously, she didn’t get along.
He was scared. God, how scared he was. Alex was his best friend, who introduced him to Kara, and he loved them both, so much. Now that he had lost Alex, he might lose Kara too.

He had to do something about it before it was too late.

He searched for several numbers in his contact list until he found the correct number and dialed.

"Eliza, it's James, I'm sorry about the time, but I have to talk to you."

~

Alex blew on the piece of wood in her hand and looked. It was perfect. She put the instrument on the stone dresser beside the other instruments as Maggie entered the house, carrying the two bottles, filled with fresh water from the lake.

"Catch." She threw Alex the bottle and she caught it mid-air. Maggie sat beside her on the mattress and took a sip from the second bottle. "What are you doing?"

"I'm making." She showed her the instrument, "chess pieces."

Maggie raised her eyebrows. "Oh, wow, cool."

"Don't tell me you don't know how to play chess."

"I... umm..."

"Sawyer!"

"I know how to play!" Maggie defended herself. "Just... not so good." She shrugged. "I know the rules but I'm not sure how to make moves and stuff."

"Don't worry, I'll teach you," Alex said, picking up a new piece of wood from the pile she had collected earlier. "It's not that we're in a hurry or something."

Maggie smiled a little while she drank from her bottle. It had been a long time since the chopper. Alex had recovered, and so did Maggie. There were still some nights every now and then when Alex murmured in her sleep, "Please don't go, please stay, please..." tears stream down her cheeks, and she would turn over and over and Maggie would wake up, holds her tight, calms her down. Maggie's nightmares ended miraculously in the night she slept beside Alex again. They helped each other get back on track, and from now on the track was more pleasant, better, healthier.

March had hit them with full force, and the rain stopped. In fact, it got so hot sometimes that they had to ventilate the whale house so it wouldn't get too hot inside. Maggie cut her own hair, not as short as Alex, but short enough so it wouldn't be a burden on her head in the heat on the island. All in all, everything was going well. Washing their close once a week, shower once every three days, bathing twice a day, fishing every day after two o'clock when the sun stops being a nuisance on the nape and you can stay on the beach without having to go into the water. Yes, you could say they lived a busy and pleasant life. They also found occupations, each in boredom times. Alex was carving, and Maggie had already put a large stone as a shelf in the whale house to show her work. Maggie loved to swim. Not just bathing in the lagoon as they have done so far. Swim, swim. Hand gestures, rhythmic breathing, the whole thing. She had learned it a long time ago, in
her youth, and of course, the waves didn’t do her a favor, but she enjoyed it. The salty water, the softness of the waves that carried her back and forth, everything was great.

Yes, everything was great, Indeed.

Except,

Well...

Alex squinted as she tried to cut the turret squares precisely. She held the knife between her thumb and forefinger and middle finger, making small, straight cuts. The narrowing of her eyes made some wrinkles around her eyes, and her hair, which had begun to grow again, fell on her eyes and she blew it away.

Maggie looked at her, her heart beating hard, her lips slightly parted. She didn’t think she had ever seen a more beautiful sight.

Alex looked away from the wooden piece for a fraction of a second to look at Maggie and looked back at the piece, carrying a small smile. Maggie coughed awkwardly and got up quickly.

"I ... um... yeah, I'm going to... umm..."

"Yeah, you go do that," Alex said, not looking away from the piece, still smiling the same smile.

Maggie came out of the whale house, shaking her head. The whole Alex situation is much better now, and the fear of harming her has diminished. Alex herself seems to like her more than usual... right? like at night, she didn’t mind being close to Maggie, and she seemed to be smiling at her more and more. Besides, Maggie doesn’t think she will last long without telling her how she feels. She thought about it more and more as she went into the water, starting to swim. Another thing that was effective about swimming was that it cleaned Maggie’s head. Half an hour, an hour of swimming can certainly make her think clearer. And when she came out of the water she knew one thing. I have to tell her.

~

There was a knock at the door, and James went to open it quickly.

"Hello, Eliza," he greeted the woman in front of him with a tight smile.

"James, you're getting more and more handsome by the day," she complimented him, passing the doorstep quickly, tiptoeing to give him a kiss on the cheek. He embraced her, feeling the relief begin to make its mark in his heart. Indeed, Eliza Danvers had a hug that did wonders.

She looked around the living room. "So where's my girl, James?"

He pointed to the hallway. "In bed. it's been... a long time."

Eliza's gaze became a bit aching. "Well then," she sighed, and they both turned toward the bedroom.

Kara was lying in bed, her hair clothed in a loose ponytail, she was wearing pajamas and the blankets around her were messy. The TV opposite the bed was lit and some childish cartoon was
on. Kara wouldn’t even seem interested in the film, and just stared at the screen, expressionless.

Eliza looked at James, and they shared a worried look. She sighed again and looked at her daughter, which didn’t even noticed when she entered the room.

"Sweetie?"

Kara turned her head slowly. "Oh, hey! mom, what.. what are you doing here? when did you come in?" She got up from the bed, coming to her mother quickly. Eliza wrapped her in a hug. "Just now. How are you, darling?"

Eliza looked at Kara's face. Her cheeks were sunken and her skin was yellow. She looked as if she had lost some weight, and there was hardly a trace of the cheerful daughter she had had before the previous summer.

"I'm fine, Mom, you don’t have to worry..." She looked at James. "Did you call her- did he call you?"

"Kar, you haven’t got out of bed for almost a month, I've tried every food or drink or distraction to get you out of it, but I just... I don’t know." He looked at a loss and scratched his head in frustration. Kara closed her eyes, lowering her head.

"I'm worried about you, Kara." He said, closing his eyes. When he opened them he found blue eyes staring at him. "I'm scared." He heard himself whispering, his voice barely audible.

"Okay, that's what is going to happen," Eliza said authoritatively. "James, you go to work and leave me with Kara, Kara and I will make a mother and daughter fun day, okay?" She smiled at her daughter softly and James seemed relieved.

"Yeah, excellent, okay..." He hesitated for a moment and leaned forward, kissing Kara gently on the cheek. "Call me if you need me, okay? anything, my pager is always on me." Kara nodded at him. "Thanks."

James left the house in a few minutes, and Eliza returned a big smile to her daughter.

"Come on, get dressed, I know exactly what you need."

~

Alex caught a few twigs and brought them close to catch the little fire that she managed to light. It got easier from time to time, but it was still quite painful and tedious to light a fire with two branches. She got very good at it. If once it used to take about twenty minutes, now in four or five minutes there was a spark. But rubbing the branches together made her hands feel sore and aching, and she moistened them to soothe the pain, letting Maggie handle the already lit fire.

"Let me see," Maggie said. Alex held out her hands. "It's not too bad," said Alex, shrugging, "but it's pretty painful."

Maggie said nothing. She got up and went to the whale house, returning a few minutes later with the bath bag. She studied the many pills and medicines they had and pulled out a small tube of ointment. "What about that?"

Alex took the ointment. "What wouldn’t help won’t hurt either," she shrugged. She tried to open
the cork, but her hands ached. Maggie took the tube back from her and poured some ointment on her own hand, then started to rub Alex's hands gently. Alex bit her lips and let out a breath of relief. Maggie smiled a little. "Better?"

"Much," Alex said with relief. They sat there for a few minutes, Maggie massaging Alex's hands. The feeling was pleasant, addictive, like she didn't want it to stop. She kept on massaging gently, looking at everything but Alex. She knew Alex was watching her, but she didn't dare to look up.

"You're really good at this," Alex said quietly.

"I'm good at handy work," she replied. The sophisticated remark gave her courage, and she managed to raise her head to look into Alex's eyes. Alex smiled a big smile, and small wrinkles appeared at the sides of her eyes. Her eyes shone in the fire that burned beside them, and Maggie felt warmth in her stomach, a heat that had nothing to do with the fire. She was nervous, a good kind of nervous. She couldn't take her eyes off Alex's eyes, they drew her into them. They sat there, still holding hands, unable to look away. Tell her, said the voice inside her head.

"Alex, I..." She didn't know how to go on. How she was supposed to be able to talk when those big brown eyes looked at her like that. Alex had the softest look she had ever seen. She simply couldn't speak. They were still holding hands.

"Maggie, you can tell me everything."

The whisper made her brave.

"I don't know where to start," she whispered back.

"Do you want help?"

Maggie swallowed and nodded slowly. Alex, the soft smile still on her face, approached her cautiously.

"Let's try," she said, and then she kissed her.

Oh God, Maggie thought. Alex held Maggie's face, her hands are suddenly on the back of her neck. Maggie, still stunned, put her hands carefully on Alex's elbows. Alex kissed her softly, carefully, measured, brief kisses. Maggie kissed her back, and it felt miraculous. She kissed her again, deeper, stronger, slowly inserting her tongue into Alex's mouth, lowering her hands to her waist. She felt thousands of sparks running back and forth in her body, her knees becoming weak. She tried to break away for a moment to breathe, but Alex didn't let her. She kissed her again, and again, and again, her hands never letting go of her neck, buried in her hair, pulling her closer. They kissed like that for a few moments, or maybe decades, until Maggie put her hands on Alex's shoulders, slowly pushing her back. She closed her eyes, trying to catch her breath. Alex put her hands on Maggie's thighs, squeezing them lightly. Maggie opened her eyes, finding Alex in front of her, a warm smile on her face, her eyes sparkling.

"Did you-?" She couldn't really speak. "I... wait."

Alex didn't say a word, only looked at her quietly.

Maggie opened her mouth again, but nothing came out. She let out an embarrassed chuckle.

"Take your time," Alex said softly.

"Are you... gay?" Maggie finally managed.
Alex laughed. "Uh... yeah, I like girls." She tilted her head a little. "I like you. and I think you like me too, so..." She carefully pressed her face against Maggie's face again, kissing her lips lightly. Maggie still couldn't digest. She looked into Alex's eyes, once again drowning inside them. Alex pushed herself away a little.

"You do, like me, though, right?"

Maggie let out a laugh and shook her head. She crashed her lips against Alex's again, making the sparkles run all over her body. She couldn't believe she was really kissing Alex Danvers.

"I liked you for what seemed like forever."

Alex smiled and kissed her once more, and Maggie pushed her carefully on the soft sand, lying on top of her, kissing every piece of skin she could put her lips on. Alex groaned under her touch, and she put her mouth on hers, swallowing her groans, moaning herself. She felt like her mouth is alive and breathing and moving and pumping against hers and it's consuming her and she can't stop, she can't, it's intoxicating, she feels Alex's heartbeat strong and clear under her hand, resting on Alex's chest, and Alex's hand rises to rest on Maggie's neck to pull her closer to her and everything swirls around her, the sand and the water and the cry of the monkeys and parrots and all that forest noise around her fades and drains to one spot, where she lies above this shirtless woman, doing what she was dreaming of doing since an eternity, kissing her more and more and not needing oxygen or anything else but continuing to feel the woman's mouth against her, enveloping her and consuming her, and everything... everything is perfect.

God, it's perfect.

~

One gull shrieked too hard, and Maggie opened her eyes. It was too early to get up. She looked around. She was on the beach, at their usual spot, and... Yes, Alex Danvers lay beside her, sleeping soundly, completely and utterly naked.

Maggie rested her head back on the sand. Yes, last night was perfect.

She felt something in her heart, some tangled knot that was there, suddenly allowed to open, and she was free to walk in the world, to do as she pleased... she said she liked me, and we kissed, and... other... things. She closed her eyes with pleasure, conjuring up the memory of the night before.

Has anyone mentioned that last night was perfect?

She turned on her side, smiling, and looked at Alex's face. She doesn't have to worry about Alex catching her staring, she'll even be quite happy if it's- Oh.

Alex opened her eyes, blinking in the soft sunlight.

"G'morning, Sawyer." Alex's voice was hoarse, from sleep or from... something else, Maggie didn't know.

"Morning." Maggie longed to bend over and give her a short kiss, but she wasn't sure if it was alright with Alex. She left her face at the same distance, still staring, smiling. Before she could say anything, Alex rose on her side and placed a kiss on Maggie's lips, almost bending over her.
"This feels nice," she murmured with a smile, still kissing Maggie.

"Is it now?" Maggie laughed, putting her hands gently on Alex's bare waist. Alex continued to kiss her, and Maggie's brain almost stopped functioning. She wrapped her hands around Alex's waist, pulling her even closer. Alex's lips went to her cheeks, her neck, to that point under her ear that made Maggie moan unconsciously... Alex was perfect.

"Alex," Maggie murmured as her mind began to return to function. "Do you think we should talk about... this?"

Alex blinked. "Do you want to talk about it?"

"You don’t?"

Alex sighed and, to Maggie's dismay, leaned back, stepping off her. "I'm not sure how we supposed to talk about it."

They sat side by side in silence for a few moments, Maggie staring at her sunburned hands, at the white sand, at the water that washed the shore in morning slowness.

"Do you like me?"

Alex looked up at her. "Very."

Maggie's hearthammered in her chest. After all, she didn’t imagine Alex liked her, and it was true. She carefully leaned closer to Alex, feeling the rush in her stomach as she saw Alex's face so close up.

She always tried to keep a reasonable distance, not to make Alex uncomfortable. Of course, if Alex made the contact she didn’t resist, but she almost never clung to her too much, not to frighten her. But yesterday... all the things that were in her body, in her stomach and her head and her heart, everything stormed and swirled inside and she wanted so badly to let everything out, to tell her everything, she hardly thought about what would happen if Alex wouldn’t agree, wouldn’t like her. She looked now at Alex's sleepy eyes, at her tanned shoulders, at the too thin yet so beautiful in her eyes, naked body...

"I think that... if you like me, and I like you, and we... want to go a level up in our relationship... what’s stopping us from doing it?"

Alex opened her mouth and closed it, then smiled, a big, bright smile that made her freckles shine. She hesitated for a few seconds and then bent to kiss Maggie, and Maggie realized that this was her way of saying she agreed. Never, in her whole life, she had felt more pleasant, more...

content.

Kissing a girl, being with her... she was with many girls in her life, but now, it felt so different. Good different.

She always knew she was attracted to girls. She had no doubt about it, and she wasn’t going to deny it. But she'd never met a girl who made her feel so... like that. So truly loved. Not in the intensity of her love, but in its truthiness. She put her arms around Alex's shoulders again, pulling her in, lying on the sand while Alex continued to give soft kisses to her face, her hands buried in her hair.

They stayed like that for a while, until Maggie suggested they go into the water. "It's much more pleasant there, and all that sand..."
Alex sighed and buried her face in Maggie's neck. "I know, but I'm too tired to get up and go there. If only I could get there without walking, it would be great."

A smirk appeared on Maggie's face and Alex raised an eyebrow. "Oh, no, what are you thinking? OH!" Maggie jumped on her feet, lifting Alex on her back, ignoring her cries and laughing aloud, racing toward the lagoon.

"Take me down, Sawyer! I mean it, take me down right now!"

"Alright, alright," laughed Maggie, and laid Alex carefully on the ground, right next to the lagoon.

"Dirty move, Sawyer." Alex sighed, shaking the sand from her body.

"You should see what I'm about to do to you," Maggie said, smirking again.

Alex looked at her. "God, you're hot."

Maggie came close to her, her lips only a few inches from Alex's lips. "Oh, yeah?"

"Yeah,"

Before Maggie could say another word, she felt a hand push her into the water, and she fell with a loud splash, while Alex was still standing outside, laughing aloud.

Maggie rose to the surface, swallowing air. "Hilarious, Danvers."

"I know, right?" Alex was still laughing.

"Are you coming or not?"

Alex jumped into the lagoon to Maggie's laugh, making even more splashing noise.

They stayed in the lagoon longer than usual, playing in the water, splashing at each other, and mostly kissing, Alex with her back against the lagoon wall, Maggie is pushing her gently, they both making out passionately.

_How did this happen to me_, Maggie thought to herself as Alex's hands groped around her body. Alex's mouth was amazing, her smell, her body... It felt incredible. As if she had been waiting her whole life for this girl, for this moment, in this place... _I still can't believe this is really happening._

"I'm getting hungry," Alex said after a few hours, gently disengaging from Maggie.

"Well, I have an idea for something you can eat..." Maggie leaned over, smiling slyly.

"No, c'mon," Alex pulled back again, laughing. "Like, really hungry."

Maggie stared at her for a few seconds. "Okay, I'll go get some fruit." Alex smiled broadly and Maggie, who was moving away from her, leaned back quickly, pushing her against the wall again.

"God, you can't smile like that," Maggie said breathlessly, kissing her. Alex laughed. Maggie couldn't remember when she heard a sweeter sound.

Maggie went first to the beach to pick up the clothes of the day before, thinking that now she could walk naked all day, and she wouldn't mind if Alex did the same thing. She giggled slightly, gathering whatever was needed.
Maggie returned to the lagoon sometime later, carrying the towel, two shirts, their underclothes and some fruit, and the little cutting knife.

They stayed there almost all day, eating, talking, staying in the water close together, kisses flying from one to the other. Maggie felt her heart overflowing, as if something new had blossomed in it. Her smiles were wider, her laugh was more rolling, her movements were lighter. She didn’t want to say for sure, but Alex seemed to feel the same way. They had almost forgotten all their daily chores, and when Alex remembered they need to feed the fish pond she felt almost disappointed.

"Don’t worry, I’ll be back in a minute," Alex said, kissing her temple for a goodbye, wearing a gray shirt as she left. Maggie watched her walk away. She caught herself before remembering that it was alright now and smiled at the thought.

They sat down for dinner in the whale house, the only light coming from the little fire in the corner. It was warm and pleasant, and Maggie eat her fish with an appetite, licking her fingers. She noticed Alex watching her, chuckling.

"What?" She asked, her mouth full.

"Nothing." Alex shrugged, and went back to fiddling with her own fish in the leaves bowl in front of her, a gentle smile still on her face. Maggie's heart jumped as she remembered that this girl was hers now.

They finished eating, and Alex put her head in Maggie's lap, letting her play with her hair.

"Do you sometimes think," Alex said slowly, "That there's someone out there who is worried about you?"

Maggie sighed, shrugging. "My family didn't care about me before, so I doubt they even know I'm missing. maybe my boss at the bar, or some regular clients I know, but I don't think any of them really have any real concern about where I've disappeared."

Alex looked up at her. Maggie was most afraid that it would cause her pity or sadness, but she only smiled compassionately, reaching out to stroke Maggie's cheek. She put her hand on Alex's, and they sat in silence, looking at each other.

"I mean, I never really had to deal with a serious loss, I never had anyone who was really close to me, so no one ever lost me, and I never lost anyone." She shrugged. "Not really."

Alex didn’t answer, and only took Maggie's hand and held it to her lips. Sometimes it's easier that way, Maggie thought, but she didn’t dare say the words aloud. Not in front of Alex.

"After my father died," Maggie froze. Alex never spoke of her father's death. She never talked about him, period. She mentioned him sometimes, and Maggie knew he was dead, but Alex never spoke of his death. "There was a time I shut myself up. Kara and Mom both experienced the same loss, but they allowed each other to come closer and talk. Kara was young. Not too young, but still young enough to need someone to help her through it. And Mom needed it too, so they allowed each other to connect, to talk. I was shocked at first. It came as a surprise to all of us. One stray car, and…" She swallowed air and closed her eyes. “I wasn’t ready for it. At first I cried a lot, and my mother too, but at a certain point I ran out of tears and stopped talking. and... I was silent." She sighed. "I was silent for a long time."

"But as time passed I understood that they needed me, and that we had to go through it together, so I went and put myself together, for them. it took me a long time, but I did it. It was hard, losing
a father, a husband..." She stopped for a moment. "My dad, he was... the most amazing dad I could ask for. He was understanding and supportive, and funny, and wise, and I... I believe that I am who I am today thanks to him."

The sound of the crackling fire and the whistling wind outside was a background noise to her story, and Maggie's eyes were only on Alex, thirstily drinking her story, listening, silent.

"So it took us some time, but we got out of the other side. we're stronger together." Alex smiled, a little broken.

"Do you know what I'm thinking?" Maggie's voice was very quiet.

Alex was silent for a few moments. She sat up, sitting with her back to Maggie, hugging her knees. "Kara and my mom had to go through the same pain, once more." She said, her voice becoming very high suddenly, and hoarse. Maggie leaned over, hugging her shoulders gently from behind.

"They've done it once, they'll manage." Maggie planted a kiss on the back of Alex's neck.

"How can you be so sure?" Alex's voice trembled, and Maggie held her tighter.

“They are the Danvers,” she smiled. “I don’t trust any other family to go through this as well as they'll do.”

And with that, Alex turned and buried her face in Maggie's neck, letting the warm touch calm her heart.

~

“How’s that?”

Kara shrugged. "Nice."

Eliza put the shirt back on the stand and swallowed a fearful look, taking another shirt. "What about this?"

Kara didn’t even answer this time, staring blankly at one of the display dolls. They stopped at two clothing stores and one shoe store, and the whole time Kara barely took out a sentence with three words in a row. Eliza had planned to take her to her favorite sushi restaurant, but it seemed that even potstickers wouldn’t interest her at the moment. Eliza sighed quietly.

"Sweetheart."

Kara turned her head, her sunken eyes bright and sad. "Mom, can we go home? I don’t really enjoy this shopping."

Eliza nodded. They left the shop to the warm sun, and Eliza raised her hand to order a cab. Kara's hand wrapped around her unwittingly and she found herself embracing her daughter with one hand and opening the cab door with the other. They had spent the ride home with Kara's head on her mother's shoulder, the touch seems to ease her mind.

After two cups of tea, a shower, and changing the linen on the bedroom bed, Eliza sat down on
the mattress beside Kara, who was still staring at the wall since the last hour.

"Honey, please talk to me," Eliza said quietly, brushing Kara's wet hair from her face. Kara turned to her with wet cheeks, with eyes that didn’t know they were crying.

"I miss her so much, Mom, I feel like I have this big hole in my chest, and I can’t breathe without it, and..." More tears began to fall from her eyes. "I was so sure she was alive."

Eliza still stroked her hair, her eyes moist too. "I know, sweetheart. I think about her every day. Sometimes," she paused. "Sometimes I think of her for so long that I catch myself crying without realizing it." She leaned over to hug Kara. "I miss her so much. And him too."

They remained hugged, Kara's head resting on her mother's chest. "How do you do this, Mom?" She whispered. "How do you manage to live without them, after all that has happened, how do we continue from here?"

Eliza was silent.

"After a while," she said, picking her words carefully. "You have to understand that you must, that you can't continue to sink in despair, in longing, it eats you, it consumes you and swallows you, and you can’t give up, you have to understand that this is not what they would've wanted. For yourself," she turned her head to look at Kara’s eyes, "and for those who are close to you."

Kara sighed deeply. She thought of the stupid funeral, everyone dressed in black, the roses filling every corner of the church. She thought about the way she had to treat her sister as dead, so they wouldn’t think she was crazy, so they wouldn’t try to convince her otherwise. She thought of the flower carriage driver, who dropped a huge load of roses in the church and how she told him to put the flowers everywhere. She remembered his surprised look, saying nothing, just touching his hat as he drove away, his eyes confused, sorry. She thought of another funeral in which she was too small to remember everything, only that her mother and her sister sat beside her in the church, her mother weeping into a handkerchief, Alex wiping her own eyes over and over, hugging her mother. She sat beside them on the bench, aware of the situation, but not really accepting it. Her father wasn’t... he wasn’t dead, was he? He’s just late. Always late. He would always come through the door, a huge smile on his face, lifting Kara in his hands despite her protests. You’re late, she used to say, grumbling. He kissed her nose gently. But I made it, didn’t I? Now show me the cookies you made with Alex. And she would immediately soften, lead him enthusiastically into the kitchen. She remembers looking around, the priest saying a prayer she didn’t understand, and she searches for her father, searching, looking... In a few minutes, he’ll walk through that door, walking quietly to them, his hair disheveled, his smile still wide. He will sit beside Kara, wink at her, motion for her to be quiet, and she will slide her hand into his warm hand, carefully, protected from harm.

She held on stronger to her mother, praying that there wouldn't be another incident that would separate them again. None of them will survive it.

"I'm powerless."

"Imagine Alex. imagine your father. imagine them standing in front of you and telling you- wake up, don’t sink into melancholy." Eliza squeezed her tight. "And I’m telling you too."

There was silence. "Thank you, Mom," Kara said, at last, wiping the last of her tears.

Eliza looked at her face. "My girl," she whispered. "My sweet, brave girl,"
She bent down to kiss her forehead, and Kara felt her strength returning to her, piece by piece.

Chapter End Notes

thanks for reading!
make sure to let me know whatever you think in the comments below and if you want, leave kudos!
come visit me at @iwannaplayairplains on tumblr
Maggie came out of the water, dripping seawater, panting. She took a long swimming. Not only she enjoyed it, it was also good for practicing, to get stronger. She went to where Alex sat, in the shade, and lay down wearily.

"How was it?"

"Exhausting, but awesome." She bent up for a moment to catch a kiss on Alex's lips. "What about you?"

"I almost finished." Alex showed her the unfinished chessman. "Once I'm done, I'll find something we can make a board from, and we'll start training you."

Maggie lay down, her eyes closed, letting the heat of the sun dry the water off of her. She knew that what Alex was saying is true. She can't let her brain degenerate like that on the island and train only her body, she must have something that will challenge her mind. To keep it running, at least for Alex.

They sat there in silence, Maggie almost fell asleep under the heavy heat. It had been almost two months since the last drop of rain, and their lake had begun to drain slightly. The small trickle from the big stone was still there, though not as strong as it was before. Alex said that once they will feel a lack of water, they would break the stone even more and let it spend a larger amount. Maggie didn't argue. She trusted Alex with her life.

Maggie opened her eyes, suddenly realizing that she had been dozing for more than a few hours. Alex laid her head on Maggie's dry stomach, also dozing in the noon heat. Maggie smiled a little and put her hand on Alex's back, bringing her closer to her. They lay there, hugged, relaxed.

"We have to go feed the fish," Alex said suddenly, raising her head.

"No, not yet," said Maggie playfully, tiredly. Alex smiled softly. "Not yet," Maggie said again, pulling Alex closer. "Just a little longer."
Alex hummed something in response and Maggie kissed her cheek lightly, sighing with satisfaction. It was a state she craved for too long. Here, like this, with this woman... it was like paradise. She looked around, at the white sand, the tall trees, and the clear blue water. Definitely a paradise.

She pulled Alex to her, kissing her, cupping her neck. Alex kissed her back, smiling into the kiss. The kiss grew wilder, deeper, they’re both moaning and groping each other, yearning for each other closeness. Maggie rolled Alex on her back, cautiously climbed atop her, slowly lowering her hands to her waist, holding her, lifting the t-shirt edge she was wearing. She started placed her hands on her stomach, her waist, her chest, running them all over Alex's torso. Alex sighed slightly into Maggie's mouth, her hands gripping Maggie's neck, bringing her closer and closer to her. Maggie pulled off for a second, looking at Alex’s eyes as if she asking for her permission wordlessly. Alex swallowed and nodded, lifting slightly so Maggie could take her shirt off. They went on and on and on, Maggie felt her heart beating hard, her mouth tingling, her knees weak with every moment passed she was kissing Alex deeper, slower, with almost total passion. And she held her, and under the hot sun above them, she felt herself burns when she touched her. She pressed her forehead against Alex’s, breathed her in, kissing her cheeks, every freckle and freckle, and she felt more divine than she ever felt in her life.

In any case, that was the routine. And Maggie felt more and more every day that she never wanted to leave this island.

Alex was amazing, and it seemed that the closeness to Maggie gave her strength to continue, and a will to stay. Their friendship always gave her strength, but the upgraded relationship seemed to be exciting and overwhelming, and she was happier and laughed more than before. Maggie knew it was because of her, and she was happy to give Alex that feeling and get the same thing from her.

~

One day, after their third chess game of the day, when Alex let Maggie beat her in the most embarrassing way imaginable, and Maggie leaned over to kiss her because she couldn’t bear how happy Alex was when Maggie won more than she was happy of her own victory and they sank into a makeout session either of them object to right outside the whale house, and then lay side by side calmly, Maggie's head resting on Alex's chest, they suddenly saw a little monkey emerges from behind a tree.

It wasn’t a strange sight, for they had always seen monkeys walking around, parrots flying above and large lizards crawling, but all these creatures always glanced at them and hurried back to where they had come from. And the little monkey, he emerged and approached them quickly, step by step, examining them with a tilted head.

"Danvers," Maggie hummed, raising an eyebrow at the monkey.

"Hmm?" Alex hummed back to her, her eyes probably closed when she didn't see the monkey.

"Danvers, get up." Maggie straightened up and sat down, looking at the monkey, who looked up at her.
Without looking away from the monkey, she reached out beside her to pick up green fruit and the little knife. At the sight of the knife, the monkey looked frightened and gave a short scream, running behind the tree.

"Hey, buddy, it's alright, I won't hurt you," said Maggie, throwing away the knife. She can open the fruit without it. She began to tear off pieces while the monkey approached her again, slower.

"Exactly, that's it, come to me," she murmured softly. She handed him a piece of the fruit. He took it tentatively, and walked away, eating it a few feet farther. Maggie looked at Alex, who watched them playfully.

"He's really cute," Maggie pointed out. Alex nodded without saying anything and took another piece of fruit from Maggie. They sat there, a few feet from the monkey, and each time he would come up to take another piece, and go back to his corner, eating hungrily. When the fruit was over, Maggie reached out her hands and he approached her cautiously.

"I won't hurt you," she said again, quietly. He seemed to understand what she meant, but not her words. He looked at her spread hands and touched them carefully with his hands. "That's it," she whispered, smiling.

He stood there for a few more seconds, touching Maggie's hands, and then he seemed to pull himself together and run away from behind the tree, climbing quickly.

They watched him jump from tree to tree, away from them. Alex sighed and rested her head on Maggie's shoulder. Maggie thought that there was something a bit bleak about her sigh. They said nothing, and Maggie hoped that her presence would comfort Alex enough not to think too much about home, again.

"Another game?" She said with a slight smirk. Alex laughed and kissed her.

"I'll tear your ass," she murmured with a smile, and they went back to the board.

~

The monkey came back the next day, in the middle of another very tense chess game, just as Maggie opened another green fruit. He seemed to be looking straight at the fruit in her hand and not at her, and she greeted him, Alex looking at them with a small smile.

"Here you go, buddy," she handed him a large piece, and he took it, then jumped off and ate it aside.

Alex moved her knight. "Your turn." Maggie looked at the board, continuing to slice the fruit peacefully. After a few minutes, she moved her turret. "Chess."

"Damn," Alex murmured. The monkey returned to Maggie's side, and she handed him another piece of fruit without words. Alex looked at them again. "Maggie, he's really cute and everything, but I'm sure he can pick fruit for himself..." she said quietly.

Maggie looked at him. "I know, but he looks pretty lonely, and a few pieces won't make us starve, right?" She turned to Alex. "Besides, I always wanted a pet of my own," she winked, and Alex laughed.
"Alright then," said Alex, looking back at the board, trying to figure out how to defend herself from Maggie's turret.

The monkey continued to approach them every time they ate, opening large eyes and extending his brown, hairy hands. Alex herself began to play with him, cutting him pieces of fruit herself, and he began to eat the pieces they served as he stood more and more close to them. As long as they continued their routine, with the carving and the chess game and the swimming and the fishing, he seemed to be almost always there, bouncing over their heads, making little noises and shrieks, enjoying their company.

They found that they enjoyed his company too.

"Buxter."

Maggie snorted. "No. Sounds like an old white man's rottweiler."

"What about Boki?"

Maggie wrinkled her face.

"Tiger."

"He's a monkey, not a tiger."

"Yeah, but you wouldn't call him Tiger if he was a tiger, right?"

Maggie rolled her eyes. "No, but if he was a tiger I'd call him Monkey."

Alex pinched her on her hip and she giggled.

"So no for Tiger?"

"No for Tiger. try something more... exotic."

"Pux. Pops? no. pe... Pichu?"

Maggie was silent for a moment. "He's not a Pokémon."

"What about Coco?" Alex's hands tried to find a better position around Maggie's waist.

"Coco is good." She turned her head back. "We'll take it." She kissed Alex's cheek.

"Hey, friend!" She called the little monkey that was sitting on a nearby tree and he walked over to them quickly.

Maggie straightened up. She was silent for a second as he looked at her empty hands and seemed a little confused when he saw no fruit. "Me, Maggie. You, Coco." She said slowly and pointed at herself and then at him.

"Maggie, I'm not sure he understands..." Maggie hushed the whisper and came again. "Me, Maggie. You, Coco."

The monkey looked at her for a few seconds and then looked at Alex.

"He does understand, he wants to know your name," Maggie whispered to her. "She, Alex." She pointed to Alex.
Coco looked at them both for a few seconds and, seeing that they had no fruit, jumped off, skipping to his tree. Maggie leaned back, resting her head on Alex's shoulder, a satisfied smile on her face.

"I think he got it."

She pulled Alex's hands to her stomach, holding her hands with hers, and they stayed that way until dinner, drowsily asleep in the soft twilight.

~

One morning Maggie woke up, Alex's arm wrapping her from behind. She heard a soothing bird chirping and the whisper of distant waves and decided there was no reason to get up from the mattress she was lying on. Alex must have thought so too, for she had woken up, apparently, and began to give little kisses on Maggie's neck and shoulders. Maggie hummed and began to giggle, turning slowly. Alex's face turned up, shining. Her skin was almost caramel-colored, her freckles sparkled, her eyes were bright, and she smiled softly.

"Way to get up," Maggie murmured, getting closer to kiss her. Alex chuckled and moved her hands back and forth along Maggie's body as she toped her.

They stayed in bed all morning, until noon, playing chess and eating fruit. When the afternoon came, Maggie shook off all the green peel from the bad and stood up, reaching a hand to Alex.

"Let's go swimming. I'll teach you."

Alex didn’t hesitate and stood at once, wrapping her arms around Maggie. They stayed there, hugged for a moment. Her embrace was a bit tight, more than usual, and she buried her face in Maggie's neck, sighing softly. Maggie suddenly realized that Alex hadn’t spoken much all morning.

"Hey," she pulled away to look at her. "Are you okay? you’re quiet today."

"Yes, I’m…” She coughed in embarrassment. "I'm fine."

Maggie examined her, tilting her head, trying to look her in the eye, silent. Alex shrugged, looking down, then closed her eyes. "Okay, I’m not fine."

A worried look appeared on Maggie's face and she raised her hands to grab Alex's shoulders. "Then what is it?"

Alex took a deep breath. "Maybe we should sit down."

Maggie grew more and more concerned by the minute, wondering what had happened. All morning she smiled and played with her, and she looked happy. She didn’t talk much, but that wasn’t a cause for serious concern. They sat down and Maggie took Alex's hand, putting her other hand on Alex's shoulder.

"That night I kissed you..." Alex began, her voice shaking a little. "You asked me if I was gay. I told you I liked girls." Maggie nodded. The thought came to her more than once. After all, they have been on this island for quite some time and have already opened up to each other on deeper subjects, and yet they haven’t had the opportunity to talk about this subject. She always wanted to
ask how Alex defines herself but she felt too embarrassed. She supposed Alex would tell her when the time comes, when she'll be ready. Then, when Alex told her she liked girls, that she liked her, she didn’t doubt it and let herself flow with it. She wanted it for so long she didn’t stop for a moment to think or ask Alex about more than that. She knew Alex wouldn't tell her if she wasn't really feeling it.

"I... I didn’t exactly lie, but that wasn’t the whole truth."

Maggie waited, still holding Alex's shoulder, massaging it delicately, showing her that she's here, that she's not going anywhere, no matter what she did. She looked at Alex that a fearful look was on her face. Alex closed her eyes as she spoke, her tone is shaken up and slow.

"I don't like girls. I mean, I guess I do, but... I just didn’t know it until I met you. I knew you liked me, and the closer we got, I found that I liked you too." She found the courage to look into Maggie's eyes. "I never felt this way about a girl. To be honest, I never felt this way about boys either. I went out with boys in college and after, but I never felt...what... what I feel about you." She stopped for a few moments and went on. "So, I'm sorry I didn't tell you the whole truth, but... I couldn't quite say it aloud. I like you so much, you're amazing..." she breathed deep. "Maybe the most amazing person I've ever known. And I don’t want what we have to disappear. I just felt bad that you didn't know that I... I don’t like girls. I mean, I never tried, I didn’t think about it, I just like you, that's all. " She exhaled with relief, bowing her head. Maggie gathered her in a crushing embrace, smiling. If that was the case, that confession made her feel better, that Alex felt open with her.

"I'm not angry, if that's what you were afraid of," she murmured into Alex's hair. Alex rose. "You're not?"

"I'm even glad you found a way to tell me," She pushed a strand of hair from her face. "But I'm not angry. There's no shame in discovering that you like girls in your mid-twenties." She smiled broadly, her dimples flashing. "I'm even pretty flattered that I made you realize that you're into girls."

"So you're not angry that I made you think I was more experienced than I was?"

Maggie looked at her, startled. "Are you kidding? to find out I was your first? it's awesome! I'm so happy! I'm just sorry you didn’t say it before, then I was treating you better..." She leaned down and pressed her face to Alex's, kissing her lightly on her cheekbone. "I’m really glad you told me."

Alex looked relieved. She smiled at Maggie, a true, loving smile, and kissed her.

"I have to say," Maggie remarked against Alex's lips, "that I hardly noticed this was your first time. Are you sure you've never been with a girl?" Alex pushed her shoulder and Maggie laughed.

They stayed hugged there for a long time, relaxed in each other's arms.

"You know I can swim, right? I grew up in a city with a beach."

Maggie blinked and patted her forehead. "Right. I forgot about it."

Alex bit her lip. "But you know nothing about swimming in the sea, do you?"

"For your information, I learned swimming in my youth, and also, I swim very well, thank you very much," Maggie smiled cockily.
A spark flashed in Alex's eyes. "Why don't we go find out?" She winked. Maggie shook her head. "A competition?"

A moment later they were running to the beach, shouting and laughing.

"It's a swimming competition, not a running competition!"

~

The whale house was completely messy. There were clothes lying beside the suitcase, not inside of it, one of the backpacks full of fruit that had already rotted, and lay on the floor, upside down, and even the stone dresser with all of Alex's works was a bit dusty. Maggie came in, fresh after her morning swim, and looked around, clapping her hands. *We can't go on living like that.*

Alex appeared when Maggie was halfway to sweep the floor, and stood in the doorway, smirking. Maggie tied her hair back in a piece of cloth, her sleeves folded to her shoulders. She swept the floor in a long branch with hard leaves at the end of it that served as a broom from time to time. She noticed Alex standing at the entrance crossing her arms, and stopped, turning to look at her.

"What?"

"Nothing." Alex’s smirk grew wider, and she went inside, lying down on the mattress Maggie had just arranged and refilled with leaves and moss, putting her hands under her head, closing her eyes.

"Smells good," she murmured.

"I found this bush behind the coconut trees thicket," Maggie said, clearing the dirt off the stone dresser. "These leaves have a really good smell so I brought some, so it won’t smell damp in here." Indeed, the new smell reminded mint and brought some fresh air to the house. Finally, it was clean, and Maggie fell with a sigh on the mattress, clinging to Alex, who was hugging her waist.

"Hey, have you updated the calendar?"

There wasn’t much space left on the wooden board on which the days were marked. In a month and a little, there would be no room at all, and they would have to turn and mark on the other side of the board. Maggie wondered what would happen when the place will be completely over. Maggie looked at the board, where she had marked the beginning of May a few days ago.

In a few days, she’ll have a birthday.

She didn’t remember the last time she had celebrated her birthday with friends or family. Not that she ever had any. For the most part, she barely remembered her own birthday, letting the days pass without meaning, without notice. She never got a card, let alone a gift. It seemed to her that she didn’t remember a time when her parents wanted her, treated her like their daughter, a time when she had friends at school, maybe in first or second grade. She didn’t think she remembered a birthday when she sat on a chair, dressed in a festive dress, presents, balloons, and music around her, and everyone smiling at her, happy with her, celebrating to her. No one of her so-called ‘friends’ had ever noticed her, and they sure didn't celebrate her birthday. Unconsciously, she hugged Alex harder, burying her face in Alex's chest.
Coco came into the house suddenly, hopping and getting closer to them. He was almost like a pet they had, always around the fire, the chessboard, and, of course, the fresh fruit they picked every few days. They liked him very much, and it seemed that he had recently come inside the house even without having fruit around. He jumped up on the bed and looked at them, head tilted to one side.

"Hi, Coco," said Alex, reaching out a hand. He liked to play with their fingers, fascinated by the hand that was so similar to his, and still very different. He looked from one to the other, delayed on Alex's smile. He tried to imitate her smile, coming out with some kind of unclear spasm, which made them both laugh. He watched them laugh, trying to imitate their laughter with his own screams. Maggie straightened up and gathered him into her lap, handing him her hand, which he began to examine at once, as usual.

They said nothing and looked at each other, and at him, smiling with pleasure.

"So anyway, I was thinking about it," said Alex.

"Yes?"

"When is your birthday?"

Maggie froze. She wondered how could it be... She looked up at Alex, her face still frozen, and Alex looked confused.

"I'm sorry, I didn’t mean..."

"No, it's okay, just..." Maggie shook her head. "It's funny that you're asking it now. I was just thinking about it myself."

"Oh," said Alex, smiling in relive. "So when is it? because we've been here for almost a year, and you had to have a birthday sometime... unless we passed it already?"

"May Seventh," Maggie blurted out.

Accursed date. A date that brings with it heartbreak, and longing for what she never had, and especially anger, for everyone who’s responsible for the situation, and for those who are not, too.

Alex studied her for a moment, and suddenly her eyes widened. "It's this week!" She called.

Maggie nodded, unable to say another word. She looked down at Coco, who was still fiddling with her fingers, like a baby.

"You okay?"

Maggie nodded again, still not looking at her. Alex studied her for another moment.

"When is your birthday?" Maggie tried to keep the conversation going, her voice shaking only a little. Alex ignored her question.

"Maggie, you... do you want us to mark your birthday, or do you... would rather not?" Alex's voice was soft, a worried look on her face, and she touched Maggie's knee lightly. Maggie finally looked up at her. She was silent for a long moment.

"Yes, I do," she said at last in a small voice. She has never allowed herself to be vulnerable in front of anyone, ever, and now she stands with her heart on the table, right in front of Alex. Ever since she learned the world, she never let anyone take care of her, to treat her right, to fix her...
and now Alex is looking at her with such tenderness, and she wants to do her good, she wants to make her happy. Alex reached for Maggie's cheek, stroking it lightly. She didn’t understand everything, but she knew what Maggie needed, and wanted to give it to her. Maggie hardly stopped the tears that were on the way and breathed deeply.

"Your birthday?" She came again, her voice a bit clearer, trying to smile.

"July ninth," Alex said, not looking away from Maggie's gaze, doesn’t remove her hands from her cheeks, her voice is casual and quite.

Maggie calculated quickly. "We were already here at your birthday," They crashed on July third, as Maggie remembered.

"We were busy surviving, there was no time for parties," Alex shrugged. Between them, Coco took Maggie's other hand, fascinated as he had been in her previous hand. Alex came closer to her, hugging her shoulder and giving her room to lay her head. Maggie sighed and buried her face in Alex’s neck, breathing deeply.

"Thank you," her voice was barely above a whisper, and she wasn’t even sure Alex had heard it at all. But Alex held her even closer to her, as if signaling that she’s here by her side, and she would stay by her side and help her. Maggie found it hard to believe that there was a person in the world who loved her as she is, and she began to accept that Alex would stay with her as long as she needed her.

And it's not that they have anywhere else to go to, do they?

~

Maggie woke early. It happened sometimes, and most of the time she couldn’t go back to sleep. She liked to look at Alex while she slept, to curl up beside her, but at some point, her bones cried for a little release and she got up, stretching, going out into the warm morning.

She liked the view. It always calmed her down. Well, not always. When she thought of how much Alex was yearning for rescue or the landscape was always empty, or when too much rain was falling and the horizon was black, it wasn’t calming. But now she sat down against the clear water and the sky still hadn’t flooded by the blinding sunlight, and thought to herself that her life was good. Yes, indeed, a beautiful view, a beautiful girlfriend, and life without worries. She breathed the clear air, smiling to herself. And of course, today was her birthday.

She used to hate her birthday. She always tried to sleep as much as possible so she won’t be conscious, or to drink enough for the same reason. But this year, she has Alex, and it's literally all she needs right now. Alex loved her, she was convinced of that, and she, of course, had never met anyone she loved more than she loves Alex.

She stayed a few more minutes in front of the view, then took off her clothes and went into the water, refreshing with a short swim. The waves weren’t strong that morning, and she swam into the distance, a strenuous front crawl, head to the sides, stretching her muscles and cooling off in the cold water.

She left an hour later, the sun was beginning to make its mark in the distance, and she returned to the whale house, finding Alex still sleeping soundly. She looked at her affectionately and pulled out a towel, cleaned and put on new clothes. Alex turned over to the other side, muttering in her
sleep. Maggie stayed there for a few more minutes to make sure Alex doesn't have a nightmare, then set out, planning a walk along the shore.

Coco appeared before her as she left the house, and she put a finger to her lips to signal that he should be quiet so he won’t wake Alex. He had done exactly as she did, putting a finger to his lips, and she hoped he understood. He approached her quickly and climbed onto her shoulder, sitting there. She took a green fruit from the pile of fruit that lay there and began peeling as she walked, giving him selected pieces that he chewed happily, still sitting on her shoulder.

They walked along the shore. Maggie whistled quietly, and Coco was still sitting on her shoulder, trying to imitate the sounds she made. From a distance, she saw a small bay, full of shells and corals, and came up to examine them closely. She picked one up, Coco jumps off her shoulder and examines them himself like she did, picking one up after another, trying to chew.

