

The Family

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A Ford explorer drives onto the Kent farm. slowly parking in front of the residence. Three people are inside. The youngest is Emily Tan, a fast-rising corporate executive in the Grayson Media Group. Emily is in her mid-20s, an Ivy League college graduate, petite, of Asian descent with a witty sense of humor, exceptionally bright. She sits in the passenger seat. Behind her, no less accomplished is Bob Miller, who has done just about everything in life. He is in his mid-50s, of Native American descent, although not completely. Bob has had several different jobs: lumberjack, short order cook, teacher, through a multitude of twists and turns he too made it to the Grayson Media Group. Bob has some girth, but he is not fat. Then you have the founder, CEO, owner of the Grayson Media Group, Richard Grayson, a man in his mid-thirties. Grayson is 6'1", 175 pounds, dark hair, sensitive brown eyes, a wicked sense of humor, a driver of a different kind of journalism centered in the Midwest. Grayson is also the Golden-Age Robin, which means despite being a spry 34, his actual age is 90. He has been fighting crime since he was 8 years old, the only Robin "worth a damn." This morning, three of the more important executives of the Grayson News

Network, have made the drive up from their corporate offices in Wichita to Smallville.

Emily Tan: Is this it?

Richard: What were you expecting?

Emily: Well, something more than this? I mean this is the home of Clark Kent and Lois Lane. It looks like Hicksville, USA.

Richard: Where were you from originally again?

Emily grins: Gotham City, boss. Same as you.

Richard opens the door, takes out laptops, and other materials. Tan exits as does Miller from the back seat. The presence of Richard's subordinates is superfluous. They are only here in case Clark Kent has specific questions, this is mainly Richard's show, as it turns out they could just as easily have stayed in Wichita.

Bob: Welcome to Kansas, Dorothy.

Tan shoots a dirty look at Miller.

Richard knocks on the door, hearing no response he opens it.

Richard: Clark? We talked on the phone; it is Richard Grayson.

That phone call had been one where Clark Kent had tried repeatedly to express his lack of interest in returning to a journalism career. But Richard Grayson had refused to take no for an answer, Clark had grudgingly agreed to this meeting. Clark enters the room, smiles gently. Introductions are quickly made. A disgusted Tan is wiping something nasty off her heels. Richard smiles to himself while taking a seat as the presentation is set up for him. The contrast in their dress is evident. The two visiting men are dressed in tailored suits with dress shirts with ties. Tan is dressed in a smart work skirt, smooths her skirt as she sits, then crosses her legs. Clark by contrast is dressed in jeans, a flannel shirt, work boots. His lack of interest in the “job interview” could not be clearer.

Richard: Is Lois in?

Clark shakes his head no, sits back in his chair, with arms folded as if to say get on with it. If Clark thinks that will rattle Richard, he is talking to the wrong guy. The man who fought the Joker at age 8, is impossible to rattle.

Clark: Is she needed?

Clark takes in the successful white man in his mid-30s, there is something about him that seems familiar, but different somehow. Of course, Clark should

know instantly who he is for a variety of different reasons. Tan and Miller have set up the screen projector, plugged in the laptop, put in place the projection for the meeting.

The aftermath of the Crisis on Infinite Earths has created a merged new world. What had been Earth-1 and Earth-2 became instead an amalgam of two individuals in many cases. It can be a confusing process to have memories of both Earth-1 and Earth-2. For individuals the degree to which they have these old memories can vary considerably. Clark has his Earth-2 memories buried deep, while Lois can access her Earth-2 memories, and will shortly have all of them. Of course, there are exceptions to this process. Richard and Kara (who you will meet shortly) were thrown free at the end of Crisis as wholly intact individuals from Earth-2. Richard's doppelganger from Earth-1 is in fact missing, while there was no Kara equivalent on Earth-1.

Bob: Ready, POTUS.

That is a reference to the fact that virtually everyone sees Richard Grayson, as the coming man, the next president after Joe Biden. For the progressive left of the Democratic party Grayson has become a folk hero, his face plastered on *Time*, *Newsweek*, *New Republic*, *Nation*, *Mother Jones*. Less complimentary is *National*

Review, which along with the Fox News Channel, views him as the Devil incarnate. Richard ignores the suggestion of presidential ambitions; he has found that whole project deeply annoying.