"Don’t eat it," Maggie laughed at him. She showed him how she took a shell and cleaned it with water, and then lifting it to the light so it would shine in pure white. Coco tried to do the same and broke two before he could clean them properly. She laughed again and scratched his head fondly. They sat there for a while, examining various shells in different shapes and sizes when Maggie found a very large and deep shell, almost the size of a small pot. She extracted it carefully, revealing more shells of different sizes. She emptied the shellfish inside and into the water and cleaned it well, rubbing it in the sand to remove the shellfish fat. Finally, she had a tool, not too big, but wide and strong enough. She had an idea, and she got up, whistling to Coco to follow her. He climbed to her shoulder quickly and they returned to the whale house.

Alex was already awake and washed her face in the leaves bowl of water that stood in the corner. She turned to the sound of Maggie and Coco, who went inside.

"Good morning," she said and approached to kiss Maggie. Maggie kissed her back, one hand still holding the big shell. Alex pulled away and looked at her with loving eyes. “Happy birthday, love.”

Maggie beamed at her. "Thanks," she said, kissing her again. She still can’t quite get used to the idea of Alex being hers. Sometimes it's too good to be true.

"Whatcha got there?" Alex nodded at Maggie's shell. Maggie smiled and swung it up. "Hopefully, something we can cook inside." Alex raised an eyebrow. "Interesting."

They spent the day experimenting, how much water to put in, what’s the right flame for such cooking utensils, and how to put it on the fire. They played chess while they waited for the water to boil, and tried to get in herbs to make herbal tea.

"It works really well," Alex looked proudly at the steam rising from the vessel. It was already the third round of boiled water, and they brought up all kinds of things they could do with it, including soup, sauce, and maybe porridge. Alex grimaced at the word porridge, but Maggie laughed and said everything was possible if they'll try. She was already building a recipe in her head that contained coconut milk, crushed mangoes, and a little water, and she longed to try it.

Alex won in three rounds out of three, then declared she was hungry. "Maybe you go fishing?" Maggie looked at her in confusion. They had just finished three fruits each, and Alex didn’t usually get hungry so fast. Alex wore a pleading face and Maggie agreed, earning herself a set of kisses.

She took the big knife and headed for the fish pond, her head full of thoughts. She thought of Alex, and of both of them, and how in almost two months, there's Alex’s birthday, and she thought about what she could make for her. Of course, lying hugged on the beach under the warm
sun is ideal, but can she try a little more than that... A walk into the forest? Or maybe swimming far enough to meet dolphins? A smile came over her face as she thought about how it’s her own birthday, and yet the only thing she could think of was Alex’s birthday. She went on pondering it while fishing effortlessly three fat fish, gathering them up on a net made from several old pieces of cloth and feeding the fish in the pond. Her head was still full of thoughts until she almost missed Alex’s voice coming out of the whale house.

“...come in any minute, and we’ll shout ‘surprise!’ Well, I’ll shout surprise, you’ll be... screaming or something. But until then you have to be quiet, she's gonna hear us. Just... come here, sit here. that's it, okay. Shh, be quiet…”

Maggie grinned to herself, her heart pounding. A surprise party. Alex arranges her a surprise party on a desert island, isn’t it the wildest idea in the world? She waited a few moments outside, still unable to stop smiling, until Alex and Coco were perfectly still, then made some noisy footsteps outside the house, pulling the curtain away.

"Surprise!" Alex exclaimed with a wide, rising smile, and Coco jumped too, yelling and bouncing at Maggie. Maggie looked around, at the decorations that Alex had hung; a chain of leaves in different shades of green and yellow, and some large wide leaves that were glued to each other with resin and written on them with small branches 'Happy Birthday, Maggie!'.

Maggie, laughing uncontrollably, a big smile spread across her face, tears threatening to pour from her eyes, looked at Alex. Alex looked happy, her hands spread out in the air, and she held a crown made of leaves. She approaches Maggie, puts the crown on her head. "For the birthday girl," she murmured with a smile, turning to kiss Maggie. They kissed for a long time, Maggie holding Alex’s face close, still finding it hard to understand the luck she had to find a person who loved her so much. "God, you're perfect," she whispered, tears of happiness falling on her cheek. Alex dried them quickly with her thumbs, lightly kissing the trails they left behind. They stayed tightly closed for a long time, Coco still screaming and running around them until they finally pulled apart, Maggie lifting Coco in her arms. "Yes, you wish me a happy birthday? thank you, Peanut!" She laughed a long, loose laugh, her heart almost bursting with pleasure. Coco slipped out of her grasp and turned to the bag, taking out a juicy green fruit and handing it to Maggie with happy screams. Alex and Maggie laughed at him fondly, and they sat up, Alex showing what she had prepared.

"You’ve done all this now?"

"No," Alex waved her hand dismissively. "I had a few days' notice," she winked. She presented an ornament after ornament, and the variety of the food that was on the ground, and what each one is made of. "Here I mixed some mango with some coconut I peeled and roasted it a bit, and that's what came out," She presented a small piece of what was supposed to be… "Birthday cake?"

"Birthday cupcake," Alex corrected and stuck a burning stick into the round slice. Maggie looked at Alex’s brown, glittering eyes, then at the improvised candle, and she had no doubt for a moment what she was asking while she blew it off to the cheers sound of Alex and Coco.

They ate freshly cooked fish with roasted seaweed and then drink the tea they made in the new casserole, and Maggie leaned against Alex’s chest as they sat outside the whale house, and they watched the distant sunset while Coco was running around them. The fire beside them glowed in a pleasant light and Maggie felt calm. Alex kissed the curve of her neck and she sighed softly.

"It was the best birthday of my life," she said.

Alex smiled, her lips still on the curve of her neck. "I'm glad."
"No, Alex." Maggie straightened up, turned to look at her. "I'm... I'm not just saying that." She looked down for a moment, picking out words. It was important to her to get it out right. She was silent for a few moments.

"My whole life, no one has ever treated me as an equal, no one cared enough about me to give me a place, or attention, or..." She took a deep breath, looking up at Alex. She studied her with listening eyes. Maggie wasn't afraid. She just wasn't trained in talking about... that. She knew that Alex knows. knew Alex understood.

"And you... give me everything as if it's... as if it's obvious to you. You do things for me, you arrange a surprise party for me alone, by yourself, on a desert island." Maggie gave a chuckle, and Alex followed. "It's crazy, Alex." She reached out to grab Alex's hand. She was silent again, playing with Alex's fingers. "You saved me, then when we crashed." She went on. "Without you, I would stop eating and drinking and taking care of myself and I would be dead in no time, but you... you made me stand on my feet and go on living, even when I had nothing to live for..." She looked right into Alex's eyes. "The moment you saved my life, was the moment I started living for you."

Alex's breath hitched and she put a hand on Maggie's cheek, a soft look in her eyes. Maggie continued. "I don't care if you don't feel it yet, or if you're not ready, or I don't know, but I feel it, and I think you should know. And I know it's only been a few months, but we've been here for almost a year, and I feel this again and again, every single day, Alex. You give me a reason to live, and a will to take care of myself, and just to be. " She stopped for a moment, letting the words trickle down. "And I love you."

Alex looked at her, frozen. Her hand was still resting on Maggie's cheek. Maggie leaned forward, hugging her gently. "And you don't have to say it now, or at all, or like that. But I just wanted you to know."

They remained hugged, Alex holding her tightly, her face buried in her neck. Maggie ran her hands back and forth on Alex's back, trying to convey what she had said in words, kissing gently to her cheek. Alex swallowed, took a deep breath, and finally, she pulled herself away from her and stood up. She reached out a hand to hold Maggie's hand and lifted her up, taking her after her into the whale house. Alex lay down on the mattress, still not saying a word, not looking away from Maggie. Maggie understood immediately, and lay down on top of her, kissing her softly. They went on like this, slowly, pulling each other clothes off. Maggie was as gentle with her as she hadn't been in a long time, and Alex, on the contrary, kissing her greedily, passionately, taking off her clothes quickly, clasping her closer possessively, not leaving, not releasing, covering her body with hot, wet kisses. Maggie was a bit confused. Alex usually didn't behave like that, it wasn't very like her. But she said nothing and let her go on with it, turning Alex on her back.

A few hours later, while Maggie tried to catch her breath, Alex turned to look at her, reaching out to wipe her sweating forehead. Maggie sensed that Alex was detained, that something in her didn't give her peace. She felt that she was letting herself express what she felt in deeds and not words and that it's hurting her from the inside, and she worried. Most of all, she worried it was because of her. She leaned over Alex, taking her face in her hands.

"I'm sorry... if... I made you feel like you have to say something... or do something... I'm sorry."

Alex shook her head. "Don't be." She whispered.

They stayed close until Alex got up and reached for the stone dresser beside her, picking up something wrapped in a leave. Maggie sat up, looking at her curiously. Alex peeled off the leaf, revealing a work she had carved out of wood. She handed it to Maggie, still silent. Maggie studied
the piece.

It was a circular piece of wood that Alex had carved so that it formed a kind of tiny, round cage with a hole on the top, and from there she seemed to put in a pearl, and it gleamed in the faint light of the embers on the side. The round small cage was tied to a piece of cloth that was wrapped in string, forming a necklace. Maggie studied the work in amazement, impressed by how fast Alex had improved her carving. She looked at Alex, who refused to look up.

"Alex, it's... it's beautiful."

Alex shrugged. "I found the pearl a few days ago, and the carving, I started it long ago, it wasn’t really..." Her voice trailed off and her hands dropped. There was silence.

"I don’t ..." she said slowly, unable to get the words out of her. "I'm still not-

"It’s okay, I know," Maggie whispered to her, wrapping her in a hug, clinging to her so that nothing separated them, two bodies clasped, wrapped, mixed. "I know."

She didn’t know why, but even when Alex didn’t say anything back, it made her love her even more. Perhaps because she knew that Alex felt the same thing with such confidence that she didn’t need any proof to disprove what she was feeling. They quickly drifted into a second round, running their hands back and forth on each other’s body until there was nothing left to verify, until there was nothing to prove. And finally, Maggie laid her head on Alex's shoulder, the breath of both of them sinking into a rhythm of sleep, her heart returning to silent beats beside Alex's.

Chapter End Notes

I haven't seen the movie Coco, I hardly know what it is about (something about a kid with a guitar? and ghosts? idk man) and it's %0 related to the pet monkey you've just met

Either way, hope you enjoy the chapter! if you did, and even if you didn't, make sure to leave a comment below, and let me know what you think!

feel free to leave a kudos too :)

You can also pay me a visit @iwannaplayairplains on Tumblr (my fic related stuff are on the tag #wiwlfaa, go check it out)

Until next time, toodles
One Year

Chapter Summary

oh, you know, a bit fluff, a bit angst... the usual

Chapter Notes

here's the song Alex is singing. listen to it while you read that part, it's much better
this one is a bit shorter than usual, but the next ones are longer, I promise

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The birthday decorations remained on the walls of the whale house for a long time, and no one bothered to take them down. On the contrary, Maggie was filled with joy every time she saw them. She continued her routine, as usual, swimming and fishing, improving in chess and playing with Coco.

She wore the necklace now all the time. In the water, outside, when she slept. She liked to play with it absentmindedly as she brooded, moving the pearl in the small cage back and forth. She wasn’t afraid the pendant would fall apart or the pearl would fall. In fact, the more she looked at it, the more she thought it was perfect. Often she would hold it to her lips, leaving it there, pressed against them.

They sat on the edge of the lagoon, where a few tiny fish entered the water. Maggie began to play with them, wiggling her toes inside the water, toying with them, and Alex sat behind her, resting her head on Maggie's back. It was one of their many quality times, without Coco around. Maggie wrapped Alex's arms tighter around her waist, earning a kiss on the back of her neck.

They didn’t talk about Maggie's birthday night. Maggie didn’t push Alex, and she felt Alex was grateful for it. She knew that when Alex will be ready she’d tell her. And she didn’t rush anywhere. A tremor ran through her heart as she remembered for the umpteenth time what state she was in, with whom, and where. She felt like the luckiest girl alive.

"Tomorrow's July third," Alex said.

She was right. It will be a year since they crashed on this island. Maggie can mark this day as the most wonderful day of her life. She knew that for Alex it wasn’t a holiday, and she turned her head back to look at her.

"Are you okay?" She asked softly. Alex let out a bitter chuckle and looked down, twisting her feet embarrassingly in the water. "Yeah, I’m... I’m fine."

The euphoria that usually made Maggie so giddy and lighthearted suddenly sank into black chewing when she thought of the unceasing longing that Alex felt for her home, for Kara, and her mother and her friends. She turned her body to sit opposite Alex. She knew that Alex's love for
her could never cover her longing for home, and she hoped she could at least try to help her overcome. Alex was still looking down at the cool water, and Maggie knew she was thinking about the chopper.

"Hey, hey." She reached up and gently lifted Alex's head with soft movement, bumping into wet eyes. "Don’t think about it, don’t let yourself drown in it. It will only make you feel worse." She stroked Alex's cheek with her thumb. "I'm here."

Alex dropped her head on Maggie's shoulder, and Maggie put her arms around Alex's shoulders.

"Don't make this day about them, it will eat you alive." She murmured. She pulled Alex away so she could look into her eyes again. "Let’s make it about us, what do you think?"

Alex looked torn. Maggie knew that there was nothing that could make her forget her family, her friends, the wonderful life she had, which has been brutally torn away from her. But Maggie's life had changed beyond recognition, for the better, from the moment she landed on this island. She wanted to show Alex how important she was to her, how much goodness she brought into her life. But most of all, she knew how much the thought of the life that went on without her tormenting her, and how the thought didn't give her peace. She knew she had to get Alex out of it before she'll drown too deep.

Finally, Alex nodded slightly. "Okay."

Maggie smiled at her and tilted her head. She said nothing and bent down to kiss her, wrapping her arms around Alex's waist. Alex kissed her back, and Maggie felt herself soften, turning into a paste of happiness in this girl's hands.

~

Alex's laughter filled the air, and Maggie felt her heart dilate.

The fish bones lay in the empty leaves bowl beside them, and Maggie turned to peel them some mangoes, the round movements already a habit in her hands. The fire was close to them and they sat on their regular big stone, leaning back, looking at the black surf landscape that had been their routine for a year.

"Can you believe we've been here for a year?"

Maggie put a piece of mango in her mouth and shook her head. "It feels like a lot more." She looked at Alex. "I feel like I've known you for years." Alex smiled at her.

"Me too."

Maggie turned her gaze back to the sea, which broke in quiet waves on the shore.

"A year I haven’t read any books."

"A year I didn’t drink coke."

Alex smiled a little.

"I didn’t eat avocado."
"Chocolate," Maggie sighed, longingly.

"I didn’t see myself in the mirror."

"I didn’t get unbelievably waisted," Alex chuckled at that.

"I didn’t sleep in my bed."

Maggie handed her a piece of mango. "You have another bed."

"Yeah, but think of the springs and the mattress and the sheets..." Alex closed her eyes and shivered.

Maggie laughed. "A year I didn’t talk to anybody but you."

"I love talking to you." Alex put her head on Maggie's shoulder, as she sometimes used to do. Maggie turned her head to give a short kiss on Alex's head.

"I haven’t been listening to music."

Alex sighed sympathetically. "God, I miss music."

Maggie laughed. "Yeah."

"With my kind of luck, Fleetwood Mac’s reunion concert was exactly this year."

"Or Simon and Garfunkel’s,"

"God, what did you listen to?"

Maggie laughed again.

"How is it that a nerd like you likes such cool bands?"

Alex snorted. "When I was in high school nobody thought these were cool bands."

"So you were a rebel?"

Alex giggled in embarrassment. "Yes, when I was a teenager I kinda had this strong desire to do everything out of spite. I was rebellious... in my own way." She rested her head on her bent knees. "I listened to rock bands like Green Day, Linkin Park, Blink 182, all that. I used to wear clothes that I thought were cool and I found that wasn’t what would make me popular. The cool kids didn’t think I was cool enough... all the music and the clothes and the science were too much for them, so they didn’t want me around. " She shrugged. "I tried to be like them for a while, with all their stuff and their clothes and their music and their parties, I wanted to be cool, to be like everyone else. but I couldn’t quite pull it off. Also, I couldn’t ignore the fact that science and astrophysics and biology interested me, and that I prefer to listen to quality music than the popular shit they heard. so at one point I gave up and just was myself. " She shrugged. "I was happy to do things I love."

"And Kara?"

"Kara..." Alex smiled and her eyes sparkled as always when she spoke of her sister. "Kara was strange.. in her own way. but she was very loved. I think that when she was in high school there was less judgmental. she was invited to parties and hung out with people, but maybe it was just because she didn’t try too hard. and I tried too hard.” She paused for a few seconds, thoughtfully.
Maggie was still silent, peeling a last piece of the mango. She never talked about her high school experience. Alex understood from the fragments of stories here and there that things hadn’t gone very well at any part of her life, and she never pressed her to tell her story. Maggie thanked her in her heart and wondered if one day she would be able to tell her the full story, without abbreviations or omissions, simply tell her what she was, who she was, and what she had been through in the worst years of her life.

"Anyway, I miss hearing some guitar, or drums or something," Alex lay back, putting her hand on Maggie’s thigh, stroking it back and forth gently.

"Loud music, the kind that blows your ears up real good," Maggie continued.

"You know that feeling," said Alex, and suddenly she rose, her eyes shining, her hand still on Maggie’s thigh. "When you’re standing in a stadium full of people, and the show is almost starting but not yet, and everyone is whistling or applauding, and then... the guitarist gives the first sounds... and everyone... just screams, you know? and the bass joins, and then the drums, and you feel that bit in your bones and your tendons, and in every fiber of your being, and you sing the words together with the audience..." She closed her eyes and shook her head. "There’s no such feeling in the world."

Maggie looked at her with awe. She felt that she couldn’t help herself any longer, the sight and sounds of Alex and everything she said stunned her, she was miraculous. Maggie bent over to kiss her, Alex’s soft lips pressed against her own. She kissed her deeply, trying to convey her feelings with a kiss, holding her face with both her hands, stroking her thumb softly on Alex’s cheeks, kissing her slowly, her tongue warm under her’s. They parted sluggishly, at last, Alex closed her eyes, a little stunned. She opened them and Maggie still held her face in her hands.

"What was that for?"

Maggie shrugged, unable to say exactly what she felt in words.

They giggled for another second, and Maggie kissed her again, Alex spread her legs to get closer to her. The kiss deepened, and Maggie's hands were wrapped around Alex's neck, pulling her even closer. They stayed together for a long moment until Alex gently pulled herself out of Maggie's grasp, still close, still holding her hands.

"You know, I was thinking..."

"And?"

"It's been a long time since I sang."

Maggie raised an eyebrow. "You’re singing?"

"Sometimes."

"And you never said anything?"

"Well, it's not that we had too many karaoke evenings on this island..."

Maggie smiled and looked at her questioningly and Alex giggled, then sat up, smiling. She took a deep breath, then opened her mouth.

A long long time ago
I can still remember
how that music used to make me smile

She glanced at Maggie for a moment, to see if she recognized the song. She did recognize it, and wondered if Alex remembered all the words of the song. She listened to her, imagining the soft piano and guitar accompanying Alex's voice.

And I knew if I had my chance
Then I could make those people dance
And maybe they'd be happy for a while

Maggie continued to look at her in silence, smiling, her knees drawn under her head.

But February made me shiver
With every paper I'd deliver
Bad news on the doorstep
I couldn't take one more step
I can't remember if I cried
When I read about his widowed bride
But something touched me deep inside
The day the music died

She paused, breathing deeply for the next part.

So Bye, bye Miss American Pie
Drove my Chevy to the levee but the levee was dry
Them good ole boys were drinking whiskey in Rye
Singin' this'll be the day that I die
This'll be the day that I die

She stopped again, smiling broadly, moving her head back and forth, as if she could hear the instruments in her head.


Alex didn’t need another invitation.

Did you write the book of love
And do you have faith in God above
If the Bible tells you so?

She moved her hands and body and head, and was all in tune with the song, and Maggie looked at her, thrilled. Alex got up, continues to sing while dancing.

Now do you believe in rock and roll?
Can music save your mortal soul?
And can you teach me how to dance real slow?

She continued to sing, moving her hands in the air with guitar and drum strokes, turning around and pointing at Maggie, jumping in the air, her voice filling everything, and Maggie's heart. Maggie was still sitting, looking at her, moving her legs and head to the song’s rhythm, laughing, mumbling the words she knew.

Well, I know that you're in love with him
Cause I saw you dancin' in the gym
You both kicked off your shoes
Man, I dig those rhythm and blues
I was a lonely teenage broncin' buck
With a pink carnation and a pickup truck
But I knew I was out of luck
The day the music died

She reached for Maggie and she got up, and they both began to dance, singing the chorus at the top of their voices, no one from miles away would hear them. It was just the two of them here, and this song and their joint hands turning back and forth and the loud laughter and singing.

I started singin'
Bye, bye Miss American Pie
Drove my Chevy to the levee but the levee was dry
Them good ole boys were drinking whiskey in Rye
Singin' this'll be the day that I die
This'll be the day that I die

Alex continued to sing and Maggie danced beside her, joining her in the chorus and words she remembered, the necklace on her neck jumping from side to side. They both danced on the dark beach, only the light of the fire shone their eyes, and they danced as if they were now standing on a stage in front of a full stadium, singing this irrational song in full throat, that song that made them scream and laugh and dance as if there was no tomorrow, and they danced to each other, turning and jumping, until the last chorus in which they both fell on the soft sand, panting and laughing out loud at this stupid song.

"Wow," Maggie said as they calmed down. They sat close to the fire now, close together, still giggling.

"Hey, Sawyer," Alex murmured after few minutes, her head on Maggie's shoulder.

"Yes?"

There was silence. Alex seemed to want to say something, but nothing came out. Maggie didn’t press her and waited for her to find the right words. She knew that eventually, she would find a way to say what she feels.

"You're pretty great." She said finally.

Maggie's hand rested on Alex's back, and she felt her heart beating harder and faster as she watched her swallow. She gave her a warm smile.

"You're pretty great yourself," she whispered, leaning over to kiss the tip of Alex's nose, then her cheeks, and finally caught her soft, ripe lips, kissing them gently. Alex held her closer, pulling her to her, and Maggie felt her breath on her face, never wanting to leave.

She has been on this island for a whole year, and she felt healthier and better than 25 years of her life in any other place she had.

They lay there, hugged. Maggie listened to the waves crashing against the reef. The voice calmed her. She fell asleep in a few minutes, smiling unconsciously.
Kara hurried down the hall, holding a cap holder with two cups of coffee. And she was about to be late.

She entered the classroom quietly while the lecturer was with his face to the board, fortunately, and walked to the end of the class with cautious steps, sitting down beside Clark.

"What took you so long?" He whispered to her as she handed him his coffee.

"I woke up late," she whispered back, taking the first sip, finally, from her coffee cup. She closed her eyes and savored the drink.

It was the last year of journalism studies at the university, and Kara, who was back on track not long ago, was determined not to lose any more classes of what she had already lost. She would have to take another two or three courses, and then she will finish her degree. She had already begun to edit and write a few things she could send to magazines and newspapers she wanted to work on, with Catco at the top of the list with an exclamation mark. Working for Cat Grant was definitely something she wanted to do, even if people used to say awful things about her. Kara valued her hard work.

She knew the way back to normal wouldn’t be easy. She still wakes up sometimes in the middle of the night, still can’t go back to sleep, her head preoccupied with Alex. What more could she do for her, and what if she’s really dead and Kara's only deluding herself, and if she's really dead, she should give her a sign, a cue, something… Her heart ached in pain of her sister's loss.

And not just at night. At almost every minute of the day, Alex was on her mind. James helped a lot, and Eliza, who stayed for another week at their request, they both supported Kara as she made her way back on track. The last step was to go back to university, go back to study, and then find a job. Slowly and carefully, she walked into the rut, blinking at the bright white, practicing back to the outside world, and letting herself be who she was again. but still, not forgetting Alex. Can’t forget her.

Especially today.

She took a deep breath, shook her head, and removed today’s date from her thoughts. Not now, she ordered herself. Later you'll have a lot of time to remember.

"Kara,"

She turned her head to look at Clark, who was probably whispering her name for the second or third time. He smiled at her as she turned to look at him, his glasses slightly bent on his nose.

"You okay?"

She nodded quickly. "Yeah, sure, I'm fine." She was silent for a moment as he sat back up and she leaned toward him. "I missed something important?"

Clark shook his head. "He’s talking about Ring Lardner within journalists that became writers, but I'm not sure."

"Mr. Kent, Miss Danvers," the professor's voice roared. "Am I bothering your conversation?"

Kara was speechless, biting her lips, but Clark gave him an embarrassed, yet captivating smile.

"I apologize, Mr. White, it won’t happen again."
Mr. White looked at him sternly through his glasses, and without another word resumed his lecture on the political situation in the First World War and the journalists who were sent to the front, a topic that Kara found very, very boring. She exchanged glances with Clark who made a gesture of locking his mouth with a key and grinned.

She opened her laptop and tried to summarize the lecturer's words, her mind wandering off again and again.

Kara spent half her day in classes with Clark, then a few more lessons on her own, and then went out to the city for errands. All the time Alex hadn’t left her thoughts, and when she came home in the evening, tired and exhausted, she found James, standing in the kitchen, bouncing something in a pan.

"Hey, honey," he said, his face radiant. He held one hand in the pan and the other with a bottle of sauce. He had a towel on his shoulder and sweat was shining on his forehead. He seemed to exert himself, and she knew he was trying to be there for her, especially today. She looked at him, her heart melting at the happiness he was trying to bring her. She approached him, rises on her tiptoes to kiss his cheek. "Hey," she said in a slightly tired voice.

"It'll be ready for a few more minutes, okay?" He said, hugging her gently, and she peered into the frying pan, recognizing various vegetables and noodles. She hugged him, feeling the heat of his body envelop her. "Thanks."

She turned to the living room, took off her shoes and sat down on the couch with a sigh. She had a hard day, and she wanted someone to talk to. Someone who will understand.

Unintentionally, she pressed a few buttons on her phone and held it to her ear, waiting for the person to answer on the other side.

"Hello?"

"Mom?"

"Kara, my dear, it’s so good to hear you." Her mother sounded as if she was waiting for her by the phone all day. "How are you?"

Kara sighed quietly. "You know, the usual. I was at the university all day, and I went through the watchmaker, my watch broke this morning." She took off her glasses as she spoke, rubbing the bridge of her nose.

They continued to talk an ordinary small talk, until there was silence.

"It's Today, isn’t It?" Eliza sighed as if there was no point in hiding it.

"Mmm," Kara hummed, folding into a fetal position, burying her face in her knees. She couldn’t keep it inside. "She should have been 27 today."

"Sometimes I'm sorry we didn’t celebrate bigger last time," said Eliza quietly.

Kara was silent, remembering the little party the three of them did when they went out to eat in a tiny restaurant, not far from Alex's apartment, raising a glass of champagne for the birthday girl, eating a chocolate cake with a spoon straight from the hot baking pan, giggling at the banal sentences hanging on the walls. Alex was 25, and happy to the roof. The following year she was absent, and today... well.

"You remember," Kara said suddenly. "When she was 11, she insisted that we make themed
periodic table birthday party, with the decorations of the elements on the walls, and the table-shaped cake, and the games..."

"She wanted everyone to wear a different foundation hat," Eliza said, and Kara heard a smile in her voice.

"And on her 16th birthday, she ran away and came back in the middle of the night to go to that concert, and you grounded her for two weeks,"

"One week," Eliza pointed out. "She had a whole argument with me about how she’s a grown-up girl, and that it was her birthday... with written reasons and everything."

"Oh, God," Kara let out a giggle.

"On her fourth birthday, she asked to watch the meteor shower that night, which was after her bedtime," said Eliza, her voice dreamy, full of longing. "I'll never forget how your father took her on his shoulders and they both looked up at the sky with eyes so shiny, the exact same look on both faces." She sniffed. "I miss them both so much."

Kara was silent, breathing deeply, imagining her older sister, staying forever 25, frozen in time.

"Happy birthday, Al," she whispered.

"Happy birthday, my beautiful Alex," Eliza sighed.

They stayed, silent, consoling in the virtual presence of each other until James went to the living room and motioned to her without a voice, "The food is ready," she nodded to him, standing up slowly.

"Thank you, Mom," she said. "I love you."

"Love you too, darling. Have a good night. say hello to James for me."

"I will. Goodnight."

She hung up and went to the kitchen, sitting down at the table. James held out his hand to her, smiling softly. She knew he remembered, and she knew that he, too, was missing Alex, and knew, most of all, that he was here for her, through her difficult moments.

"It smells wonderful."

Chapter End Notes

thank you for reading! please let me know what you think in the comments below and/or leave kudos!

also, I'd like to thank my buddy Ryder, who agreed to do this chapter's beta read for me and he's kinda the best ever. go check his blog on tumblr at @karolsens
I'm at @iwannaplayairplains if you wanna say hello or see things about this fic (under the tag #wiwlfaa) :)

have a great day!
Maggie turned on her back, panting. She settled her breath while Alex lay beside her, doing the same. The breaths became giggles, and she turned her head to look at Alex, who was beaming at her.

"That was..."

"Amazing."

"Yeah," Maggie let out another giggle and leaned over to kiss Alex, her hand slipping slowly to her waist.

Alex was great. She wasn’t experienced, but nevertheless gave Maggie the feeling that she always knew what she was doing, and did everything in an elegant, loving, and gentle way. Even too gentle sometimes. Maggie still felt she was exploring and scrutinizing about everything, since it was new to her, and she was glad to give her the opportunity to know her and herself better.

Alex's looks didn’t hurt either. The time on the island made her skin tan to a light caramel color, and she was very thin, but Maggie didn’t mind. She saw the beautiful Alex always was, and perhaps more than that, and sometimes she wondered if her love for Alex had made her look more beautiful in her eyes then she really was. She hoped that her own body, which had also undergone changes on the island, wouldn’t deter Alex.

Maggie kissed Alex's neck now, making her moan, and she ran her hands back and forth over Alex’s upper body, adoring her, loving her, unconditionally. Alex's hands were tangled in Maggie's hair and she gently pulled her up to kiss her on the lips. Alex's legs went up and she wrapped them around Maggie's waist, making her moan in response.

Sometimes Maggie couldn’t believe her good luck. She did everything with such delicacy and attention, giving meaning to every kiss and touch, every look, every whisper, relishing the right to be with that woman, to do things to her, to accept things from her.

Often she found herself looking into Alex’s hazel eyes, drifting into them helplessly, devoting herself to giving this woman the best she could give, her heart beating hard, only for her.

It scared her sometimes, to be this dependent on one person. She knew it wasn’t very healthy. On
the other hand, they are alone on a desert island, and in this case, the rules change. They were the only souls to one another, and she felt it was possible to make an exception. But she couldn’t divert her thoughts from the matter. What if she loved Alex just because she had no other person to love? Or worse, what if Alex loved her just for the same reason? She looked at Alex, who smiled happily at her, holding her close, whispering loving words to her. Was this all fake? Forced? The inevitability of reality?

If they both were now in National City, would Alex have given Maggie another look? Or would she have chosen another woman... another man?

Would Alex have ever discovered her sexuality without Maggie?

She sank into thoughts, and Alex noticed, stopping her movements slowly.

"Mags, you okay?"

"Yes, yes," Maggie hastened to reply, kissing Alex again, on her lips and neck, trying to get the thoughts out of her head. *Now is not the time*, she ordered herself.

"Don’t stop," Alex sighed, closing her eyes. "Please, don’t stop ..." Maggie did as she said, her face still pressed against Alex's. She kissed her fluttering kisses on her neck, her cheek, her forehead, while her hand is still constantly immersed in steady rhythm between Alex’s legs, their thighs and hips brushing at times, their warmth becoming air between the two.

"Maggie ..." Alex's voice trembled. "harder... please..."

"Look at me."

Alex trembled, her eyes still closed, her mouth slightly open.

"Alex..." Maggie continued at a steady pace, hurrying a little, stronger each time she pushed, earning sighs of delight from Alex's mouth, pure sounds of happiness.

"Open your eyes."

Alex opened her eyes at once and they shimmered, from tears, from the light of the nearest coals, from desire. Maggie pushed deeper, faster.

"Alex..." she whispered.

Alex opened her mouth with a silent scream, not looking away from Maggie’s eyes. With one last push, Alex arched and threw her head back, and Maggie thrusted her over the edge, and suddenly it all became quiet, Alex’s eyes stayed closed.

They began again, without talking, only touches, and moans and kisses, and lips dragged on hot skin.

Long after that, when Alex put her head on Maggie's chest and they both laid down, close together, resting, thoughts crawled back into Maggie's head and she moved a little under Alex. Alex raised her head, looking at her.

"Maggie ...

"It's nothing."

Alex looked at her intently and Maggie sighed and closed her eyes. "It's nothing, it's stupid."
Maggie looked up at the ceiling, an old memory rising in her mind. Alex's birthday. She remembered how she had prepared her a sumptuous meal that included three portions of everything the island had to offer, in various combinations, gave her a bouquet of colorful flowers she had gathered from all over the island, and a big, beautiful coral that she found while she dived by the lagoon. She remembered how she apologized for not being able to create things that would be more than corals and shells, how she felt like she could give her the moon and it wouldn't be enough. She remembered how Alex stopped her with a kiss and told her it was the most beautiful present she ever had for her birthday and how she knew it wasn’t true, because Alex grew up in a loving family, and how she might not have got any bigger and better gifts for her birthday each year. She remembered how she didn’t say anything in response because she knew Alex loved her enough to say such things... But what if it was all a pretense? She glanced at Alex for a second. What if none of this was real?

"I was thinking about... about us..." Maggie said cautiously. She got into a sitting position, wringing her fingers, wondering how to say what’s in her heart.

"Do you think that... if, if we had met at National City... I mean, would you still be, um... in- into me?"

Alex sat up quickly. "What makes you say that?"

"I don’t- you know what, it's stupid, drop it..."

"No, no," said Alex, tucking her finger under Maggie’s chin and lift it up, looking into her eyes. "It's not stupid. Please."

Maggie sighed, looking at her hands resting in her lap. "I just, I... I love you, okay?" She didn’t dare to look at Alex when she said that. "And I swear that I do, I love you like I've never loved anyone before. but I’m having... thoughts, about... what if we’re together just because we’re alone? what if..." She looked up now, Alex's eyes looking at her seriously. "What if none of this is real?"

Beneath all her fears and feelings, she had a single thought, and she wondered how quickly she had managed to abandon her habits not to talk to anyone about her feelings, and how Alex had succeeded in melting all her walls like that, right from the start. She found herself again thinking about that talent of Alex, to listen like that. Alex continued to look at her, her hands stroking Maggie’s back. Alex was silent for a few moments, and Maggie almost wished she’d said anything at all. She felt as if sharp edges from inside threatened to stab her, to hurt and tear her skin, to keep her bleeding right then and there, the fear growing in every second. But then Alex opened her mouth.

“All my life, I dated boys. I dated stupid boys, and charming boys, and nice boys, and all kinds of boys. And I’ve always, always, kept breaking up with them. I just," She breathed deeply. "I just didn’t feel like I thought I was supposed to feel... And I thought it was because I hadn’t found the one. Then I got busy with college, and med school, and all the other things, and I just didn’t feel like I wanted to do all of... that. I gave up on finding anyone.”

Maggie kept looking at her, still afraid as Alex continued.

“And then I crashed on this island, with you," she smiled a little." And at first, I didn’t even think about... us, that way. It didn’t even occur to me. And then you became... so important to me, so significant, and I started to have thoughts that... I don’t remember having so fiercely before in my life.”
Alex was silent for a few moments, and Maggie's heart threatened to burst out of her chest.

"Maggie, I-" Alex put her hand on Maggie's cheek. "You made me feel things I never felt, things I didn't know I could ever feel. I'd already given up on finding a partner, I'd given up on someone who would be mine, someone I could love..." Maggie's heart stopped and Alex looked into her eyes, the little fear that was there had finally faded away. "I love you, Maggie, and it's not because of the circumstances, it's because you made me understand who I am, and because of who you are. What we have, is the realest thing I felt in my life."

Maggie gathered Alex's face in her hands and kissed her, a long kiss, Alex's lips so soft against hers, her warm hands wrapped around her shoulders and body. She felt, not for the first time, that something inside of her was buzzing and humming and trembling with happiness.

"I love you too." Maggie's voice was barely a whisper, but her smile was wide and brightened her face. They sat there, their foreheads pressed together, their hearts beating as one.

"Hey," she murmured, her eyes still closed.

"Mmm?"

Maggie took a deep breath. "I'm... really happy."

Alex smiled at her and planted a kiss on her forehead. "I'm happy too." She whispered.

Maggie bent over her again, and they stayed there all night, heat rising from their tangled bodies.

~

"Ready?"

"Yeah, just a second."

Maggie tucked the bottle into the black backpack and zip it, loading it on her back. They left the whale house together and began walking into the forest.

After Alex announced that she had carved all the things that could be carved of wood, and Maggie got tired of winning in chess, they decided to take a hike in the woods. Hikes, in plural, if this one will be considered a success, they'll go on some more. They took some fruit, the two bottles of water, and one of the small knives.

Recently, Maggie felt the need to fix their clothes. She found a small but strong fishbone, made a tiny hole in the bottom, and there was a needle. She pulled unraveled one of the more used shirts they had to get a long thread, and began to sew almost everything. First, she narrowed and shortened the men's pants to suit their size, and since then they began to wear them more frequently and without having to tie a strip of cloth around the waist as a belt. Second, she fixed and reinforced their undergarments that had begun to wear out, and with the same opportunity adjusting them to their size, which had diminished over time. Third, she began to create new things, such as bandanas for gather the hair back (which used mainly by her because Alex started to cut her hair monthly) or repairing the fishing net she'd built to collect the fish more easily. She enjoyed sitting next to Alex and sewing while the latter carved, and Coco sat beside them, gnawing mango after mango.
They went on a walk now, fully dressed except for shoes, which they gave up and put aside when they realized that the legs of them both were now accustomed to the heat and the forest floor, and now they didn’t need them. They began to walk into the forest, the heavy heat almost not noticeable under the treetops.

"I feel like finding a new fruit," Alex said. Maggie smiled at her.

"Yeah?"

"Yeah, something salty, like potato or carrot flavor... something we could put in a soup."

"So you can say you want to find a new vegetable."

"But it won’t be new, it will simply be a vegetable, because technically we don’t have any vegetables at all."

Maggie rolled her eyes with a smile, aware that Alex was too stubborn to just agree with her.

"Well, then a new vegetable."

"Fruit!"

"New fruit," Maggie agreed, nodding. She turned to Alex, who was walking a little behind her.

"I didn’t know you even liked vegetables."

Alex looked up from the ground and stopped to stare at Maggie. "Are you still deliberately keep saying vegetables?"

Maggie giggled and her dimples popped up on her face. "So what if I am?"

Alex sighed and approached her, pinching her waist. "Then stop it, I mean fruit."

Maggie giggled harder to the pinch, jumping back and walking on. "What flavor do you want this… thing to have?"

"Like I said, potato or carrot... although turnip will be good too." Alex looked up at the sky now, thinking. "My taste buds can’t tolerate mangoes and fish and green fruit anymore, I feel as if I'm shoving tasteless pulps into my mouth."

Maggie signed and agreed. Things didn’t get any better, and she began to feel a little weak in the recent months, because of the lack of variety of food. She imagined that Alex felt the same way, and to be honest, a new fruit or a vegetable could really improve their situation.

They walked on, discussing the flavors of various vegetables and fruits, resting occasionally and walking on until they decided to return to the whale house for dinner.

Alex sat outside with the conch pot and put some sliced fish and seaweed for a soup, as usual, while Maggie sat a few feet away and fixed one of her pants, fish bones sticking out of her mouth like a seamstress.

"Come here for a second, I need to measure you," she called and stood up. Alex stood up beside her and put on the pants, Maggie circling her and checking the length and scope. She put her hands on Alex’s waist, put the pointed fish bones into the garment to keep the measurements, not notice Alex’s smirk.

"All done," she announced, looking up and meeting Alex’s eyes. "What?"
"Nothing, it's just that you're playing seamstress and that's totally cute."

Maggie raised an eyebrow and shook her head. "Alright, smitten kitten, take off the pants now, I need to sew them."

"Sure thing, ma'am," Alex's smirk only got bigger, and she took off her pants slowly, not looking away from Maggie, that rolled her eyes and reached out to grab the pants. "Hurry up, Danvers, your pot is burning."

"No, it's not," Alex said, handing Maggie the pants at last. Maggie gave her a last look and went into the whale house.

"Come on, Sawyer, I took off my pants for you! Nothing?"

"Nothing I haven't seen before," came Maggie's voice from inside. Alex rolled her eyes and snickered.

"And your pot is still burning."

Alex's eyes widened and she sniffed the air.

"Shit!"

~

The boredom, it turns out, wasn’t only expressed in the things they found, or didn’t find, to eat, but also in the activities they did. There were the sewing, the carving, the swimming, the cooking, and recently, the hiking, which helped them get to know the rest of the forest and its dwellers, but became pointless at some point because the forest was really not that big. But Alex, as she claimed, carved everything that could be carved, and the clothes that could be sewn or repaired were done, and the chess games really got boring to Maggie every time she won, which happened quite a lot recently. She was still swimming, but that took only two hours each day, and the rest of the time?

"Maggie?"

Maggie looked up from the fish she was in the middle of cleaning. "Huh?"

"Are you okay? you look... not so good," Alex frowned anxiously. "Your eyes keep closing."

"I'm fine, I'm just a little tired," Maggie shook her head, widening her eyes, suddenly finding it hard to keep them open. "I'm fine," she went on, but Alex took the knife from her.

"Go inside, rest, I don't want to wear you out. Especially with that knife in your hand," she waved at it, shaking her head at Maggie's insistence. "Go! I'll wake you up when the food is ready."

Maggie finally agreed, gently kissing Alex's cheek. "Well, thank you."

Alex sent her a kiss in the air as she entered the whale house, collapsing on the mattress and falling asleep in seconds.

She began to feel weaker and more tired, most of the day. Alex said it was the heat, but something
in her stomach refused to accept the fact that it was just the weather. For almost year and three
months she had lived only on berries, fruit, and fish. As Alex had noted then, everything felt like
the same mass, over and over again, passing from her mouth into her stomach, out and then the
same. This nutrition didn’t satisfy either her stomach or her body, and now, for the third time on
this island, she refused to get up from the mattress, dozing and drinking water alternately, while
Alex did most of the daily chores.

Alex, as it seemed, couldn’t be very active either. She was fishing and making lunch for both of
them and filling the water bottles, but laundry was out of bounds now, and they had gone with the
same clothes for over a week, which was unusual. Maggie also stopped walking because she got a
dull headache whenever she tried to stand, and Alex brought her water alternately, she too,
Maggie found out, with headaches and growing weakness.

She didn’t like it. She didn't like Alex doing everything to stay strong and yet without the means to
continue. She didn't like feeling the huge weight on her shoulder whenever she tried to get up, to
help Alex with the chores. She didn’t like the fact that she had barely swam recently, and knew
that only the walk to the beach would exhaust her completely, let alone swim. Alex began to lie
beside her in the whale house, ignoring the daily chores that had to be done.

They were resting on the mattress now, a light afternoon rest, mostly to avoid the heat outside,
which was now at its peak. Maggie felt her head foggy and her throat hoarse, and she reached for
the bottle of water to drink a sip, and found it empty.

"Didn’t you go fill it just an hour ago?"

"I did. I guess it’s over."

Maggie emptied her last drops into her throat. "How is that even possible?"

Alex sighed softly and looked at her, chewing her lip in apprehension.

"Mags, the lake... it's... it's starting to drain out."

Anguish filled Maggie’s stomach. They had already broken most of the big stone with coconuts
and drank every drop of water that was good enough to drink. She thought about it for a moment.
It's October now, right? Last year the rain started around December, so they have another two
months until the rain comes... They may die of thirst. Maggie closed her eyes to think, but her
mind was so shrouded and blurred that she could think of nothing. She pressed her fingers into her
closed eyes, trying to accept the situation.

"We knew... we knew that this would happen." She said finally. She opened her eyes and looked
at Alex, who looked weaker than ever. Despite her tanned face, she looked pale, and her
cheekbones were already beginning to appear above her skin. She doesn’t eat enough, Maggie
thought. Neither of us.

"We knew we couldn’t live like this forever," she said. Or at least, she always knew that. Alex
continued to believe in this stupid idea of ’someone will come to save us.’ Maggie never really
believed it. She pretended for Alex, she forced herself to think that sometimes, but she never truly
believed it.

"Someone will..." Alex said weakly. "What?" said Maggie, slightly angrily. She was almost tired
of hearing about it. About Alex’s home, about stupid Kara, about all the good life Alex had a long
time ago. She felt like she wanted to scream in her face, waking her, telling her every horrible
detail of her life, seeing if she still believed in fairies and unicorns. “They’ll come with choppers
and helicopters right to you and take you home, they’ll come to rescue you?”
Alex looked hurt. "Maggie, I didn’t..."

"They’re not coming, Alex, not now, not tomorrow, not next year, not ever! Don’t you get it?" She straightened up now, standing. "We are here on this island until we die! We are not going to be saved, we are going to die a long, agonizing death that will include starvation and dehydration, and the heat will crumble our bones into dust and no one will ever know what happened to us!" She was just shouting now, wondering from where she found the power to scream. Wondering how she could say these things, and to Alex’s face. She felt these sharp edges inside of her starting to tear apart, but she didn’t stop. A small voice at the back of her head tried to stop her and prevent this train accident before it happened, but she was already on the tracks, unable to hold back.

"I swear, if there is a God, they must be sadistic and evil enough to bring down an airplane full of passengers and let me and you be the only ones to survive and put us on an island to starve," she said, turning to the air more than Alex, who looked frightened and hurt and confused and weak, and so, so beautiful. Maggie's heart broke a little when she noticed it, but she couldn’t stop the lava that was rushing out from her core in high waves. "To let us crash on an island, fall in love..." she saw tears gathering at the corners of Alex's eyes. "I’ve found a reason to live here, Alex, you’re my reason to live. And now," she closed her eyes not to look at her. "Now I'm going to die. I guess that I don’t deserve to be happy after all."

"But you are happy, here with me!" Alex protested. "And one day, someone will come, and we'll get out of this place-

"I will never understand how you can believe in such a determination that someone is still sitting somewhere and thinking about you, looking after you and wanting to save you, don’t you understand?! No one is coming! No one!" She caught a coconut that lied there in the pile of fruit and threw it on the ground, and it fell in a loud noise. "We're going to die here! We fell in love with each other on a deserted island, and we're going to die here, and this sadistic god is in charge of this stupid plan, and I wish I were dead!"

Alex looked at her, a little less shaky, her eyes steady. She sat on the mattress and hugged her legs to her chest. "Really?" She said quietly. "Aren’t you even a little happy about everything that happened?"

There was silence, and Maggie wondered for a moment, panting, how the tables have turned. How Alex, that was so determined, to this moment, to get out of this island, now counted its advantages, and how Maggie, who saw the island as the best thing that ever happened to her, regrets that she had entered it in the first place.

"But what does it matter, Alex, what does it matter?" Her voice was almost pleading. "What does it matter when nothing is left after that..."

Her knees were so weak and she felt like she’s falling, but she held herself in time, looking at Alex desperately.

"Who said that a perfect life can’t be on a desert island?"

"We’re going to die soon-"

"And still," Alex said calmly. "We still have each other, and we are here, living our lives, until the last moment, or until they come to save us. And if they come, we'll have more time."

Maggie shook her head. She couldn’t stand there and hear these things. It was too much, too much...
She looked at Alex for a long moment and then took one of the towels that were folded there.

"I'm going to swim."

She went out without a second glance at Alex, and headed to the shore. Yes, swimming will do her good. She would clean her head, freshen her body, Hell, maybe she’ll even have enough luck and drown.

A flashing exclamation mark rose in her mind. No, she can’t drown. She can’t do it to Alex.

She went into the water, feeling them wrapping her coldly, and took a breath before she dipped her head inside and began to move evenly, swimming toward the horizon, emptying her head of any thought. She needs to rest.

She was so focused on swimming and she hardly heard the dull, mechanical sound, the sound that appeared in her nightmares until a few months ago. She took her head out of the water and tried to recognize the sound, and wondered if she didn’t imagine it. Weakness can trigger hallucinations in the human brain. She looked around, waving her legs and hands to stay above the water.

And here it was, a chopper, a real chopper, approaching their island.

But there seemed to be some kind of problem. It wasn't flying. It was on fire.

A chopper came to their island, but it wasn’t landing.

It was crashing.

Where there is light, A shadow appears.
thank you for reading! please let me know your thoughts in the comments

thanks again to Ryder who kinda saved me with the beta-read and he's the coolest ever! he's @karolsens on tumblr

I'm @iwannaplayairplains on tumblr, come say hi or search the tag 'wiwlfaa' or 'desert island au' for this fic related things
heya fellas, how you doin'?

there are some important notes in the end but you'd better read the chapter first

this chapter will include some medical concepts that I'm not sure will be entirely correct (since I'm not a doctor), and therefore I apologize in advance to anyone who knows a little more about medicine than I do. If it really sucks (which shouldn't happen because I did a little bit of research) you are welcome to tell and I'll fix what is needed.

on the same subject, there might be some triggering descriptions of unpleasant medical conditions. I tried to make it as simple and censored as possible, but just so you be ready.

anyway, it's a tough one, so prepare yourself

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

The chopper approached the island with frightening speed, and Maggie continued to stare at it in astonishment, still not believing her eyes.

"Oh, no," she murmured.

She pulled herself together and began to swim quickly to the shore, watching the chopper keep losing height, faster and faster. Her heart pounded hard in her chest, it was sore with effort, with anticipation, with desire. Her thoughts, which were usually so calm when she was in the water, swirled and spun in her mind. She was thinking of hope, and loss, imagining possible scenarios one after the other. She dipped her head in the water to focus, not letting herself grow too high, and went on swimming, reaching the shore.

The chopper would crash before she’ll reach it.

She accelerated, almost touching the ground with her feet, urging her speed as she pushes her body inside the water toward the shore. Her muscles cried out in protest but she didn’t let herself stop.

Come on, come on.

The chopper continued to lose height, making a whistling noise and small explosions as it swirled in the air toward the island. It was getting closer and closer, and Maggie was already standing on the shore when it arrived, following it with her eyes, standing for a second, breathing.

It landed loudly in the woods, crashed straight into the trees, close to the shore.

Too close.

"Alex," Maggie muttered, running toward the whale house. "Alex!" A murmur turned into a scream and she hurried to where the chopper had landed. It can’t happen to her, it can’t, not now...
She ran into the forest, fire, and smoke welcoming her as she proceeded.

"ALEX! Alex, do you hear me?" She screamed through the clouds of smoke and ran as fast as she could. She reached the location of the whale house and saw the chopper in front of her, devastated, dismantled, on fire, burns all the trees near it. It landed right next to the whale house, which seemed like it didn’t survive the crash, and fell into a pile of planks and whale-skin sheets.

She looked at the whale house in terror, which was burning in flames now, destroyed. She ran inside. "No… no, no, no, NO!" Her murmurs became shouting again and she began to dig through the piles of the ruined house to find Alex.

A dirty hand from coal rose from the rubble, and Alex emerged from beneath a large canvas, her face covered with coal and dirt as well. Maggie rushed to her, terrified, and helped her out of the rubble.

"Alex," she whimpered with huge concern, turning away the shards of trees that covered Alex almost completely, exposing Alex's broken legs beneath them, and her upper body, which was badly bruised. Alex grimaced, emitting cries of pain. Maggie didn’t hesitate and quickly stuck a hand between Alex's legs, tugging her on her back, making her cry even louder, moving away quickly. Her body could hardly bear the burden, but she held on, hurrying to safety. She had reached a point far enough and quickly put Alex on her back while the burnt chopper was behind them, and some trees were still on fire.

"Alex, Alex, don’t die, please .." Maggie murmured as she skimmed past her trembling hands on Alex's broken body. Both legs were completely bent, and in her upper body were large bruises, one of them was bleeding. Alex lay there, her eyes fluttering as the pain blurred her mind. Maggie noticed that and shook Alex’s shoulders. "No!" She shouted. "You don’t get to die on me! We’re gonna stick together, ‘till the end, we’re gonna do it! you have to stay alive, do you hear me? you have to!!" She tore Alex's shirt off and began to press it onto the chest wounds, trying to stop the bleeding. She was trembling and terrified, but she didn’t let herself freeze. She can’t, not now.

"Maggie," Alex said weakly. She reached out a flabby hand to grab Maggie's arm. Maggie immediately reached out and put her face to Alex's face, tears now covering her cheeks. "Alex, do you hear me? You can’t die, you can not-

"Maggie," Alex said again, her voice clearer now. She widened her eyes with effort, obviously trying to stay conscious. She squeezed Maggie's hand and spoke slowly. "It was a cho- chopper, right?" Maggie nodded in fear, a little confused. Alex continued. "Maggie, you must- you have to- go to this chopper- and see if- if there’s a- anyone there- if they’re still- al- alive- if they can call someone- Maggie, now, please..."

"I'm not leaving you," Maggie said, resolutely. She can’t walk from Alex now. What if something will happen to her and she wouldn’t be here? She would never forgive herself.

"I'll be alright," Alex said firmly, holding out her hand to squeeze the piece of cloth into her body in Maggie's place. "Please, I’m begging you, g- go and do it."

Maggie shook her head, tears flooding her eyes, and she began to weep, lowering her head to Alex’s chest. "I can’t, Alex ..."

"You can, and you'll do it," Alex's voice became a little slurred and she tried to breathe deeply, barely regaining any strength. She looked into Maggie's wet eyes. "Sweetie, you ha- have to go there. I'll be alright."

Alex is right. This can save them. She imagined how they were saved, coming back home to
National City, living together, laughing, loving... alive and well. Years over years. Her eyes cleared and she looked at Alex, her face pale like she had never seen her.

"Don’t you dare die." her voice trembled. "Do you hear me? Don’t you dare.”

She bent down as gently as she could to kiss Alex on her lips, tasting blood and salt and dust and thousands of other things, and cut herself off with supreme power, running quickly toward the chopper.

The fire subsided a bit, and the chopper, mostly destroyed, lay there on its side and was covered in soot and dirt, and rising smoke. She climbed carefully into the cockpit, opening the metal door with great effort. She pushed her head inside, meeting two blue, terrified eyes.

"Oh, thank god," a voice sighed, and Maggie looked at the body that was attached to it. A blond and solid young man, sat in the cockpit with only his chest visible under the wreckage of the dismantled chopper.

"Where did you come from?" He asked, trembling, noticing Maggie's undergarments, his look confused, frightened. The ceiling above him was completely bent. There was glass shattered all around and Maggie came up to him, trying not to step on them.

"Are you okay?" She asked, ignoring his question. She suddenly noticed that his arms were stuck under the wreckage and began to help him clear them off his body. eventually, he pulled off his arms and rubbed the wounded parts, sighing with pain. "I think so," he mumbled. She dried her still wet eyes and looked around for some kind of communication device.

There it was, hanging on the wall.

She reached out to take it, looking at the guy. "Does this work?"

"I should hope so," he said, groaning as he tried to get his hand out and pushed a large piece of metal over him. She handed him the device and he pressed a few buttons.

"This is Clay Doe transmitting to Fox Zero, asking for a signal, over." His voice was anxious but clear and firm. He wiped the sweat off his forehead.

The device made a disconnected radio sound. He tried again. "This is Clay Doe transmitting to Fox Zero, asking for a signal, over!" His voice grew more panic-struck.

Nothing.

"It's Clay, man, answer me, goddammit!!"

Still nothing. Maggie's heart pounded harder and faster every second, thinking of Alex lying just a few feet away, probably dying, and she’s not with her, she’s not there beside her...

"Jeff, I swear to god-"

"Clay?"

Maggie's heart stopped.

"Jeff, Jeff, it's me, man, I crashed on an island, I'm with Forts, you hear me, man? you hear me?" His voice was high and he sounded as though he was about to cry with relief.

"What? I can’t believe it." The other guy's voice was a bit fragmented over the radio. "You’re on
"Yeah, man, I crashed with Forts, I need you to send a rescue team, things are pretty lousy." He glanced at Maggie for a moment. "And there's someone else here..."

"Two," Maggie cut him off. "We're two." Her heart was beating slowly again and her voice was quiet. The guy gaped in surprise.

"Two, Jeff, there are two other people here, I need you to send me help, it's urgent, the situation here is..."

"Okay, okay, I'm talking to Adam now, I'm sending them."

The guy looked at Maggie, and suddenly he reached out a hand. "I'm Clay, by the way."

Maggie squeezed his hand limply, aware of the strange situation. "Maggie, and the other one is Alex." She paused for a second, and went on immediately, gesturing nervously toward the forest. "Listen, I need to... I need..."

"Go." He said, sighing again at the rubble that was resting on him. "Anyway, you need to be in the area when they arrive."

She didn’t wait for another invitation, and hurried out of the chopper, running toward Alex, Clay continuing to talk to the rescue forces on the radio.

Alex lay there, groaning, still squeezing the wounds with the shirt, that was already soaked in her blood. Maggie leaned quickly beside her.

"Alex, Alex, there's a guy there, he's talking to someone on the radio, and they gonna come here soon."

Alex gaped at her, tears appeared in her eyes and she sighed, leaning back on the ground. Maggie let out a laugh, and Alex followed, and they started laughing, Maggie burying her face in Alex’s shoulder, reaching for her charred cheek. She pressed her lips against Alex’s temple.

"They'll come, Alex, like you said." She whispered, feeling a little swarm of hope creeping into her heart. They'll survive it. Together. She kissed Alex's lips, feeling her tremble with relief, her dark eyes shedding tears of happiness. God, how she loved her at that moment.

Alex coughed, grimacing again, lifting her blood-soaked shirt, examining her with a face crammed with pain. Maggie looked at her fearfully and Alex looked up.

"I-I-" Alex's voice quivered, "Listen t- to me. Bring me all the clothes you c- can find, and as much water as possible from the l-lake." She almost pushed Maggie over her.

"Okay," Maggie’s voice was slightly frightened, and she kissed Alex's forehead, hurrying to do as she said. She returned a few minutes later with a pile of clothes she had found under the ruins, and a bottle that she filled with the rest of the water from the lake.

Alex began to take care of herself, bandaging and cleaning her wounds, emitting a groan of pain in the process. Maggie watched her anxiously, wondering if she should help, and how. Alex continued to speak as she did, her voice a little less shaky. "Maggie, go to the g- guy in the chopper and see if he's alright, and see if there's any m- medical equipment you can bring me." She looked up at her for a second and went back to dressing. "A kit or a- a- bag, anything."

Maggie nodded and swallowed, rising up. She almost started walking when Alex called her back and she turned to her. Alex handed her the water bottle.
"You have to drink," she said, taking a sip herself. Maggie took the bottle and drank two sips. She didn’t want to finish the water for Alex, who needed it more than she did. She leaned back to Alex, kissing her slower than before, more steady, hopeful. Alex raised a hand to hold Maggie’s neck, pulling her closer.

"I love you," Alex whispered. "so much."

"This isn’t goodbye," Maggie murmured.

Alex’s gaze was unusually calm. "Not a goodbye. We are together, continue to live."

Maggie couldn’t bring herself to leave her, and she cupped her face in her hands, her eyes starting to tear again. she kissed Alex gently on the cheek. "I love you too," she whimpered.

Alex pushed herself away so she could look into her eyes. "Go," she pleaded. "I’ll be fine."

Maggie couldn’t remember starting walking from Alex, not consciously, at least. She walked toward the chopper, climbing to its open door. Clay seemed relieved to see her.

"Oh, thank god you're back. I was thinking of yelling for you, but I didn’t know if you were far away." He removed almost all the debris off of him, exposing bruises and wounds all over his lower body. "I can’t get this off," he pointed to the belt, that was stuck under a large metal plate.

"Of course," she murmured. She reached out and the two of them pulled hard, removing the metal plate and unfastening the safety belt. He was now free, breathing in relief.

"How, what's his name, Alex, is he alright?"

"She," Maggie cleared more pieces of wreckage out of the chopper.

"She," Clay repeated, surprised. "I’m sorry, I thought, you know, Alex...

"It's okay," Maggie wiped her face, looking for a first-aid bag. "She's okay, but she needs the first aid kit, is there any?" She climbed down the chopper, which was tilted to the side, and began to open cabinets and side drawers. She finally found it in the back compartment, a small bag with a white cross on it. She loaded it on her back and went back to Clay.

"Come on, let's get out of here."

Clay pulled himself out of the pilot's chair, almost immediately falling to the floor. He looked up at her, startled. "I can’t move my legs." He said, his voice rising in a panic. "Oh god, my legs, I can’t-"

"Okay, calm down." She leaned toward him, pulling him up to sitting. "We’ll find a way to get you out of here, and they'll come, they'll come and take you to the hospital." She jumped out of the chopper. "Now you just have to get to Alex, and she'll help you. She's a doctor." He swallowed thickly, horrified, as he looked at her.

"Try moving them, even just a little," she said, putting her hands carefully on his ankles. A small, slow motion has recorded in both legs.

"Good, that's good! now try to get down to here. Slowly, slowly," she led him cautiously, walking out of the chopper, limping and shivering, to where Alex was still lying. He walked slowly, his legs stumbling every few feet, and she held his bleeding arm, supporting him.

Alex was still lying there, bandaging herself with two shirts tied tight together, some of the other
clothes being used as a pillow under her head. Her breathing was still ragged, and she opened her eyes as Maggie and Clay approached her. Maggie carefully placed Clay on the ground and handed Alex the first-aid kit. "That's what I found," she said, sitting down next to her. She put her hand carefully on Alex's shoulder. "Are you okay?"

"I think I'll live." She heaved herself up, grimacing, a call of protest coming from Maggie when she saw her aching face. "No, you should lie down, rest..." but Alex waved her hand dismissively.

"I'm alright, don't worry." She put a hand on Maggie's knee and squeezed it gently.

"My legs need fixing, I need you to bring me branches so I can dress them," she said, taking a shirt and starting to tear it into strips, making improvised bandages. Maggie rose immediately and ran to bring some strong branches that lay in the ruins of the house. She handed them back to Alex, who right away began to tie them to her legs proficiently, as though she was unaware that they were her own. Maggie helped her and in a few minutes Alex's legs were bandaged, and she wiped the sweat and the coal from her face.

Clay looked at the two of them, silent, slightly trembling, a stressful look in his eyes. Maggie looked at him for a moment, suddenly realizing young how he was. Nineteen, maybe twenty. Too young to fly a chopper by himself. Alex looked at him too and gave him a small, tired smile.

"Alex," she held out her hand. He looked at her outstretched hand, then looked at her, and reached out his hand, shaking it. "Clay."

"Clay," she repeated softly, putting her other hand on his, wrapping it warmly. "Thank you, Clay."

Clay looked a bit confused but nodded his head without saying a word. He must have been intrigued, but he didn’t dare to speak. He moved uncomfortably on his butt and Maggie remembered. "Alex, Clay has a minor leg problem, can you check him? I'll go and see if there's some food or water in the chopper." She got up, leaving the two alone.

She searched the choppers for things they could use and found blankets and canned food, and bottles of water. She hoped that the rescue would come soon, that they would be able to bring them to the hospital as quickly as possible. Alex needed full treatment. *God, the rescue is on their way.* She rolled the words over and over again in her head, trying to understand what they meant.

The thought was absurd and completely false. She never thought it could happen, that it would happen. The chances were negligible. But someone really comes to get them out of here, to save them. They are not going to die of starvation or thirst or fever. They will live.

A smile came over her face as she picked up essential things she found, and the idea settled in her mind slowly, sending light balls to her hands, her legs, her heart, strengthening her and giving her power to continue.

*It's funny,* she thought. *So funny.* At first, she didn’t want to live on this island. She didn’t want to live at all. And then... all that happened with Alex... and she didn’t want to die anymore, but she didn’t want to leave this island either. She suddenly realized that perhaps she was afraid that the island meant that she and Alex would stay together forever. And now, she’s going to get out of here and live, and she thinks she feels fine with it. She is, she feels fine, and she and Alex will stay together, no matter what. They’re going to get out of here, stay together... right?

*That's what you wanted, isn't it? you wanted Alex?* Her head started to hurt again, and an inexplicable fear crept into her heart. She tried to dismiss it quickly, concentrating on finding essential survival items. *This is not the time.*
She ran into a big life jacket and hurried to wear it. It was hot outside but she wore nothing but underclothes and it bothered her a little to walk around like that, especially when this Clay was around. He looked like a nice guy but she still felt a little uncomfortable.

Maggie sighed, rubbing her face with her hands, the voice of logic asking her to understand what she was feeling. She took a deep breath. Her thoughts finally settled, and one of them came to the surface, clear as sunlight. She just wants Alex to be alright. And she wants to be with Alex. That's what she wants. She doesn't care anymore whether it's on the island or National City or on the moon, she just wants to be with Alex, and that she'll live. That's it. Simple as that.

She got off the chopper, carrying what she managed to glean and coming back to Alex and Clay. She tried to get the thoughts out of her mind, for the time being, concentrating on taking care of Alex until the rescue came.

"...And then I heard an explosion and tried to turn this thing around, but apparently, there was another problem because it started to circulate in the air and... I couldn’t control it." Clay took a deep breath and leaned back. "And the next thing I know is that I'm trapped inside my wrecked chopper after it crashed on an island in the middle of the ocean."

Alex gave him a warm smile as Maggie sat beside them, putting the supplies on the ground. "You're alright now. They'll be coming soon, and they'll take us out of here." She turned to Maggie. "What did you bring?"

"There's some water, there are strips of canned meat and tin cans, and I've got... blankets." She pulled one of them out and spread it, covering Alex’s back, giving her a brief hug as she went. Alex smiled at her and gave a short kiss on her temple. If Clay noticed, he said nothing.

"How do you feel?" she asked. Alex sighed, fingering the clothes she wore bandages around her chest. "The pressure calmed down a little after I bandaged myself, so I think by the time I'll get to the hospital I'll be alright."

Maggie nodded. "And his legs?" she asked. Alex turned her look at Clay's legs, which rested directly, and on his frightened face. "I couldn’t really examine when he’s lying, because he has nowhere to sit, but from what I checked, he’s in good order. Not brilliant, he's probably a little problem with his nervous system, but we won’t know for sure before we’ll do a CT." She nodded at him. "But he'll be fine. He was very lucky."

Clay chuckled bitterly and shook his head. "I took the chopper without permission. It's my dad's chopper, he has a lot of them, he rents them. I know how to fly a chopper since I was fifteen." He closed his eyes. "I was angry at him and took his chopper, for a ride, you know, I wasn’t planning to get away that much, I didn’t plan that none of that to happen at all." He let out a breath and looked at them, Alex resting a comforting hand on his thigh. "Things could have been much worse, you're lucky."

He nodded briefly and turned his look from Alex to Maggie, who was sitting tight close, Maggie’s hand on Alex’s whist. "So.. um... what are you two doing alone on an abandoned island?"

They exchanged a glance, Maggie slowly grinning. "Well, it really is a pretty long story," she whispered to Alex, who smiled at her. They are really getting out of here. They're on their way out. Suddenly she realized that Klay was the first person she had seen and spoken to except Alex for the past sixteen months, and that made her chuckle. She raised her eyebrows toward Alex, gesturing to her to do the honors.

"We..." Alex began and gave a little laugh. "We crashed, our plane crashed in the sea, not far from here, and we swam all the way here, waiting for rescue to arrive, but no one came." She
exchanged short glances with Maggie. "We've been living here ever since," she finished.

Clay looked shocked. "What? this is insane! How long will you be here?"

"About sixteen months."

Clay looked once again from one to the other, pure amazement on his face. "What- what did you eat? You had water? How the hell did you survive this? this is… wow," he held his head in his hands.

Maggie looked down, shaking her head. "It was hard, but we made it through." She looked at Alex again, who turned to take one of the water bottles for a drink. "We had each other."

*Three hours ago you didn’t think how ‘It was hard, but we made it through’, thought Maggie quietly. I guess things look different after you make them through, and you can say that you make them through instead of losing your shit.*

Clay's jaw was still on the floor, and Alex handed Maggie the water bottle, smiling at him affectionately.

"That... that's a lot..." He shook his head. "I think I remember it. There was something about it on the news. Someone was talking about her sister... They couldn’t save anyone, there were bodies they couldn’t find."

Alex's head darted up. "Someone talked on the news about her sister who drowned in a plane crash? you remember what she was looked like, what was her name?"

Clay shook his head again. "It was on the radio, I don’t know what she looks like. I can barely remember her name. I just remember thinking that if it happened to my sister... I wouldn’t be able to handle it."

Alex turned to Maggie, her eyes moist. "Kara... she..." Maggie smiled softly at her and brushed her hair off her face.

"Yeah, I know." She whispered. She planted a kiss on Alex's forehead, wrapping her in her arms. "You're going home."

"We," Alex said into Maggie's shoulder. "We're going home." Maggie didn’t answer, only gripping Alex harder, her head shrouded in thoughts.

Clay coughed, and they pulled away but stayed close together. He leaned back, tilting his head in interest. "It's pretty awesome, when you think about it. where did you live?"

They told him most of their story, and Maggie opened one of the tin cans and they ate its contents, savoring the taste of red beans, to Clay's laughter. Just this morning she thought they were gonna starve to death, and now they eating well a content of a dusty can. who would have thought.

"When did you say they were coming?" Asked Alex after some time, wiping the sweat off her forehead. Clay looked at the sky covered with branches above them.

"It's a flight of about an hour and a half from where we live if you fly as fast as possible, and I guess they went out as fast as they could. So I guess they're supposed to be here soon," he said and sighed deeply. "I feel tired."

"You've been traumatized, you're in shock, it's normal," Alex said. "Sit back and rest, but try not to fall asleep, it's still dangerous."
He did as she ordered, and there was silence as Alex and Maggie finished the rest of the canned meat. When they’ve done, Alex laid her head on Maggie's shoulder, both listened carefully to hear any sound of an approaching chopper. Maggie was playing with the necklace on her neck. She was glad to find out it had survived everything that happened until now, and hoped it will survive the rest.

"What will you tell Kara?"

Alex didn’t answer for a moment, and Maggie wasn't sure if she heard her. She was about to repeat the question when Alex answered.

"I don’t know yet."

Maggie moved a bit closer to her, put her hand on Alex's hip and pulled her close. She wanted to whisper that she’s right there with her, that she would stay there all the way, that she wouldn’t leave her, no matter what will happen. She was so afraid, but also hopeful. All those words were on the tip of her tongue, but Clay was there within earshot, and there would be time for all this later.

She felt Alex's head drop and thought she was falling asleep, and she reached out to shake her.

"Don’t fall asleep," she said, looking at her. Alex's eyes fluttered, and she tried to keep them open. "I... I don’t feel so good..." she murmured, panting lightly.

"Okay, okay, just lay down. Lay back, alright," Maggie supported Alex's body as she lay back, still straining to breathe. She looked at her worriedly, putting her hands on Alex's chest.

"My heart... Maggie, my heart, it’s beating fast... too fast... something happens to it," Alex's breathing becomes heavier and heavier.

"Okay, calm down, breath slowly, slowly." Maggie practically didn’t know what she was supposed to do, and hoped that the damn rescue team would arrive soon or that she would lose Alex.

"Maggie... look at me," Alex struggled to breathe, her lips slightly blue, her skin grayish-looking. Maggie's heart accelerated, and her mouth became dry. She couldn’t let Alex die like that in her arms. Not when the help is so close.

"No, don’t you start now. You're going to make it. You have to. Just a few more minutes, okay, honey? you have to," Maggie's voice was hoarse and she held Alex's upper body in her arms, trying to pass on her warmth to keep her alive. She didn’t know what was happening to Alex, but it was probably not good.

Clay struggled to sit up and looked at them, perplexed. "Is she okay?"

"No, I... I don’t know," Maggie murmured. She looked at him. "Can you stand up?

He nodded slowly. "I think so."

"Okay then, go to the beach, it's that way, and look up to see if they're on the way. I'm not sure, but I think that's the direction they're supposed to come from. If you see them wave them to land on this side. Go, now."

Clay nodded again and stood up, struggling a bit, grabbing a branch that lay beside them and using it to walk toward the beach, slowly hobbling.
Maggie looked back at Alex, whose breaths were squeaky. "How are you, beautiful?"

"Never- been- better," Alex pant with an effort. Maggie managed to smile a little.

"They're on their way, babe, they're on their way, and they'll be here every minute, and you just have to hold on for a few minutes, okay?" Tears rose in her eyes but she continued to smile. Alex nodded. "Just a few more minutes."

They looked into each other's eyes, Maggie refusing to move further than she was already close.

"Tell me if there's anything I can do," she said. "To press or massage or... or something,"

Alex shook her head. "It's my h- heart, it's a condition c- called tachycardia, if I'm right. And.. m- my lungs too, it's hard for me t-" She struggled to breathe, letting out a small gasp. "There is nothing you can do without the equipment and s- skills." Her speech was interrupted again by a cry of pain, and she reached out to feel her chest.

Let them come already, Maggie thought desperately, watching Alex take deep, slow breaths with great effort. They stayed like that for a few minutes, her hand gently stroking the side of Alex's head. Even though she was pale and sweaty, blue lips and ugly coughs, she was still, so beautiful. Maggie hurried to wipe the tears from her eyes, not looking away from Alex’s red, tired ones.

Suddenly,

Mechanical sound.

They're here.

"They're here, Alex!" Maggie straightened up and looked toward the beach, where she saw Clay’s image through the trees stood and shouted, waving the branch he held.

She looked back at Alex, finding her closed eyes.

"Alex?"

She held her shoulders, shaking her. Breaths were heard but her eyes were still closed. She hurried to put a hand on Alex's chest, feeling it suddenly horrifyingly quiet.

"Alex, open your eyes, they're here!" Maggie screamed, terrified. No, she can’t die. Not now. She shook Alex again. Alex opened her eyes for a moment, her eyelids fluttering, and closed them again.

"No, no, you can’t, you can’t..." Maggie murmured, hearing the chopper’s roar behind them, landing on the beach, the shouts of the lifeguards. There was nothing she could do but press on Alex’s chest, shake her, open her eyelids forcibly.

"You said they would come, you said and they came, they're here, wake up! you have to wake up!" Maggie was weeping now, still trying the resuscitation she didn’t know how to do on Alex’s body, feeling herself becoming weaker and weaker by the minute, but still unable to leave, unable to stop, unable to accept the facts.

The rescuers' voices grew louder and closer, and suddenly she felt someone approaching her, leaning beside her.

"Is she okay?"
"I don’t, I don’t know..." tears covered Maggie's entire view, she couldn’t look at anything but Alex, couldn’t think of anything else. She lay there, still, her breathing weak.

"We'll take it from here," the voice said. "Luke, get me a crash kit, now, Rudy, take this one away from here, let’s go, people, go, go!"

The voice sounded authoritative, and something in Maggie's heart calmed down when she heard that other people were taking care of Alex, but another figure began to pull her away, toward the chopper, and she tried to fight.

"No, no, she's dying, no, I'm not leaving her!" She screamed and kicked, hysterical. She heard voices around her, busy people, but her eyes could see nothing but Alex, who was momentarily surrounded by lifeguards.

"Okay, she has a pulse, but it's weak. Start compressing."

"Take her away!"

"Starting to ventilate,"

"This is not good, there’s a lot of blood..."

"Flipping in one, two-"

"Come on, come on!"

"Rudy, I told you to take her away!"

"I can’t, she won’t let me!"

"She’s not breathing, get her epinephrine-" 

"No!!" Maggie burst into tears and managed to free herself from the guy who was holding her and ran back to Alex, just to be caught again before she reached her. "No, no, NO!"

"Rudy, take this-"

"Alright, I have normal pupil response, Luke, we need to take her in..."

"Come on, goddammit..."

"I can’t find a vein-"

Maggie felt something stab her in the thigh, and from the clouds of the crying her mind became more and more shrouded, and she realized she had been sedated.

"Alex..." she managed to exhale weakly before she sank into a stupor, collapsing in the arms of the man who held her, hearing the din of the voices of the people trying to save Alex.

Chapter End Notes

first of all, I apologize again to anyone who knows medicine a little bit better then I did in case I made any mistakes. all of them are mine, and you are welcome to tell me
if there's something wrong.

second of all, I have an announcement to make-

I'm taking a break.

I'm not leaving, no, don't worry. I'm just taking a little break from uploading the story every 3 weeks so I can finish the story quickly and quietly. this story is fully written until chapter 15-16, and since I have 4 more chapter to write (down on paper, I have all of them in my head) I'm gonna need more time. you are welcome to subscribe to the fic and you'll get a message when it will be uploaded again, or you can come back in two or three months and see how's it going. I don't know how long it'll take but I promise I won't leave you guys without the rest of the story. it's here, I just need to get it out, and I need no pressure while I do it. I won't forget you, and I will be returning as soon as I can.

as always thanks to Ryder for the beta read- he's the best, and also @karolsens on tumblr

I'm @iwannaplayairplains on tumblr, you are more than welcome to search the tag #desert island au or #wiwlfaa on my blog for fic related stuff

any question, concern, and responses you have you are welcome to comment down below! if you liked it make sure to leave kudos :)

until next time, take care
Joxerton

Chapter Summary

hope you've missed me, cus i have a lot to deliver

Chapter Notes

Few things-
First of all, some clarifications about the next part of the story

Alex and Maggie left the island. They are now in a small town named Joxerton in the state of Washington, north-west, by the ocean. It's a town I invented and has nothing to do with reality, I just wanted a small town in this area and since I don't know the place, I invented it. Joxerton is where Clay lives, and they're at the hospital of this town. I won't tell you the following, and you can read about it later on.

So far the story was about Alex and Maggie alone, on a desert island, and little parts about Alex's family, back in National City. From now on, Alex and Maggie are back to the city, and the story will take a slight turn. It will not only be about Alex and Maggie, but also about those close to them. Of course, Alex and Maggie are the center of the story, and everything turns around them, but I just want to warn in advance that since they've returned to National City, there are more people around them, and the story will talk a little more about them than it has been until now.

My second clarification is about supercorp. As you have noticed, Kara and James together in this story, and I intend to leave them together. Lena does play a role, and for a moment I don't erase the fact that she's a lesbian, which I think is entirely clear, but nothing is going to happen between Kara and Lena. If you happen to come here for a romantic supercorp, it won't happen. They're good friends, and I have other plans for Lena, so don't worry.

I think this is it for now, and we can continue the story.

Thank you for staying with me! It's not obvious to follow a story even when it takes time to update and it only shows how loyal you all are and it gives me a good feeling about how I write. A big thank you to everyone who has stayed until now. I love you!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

"You're kidding me."

"No, no, it's absolutely true, they told me."

"Wow, I can't believe it."

"Yeah."
"Sixteen months?"

"That's what they said."

"Wow. That's sick, bro."

"Totally."

Maggie opened her eyelids slowly. Everything was blurred, and it took her some time to gauge her condition. She was lying on a bed, and beeping instruments were around her, connected to... her, apparently. She wore a hospital gown and her mouth was dry. very dry. She looked around, eyeing a glass of water on the table near her. She reached out, revealing an infusion attached to her arm. The glass was too far away. Damn. She let out a groan and looked around again. She was alone in the room, and the voices she heard were standing outside the room, the door slightly open. She coughed loudly, hoping to catch the attention of those outside.

It worked.

Clay came in, wearing jeans and a T-shirt, a white bandage on his right arm. He limped, using a pair of crutches. Along with him came a guy around his own age, his hair black and neatly combed with a forelock, and he wore a leather jacket. They both smiled at her.

"Maggie!" Clay said, toddling on his crutches. "How are you?"

"Thirsty." That's all she could say, her voice croaking. Her head ached.

"Of course," the other guy quickly handed her the glass of water, and she drank it all in one gulp. "I'm Jeff, by the way."

"Nice to meet you," she murmured, lying back on the pillow, closing her eyes.

She opened them almost a second later, rising sharply, a move that made her head throb with more pain. "Where's- ouch... Where's Alex?"

She held her head in her hands, looking at Clay. She dropped his smile and Maggie almost stopped breathing.

"She's not-"

"Oh no," he shook his head quickly. "She's alive, she's just... the doctors said... she'll be fine, she just hasn't woken up yet."

"How long have we been here?"

"About twenty-four hours."

Maggie closed her eyes and let the information trickle down. Twenty-four hours they are outside the island. Alex is still under. Kara... doesn't know anything yet.

"I want to go see Alex."

Clay shook his head, an apologetic smile on his face. "The doctors said you shouldn't get up. I'm supposed to make sure you won't get up until the doctor comes in. He's supposed to come any minute, though."

Maggie let out another groan, quieter this time, and put her head back on the pillow. She wanted
nothing more than to see Alex at the moment, but her headache only intensified as she lifted her head from the pillow, so she didn't want to imagine what would happen when she'll get up. Alex was under anyway, she wouldn’t know she wasn’t beside her.

Not that it made her feel less sorry that she wasn’t beside her.

She looked at Clay, who was talking to Jeff now. "And you okay?"

Clay shrugged. "The doctor said it was mild nerve damage, and that it wasn’t permanent, and I'm supposed to walk fine in a few days."

"Hopefully." a voice from the doorway said.

Maggie turned her head to the door, where a very tall doctor stood, his hair black and messy and a stethoscope around his neck. He looked sloppy, but not neglected. He greeted Clay and Jeff and turned to Maggie.

"Hey, Maggie, I'm Doctor Lace, and I took care of you and Alex when you came in yesterday. How are you?"

Maggie shook his hand, uncertain. "My head is aches, but I think I'm fine."

Lace stood beside her, next to the bed "I'm glad to hear that. So, can you tell me your full name?"

He pulled out a small flashlight and began to examine her eyes.

"Marg- Maggie. Maggie Sawyer."

"Do you know the date today?"

Maggie looked at him, a little confused. "I'm not sure, mid-October?"

"Today is October 17th." Lace nodded. He raised a finger and she followed it, doing as he said. He felt her shoulders, her hands, and along her body to make sure her function was full.

"Well, except for malnutrition and dehydration, your condition seems reasonable. Though I'd like to keep you here for surveillance."

Maggie nodded slowly, her head still throbbing with pain. "My head really hurts."

Lace gestured toward the transfusion that was attached to her. "You're dehydrated. The IV is supposed to give you back the fluids you've lost and you'll be out of bed in no time." He snapped his fingers to express speed and chuckled.

"Where am I?"

"You're in St. Patrick's Hospital, in the small town of Joxerton, in the state of Washington." He smiled. "We'll take care of you in the best way we can, and then you can go on your way." He was silent for a few moments, letting her digest the situation.

"I have to say, Clay here updated me about the details and your story is very interesting. I am fascinated by the fact that you spent sixteen months on a desert island without food or water."

Maggie tried to smile, nodding politely. "We got along with what we had."

Lace nodded. "I would love to hear the story, but first of all, it’s important for us to try to contact family members. Are there any?"
Well...

What is the answer to such a question?

She didn’t know if anyone had informed her parents when she had crashed, and if they knew, had it affected them in any way? Or did no one care if she died at sea? Her heart contracted a little, and she thought.

No, for now. Maybe she would consult Alex.

"No," she said. Something went by on his face, something she couldn’t explain. Mercy, perhaps sorrow. She chose to ignore.

"What about Alex?"

Lace sighed. "Alex was badly injured in her legs and lungs. We cast both legs so there shouldn’t be a problem with them, and I hope they will be back to full functioning soon. One of her lungs was punctured and began to fill with blood. Clay told me she was fine and only after a while she started fluttering. I think the lung was punctured but with a very small hole, so it began to influence late. That's also why the blood didn’t enter her breathing cycle, and the damage was small enough so I could reach it in time." He nodded and looked over at Clay and Jeff and back at Maggie. "She was very lucky."

Maggie felt a stone drop from her chest, and her heart became lighter. She smiled at him, breathing deeply.

"Thank you, Doctor."

Lace smiled. "My pleasure."

"When is she supposed to wake up?" Asked Clay.

"She was out of surgery more than twelve hours ago, I hope she will wake up in the next few hours." He looked at his watch. "I'll let you know when you can see her." He looked at Maggie.

"Any further questions, Mrs. Sawyer?"

Maggie paused. "No. But let me know as soon as Alex gets up, I want to be there next to her."

Lace nodded with a smile, nodding at Clay and Jeff. "Boys," he said, and left the room.

Jeff sat down beside Clay, who was smiling at Maggie. "Do you need anything?"

_I need Alex_, Maggie thought, looking at him. "Nothing."

"You want us to stay? We'll keep you company until she wakes up."

She considered it for a second. "Yes, it's alright."

Clay shoved his hand in his pocket. "I almost forgot. Your necklace." He pulled out Maggie’s necklace, slightly battered, but intact. Maggie felt her neck, wondering how she hadn’t noticed the necklace’s disappearance. She took it from his hand, nodding gratefully. She didn’t want to put it back on yet, so she put it on the table and watched it while Clay and Jeff sat there, talking to each other. Maggie closed her eyes, trying to rest. They didn’t bother her, and in any case, they weren’t harmful. She just lay there, waiting for her headache to pass, or Alex to wake up, whatever comes first.
There was an inexplicable fear in her at all time, and she tried to ignore it, pushing it deep inside. She couldn't handle it now.

~

She didn’t notice that she had fallen asleep until she felt a hand shakes her gently. Opening her eyes, she found Clay's face, who smiled at her warmly.

"You fell asleep," he said. He thought for a few seconds and then said, "You said- you said things..."

Maggie rubbed her eyes. "What things?"

He looked embarrassed, like he regretted saying anything. "I didn’t really understand, it was more of a murmur... You said 'Alex' and 'Wait' and... other things." he turned red now. Maggie looked around. Jeff must have gone, and the window outside, which shone when she woke up earlier, was dark now. She looked back at Clay, who looked down. The doctors apparently asked him to stay with her, since she had no one. She did dream, but she couldn’t remember the dream. Only that it gave her a terrible feeling of helplessness. She offered him a consoling hand.

"It's alright," she said, trying to smile. He swallowed and seemed relieved.

"What about Alex?"

He shook his head. "She still hasn’t woken up, but Lace was here about an hour ago and said when you wake up you can get up." He smiled broadly.

He helped her out of bed, and they walked slowly down the hallway, Maggie with the infusion pole accompanying her, and Clay limping with his crutches. The headache was still there but Maggie didn’t dare saying anything out of the fear of being taken back to her bed. She can survive a light headache.

Clay turned down the hallway and led her to a side room, opening the door for her. She slowly walked in, looking at the bed in the middle of the room.

Alex lay there, wearing a hospital gown like Maggie's, covered with tubes and surrounded by beeping devices. Her arm was connected to an infusion too, and her nose had a cannula that seemed to help her breathe. Maggie's heart contracted at the sight of the helpless Alex, attached to tubes, and she approached her carefully, reaching for her hair.

"Hey," she whispered, leaning over to kiss her forehead.

She heard Clay reach for a chair and she let him help her sit down, not looking away from Alex.

"If you need me, I'm out here."

She tore her eyes away from Alex and looked at him. He stood in the doorway, waiting for her approval, and leaned against his crutches. His blond hair was disheveled and on his face was true concern. Her heart filled with warmth and she nodded at him.

"Thanks, Clay."

He smiled and left the room, closing the door behind him.

She looked back at Alex. Alex looked paler than ever, and Maggie noticed that there were many scratches on her face and neck, which were now clean of coal and soot. Maggie reached out to
stroke her cheek and put her hand down to hold Alex's hand. She won’t move until she’ll see
Alex's brown eyes looking back at her. The device continued to beep, soothing, and she rubbed
her thumb back and forth on Alex’s hand.

As a matter of fact, the first thing she wanted to do now was to call Kara. But she had no idea
how to look for her in the phone book, and how many Kara Danvers were in National City, and
how was she supposed to guess which one was Alex's sister? What was she supposed to say?
Hello, did you happen to have a sister who you thought she'd been dead for the past sixteen
months but actually she's still alive and in a hospital right now, two hours flight away from you?

Maggie shook her head, trying to think of a way to find Kara. Alex said she was a student at the
university... No, it's still too far-reaching. What about James? He's a doctor at the National City
general hospital, right? She tried to recall his family name from Alex's stories. Ore... Ol... maybe
it's Otto? Something with O, that's for sure.

Maybe she should wait until she'll wake up. She squeezed Alex's hand carefully, leaning over to
kiss her fingers. "Come back to me," she whispered.

She sat there for a while, she didn’t know how long. A nurse came and arranged the pillows under
Alex’s head, checked her vital signs, and offered Maggie with a warm smile to make her a bed in
the room. Maggie refused. She wants to be awake when Alex wakes up. She slept enough today.

She sat there for a few more hours when Lace came into the room, looking rather tired. He greeted
her. "You weren’t in your room so I figured Clay led you here." He went over to Alex’s beeping
devices and began to check that everything was alright. Maggie looked up at him.

"I everything okay?" He asked her. She sighed and turned her look at Alex.

"It's just that... I wish she'll wake up already," she said.

He pursed his lips and seemed to ponder the idea. “It is possible to insert material to wake her up,
but it’s always worthwhile to give the body the recovery time it needs. Of course, she was
supposed to wake up by now, but I think her trauma requires a longer recovery time.” He studied
her for a moment.

"It's just-" she blurted out. "It's just that her sister, she doesn’t know anything, and she... she needs
to know, and I-I don’t know how to reach her."

He nodded. "I understand. is there anything I can do for you?"

She thought for a moment. "I need you to get me the National City general hospital number. And
a paper, and a pencil too."

He pointed to the phone on the table. "You can use the phone here. I'll ask the nurse to give you
what you need." He was about to leave the room, then stopped. "If there's anything else you need,
ask someone to page me, and I’ll be there."

She thanked him, and took Alex's hand again, a little more encouraged.

~

James felt the stomach of the woman lying on the bed in front of him. He twisted his mouth.

"Abdomen's rigged," he told the resident next to him. "Run a CT for the stomach and for the legs
too." He handed him the sheet. "And give her something for the pain," he added, patting his back.
"Right away, Doctor."

James sent the resident away and looked around. The emergency room was rather relaxed for saturday night, and he went to the reception desk to check on previous patients.

"Dr. Olsen, you have a phone call."

He took the phone from the nurse's hand. "Olsen."

"James? Hey. My name is Maggie Sawyer, I have... I have some news for you, um... I think you should sit down."

"Come on, Kara, pick up, pick up, pick up..." he mumbled and pressed on his phone screen over and over. Kara was home, studying in a study group with Clark and Lois. He should have return late at night today, but after the phone call he just received he was doubtful if he would return to the hospital in the next few days. They have to fly there... God, he must book a flight, now. He pressed the accelerator again and bypassed a few cars. He must get home now. Why did Kara have to turn off her phone when she was studying? He liked it when she was being so devoted to studies, it gave him the feeling that she was back on track, but now there really wasn’t a time to be cut off.