Richard: No, just thought it might be nice to see her again.

Richard: This job interview is but a formality, Clark, we need you, just as much as you need us. GNN is a growing company, we have firm roots in the South, the rural Midwest, the far West. But we are a national company, in a short time we have become the principal rival of the Fox News Channel.

At this point Lois Lane enters the room.

Lois Lane: Clark, do you know who is visiting?

Lois makes her initial comments from just outside the door, but then comes into her living room smack just before the presentation has gotten going in earnest. Lois' thoughts are running a mile a minute. It also does not take Lois long to access a wave of what Kara would call Earth-1 memories, most people on the planet would say Earth-2. A merged mind of both earths can be disconcerting when you access memories from a life you lived long ago. It is all confusing right now. She knows who Richard is as a person, but has not made the personal connection, but that will come in dribs and drabs. How at 8, or was it 9? Robin had asked her

out on a date. It was a very timid affair. She bought him a burger, milk, an apple, and at the end of it he stood on his tippy toes to kiss her goodnight. Their relationship grew from there. He was her baby brother, she was his big sister, adopting each other unofficially. You can inherit a family, but you can also, at least in their case, make the family you want. For the moment, Lois is wondering what Richard Grayson, along with some high-powered corporate suits are doing in her living room. Being Lois Lane, she asks the obvious question.

Lois whispers to Clark: What is Richard Grayson doing here?

Clark whispers to Lois: Job interview. Could not get out of it.

What follows is a presentation on modern journalism that is overwhelming. Grayson, a charismatic speaker, knows how to pitch ideas to an audience. Here he holds aloft the possibilities of being on a platform that is redefining journalism. There are lengthy observations about longform journalism, citizen participation, mini documentaries, and the ability for Clark to write his own ticket. Then there is the pitch about money. Richard had thought seriously how to frame this part-time offer. Richard figured that if Clark had dragged his family out to Smallville, he would not want to leave. It had to be an offer that would tempt Clark back into journalism, but not involve a lot of work. Richard's solution was to offer \$75,000

for five longform stories, full-medical benefits, with complete editorial control of content. Clark, Richard feared, would be skittish if the dollar amount were over \$100,000.

Lois: For part-time? For just five stories? (She is in a state of shock. Her mood as someone who does the family finances is to take the money and run).

Bob: More once that he goes over 5 for the year.

Lois: How high?

Richard laughs gently: When Clark gets over \$100,000, we will need to talk.

Everyone but Clark laughs.

Richard: Of course, these need to be long stories. I think that rural Kansas has lots of stories that the mainstream press has missed. If money is an issue, we can go higher, I can write whatever check is needed.

Richard then expounds for several minutes to talk about the hollowing out of rural America, corporate agribusiness, the crushing of labor unions, crystal meth, the mental health crisis in rural America.

Lois: You are really talking about hard-hitting hard news.

They all nod, then start talking once again.

Lois: Why Clark, but not me?

Richard: If you are interested in doing some freelance journalism we can talk. But I know you are busy with the *Smallville Gazette*, (Richard tries not to snort when mentioning the *Gazette*, but he makes it), plus you have never liked TV.

Lois: That is right, the idiot box, the vast wasteland.

Richard: Plus, Clark has done TV. He has won Peabody awards, multiple Pulitzer Prizes, even an Emmy.

Lois pats Clark's knee. What do you think?

Clark does not want to say yes, but he is overwhelmed, it will be a relief to not have credit-card companies call, to no longer have those financial arguments with Lois.

Clark: I am in.

Richard smiles, then reaches across to shake Clark's hand. It is followed by the rest of the team, who are a little surprised because Clark at first had seemed a little checked-out. Lois is so relieved that financial considerations might be resolved for a while, she nearly faints with pleasure. Manna from Heaven has arrived at the last minute from Wichita! Then what follows are a few minutes of

quiet chatting as materials are packed away, handshakes. Business cards are once again produced. Clark stands at the door desperate for everyone to leave.

Richard cannot resist: Lois good to see you again.

Then as Clark stands there wanting to close the door, Richard whispers to him.

Richard: Want you to come up to Wichita to meet my family.