"Hey, you’ve reached Kara's voicemail, if I don’t answer, I'm probably in the middle of eating, so don’t disturb me n-" He hung up.

"Damnit." He hissed.

With the motorcycle he would arrive much faster home, why he had to take the car? ugh, for god sake, he thought, then shook his head, focusing.

Alex is alive. She's safe and well and she’s here, and he can’t believe the idea. Kara was right, all this time. He took deep breaths, trying to relax from the excitement that enveloped him. He loved Alex, she was one of his closest friends and his girlfriend's sister, and he missed her so much. He can't believe it’s happening, that she’s really here.

He parked with a brake squeal, and jumped out of the car, running fast, climbing the stairs two at a time. He swung open the door, revealing the three students sitting around the table, talking and laughing. Kara turned bright eyes at him.

"James! I thought you were working late today," she called cheerfully. "Come on, join us, Clark has-"

"Kara, no, I have to, you need... You need to come with me," he said, breathing heavily.

Kara looked amused, though confused. "Okay..." She got up and went over to him, and he led her to the living room, gently sitting her on the couch. He looked into her big blue eyes and swallowed. He needs to tell her the news now, but he doesn't sure where to start. she gave him a warm smile. "What is it, James?"

"Kara, I... I got a phone call. A girl named Maggie called me." He put his hand on her knee, talking slowly. "She told me she was in the plane crash sixteen months ago with Alex, and she- she survived." Kara seemed unable to understand, confused. "What? It's not..."

"She said that she and another person swam to a nearby island and waited for the rescue, and they lived on this island ever since. This other person was Alex."

She caught her breath and looked at him, stunned. It can’t be. It can’t. She had already accepted
the idea, she had gotten used to it. Dammit, she went down to hell and back. If it wasn’t James sitting there telling her that, she would begin to think it was some sick joke.

"What? James, you ..."

"I’m absolutely sure. She told me. She told me about you, and me, she said things that only a person who knew Alex could know. She’s telling the truth, Kara."

"But, but... how, how did they get out of there?"

"She said there was an accident, and they were able to contact rescue forces, and Alex has been through surgery, but she is alright." He took a breath and smiled at her, his eyes a little wet as he took the words out of his mouth. "She's alive, Kara. Alex is alive, and she's here."

Kara couldn’t speak, she just stared at him, shocked, covering her mouth with her hands as tears began to fill her eyes. He reached out and hugged her, and she buried his face in his shoulder and began to cry, long and weeping cries, she fell to his shoulder, sobbing, taking out all the sadness and distance and anger that were still in her, everything now draining into this idea that Alex was in the hospital now, alive and well and waiting for them.

Kara couldn’t speak, she just stared at him, shocked, covering her mouth with her hands as tears began to fill her eyes. He reached out and hugged her, and she buried his face in his shoulder and began to cry, long and weeping cries, she fell to his shoulder, sobbing, taking out all the sadness and distance and anger that were still in her, everything now draining into this idea that Alex was in the hospital now, alive and well and waiting for them.

She pulled away and held his face in her hands, shivering. She smiled through the tears. "I was right, James, I was right this whole time. God, I can’t believe it..." The relief washed over her in great waves and she shook her head, still digesting everything. She looked up at him, serious.

"Where is she? We have to fly there, now."

He nodded. "I’ll go book the flight and you pack us a bag. We’re leaving."

She leaped out of the couch and walked over to the stunned Clark and Lois and told them the whole story. They cheered (Lois let out an excited scream and Clark shook James's hand warmly, pulling him into a tight embrace) and they began to get ready for the flight.

"Wait," she blurted out, dropping her shirts and going to the phone. "Mom."

He rummaged through the drawer for their passports, looking half-eyed for the quickest flight to Washington, while Kara dialed Eliza's number, her tears reeling as she said those words out loud.

"Alex is alive."

~

Maggie felt a hand on her shoulder, shaking her lightly. She straightened up, looking around. She must have fallen asleep when she rested her head for a few minutes while she sat beside Alex's bed. She looked up. Clay smiled at her, his eyes bleary.

"I brought you some coffee," he whispered, sitting beside her.

She took the coffee from his hands, thanking him with a nod. He looked at Alex.

"Still nothing?"

Maggie shook her head no and brought the coffee to her face, warming up. Its scent rose from the cup and she breathed it in. Clay chuckled as she opened the lid of the cup and stuck her nose in before taking a few recovering sips.

"God, I missed a lot of things, but coffee..." she murmured with her eyes closed, savoring the taste
of the coffee. She gave him a smile. "Thanks. How did you know it was my coffee order?"

He shrugged. "You look like the black coffee type."

She took a few more sips and then looked back at Alex, who lay still. She sighed a little and looked out the window. She guessed it was very early in the morning and wondered when Kara and James would arrive. He called her before they boarded the flight and said that Kara and Alex's mom would be on a flight too, and would be arriving soon.

They sat there and drank their coffee in silence, the machine still beeping in the background.

"Clay," Maggie turned her head to him. "Not that I mind, and you're very helpful and a good company, but... I wouldn't want to leave you here against your will. If you feel good, you can go home."

He lowered his head, looking at his coffee cup. "I don't feel so good with the idea that she's lying here because of me, because I was stupid enough to make an accident... I want to stay here until she wakes up, if that's okay with you. To tell her I'm sorry. I didn't think about that when she was conscious."

Maggie put a hand on his shoulder. "You have nothing to be sorry about," she said, her voice firm. "If at all, we need to say thank you. When you crashed on the island, you saved us. Without you we would have died there." She squeezed his broad shoulders and smiled at him as he looked up at her. "Don't feel guilty."

She looked at him for a few seconds when she heard a sound from Alex. She turned her head sharply and hurriedly put her coffee cup down on the table.

"Alex?"

Alex moved slowly, her eyelids fluttering. She raised her hand to Maggie, straining to open her eyes, coughing slightly.

"Water..."

"Of course-" Maggie rose and went to the water jug that stood there, pouring into a plastic cup. She reached for Alex carefully and put a straw in her mouth. Alex drank slowly, her eyes still closed. She released the straw, breathing deeply. Maggie put the cup down and looked back at her, a smile lighting her eyes.

Alex rubbed her eyes slowly, opening them at last. She led her eyes on Maggie, smiling wearily.

"Hey."

"Hey yourself," Maggie let out a laugh and leaned over to her, planting a longing kiss on her forehead.

Alex nodded to Clay, who stood with his crutches behind Maggie. "And hello to you too."

He waved awkwardly, smiling at her. "Good to see you."

Maggie put her hand on Alex's cheek. "You've worried us," she said quietly.

"Yeah, well, they gave me the good stuff for the pain," she shrugged, and Maggie laughed, happy. Alex woke up, and her sense of humor is working better than ever.
"Would someone please let me know the details?" Alex said, trying to stretch her hands and neck.

"I'll go get the doctor," Clay said, hurrying out of the room on his crutches. He closed the door behind him.

"How long was I out?"

"Along with the surgery, and the time after that... about thirty-five hours."

Alex widened her eyes. "Wow, I must have been really injured. What was that?".

"We should probably wait for the doctor, he knows a lot better than me about these stuff."

Alex nodded. "And you?"

Maggie ran her thumb over Alex's cheek. "I'm fine. just a bit worried about you."

Alex tried to rise, successless, and pulled Maggie to her for a brief kiss. "We're alive. We survived it."

"Hell yeah we are," Maggie smirked, kissing her again. She paused for a moment with her face pressed against Alex's face, breathing her deep.

They were interrupted by a knock on the door, and Maggie hurried to sit back. "Come in!"

Lace stepped in, grinning, and Clay hobbled after him.

"Alex! I'm so glad to see you woke up. How do you feel?"

"I'm fine, good to see you, Doctor..."

"Lace." He pulled out his flashlight and began examining her, feeling her hands and head, and removing off the blanket, revealing two legs cast to the thigh.

"We had to cast you until after the knee to prevent burnout, but I hope we can remove the castings in a month or so, at most." He pointed to her chest and began to explain Alex's lungs situation as Clay patted Maggie's shoulder and motioned for her to follow him. She got up and they went to the door.

"My mom called me, and they're a little worried. She's on her way to pick me up." He explained in a whisper and pointed to his phone. "I don't want to miss you before you go back to... um."

"National City,"

"Yeah, just call me before you fly back, okay?" He handed her a piece of paper where he scribbled his number. She took the piece and smiled at him, giving him a short hug. He was much taller than her, but she saw him as a child. He gave her a final nod, leaving the room.

Maggie returned to Lace and Alex, who were discussing the medical possibilities that were expected for Alex, in a language Maggie couldn't understand a word of. She sat down in her chair, taking Alex's hand.

"...Of course, thank you, Doctor." Alex smiled at him and he shook her hand.

"Well," he said, looking around at the two of them. "I've already said to Maggie and I have to say again, I'm fascinated by your story. And because Alex is expected to stay here for a few more weeks, I'd be glad if we could sit down and you'd tell me all about it, if that's alright with you, of
They exchanged an amused look.

"I guess it's alright," Alex said, and Maggie nodded.

"I'd also like to call my sister," Alex added. Lace nodded toward Maggie and Alex looked at her questioningly.

"I called her," Maggie explained. "I got James through the hospital and they got on a flight. In fact, they should be here soon." Alex looked stunned and excited.

"Oh, God," she murmured. "What about my mom?"

"They told her, she was supposed to come with them, on another flight." Maggie squeezed her hand encouragingly.

Lace coughed awkwardly and went to the door. "Whatever you need, you're welcome to page me." He shook Maggie's hand and went outside, closing the door.

Alex closed her eyes and shook her head. "I can't believe I'm going to see them again... I've almost lost all hope..." She raised wet eyes to Maggie. "Maggie..."

"It's alright," Maggie stroked her arm. "You'll be alright. We're all gonna be fine." She was silent for a few moments as she gently stroked Alex's hand. "James said he'd call when they'll be on their way to the hospital."

Alex nodded, looking at Maggie's hospital gown. "Do you want to go and change clothes, or...?"

"I have no clothes." Maggie snickers.

"Right."

"Besides, I want to be here in time to meet your family,"

Alex nodded, and suddenly her mouth rose in a curve. "Meeting the family..." she said suggestively. Maggie shook her head in embarrassment. She has never come so far in a relationship to meet the family. Alex seems to pass her through the same steps as she does for Alex.

"Where's your necklace?"

Maggie reached out automatically to put her neck. "I left it in my room, on the table. I'll go get it." She stood up. "You need anything?" She picked up her nearly finished coffee. "Clay brought me coffee earlier, you can finish it."

"Oh!" Alex took the cup gratefully and sipped, just to grimace and almost spit it out. "It's black coffee!"

Maggie laughed. "You want a macchiato?"

"Whipped," Alex raised a finger and reached for the glass of water to wash the coffee down. Maggie rolled her eyes and bent to kiss her cheek. "Okay, but I can't kiss you after you drink it," she said.

"Then kiss me before," Alex pulled her close with a smile and they kissed a long kiss, Maggie sliding her hand along Alex's cheek. She pulled away and smiled, turning back to the door.
"Maggie," Alex stopped suddenly and Maggie turned to her questioningly. Alex opened her mouth, then closed it.

"Nevermind, we'll talk when you come back." She waved her hand dismissively.

Maggie came back to her room and picked up her necklaces, the only item that came back from the island with her. She held it tight and glanced around again last time, then left the room. Lace, who walked down the hall with a medical chart in his hand, greeted her with a nod.

"Doctor Lace!" She called after him. He turned, raising his head.

"I, ahh..." She moved closer, looking sideways. "Alex asked me to bring her coffee, and... I don't really have cash on me right now, would it be fine if..."

"Oh, of course!" He reached out and pulled out his wallet, handing her twenty dollars. She picked up the bill, wearing it nervously. She hated being needy, asking people for things, but the next thing she felt she almost had to. She opened her mouth several times and closed it, and Lace looked at her affectionately.

"Take a few more, on me. Give it back when you can."

She looked at him with gratitude and nodded, and he patted her shoulder and walked on, back to his medical chart.

Maggie hurried to the souvenir shops at the hospital entrance, finding a sweatshirt and knee-length pants to change instead of the hospital gown she wore. Although the clothes were a little bit too simple, she felt much better and wanted to wear something a bit more representative for the meeting with Kara and everyone. She dragged the infusion poll behind her, which was almost out, and her feet remained bare, but she preferred to leave them like that. She didn’t feel a cool and pleasant surface as the hospital floor under her feet for too long. Besides, they were so rough that she felt they were like shoes.

She went to a coffee stand and bought Alex a cup of coffee, then hurried back to Alex's room. Alex lay on the bed, opening her eyes as Maggie walked in. Maggie handed her the coffee and hurried into the bathroom to change. Just as she went out, dressed in her new clothes, the phone on the table rang. They looked at each other, freezing. Alex's hand trembled and Maggie quickly took away her coffee cup so it wouldn’t fall. She picked up the phone tube carefully.

"Hello?"

"Maggie? it's James."

"Hey."

"We are on our way from the airport to the hospital. Eliza will come with us."

Maggie nodded, and when she remembered that he couldn’t see her, she swallowed, strengthening her grip on the tube. "Yeah, we... we'll be here. Do you have the room's details?"

"Yes, I wrote them down, don’t worry." She heard he was breathing deeply. "See you soon."

She looked at Alex and silently mouthed you want to talk to them? Alex's eyes widened and she shook her head, closing her eyes tightly.

"See you soon," she said, then hang up.
"Oh my God," Alex murmured, her hands still trembling. Maggie sat beside her, gathering Alex's hands in hers, trying to calm her.

"What did you want to tell me?" She asked quietly, trying to distract her. "Before I left,"

"Oh, I..." Alex shook her head and breathed deeply. "When they'll arrive, I'll have to introduce you..." She seemed a little lost, unsure. "Would it be as.. my girlfriend, or...?"

Maggie smiled reassuringly. "If that’s what makes you comfortable. Whatever you feel like saying."

Alex nodded, tightening her grip on Maggie's hands. "Yes, I think that… that's good. My girlfriend."

"Hey, it's gonna be okay. I'm gonna be right here the whole time. I can also do the talking if you don’t-"

"No, no," Alex shook her head. "I should do it. I can do it."

"Okay." Maggie whispered, not dropping her smile. She leaned forward and kissed Alex a long, soft kiss on the forehead.

"I love you."

"I love you too."

They remained in the room, alone, waiting. Alex wriggled her fingers fearfully and Maggie walked back and forth, tapping on her legs nervously. She took off the IV, since it was out, and she didn’t bother to ask for a refill. She felt better, and either way, more important things were on the agenda right now.

Suddenly there was a knock on the door and they exchanged glances. Maggie called out, "Open!" And a nurse stuck her head inside.

"A few people came to see Miss Danvers."

"Let them in," Maggie nodded at her.

The nurse opened the door wide, and three people stood at the doorway, the first one running in, her blond hair wild and her blue eyes sparkling with tears. Before Maggie could figure out what was going on, the woman and Alex were smashed in a tight embrace, weeping over each other's shoulders. The other two people, a tall black guy and an elderly woman who had wiped her eyes again and again, came in too, hurrying to wrap Alex in a group hug.

Maggie stood on the side, looking at them, smiling broadly. She wasn’t jealous, she was happy for them. To be honest, she was afraid that at the moment of truth a stab of jealousy would attack her, but to see the tearful faces of this family, to know everything they had gone through, It was so moving that tears came to her eyes, and not tears of sadness.

The girl Maggie had guessed was Kara finally released Alex (who carefully felt her chest that had not yet fully recovered) and they held each other's faces, still sobbing aloud. The other two people, James and Eliza, Maggie guessed again, both hugged her in turns, neither of them able to say a word yet. Kara hugged her again, holding her sister's face, looking at her joyfully.

"Alex," she whispered. "I just can’t believe it..." She burst into tears again and buried her head in her sister's shoulder. Alex ran her hand over Kara's back, tears wetting her gown.
Eliza sat down on the bed and pulled her into a second group hug, while James wiped his eyes with a smile and turned to Maggie.

"Hey... Maggie, right?" He said, approaching her, reaching a hand for a shake. She squeezed it while tears were still running down her cheeks and nodded at him, laughing. "James. It's good to see you."

Eliza pulled away from the embrace first and left Kara and Alex together as she approached Maggie as well.

"Hello," she said. "You must be Maggie." Maggie reached for a handshake, nodding, her face radiant. "I'm Eliza," Eliza said, then reached her hands, holding Maggie's shoulders, her eyes sparkling. Before Maggie could respond, Eliza wrapped her in a warm embrace, and Maggie immediately felt her body relax with this woman's touch. She hugged her back, a new set of tears streaming from her eyes.

"I can't believe it, I just can't believe it," Kara went on, her voice shaking with tears and laughter, not letting go of Alex's grasp. She looked around at everyone, who were smiling broadly. "It's... it's like a dream, or, or, or some crazy fantasy..."

"It's not," Alex told her, sniffing. She brought Kara's face to hers and kissed her forehead. "I'm here, I'm safe and alive." She breathed her sister deeply, holding her tight. "There wasn’t a day on the island that I didn’t think of you. There wasn’t a day that I didn’t try to survive to get back to you." Kara buried her face in Alex's shoulder again, sobbing harder. Alex sobbed on Kara's shoulder too, and they relaxed only after a long time. Kara let out a breath and a loose laugh and looked around again, suddenly noticing Maggie.

"You," she said, finally got up from her sister's bed. "You’re... Maggie," she said, coming over to her. Maggie continued to smile, nodding, unable to say a word. Across from her was Kara Danvers, the sister. The one she had heard so much about and only now she meets. Her heart pounded as Kara wrapped her in a hug, much more crushing than Eliza's, and she gave her a similar hug, seeing Alex's wet gaze through Kara's shoulder.

"Thank you," Kara whispered to her. Maggie tightened her embrace in response, wondering for a moment if Kara would give her her blessing to be with her sister.

Eliza sat down in the empty chair, holding Alex's hand, and Kara sat on her bed in front of Alex. Maggie stood beside the bed, carefully placing her hand on Alex's shoulder, and James leaned against the wall, his hands in his pockets.

They began to tell their story, in turns, not dropping out a single detail. The lack of water, and strategy for collecting food, fishing, and the bodies, and building the whale house, and the hobbies they found during times of boredom. Everyone listened, fascinated. Maggie felt a little dizzy from the longing stand, and James, who noticed, hurried to get her a chair, and she sat down, giving him a grateful look.

They had almost finished the story, though they didn’t mention anything about the relationship between them yet. Kara seemed to notice Maggie's hand, which rested on Alex's shoulder, gently stroking it, and now was in Alex's lap, their fingers crossed. She said nothing, and Maggie waited patiently for the moment when Alex felt she was ready to come out.

"I don’t remember too much about what happened after the chopper crashed, but Maggie took good care of me," Alex finished. "And Clay, too," she turned to Maggie. "Where is he, by the way?"
"He had to go. He asked us to call him before we get back to National City, he wanted to say goodbye."

Alex nodded. "That's about everything, I think." She looked at Maggie again, who gave her a reassuring smile and squeezed her hand.

"I... uh..." she murmured, her eyes fixed on her lap. "There's something else you need to know." She looked from one to the other and finally, her eyes landed on Kara, who looked at her curiously.

"Maggie and I... we're... I mean, it's not that- we're just... uh..." She raised her hands in frustration and looked at Maggie, her eyes lost.

"What she's trying to say," Maggie smiled, "Is that we're together."

"Yes, together." Alex breathed, looking worried and anxious. She looked back at her family. "Me and Maggie, we're together. In a relationship. Romantic relationship."

There was silence, and Alex looked at the three of them, looking more frightened than ever before. She released her hand gently from Maggie's hand and placed it on Kara's, begging wordlessly for her to say something.

"I- I'm not trying... don't take this the wrong way, but..." She looked from Alex to Maggie. "Are you sure? Of what you're doing?"

Alex nodded. "One hundred percent. I was... well, it took some time, and I know it sounds weird and unexpected, but... I do, I like Maggie." She paused for a moment. "I love her."

Kara studied Maggie again, trying to gauge her. "And you?"

"I love Alex." Maggie said without hesitation. Alex slipped her hand carefully back into Maggie's palm.

"So are you... gay now? I mean, bisexual, like Kara?" Eliza asked, squinting in confusion. Alex exhaled an unsure laugh, shaking her head.

"I'm... not sure, but I could be. I mean, Kara, after all-" she gestured at her sister, "-loves men and women. I don't know exactly what I like. Maybe I never really liked men. I don't know. Either way, I'm with Maggie." she said. She looked back from one to the other, trying to understand their reactions.

"I don't expect you to understand right away, and I realize if it'll take a while to seep, but I ask you to give it time, a few weeks, months, and you will see that we're not making this up. it's real."

She looked into her sister's eyes. "I feel it."

Kara nodded. "Okay, yes, of course, I believe you." Kara rubbed her sister's hand with an affectionate smile. "I got you."

Alex breathed a sigh of relief, turning her gaze to her mother, who smiled warmly at her. "I love you so much, sweetheart, no matter how or with whom." She reached for Alex's cheek, which leaned against her. "I hope you're making the right choices."

"I am, trust me."

She looked up at James. "Olsen?"
He smiled at her. "What's good for you, good for me, sis."

She shook her head, smirking. "God, I've missed you." She looked at Kara and him again. "You idiots haven't married yet, have you?"

Kara let out a laugh as James came up behind her and put his hands on her shoulders.

"I couldn't marry without my sister there anyway."

"Oh, so I need to understand that you want to marry me?" James teased. Kara raised her head to meet his gaze.

"I was yours the second Alex pushed us both into a kitchen to cook halloween dinner for ninety people," she retorted, and he leaned over to kiss her to the voices of Alex's protests ("That was thirty people, don't exaggerate!") and Eliza and Maggie’s laughs.

They continued to sit there, and James went to the nearest restaurant, bringing enough food to feed an army, and they all sat eating and laughing, completing gaps of months to make up, and all the time Alex's hand didn’t leave Maggie's.

Kara went out to talk on the phone with Clark, and Eliza and James sank into a conversation, and Maggie took the opportunity, sitting carefully on the bed next to Alex, leaning back and wrapping her arm around Alex's shoulder.

"I like your family," Maggie mumbled.

Alex was silent for a few moments. "They’re your family now too," she whispered eventually back. Maggie looked up into Alex's eyes, which glowed at her warmly. She felt her cheeks get wet again, and Alex reached out to wipe them while Maggie rested her head on her shoulder, closing her eyes, not letting go of Alex. She felt exhausted, but not the bad or the worried kind. Just the kind you might feel when you meet the people who are about to change your life, and everything around fills you with excitement, and with a pleasant hum, and your heart beats so hard you can't believe this is your life.

But it is your life.

And once Maggie leaned closer to Alex and she pressed her lips against Maggie’s temple, she felt like everything will definitely, without a doubt, will be absolutely alright.

Chapter End Notes

thank you for reading !!

I apologize for any of you who knows medicine more than me about any mistakes I made or will make in the future in this fic about medicine. I hope that I didn't/won't do a lot of them lol

A few words about the Danvers' reaction to Alex's coming out of the closet. You have to remember that she didn't see them for sixteen months, when before that they (and she) were sure she was completely straight. Suddenly she returns from the dead, with a stranger woman, and telling them that they are together. The Danvers' are not homophobic, not even close, they're just trying to figure out what happened to
the Alex they knew. They worry that she's not sure what she's doing, that sixteen months may have changed her (and they did, but not in a bad way). The reason they don't jump up and down enthusiastically and congratulate her is simply because they are a bit overwhelmed. They aren't used to the new Alex, and they check whether she feels good. They trust her completely, just, step by step back to reality. I'm deeply sorry (I really do!) if I hurt someone writing this response, I didn't mean to. I tried to make it as real and true as possible. Don't worry, the Danvers will welcome Maggie with open arms :) 

also, I hope it was clear that Alex is confused, but she's definitely a lesbian, make no mistakes about That

thank you again for reading! if you liked it, make sure to leave kudos\comment below and let me know what you think! 

I will try my best to update every week or every second week

I'm @bilerleigh at tumblr, come say hi
Recovery

Chapter Summary

it's a little fluff and mostly rounding up things i felt needed rounding up

Chapter Notes

i've never had less power to do my own beta read so just uh read and i hope there won't be a lot of mistakes
i've been through over this like twice but it's never enough

See the end of the chapter for more notes

There was a knock at the door, and Lace came in, wearing a wide smile. "Hello to my favorite patient," he said, winking.

Maggie laughed. "Hello to my favorite doctor," said Alex, closing the magazine she was reading.

He approached the monitor and she lifted her legs slowly, sitting down carefully on the bed.

"How are we doing today?"

Alex shrugged and he looked at Maggie, who was sitting beside the bed, her hands folded. "She's okay."

Lace looked back at Alex. "Is she?"

Alex pouted. "I've been here for six weeks, Lace. You promised me I'd be out of here in a month. I can't stay here anymore."

Lace pursed his lips sadly, folding his hands. "I know, but your legs don't agree with me. You still can't take a few steps by yourself, and that requires treatments that you can't have alone at home." Alex's legs were already out of the castings, but now they were bandaged, and she was mostly in a wheelchair.

"So let me go back to National City. I'll have the treatments there, at the hospital." Alex said, pleadingly. "My family has been flying back and forth for weeks from National City to here, and Maggie has been sleeping on a cot in my room since she was released. I beg of you, let me out."

He put his hands in his pocket, thinking. Maggie leaned back in her chair, amused. He looked at her.

"She's tough."

"The toughest." She agreed, smiling.

He looked back at Alex. "Okay, I'll make a few calls and see what we can do."
Alex smiled broadly, and he turned to the daily examination of her chest and lungs, then her legs, while Maggie went out for coffee.

Indeed, six weeks had passed since they left the island, and for now, the situation had only improved. She got to know Kara, Eliza, and James better, and they were loving, caring, and especially very happy, and welcomed her with open arms. Alex felt great, except for her legs, which didn’t function too well, as Lace said.

But as he also said, they were on the way out, and Maggie was never more excited.

She is about to start her new life, with her not-so-new girlfriend in a new apartment that already been waiting for at National City, thanks to James. She is going to do something meaningful with her life, as she decided sixteen months ago, and the decision was back on top of her list of priorities. She has no pressure, no rush, and most of her problems are gone. Her life seems quite perfect, relatively speaking.

Clay came to visit from time to time. They were happy with his visits, and he liked to spend time with them. His legs recovered within a few weeks, and he would stay with them when Alex’s family wasn’t around. They liked him very much and loved spending time with him, and he used to bring them cakes that his mother had made. The quarrel with his parents, as turned out, was resolved as soon as Clay came home from the accident, safe and sound, and from his reports, things were only getting better.

Maggie returned to the room with two cups of coffee, finds Alex sitting and reading, alone. Since she rarely left the room, except once or twice a day in a wheelchair, she asked Maggie to bring her books, magazines, and anything else that would occupy her hands, that were desperate to be occupied. Maggie even bought a small chessboard, and they played sometimes, almost as if they were on the island again. Now Alex was absorbed in a book, and when Maggie came into the room she looked up and smiled at her. "Thanks," She took the coffee from her, closing the book.

"So..." Maggie said, sitting up. "Does Lace really letting you go?"

"Yes. As he said, there are still a few calls and inquiries to do, but I think by the end of the week we're getting out of here."

Maggie smiled through her coffee. "That’s great."

"It is." Alex reached for Maggie's hand. "Are you excited?"

"Very." She put her coffee on the table and lay down beside Alex on the bed. "We'll have our own apartment, with our own stuff, and our own bed..." She smirked and bit her lip, looking at Alex. "I don’t think I'll survive much longer without sleeping with you in the same bed."

Alex laughed. "Don’t worry, I think you’re gonna make it. besides, you spend a couple of nights here in this bed with me."

“Yeah, but it’s so uncomfortable,” Maggie sighed, and Alex laughed again.

They stayed there, lying, Alex's hand around Maggie's shoulder, which rested her head on Alex's chest. Kara and James returned to National City the day before and were due back for the weekend. Eliza stayed in one of the hotels in the city and was about to visit them for lunch.

"Did you thought about what you want to do?" Alex asked slowly. "You know, when... when we get back."
Maggie was silent, looking at Alex's palm. "What do you mean?"

"You know what I mean."

Maggie sighed. "Yes and no."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, I want to study something, but I'm not sure what... I'm not..." She tried to find the words. "I don't know what I'm capable of, what I'm good at, what I can do. I never really thought about doing something like that." Her hands fell to her lap and Alex hurried to take her hand in hers.

It wasn’t the whole truth, but Maggie didn’t feel she could speak the truth aloud. The truth was that Maggie's past, and all that she had gone through in her life, led her to think of only one profession she wanted to engage in, but she was still sure she had no chance of reaching it. That she has no chance of rising from the situation she has been in since she remembers herself, and to become... this person. Alex believed in her, and she hoped that with a little more confidence and believing in herself she could make that dream come true. For now, she was silent.

"I'm sure you'll be able to find something... when we get back home, we'll look at the Internet, we'll make some calls... we'll see what you can do. I'll help you.” She hugged Maggie's arm. "You're amazing, Sawyer, we'll find your dream job."

Maggie turned her head up, smiling. "Thanks." She whispered.

Alex didn’t answer and just put her face close to her, kissing her forehead lightly.

"What about you, were you thinking about what you were going to do?"

Alex exhaled. "I actually talked about it with James the other day, and he said that a doctor who didn’t practice medicine for more than a certain period of time had to do some test that would allow them to practice medicine again."

"So you’ll do it?"

"Yes, I suppose it would be nice to get back to the hospital." She was silent, smiling a little. "James said everyone would be so happy to see me."

Maggie kissed her cheek.

They'll be alright.

~

"Alex, that's great, I'm so glad to hear that," Eliza smiled at them both warmly, and under the table, Maggie felt Alex's hand groping at hers, and she squeezed it hard.

"Yes, the release papers are on the way," Alex played with the fork in her other hand.

They sat in one of the cafes inside the hospital compound, Alex in a wheelchair, a large cotton sweater covering her hospital gown. The air was cool, and Maggie wrapped Alex’s frozen hands in hers, which were a little warmer. The meal was long overdue, and Eliza was watching them, smiling.
Since leaving the island, it was necessary to arrange and organize all their things and belongings. When she disappeared, all of Alex's things were packed in bags and crates and placed in some storage unit owned by James and Kara, and now they would be back in her possession. When Maggie checked with her landlady (who was rather surprised to hear that Maggie was alive and well), it turned out that she had sold all of Maggie's things when she discovered Maggie was missing. She apologized again and again and promised to pay the sum back, and Maggie smiled nervously throughout the conversation, telling her there's no need, and they discuss the matter when they’ll return to National City. Luckily, there weren’t many things there to begin with, and nothing of sentimental value, and Kara assured her that they’ll go on a shopping spree to renew her wardrobe. Maggie was excited about spending time with Kara. As for shopping, a little less.

They didn’t have much money. In fact, the bank foreclosed on Maggie's account when all the money there had been used for the rent she had committed to in her contract. Kara was outraged and offered to sue the bank, but Maggie calmed her down and said there wasn’t too much money there anyway, and that a lawsuit would only give everyone a headache. Luckily, all the money Alex’s family received from the plane crash lawsuit entered to a fund that saved the money, thanks to James, and now Alex and Maggie could use it and decide together what to do with it next.

And so, slowly and steadily, they began to walk back to the normal life course. New clothes here and there, new phones, and, as mentioned, an apartment James had got for them, just two blocks from Kara and his apartment. They wore clean clothes and showered, in a real shower, and even the color of their skin began to slowly return to its original color, and their hair grew, recovering from the weather damage. Past wounds, bruises, and scratches all slowly faded away from their bodies, and Maggie hoped she would soon gain some weight, and Alex too.

The only thing that prevented them from going on with their new lives was Alex's wounded legs that forced her to stay in Joxerton, and Eliza was thrilled to hear that this obstacle too was about to be removed soon.

"So we'll talk to Dr. Lace and get you on a plane back to National City as soon as possible." She pulled out a small notepad in which she wrote important things and began to write, keep on talking at the same time. Hearing the word 'plane', Maggie's hand squeezed Alex's hand harder, and she turned her head quickly, anxiously. Maggie just shook her head. "I'm fine."

"You're scared?"

She turned her head away, closing her eyes, thinking. Finally, she looked up to look at Alex's worried eyes. "I'm with you." She whispered. Alex smiled broadly at her and raised her hand to kiss the back of Maggie's hand.

"...And of course, the bed." Eliza continued to write and talk at the same time. "It will arrive tomorrow, I'll have Kara to be there to get the movers, and someone to set it up properly, or else we-"

"Thanks, mom." Alex reached out to hold Mom's hand, smiling at her. "Thank you. for everything."

Eliza raised her head and her eyes filled with tears. She put down her pad, holding out two hands to hold Alex's hand.

"Sweetie," she said. "You don’t understand how excited I am to see you. I thought you were dead, we all were. I can’t believe you came back to us." She wiped a tear down her cheeks. "I love you so much."
"I love you too, mom."

Eliza turned a wet smile at Maggie, who almost cried too. "And thank you, Maggie. For come into our lives. I couldn't ask anyone better than you for Alex. I see how you make her happy and do her good, it's so amazing to see both of you..." She now held each of their hands in her own hands, smiling from ear to ear. "I just want the good for both of you,"

"I missed you so much," said Alex, shaking her head. She had said that phrase so many times in the past six weeks, and she seemed like she’ll never stop saying it.

Maggie felt her heart full, overflowing, as she watched these two women, united, happy, pleased, side by side, and she was never happier to be part of a relationship.

She felt Eliza's hand presses hers warmly, and the sensation sent light balls to every corner of her body.

~

Maggie zipped the zipper around her duffel bag where she had put in all the things she bought during their short stay in the hospital. There were some clothes and books, and a small chessboard, and a few other things. She put the bag on her back and turned to Alex.

"Ready?"

Alex sat in the wheelchair, reading a magazine. She glanced at Maggie with one eye.

"I'm not the one who does the walking."

Maggie rolled her eyes and went to the back of the chair to push it out of the room, bending down to give a quick kiss on Alex's head. Eliza stood at the reception desk talking to Dr. Lace, and they both turned to the girls as they approached them.

"Doctor, thank you for everything." Maggie held out her hand and he shook it warmly, a broad smile on her face.

"No, thank you. It was a pleasure to meet you two lovely ladies, and your story is absolutely impressive." He pushed his hands back into his pockets. "Be sure I won’t forget you."

Alex nodded at him with a smile. "Thanks, Lace."

"My pleasure, Miss Danvers."

They exchanged a few more farewells, and Maggie began to push Alex toward the exit, where she replaced the wheelchair with a pair of crutches that weren’t as comfortable, but did the job. Maggie noticed that Eliza was saying last words of farewell to Doctor Lace. He said something to her, and she nodded and they both looked at the girls, grinning broadly. They shook hands and Eliza hurried to where Maggie and Alex had settled with the crutches. Maggie looked at her.

"Is everything okay?"

"Everything is excellent," Eliza said, looking at both of them warmly. "Let's get out of here."
They took a taxi to the airport, where they separated from Eliza, when she boarded a flight to Midvale and them on a National City. Kara and James were already waiting for them in their new apartment. Eliza said goodbye with a kiss, promising to come and visit at the first chance.

They sat at the boarding gate waiting to be called. Maggie, who hadn’t slept well for several weeks, put her head on Alex's shoulder, dozing a little while Alex kept reading her magazine.

"Flight 498 to National City please arrive at Gate 12," they heard a voice calling. Maggie quickly raised her head from Alex's shoulders, which folded the magazine. "It's us."

Maggie looked at her, fear in her eyes. Alex put her arms around Maggie, letting her bury her face in her shoulder.

"We'll be alright," she whispered. "It's a short flight, inside the stats... nothing will happen, I promise."

Maggie wanted to ask her how can she be so sure, and wanted to run away as far as she could, and wanted to make love to Alex right there on the uncomfortable benches of the airport, for the last time before they’ll get on this plane, and wanted to tell her how much she loved her, and she wanted to scream that she will never ever get on another plane in her life, but all she could do was kiss Alex carefully, as if she’s afraid to break her, her hand lightly caressing Alex's shoulder. "Okay."

They went to the gate, moving toward the sleeve of the boarding, Maggie doesn’t remove her hand from Alex's shoulder while she leans on her crutches on her way inside the plane.

~

"You're here!"

"Hey, Kar," Alex said wearily, striding painfully into the new apartment. Maggie followed her, carrying the bags, looking around.

The apartment was bright and well-equipped, and Kara, apparently, also insisted on filling the fridge. James was in the kitchen, and just finished drilling one of the kitchen cabinets against the wall. He turned to the girls with a smile, waving. Alex landed heavily on the couch, placing a hand over her eyes.

Kara bounced around, taking the bags from Maggie. "We've been working since yesterday to arrange the place, isn’t it amazing?" she said. "There's food in the fridge, and there are towels and linens in the cupboard too, and we've brought here all of Alex’s things, and we've fixed the bed and the couches in the living room, and James even managed to set up the TV." She pointed proudly to the TV on the wall, keep talking about what they had already done with the place.

Maggie turned around slowly, studying the new apartment. Everything was very pleasant, though it still didn’t feel quite like home. She would have liked to talk to Kara and James, but to be honest, all she really wanted was to take a quick shower and go to sleep in Alex's arms. She turned to the cheerful Kara, smiling wearily at her. Kara stopped abruptly, looking from Maggie to Alex and back.

"Of course, you want to go to bed, we'll talk tomorrow." She bent down to kiss Alex's tired cheeks, giving her a quick hug. "I love you," she said, and Alex hummed something, too tired to
"Thank you, Kara, for everything." Maggie smiled at her, and Kara hurriedly wrapped her in a hug. "Thank you, Maggie."

James gave a friendly pat on Maggie's shoulder and they left the apartment, leaving Maggie and Alex alone. Maggie looked at Alex, who was sitting with her eyes closed on the couch, leaning back. She seemed almost asleep. Maggie smiled and went to the closet, taking out bedding and made the bed, then went into the shower.

A shower was one of the things she missed on the island in particular, and she savored the water that now poured out of the tap, washing her body, removing dust and dirt from the trip. Her mind was flooded with thoughts as she stood under the hot water, and she thought about the flight.

At first, when the plane began to take off, she held Alex's hand tightly, almost breaking it. At her request, they sat in the seats far from the window, and Maggie closed her eyes and waited for the takeoff to end. Not that it was something that would please her, she was on an airplane, for christ sake, everything seems to frightened her so much. Once when the plane was tilting too far to the side, or a flight attendant dropping a glass too close to her, every time she jumped in surprise, closing her eyes. All the while Alex was sitting beside her, murmuring calm words and holding her hand, drawing soft circles on the spot between her thumb and forefinger. How come you're not afraid? Maggie murmured. Alex smiled and pushed a strand of hair off Maggie's forehead. You give me courage, in some way. Maggie's heart calmed down slowly, and by the time they landed she was almost alright. Alex gave her the courage, back.

She emerged from the shower, drying herself and wearing the sweatshirt she had bought at the souvenir shop six weeks ago. She went to the couch, sitting down next to Alex.

"Babe?"

Alex hummed something, almost completely asleep.

"Let's go to sleep."

Alex smiled a little, her eyes still closed, and reached out to get up.

Maggie helped her up from the couch and practically carried her to the big bed which was a few feet away. She undressed her carefully, dressing her in one of the big shirts she found in the closet among all the clothes Kara had brought there. Alex lay down on the bed, folding to the side as she always did on the island, and Maggie smiled, lying down next to her. The soft mattress and the new linen, and the fact that she was too tired to do anything at the moment, and Alex lying beside her, one hand around Maggie's waist, all this made her smile happily, and she looked at sleeping Alex, leaning over to kiss a soft kiss on her forehead.

"Good night, Danvers."

Alex didn’t answer, and Maggie quickly sank into a deep sleep, perhaps the best she had in years.

~

Maggie opened the fridge, stuck her head inside. It was full, and she wondered what Kara thought when she bought all these groceries. Orange jam? A baby carrots tray? She snickered as she
imagined Kara passing through the supermarket hallway and loading whatever she could on a shopping cart. Maggie shut it quietly, turning to make herself some coffee.

Alex was still asleep, and Maggie decided to try to make something to eat, opening and closing cupboards, finding pans, bowls and plates, and various cutlery that was there. They seemed to have almost everything they need.

She heard a sigh from the bed and saw Alex turn over on her side. She hurried to her, sitting down next to her.

"Good morning," she smiled at her. Alex rubbed her eyes, sighing.

"How did you sleep?"

"Excellent, but my whole body hurts." She opened her eyes at last, smiling, reaching for Maggie's hand. "And you?"

"Always sleep well when you're next to me."

Alex rolled her eyes and Maggie laughed, leaning over to kiss her cheek.

"I'm making us something to eat, and then I'll warm you a bath, how is that sound?"

Alex looked at her, eyes soft.

"It sounds like I want you to stay here with me all day." Maggie laughed at that, and Alex pulled her to lay down on top of her, start kissing her face and neck gently. Alex held her hips with tenderness, slowly rolling her hands under Maggie's sweater, caressing Maggie's skin with her fingertips, on her back and waist, and they lay there, loving with happy laziness. Maggie felt calm, as she hadn't felt for a long time.

"Aren't you hungry?" Maggie asked slowly, between kisses. "There's a lot of food in the fridge, and I thought to make some pancakes, or omelets, or bacon, or... anything that's not mango or fish," she finished, making Alex laugh, small wrinkles on the sides of her eyes. Maggie laid a gentle kiss on Alex's temple.

"I don't want you to go," she said with a pout. Maggie didn’t want to go either, but her stomach began to make noises, and she had to admit she felt pretty hungry. She put her head in the hollow of Alex's neck, resting. They lay there for a few more minutes, peacefully, and Maggie almost forgot all the noises her stomach made a moment ago.

A phone rang, and Maggie took a few seconds to realize that it was Alex's new phone. She stood up heavily and took it out of her bag, looking at the screen. "Babe, it's Kara," she said, handing the device to Alex. Alex held the device to her ear. "Hello?"

Maggie heard Kara's voice over the phone but couldn't hear her words. She guessed it was a good time to go and make food while Alex talked to Kara. She went to the kitchen and began looking for kitchen utensils. She put down a frying pan and a bowl and began to cut, mix, and fry, and by the time Alex had finished her phone call, there were already a few pancakes ready. Maggie never made real pancakes, without aready mixture from a box, but she guessed the ingredients, letting them mingle in the pan. Today there is no place for seriousness or rigor, today it's about Alex, and her.

"What did Kara want?"

"Nothing, to know if we're alright, if we need anything..." Alex lay back on the cushions.
Maggie tasted one of the pancakes and twisted her mouth. She went to Alex with a plate and fork and gave her a bit, looking at her expectantly as she cut a piece and put it in her mouth, chewing slowly.

"I tasted one but feels like something is missing ..."

"Well... it... really feels like..." Alex put down the fork. "something is missing..."

"What is it?"

"Sugar, Mags." Alex pushed the plate toward her.

Maggie's eyes widened and she patted her forehead. "Shit!" She hurried to the kitchen, adding sugar to the mix.

A few attempts later, Alex tasted three more pancakes until she announced which one was the best, and Maggie smiled with satisfaction while watching Alex devouring the pile she'd made. They finished the pancakes and Maggie went to wash the dishes. She finished and went back to lie beside Alex, who was now drinking her coffee calmly, running her fingers gently inside Maggie's hair.

Alex went in for a shower ("as much as I appreciate you wanting to warm me a bath, I think I've done enough baths for the rest of my life,") insisting she can manage alone, and finally compromising that the door would be open, in any case. Maggie rearranged the cabinets and shelves a little so that she could know where everything was. She had never possessed so many things, and it was nice, for a change. She opened the window to the small porch, leaning against the banister, looking down at the view.

She thought about the city, and the lights down there, and how there's a smell in the air, a smell she wasn’t used to, a new and pleasant smell. Not salty, she suddenly realized. Somehow, it was a smell she had smelled before, but had been forgotten from her mind. She thought about how nice it would be to go out with Alex for a dinner, and with Kara for shopping, and to be and spend time with people who loved her, who cared about her. She thought of the life she had always imagined- to be beside Alex, to be loved, to be... someone in the world. She took a deep breath. Her constant fear that she was ruining every good thing in her path started to creep into her heart as usual, but she rejected it. Something in her gleamed and glowed and knew she would be just fine. Right where she is.

She went inside, where Alex came out of the shower slowly, hobbling on her crutches, her wet hair splashing everywhere. No matter what state she's in, Maggie bit her lip, she always taking my breath away.

Alex raised her head. "Even though I had to sit, it was the best shower I ever took."

Maggie laughed. "You missed showering, huh?"

"So much." Alex sat on the bed with a sigh, throwing her crotch aside. "I need to make a few calls, do you mind handing me the bag?"

Maggie went to pick up the bag, put it in Alex's lap, and leaned over to give a short kiss on her lips.

"I'm going for a walk, to see the neighborhood." to breathe some fresh air, to think, to clear my head. She didn’t want to tell Alex, wouldn't want to make her worry. She has enough worries as well. She just needed some time to think.
Alex rummaged through her bag. "Great, have fun."

Maggie put her new phone in the back pocket of one of Alex's old jeans, which she was wearing now. She picked up a coat that was there and left.

The air was cool, but not too much. She watched passersby, children running past her, a couple of girls laughing too loudly on the other side of the street, an elderly man sitting on a bench, smoking a cigarette.
She used to smoke once. She used to do a lot of things to annoy everyone, do things out of spite. She would get drunk, sleep with whoever she could, dance with whoever she could, smoke whatever she could. Always with everyone, never with anyone. She used to live in the present, always. Not to celebrate and enjoy and ‘make the most out of life’, as they used to say. It wasn’t that. It was to hide from everyone, and especially from herself, the fact that she had never felt like she belongs to anyone, or anywhere, and always tried to cloud her senses enough not to feel. Until the trip to India, which was supposed to be the turning point in her life, and in a sense, it can be said that it was. Now, she has to think about what to do with her new life.

She bought a cup of hot coffee at a stand on the road, sitting on one of the park benches.

In the past month, she hadn’t had a minute for herself, she spent her time nursing and caring for Alex. And now that Alex was a little better, she had time to think about other things. She played with the worn pearl necklace that rested on her neck, a constant reminder of Alex's love.

Her life had changed radically. She had been abandoned since she could remember herself. No one ever cared for her, and she didn’t find the need to take care of herself. Then her plane crashed on that island, and she met Alex... She took a deep breath, put a finger to her lips, smiling. She's about to open a new page. To take care of herself, to learn to love herself anew, to learn what she was worth. Alex sees her, Alex sees all of her, the good and the bad, and she’s with her. She didn’t think she could love someone so powerfully. She remembered something she had thought long ago when Alex first told her about Kara. She wondered what it was like to love someone like that, like they’re your whole world, and that they would love you back the same way. Maybe for the first time in her life, she wasn’t sure about anything more than her love for Alex, of Alex’s love for her.

She was afraid to leave the island. The island was her safe place, hers and Alex's. And now... She looked around, at the park, at the people. It is so different from the island.

She was sure of Alex’s love, she just didn’t know how the new her and the new Alex and the new landscape would affect all that.

We can do it, she encouraged herself. We can, ride or die, we’ve survived so much, what is a landscape change, a routine change, a location change? We’ll do it, without a problem. Alex will return to work at the hospital, to save lives and be as brilliant as ever.

And Maggie? She would go to school. She would be the person she always wanted to be, the person she once hardly believed she could be. She would invest herself entirely in being the best version of herself. For her. And for Alex. And also, for her new family.

She finished her drink, threw the empty cup into the trash, and started walking back to the apartment.

She felt lighter than ever before.
this wasn't very plot-necessary but i felt the need so y'all just suck it up, alright
next chapter hopefully will come very soon, maybe even this weekend, who knows
not me that's for sure

tell me what you think of this chapter, of the story in general, of anything really (i'm a
very good listener) in the comments! if you liked it, please leave some kudos

i'm @bilerleigh on tumblr, come say hi
Different

Chapter Summary

it's a baby angst before the real angst comes along

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Do you think it would be strange? Said Maggie. If we’d like, lived together? in the city?

They lay on the sand, looking at the endless, starred sky, Alex's head lying just to the right of Maggie's head, upside down. Alex gave her a confused look.

What do you mean?

I mean, Maggie raised her hands in the air, as she sometimes did when there was she couldn’t quite explain in words, and she needed her hands to make gestures so she would feel there was something helping her express herself.

I mean I've known you for a long time. Maybe as longest I've ever known anyone. But I don’t know how you act in all kinds of other situations.

Alex smiled but didn’t look at Maggie. Does it bother you?

Not really, Maggie shrugged. It's not like it's a useful knowledge in any way, you know... She let out a nervous chuckle.

Alex didn’t respond.

But still. I feel that there’s a part of you that I don’t know. It’s just... weird.

Finally, Alex looked at her, bringing her head closer, until her nose touched Maggie's cheek.

What's the rush? She whispered.

Maggie felt something in her relax, and let go and detached itself from her body until it reached up to the stars.

None of them had any idea that in three and a half days, Clay Doe's chopper would crash on their island.

~

"Three, two, one, happy new year!!"

Maggie cheered and waved with all the other people in the park, along with Kara, James, and
Alex beside her. She gathered Alex's cheeks in her hands and kissed her, smiling broadly into her lips. Alex put her hand gently on the back of Maggie's neck, her gloved fingers resting at the hollow of her neck. She pulled away from her and put a kiss on her forehead.

"I love you."

Alex smiled and lowered her head.

"Love you too."

They were silent for a few seconds, the wild crowd around them, fireworks exploding above their heads, everything was fading and swirling into Alex's glowing brown eyes, that now elevated to her in a soft smile.

"It was one hell of a year," she muttered, and Maggie laughed at her, her dimples deepen.

"Happy new year!" They were interrupted by Kara, who shrieked enthusiastically and hugged them, a little too hard. James put his hands on her shoulders and the fireworks suddenly began to make shapes in the sky, and everyone turned to look.

A month has passed since they returned to National City. January has emerged, cold as ever, and Maggie rubbed her hands and blew on them to keep them warm. In a few hours, they would be home and she could have a hot drink and curl up under the blanket with Alex.

Maggie was alright. Relatively speaking, of course. She had met with James and Kara from time to time, along with Alex, walked around the city, went swimming several times a week. The chlorinated pool water didn't match the clear ocean water she used to dive in, but it was as close as she could get. But either way, she had to spend most of her time now taking care of Alex.

After settling into their new apartment a month ago, they went to the National City General Hospital, where Alex used to work, but not for work reasons. They went to the physical therapy center, where it was determined that Alex needed treatment and support around the clock, as she couldn’t stand or walk without help. She still needed crutches and had to go to the hospital three times a week where she would train and strengthen her legs. The original damage to her legs was fractures in most of the bones of the legs, but they were in castings for a long time, and now it was necessary to strengthen them. Alex managed to walk with crutches without a problem, and now she had to put on special bandages and try to get rid of the crutches. She pouted and grumbled, but eventually worked hard to succeed in operating her legs properly. Maggie was with her in every treatment, smiling proudly whenever she succeeded.

Alex seemed to be regaining herself slowly, perhaps too slowly, though she did manage to do things that a month ago she couldn't do, so there was progress. But she needed help on the stairs, and in the shower, and generally going from here to there she used her crutches, but Maggie had the instinct to reach out for help, to be next to her in case she'll need her.

They celebrated Christmas last week, in Kara's apartment, with James and Eliza. The holiday was wonderful, there were cookies and eggnog and pleasant music, and an old memory that flickered in Maggie's mind, last year’s Christmas, on the island, how she assured Alex that next year she would celebrate Christmas at National City with her family. Her fingers drew soft circles on Alex's thighs while she was concentrating on the movie, and she felt relaxed and calm. She hardly believed that Alex would actually celebrate Christmas with her family, not to mention herself. They didn’t talk about it but she knew that Alex remembered well what Maggie had told her last year, and she moved a little to get closer to her, never fed up with their closeness.

She still remembers how Alex shifted gently to her touch, and it seemed, perhaps only in her
imagination, that the move had kept them away rather than close.

She tried to ignore these thoughts all week, but they kept coming back when Alex moved her head as Maggie tried to put a kiss on her lips and instead they touched Alex’s cheeks only, or when she made Alex’s favorite dish, lasagna, and Alex just smiled wearily and said nothing, or when...

*Why do you even think about it, Sawyer? Do you doubt that she loves you at all?*

*Do you?*

*No, no,* She hastened to remind herself. *She and Alex could go through every obstacle. No landscape change, or broken legs, or anything else in this world, can compare to the love she and Alex have. Nothing can defeat them.*

*Are you sure?*

They were home now, after the New Year's parties, and she was watching Alex, who had arranged for bedtime on the bed, doing the usual exercises to strengthen her legs. She still kisses her and hugs her at night, and sometimes looks at her with this look, as if she will take down the moon for her, but sometimes... she’s not sure why, everything is forgotten in contrast to a shift of distance or a frozen look or anything that made her think there was something at Alex’s heart, something that hadn’t been there before.

*I'm not sure what I should do,* she thought, and the thought was painfully serrated.

Alex turned off the little lamp by the bed and glanced at Maggie, who was sitting at the counter. *"Good night."*

"Night." She murmured, turning to look at the starry night sky through the window. They didn’t compare to the show that was every night in the island's skies, and she found herself languishing in memories of the past in the island, how they would sit under the sky and Alex would explain patiently about the constellations spread all along, and how she fell asleep in her arms, time after time, abandon the leafs bad in the whale house to sleep on the soft sand, under the stars, in each other's arms. How she felt so sure about everything in her life when she was there, with Alex, and how now nothing in her life felt safe.

*You're making everything up, stop it.*

She shook her head to clear herself. *She'll talk to Alex. Tomorrow morning.*

Yes, that sounds like a good idea.

Well, it seems like it’s not a good idea after all.

Meaning, it would be a good idea if Alex was willing to talk to her.

She tried to raise the subject, to say things like *how you feel with your legs,* and *we haven’t talked in a long time,* and even tried the serious *we need to talk,* but Alex didn’t seem to want to talk, and she always managed to steer the flow to a simpler place.

*Forget it, nothing happened, she's alright,* she thought as Alex smiled warmly at her after she'd had a tricky exercise and Maggie cheered. But then at night, she turned to the other side of the bed without saying anything and Maggie couldn’t help but think again *we have to talk.*
"Come on, baby, two more steps," Maggie murmured. She stood with her arms outstretched at the end of the short runway Alex walked on while gasping for breath, in a room full of people who train with the variety of equipment that was there. Alex finished the two last steps and reached Maggie, falling into her arms. Maggie helped her to ground herself and smiled broadly at her. Alex didn’t return a smile.

"Can we finish this already?" Grumbled Alex. Maggie felt the crushing machine that crushed her heart whenever Alex gave her that look. She knew that these weren’t the exhausting exercises she had to do that made her frown.

"One more time," said Lisa, the physiotherapist, behind them. At her request, Alex tried again, then again, and finally, she sat down heavily on the bench in the corner, sipping water like after an exhausting run.

"You worked great today," Lisa reached for a fist bump, and Alex bumped it, still drinking. "I think next week you can do much better. Without help, even."

Alex shrugged, taking another sip. Maggie sat down beside her carefully. "Training at home is very important, so pay attention-" Lisa’s words were interrupted by a shout from across the room.

"Lisa!"

Lisa turned her head. "Excuse me," she apologized and left.

"You really did a great job today," Maggie said, leaning back, brushing the hair off Alex's sweating forehead. Alex shrugged again, nodding.

Is everything okay? The question stuck in Maggie's throat. No, everything is not okay, my girlfriend has been walking around with a sour face for too long, and she doesn't seem to want to talk to me about it. but yeah, besides that, everything is just terrific.

Maggie was worried. She couldn't deny that anymore. She didn’t want to think about it or put it up out loud. It’s been a couple of weeks after new years eve, and Alex continued to grumble more and more usual. Maggie didn’t remember that in difficult states on the island Alex grumbled like that, and the whole situation became even more surprising and strange, and Alex continued to ignore, dismiss, and shut herself even more whenever Maggie tried to talk.

She thought of all the times she held out her hands to help her walk, or to stand up, or to do anything, and how many times Alex smiled at her in response, until slowly, no smiles appeared, and she became a groaning lump who exercised reluctantly and ate very little.

They hadn’t had sex for three weeks.

Who are you kidding, Sawyer, obviously something is wrong.

"Hey, is everything-"

"Alex, Maggie!" Kara appeared suddenly, radiant. Just then Maggie remembered that they had
lunch plans right after Alex’s session. Alex smiled faintly at her sister.

"Hey, Kara," she murmured. Kara shifted her gaze from Maggie to Alex, slight confusion on her face. "Is everything okay?"

"I'm alright," said Alex, and began to put her things in her bag. "I'm just tired."

Kara smiled, an unusually small smile. She looked at Maggie, raising her eyebrows. "Alright then. James is waiting for us in the lobby."

"Excellent." Alex took her crutches and rose. Maggie, instinctively, reached out to help. Alex jerked her head abruptly, freezing. "I can do it," she said, her voice hard.

Maggie took back her hands. “Sorry,” she said in a small voice.

Kara wore a confused look again, and she passed it again from Alex, who was walking as fast as she could with her crutch towards the exit, to Maggie who was left beside her, walking much slower.

"Something's wrong?"

"No, it's all good. Let's go eat," Maggie hurried outside, determined not to lose Alex in the crowd of people in the hallway.

*Everything is not okay.*

*But you have no idea why.*

~

They entered the impairment, Maggie opening the door and letting Alex get in first. She closed the door behind her and went to the fridge.

"Are you hungry? we just ate."

Maggie took out a beer. The can had crumpled a little in her clenched hand and she took a deep breath, trying not to get angry. She turned to Alex, who was sitting on the couch, sunk in her phone.

*I'm just thirsty, that's all. You want anything?*

*I'm just thirsty, that's all, You want anything?"

*Good, Sawyer.*

Alex didn’t even look up. "No."

Maggie opened the can and took a few sips, trying to relax. Maybe she should go for a walk, or a run, or a swim... swimming is good. Or maybe she should go check to see if the Basement Range was still standing where it had last been. Doing some shooting now could certainly help her relax, but something told her it was a short-term solution, and she had to look for a long-term one. She looked out the window. It was raining and windy but it hasn't snowed yet. She hoped it wouldn’t snow this year. She didn’t like snow, It reminded her of Nebraska, and the cold.
Alex? Is everything okay? Talk to me.

Deep breath.

"Ale-" she choked in the middle of the talking, and Alex looked up slowly, puzzled.

"You said anything?"

"No, no."

Yes.

Again, Sawyer.

She took a few more sips from her beer, turned to stare at the kitchen tiles over the sink, trying to break down the problem in her mind before she speaks again.

Alex is angry. She grumbles and she’s more fidgety than usual. Why is that happening? It’s because her legs don’t work. She has to be dependent on others. It’s an annoying situation.

But there’s something else, it’s not just that... She's not irritable when she tries to walk, she's generally irritable.

I don’t know what she's going through.

It suddenly became clear to Maggie that she had never been with Alex among other people until about three months ago. That she had never seen Alex off the island. She only knows Alex who’s busy with surviving, with keeping the high morale, with carving all day.

Of course.

She thinks she knows Alex, but there's a whole other aspect of her she doesn’t know, and if she doesn’t get to know soon, she might lose her.

She turned to look at the couch where Alex watched TV with blank eyes.

How terrible can you feel when you can’t stand up, walk, dance, jump, do anything on your own?

She didn’t know how much Alex really wanted independence. She didn’t know her well enough. The thought sent a stab of pain in her heart, and it seemed to send more stabs through her whole body.

Me? Don’t know Alex well enough?.

She finished the beer with two last sips, swallowing the drink with the tears.

"Hey, I'm watching this!"

"No, you're not, you're staring at it, there's a difference." Maggie tossed the remote to the couch. "Will you tell me what the fuck is going on with you?"

Alex sulked. "What are you talking about?"

"You're grim all the time, you don’t eat anything, and you don’t talk to me anymore, what
happened to you?"

"Nothing happened to me."

Maggie pinched the bridge of her nose. *You came to it wrong. Try 'what happened to us.'*

*Come on, try it.*

"What hap-" *Wait, no, It's not good, not good, something else.*

*We haven't slept together in three weeks?*

Okay.

"We haven't sle-"

"We haven't slept together in three weeks? is that what you're gonna say? you miss the sex? fine, I'll take off my clothes and lie over there and you can do whatever you'd like, is that what you-"

"Alex!"

Alex struggled to her feet, panting from the shouts. Maggie could hardly stop herself from reaching out to help, and Alex flinched. "I can do it! alone!" She barked.

*Shit, shit, shit. What did you do, Sawyer, why do you always have to destroy everything?*

Maggie stood there, looking at the only person who ever loved her back, limping on crutches, getting ready to sleep at five PM with vigorous, angry gestures. she felt that lump of tears in her throat for too long now defrosting through her eyes, feeling utterly helpless, so guilty even though she had no idea what she had done.

"Alex, I..." she whispered.

Alex didn’t look at her and only buried her face in her hands, sighing desperately.

"Not now, Maggie, I'm not... I'm, just, not now."

Maggie walked monotonously to one of the chairs in the kitchen and sat with her back to Alex, burying her head in her hands, hearing Alex struggling to put on sleep shorts in a sitting position, bracing herself not to go there and help. Finally, the sounds of getting ready have stopped and there was silence, and all she could hear was her rhythmic breathing and the sounds of the city outside, which kept reminding them that the last place they were on right now, was the island.

~

"Are you okay?"

"I need a drinking buddy."

She could almost hear James smiling through the phone.

"Be right there."
She put her glass down on the counter, motioning for the bartender to pour another one.

_Would you look at that. Sixteen months on a deserted island, and you thought you had changed. Nothing has changed, you’re not fooling anyone. You’re still the alienated, incapable of loving, cowardly girl you were before. Nothing can take away from you. No one will love you because there is nothing to love about you. Alex deluded herself, and so did you._ The sharp drink went down her throat in two sips, and she grimaced, getting used to it.

Pictures passed through her mind, one after the other. A random girl she fucked a few years ago. Bright lights in a nightclub. A fragment of the plaster wall in her former apartment, which she knew exactly where it had come from and who caused it. Her father's face before he hit her. Her face, in the mirror, slightly bruised. Snow, going down, going down, going down, never stopping.

The ceiling of the whale house. The waves as they had seen from the top of the great rock. The lagoon, at five in the morning. Coco bouncing from tree to tree. And finally, Alex's face. Smiling after a chess game, laughing at a joke James had told when they were in Joxerton, moaning happily under Maggie's touch, serenity, asleep, while a soft morning light making dots and lines along her cheeks.

A drop shimmered next to the glass she held, and it took her time to realize that it was a tear that had fallen. She quickly wiped her eyes, which suddenly revealed that they were wet, and ordered another drink.

"What’s with the grumpy face?" There was a voice behind her. She didn't turn.

"A pretty girl like you shouldn’t be-"

"Listen, pal, if you won’t piss off in the next three seconds I swear to god I will-"

"Maggie,"

She had never been so happy to hear James’s voice. He appeared beside her, puts a confident hand on her shoulder. "What going on?"

"So you’re the boyfriend?" She heard contempt for the stranger's voice.

"Oh, no, I have a beautiful girlfriend at home," James said in a combination of cordiality and aggression. "Which is the sister of this girl’s girlfriend, by the way."

In spite of all the sadness and anxiety that closed over her heart, she felt an urge to giggle at James's sharp response.

"Anyway, if you'll excuse us, we have better things to do than try to avoid your poor courtship skills..." She heard James pat the stranger's shoulder and sit down next to her.

She turned to look at him, trying to cut a smile out of herself.

"How’s it going?" His gaze was too pleasant, and she felt her chin quiver. He didn’t waste a second and quickly wrapped her in a hug.

"She doesn’t love me anymore, James." She murmured to his chest.

"Impossible."

Between her and James there was always a sense of… different connection. Since they met, they shared mostly nods and smiles and handshakes, but somehow, whenever they all met, she found
herself sitting next to him, and they always shared a drink, or exchanged a few words, and she thought he was one of the nicest men she had ever met. And there were not many.

He was just a man she felt comfortable talking to, even if they didn’t talk all the time.

"Tell me what happened."

So she told him. She didn’t miss one detail. The way they came back from Joxerton and Alex began with treatments and training, and how she couldn’t stop herself from helping her constantly, and how Alex got more and more irritable every day, and she didn’t talk to her or tell her anything, and Maggie didn’t know how to make it better. And how everything is different, so different from before.

"She's the only person I've ever felt really close to. I'm scared, James." She tapped her fingers on the bar. "On the island everything was so simple."

He was silent. "How was it? On the island, I mean."

"It was..." She thought for a moment. "At first it was like hell. And then it was like heaven."

"What do you mean?"

"I felt bad because... because I survived, I wanted to die, I didn’t care about anything. But Alex, she... She didn’t give up on me, she didn’t let me die. I was in love with her from the moment I saw her. She was so beautiful, there in the water..." She sighed

"And she... well, I didn’t want to make her feel uncomfortable, so I didn’t say anything, but at a certain point I couldn’t keep it inside anymore, and fortunately, she realized she liked me back, and... then it happened. And that was the best moment of my life."

"But to live in a city is not like living on the island,"

"It's so different." She sighed heavily. "And I thought it would be good for us, you know, to live a normal life, but... everything got complicated."

They were silent for a few moments, sipping their drinks.

"I think..." he said slowly. "That you have to talk to each other, you have to communicate, get it out, say what's not good for you."

She rolled her eyes. "That's the biggest cliché I've ever heard."

"Well, it's true," he shrugged.

"She doesn’t talk to me!"

"Then talk to her."

"She won’t listen, she won’t hear me."

"Maggie," he gave her a serious look. "Be honest with yourself. You make very good and nice excuses here, but do you really mean it? Are you really going to give a package of worn excuses to keep you from getting your girl back?"

She looked down.

"You’re better than this, Sawyer."
Alex’s face, charred and dirty, her heart rate fading under Maggie’s hand, the calls of the rescuers who came a second before everything was lost forever, Maggie’s screams that pierced the island’s desolation...

"Do you love her?"

The sensation of the syringe stuck in her thigh, the immediate weakness that takes over everything, unfamiliar hands that catch her before she falls asleep...

"More than... more than anything I’ve ever loved."

James smiled at her.

"Then you have to save her, before she disappears."

*He’s right, you know.*

~

The apartment was dark when she came in a few hours later. Alex sat on the couch and stared at the flickering screen. They looked at each other a few seconds before Maggie spoke.

"I thought you went to bed."

"I couldn’t sleep."

Maggie walked over to the couch and sat beside Alex. The screen continued to flicker in front of them and she tried to find the words.

"Alex, can we please... just, talk? please," her voice was broken and trembling. Her shoulders were hunched, and she never felt weaker. She looked up at Alex, who was sitting there with her eyes closed.

"Yes."

*Oh, god.*

"Alex, I..." She struggled to find a way to sort out her thoughts, which were foggy, partly because of the drinking. But that wasn’t the time to hold back.

"I don’t know what’s happening to you. You’re annoyed and angry most of the time, and I’m trying to find a way to talk to you, but you don’t listen to me, and you don’t want to talk to me, and I feel that... I feel...” She took a deep breath. "I feel like you don’t love me anymore.” She finished in a desperate whisper.

"Oh, Maggie," Alex sighed. Maggie felt Alex’s hand pull her closer, and suddenly they were linked, Alex’s breath flickering on her cheek.

"Don’t you know I’m crazy about you?" She heard Alex’s whisper in her ear, and something in her threatened to snap, to break out in a whimper, to stab every muscle in her body.

"Then why... Why are you..." She couldn’t finish the sentence.
"Maggie, I worry. Never, in my entire life, I've never worried more." Alex's wet eyes looked at her now.

"What do you mean?"

"You don't do anything but take care of me. I tried to encourage you to look for a job or to study, but you insist on continuing to nursing me all the time. You don't do anything for yourself..."

"I'm going to swim~"

"It's not the same thing. I feel like I'm depriving you of the life you're supposed to live. You're supposed to go out, to do things, discover your new self, not go to therapy with me and help me in the shower all the time. I just... feel so bad, Maggie. I feel like I'm tying you to me. " She lowered her head for a moment, her hand trembling on Maggie's thigh. "And... I wouldn't want you to be tied to me all the time. I want to try a little by myself, it doesn't do any good for any of us when you're always dragging me on your back."

"And to get away, and shut down, and be angry, is?"

Alex shook her head. "I didn't know how to tell you. I was afraid to rush you, because maybe you aren't ready, but... I really want you to succeed. Every time you tried to talk about it, I rejected you because I didn't know what to say, but I thought about it. I tried to stop but it angered me even more. " She raised her hand to hold Maggie's face. "I'm so, so sorry, baby. I shouldn't have done this the way I did. I should have listened to you, talked to you. You're right. I... I made a mistake." she kept looking into Maggie's eyes. "I just have to get used to it, I guess. Being in a new relationship. This whole thing of communication in a relationship is a bit new to me. Relationship, is new to me. I've never been with someone the way I am with you."

"We were together on the island."

Alex shook her head again. "You and I both know it's not the same."

Maggie shrugged. Alex was right. "It's kinda new for me too," she said. "The whole relationship thing. But I guess that's how you learn."

"Yeah."

"Just... don't do it anymore. If there's a problem, come and tell me. We'll fix it. together." Maggie shook her head. "And, I'm sorry I made you feel that way. I wish I could make things better. We need to learn to... communicate more. to live our life in that new style were in. to adjust our lives to it."

Alex smiled. "That's a fine speech from someone who came in at 11 PM smelling like tequila."

They both chuckled. Alex pressed their foreheads together, and they were silent for a long time, close together.

"You know, I... I'm afraid too," Maggie heard herself whisper. "I think that... the reason I didn’t start until now is that I'm afraid to start and... What if it doesn’t work out in the end? What if I try and I won’t make good? What if everything I’ll do in the end turns out to be a failure? What if I-" She choked and gasped, "What if I'm not as good as I need to be for that?"

Alex wiped her tears with her thumbs, smiling at her with infinite tenderness. "I believe in you, Maggie, more than anything I've ever believed in. You can change the world if you want to." She was silent for a moment. "And you have me, and I will turn every stone on the face of the earth to make you happy."
In these words Maggie buried her face in Alex's neck, breathing her as deeply as she hadn't done in a long time. Alex's arms wrapped around her tightly, and she felt the knot in her chest unravel, release, gone.

"Promise me."

"I promise."

Chapter End Notes

thanks for reading! let me know what you think in the comments, and if you liked it please leave kudos!

my old buddy Amy helped me with that one so thanks honey, ily, etc

i'm @bilerleigh on tumblr come and say hi
"Can you please stop cheating?"

"I'm not cheating, it's my money!"

"But if you hide it, it's not fair,"

"If it's my money, I can do with it what I w-"

"It's called cheating!"

Maggie picked up her bottle of beer and took another sip, looking fondly at two Danvers girls squabbling in a way that was pretty cute. James picked up his bottle too, and they tapped bottles. "To our girls," he mumbled.

"Amen," she murmured back.

They were in James and Kara’s apartment, playing an exciting game of monopoly. Apparently too exciting, for Alex and Kara were both determined to win (while Maggie and James were chatting without even notice when their turn is up), and now they debated whether Kara could hide her money below the tablecloth to save for distress times.

"That's my money-"

"But it's cheating!"

"It's like in Catan, when I hold my cards in my hands-"

"But there is a reason that it is a monopoly and not Catan-"

Maggie leaned back on the couch behind her. "So how things at the hospital going?"

"As usual," James shrugged. "Everyone is very excited about Alex's return."

Maggie smiled. "What, like a welcome back party or something?"

"Yes, some people have already started collecting money for a present," he winked, and Maggie laughed.

There was silence for a few seconds when Kara and Alex's voices of argument continued to be background sounds.

"She was really loved there, huh?"
"You could say." He was silent for a moment. "She was very devoted to her job, and very good at it, and in general... well, you know her, it's hard to hate Alex."

Maggie nodded and looked at Alex, who was still arguing with Kara, now in a milder tone, and they both began to laugh at something Kara said, hand on a shoulder and head thrown back.

Alex was about to return to her old job at the hospital in a few days, after finishing the treatments for her legs, and Lisa the physiotherapist confirmed that she was indeed fit to go back to work. She did the test, and passed successfully, of course, and there was no greater support than Maggie for returning to routine.

Alex caught Maggie watching her across the table and sent her a kiss in the air. Maggie smiled broadly and winked back.

"Okay, can we continue the game?"

The cube rolled, the game went on, and Alex finally won, grabbing the last money note from Kara’s hands, leaving her sulking.

"Aw, sis, don’t worry, I'll buy you some ice cream the next time we meet."

"It'll take a little more than ice cream to make up for this loss..." Kara murmured sullenly, earning giggles from Alex and Maggie and a hug from James.

"Well, the fact that I was stuck on a deserted island for sixteen months doesn’t mean I don’t remember how to kick your ass in monopoly."

“Yeah, we played a lot of monopoly back there,” added Maggie, and everyone laughed, except Kara.

"Just wait for the next game night to come, we'll play Scrabble and I'll beat your ass."

"Bring it," Alex pulled out a playful tongue.

"Okay, enough of that," said James, planting a kiss on Kara's lips, and she immediately softened to his touch. Alex went to sit beside Maggie, put her head on her knees. Maggie immediately began to run her fingers through Alex's soft hair, feeling content.

Maggie started working at a near cafe a few weeks ago. Her job was just to make coffee and smile broadly at every customer, but she could handle it. It was only a temporary job, of course, but still, she had to occupy herself, now that Alex was back to normal. Alex supported every step Maggie decided to make, standing behind her all the way. Maggie knew she would soon be brave enough to continue on the path to the person she wanted to be. At the moment, she enjoyed her temporary peace and her blessed routine with her family, and knew that no one would urge her to do anything she didn’t want.

A few hours later, and one beer too much, Alex and Maggie parted from James and Kara at the door, hugging and promising to come back again soon. The quartet got along pretty well, and they often met for a game night, dinner, or just a few drinks at the neighborhood bar.

The weather outside began to warm up a little, but Alex was still clinging to Maggie and they walked down the main avenue, hands intertwined. They talked slowly, about unimportant things, walking calmly, with ease. Maggie was almost got used to living the quiet, pleasant life, along with loved ones who surrounded her.

"...and I thought maybe we'd go check out that new restaurant on Doffin Street? James said it was
some kind of a nice Italian restaurant, and God knows it's been a long time since I've eaten Italian food. I’m thinking maybe those little dumplings they put in cream sauce, with cheese that covers the... what?” Alex paused in mid-sentence, asking at Maggie's smile. Maggie shrugged.

"Nothing."

But it wasn’t nothing. It was Alex. Her Alex, who she has gotten to know better lately, Alex, who gets excited about Italian restaurants and small cupcakes in a showcase, Alex who sings with the radio without even noticing, Alex who reads so intently that the world can explode around her and she won’t notice, Alex, who loves everything so fiercely, but not always know how to say it. But Maggie knows she does.

They walked on, and Alex put her head on Maggie's shoulder. It wasn’t very comfortable with the walking, but Maggie understood it. It was this feeling that you have to be as close as possible to this person next to you, even at the price of stumbling feet or walking slower.

"We'll be home soon, and then you can be as close to me as possible," Maggie whispered to her, making her giggle, her cheeks flush in red.

~

"Lena!" Lena turned to hear Kara's voice, a smile on her face.

"Ugh, I started to think you wouldn’t come," they embraced warmly. Kara waved her hand away. “No way! It's Thursday, after all,” they began to walk along the street, Kara leading the way.

"What is this place, anyway?"

"You’ll see when we get there," Kara flashed a smile.

"I just hope it will have a good selection of salads, otherwise it would be very disappointing."

"Don’t worry, your girl knows how to look after you.” Said Kara, and they both chuckled.

Since she had asked for Lena’s help a long while ago, the two had begun to see each other more often, and recently they had begun a tradition of joined lunch every thursday. Usually in a cozy restaurant on the sixth avenue, or in Lena's favorite bistro, and once they even ordered food to Lena's office, something with wrapped rolls and lots of french fries, and they ate like that, with no cutlery, crossed legs on the hideously expensive leather couch. They found that they enjoyed each other company very much, as though the relationship between them hadn’t reached its maximum potential years ago. Now, both older and mature, they decided to try again to be friends, of a different kind. Meanwhile, it worked wonderfully.

"How does the job searching go?" Lena put down her fork and wiped her lips with a napkin in a polite gesture. Kara hurried to swallow the big bite she'd taken, thinking.

"Well, I sent my resume to all the papers I want to work in, but that was only a few days ago, I don’t expect them to call me back the second I apply them."

"I expect them to. You work hard and you're excellent at what you do," Lena sipped from her water.
Kara blushed. "Come on, Lena, you only read-

"Three essays and two huge articles? Yes, I think I am qualified to determine you are excellent in what you do, and you deserve to work in the best place."

Kara gave her a smile. "Thank you, Lena, it means a lot to me."

"Speaking of the best place... I hope you sent your resume to Catco?"

Kara sighed. "Yes, via the main email, and through two more emails of reporters I know, and the customer service email, and a physical copy that will reach the mailbox of Cat Grant's secretary. Oh, and also to Cat Grant's secretary email."

Lena snickered. "Ah, so I understand you don’t really want this job?"

"I really, really want this job, Lena," Kara rubbed her eyes. "I want it more than I want to breathe."

"Wow, let's not get carried away..."

"Okay, I want to breathe just a little more than I want this job," Kara grumbled and took her fork while Lena looked at her fondly.

"Don’t worry, I'm sure they'll come back to you as soon as they read your stuff."

They went on talking as they finished their meal and went out into the street again, chattering on the way back to Lena's office.

"How is your sister?"

Since Alex came back, Lena had asked about her every week, and the two had even met on one of the game nights Kara and James hosted in their apartment. Kara had the feeling that Lena felt responsible for Alex since she couldn’t help finding her. She hoped she didn’t feel guilty at all, and that the fact that Alex was safe and well now calmed her.

"Oh, she went back to work this week," Kara said happily.

"Really?"

"Yes, James said people were planning a party for her, or a surprise, or something... everyone's really glad she's back."

"I'm sure." Lena paused. "And how’s James?"

Kara smiled softly. "He's okay, we're fine. Excellent, even."

"I'm really happy to hear."

"What about you?"

"Me?" Lena was confused for a moment.

"Yes, you know, in the dating sector..." Kara stole a mischievous smile at her.

Lena giggled nervously. "I'm not sure I'm gonna go out with anyone anytime soon."

"Why not? listen, I-"
“I mean, I met this nice girl some time ago at this, uh, business meeting, you know, and, uh, and we talked, like, a lot, you know, like more than just... a colleague, and she was... she was really cute and I really think that, uh... ”

"Are you still sure you're not going out with anyone anytime soon?" Kara interrupted with a chuckle and Lena blushed. Kara patted her shoulder affectionately.

"Lena, that's great! Why don’t you ask her out?"

Lena bit her lip. "I don’t know..."

"Come on, are you really going to let the girl you like not to know?"

"Well, ah, I mean, yeah, I mean, she looks like she likes me...

Kara smiled silently as Lena thought.

"Do you really think I should talk to her?"

"Obviously!"

Lena smiled, looking at the pavement.

"Well, I'll send her a text today."

"Awesome!" Kara jumped with excitement, hugs Lena's shoulder. They approached the L Corp building and slowed their pace.

"Just try not to lose your tongue when you talk to her."

"Kara!"

"I'm kidding!"

~

Alex came inside the house just as Maggie closed the oven door. "Hello," said Alex in a weary voice, taking off her shoes.

"Hey," Maggie said distractedly, a towel on her shoulder, mixing the dishes inside the pots on the stove. Alex approached her, planting a kiss on her cheek. She stole an olive from the can on the counter, jumping to sit on it. "What are you making?" She asked, mouth full. Maggie still didn’t look at her and continued to mix and taste the casseroles, adding salt to this and pepper to that.

"Dinner."

"I can see it's dinner, but what for?"

"Shouldn’t I make dinner?"

"It’s even good that you're making dinner because I'm starving." Alex popped another olive into her mouth.
"Don’t get filled with olives, there’s enough food."

Alex took one last olive and put the can on the counter, jumping off it. "Well, I hope you made delicious food because all I ate today was a really really small sandwich, and four cups of coffee, one of them," she landed with a sigh on the couch. "Was black."

Maggie gave her a surprised look without saying anything, and she raised a defensive hand as she lay on the couch with her head on the pillows, far from the eye, her feet raised in the air. "Don’t give me that look, I needed coffee before four and a half hour surgery and this idiot intern brought me a black." She stood up to look at Maggie. "Without sugar."

Maggie snickered and Alex fell back to the couch. "I don’t understand how you drink this thing."

Maggie didn’t answer and began to set the table for both of them, and soon they sat down to eat.

"How was the surgery?"

"It was alright," Alex shrugged, taking another bite of the steamed vegetable stew. "Another biker who was riding without a helmet, thought he was omnipotent and found himself smeared on the sidewalk. He was lucky that most of the blow was on the side of the body and not on the head, otherwise he would have died long ago." She chewed for a few seconds. "But he still needed a fixation of the spine, and the process got more complicated than I thought."

"But you got along in the end, I suppose?"

"Sure. A few weeks of practice and I'm good as new," Alex winked, and Maggie shook her head with a smile, still playing with the food on her plate.

"Something's wrong?"

"No, I'm just," Maggie cleared her throat. "I... um... I was thinking about something."

Alex turned to look at her, all concentrated on her. Maggie kept looking at her plate.

"I need to tell you something."

* *
* *
* *

"Dad?" She asked, her voice confused, weak. Her father turned to look at her, at last, his eyes furious. He approached her slowly. She still didn’t understand why he was angry.

Not that he usually had a reason. Sometimes he was just angry.

"I got a call today from Mrs. Wilkie." His voice was quiet, and she knew it wasn’t a good sign.

"She told me that she found a very interesting note between Eliza's things. Do you know what the note said?" He put his hands on the table. She shook her head, swallowing thickly.

She did know. She knew when he said Mrs. Wilkie called him. She pictured the note in her mind, the note she wrote over and over, writing and erasing and writing and erasing, until she decided that’s enough, and if she wanted to do it she just had to do it. She remembered how she handed
Eliza the note, blushing, hurrying out to avoid seeing Eliza's expression as she read the note. She remembered how long she had thought of her, until she understood what she was feeling, and tried to put off these feelings, to turn them off, until she realized that there was no point, that they’re part of her. Until she realized it’s who she is.

She hadn’t got a call from Eliza all day.

She knew what the reason was now, and prayed that the beatings and the screaming would be over quickly, before she’ll notice.

"It said that you invited Eliza to Valentine's Day dance, is that true?"

Maggie didn’t answer, staring at the floor.

"I asked you, is that true?" His voice rose now, frightfully, and he punched his fist against the table. Maggie jumped in alarm. She still didn't answer.

"Margarita-"

"It’s true."

For the first time ever, she dared to look at his face as she spoke to him during a fit of rage. She was surprised to find that he was stunned, his eyes wide with shock. For a few seconds, he stood there, shaking his head.

There was a part in her now, a small part, that hoped it wouldn’t be as bad as she thought it’s going to be. But as always, her life continued to stray off the track, a repeated train accident of beatings, humiliation, and shouting. She closed her eyes, waiting, her heart beating fast.

"You?" He said, his voice quiet again. "Well, I shouldn’t be surprised, I always knew you were an abomination." he spat the word like venom.

She shrank a little, his words stabbing like needles in her heart. Suddenly, a big hand slapped her hard, slamming her backward.

"Aberration! you're an aberration, you understand me?! only shame you bring on us!" Another slap, on the other side this time. The tears boiled on her face and she tried to breathe deeply. In a moment it all be over, she tried to calm herself down. It'll be over in a minute and you can go back to your room and you'll be alright.

"I don’t want to see you here anymore." She heard him say suddenly. She raised her head, fuzzy, confused.

"Get out of the house! You don’t live here anymore!" He was screaming now. “Do I need to smack you again for you to understand that?!” He pulled his hand back and Maggie hurried to raise a protective hand. He put his hand down slowly, to her relive, not hitting her.

"Go pack a bag, you don’t live here anymore."

"Dad..." Her voice was weak, hoarse. He didn’t look at her, didn’t answer.

When she entered the living room with her bag, her father stood on the corner, his hands folded, waiting. Her mother was busy in the kitchen. Maggie walked over to her, uncertain.
"Mom?"

"You heard your father." Her mother didn’t look at her. Maggie’s throat burned, and she shook her head in disbelief.

"Are you going to let him do what he wants to you? To me? To keep beating us? He’s kicking me out of the house, Mom! you can’t-"

"Margarita, you heard your father. You're a shame on this house and this family, and you don’t live here anymore." Her mother turned to look at her at last, the color of her eyes exactly the same as Maggie’s. Maggie recognized a faded, blue stain on her mother's collarbone, which she quickly hid. Maggie’s gaze turned into deep contempt, and sorrow, and she turned to leave the house, not even taking a single look at what she had left behind.

With her bag on her back, she began to walk. She hitchhiked at the exit of town, arriving in Lincoln within an hour. She began to walk along the dark streets, all alone.

She lived in the street for a while, sleeping in various shelters and dark alleys. The first, freezing nights were the hardest. She used to curl up with as many clothes as she could put on, waiting for the night to end, for the frost to disappear. Sometimes she wished for her death, but she never received it. She went on walking around, meeting shady people who gave her shady advice, and lived from day to day, from penny to penny, from a dry bread to rotten fruit. She tried not to think about the future, and especially not about the past. She has no family, no friends. She has nothing in the world.

"Are you alright, kid?"

She raised her head, pursing her eyes. A young woman stood there, her blue uniform stretched with pride on her chest. The woman bent down on her knees, looking at her worriedly. One of the people she met told her she shouldn’t get in trouble with the police, but she supposed it was good advice if you were holding drugs. Maggie didn’t have any drugs, but she still recoiled slightly when the woman's eyes met hers.

"I’m sergeant Hopkins, Rosie Hopkins. And you, kid?"


"How old are you, Maggie?"

She hesitated again. If she'll say she's a minor, she would be thrown into an orphanage where she would eat spoiled soup with iron tools and she would have to gather her hair in braids. Or maybe she read too many books and there are none of those anywhere anymore. Either way, she didn’t want to take the risk.

"Eighteen," she said. Better not stretch the rope too much.

Rosie didn’t seem satisfied but said nothing. She studied Maggie, the clothes she was wearing, and the bag that sat beside her. Maggie swallowed in fear. She doesn’t buy it.

"Well, Maggie, are you okay? Are you taking care of yourself? We wouldn’t want anything to happen to you..." She bit her lip.

Maggie nodded quickly. "I'm fine," she said.

Rosie pulled out a card. "That's my number, okay, Maggie?" She handed it to her. "If anything happens to you, if you need money or food or anything, call me."
Maggie looked at the card, then at Rosie. She doesn’t remember when ever in her life, someone offered to help her. The only friend she ever had was Eliza, and with her, she just sat and smoked in the basement, saw horror flicks and joked about the school teachers. Anyway, she tried to forget about Eliza.

"Thank you," she said weakly. Rosie nodded once more and turned to go, got into a police car that parked nearby, driving away.

It became a routine. Rosie came twice a week to Maggie's place, where she slept between rolled-up clothes and empty cans. She almost always brought her food, or sweets, and handed it to Maggie, sitting next to her for a few minutes. Maggie never spoke, while Rosie chatted cheerfully, telling funny things from the station or stories that happened to her. Maggie didn’t feel uncomfortable. On the contrary, she felt safer, more serene, next to this woman, and every week she waited for her, sometimes waiting for the food and sometimes for the talk, which seemed to cut her off, even for a few minutes, of her terrible life.

Rosie had offered her several times to come and take a shower, or sleep in a warm bed, but Maggie always refused. She liked Rosie very much, but something inside her insisted that she should refuse, and she did. Years after that, she wondered if it was because she simply couldn’t trust anyone anymore. Either way, the situation remained as usual, and Maggie found herself waiting impatiently for these visits. She felt better, simply because of Rosie.

A car stopped in front of Maggie's spot, and she looked up from the book she was reading. Rosie got out of the car and went over to her, holding a bag of food in her hand. Maggie put her book aside, waving.

"How are you today?" Rosie said with her usual smile, handing her the bag.

"Not much." Maggie opened it, and in a few seconds she was biting into the big sandwich.

Rosie began to chatter as usual, Maggie humming weakly here and there, listening. Rosie sounded a bit thoughtful today, and maybe even gloomy, but Maggie didn’t ask anything. Her job was to say as little as possible and to get as much as possible.

"Maggie, I... there's something I need to tell you." Maggie almost choked with panic, and she swallowed quickly. She dropped the sandwich, looking at Rosie.

"I've got a better job in another city, and... I won’t be here anymore. I’m leaving"

Shit.

Maggie frowned nervously, trying to understand the meanings of the news.

"So..."

"I'm sorry, Maggie."

"Where to?"

"Somewhere in Michigan."

Maggie wrinkled her nose, and Rosie smiled and shrugged. "They need me there, and I go where I’m needed"

"When are you leaving?"
"Tomorrow afternoon. My whole apartment is already packed."

"And what about George?" He was Rosie's cat, and Maggie often heard about him jump out the window to the neighbors' balcony, or drop an expensive vase Rosie had got from her mother. Rosie smirked.

"Do you want him?"

Maggie began to stutter and Rosie laughed. "I'm kidding, he'll come with me, of course. He doesn't like long trips, but he'll manage."

Maggie was silent, looking at her dirty hands. She wondered what would happen to her now. No one had ever cared for her, and now, the one person she could imagine she cared about... She felt a lump in her throat. Rosie put a cautious hand on her shoulder.

"Is there anything I can do for you before I leave?"

Maggie raised her head. She quickly calculated how much money she had left. It wasn’t enough.

"I need... money," she managed to pull out with great effort.

"Of course, how much?" Rosie hurried out her wallet. Maggie wondered with how many homeless people she used to do it, take out her wallet and give money without expense. She assumed Rosie had seen her as a little girl, a weak thing in a dangerous place, that need to be protected. She knew she wouldn’t use that money for drugs. Obviously, that wasn’t what Maggie planned to do with the money.

"I need enough money for a bus ticket."

Rosie looked up from her wallet, wondering without words.

"Without you... I have nothing that keeps me here." She murmured, not looking at Rosie's eyes. She thought she saw a small smile, and suddenly there were two hundred dollar bills in her hand. Maggie opened her eyes wide with disbelief, and before she could protest, Rosie leaned over, laying a hand on her shoulder.

"Good luck, Maggie." She paused for a moment, smiling. "You'll do great things."

Maggie watched her drive away in the car, and she never saw her again.