Clark looks totally confused.

Richard: You know, my wife, Kara your cousin.

Richard ambles down the steps, Clark shuts the door, but then it suddenly hits him what was just said. Clark listens as they drive away.

Emily: I cannot believe you managed to get Clark Kent!

Bob: He seemed totally out of it. Boss, do you know what you are doing?

Richard: Clark just is a little lost, but he will come through. Remember what they used to call Clark Kent– Walter Cronkite of the Prairies.

Back in the Kent House.

Lois: What was Richard Grayson saying as he left just now? I could not make all of it out.

Clark: Wanted us to drive down to *Wichita* to meet his wife and family.

Lois: Family?

Clark: Mentioned something about my cousin, Kara.

Lois: I don't think it means what you imagine, Clark. Robin and Power Girl must have married. I think we are all driving down to Wichita, to meet our extended family.

Car Driving Back to Wichita

Tan is driving for the three of them. Richard sits in the passenger seat; they are chatting quietly. Richard had done the driving before, to ensure they were not getting lost. Then the phone rings.

Richard: Hello?

Kara: Hi, stranger what is up? I have not heard from you all day. Sounds like you are in the car. Do you want to grab an early dinner, we can do something with the boys?

Richard: Well not exactly.

Richard then uses their code word of Zor for being not alone.

Richard: Zor is not it a fine day?

It is a private joke, of sorts. Kara's father was Zor-L, a prominent Kryptonian scientist, aligned with a very evil regime on her planet. We are not alone is their code for a man that Kara despises deeply. The Krypton that Kara Grayson inhabited was a much, much, much darker place than anything Clark Kent or Kara Danvers ever knew. Being a member of the House of L is not something Kara would ever feel pride about. Besides, the whole Kryptonian patriarchy with its oppression of women, hardly is something Kara wishes to have herself aligned with either.

Kara: (Kryptonian): Alright, where are you? Moscow? Paris? London?

Richard: (Kryptonian): Smallville.

Kara (Kryptonian): Jesus Christ! What the hell were you thinking? What has our rule always been? No secrets between us. None! But also, no contact with anyone in the Kent family. You know what that man did to me!

Richard (Kryptonian): Now, Kara, do not be mad.

Kara (Kryptonian): I hate it when you say, do not be mad! Especially when I am mad, such as fucking right now!

Kara hangs up abruptly.

Tan and Miller give Richard a sheepish look. Richard has a hand caught in the cookie jar look on his face. They both whistle.

Bob: Boss in trouble. You are sleeping in the doghouse tonight.

Emily: So, what did you do? Women do not get that mad, unless men have really messed up. She grins at Miller. What was that strange language you two were speaking anyway? It sounded German.

Richard: Oh, that is what it is, I think some people in Kara's family are from southern Germany or is it Austria?

Phone rings again. Richard knows that it is Kara, but thinks for a second do I face the firing squad or just not answer?

Kara (Kryptonian): This is a betrayal! Why would you do something like this? To sneak off like a dog to suck up to Clark Kent, betray your wedding oath, while I am pregnant with your child! Fuck You!

Richard tries to answer, but Kara has hung up again. Miller was about to impart advice, but Richard held up his hand.

The phone rings again.

Kara (Kryptonian): I must get my book to the publisher this week but give me your lame excuse for contacting that asshole. Tell me NOW!

Richard (Kryptonian): Your cousin needed help. I just made Clark an offer, he could not refuse.

Silence for a second.

Kara (Kryptonian): Clark is not my cousin; I am not any Kara Zor-L he has ever really known.

Richard (Kryptonian): Clark is sort of your cousin. Besides, he has all the Earth-2 memories.

Kara (Kryptonian) super angry: Our world is Earth-1! Get this shit straight!

Kara (Kryptonian): How would you like it if I went behind your back to contact your family?

Silence for a second, because Richard barely has a family. Richard's parents were slaughtered when he was 8, he is technically Bruce Wayne's ward, but their relationship has always been on and off again. Then there is the whole fact that this world's Bruce Wayne was not really his Bruce Wayne. Moreover, Helena Wayne's death, who was like a sister to him, remains a festering wound. It is for

Richard and Kara, the wound that has never healed, the wound that can never heal, the wound that the two of them will take to the grave. Helena Wayne was family to Richard, but she was Kara's best friend. For both Richard and Kara Grayson their early life before each other was a long, long walk through the torments of Hell.