*

*I drove along the country. I was in Denver, Phoenix, Las Vegas. I arrived in National City and stopped moving, simply because there was nowhere further to go. I remember arriving to the city center in the middle of the night and looked for the most comfortable place to sleep in. I found a small alcove over a chinese restaurant where I left my things while I was looking for a place that will hire me. I moved from temporary work to temporary work, was fired from more places then I can remember, until I got to some place that took me as a refuge. It was an old man, a restaurant owner named Paulo. He gave me food and a place to sleep, opened a bank account for me, arranged all my things. He even insisted that I finish my studies. With his help, I finished high*
school, and then I went to college. Paulo died before I could finish college, but he left me enough
money to take care of myself. I finished college quickly and left to make more money. I lived from
day to day for a few years until... well,” She took a sudden breath, realizing that she had been
talking nonstop for an hour. Alex, beside her, wiped her eyes, sniffling.

It was the first time in her life she had been able to tell the whole story to anyone. There were few
people she met who asked about her story, but she never took out more than a few words, always
ending up with a shrug, never revealing the truth behind her mask. She didn’t believe she would
ever get it out of herself. They continued to sit there, Alex asking in great detail about Maggie's
history over time and Maggie answering slowly, moderately, with the understanding that this was
the past, and now it’s the present.

The half-full plates were forgotten, and Alex sat now, burying her face in her hands, trying to
understand the weight of the matter, the meaning of this unbelievable story.

"Maggie, I... I can't believe you have gone through all this..." she murmured, tears reappearing in
her eyes, her hand reaching for Maggie's hand. Maggie smiled at her.

“You said... you said you learned swimming in your youth, and you talked about your high
school years and college like it was... like it was ordinary. Like it was..."

Maggie lowered her head. "I really took swimming classes when I was younger, before they
threw me out. But all the stories about high school and college... most of them didn’t really happen
to me. Not entirely, at least. I'm sorry, I didn’t want you to judge me before I told you everything.
Before you knew exactly who and what I was. I'm sorry I made you believe I had a better life than
what really happened to me."

Alex shook her head. "I'm glad you told me eventually. That I made you feel like you could be
honest with me." She reached out to stroke Maggie's cheek. "What you went through... it’s..."

"The end is good, Alex. I found you, I found Kara and James and Eliza, I found you all, and
you're so good to me, you're my family, Alex, you are," She lifted Alex's hand to her lips with
both hands, Kissing, "My family. And I love you."

Alex burst into tears and hurried to wrap Maggie in a hug. "I love you," she whispered to her
shoulder. She kept whispering these three words over and over, as if trying to erase the horrors of
the past.

They stayed close together for a long time, until Alex released Maggie, leaving her hand on her
cheek. Maggie smiled at her warmly, her eyes still wet. Alex slowly lowered her hand, feeling the
necklace that didn’t descend from Maggie's neck, lying right above Maggie's heart, the pearl
inside shining stronger than ever before.

"So you said that... you have something to tell me about this?"

"Oh, right!" Maggie went to the corner of the room, coming back with a stack of papers. "This,
she handed the pages proudly to Alex. "Is the research I've done on police academies that are
close to National City."

Alex looked at the stack of papers, then at Maggie.

"You're going to be a cop."

Maggie nodded proudly.

"Just like Rosie."
Maggie nodded again. "I'm going to be what other people have been for me. I'm going to save lives." Alex leafed through the pile of pages, examining the details Maggie had gathered while Maggie kept talking.

"You see, maybe I was alone all my life, but there were people who saved me, and I want to be like these people."

"It's amazing, Maggie," she put down the pile. "I'm so proud of you. I'm proud to be with you, I'm proud to be yours." She gathered Maggie's face in hers, kissing her gently. "I'm proud that you're mine."

Maggie smiled against her lips, kissing her back, a long, loving kiss.

"You're going to have such good sex tonight," Alex murmured at last, making Maggie giggle all the way to the bed.

Chapter End Notes

thank you for reading! make sure to let me know what you think in the comments, and if you liked it, leave some kudos. also, you guys are the best and I appreciate you for all the love and support I'm getting, so thank you all so much! it really warms my heart :D

I opened a twitter this week! (well I opened it a while back but I started using it this week) mostly for sanvers content, which I need more at this times of stress, and I'm not sure I know how to use it...? idk anyway I'm @bilerleighs so you can come and say hello or whatever :)

as always bilerleigh on tumblr

thanks again! xo
not the ring you want it to be. my sincere apologies
(also, a guest! be nice to her, she's cute and she makes lena happy)

Maggie's pencil tip snapped, and she cursed, getting up to one of the drawers in the cupboard to fetch a new one. On second thought, she returned the new pencil to the drawer and took out a pen. Perhaps it’s better to avoid further sharp breaks in the future. She went back to the table and the papers in front of her.

She had been studying at the Police Academy for three months, a short drive from National City, and she had never felt better about herself. Well, at the moment she had to go through a long and tedious article and sum it up, and three more papers to submit, but the whole idea gave her a good feeling. She is finally heading toward the destination she hopes to achieve.

She was so concentrated on her work that she hardly noticed Alex coming out of the shower, her hair dripping with water. Alex's wet footsteps drew her attention and she looked up, revealing Alex standing in front of the wardrobe, wearing nothing but a towel wrapped around her waist. Maggie leaned back, raising her eyebrows in satisfaction, examining Alex's body from behind. Alex pulled her clothes out of the wardrobe, turned, and laid her gaze on Maggie, who smirked.

"Enjoying the view?" Alex asked, dropping her clothes on the bed and heading toward Maggie. Maggie examined her closely without a word, from her bare feet that were drowning wet steps on the floor to her bare neck, and all that was between them. Maggie's smile widened.

"Definitely," she murmured, letting Alex lean over for a short kiss, which deepened immediately by the too of them. Maggie reached out, fluttering her fingers at Alex's bare waist. The paperwork was forgotten on the table while Alex wrapped Maggie in her arms, giggling.

There was a beep from Alex’s phone, not far away. Alex didn’t seem disturbed by it and went on kissing Maggie, that hugged her waist.

"Maybe you should-" Maggie tried to say, but Alex covered her mouth with hers.

"Not now, I'm busy," she muttered with a smile, and she lowered her head to kiss and suck Maggie’s neck, her tongue slowly moving to the spot behind Maggie's ear that always made her swoon with pleasure, Maggie pulling her head back with her eyes closed, a dull growl comes out of the back of her throat. Another beep was heard, followed by two more.

"Alex, not that I'm not enjoying it," Maggie tried to say without panting, "But maybe you should check on what it is, it sounds pretty urgent."

Alex finally raised her head, her cheeks flushed, her eyelids still slightly wet from the shower. Her hair was damp and fell to her face in soft lumps, and Maggie reached out to move it from her
forehead. "We'll go on for a minute, just check what it is," she said.

Alex stood up with a sigh, holding the towel around her waist. Maggie continued to gaze at her from a distance while she picked up her phone, checking messages. Suddenly her eyes widened and she let out a scream, covering her mouth with her hand.

"What happened?" Maggie asked in alarm, rising quickly towards her. Alex kept covering her mouth with her hand, showing Maggie the phone screen. It showed unanswered calls from Kara, and several messages.

[Kara: 8:20 PM] We're on our way to dollywood, why don't you and Maggie join us?

[Kara: 8:33 PM] Alex, answer your phone, now.

[Kara: 8:35 PM] Aleeewweeeexx

[Kara: 8:39 PM] You're leaving me no choice

[Kara: 8:40 PM] Are you doing this on purpose?

[Kara: 8:42 PM] Okay, so, James proposed. and you two should come to dollywood. now

[Kara: 8:43 PM] ALEXANDRA, I swear to god

Maggie opened her mouth in shock, looking at Alex, that tears beginning to show in her eyes. "I can't believe it," she whispered.

Maggie smiled, hugging her shoulder. "Well, I can't say that I don't believe it," she said. Alex let out a laugh, wiping her eyes.

"Come on," Maggie patted Alex on the back. "Get dressed."

~

"Oh, finally!" Kara waved excitedly at Maggie and Alex as they approached the booth where she and James were sitting, a bottle of champagne and four glasses waiting on the table. Kara rose quickly and closed the distance between her and Alex in a moment, the two crushing each other in a long embrace. Maggie couldn’t quite hear, but they mumbled something to each other, and Alex let out a sob or two. She smiled warmly at them and went over to James, who stood up with a wide smile.

"Congratulations, man," she greeted him, tiptoeing towards him, rubbing his back sympathetically as they hugged. "I'm so happy for you," she said, more quietly, into his ear. He held her tight for a moment and then let go, and she saw that his eyes were wet. He just nodded, too emotional to speak out loud.

The four of them hurried to sit in the booth, lifting the champagne glasses high, cheering and laughing. James's hand didn’t leave Kara's waist, while she couldn’t stop looking at her ring, or smiling, or giggling, or pouring more drinks for everyone.
"Come on, tonight it's on me," she said, ordering another round.

"It's good to know that a journalism student earns so much," Alex remarked. "Maybe I should try it too." Maggie and James laughed and Kara raised an eyebrow.

"It's also good to know you don't remember I graduated more than three months ago." She wrinkled her nose at Alex, who was patting her forehead.

"How could I forget! How's life in finding a job?"

"Exhausting," Kara sighed. "There's an endless waiting list in Catco, and they keep saying they will call me back, but they're not." She took another sip from her glass. "Clark found me a job in some other magazine, and I'm a part-time research assistant until I find something better."

"Yes, but at the moment you have more important things on the table," Maggie smirked and nodded at the ring, and Kara looked up at James with shining eyes, that a proud, broad smile was on his face.

"That's right," she murmured, and he leaned down to kiss her forehead.

They looked so happy, so... peaceful. Maggie was almost jealous. Not that she didn’t have the same thing with Alex. She ran her hand slowly along Alex's thigh under the table, smiling with full dimples all evening. Life with Alex was good. It's just they were both very busy, Maggie was intensely studying at the police academy, and Alex was always at work in the hospital. There were very few evenings they had together, just the two of them, to have dinner or just talk; They'd meet early in the morning, when Alex woke Maggie before she went to work, or late at night when Maggie got into bed after eating the takeout Alex had ordered, lying down beside the sleeping Alex. This night was supposed to be a free night, more relaxed one, as soon as Maggie would finish studying, but the good news demanded other things.

"Have you started planning the wedding, or not yet?"

"They just got engaged, Danvers, let them."

"Oh, I started planning this wedding a long time ago," Kara said, and everyone laughed. She looked up at James, her eyes soft.

"He's going to wear the best tuxedo you'll ever see," she said, patting his collarbone, "And a bow tie."

James groaned and Alex burst out laughing. "It's for the bride," Kara said, and laughed too.

"I can't believe you're a bride," Alex shook her head. She reached across the table to hold Kara's hand. "It seems that only yesterday the seven-year-old Kara came to me and asked me what Monica and Chandler were doing in the bathtub together, and why couldn’t they just shower separately."

Another wave of laughter passed through everyone. "What did you answer?" Maggie asked.

"Nothing, I sent her to her mother, it's not my job." Alex shrugged, taking another sip of her glass.

"Can we please not talk now about how I found out what people do in the bath together, please." Kara covered her eyes with her hand.

"Sure, honey, what would you like to talk about?"
She rested her head on James's shoulder, who settled back in his seat. "This ring. How much you think that it cost?" She showed the ring to Alex and Maggie, and the three of them began to question its price rather excessively, giggling at James's reddening face.

They sat there for hours, talking, laughing, drinking. Reminiscing happy memories, making new memories, even happier. Maggie felt calm, and Alex's hand on her shoulder, soothing, caressing, made a thicket in her belly to loosen up a little.

~

"They make it spicy," Kara grimaced, reaching for the bread. James raised an eyebrow.

"It doesn't look spicy." He handed a fork across the table to taste Kara's dish, running it over his tongue. Kara rolled her eyes.

"Come on, you won't recognize spicy food even if it'll wear a top hat and a dance samba," she said. James shrugged, chewing.

"Maybe, but it's pretty tasty." He pointed to his plate. "Wanna switch?"

Kara smiled, shaking her head. "You always get what you want."

James winked at her, switching between their dishes. "It's because I'm so handsome."

She laughed at him, and began to eat from her new dish, which turned out to be very tasty, and not spicy at all. They kept on talking, discussing journalism, and hospital things, and about those around them in a restaurant, which according to James, their average age was no more than forty-eight. Kara studied the tables. They sat on the side of the restaurant, on the balcony, an amazing view facing them on one side, and on the other, a good view of the rest of the restaurant visitors.

"You're a bit strict with this place... maybe forty." She raised her head. "Forty-two."

"For the average to be forty-two, at least half has to be under forty-two, and I don't think I see anyone under forty here."

"You can't know the age of a person just by looking at them!"

"Actually, I'm a doctor, so I can." He smiled at her and raised his glass. She sighed, smiling lightly.

"You're lucky you're so handsome."

He made a face, trying to make himself look uglier, and she laughed loudly, shaking her head.

"You know who else is handsome?"

"Who?"

"That waitress over there."

Kara looked away. A red-haired waitress, a bit full, stood at one of the tables, taking an order from an older couple, smiling politely.
"Wow, you're right." Kara sat up straight to look at her better. "Damn, she's stunning."

They both stared at her, mumbling to each other in silence, as if she could hear them at such a distance. She finished with the couple and suddenly she noticed them, her eyebrows furrowing in confusion. Kara panicked and raised her hand, waving. The waitress began to make her way to them.

"Shit, she's coming here!"

"Why did you raise your hand?!"

"I don't know, she was so pretty, I panicked, okay?"

"Good evening, can I help you?" The waitress stood beside them, a pleasant smile on her face. They looked at her, perplexed.

"Yes, we, uh..." said James, stammering.

"We finished the food, it was very delicious," Kara said with a big smile. "We'd love to order a dessert."

"Of cou-"

"No!" The two women looked at James, confused. "No?" Asked Kara.

"No, just," he laughed, embarrassed. "We've already ordered dessert, everything is fine, we're all set."

Kara looked even more confused. "Have we ordered dessert?"

"Yeah, you don't remember? when we ordered the food, we also ordered dessert." He turned to the waitress. "In fact, we would like the dessert we ordered will be served to us now, please."

"Of course," she wrote something in her small pad. "Anything else?"

"No, that's all." James sent her away, turning to look at the surprised Kara.

"What was that?"

"What?" He acted innocent.

"We didn't order any dessert and you know it." She leaned back, raising an eyebrow. "What is it?"

"Of course we ordered dessert, you just don't remember it."

"James."

He sipped his glass, the innocent look still on his face. "More wine?"

She rolled her eyes and he reached out to take her hand. "Come on, Kara," he said softly, and she melted at the sight, pleading.

"I love you, you know that?"

She blushed a little, smiling. "I love you too."
He stroked her hand. "Kara, you are... my greatest love, more than photography, more than medicine, more than cooking. I can’t practice you, but I enjoy you much more, and I want you to know that. I thank the universe every day that brought us together. I don’t know what I would do without you."

Kara was completely red, shaking her head. "James, where all of this came from?"

Suddenly three waiters appeared behind them, efficiently and quickly taking down their plates and pouring more wine, and the latter placed a large silver tray covered with a silver lid in front of them, patted James on the back, and walked away. Kara looked around, stunned, intrigued.

"What is going on here?"

"Kara, you are the love of my life." He opened the tray, revealing a small plate and two forks, and a small chocolate cake on the plate, for exactly two people. On the chocolate cake, stood, glistening, a small black box.

Kara covered her mouth with her hand. It's better than anything she ever imagined would happen. She thought he was just feeling romantic today, with the dinner on the roof, and the fancy clothes, and the looks he sent her, but this...

"James, I..." She managed to mutter, her eyes moist. "You’re..."

"Kara, I love you, and I want to spend the rest of my life with you. I knew that from the moment we met." He took the box and opened it, kneeling beside the table. He breathed, blushing, holding the little box in his hand in front of her.

"Will you marry me?"

"Yes!" She managed to ejaculate, stunned, excited. "Yes, of course, yes, oh, god!"

He stood up with a smile, takes the ring out of the box, holding it, trembling, against her finger. He threaded it carefully, the thin golden circle fit exactly into her finger.

"James," she murmured, holding his face in her hands in front of hers. They both giggled, trembling with happiness. Applause was heard from all directions as the diners noticed the marriage proposal in front of their eyes, some rising, some whistling. James brought her closer to his chest, hugging tighter. She remained with her face pressed to him and they both giggled, waving their gratitude to the crowd.

She returned her attention back to him, her hands on his chest. "I love you so, so much," she murmured. "I can’t wait to marry you,"

"That makes two of us," he kissed her forehead, still smiling.

They remained tight close, and Kara suddenly jumped, wiping her eyes. "I have to call Alex!"

~

"Sounds nauseously romantic." Maggie beat the punching bag James held for her, panting. James grinned.
"First of all, yes, guilty as charged. Second, Sawyer, don’t pretend you’re not a hopeless romantic yourself."

"I’m not." She turned on her side, slapping the bag with her leg.

"You are, at least for Alex." She didn’t answer, still beating the bag skillfully; jumping up on her feet pads and reaching her hands out swiftly.

They began training together long ago, just before Maggie was enrolled in the police academy. They did boxing and gymnasts, sometimes talking and sometimes silent, but the couple workout did well for both of them, and brought them closer. Maggie even took James to the Basement Range from time to time, and they did a couple of ranges together. Maggie knew that one day she would be a cop, and she would hold one of these in her hand, enforcing justice. She couldn’t wait.

"Come on," he said as she continued to be silent. "I remember how you told us you made Alex romantic dinners on the island and brought her seashells and stuff. She makes you soft-" A too strong blow she laid on the bag made him choke and she stopped, worried.

"Sorry, I didn’t mean..."

"I’m fine, it’s all good," he felt his chest, grimacing. "Let’s finish here, okay? Kara’s back at seven, I want to be home by then."

She couldn’t blame him. He was engaged to the love of his life, and she wanted to laugh at him when she saw how he was hovering in the air, blushing, happy, unconsciously smiling. She wanted it, too.

She had it, of course. She loved Alex to death, she couldn’t imagine herself with another woman. And she knew that Alex loved her as much. It’s just, the stress lately, it makes them both tense, busy. Alex took double shifts at the hospital because she was the only source of income, because Maggie had to spend all her time studying. They were alright, they were like they always used to be, just... there’s nothing to worry about, she tried to calm herself down. Kara and James are engaged, and that makes every other couple around wither away in comparison.

But what if it is not? what if-

Enough. Stop it. Don’t let yourself fall for it again. You’re stronger than that.

She continued to smile at James as they dressed, leaving the fitness center together, stopping to have a drink at a stall in the corner. They chatted, walking, she accompanied him home and they parted in a hug, and she went on, left with her thoughts alone.

Sometimes she wasn’t sure she was stronger than that.

Kara drummed nervously on the floor with her shoe, and Lena put a calming hand on her arm.

"She’ll be here, don’t worry."

"Of course she’ll be here, we arranged this meeting two weeks ago. And I sent her a message. Two, actually. And we also talked on the phone."
"Kara, calm down," Lena said, her voice quiet. She smiled. "You're as stressed as if she was dating you."

"Excuse me if it's important to me that my best friend will go out with a normal woman. What can I do, sue me."

Lena raised an eyebrow. "I'm your best friend?"

Kara kept looking nervously toward the exit. "James is my fiancé, and Alex is my sister, and they are my best friends too, but they have other names for that, so you're my best friend." She glanced at Lena. "It's okay, right?"

"Of course!" Lena's smile widened. "I'll just have to get used to it."

It had been almost a year since they had re-established their relationship, and Kara smiled slightly at the thought of everything that has happened since then. She calmed down for a moment from the temporary pressure, giving Lena a warm smile. "I knew who to go out with in high school," she winked, and Lena giggled.

"Okay, where is she? It's been almost ten minutes,"

"She's always late."

"Oh, magnificent."

"Maybe you'll show me your ring again," Lena suggested, trying to distract her.

Kara reached a hand for Lena, her eyes still fixed on the door. Lena looked at the ring, exclaiming.

"Kara, it's gorgeous! a perfect fit for you," she flattered.

"You said that the first time you saw it, it hasn’t changed since then."

Lena opened her mouth to respond, but suddenly she saw someone familiar from a distance.

"There she is!"

Kara sprang, looking toward the exit. A tall girl with brown hair and a hesitant smile came closer to them when she recognized Lena. "Don't be awkward." Lena hissed.

"I'm not," Kara hissed back at her, and they both turned to the girl with big smiles.

"Hey!"

"Hello," Kara hurried to reach out a hand. "Kara Danvers."

"Kara, meet Sam Arias."

"Nice to meet you." Sam smiled brightly, shaking Kara's hand pleasantly.

"You too," Kara looked from Sam to Lena, who was standing too close now, Lena's hand almost resting on Sam's waist.

"So... um... I'll go grab a table for us, and you two... just-"

"We'll wait here," Lena smiled.
"Yeah, right," Kara hurried to the reception desk next to the bar where she and Lena had sat, ordering a table to the three.

She waited at the bar, watching from a distance as Lena and Sam stood together, holding hands. Lena’s smile didn’t leave her lips, and she looked at Sam, her eyes sparkling. Kara smiled to herself. After all that Lena had gone through, slander about her surname, the name of criminals and liars, a name associated with fraud and deceit, and how she had rebuilt everything on her own, all the hard work she did reclaim her honor... Kara was deeply sorry that she wasn’t there for Lena when she needed her most. But now she is, and now, Sam is too. From a distance she saw that Sam was laughing at something Lena had said, putting a hand on her stomach, leaning back, eyes closed. She could almost hear the sound of her laughter, see the bright smile on Lena’s face.

They looked happy. Kara felt the ring on her finger with her other hand. She’s happy, too. She hoped that one day Lena would be as happy as she was. Maybe she already is.

"Your table is ready, ma’am." Said a voice behind her, and she thanked them, walking toward the couple.

~

Alex sat with her feet on the small table, her hands clasped behind her head. "Are you done yet?" She called aloud.

"Yeah, just a minute!" Kara called back, getting ready in the dressing booth. She was wearing a very big white dress, which was too inflated for her taste. She didn’t really want it, and the chance she would take it was very low, but the saleswoman insisted, and Kara was all about pleasing other people, to her older sister’s dissatisfaction.

She walked out of the dressing booth, walking toward a round white bunk that was there, turning and waving her hands in the air as the saleswoman and Alex looked at her, both smiling broadly.

"Darling, you look fabulous!" Said the saleswoman. "Why don’t you do another spin?"

Kara exchanged glances with Alex, whose smile changed into a smirk of reproach, crossing her hands. Even after a long time apart, Kara knew exactly what Alex was thinking. She did another spin, to the saleswoman’s exclamations and stepped off the bunk.

"Can you bring us more drinks?" Alex turned to her.

The saleswoman looked from Kara to Alex and back. "Of course," she said with a polite smile, walking away.

Alex approached Kara. "Darling, you look fabulous!" She whispered in a squeaky voice, and Kara hit her shoulder in response, Alex wriggling and laughing.

"This thing is horrible, help me take it off." Alex turned to undo the back of the dress, and soon Kara was free, wearing only a leotard. They sat down on the nearest couch, Alex pouring more champagne for Kara.

"What about that one?" Alex pointed to one of the dresses in the catalog, and Kara looked, turning a page. They discussed different dresses, designs, and fabrics, when the saleswoman returned with
"We would love to see these two, if you don't mind," Alex said, showing her the dresses Kara had chosen before she could say anything else. The saleswoman took the catalog with the big fake smile still on her face, turning away.

Kara pulled out her notebook, taking a few notes, muttering to herself. Alex continued to browse the other catalog uninterestingly, drinking. "You have to relax, Kara," she murmured, pouring another drink for her sister. Kara's foot drummed nervously on the floor.

"The wedding is in a month and you want me to relax? We haven't finished with all the food tasting, and haven't found a photographer yet, and the bridesmaid dress..."

Alex put her hand on her shoulder, smiling reassuringly. “Kara, breath. The tasting is tomorrow, and I'm sure we'll find the perfect food. James is taking care of the photographer, and Lena said she's in charge of the bridesmaid's outfits. " She stopped for a moment. "You have to take a few things off your chest, okay? Calm down, it's going to be the most perfect wedding ever, and not just because it's you and James. It's going to be perfect, I promise.”

Kara closed her eyes. "Okay."

Alex leaned back, satisfied. "Are you nervous about marrying James?"

Kara smiled, unwittingly turning the notebook in her hand over and over. "No. Actually, it's the last thing I'm nervous about. James is the one." She looked up at Alex.

"What a feeling, huh? To know you're marrying your one?"

Kara raised her eyebrow a little. "Yes, you... you feel the same thing about Maggie, don't you? I mean, you've been together for quite some time... and what you've been through... "

"Yeah, yeah, no, of course," Alex murmured, and Kara seemed even more confused. She was always looking at the way Alex and Maggie gazed at each other, or were talking about each other, always being side by side. They always seemed happy, relaxed, pleased with their relationship, with their new life. Of course, there have been some tough times between the two, like every couple, but recently it seems that things are in good shape. She looked at her sister, her gaze asking. Alex sighed.

"I'm not saying there are problems-"

"It's okay if there are problems, Alex."

Alex shook her head. "It's just that we've both been very busy lately, and we don't have much time to talk, and... it's like, I know how every couple always has periods like that, and I just hope it will calm down soon, but..." She rubbed her forehead.

"Maggie has... a problem. You know, she... she had a difficult life... she has been through so much, and she has this feeling that she's not... worth enough, that she deserves nothing, that she's no good. And in the time we've been together, I tried to show her how wrong she is, how amazing she is and how much she deserves, and that I truly want to be with her, and she... she's fighting her demons. She's a fighter, but sometimes she has... falls. And she's acting a bit off lately. I just hope it's not one of these falls."

Kara's hand stroked Alex's back, soothing. "Maybe you should show her. Take her to dinner, take a walk, do something together, spend more time..."
"We don’t have time, that's the whole thing. I work double shifts in the hospital, I barely got the time to come here today, and she studies almost all day, every day. Soon she’ll start a training program, she’ll be out of the house a lot, and I..." Alex buried her face in her hands. "I'm not sure what to do."

Kara pulled her sister closer, hugging her. Alex buried her face in Kara’s neck, breathing to relax. Kara knew how she was feeling. Not because she felt it, but because she saw it. She saw the despair in Alex's eyes, the fatigue, the anxiety. She saw the love in Alex's eyes, the fear that one day, she wouldn’t be able to stop what will come.

"The two of you are stronger than this. You'll get over everything."

Alex nodded into her sister's neck, not letting go.

"Kara, Alex!" They heard a voice and broke apart, looking back. Lena stepped into the shop, dressed in a suit as befits for a businesswoman. She was holding a long parcel in her hand, something that looked like a dress, wrapped in plastic.

"I didn’t know if you would come!" Said Kara happily, rising quickly to hug her friend.

"I just finished in the dress shop and there's another hour until my next meeting, so I thought I'd jump over, if that's okay."

"Of course!" Kara looked at Alex, who still looked a bit agitated. She turned to Lena. "Why don't you go in to try it on and we’ll see how it is?"

"Oh, sure." Lena put down her things and went into the dressing booth. Kara sat back beside Alex, who was resting her head on her shoulder, almost curled up beside her.

"You'll be alright. You both will.” Kara raised her head to kiss her cheek. "Everything will be just fine."

"Thanks, Kar," Alex murmured, sighing. They sat in silence until Lena came out of the changing room, dressed in the bridesmaid dress.

"Darling, you look fabulous!" The saleswoman said suddenly behind them, and Kara and Alex burst out giggling that fast enough turned into laughing.
The wind from the open window hit softly in Maggie's face, and she looked at the landscape along the road. They had rented two cars for the weekend, and Kara and James had driven the first one, in front of them, with Lena and Sam, while Alex and Maggie had driven Clark and Lois. Clark and Lena as the groomsmaids, and Lois and Sam as their wedding partners. They all left a few hours ago on the way to Midvale, where James and Kara’s wedding would take place this weekend.

"It's going to be even hotter when we get there, so enjoy the wind," Alex said loudly to Maggie. Maggie didn’t answer and looked at the distant sea that came closer slowly. She wondered how far away their island was, and what had happened to it after they left. She wondered what would have happened if they had stayed there, and what would have happened to Kara, James, and Eliza.

"It won’t be hotter than anything I'm used to," Maggie mumbled, and a little grin from Alex signaled to her that she heard her through the sound of the wind blowing.

It's been a long time since she and Alex spent quality time together. She couldn't remember the last time they watched a movie together, or had dinner, or just sat and had a conversation. It seems that all their communication nowadays is based on being in the same bed most of the night, and occasionally short, tired conversations before or after sleep. It seemed to Maggie that they were just roommates, each one for her own. Alex inadvertantly put her hand on Maggie's knee, stroking slightly back and forth, her eyes still on the road. Maggie was filled with warmth, but not in the amount she was used to. Her heart tightened a little and she reached out to hold Alex's hand, trying to make the feeling of soreness go away.

"There she is," Alex said after a few minutes, and Midvale reviled before them, a small town with small houses that clung to the sea, and with the sun shining above it. Maggie breathed in the salty air, good memories flashed before her eyes. Soon they would land in the old Danvers' house, and tomorrow Kara and James would marry each other in the courtyard of the big house with a few friends and family. Maggie and Alex worked hard to get themselves a leave from the studies and work for this weekend, which everyone seemed to be preparing for weeks. It would be a weekend to be remembered for a long time, Maggie knew.

Eliza's figure was already waiting for them on the porch, and everyone got out of the cars, carrying suitcases and crates, greetings and kisses, and went into the house to munch on all the dishes Eliza had prepared for them. Soon they sat at the table, and the meal went through smoothly, with food for an army on the table and a buzzing sound of everyone talking. They finished eating, the dessert has been served, and a calming bliss fell on all.

"...and just hung up in my face!"
"No way!" Alex laughed. "So what did you do?"

Clark shrugged. "I called someone I know in the DA’s office. They took care of it from there, but I might have to testify. And of course, the cover story is mine to report."

Lois smiled, her hand gently caressing the back of his neck. "You're lucky they caught him in time. This story could have ended completely differently."

"Who would have believed that a part-time reporter in a foreign magazine would reveal such an outrageous scandal on a local mafia," Kara winked at him, and she and Clark clinked glasses with a smile.

Maggie helped clear the table while the rest of them continued to chat, finding herself inadvertently washing the dirty dishes that she had carried into the kitchen. It was a job that calmed her, and she certainly needed relaxation, especially now.

Well, not that she felt that bad or anything. She felt fine. She was happy for Kara and James, who seemed more joyful than ever. She did what she always dreamed of doing, being a cop. Or at least learns how to be one. She’s in a relationship with the most amazing woman, and both are happy. Seemingly, everything looks perfect.

But something was wrong. It wasn’t just that something was wrong, something felt wrong about her feeling wrong and that felt even more wrong when it was supposed to in the first place. In other words, her life is perfect, so why is she always feeling that her heart is suffused, that she's never in a good mood, that things aren’t how they should be? After all, this life, the life she lives now, is the life she dreamed of. There was something that bothered her, and she couldn’t put her finger on it.

"Oh, darling, you shouldn’t have..." Her thoughts were interrupted with Eliza's voice entering the kitchen, carrying another pile of dirty dishes. She gave her a warm smile and came over to replace her at the sink. Maggie insisted.

"No, Eliza, please, this is the least I can do for you for hosting us."

"Nonsense, this is my daughter's wedding, I wouldn’t let you sleep anywhere else." Eliza put a hand on her back, kissing her head. “How are you? Alex hasn’t talked to me too much recently, and neither have you. Been busy?"

"Very," Maggie sighed. "She with her job, and I'm with school... but we're fine. Getting along.” She smiled at Eliza, who seemed calmer.

"I'm glad," she said, turning to clean the counter. "I just hope you don’t exhaust yourself too much, that you have some free time from time to time."

"We have to thank James and Kara for this free weekend," Maggie joked, and Eliza laughed and patted her back. She opened her mouth to say something but suddenly they heard a shout from the living room.

"Mom!"

"The bride calls me. Be right back." She left quickly, leaving Maggie alone again.

*I just hope that you don’t exhaust yourself too much.* The words echoed in Maggie's head as she washed the plates in the sink. She felt exhausted, indeed, but it wasn’t from school. She enjoyed her studies, mostly. It wasn’t... anything else she'd done lately. But something in her felt tired, drained, worn out. As if she was on the edge of a cliff. As if something in her life was wrong.
Maybe it's about Alex? No, things were fine, pretty normal. No complicated incidents. She thought of Alex’s figure before her, her eyes weary and her yawn wide. *She's too tired lately,* Maggie reminded herself. *She works hard to support us both.* They hadn’t fought or anything lately, but... they hadn't communicated too much lately too. They don’t have time. Maggie's heart ached again and she wondered about it. Is it blame? For not investing enough in Alex?

No.

It’s that Alex gives from herself too much for her, and Maggie gives her nothing in return.

*But that's nonsense!* A voice protested in her mind. *Alex does it all happily, willingly, she told you so. She doesn't care if it's like that, she loves you.*

*Yes, but do I deserve it?*

She was so absorbed in thought that she almost jumped to the feeling of tenderly wrapped hands around her.

"Hey," Alex whispered in her ear, putting her chin on Maggie's shoulder. Maggie acknowledged her with a small hum, continuing to wash plates one after the other.

"I see we can’t take away the pleasure of washing dishes from you, even if you're out of the house."

Maggie chuckled. "What can I say, there are too many dishes and not enough hands." She closed the tap and put the last plate on the dryer, taking the towel Alex handed her.

"Well, now that you're done, I've got an idea where you can put your hands on next," Alex murmured, turning Maggie around. She leaned forward and kissed her, and Maggie smiled at her lips, wrapping her arms around Alex's neck easily. All the thoughts she had before flown away at the touch of Alex's lips, which had always managed to melt her easily.

They broke apart after a moment, Alex burying her face in Maggie's neck. "I missed this."

"What are you talking about?"

"You know what I'm talking about." Alex's voice was muffled through Maggie's neck.

Maggie knew. She had no reason to ask what she meant. She knew that Alex missed the hugs, the conversations, she missed Maggie. It was too long since they had each other like that. Maggie missed it too. Alex raised her head, looking at her with a loving, tired look.

"Are you nervous or something?"

"Me? No. Why would I be nervous?" Maggie looked away from Alex, gently pushing her away. She turned toward the exit, Alex's gaze following her.

"I don't know, you look... not calm. Everything okay?"

"Everything is fine. Let's go back to the table."

Maggie went out of the kitchen, Alex trailing behind her. She guessed the look on her face, confused and worried, that little crinkle between her eyebrows is visible, but she didn’t dare turn around and check.

That night, she slept beside Alex in the old sheets, in Alex’s old bed, in the little attic room. She
pressed her face against Alex's chest, praying for sleep to take her, to take these naggng thoughts away from her head.

~

Kara made another spin, at Eliza's request, and was greeted by calls of joy, applause and whistling. Everyone except James went to Kara's old room to see her in her wedding dress, that looked perfect. Kara, flushed and smiling, clasped her hands happily.

"Kara, you look..."

"Amazing."

"Simply stunning!"

"Thank you," she said, turning back to the mirror. She kept smiling to herself, adjusting the lace of her waist. She didn’t have to say anything to everyone to know what she was thinking about.

"Don’t worry," Clark said with a smile from the corner of the room. "I'll stand next to him when you’ll walk down the aisle to make sure he won’t fall when he sees you," he winked. Kara looked at him over the mirror.

"You better be," she murmured.

"Alright, people, we've got half an hour before the guests get there, and I suggest everyone get to their places," Eliza said, kissing Kara on the cheek before turning to leave the room. "I'll see you soon,"

"Thanks, Mom."

Everyone left the room one by one, greeting Kara and chattering until the room was empty and Lena stayed behind, standing behind Kara, who was still arranging the lace on her waist.

"Kara, it's fixed," she murmured. They exchanged glances through the mirror. Kara's movements became less vigorous, and her hands slid back and forth over the chiffon of her dress.

"I just-"

"Don’t know what to do with your hands, as always," Lena smiled. "Just give them to me." Kara turned, pressing both hands into Lena's hands.

"Everything will be fine."

"Of course everything will be fine, I'm marrying James." Kara smiled nervously.

"So why are you still nervous?"

"It's just that... what if I fall in the middle of the aisle? Or what if the musicians will be bad? or what if it’s too hot outside? is it too hot outside?" She left Lena's hands for a moment, turned to the window. "Maybe we chose a too hot day? we could have done it next week... or last week, it would have worked too," She began muttering to herself. "We have to make sure there’s enough water for everyone, if someone faints from the heat-"

"Kara," Lena put a hand on her shoulder, pulling her back from the window. "The weather is perfect, we couldn’t choose a better weather. And the musicians are excellent, I remind you that I chose them myself. And you won’t fall in the middle of the aisle, because Eliza will walk right
next to you." She led Kara to sit on a chair, a soothing hand on her knee.

"Lena, I'm marrying James today. Everything has to be perfect."

"And everything will be perfect." Lena calmed her down.

"How can you be so sure?" Kara looked back at the window.

There was silence for a few moments as Lena stroked Kara's hand.

"I knew I wanted him from the moment we met. He was funny, and sweet, and wonderful, and... he was everything. He's still everything. He's my life." she paused. "I'm marrying him today, and everything has to be perfect, everything must be perfect. For him."

Lena smiled.

"Kara, I think that... just the event itself, the fact that you two are getting married, makes this wedding perfect. You could get married in a shed with torn and dirty clothes and it would still be the most perfect wedding in the world, because it's your wedding. The best couple I know." She put her hand on Kara's chin to raise her head, meeting blue, wet eyes.

"Hey. It'll be perfect, I promise you."

Kara nodded, swallowing. Suddenly there was a knock on the door, and Alex pushed her head inside.

"Am I interrupting?"

"No, come on in." Lena rose, straightening her dress. "I'll be right outside, okay?"

Kara nodded, and Alex came in with a smile, patting Lena's shoulder affectionately, a quiet 'thank you' on her lips. She leaned over next to Kara, who now notices that she is holding something in her hand.

"What is this?" She asked, sniffling.

"That," Alex waved her hand, showing the crown of flowers she held, "Is something I've made for you."

"You made it?"

"Hey, don’t look so surprised. You know I learned to carve when I was on the island. It's the same job, just with... other things like branches and flowers." She turned the crown in her hand as Kara let out a snicker and shook her head. "Okay, it's not the same thing, but look, I did it!"

"You did."

Alex smiled. "May I?"

"You may." Kara lowered her head, and Alex arranged Kara's hair back, placing the crown on her head. A tear fell on the white fabric of her dress and Alex looked at Kara's face, raising her eyebrows.

"Oh, no, no, no, don’t cry, Kara..." She held out a thumb to wipe her sister's eyes. "Don’t cry, it will ruin all your beautiful makeup."

"I don’t really care about the makeup," Kara murmured, sniffling again. Alex hurried to hand her
a tissue, sitting on the chair next to her. Kara put her head on Alex's shoulder, and they sat there quietly for a few minutes.

"Alex?"

"Mmm?"

"Are you happy?"

Alex didn’t answer for a moment, and Kara was afraid she hadn’t heard her whisper.

"If I'm happy?" She said finally, confused.

"Yes."

"Kara, this is your wedding day, I-"

"Alex."

Alex blew out air. "I... yes, I'm happy."

"It doesn't sound happy to me."

"I don't want to bother you, especially not today, especially not now... dear god, Kara!"

"It's just that I-" Kara sighed. "I'm happy, Alex. I'm so blissful. It's the happiest day of my life, and it's a cliché, but I really feel it, and I just-" She stopped, looking at Alex.

She loves her sister so much. For sixteen months she was lost, missing, presumed dead. And still, Kara was sure she would find her, despite all the things that happen and people and evidence around her that said it wasn’t possible. Her sister had always been her rock, her brace, her shield. They quarreled and made up, and hated and loved, but most of all, she knew they were bound forever, and she wouldn’t give up anything that happened to them, for nothing in the world. And now she was going to marry this wonderful man who loved her, and her sister would be there next to her the whole time. And she wants her sister to feel the same in her heart. That Alex would be that happy, too.

"I want you to be happy, Alex." She whispered, puts her hand on her shoulder.

Alex took a deep breath, biting her lips. "I... I am happy." She managed to mutter, but Kara shook her head.

"Alex, please...."

"I mean, right, not everything is perfect, but... we aren’t giving up. There are difficult times, and I suppose this is a difficult time. And I love Maggie. I saved her life, and she saved mine, and we’re together because there are things that I... I can’t explain. Even if the world will burn, I’d still want her. Because she’s mine. And she sees all of me, and wants me, and she’s gentle and considerate with me. She loves me more than anything, and I, I love her in a way I didn’t know I could ever love another person. I didn’t know it was possible. She showed me how. I love her because she's funny, and amazing, and filled with so much love, and she has warmth and simplicity, and I'm so... so in love with her." Alex closed her eyes.

"Are you afraid of losing her?"

There was silence for a moment, then a weak, barely audible- "Yes."
"Alex, I-

"No, you don’t get to do this. Not today, not now. I can’t agree." Alex sounded firm. "I’m not letting you do this on your wedding day, an hour before the wedding."

"We’re going to Hawaii tonight-

"We’ll talk when you come back. I promise you everything will be alright."

They looked at each other for a moment with examining stares. Alex pressed her hand to Kara’s. "I know you want me to be happy," she whispered. "But I want you to be happy too. After everything I’ve made you go through... you deserve to rest. You deserve it."

"It wasn’t your fault-

"For fuck sake, shut up," Alex sighed, leaning back. "You never shut up."

"Alright, idiot." Kara leaned back too, folding her hands.

There was a knock on the door.

"Open!" Called Alex. Eliza came in, then Lena.

"Is everything okay?"

"Everything is excellent. How’s the groom?"

"Hunk," Eliza winked, approaching the girls.

Kara rose, smiling. "He better be." She said, standing in front of the mirror. Eliza went over to her, helping her with the crown arrangement on her head.

"Where’s Maggie?" Lena asked, sitting down on the bed. They all turned to Alex with a questioning looks.

"I’ll go find her."

Alex left the room, giving Kara a last look. Kara nodded at her with an encouraging smile and Alex closed the door behind her.

~

"Hey."

She didn’t turn. It was pleasant to sit on the bench in the garden, far enough away from everyone, but still with a view to the sea. She wondered how Alex knew she would be here.

"How did you find me?"

"You’re drawn to the ocean."

Alex sat down next to her, and Maggie felt how she’s afraid to touch, to get even closer than she was now. Maggie didn’t reply, still looking at the distant waves.

"You miss the island." It wasn’t a question.

"You’re not?"
She felt Alex shrug, hesitant. "Of course I do, but… our lives are different now." She was silent for a moment. "This is what we wanted, doesn’t it?"

Maggie didn’t answer. Without thinking, she slid closer to Alex, causing Alex’s arm that laid on the armrest to hug her shoulder. She felt Alex pressing her mouth to her temple, kissing her softly. She closed her eyes, she closed her eyes, smelling the strong, salty scent. If she was really concentrating, it was as if they were still on the island, sitting on the beach at lunchtime, peels of eaten mango placed beside them.

That was what she wanted. That was all she wanted.

But she feels it’s not the best that could have happened. Not for her.

For Alex.

Alex can have more. She deserved more. On the island... She couldn’t escape. There were no other possibilities for her. And they talked about it, Alex said she loved Maggie. No matter the circumstances.

But did she really mean it? Was it something she said because she believed in then? And now?

She raised her head, looking at Alex. Her face had light makeup, and it made it hard for Maggie to see the freckles that were usually comforting, that made her smile. Her eyes fixed on Maggie, worrying, asking without a word.

She opened her mouth to speak, and a distant shout interrupted the moment.

"Alex, Maggie!" Sam cupped her hands around her mouth. "It's about to start!"

"We'll be right there!" Maggie shouted back. Alex kept looking at her.

"What is it?"

"We'll talk later, now it's not the time." Maggie stood up, reaching for Alex. Alex continued to look at her, a little disappointed.

"Okay." She finally agreed, standing up. She leaned forward slightly, kissing Maggie's pink lips. She opened her mouth to deepen the kiss, but Maggie pushed her back a little with a slight smile.

"Come on, we have to go."

They hurried off to the ceremony, which stood in the middle of the lawn in the courtyard of the Danvers House, with the chairs of the small crowd that had already reached almost full capacity. Maggie led them to their seats in the front row, next to Eliza’s place, ready for her to join them later.

James and Clark approached the canopy, James waved his hand at the crowd, smiling. He stood under the canopy, Clark a few feet behind him.

The group of musicians began to play, something quiet and pleasant, almost magical, and everyone stood up, looking back to receive the bride. She appeared in a moment, white, bright, accompanied by her mother, which was almost as bright as she was. Lena walked a few feet behind them, smiling happily too.

James looked shocked, his mouth slightly open as he looked at Kara walking toward him. She gave him a shy, flushed smile, and in a few moments she stood beside him, and they looked at
each other, wide smiles, bright eyes.

"Dear guests, we gathered here today..."

~

"Here," Alex approached Maggie with two glasses. Maggie took hers and drank it all in one gulp. Alex looked at her, a little surprised.

"Are you alright?" She drank too, a more measured sip.

Maggie nodded, a bit vigorous nod. "I'm fine," she said. They stood close to the bar, where various guests were chatting and drinking. Maggie felt Alex inspect her, her worried eyes digging holes in the back of her neck again.

"Why don’t we go dancing?" She suggested, trying to distract Alex’s attention. They obviously should talk, but now is not the time, and here is not the place. She turned to look at Alex, a strained smile on her face.

Alex opened her mouth to respond, but someone patted her shoulder and she turned.

"Alex Danvers, as I live and breathe!" Said a young woman in a black dress, her smile full of makeup. Alex smiled at her, surprised.

"Lory! Wow, it's been..."

"Years! How are you? I’ve heard you...” Her voice suddenly froze, and she looked from Alex to Maggie, biting her lips. "I heard you died, and then..."

"Yes, it's a long story," Alex waved her hand dismissively. "I got stuck on a desert island. We," she suddenly gestured at Maggie. "We got stuck on a desert island."

"Oh!" Said Lory. Surprisingly, she wouldn’t have seemed particularly interested in the story. "And you are...?"

"Maggie Sawyer, nice to meet you," Maggie held out her hand, squeezing Lory's hand with a fake smile. She felt that this woman was arrogant, self-interested and presumptuous, and she immediately decided that she didn’t like her.

Lory didn’t give Maggie too much of her attention. She turned her look back at Alex, and to Maggie's annoyance, began to examine her up and down, eyebrow slightly raised.

"Lory, Maggie is my girlfriend. Maggie, Lory is..."

"An old friend." Lory completed her, her gaze still fixed on Alex's, a cocky smile on her face. Her eyes flickered to Alex's lips, to her chest, to her body, every few seconds, and Maggie tried to hold herself out of anger.

"Is that so? I've never heard of you..." Maggie said, her arm inadvertently climbing up to grab Alex's waist.

"Well, Alex and I have known each other since kindergarten, all the way to high school. I moved to New York not long ago, I have my own law firm now." She kept looking at Alex, who nodded admiringly.

"Impressive," said Alex, smiling. "I'm a doctor, at the National City Gener-"
"Yes, Kara told me you were working there." She bit her lips again and glanced at Maggie, "And what are you doing?"

"I study at the Bergen Police Academy, next to National City." Said Maggie, her voice steady, her head tense and high. She tried to maintain a calm, pleasant mood beside this woman, who was clearly interested in Alex.

Alex, on her part, wouldn’t have seemed particularly interested in Lory. She smiled proudly at Maggie and looked back at Lory. "Maggie is going to be a cop."

"Very well," said Lory, smiling slightly, and Maggie felt like a little kid being praised on a painting they've drawn. She tried to keep her cool.

"So, Alex, I didn’t know you-" Lory nodded at Maggie.

"Going out with someone?" Alex looked confused.

"Going out with a woman." Lory said emphatically, and she seemed to be getting closer to Alex. Maggie strained to keep Alex as close to her as possible, a smile too big, proud, still on her lips all the time, while she watched Lory.

"Oh," said Alex, giving out a giggle. "Well, Maggie help me with this whole... uh, thing, you know." She seemed to understand Lory's intentions suddenly, but she didn’t bother to take a step back.

Lory's smile widened. "Well, how lucky," she said, her voice goes down an octave.

"Lucky?"

"That you met a woman who helped you. The whole lesbian stuff can be quite complicated." Lory's eyes flashed at Maggie, a touch of contempt in her eyes. "You are a lesbian, right? No men?"

Alex nodded in agreement. "Yeah, yeah, I... I am," she said, a polite smile on her face. She seemed embarrassed for a moment.

Maggie wondered what made this woman see her in such a negative light, especially since she’d never spoken to her before. Has this woman spent the last ten years pining for Alex to come out? Or is she just happened to attend a wedding just when she feels the need to hit on the first lesbian she'll meet? Maggie swallowed. She never met someone who talks so little about something but themselves and still manages to offend other people. She saw Alex’s cheeks redden at the last statement, and Lory, on the other hand, seemed satisfied.

"Well," Lory reached out suddenly, taking Alex's hand in hers. "Can I have this dance, Mrs. Danvers?" She said with a smile, not waiting for a response before she began to lead her away.

"Actually, we were just on our way-" Maggie began.

"Great," Lory said, taking Alex after her to the dance floor. Alex turned to Maggie.

"It's just one dance," she said. "I'll be back in a minute."

Maggie was left behind, watching Alex walk away. Alex turned her head and sent her apologetically look. Maggie continued to look at them, as they entered the dance floor, Lory laying her hands on Alex's body, continuing to speak to her in private, with a slight smile, her
voice probably whispering, seductive. Alex smiled as she looked at her, not the smile she had when she looked at Maggie, but another smile, eyebrow raised, wondering. Curious.

Alex didn’t have the chance of... being in the bachelor's swamp, when she was single and knew what she wanted. All her life she had dated men, because that's what society made her think she wants, she never thought she could go out with women. Maggie looked at both of them, far away, rocking in each other's arms. She felt disgusted, nauseated, and she lifted her glass to her mouth to drink, finding it empty.

"Maggie!"

James appeared behind her, pulling the giggling kara behind him.

"Hey, guys, such a great wedding," she tried to smile. "You guys are... great, you deserve the best."

"Thank you, Maggie," Kara jumped to embrace her, crushing her with a hug. She smelled of champagne, and she swayed a little. James looked at them over her shoulder, smiling, his tie loosen up.

"Are you okay?" Kara asked, close to her ear. Maggie didn’t know what to say, except for a total lie. Anyway, she wouldn’t tell her, or James, that she wasn’t feeling well, on their wedding day.

“I’m great. Actually, I'm going to get myself another drink.” She lifted her empty glass. "Bring you anything?"

James shook his head. "We're on our way back to dancing. You should come,”

"Yeah, maybe later." she smiled and hurried away, lowering her face until she reached the bar. "Whiskey," she asked the bartender, swallowing her glass again in one gulp. She slammed the glass on the bar with a mute request for another fill.

~

The rest of the wedding passed by quickly, at least through Maggie's eyes. Lena and Clark made a speech, and James, Eliza, and Alex too, and they all raised their glasses again and again to greet the couple. James and Kara wore wide smiles all the time, hands clasped, unrelenting. James raised Kara's hand to kiss the back of her hand every few minutes, making her giggle with delight.

It was dusk, and most of the guests were on their way out. Finally, the couple walked to the car that waited to take them to the airport, to set off as a married couple to their honeymoon in Hawaii. Hugs and greetings passed through everyone, and someone bothered to disperse confetti on their heads, and it flew in the light wind. The car drove away, and everyone returned to the large tent in the yard, the waiters and the cleaners were already clearing the place.

Maggie stood alone, looking around. Lena and Sam sat with Lois on one of the garden benches, the three talking pleasantly. She noticed Sam's hand resting elegantly on the back of Lena's neck, and Lena's bright, calm eyes when she spoke to Lois. Clark approached them and puts his hands on Lois's shoulders, joins the conversation. Maggie wondered if she should join too, if she could tolerate another few minutes of fake smiles, casual talks about nothing, feeling the black hole inside her swallowing everything.

She heard a voice behind her, turning. Alex stood there, brushing the ground a little with her foot. She turned to her, saying nothing. Alex was still staring at the ground, tentative. Maggie moved closer.
"Do you wanna get going?" Everyone planned to stay for another night at the Danvers House, but Alex had to work the next morning.

"You have something to tell me." Alex looked up at last.

Maggie looked at her. It was a light, pleasant afternoon, and a sound of birds heard from a distance. Alex was so beautiful, in her purple dress, with her hair combed slightly to one side. Maggie took a deep breath, nodding. She had to do it, whether she liked it or not.

The facts stood before her, clear and steady, and she turned them over in her mind again and again as she sat in the bar earlier, trying to make sense, to find a breach, a loophole, a way to free both of them.

She had to say goodbye to Alex. She had to break up with her.

"Let's talk in the car," she said, tilting up to give a little kiss on Alex's cheek, breathing her deeply for a second. Her hand caressed her arm as she moved toward the house, toward their already packed suitcases, closer and closer to the finish line.

They said goodbye to everyone, going out to the cool evening air, alone in the rental car, again in their daily clothes. There was a long drive ahead.

Alex didn’t speak for the first half hour. Maggie only worn her hands in her lap, longing to look at the sea, to get inside, to the deep depths. Not to think, or to speak, without having to be here, trapped in the car with the woman she loved, the woman who she didn’t know if she deserves to be loved by her.

"Maggie," Alex murmured suddenly. They were on a long, empty road, and Alex let herself take her eyes off the road for a few moments, put her hand on Maggie's knee. "You know you can tell me everything, right?"

Maggie looked at her for a few seconds.

"Stop the car."

Alex obeyed quickly, stopping the car at the side of the road. Maggie turned her whole body to Alex, reaching out to stroke her cheek slowly. Alex put her hand on Maggie's hand, looking into her eyes. Maggie shook her head, grasping Alex's face with both hands, kissing her hard.

It wasn’t a kiss like any other kiss they'd ever had. Maggie held Alex's face, pulling her closer, kissing her deeply, slowly, breathing her in. Alex didn’t object, putting her hands on Maggie's shoulders, pulling her close. Maggie's tongue passed over Alex's lips, making her tremble, a slight moan from Alex rose above the sound of their gasps between kisses.

She continued kissing her, feeling her heart pounding, hoping to pass through everything she needed to say and didn’t know how to, everything she felt, hoped that Alex would save herself. She tried to pull back but Alex didn’t let her, pulling her in again, pressing their lips together. She had the feeling that she, too, was trying to postpone the end that she’d begun to feel through that kiss.

They broke apart at last, Maggie pressing her face against Alex's neck, breathing. She felt Alex tremble, and she clung to her even more, hoping to warm her up.

"Please don’t say it," Alex whispered, barely audible. Maggie's heart stopped.

"Alex..."
"I... please... I don’t-

"Alright," Maggie said. She gave a kiss into Alex's hair. "Just... keep driving."

Alex barely managed to leave Maggie's shoulders, to put her hand on the wheel again, to continue their journey back to National City.

Maggie wasn’t sure, and she was afraid to check, but it seemed that a stray of tears had already made its way across Alex's cheeks. There was a rock laying on her heart, a heavy, black rock, and she felt a tremor pass through her.

*Don’t do that. You don’t have to. Alex loves you. You deserve her love. Just talk it through.*

Maggie heard those voices barely at the back of her head, refusing to believe them. She silenced them all, dismissing them. They were the selfish voices inside her.

*There’s no other way.*

They stopped at a red light after a while. Alex took a deep breath, closes her eyes, rests.

"If you say it out loud, I... I'm not sure I could take it." Alex said, her voice broken. Maggie wiped her eyes.

"There's nothing we can do."

"Of course there is!" Alex rebelled, turning to look at her. She swallowed. "I love you." She reached a hand for Maggie's. Maggie didn’t flinch, crossing her fingers with Alex's.

"I love you too." She said, raising her head.

The traffic light changed and a car honked behind them, Alex hurried to put her hands back on the wheel.

"Maggie," she said quietly. "Whatever it is, we can overcome it, we can’t let anything stand in our way to-"

"No."

Alex stopped, surprised, as the car continued its smooth ride.

"We can’t." Maggie continued. "It's something that cannot be fixed."

"It's nonsense, Maggie, whatever it is, we can fix it, we can’t give up." Alex sounded stiff, confident. "You told me yourself! you said to me then, that whatever it is, no matter what, any problem that needs to be talked about, we can solve it together! You told me that! just tell me what it is, and we’ll work on it together, and-"

"You know what, I think that maybe it's not such a good idea to talk about it on the ride."

Alex opened her mouth and closed it, several times, until she leaned forward in her seat, sighing, concentrating on driving. The rest of the journey went through silently, each one and her thoughts.

Finally, they arrived at National City, where Alex parked the car under their apartment, both sitting in the dark, quietly, waiting, not knowing for what.

"I don’t know what to say." Murmured Alex. "I don’t want to... I don’t-"
“Let’s just go upstairs.”

Maggie didn’t look at her as she got out of the car, unloading their bags while Alex remained in the driver’s seat, staring into the air, rubbing her eyes.

~

Maggie leaned against the sink, a glass of water in front of her. Alex sat on the couch, her head in her hands.

“Just tell me what it is.”

Maggie spread her fingers on the marble beside the glass.

“I think...” she said slowly, each word wounding her like a knife. “I think we should break up.”

Alex remained sit, silent.

“I think I’m not doing you any good, and that I’m getting in your way, and that there are better things that... that... you just better off without me.” She exhaled, feeling her eyes burning.

“No. I refuse to accept it. It’s not true.” She heard Alex behind her, getting up. “If that’s the thing, I refuse to accept it.”

“I’ve made my decision, Alex.”

Alex stopped. “You made your decision, what is it supposed to mean? How long have you been feeling this way?”

“It’s been a while.”

“You were... you were okay last week, two weeks ago-”

“I’ve been not okay for a long time.” She turned at last. Alex’s face showed her that she knew, that she was trying to deny, that she was trying to prevent the storm. “I have been not okay for a very long time. In fact, since I was born.”

“Maggie, stop talking nonsense.”

“I’m preventing you from going out there and fulfill yourself, I’m preventing you from living a better life, I’m a burden, and it’s better for you without me.”

“That’s bullshit! Maggie,” she approached her, taking Maggie’s hands in hers, a tortured look on her face. “Mags, baby, you are not a burden. I love you, and... and I-” she shook her head, speechless. “I told you I love you for the first time on that island, and since then nothing has changed, I swear!” She shook Maggie’s hands in despair. “You have to believe me.”

Maggie left her hands, walking away.

“You said that I was important to you, you said you fell in love with me for who I was, and how I made you feel, but... I was important to you because we were on the island. I wouldn’t be important to you if you weren’t depending on me in a certain way...”

“No, it’s not-”

“I’m just trying to make a point here, okay?” Maggie blew air and pinched the bridge of her nose. Alex approached her apprehensively.
"Maggie, the island may have brought us closer against our will, but... the feelings I felt, the feelings I still feel are real. I haven’t stopped loving you because we left the island—"

"But you did." Maggie interrupted her, her eyes staring at her sharply. 

Alex's eyes looked hurt, and Maggie regretted saying anything at all. 

"It's- I’m not- It's not that you—"

"You think I don’t love you anymore."

A flashback passed before Maggie's eyes to where she sat in the bar with James and buried her face in his chest. *She doesn't love me anymore, James,* she said. She came home that evening and Alex promised that she would turn every stone on the face of the earth to make her happy. And she really did.

So why do you still have the feeling that it's better for her without you?

"You love me, but on the island... you didn’t have anything on the island. Neither of us had, and I think that now, that you have a choice... you'd rather be with someone else. Me, I'm not doing you any good."

Alex looked shocked. "Are you serious? do you really think so?"

Maggie looked down. "Even if it's not entirely true, I think we should be apart for a while... you should go and understand what you need, figure out things with yourself without me in the picture."

"Maggie, I don’t need to find out anything, I want you."

Maggie shook her head. "I'm not sure anymore."

"I've had a choice for over a year, and now you think I want to leave? That I no longer love you the way I did?" Alex sighed desperately. Maggie shook her head, closing her eyes.

"Don’t make it harder than it is."

"I'm doing it harder than it is? You're the one who started it! Fuck, Maggie, do you really mean that?"

Maggie didn't answer. Through closed eyes, she felt Alex approaching her again, taking both her hands gently.

"Maggie... please tell me you don’t mean that."

She loved her so much. But they couldn’t be together. Not when she held Alex like that, keeping her from a happier future. A future that wouldn’t include her. She doesn’t do good to Alex. She does no good to anyone.

"I mean it."

She opened her eyes to see Alex shaking her head, biting her lips, sobbing.

"Please..."

She turned.
"I'm sorry, Alex."

"No!" Alex wiped her eyes. "You have to fight it, Maggie, it's your demons who tell you everything, it's not true, none of that is true!" She moved closer to Maggie, holding her shoulders. "Baby, it's not true! I love you, you have to understand it! fight those demons, fight them for me, for you, I... " Her eyes moved frantically, and she seemed to think quickly. "I'll take another leave. We'll both take a leave, go somewhere, on a vacation, anywhere you want. We'll talk about it. We'll fix it together, Maggie, you have to, just give me a chance, please... " Her voice subsided and tears continued to fall from her eyes. Maggie shook her head.

"It's not my demons, Alex. You're amazing, and I love you so much," she breathed deeply, shivering. "But I can't be with you, not when I keep you from a better life, a life without me."

"You've made my life better, Maggie, don't you get it?"

"It's not... it's not true, I didn't."

"Maggie..."

Maggie grabbed her bag that still stood by the door, walking away. "Goodbye, Alex."

She opened the door, not looking back as she left, closing it behind her as Alex sobbed, perplexed. Her heart pounding hard in her hands, her legs, her head, everywhere but her chest, which felt empty, unbearably empty.

I didn't want us to burn out
I didn't come here to hurt you
now I can't stop

Chapter End Notes

thank you for reading! any notes, comments, and reviews on this chapter will be warmly accepted at the comments. if you'd like to talk in privet, i'm bilerleigh on tumblr and bilerleighs on twitter. would LOVE to hear your thoughts!

please remember that i have a plan. i have thought about this process more nights then i can recall, and worked on writing and rewriting this thing for a long time. this is absolutely not the last chapter, and everything will play out eventually. i know some of you don't like it, and it was hard for me too, but as i said, everything i write has a reason.

i love you, and thank you for reading my story!
Alex put down the phone. Kara sat next to her on the couch, a gallon of ice cream and two spoons in her hand.

"Still nothing?"

Alex shook her head. Her eyes were swollen, red, and her whole being seemed extinguished. Kara reached for the remote and turned on the TV.

"Okay, put the phone aside, you need a distraction."

"It's been three weeks, and I couldn't stop thinking about her for more than a few hours. I don't think that-" She squinted to read the title of the movie, which now appeared on the top of the screen. "Some generic action movie will be able to distract me more than I've tried so far."

"Come on, Alex, give Bruce Willis a chance."

Alex didn't answer, just curled in deeper into the couch. Kara sighed, pausing the movie.

"Do you want to talk about it?"

"There's nothing to talk about. She left me for no logical reason and didn’t answer the phone once." Alex closed her eyes.

"So what do you want to do?" Kara sat back in her seat, turning her eyes to Alex. "Whatever you want to do, I'm up to it."

The night Maggie left, Alex was left alone, crying all night. The next morning she came to work as usual, drowning herself in the work to keep up until Kara and James came back. A week later, when they returned, Alex called Kara, and all her tears came out again. Kara took the time to help her sister, with emotional support, hugs and a sympathetic ear. It was Alex who kept telling her she doesn’t need anything, she just needs Maggie.

"How many times have you called her?"

"About fifty." Said Alex, her face still buried in the couch cushion. Kara raised her eyebrows in surprise.

"That's..."

"Two or three times every day since she left, and it's been twenty-one days."

Kara sighed, poking a spoon into the ice cream. "Are you sure you don’t want to watch the
"We can watch the movie, it just won’t help." Alex looked up for a moment, at Kara, who had already put a third spoon of ice cream in her mouth.

"Ice cream?"

Alex shook her head, returning her face to the pillow.

"I loved her," Alex murmured for the umpteenth time. "I still love her, you know. I'd walk down the street and see rings in shop windows. I wanted to marry her, I wanted to be with her forever." She sniffed. "She doesn’t even answer me, if she had answered me, I... I would..." She paused. "I would find out where she is and I’d go there and slap her in the face. And then I would kiss her until she would realize she’s wrong. Until I'd fix her."

"I can find out where she is."

"You know I’d ask you to find out, but I want it to come from her." She sighed. "I wouldn't really do these things. But I just wish she would answer."

There was another silence as Kara continued to quietly wipe out the ice cream by herself. After a few moments, Alex sighed, reaching for the gallon.

"Give me that." She dug through the ice cream, shoving a large spoon into her mouth. Kara looked at her with worried eyes. Someone has to talk to Maggie, she thought. Find out where she is. Make it clear to her that she made a mistake, that she’s wrong."

"You know what, it was probably my fault," Alex spoke with a mouth full of ice cream.

"Alex, it's not."

"Yes, it was, because I thought I could fix her myself. Because I didn’t ask her to go to therapy, it was because I thought we could handle it, I thought we could win it all, if we just believed. If we love each other enough." She looked down at the ice cream. "I guess I was wrong. I had it in front of my eyes, and I refused to accept it."

Kara was silent. "Okay," she said after a moment. "But it means that, whatever it is, you can handle it, right? I mean, if you come to her and explain, can she understand that she made a mistake?"

Alex sighed again. "Maybe. I don’t know anymore. It was so…“ she shook her head. “She won’t listen to me. She won’t answer me, and even if she will, I don’t know if she'll listen."

Kara scrunched her nose.

"Stop looking at me like that."

"Like how?"

"Like an idiot. You have a crinkle above your nose when you're not happy with me, or when you're hiding something." Alex took another spoon into her mouth. "Are you hiding something?"

"I don’t hide anything, and I don’t have a crinkle." Kara's hand went up to feel the gap between her nose and her eyes, feeling a very clear crinkle. Alex licked her lips, placing the empty spoon over her mouth.
"So what is it going to be? I'm finding out in ten minutes where Maggie is right now or you’ll continue to sink into self mercy over your damaged relationship?"

Alex scowled at her. "First of all, how will you ever find out where she is in ten minutes?"

"I have my own sources."

Alex put the empty gallon on the coffee table. "Then what will happen?"

"I'll tell her she made a mistake and that she should talk to you."

Alex was silent, curled up again with her face toward the couch cushions. "We haven't talked in three weeks, I don’t think she wants to talk to me."

Kara leaned toward her a little, trying to hug her shoulders. "What do you care if I try?"

"It could ruin-"

"It won’t ruin anything that hasn’t been already ruined."

Alex was silent for a few moments. "Maybe that's what it was meant to be, you know. Maybe we never really meant to stay together. Maybe it was all just a big mistake and-"

"Enough with that, butt head." Kara patted Alex on the shoulder. "You had a relationship, and it was real and good, and I’m truly grateful that you find out and understood who you are on a deeper level, and it all really great and ideal, but something was problematic. You both had problems that you didn't work out, and now it exploded in your face. Now you need to find a solution."

"What part of ‘she hasn’t answered me for three weeks’ you didn’t understand?"

"I can get her for you!"

Alex shook her head. "It should come from her."

"It will come from her, as soon as I talk to her!"

Silence. "No."

Kara sighed deeply, leaning on Alex's back, that curled up into a ball now, her head hidden. "So you’ll stay here for the rest of your life and sink up in sadness?"

"It’s not an option?" Alex's voice was muffled through the couch cushions.

Kara reached for the remote, continuing the frozen movie on the screen.

"It's an option."

~

The loud, high-pitched music knocked on Maggie's wall as she tried to study. She had asked them once or twice to be quiet, finding a stoned student apartment when she knocked on the door, which wasn’t really into about stopping the loud music coming from the poor speakers in the
She sighed, rubbing her eyes. She has a test in two days, and she wanted at least to try and get a passing grade. She has a few more months of theoretical studies, and then she’ll start a training program, and won’t live there anymore. But until then, she must devote herself entirely to her studies. Especially since she didn’t really have anything else to do, now that she was alone.

It seemed to her that everything was moving slow, too slow. As if she were inside a dream, and she was just waiting to wake up. If it's a dream, it's a pretty bad dream, and she would like to pinch herself and get up, to discover that she’s in her big old bed, with Alex’s sleeping beside her, hair spilled on her face and mouth slightly open, quite snoring sounds coming out of her mouth. Or even better, in the whale house, an early morning shimmering light shines through the leather ceiling.

*If the island was a lie,* she thought too many times than she could count, *it was a lie I prefer to live.*

She misses Alex. The pain in her chest hadn’t let go for a single moment in the last three weeks, and she tried to ignore it, to repress it, to concentrate on her studies, or on her old job at the cafe, or anything else.

She had to work now, in the time she didn’t have. Had to spend less time studying to support herself, to be able to pay for her poor one-room apartment in a crumbling apartment building. Everything there was dirty and dank, and very old, but that wasn’t what bothered her. She survived worse conditions. What bothered her was that Alex wasn’t there with her.

*Stop it,* she told herself. *It's better for her without you. She just doesn’t know it yet.* Maggie turned off her phone, the sight of the unanswered calls list from Alex burnt into her mind. *She’s better off.*

*Look at it this way, you should be happy for her. She goes out into the world with her true identity, honest about herself, to discover better things. You helped her discover herself, which is beautiful, but not with you she should be. You are not the person she needs to continue her journey.* Her hands were inadvertently sent to her neck, where the pearl necklace, made by Alex, rested for the past year. It broke some time ago, the worn wood didn’t last, and she put it in some drawer in her old apartment, to fix it when she’ll find the time. The necklace stayed there. Maggie never got the time to fix it, and her empty neck felt heavier than ever.

She kept reading the stuff she had to memorize, but the words seemed to fly in the air, not in her mind. She sighed, rubbing her eyes. She’d tried coffee, at least two cups, and had eaten a little, but it didn’t help. She’s not in the mood to study.

She slammed the book. *It's not gonna work, I'll go on tomorrow,* she thought with a shrouded head.

The basses continued to bang on the wall between her apartment and the students' apartment, and she remembered in other times when she used to go out and get drunk, kiss pretty girls and leave after a minute, drinking shots with a bunch of strangers, dancing with a bunch of other strangers. She wondered if one of the clubs she used to visit frequently was still standing after all these years, and for an inexplicable reason, she got up from her chair, dressed in simple evening clothes, and went out into the warm evening.

The club seemed to rise a few inches above the ground, shivering and puffing loudly, people in evening clothes wallowing in corners, drinking unidentified drinks, smoking cigarettes that passed from hand to hand. The dance floor spread out to the entire area, leaving a narrow space where the bar stood. People danced, rocked and jumped, the music masking every sound nearby. It's a place
to forget, to disappear, to be someone else, for a few hours.

Maggie found herself in the middle of the dance floor, dancing like she hadn’t danced for years. Everyone around her danced in a single lump of flesh, sweat, and fuzziness. She was already on a few drinks, and someone had passed her a cigarette with something she didn’t know what it was, but the world around her was already spinning, and she didn’t know if it was the dance, or whatever it was that was circulating in her system.

A tall guy clings to her from behind, feeling her waist. It took her a second or two, but she realized his intentions, pushing his hand away. She moved away as far as she could, in another direction of the floor. She saw a thin girl in a short dress, and thorny, yellow hair. The girl looked at her, smiling, both moving toward each other at the rhythm of the thundering bass. Within a few seconds, they danced together, Maggie's breath steaming through the stifling room, right on the girl's neck.

Ten minutes later Maggie was thrown on the bathroom wall, the girl's tongue already groping deep in her throat. Hands were thrown in all directions, and the girl's dress was lifted up, Maggie turning her against the wall, reaching between the girl's legs, slipping into her effortlessly, pushing and pushing and pushing up.

"Oh, yes," moaned the girl. "Just like that..." Maggie didn’t hear anything, she just sucked on the girl's jawline, which was sharp, defiant, painfully familiar. She closed her eyes, imagining other hands, other eyes, other voice.

"Yes, yes, yes!" The girl shouted, her voice echoing on the dirty ceramic stones. She came, and Maggie pulled away from her, set to wash her hands in the nearest sink, ignoring the figure in the mirror.

"Who's Alex?" The girl asked, rearranging her dress. Maggie froze, the water running in her hands.

"What?"

"Alex, you mumbled that name. I hope you're not straight..."

"I'm not."

"So who is she?"

"None of your business."

The girl chuckled, licking her lips. She approaches Maggie from behind, looked at her through the cracked mirror. "Well, we all have secrets. People we would rather not want that bad and yet our heart doesn't let us, doesn’t let go-"

"Listen, I don’t know you, and no offense, but I don’t want to." Maggie closed the tap. "Have a good night."

She went out into the warm, hot night air. There were groups standing in the same place as when she came in, and she began to walk along the dubious street to her own dubious street.

"Hey, wait!" She turned. The girl stood in front of her, panting a little.

"I'm sorry, I didn’t mean-"

"It's okay." Maggie turned again, to leave.
"Hold on," the girl stood in front of her. "We started off on the left foot. You want to get out of here? I can help you forget..." She moved too close to her, the smell of alcohol is clearly noticeable."Drink something in a more quiet place? Maybe go to my place?"

Maggie gently pushed her away. "With all due respect, I'm not interested."

The girl looked pissed, and she reached out, pushing Maggie hard. "What is your problem?"

"Nothing, please, I have to go—"

"Does it look cool to you, fuck a girl in a club's bathroom and just walk away?"

"Everyone does that, didn't you get the memo?" Maggie couldn’t stop herself from being cynical, trying to get around the girl, failing when she pushed her again.

"Well, why don’t you go fuck yourself, you litt—"

"Hey!" A guy in a V neck shirt approached them. "Is everything okay?"

"Everything's fine, I'm on my way home," Maggie tried to get away quickly again.

"Did you hurt her?" She heard the guy ask her. "Did she hurt you?"

A few seconds passed when Maggie kept walking, hoping that was the end of it, but suddenly the guy stood in front of her. She found he was much more muscular and tattooed than she had noticed before.

"I asked," he said threateningly. "If you hurt this pretty lady here."

"I didn’t do anything! Get out of the face," Maggie's nerve twitch was about to end, and she turned to go, hitting the guy with her shoulder as she passed him.

"Hey!" She heard him shout. "You slut, come back here!"

She began to run.

The guy ran after her, cursing and screaming, and she hoped to get to the main street before he’ll reach her.

"Come back here!" He shouted again, reaching out. He grabbed Maggie's hair, pulling it hard. She shouted, trying to free herself from his grasp. She beat and cursed, hitting her legs and her fists, while he was still pulling her hair hard, striking the air near her face.

A police car siren suddenly sounded, and to Maggie's surprise the guy lay down on the ground, closing his eyes. Maggie didn’t understand what was going on, and her head was spinning from alcohol, from beatings, from everything, while the strong lights of the car illuminated her face, her hands frozen in the air.

"Police, don’t move!" Shouted a voice, and Maggie didn’t move. She didn’t move when she was handcuffed, or when she was led into the car, or when one of the policemen tried to check the guy's condition, and he foolishly jumped up and began to run, dragging more police force behind him. She didn’t move when they took her out of the car to the police station, questioned her about her actions that evening, and asked her to call someone to come and get her, because she clearly couldn’t go out alone. Nor did she move when they put a telephone in her hand, and she wondered who she was supposed to dial when she had no one in her life. When she managed to scare everyone away.
Kara’s dream got filled with a loud ringing. It was shaking and waking her until she opened her eyes, focusing. James lay beside her, sprawled on the pillow.

"James," she murmured. "Phone."

He didn’t move.

"James!" She said, her voice a little louder. She pushed him. "You have a phone, it must be the hospital."

He opened his eyes suddenly, rising in confusion, reaching out for the phone.

"Olsen." He croaked loudly. Kara tried to go back to sleep, folding on her side, closing her eyes back.

James, beside her, rose sharply. "Maggie."

Kara turned. "Maggie?" She asked, shocked. He hushed her, switching to speaker mode.

"Yeah, hey, James, what’s up?"

"I’m.. fine," he said, confused.

"How was the honeymoon?"

"Maggie, it’s two-thirty, are you alright?"

There was a sigh from the other side. "Yes, I.. I’m fine, I just, uh, I need you to come and take me."

"Take you? where are you?"

"At the police station. On Stanford Street."

"Police!" Kara blurted out, covering her mouth with her hand with concern.

"Oh, hey, Kara, I didn’t know you were listening." Maggie sounded tired, her voice a little long, stretched at the edges. James and Kara looked at each other, eyes now wide awake, worried.

"I’m on my way," James said. "Don’t move."

"Couldn’t even if I wanted to, Olsen."

*

James walked into the station quickly, approaching the first clerk he found. The latter led him to the position where Maggie waited, sitting on a bench in an office room, staring at the ceiling. He looked at her for a few seconds through the glass window. She wore old, crumpled clothes, her hair was disheveled, and large black circles surrounded her eyes.

"What happened to her?"
"She got into a street fight and we had to check that it had nothing to do with drugs. We’d let her go, but she's too drunk to walk out by herself." The clerk glanced at him. "Are you family, or...?"

"A friend." He looked back into the room. "Get her out of there."

The clerk opened the door, instructing Maggie to leave with a nod. She gets up from her chair, walks slowly toward James, the smallest smile on her face.

"Hey, Jimmy."

James shook his head. "Let's get you out of here."

They signed the necessary documents and James led her to the car, opening the door for her. She walked slowly, carefully, as if she’s afraid to break her legs. James noticed a large bruise on her jaw but didn’t say a word about that.

"What's going on with you, Maggie?"

"I'm fine, I just had a bad evening, that's all."

He shook his head. "No, I mean, what's going on with you? You don't answer calls-"

"You tried to call? I'm sorry, I haven’t been very available lately..."

"Yes, because you're avoiding Alex!"

She shrank a little, as if she’d been struck at Alex's name, loudly in her ears. "I'm not ‘avoiding her’," she emphasized the last phrase. "I'm just... concentrating on other things."

"Yeah, like getting into fights with strangers in the middle of the street?"

"Well, that wasn’t on the plan..."

"What the hell were you thinking?" His voice grew louder, and he turned in his seat, facing her. She flinched, confused.

"I'm-"

"You get into trouble in the middle of the street, call me in the middle of the night to come bailing you-"

"I wasn’t in custody-"

"That's not the point!" He interrupted her sharply. "You need-"

"You know what, this was a mistake, I shouldn’t have called you," she opened the door, rising to get out.

"No, wait," he reached out, stopping her. "Wait, I'm... I'm sorry."

She went back to her seat, looking at him angrily. She seemed very sober for a drunk person, and he tried to formulate what he felt in words, hoping he would succeed, hoping that she would understand everything they had been through the past few weeks.

"I'm worried about you, Maggie. We all are. You haven't answered to calls for weeks, and the first time we hear from you is because you're in trouble. I don't know where you live, what you do,
how your studies, what the hell happened between you and Alex, I don't know anything. Alex said something about how you let her go? So she can understand who she is without you?"

"I was holding her back. She’s better off without me." Maggie's voice was almost automatic, and she didn’t look at him as she spoke. He shook his head in despair.

"Maggie, with all due respect, that's bullshit, and you should-"

"I didn’t call you here to preach to me, I called you to get me out of here." She turned her head to him. "And if you're not going to drive me, I'll walk."

He stopped and took a deep breath. Then he nodded, not saying a word as he started the car. They set off, Maggie instructing him how to get to her apartment.

"I said you'd turn right here," she said, looking back at the missed turn.

He didn’t look at her, concentrating on the road. "We're not going to your place."

"Olsen."

"You're staying with us tonight."

"Olsen, if she's there-"

"She's not there."

They spent the rest of the drive in silence, not talking even when he parked the car, or as they climbed upstairs, or when they entered the apartment, Kara greeted them with tired eyes. James walked past her without a word and went straight to bed. Maggie stopped in the middle of the living room, lost, as if she hadn’t been here in this very house dozens of times before.

Kara approached her, tentative. "Are you alright?"

Maggie nodded, her eyes closed. "I'm just, very tired."

Kara put a warm hand on her shoulder. "Come."

A pillow and a blanket had already been placed on the couch, and Kara hurried to fetch a bottle of water. Maggie sat down on the couch and murmured a weak thanks, sipping the bottle to its end.

"If you need anything else, we're right here."

Maggie didn’t answer, resting her head on the pillow, her body slowly relaxing as she fell asleep.

~

"Bye."

"Bye."

A soft kiss followed by the sound of a door closing. Steps walking away. Other steps, softer, closer. The sound of water boiling, a fridge opening and closing, dishes rattling gently.
Maggie opened her eyes with great effort, her head throbbing with indescribable pain. She let out a sigh, trying to hide the sunlight from the living room windows with her hands. The soft steps earlier approached her cautiously.

"Morning," Kara murmured quietly, sitting down on the coffee table beside her. "How do you feel?"

"I don’t think there's a word for that." Maggie managed to say. She rubbed her eyes. "Can you turn off the light?"

"Light? Oh, yeah, sure," Kara quickly got up to close the curtains, and the apartment was almost completely dark.

Maggie let out a second sigh, feeling her nerves slack. She heard Kara turn around, cover curtains, and making something in the kitchen. It turned out to be coffee, which she handed Maggie inside a big yellow cup with green flowers.

"Here," she said, and Maggie opened one eye, sitting up heavily, taking the coffee. She sipped quietly, waiting for the caffeine to soothe the horrendous hangover in her temples.

"So," Kara said, tightening her nightgown around her body. "Are you going to tell me what happened last night?"

"Nothing important," Maggie said, looking at the black liquid in her cup.

"You scared us."

"Sorry."

Kara looked at her. She sat hunched, almost extinguished. Her clothes were wrinkled, her hair was messy and her face dirty. She noticed, suddenly, startled, the bruise on her jaw.

"You have, oh no..." She reached out to touch the bruise, getting a cry of pain from Maggie, who closed her eyes tightly. Kara sighed and went over to fetch her ice, wrapped it in a kitchen towel, held it to her jaw as gently as possible. They sat there for a while, Maggie sipping her coffee and Kara holding the ice pack on her, trying to cover as many areas as possible.

"How is she?" The words suddenly came out of Maggie's mouth in a murmur, trembling. Kara bit her lip.

"Do you really want to know?"

Maggie didn’t stir.

Kara shifted her position on the coffee table, crossing her legs. "Horrible."

Maggie still didn’t move, but her fingers tightened around the coffee cup.

"I know you don’t look for my advice, but I think you should go and talk to her, and you'll understand what the problem is. You have some strange idea, or, or something that you-"

"It's not a strange idea, it's the truth. She's better without me."

"That’s not true!"

"It is, Kara, look at me!" Maggie raised the voice, squinting in pain almost immediately. Her heart beat faster, and her head seemed to be caught under pressure. She took a deep breath, trying to
beat faster, and her head seemed to be caught under pressure. She took a deep breath, trying to relax. Kara moved carefully to sit next to her on the couch, looking at her with increasing concern. “Look at me, I'm...” she said again, more quietly. "I'm a mess."

"You're a mess because you're not with her, because you left her.” Maggie didn’t answer. "I know that the situation is not easy for you, and that you've... been through... hard stuff, but Maggie,” Kara reached out a hand to lay on Maggie's knee. "You don’t have to go through all this alone. Just because you've been through horrors, doesn’t mean you're not worthy of redemption."

"I didn’t say I wasn't worthy of redemption, I said I’m not worthy of A - Al - Alex," she tried to say her name, finally exhaling it with great effort. “And it’s not about me,” she added quietly. “it’s about her. It’s about what’s best for her.”

Kara sighed, still holding the ice pack under Maggie's jaw. She looked at her brown, circle-rimmed eyes, at the thin strip of her lips, at her pale cheeks. "Please, Maggie, she's in no better shape than you."

Maggie let out a bitter chuckle. "I don't think anyone is in better shape than me."

Kara went on. "Go and talk to her."

Maggie didn’t answer, sipping the last drops of coffee. She put down the cup, rubbing her eyes. "Thanks for the coffee." She rose slowly. "I think I'll get going."

"Are you sure?" Said Kara. "I'll be out soon, you can stay here as long as you like." She cleared Maggie's empty cup to the sink. Maggie patted her pockets and chest, looking around, nodding. "No, I... I have to go, I have a test tomorrow."

"Oh."

Maggie raised her head to look at her. "Thank you, Kara, for everything."

Kara smiled at her brightly, and hurried to her, wrapping her in a hug. "Whatever you decide, you'll always have a place here. Give us a call from time to time, even when you don’t get arrested in the middle of the night."

Maggie chuckled, patting Kara's back. She doubted she would ever come back voluntarily, but she nodded with a slight smile. "Sure."

She moved toward the exit, her hand on the doorknob, as Kara's voice stopped her. "I almost forgot," she patted her forehead. "Alex told me that there are still some of your things in the apartment. She can’t reach you, but if you're here,” she shrugged. “Whatever you decide, just know she’s waiting for you. "

Maggie nodded, stepping out, wanting to wonder what Kara had just meant in the last sentence, and somehow knows the answer.

~
The elevator door swung open, and Maggie came in hesitantly, her heart pounding harder with each second. She's about to see Alex after more than a month they didn't see each other, and she doesn't feel like it's going to help her mental state. She pressed the button, and the elevator closed again.

She knows, it's not like she has a choice. She knows she has to. For Alex, to free her from the past, from that cardboard box that contained Maggie, with all her things and belongings. And for her too, after all, how long can you survive on the few clothes you took when you left for one weekend, and things you allowed yourself to buy with the little money you had. She talked to Kara yesterday, making sure everything was ready, not daring to communicate with Alex directly.

The elevator rises in the air, slow, as if it knows what's going on inside Maggie's body, as if trying to help her postpone the moment.

But it's impossible to escape the inescapable. That's why it's called inescapable, right?

A gentle ringing sound and Maggie went out into the familiar old hallway of her old apartment building. She walked to the door automatically, her heart already winding and twisting inside her. Alex is behind that door. She stands, or sits, or reads, or watches TV, it doesn’t matter to Maggie, she's there. She wished for a few moments that she had x-ray vision, that she could know what was going on behind the door, to prepare herself for what was about to happen.

Nothing’s going to happen, she tells herself, trying to breathe deeply. *You knock on the door, pick up your box, and get the hell out of there. You don’t need anything more than that and she definitely doesn't need you.*

Maggie reaches forward, knocking three quick knocks.

Two second later, the door opens wide.

Alex. In a flannel shirt, folded in sleeves, in worn jeans, in socks that don't match. Her hair is a little shorter than Maggie remembered, but longer on one side than the other. And it's also redder, and has a graceful shine. Her cheeks are flushed. Her eyes are the same, but the look in them is... off. Darker.

It's amazing how one moment ago Maggie's heart almost came out of her chest, and now it stopped, and she begins to fear that it will never beat again. Alex stands in front of her, and she can't breathe.

"Maggie," Alex whispers. "What are you-"

"I came to take my things, Kara told me there’s a box." Maggie barely manages to speak clearly.

Alex looks at her for a moment, swallows, stunned. "Yes, yes, right." she concedes. She turns back, making a way. "Come in."

"Didn't Kara tell you I was coming?" Maggie walked slowly inside. Alex closed the door behind her, goes to the small room next to the kitchen.

"She said, I just didn’t know... I didn’t know exactly when you would be here," she murmured. Maggie looked around. Nothing had changed since she left, but it had only been a little over a month. And it's not that Alex does anything other than work.

"How are you?" She turned to her. Alex took out a closed box, placed it on the marble island. She avoided Maggie's gaze.
"I'm fine, working as usual." She bit her lip. "And how are your studying?"

"As usual, too." *Worse,* she wanted to say. She can't concentrate in class, or pass tests she used to pass easily, or succeed in her training, or do something, anything at all, functionally. Her life had deteriorated, but she wouldn't dare say all this to Alex. She smiled a little, turned to the box.

"So that's everything?"

"Yes, but..." Alex put her hand on the marble island, breathing deeply. "Maggie, I... I think we should talk."

"Talk about what?"

"About us, of course." Alex looked a bit confused. "Don't you think we should talk?"

"I think I've made it clear why we don't need to be together."

Alex sighed. "James told me what happened the other week. He told me you got arrested-"

"I didn't get arrested, I just... I drank a little too much..."

"He should have come to pick you up from the police station in the middle of the night. And you've been beaten up? Kara said you didn't look so good-"

"I see you've been talking a lot with Kara and James lately, didn't you? What else did they tell you?" An angry torrent came out of her without she realized, without thinking that Kara and James had been Alex's long before they were hers, and maybe they always were. Alex took a few steps back, closing her eyes.

"Maggie, I just... we're both in bad shape, okay? I think we need to talk about it, see what the solution is, try to find the right thing to do..." She looked frightened. As if she were on the edge of an abyss. Maggie clenched her jaw.

"There's nothing to talk about, Alex. I've seen it myself. You need to be with someone who can give you a better life. A life I can never achieve." She shook her head. "You deserve so much, but I'm not the person who can give it to you."

"Maggie-"

"No." Maggie's voice was cutting. "We're not going to discuss this." She grabbed the box, moving toward the door.

"Wait." Alex's voice trembled. She turned, finding wet eyes looking at her. She sighed, placing the box on the floor, looking at Alex with a questioning look. Whatever she has to say, she better do it quick.

It starts abruptly, but from the moment it happens, it happens slowly. Alex gulps the distance between them in two quick steps, grabbing Maggie's face with both hands, kissing her firmly and softly together. Her kisses become slower and slower, Maggie's hands inadvertently grabbing Alex's waist, holding her tight and close, and Alex sighs, like she waited for this moment for decades. She puts her hands in Maggie's hair, pulls it lightly, makes her sigh back softly into her mouth.

"Alex..." She manages to whisper.

"Shut up," Alex whispers back. She pushes her to the door, puts her hand to the back of her head.
and kisses harder, pauses only for a few seconds to catch her breath, to calm down the pounding of the heart, to stop the trembling, but Maggie doesn’t give her much rest because she pulls her back, suddenly pushes her to the other side, on the marble island. She continues kissing Alex, both moaning at this touch, hands groping back and forth, up and down, grabbing thighs and hips and shoulders and letting everything out, to be free, that feeling of freedom has never felt sweeter.

Alex turns around, lifts Maggie up and sits her on the counter, Maggie now half-headed taller than her. They go on, lips chasing lips, tongue pursing tongue, sighs swallowed up and exhalations released. Maggie is halfway to opening Alex’s shirt, suddenly realizing that she herself is already shirtless, braless, and Alex’s pants are halfway to the floor. She pulls back, presses her forehead against Alex’s forehead.

"Wait..." she whispers, panting. The world stops. Everything around her stops, Alex stays frozen in time, half the buttons of her blouse open wide, revealing soft skin that god knows how long it has been since she touched it, since she kissed it... "Wait a minute," she whispers again, looking at Alex’s dark eyes. Only their panting sounds in the background, rhythmic as clockwork.

"D’you wanna..." Alex whispers, her hands floating over Maggie’s bare waist. Maggie realized that she didn’t want to push her to do something she didn’t want, but still finds it hard to stop herself.

"I- I need a minute," Maggie pushes Alex gently over her with an almost painful motion, closing her eyes.