Phone hangs up again.

Emily has a confused look on her face: What?

Phone rings again.

Kara (Kryptonian): I hate it when we fight. I love you so much. But it is your fault for getting me pregnant. I look like a cow and a pig have created this mud creature. See you in a few hours. Well, aren't you going to say anything?

Kara is talking very fast at this point.

Richard (Kryptonian): I love you very much. I am just confused as to whether we are doing dinner at this point.

Kara (Kryptonian): We are eating whatever crap we have in the fridge.

Richard sighs.

Kara (Kryptonian): Bring back Rocky Road ice cream.

Bob: You can really say a lot in German.

Emily: Boss, do we need to find you a hotel?

Richard: No, but before we drop you two off, I will need to find Rocky Road ice cream. A lot of it. I think that was just Round 1.

Grayson Home

Richard is walking up the steps, a bag from Churn and Burn marked on the outside with several pints of Rocky Road. The house is a nice one but considering the money that Richard and Kara make they could afford one much more lavish.

Richard slowly moves to the side a bicycle, while being about to open the door.

Phone rings.

Richard: Hello?

Lois: We need to talk.

Richard: Thought you or Clark would call back. Yes, we can do that. Need to check on Kara. Can you give me half an hour? Is it just us or will Clark be on the line?

Lois: Just us. Do you need my number?

Richard: No. I have your private cell phone number.

Lois: Oh, is that right?

Lois feels like teasing Richard right now.

Richard: Yes, big sister, I have lots of mad skills.

Richard is content to now be honest about the nature of their relationship. It pleases Richard that he does not have to pretend any more around Lois. The reference to sister serves as releasing a memory block, for any of her remaining hidden Earth-2 memories.

Lois: Good to know it, baby brother.

Richard opens the door as Lois hangs up, where he is hugged by his sons John and Thaddeus.

Richard: How is Mom?

John: Upstairs, Dad.

Thaddeus: Is the ice cream for all of us?

Richard: Yes, I got a lot of Rocky Road, Cookies and Cream, even Butter Pecan.

Thaddeus: The last is my favorite!

John: Mine too!

Richard: Well, how about that.

Richard firmly: John, go put away your bike.

John: Yes, Dad.

Richard walks into the kitchen, then puts away the ice cream that he has purchased. Richard takes a deep breath before tackling the stairs. Thinks to himself, now for Round 2. Then rushes up the stairs. Richard slowly, but deliberately walks into the master bedroom. Kara is laying on her side, a pile of tissues scattered next to her on the bed. Kara is an incredibly gorgeous woman: blonde-white hair that reaches down the middle of her back, 5'7", 110 pounds (her weight has fluctuated a little with being pregnant), a brilliant woman, with a sharp, acerbic tongue. Kara's personality would drive most men crazy, but Richard finds it adorable. Kara has had a long career as the superhero, Power Girl, but is now in

semi-retirement. Kara has also become something of a media star in her own right. Her recent book, *Land of the Free: The Abolitionist Movement and the Destruction of Slavery*, has just received the Pulitzer-Prize in History. *The Sound of Music* is playing in the background. Richard knows immediately it is going to be one of those nights.

Kara looks behind her shoulder: Richard?

Richard: Yep, that is me.

Kara: Benedict Arnold has returned. What is the matter? Couldn't turn over our nuclear codes to the Russians? Or is that your master plan for tomorrow?

Richard: You know I am not allowed to have plans. I can have schemes. You are the planner.

Kara sighs: Well, at least you remembered one thing. That is right, Batboy, I am the planner! You probably want to take that from me.

Richard rolls his eyes. He gets in the bed behind Kara, rubs her shoulders.

Kara: So, did Clark really take the job?

Richard: Yes.

Kara sits up so she can glare at her husband.

Kara: You are a real bastard! You know how badly that man hurt me.

Richard: That was a different Clark Kent on a different Earth.

Kara: Do not even try that shit. There is no multiverse, there has never been a multiverse, there never will be a multiverse.