She can’t let herself do it. She can’t do it to Alex. It’s like squeezing a whole lemon into a gaping hole in her skin, but she slowly descends from the marble island, wearing her bra and blouse at top speed.

"We can’t make it happen, it’s a mistake."

"No, no, Maggie-"

"It was a mistake to come here," she shook her head. "I shouldn't have come back."

"Please, just listen to me-"

"I have to go." She said, picking up the box quickly, smoothly, and out the door, shutting it tightly behind her, the sound of it echoing in her ears along with million other voices until she enters back into the elevator.

Chapter End Notes

thank you for reading! would love to hear what you have to say about this chapter in the comments, and if you wanna, you can DM me! i’m bilerleigh on tumblr and bilerleighs on twitter, so you can come over and cry with me over sanvers.

you are also welcome to leave kudos if you liked it

i have a little surprise that will be here at the last chapter, so stay updated! hope that by the next month this story will come to its end

thank you all again! xo
The End

Chapter Summary

i think i used every cliché in the book

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"Good morning, everyone!"

James raised his head from his coffee cup. A chubby, smiling doctor entered the doctors' restroom, carrying a pile of medical papers. She passed among some of the doctors, passing messages and distributing sheets.

"Morning, Dr. Samson." He said when she finally reached him, flipping a page in the medical magazine he read. She placed three sheets in front of him. "Came in this morning." He reached out and picked up one of them, starting to study it. "Scott's patients."

"Thank you," he mumbled, concentrating.

"He said he wants to see you in Wing B, before 9:30." He looked up just above the edge of the sheet, and she shrugged. "His words."

James shook his head. "Of course," he said. "Thanks."

She looked at the sheets left in her lap. "Did you see Danvers?"

He raised his head now, putting down the sheet. "She... She hasn’t arrived yet, I think." He held out his hand. "Give it to me, I'll give it to her."

She seemed relieved, "Oh, excellent, thank you."

"No problem."

She left the room. James stayed with his cold cup of coffee, and four sheets that weren’t his. He tried to read the magazine in front of him but couldn’t concentrate.

He opened his phone screen, wondering if he should call Alex and make sure she was coming to work today, as he had done sometimes in the last month or two, or to let it go and hope she was alright.

It wasn’t a simple time. Kara and James, freshly married, lived their lives as usual, with rings on their fingers now, and James couldn’t have been happier to know that he gets to spend the rest of his life with Kara. But with this period, after the wedding, they had to take care of Alex, to make sure she was eating, sleeping, working, distracting herself from the breakup. James loved her as his sister, as if she’s his own blood, and he and Kara both tried as best they could to give a hand in making through this hard time.

He was also worried about Maggie. After that night at the police station, he tried to call her, and she answered only a few times, the other part she left him hanging, talking to the answering
machine time after time. Even in the conversations she did answer, he felt like talking to a ghost. She answered in short, hesitant sentences, avoiding certain questions, to others she just didn’t answer. Always end the conversation with one excuse or another, cutting him off, leaving him to listen to a high pitched dial tone.

He missed her. She behaved differently. Alex was different too. He knew it was wrong, that there was an injustice here, that the situation had to be corrected. But he knew it wasn’t in his hands, and he always stayed wondering what could he do.

"Morning," said a sleepy, hollow voice behind him, and he turned. Alex sat next to him with a sigh, holding a big cup of coffee. She reached for the medical magazine that James had abandoned, beginning to flip through it.

"Hey," he said, as sympathetic as possible. "How are you?"

"Fine," she said, not looking at him. She turned a page. He opened his mouth to say something else but she cut him off.

"Wow, did you see that?" Her eyes suddenly widened. She pointed to an article with a title that included the words 'full reconstruction' and 'lower spinal vertebrae'. She looked at him, a rare smile on her face.

"This is amazing! I have to talk to Samson about it."

"She was here, just a few minutes ago. She asked me to bring you this." He handed her the sheets. She took them and began to study them.

He bit his lip, trying to think whether he should ask her in more detail if she needed his help in some way. Kara tried to be her rock at home, when she came over, and he, at work. So she had support from every direction. But today... He studied her quietly. Today she looks a little more peaceful than usual. As if she were on her way to recover, to be better. Almost as if she was alright. She caught him looking.

"What?"

"You look good."

"Thanks, Olsen, but I'm in the girls' section." She looked back at the sheet in front of her. "And if I remember correctly, you're married."

"No, I mean... you look better."

She swallowed, looking at him. "At least it looks like that."

He didn’t answer. He must have erred in deciphering her body language. She shook her head at him. "I'm not saying I'm not better. But I'm not saying I'm any less, too. The situation is more or less static, the same thing." She took a deep breath. "But I am getting... better. Baby steps, I hope."

"Me too."

She smiled a little, looking back at the medical sheet.

"But you do look-"

"James."
"Yes, I'm shutting up."

They sat in a relaxed silence, Alex scrutinizing an article she had found and James scanning his own sheets.

"Look at this one," he said, handing her the scan. They examined it together. "There's something here..." He pointed to a stain. "I'm not sure..."

She squinted, looking at the stain he was pointing at. "Look, it fits right into the lung," she said, pointing. "Something in the ribs is wrong."

"But you don't think that-"

"It could be pulmonary edema? Perhaps, but look at the heart. You need to do a scan with contrast to see if there's anything more than that."

He brought the sheet closer to his eyes. "You're right," he muttered, smiling. "You're sharp this morning."

"Well, this coffee is really good," she lifted her cup toward him. "It's from a stand I saw on the way, and I decided to try it, you know, from th-"

A beep interrupted her speech, and James pulled out his pager.

"Oh, shit, a car accident on the way to the ER. I have to go."

"Sure." She took another sip while he got up.

"If you see Scott, tell him I'll be late." He arranged his belongings quickly, wearing his white gown. Alex let out a sigh.

"He's so not nice. It's been so long since I came back and he's still acting strange towards me, as if-"

He looked down at her, his body bent in a running position.

"Never mind, go."

He ran out to the emergency room.

~

Maggie put her groceries on the conveyor belt. Bread, eggs, a can of oatmeal. The bored cashier, chewing the gum, moved her products slowly and stated the price. Maggie rummaged in her wallet, pulling money in crumpled bills and coins, the only money she recently had, from her work at the cafe.

She went through the grocery store to buy her groceries, calculating the rest of her money for the rent and other things she had to pay for. She quickly packed her things into a bag and thanked the cashier, stepping outside. She had a little more free time today, and she hoped to go back home and study for a big test that was coming soon, and maybe pass through the Basement Range, to get out some nerves. It was a nice day, an autumn day in mid-September, and the sun shone on the
street where she went, warming it up a little.

She still felt bad. A black hole was in her chest, often reminding her of things she would have preferred to forget. Sometimes she felt she was living on an automatic pilot. Studying, working, eating, sleeping. There were days when she didn’t speak to anyone, only she and her thoughts, which hadn’t done her any good.

But time did its job, and slowly, she began to feel taste in her mouth again, or she found that she didn’t think of Alex at least for a few hours. Her situation was no better, definitely. But it was getting there.

She wondered how long it would take her to return to herself. Does she even have herself to go back to? Maybe she should start over, in a new place, to be someone else. Someone better.

Perhaps, if she could change, she could go back to Alex. More deserving.

It cheered her up a bit, and she continued on her way back to her apartment.

~

"What do we got?"

"Thirty-five-year-old male crashed into a woman at the crosswalk, two children in the back seat," the paramedic informed him. The ambulance’s rear door opened and a stretcher came out carrying a man who was connected to the tubes that helped him breathe, covered in blankets. "A serious injury to the head and chest, fractures in the wrist and left shoulder. Lost a lot of blood. We started transfusion ten minutes ago."

"Okay. Brooks," James patted one of the interns’ back. "Take him to trauma two, start with x-ray to the head and chest, and page Scott, he’d want to be here."

"Right away, Doctor."

The second ambulance appeared, and the back door opened before it stopped. A frightened child, looking about ten years old, with flesh wounds on his face and arms clinging to the stretcher that rolled out, where lay a second child.

"A seven-year-old boy, bruises on his lungs, his pelvis, and his right arm." The paramedic pointed to the boy’s arm, wrapped a bleeding bandage. “Glasses flew everywhere, he got serious cuts in the chest, his abdomen…”

"Cole! hey, wait, Cole, what - what are you doing to him?” The other boy jumped out of the ambulance, next to his brother's bed, shivering. James looked around, grabbing an intern who was standing there.

"Take this kid, check that he's okay and give him something for the shock.” He looked at the rest. "You and you-" he pointed to two other interns. “To trauma three, start working on his chest. Carefully!"

The ambulances continued to arrive, emitting people that caught in the accident, with bruises and wounds of varying degrees. James kept sorted them out skillfully, calmly, concentrating on his work and instructing the doctors around him.
A few minutes had passed since another ambulance arrived and James wiped his forehead, taking a deep breath. He heard the commotion inside of people in need of treatment and doctors taking care of them, cries of pain and doctors calling for various treatments. It was part of his job, to be at the spot where the patient was just coming in, to know exactly what they needed and when, and to sort out different patients for different degrees of urgency. He had to be very focused, and remember every patient who came in, diagnose them quickly and call the right doctors for treatment. Someone handed him a bottle of water and he sipped gratefully. An approaching ambulance siren sounded, and he shook his head, preparing for the next patient.

~

As usual in these cases, everything happens very quickly. So if someone was standing at the end of the street, or on its side, looking at everything, they would have to slow down for a moment, and look at things one after the other, to understand exactly what had happened.

She looked to the right, then to the left, and back to the right. In her hand was the bag with groceries. She walked quickly, crossing the road. A bus stopped on one side, and a bicycle beside it.

She heard a scream and turned quickly. A little boy ran into the road, chasing a small ball. His mother ran after him.

She looked left, then right.

A car began to approach them with frightening speed, and the boy, who had caught his ball, in the middle of its path.

The mother screamed again, accelerating. She wouldn’t be able to reach her son in time.

The boy began to run back to his mother, his little feet hobbling on the road.

The car drove on. She had only a few seconds.

And this is where everything happening even slower.

She didn’t think twice before dropping the bag, letting the eggs roll and break on the asphalt, as she darted in front of the boy, pushing him toward the sidewalk, to his mother. The boy rolled on the sidewalk, the ball held firmly in his arms. She fell on the road, on her side.

The person who watching and slowing everything down at the end of the street doesn’t know it, but Maggie remembers a big gray bumper approaching her as she lay on the road, knowing she only has one second before it will hit her. That she wouldn’t be able to get up, wouldn’t make it, and she turns her back to it, cowering.

Let it be over quickly, please.

~
"Female, mid-twenties, spinal cord injury, at least ten fractured bones, probably a concussion," the paramedic rolled the bed out of the ambulance. "This woman jumped in front of a driving car."

"Damn," James murmured, glancing at the woman's chest, which was soaked with blood, bruised. Her face was covered with blood, wounded, a ventilation mask on her mouth. "Is she conscious?"

"Hardly. She almost crushed on the way here. A hero, but not a very lucky one."

"Did you catch her name?"

"No." The paramedic closed the ambulance doors and patted James on his back.

"Thank you," said James, leading the bed into the emergency room. "Get her in, and page Danvers!" He looked back at the paramedic. "Do you know how much more there’s on the way?"

"I think we were the last." The paramedic entered the ambulance and they set out. James watched them drive away, then turned to one of the interns.

"Stay by the phone, make sure there are no more ambulances on the way. I’m going in."

The intern nodded, and James hurried in, checking that everything is going well. So far, the situation seems stable.

~

"Miss, do you hear me?"

"Her eyes are open-"

"Miss?"

The man leaned over her. "We're on our way to National City General Hospital." He spoke aloud, almost too slowly. She saw him through fluttering eyes, feeling nothing but pain, a sharp burning pain, all over her body. She couldn’t speak, could barely think.

The only thing that got into her mind was Alex.

Alex, who doesn’t know how much regret Maggie feels at this moment.

Alex, who doesn’t know Maggie will do anything to turn the clock backward, so she wouldn’t die, so everything will be the same as before.

Alex, who’s exactly where Maggie is going right now.

On the island, they sometimes spent the time telling jokes. Each one would tell a joke on her turn, until they were fed up. Alex was sitting in Maggie’s lap, somewhere in the forest, next to a tree.

A man, said Maggie, went into a junction full of passing cars and waved his hands. A car stops next to him and he asks, 'Excuse me, what's the quickest way to the hospital?'

The man in the car replies, 'If you keep standing where you are, you'll get there as fast as
possible.

Alex laughed so hard she snorted. Maggie then buried her face in her hair, happy, giggling.

Her eyes were almost closed on their own, and she heard a quick beeping.

"We're losing her!"

"Shit, no, no-"

“Pedals! charge to 100!”

The paramedics began to work on her quickly, putting various substances into her body and pressing her chest. The ambulance was driving at top speed.

She can’t remember too much after that, but she thought she could hear James's voice, before there was only darkness around her.

~

"Olsen, over here!"

James hurried into the trauma room, finding the last woman who comes in. "Where's the driver?"

"He went into surgery." Said Scott, who was already working on the women's chest. He looked up at him. "I need your help here."

"Sure."

James approached forward and moved the mask over the woman’s face. He looked at her for a moment, confused.

Wait, it- it can’t be. it's impossible.

He was frozen, standing still, staring into her face, unable to move.

"Olsen?"

"That's Maggie."

Scott narrowed his eyes. "Who?"

James looked up at him, his heart pounding. "That's Maggie." He whispered, looking back at her. His hand moved unconsciously to move her hair away from her face. The realization struck him gradually, and he couldn’t move, couldn’t speak, only to whisper, his heart racing in his chest, his eyes fixed on her bleeding, wounded face. This is Maggie, lying on the bed in front of him, fighting for her life.

"Olsen, do you know her?"

He didn’t answer. "Where's Danvers?"
"They paged her five minutes ago, she's not-"

"Page her again." James turned to find the room’s door opening, Alex in a trauma gown, all business, going inside.

"What do we got?" She asked, getting to the point. James stopped her, putting a hand on her shoulder. She looked at his damp eyes, puzzled.

"James?"

"Alex, that's... that's Maggie."

Alex's eyes widened, and her hand sent to her mouth as she pushed him off and walked over to Maggie's side.

"What... how... what-"

"She jumped in front of a driving car." Said Scott. "Saved a child. She has a serious injury to the center of her spine, ten - no, twelve broken bones, a concussion, and her chest shows-"

"I can’t believe it," she murmured, tears appearing at the corners of her eyes. She turned to James. "James..."

"I know." He understood, and he knew what she knows. That they made a mistake, a terrible mistake that cost them time separately, countless tears, heartache, and now... there’s a chance that they won’t be able to set right what was done.

"You have to fix her."

Alex dried her tears, nodding.

Scott scowled at her. "You don’t fix anyone you know personally." He turned to the nurse. "Page Fox. Danvers, you're free to go."

"Do not page Fox." Alex's voice was sharp, stern. She didn’t look away from Maggie. "This woman is the most important thing in the world for me, and I’m the best doctor for head and spinal injuries in this hospital."

"If she dies because of you, you know the consequences-"

"If I won't fix her myself, I'll regret it more."

Scott shook his head. "I can’t let you do that."

"Let it be on my conscience."

They exchanged glances for a few seconds, and finally he sighed. "Okay. But you'll need permission from the chief to attend the surgery."

She nodded, looking back at James. "I need you."

He came to the table. "I'm here. As long as you need me."

Alex rolled up her sleeves, reaching for the nurse. "I need an x-ray for the neck and back, and a head CT." She lowered her head to Maggie, her hand stroking her hair carefully, with a slight tremor.
"You'll get out of this, Sawyer. I promise you."

~

She heard a beep. And another one. They came one after the other, soothing, rhythmic sounds. She lay on a bed, but her body was stiff. Uncomfortable. She tried to move, but it hurt. It hurt her to breathe. She squinted, eyes still closed.

"Maggie?"

Soft, quiet voice. Tired voice. She knows who's behind it, she just needs to wrap her mind around it before.

Maybe she should open her eyes.

The light in the room was dim, and the window showed total darkness. A hospital bed, of course, and she's wearing one of those annoying gowns that open in every direction. She wanted to let out a sigh, but she knew it would hurt. She managed to move her eyes, to find the source of the voice.

Alex. Alex, whom she'd seen only last week, but she felt like it was an eternity. She looked worried, stressed, tired, all together. She put a hand on Maggie's shoulder.

"Don't move, you're in a cast."

She tried to squeeze her tongue out, to wet her lips. "What happened?" She croaked out with effort.

"There was an accident, a car hit you, and... they brought you in. You had some serious fractures all over, and a serious spinel trauma, but I took care of you." Alex nodded, a slight smile on her face, her eyes soft. "It will take you a while to recover, but you'll be fine. Everything will be fine."

Maggie blinked. The memory came back to her, piece by piece. "The boy?"

Alex's smile widened. "He's okay, he didn't even get hurt."

Maggie closed her eyes again. "Good."

"How do you feel?"

"Everything hurts."

Alex nodded. "I'll give you more painkillers."

She felt Alex's hand stroking her shoulder, her arm. She wanted to tell her to stop, and at the same time, she didn’t want her to take her hand off her.

"Rest," she heard her say before she drifted back to sleep.
The next time she opened her eyes, there was light outside, though the window was covered with a curtain. She still couldn't move her head too much, but she could see who was sitting by her bed.

James ate a salad from a plastic bowl, staring into the air. She stirred a little and he turned to look at her, a smile spreading on his face. He put the salad aside, leaning toward her.

"Good morning, Sawyer."

She swallowed hard, grimacing at him.

"What are you so cheerful about?" She managed to say, her voice husky and tough. He shrugged.

"Glad to see you're alright."

"I'm not alright. I'm in a cast, haven't you heard?"

"Yeah, they told me something about it." His smile widened and he leaned back. "You thought it was a good idea to jump in front of a driving car? That you don't have enough excitements?"

She was quiet for a moment. "I didn’t. think."

"Of course you didn’t."

She rolled her eyes, and he grinned.

"When all this cast will come off?"

"Hopefully, in a few weeks your bones will begin to heal, and you can get into more comfortable bandages, but your doctor should give you this information, not me."

"And where’s my doctor?"

"She’s home, I sent her to rest."

Maggie raised an eyebrow. "You mean..."

"Alex. She took care of you."

"Is that legal?"

"No. But she made it legal." James bit the inside of his cheek, studying her reaction. "She treated you like no one else could." He added in a quieter voice.

Maggie closed her eyes, trying to disappear. Everything made her head spin, made her confused, she didn’t know what to think, what to do. She was lucky she was in a cast, or else she should have asked to lie down. She tried to breathe deeply, but a sharp pain hit her chest again. "Ow," she blurted out, and James hurried toward her.

"Your lungs have been damaged a little, but we've been able to fix it. Just... try not to move too much," he put a clam-shaped mask on her face. "It should help you breathe."

She nodded gratefully, and he sat down again, looking at her worriedly.

"I know you... don’t want my advice. I know it's not my business to say, but," he sighed, shaking his head. "Maggie, you have to talk to Alex. You have to understand what happened to you two,
you have to... fix this." He looked into her eyes. "You have to do something, I can’t stand by and see you wither like that, both of you. To go in the middle of the night and pick you up from the police stations, sit next to your bed in the hospital after an accident that could very easily take your life... You can’t go on like this. And so is she. " He paused. "I don’t want to think about what could have happened if you came here a few moments too late, or if the car was going a bit faster, or anything that would... that would take you away from her." He swallowed. "And from me too," he added, quietly.

She couldn’t answer him with the mask on her mouth. She held out the hand that wasn’t covered in a cast, pulling the mask off her face slowly.

"It's nice that you're lecturing me while I can’t get up and leave."

He snickered. She put the mask back on her face.

"So? What do you say?"

She just looked at him thoughtfully.

She didn’t know what she was feeling. Maybe she should just... talk to Alex.

He seemed to read her mind. "I know she will have things to say too, especially when we have you here, unable to move or resist,"

She rolled her eyes and he laughed, taking his salad again.

"You always have to complicate everything, don’t you?"

"That’s how I am."

He chewed loudly. "I missed you, Maggie."

She was silent for a moment. "Me too," she finally said.

They continued to sit in pleasant silence, the beeps of the devices around telling them that Maggie was alive and breathing, that she’s here.

"You know," she coughed. "There's a joke."

"A joke?" He asked, confused for a moment. She coughed again.

"Yes. One man walks into a junction full of passing cars and waves his hands, and a car stops by his side and he asks, 'Excuse me, what is the quickest way to the hospital?' And the man in the car replies, 'If you keep standing where you are, you'll get there as fast as possible.'" She paused, "That's the joke."

James's mouth curled slowly until he burst out laughing, shaking his head. She manages to smile a little.

"So you wanted to get to the hospital."

She closed her eyes. "Maybe. Not like this. But maybe."

He thought for a moment, opening his mouth to say another thing, and suddenly his pager beeped. He looked at it, gets up quickly. "I'm sorry, I have to go." He turned to leave. "I'll tell Alex you're awake." He added, and left before she could reply.
She thought of what had occurred to her yesterday, before the accident. That if she could change, she might win Alex again, be worthy of her. She feels so bad without Alex around, but she can’t be selfish, she can’t think of herself, Alex is ten times more important. She didn’t talk to her, but James said she was... broken. Wither. She saw herself, that day, the way she looked... It hurt her to think of Alex like that, but she just didn’t understand, it was a way to free her, give her a chance for a new beginning, without Maggie. Without anything to limit her. Maggie shouldn’t stand in her way until she’s fixed.

"Hey."

Alex stood in the doorway, walking slowly inside. Maggie reached out to remove the mask, watching her approach the bed, sitting down next to her.

"How do you feel?"

Maggie put the mask back in her mouth without saying a word, shrugging as much as she could. Alex nodded. "We have to wait for your bones to heal, and it will take some time, but we hope that eventually you will be able to walk out of here." She smiled at her.

Maggie wanted to sigh. She wanted to close her eyes so she wouldn’t have to look at Alex. She wanted to ask Alex to leave, and to not come back. To stop loving her. To stop looking at her with that look that makes her skin burn. She’ll never be good enough for her.

"Alex," she lowered the mask, licking her lips. "There's something I need to explain to you."

"No." Said Alex, her gaze still pleasant, but something firm, determined, was in her eyes now. "I think you've explained enough. Let me talk now." She reached out, put the mask back on Maggie's face. She took Maggie's hand in hers, stroking her fingers gently.

"Maggie, I love you. I love you like I've never loved anyone, like I've never loved anything, I love you, and I don’t care what you've gone through in your life, I don’t care what kind of person you used to be or what people thought of you, I care about the person you are now. The person I know. I want to be with you for the rest of my life, and if it means telling you every minute how amazing and beautiful and strong and so good for me you are, I'm willing to do it, just please," Tears were now in her eyes and she pressed her lips to Maggie's fingers, "Please understand me. Please understand that there's no one else I want to be with. Only you."

Maggie felt something wet on her cheek, realizing she was crying too. Only the sound of her heavy breathing through the mask could be heard, and Alex's sniffling sounds. Her nose was red, and her hair fell on her face, her cheeks damp. Maggie pulled her hand out of Alex's hands, reached out to stroke her hair as Alex closed her eyes to the touch.

"When we were... there, everything was perfect, just because we were together. Because it was the two of us." Alex whispered. "And I fell in love with you, slowly, but I fell hard, because you're so... kind, and powerful and true to yourself, and you make me feel things I didn’t know I could feel. And we left the island, and I was so scared." Alex shook her head. "But I knew we were going out of there so we could live together. Maggie... We left this island to live. But I can’t live without you. Without you..." She squeezed Maggie's fingers hard, closing her eyes again. "Without you I have nothing, I am nothing, you make me who I am, and I need you to understand that there’s no one in the world who can fulfill what you were in my heart."

Her heart pounded hard. God, what this woman made her go through. From the moment she lifted her on that wooden raft, between the wreckage of the plane and suitcases and bodies, from that moment on... She shivered to the thought. She was an inseparable part of her life. For better or
worse. And now she sits in front of her, begging her in tears to come back to her. After all they’ve been through… she still wants her. Alex’s words penetrated her heart, filling it with warmth, goodness. Suddenly, all her past thoughts were gone, and only Alex remained, and her.

“Okay.”

Maggie’s voice sounded muffled through the mask, and she could barely get the word out, but Alex heard, and she looked up in confusion, hoping.

"Okay?"

Maggie nodded. Slowly she reached out to remove the mask from her face.

"I love you, Alex. I've never stopped loving you, and I'm still... I still think that-"

"No. I’ve heard enough, I can’t allow it." Alex put the mask back in Maggie's face. "You don’t talk anymore, from now on, it’s yes or no." Maggie couldn’t resist, her body ached and tired of exertion.

Alex held Maggie’s hand again, looking into her eyes. "I will fix you, and you will go back on your feet, and you will be a successful and badass policewoman, and one day, if you’ll agree, I want to marry you."

It’s lucky that Maggie has that mask on her face because she thinks she stopped breathing.

"I'm willing to hear a no, but only if it's because you don’t love me or don’t want to get married. I've already heard that you love me, so tell me," Alex swallowed. "Do you want to marry me?"

She reached out and took the mask off Maggie’s face. Maggie opened her mouth in astonishment, wide-eyed. She didn’t know what to say, and only shook her head in shock, trying to digest the situation.

"To marry..."

"Me, yes. To live in a big house with a white picket fence. A small backyard with grass and trees. A dog, maybe two. To grow old together."

"Alex, I... I-"

"I'm also willing to let you think about it, if you want to, if you need to, but all those thoughts you have such as 'I'm not good enough for you', they have to go, as soon as possible." She pressed Maggie's red, scratched fingers to her lips, kissing them tenderly. "You’re the best thing that ever happened to me. I don’t want to lose you." Her voice broke at the end of the sentence and she let out a strangled whimper, closing her eyes.

"Yes."

Alex opened her teary eyes, looking at her. "Yes?"

"Yes, I'll marry you."

Alex smiled. "You dumbhead."

"Look who's talking."

Alex leaned over, pressing her face against Maggie's cheek. "I love you," she whispered. "I love you, I love you," she whispered again and again, as if the words had the power to heal Maggie,
her body, her soul. Maggie hadn’t realized until now how much she missed the feeling.

Alex stayed beside her for a long time, breathing her deeply, and Maggie knew that maybe, with Alex next to her, she would heal more easily. Faster.

"Will it fix everything?" She managed to mutter. Alex looked up at her.

"No. But it's a start."

~

"Alex, wait up!"

Alex exhaled in frustration. She slowed down, waiting for her little sister. Kara arrived in a few moments, holding tight on a colored vane. She stood beside Alex, frowning.

"You never wait for me!"

"Because you're running so slow!"

"It's not my fault!"

Alex let out a groan. "Moooom!" She called aloud. "Kara's bothering me!"

"Am not!"

"Am too! She wants me to run slowly so I'll be at her own pace and that's annoying!"

Kara stamped on the ground with her foot, angry. Alex saw that her chin was shaking, and she wanted to say something like 'what a crybaby' but their mother appeared beside them, their father stayed to sit, watching from a distance. Eliza put her hands on her hips, examining them.

"Well, well, what shall we do with you two?" She half said, half asked, and Alex and Kara remained standing in frowning faces, waiting for her to decide who was right. Eliza sighed.

"Alex, go sit next to your father, I want to talk to Kara."

Alex rolled her eyes, maybe too hard. She had secretly enjoyed it recently, it made her feel like a real teenager, even though she was only 11 years old. She couldn’t defy her mother's orders, but the rolling of the eyes, and sometimes the slamming of her bedroom door or furious steps across the kitchen achieved the typical teenager effect. Eliza would sigh and shake her head, and Jeremiah always smiled secretly, patting her shoulder as he passed behind her.

Alex walked heavily on the sand as she approached her father, sitting down grudgingly beside him.

"How’s my runner?" He said in a soft voice, putting his hand on her shoulder. She didn’t need an invitation to start ranting.
"Kara doesn’t let me run at the pace I want! She always wants me to wait for her, and then I wait for her and we keep on running, but she doesn’t run in my pace and she slows me down again and I want to run fast enough to break my record between the two big stones!” Alex raised her hands and put them in her lap in despair. "She's little and runs slowly and I wish I didn’t have to take care of her all the time."

Her father was silent, his hand still on her shoulder. She sighed, calming down slowly, and they continued to sit in front of the quiet sea, Eliza and Kara were sitting on the sand where Alex stood a few minutes ago, and Kara was sitting on Eliza's lap, talking enthusiastically with big hand gestures. Alex bit her lip, lowering her head.

"You know, when I grew up... I didn’t have any siblings, I had no one to play with or run with or fight with. And my parents were busy most of the time so I played with myself. I did experiments by myself and putting on trains and airplanes and playing ball and running, everything by myself. I didn’t have any friends until I got to high school. " He paused, Alex drinking his story thirstily. She loved his stories.

"And when you were born, you brought us so much joy, and we were so happy... We love you so much, Alex." His grip on her back tightened. “We didn’t want you to be alone. We understood it late, but it wasn’t too late, and we brought Kara into the world. "

"You brought her for me?" Alex said in confusion. She didn’t know that. She wasn’t sure that’s what she wanted, if she was asked. "You could buy me a mobile plane, or a kit for young scientists, like we saw at that fair, it was much more fun than an annoying sister."

Jeremiah laughed, bringing her closer to him. “Oh, sometimes you’re right. Sometimes, you don’t want to see your sibling anymore, and just want to crush their stupid face and pray that they will fall down the stairs so that they get what they deserve. I don’t know about that, but so I’ve heard.” He glanced at Eliza for a moment. "But sometimes," he continued, in a quieter voice, "Sometimes there are moments they are the person you want to see most in the world, the person you know will always be by your side, the person who will agree to do everything with you, for you. The person who will wait for you, when everybody leaves.”

"So, are you saying that one day Kara and I will be good friends?"

"I’m saying you and Kara are sure to be great friends one day."

Alex shivered, making a sound of disgust. "I'll never be a good friend with that short head."

Jeremiah laughed again. "Okay." He said, and got silent.

"Dad?"

"Yes, Alexandra?"

She didn’t care that he called her Alexandra. She loved it. It was her mom that called her Alexandra when she was angry, or because she hadn’t washed dishes after her, or because her room was messy, or when she had argued too much. But her dad, he called her Alexandra because that was the name he had given her.

"What do you think there’s over there? I mean-" She pointed to the horizon, which began to darken a bit. "After what we see, what's there?"

"Well, if we travel in a completely straight line, there is a chance we will eventually reach Japan."

Alex exhaled. "Yes, I know that," she said, and almost added 'Dah'. "I mean, what's in the
"middle?"

"That would be the Pacific Ocean."

"And what's in it?"

"Many things. A lot of different species of sea animals, and certainly different islands, with more species of animals..." He looked at her. "So what now? We've gone into zoology? buy you a book?"

"You can buy me a book if you want to," Alex shrugged. "But I was just interested, it always looked so big, and there couldn’t be nothing in a place so big."

"So yes, on the contrary, there are so many things in it." He stopped. "A little bit like people."

Alex squinted. "What do you mean?"

"People are also very big inside, and full of different things..." He nodded. "There are people who have so many things in them, and they sometimes need help. You know, like we learned that there's a lot of trash in the ocean, they need to separate between the good and the bad things." He paused for a few moments, and she kept looking at him. "You know, Only the ones who dare to dive, reaches the bottom, and can discover beautiful things that can’t be seen on the surface."

She was silent, thinking. It sounded like something on which people used to say 'When you grow up, you'll understand.' She was already a grown up, obviously, and she longed to understand everything, and now. But something in these words seemed to settle at the edge of her mind, waiting leisurely. When you’ll grow up, you'll understand us.

"Alex, Alex!" Kara came running, her dress fluttering behind her. Her plump cheeks gleamed in the setting sun. "Mom said that if I’ll try hard, I could be at your pace! Could we try again, please, Alex?" She clasped her hands pleadingly. Alex couldn’t help but smile at the sight. She glanced at her mom, who was standing behind her, a slight smile on her face.

"Sure," she said, standing up. "Let's try." She took Kara's hand in hers and the two of them started running again on the beach, laughing freely, skipping and jumping, enjoying the last rays of the sun before they had to go in and wash their hands for dinner.

Chapter End Notes

i know i've said it like a million times, but i have no clue about medicine, so there are medical mistakes here for sure. and on that note, i wrote a doctor au! i used medical references from medical shows for that one so i hope it'll be better on the medical side. it'll be ready god knows when, but it'll be here. wait and you will be rewarded. yay :D

i hope yall liked that one! let me know what you think in the comments, and i'm at bilerleigh on tumblr and bilerleighs on twitter, so you can come shout on me there if you want
thank you all for being here with me along the way and reacting to my story, i can't believe it's about to end. but it's not the end yet so i'll save my big thanks to the last chapter lol it will be here in a couple of weeks, and will be a short and sweet epilogue. it's already set to go, just waiting for a little surprise that will accompany it. y'all gonna love it, i promise :)

see you at the next and final time, thank you all again, you are wonderful. xo
Chapter Summary

what you have been waiting for, all along, probably

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"All units to six and Johnson, we have a bank robbery with several casualties, I repeat, we have a bank robbery with several casualties at six and Johnson, all units..."

"Sawyer!"

Maggie tossed her empty cup of coffee into the near trash can, sliding quickly into the passenger seat.

"Go," she said to Léon, and the two took off in a fast drive toward the incident. Léon was muttering all the thoughts on his mind at the moment very quickly as he used to do in times like this, his hands holding the wheel.

"Six and Johnson, this is where that red bank is. No, the green one, something with M or N at the end, right, Sawyer?" He didn't wait for an answer. "I think my cousin has an account there, I hope there aren't a lot of casualties, even though if she said a robbery with several casualties, then maybe there are a few. Who even gets into a bank and starts shooting at everyone, that doesn't even make sense..."

Maggie smiled quietly as he went on. She has been working with Léon for six months now, after her former partner left the station, and the two got used to each other very quickly. She enjoyed his company in general; he was charming and professional, with his always neat clothes and a light accent always enveloping his speech. Since they began working together, they have always been on the same page, working as a winning team. There were some people who were sometimes taken aback by his strange nature and peculiar customs, but Maggie liked him. He drove at top speed now, zigzagging professionally between lanes while the siren above the car blinking loudly, turning their way.

"...And we're here," he murmured, squealing beside the patrol cars that were already outside the bank, where screams and shouts were heard, and some gunshots, followed by more screams. Maggie hurried out of the car, pulling out her pistol.

"What's going on?" She asked one of the policemen standing there. He glanced at her, exhaling with a sigh.

"Sawyer, you're here, Good. We're getting a rescue unit, I need you to lead."

"Of course." She put her gun back in place. The policeman pointed to a group of policemen standing not far from them.

"Go to Dan, he'll explain everything. We're going in ten minutes, the usual procedure."
She nodded, patting him on the shoulder, hurrying to the group of policemen.

She had been a cop for three years now. Fighting justice, arresting criminals, murderers and thieves, and trying to instill hope and good in those who lacked them. She felt that she was on a mission, every day she came to work, glad to give what she had to those who didn’t have. She had never felt such satisfaction. Never believed she could feel such satisfaction.

She and Alex got married a little after she got to work at the station. The wedding was simple, pleasant, with broad smiles that didn’t go off all evening, and a sense of happiness, wholeness, which filled her more than ever. There was something perfect about that evening, not only because of her marriage to Alex, but something sweet, like closing a circle that had opened long ago.

She didn’t tell anyone, but when they chose a date for the wedding, they noticed that the chosen date was the night she and Alex first kissed. She wasn’t sure Alex remembered, and she preferred to keep the memory to herself. The memory of a perfect night, which led her in the best way she could take. Sweet and bitter life, with victories and falls, but always beside their people she called a family. Never forget where she came from, always remembers where she's going.

A side door on the wall of the building suddenly opened, and three skinny guys with black outfits loaded with black kit bags ran out of the building, quickly entering a pickup truck nearby. No one seemed to notice, but Maggie called out.

"They're there!" She shouted, looking back. Her gaze caught Léon's and both of them, in perfect coordination, entered the nearest police car, and Léon pressed the gas, hurrying after the truck.

"Come on, come on..." she murmured as they shortened the distance between the two vehicles. She grabbed the radio.

"Sawyer here reports from T-5, a black van going down Johnson Street head north, three armed men are inside, all available units please head to the area, I repeat, a black pickup truck- watch out!" She almost screamed as Léon overtook a few cars and almost hit a bus in the parallel lane. Léon continued skillfully, bypassing cars and heading forward fast, and he gave her a small smile.

"Don’t you trust Léon, Margarita?"

"No margarita now, focus on driving."

"Yes, darling."

They continued quickly, with some police cars following them as Maggie continued to describe the route of the van into the radio to call for more help. One of the men stuck his head out the window, took out a long, slender rifle, pointed in their direction.

"Léon!" Called Maggie, and he began zigzagging faster between the lanes, making it harder for the man to hit them. A few bullets hit the roof of the car and Maggie lowered her head, taking out her own pistol.

"Playtime," she murmured, taking the weapon out of the window, aiming, stepping, shooting.

Maggie was the best sniper in her class. Léon whistled encouragingly when she shot toward the wheels of the van, pecking them one by one.

"A star, Margarita."

"Oh, I know," she murmured, firing one last bullet and finishing her cartridge. There was no
reason to refill, for the truck began to lose speed, turning on its axis and finally falling, staggering
to the side of the road. Maggie and Léon came out of the car with guns drawn, and with them the
cops from the police cars behind. Léon opened the door of the van, finding the bandits bruised,
lying in a heap. He gave them a dismissive look.

"You're under arrest," Maggie said in an authoritative voice as Léon pulled them one by one from
the truck, handcuffed them, and placed them along the lying truck.

"Well done, Sawyer," Dan approached them, smiling admiringly.

"Léon did all the work," said Maggie, patting Léon on the back. Léon shook his head, gesturing
wheel movements with his hands. Dan laughed, putting a hand on his shoulder.

"Either way, you two did a great job. The cleaning team will be here soon, and you can take these
guys away from here." He looked contemptuously at the bandits. Léon went immediately to take
two of the boys and led them to the car while Maggie led the third.

"What do you say about some good old cheesecake, Sawyer?" Léon said as they sat back in the
squad car, the three bandits sitting in the back, defeated glances on their faces. They looked
young, like they had robbed this bank by mistake. One of them still had acne sores on his cheeks.

"My favorite."

"And chocolate?"

"My favorite."

"You have to choose."

"Chocolate, then."

He hummed. "I think I'm out of cream."

"Chocolate is the main ingredient in this cake, Léoné."

Léon smiled, glancing in the mirror. "You see, boys, don’t look at this woman like that. She's not
an ordinary woman, eating chocolate cakes, no, no! She's a very special woman! You see, she
spent two years living on a desert island. Yes, yes, thus and verily!"

"Sixteen months," Maggie murmured with a smile. "And I wasn’t alone." Léon liked to make a
fuss about everything. She was pretty sure he studied theater at some stage of his life. He denied.

"She fought sharks and huge scorpions, survived tropical forests and various reptile species and
venomous cobra snakes. She swam on a dolphin until she reached the farthest island in Japan and
there, she found human beings and managed to make her way back to the united states of
america!" Léon thundered, and the three guys at the back stared at him in shock, thirsty for every
word he uttered.

"Really?" said one of them weakly. Maggie glanced at the prospectus, amused by the expression
on their faces.

"Really," she said, and the three of them gaped a little more.

"Sick," said another.

It wasn’t true, of course. But where's the fun in spoiling it?
"I'm home!" She announced as she closed the door behind her. A hairy german shepherd, so big he had reached her waist, hurriedly leaped at her, putting his paws on her chest. She stroked his head, scratching behind his ears.

"Hello, buddy," she laughed, dropping her bag to the floor. "Did you play nice with Mommy today?"

"Brought back all the balls I threw for him," Alex's voice said, and she came out of the kitchen as she wiped her hands in a towel. She gave Maggie a big smile, coming to greet her. Alex came back from work a few hours before Maggie, and now she was in the kitchen with Kara and James, and they were all cooking dinner. Well, Kara and James cooked. Alex cut vegetables and tried not to cut herself.

"Hey, you," Maggie smiled at her, and they shared a short kiss. Coco continued to howl at Maggie's thighs, seeking attention.

"Let me say hello to Mommy, silly," she said as she raised a hand to stroke the back of Alex's neck, running a hand through her short hair. "How was your day?" she asked.

Alex's eyes flickered. "Come," she said, taking her hand in hers. She led her into the hallway, past the kitchen before continuing.

"Guys, Maggie's here," she announced, and Kara and James looked up, waving. Toby, a year and a half old kid, slept in a baby cart, a crumbling biscuit still held in his small hand. He was a beautiful boy, with a hair just like his father when he was his age, and a plump, sweet cheeks. Maggie glanced at him, smiling warmly. She hoped her nephew would wake up soon so he could play with Coco while they'll eat.

"I'm just taking her for a minute, manage without me?"

"I think we've got along very well without you so far," Kara muttered without looking up from the mixture she was mixing. Alex frowned and Maggie laughed, and they both rushed to the bedroom.

"Okay, what is it?" Maggie asked as soon as Alex closed the door. Alex didn’t answer and just smiled at her, holding her close. Maggie took a deep breath. Alex had the smell of fried onion and fresh vegetables, and something that reminded her of sunflower blossoms in a hot field. She looked at her with loving eyes.

Alex leaned forward, kissing Maggie with infinite tenderness. She deepened the kiss almost immediately, holding Maggie's face in both her hands. Maggie kissed her willingly, a little surprised. Alex giggled a little at her lips.

"Sweetie, not that I'm complaining, but something happened?" Maggie looked closely into Alex's eyes, which shone at her, almost as if they were... damp. Alex was about to cry.

"Alex?"

Alex shook her head, looking down. Maggie looked still confused, following Alex’s gaze with her eyes until she bumped into Alex's stomach.
"Alex...?"

Alex lifted her head, looking at her happily, her smile stretching. "Yes?"

"Are you..."

Alex couldn’t answer, just nodding soundlessly. Maggie's eyes widened, and she opened her mouth, resting her palm on it.

They had been trying to conceive for the past year. Alex wanted a baby so much, and Maggie... Maggie agreed, finally. After the treatments she began five years ago, both physical and mental, she managed to be more conciliatory, with her past, with her surroundings, with the world. She knew that a baby would be a fix, to everything that was bad in her past. For everything that was bad in the world. She will love this baby as no one has ever loved their child.

And they tried. Time after time, the artificial insemination has failed. They stood bravely in the treatments, and Maggie held Alex's hand tightly in every step of the way, both of them waiting each time for the doctor's nod, for the double line on the test stick.

And now...

"Alex, are you... are you sure? because sometimes-"

"I'm convinced. I checked two days ago, alone, and it was positive. But I didn’t want to tell you yet, and today I went to the clinic in the hospital, and it was confirmed." She sniffed, a smile never leaving her face.

"I'm pregnant."

Maggie let out a short laugh, and wrapped her in her arms, almost dazzled by the sudden happiness that had descended upon her. She could hardly believe. They have a big house, and a white picket fence, and a dog, as Alex promised her, and they have a sister and a brother-in-law and a nephew and a grandma who come to visit, and now they'll have a baby.

Maggie didn’t believe it was happening to her. She has a family, the best family she can ask for. Amazing, wonderful people who love her for who she is, unconditionally and uncritically, without limits.

And a wife. Who looks at her now with a loving look, with eyes full of admiration, for the woman she is, for who she managed to be. For the phoenix she is, who rose from the ashes of its past, and grew to be a winged creature, colorful, full of goodness.

"I love you," she murmured against Alex's lips, meaning every syllable. She bent down a little, pressing her lips against Alex's still flat stomach. "And I love you too, whoever we are. We can not wait to meet you."

Alex giggled from up and Maggie rose, burying her head in her wife's shoulder. She breathed her in, filling with gratitude.

Eight years ago, she didn’t think she would ever have anything to live for.

But the woman in front of her had shown her she has. She gave her everything to live for. *Thank god I didn't die on that plane,* she thought. And at that moment, she knew.

She knew she had a reason to keep on living.
Your love is my turning page
Where only the sweetest words remain
Every kiss is a cursive line
Every touch is a redefining phrase

Chapter End Notes

one year ago, i didn't even dream to reach to the number of comments, reactions, and responds i got from this story. this story has been curved from my heart and soul, was written with blood and sweat, and though it's far from perfect, i feel it's like my baby, and i'm proud of it.

any comments or notes you have, i'd be happy to hear, read and take to my attention. i'd like to get better, and you are the reason i can.

most of the people i should say thank you to aren't going to read these words, but my amazing friends offline helped me so much, with myself, the changes i've been through in the last year, and also with this story, and with the ups and downs this journey brought with it.

thanks to my mutuals, every single one of you is a gift, and i'm so glad i've met you. special thanks to the awesome and amazing ray, which has drawn the most beautiful sanvers art for the final scene, and you can find it here or here

everyone who read the piece in its entirety- i adore you for being here and reading my story. it hadn't been easy, and i've made it for two reasons. sanvers, and all of you.

so thank you. words can't describe how much gratitude i feel for all of you right now.

i have couple more fics up my sleeve at the moment, so stay tuned for the secret santa and for sanversweek, all coming in the next few months! unrelated to these two, hopefully my doctor au is coming up soon :)

you can find me at bilerleigh (tumblr) or bilerleighs (twitter) where i would love to hear your comments as well!

i love you, thank you, and remember- you have a reason to live. don't lose hope. 3>
xoxo
yar

End Notes

thank you for reading!
if you liked it, make sure to leave kudos/comment to let me know what you think
Also I'm at @iwannaplayairplains on tumblr come and say hi
now @bilerleigh

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!