Richard: I need to talk to Lois in half an hour.

Kara getting even angrier now: Oh, you, do you?

Richard: Now, Kara.

Kara: Do not pull that now, Kara crap! You know how much I hate it. The thing is You know how mean and vicious my cousin has always been to me. Clark with his stupid damn rules. Fake Clark voice: You cannot do that Kara! You must be perfect Kara! Why did you make that mistake Kara? Everything was going so great, but now our family will be destroyed, we will all be homeless. No one will read my books! I am sure if he ever gets here, he will have lotsssss (she sounds out the s for a while) of “helpful” criticisms to make about how clean my house is, how well I feed my children, everything else!

Richard: Well, why don't we just spend the rest of our lives hiding? Why do we always have to assume that something bad is about to happen?

Kara: Because it does! Listen here, middle-aged boy wonder! Death stalks my life, along with everyone in this family. Everything that can go wrong will! First Krypton got blown up, thanks to my stupid assed father (Richard lays back and sighs deeply) but mainly due to our idiot politicians. No, we cannot work together to solve Krypton's problems! Climate change is not real! Then I got thrown into that damn slow rocket. Got to Earth where I could be "tutored" by the great Clark Kent! Lois was the only one who stopped me from killing myself!

Richard: You are being dramatic.

Kara: Oh, I am, am I?

Richard: Now, Kara.

Kara screams in frustration: Then my best friend Helena got killed. Your sister!

Richard: Why do we have to go through all this again? We know the story. I suppose you want to talk about the collapse of the multiverse again.

Kara: It was not a damn multiverse! It was our home! Some male chauvinists decided to get together, so they could have a good time numbering earths, but it

was still wrong. I bet those assholes had a good laugh when they made “our” Earth the original Earth-1, misnumbering it as Earth-2! Only a man would be so damn stupid! I refuse to believe that any earth existed before ours. If we are going to number planets then we are 1, while the rest follow. Now we are supposedly on Earth-Prime! What the hell does that even mean, Prime Rib? No woman would have ever done it! Women are good, just, noble, and pure. But asshole men would do it without thinking about it for a minute. Look, your family has suffered too!

Richard: Kara, I am not having this conversation!

Kara: Well, you are wrong about that Batboy! We are having this conversation. We have been having this conversation for the last five or ten minutes. When did we start?

Kara searches for a clock.

Richard sits on the edge of the bed. Sighs, then puts his head in his hands.

Kara: Look, she reaches for Richard, just tell them you made a mistake. Tell them you were drunk.

Richard: I do not drink; besides, I gave Lois my business card with our address and home phone number.

Kara very excited: YOU DID WHAT! OH MY GOD! MY ASSHOLE COUSIN IS REALLY COMING HERE TO RUIN MY LIFE ONCE AGAIN!

Kara gets up from the bed, glares at Richard, then runs at super speed into the bathroom. Door slams super hard.

Then it opens.

Kara: SLEEP ON THE COUCH! SLEEP IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DAMN ROAD! SLEEP WHEREVER YOU WANT! I DON'T CARE! DID YOU BRING ICE CREAM?

Richard: Churn and Burn.

Kara: Well, you did one thing right today!

Door slams super hard now. Reverberations are so hard that the dresser nearly tips over. Richard can hear Kara sobbing.

Richard: Kara, please. You know I hate it when you cry. It makes me so sad.

Kara voice speaking through deep sobs: Just go away, leave me alone!

Kara: But before you do! I remembered something!

Richard knows what is coming, thinks to himself, please God not this.

Kara: This is the man who spread all those perverted theories at the JSA-JLA crossover about how Kryptonian women are nymphomaniacs. All a man must do is lie still, watch the basketball game, but I could go on and on! This is who you have aligned yourself with! Years, years it has taken years, Richard, for me to deprogram you from these, these false doctrines!

Richard sighs. Picks up his cell phone, then slowly walks to the stairs. Sits on the first step of the carpeted stairs. Hits the address book that has Lois' private cell phone number.

Phone rings.

Lois: Hello?

Richard: It is me.

Lois: How did it go with Kara?

Richard can still hear Kara crying from the bathroom.

Richard: Believe me you do not want to know. Kara is pregnant, so this is not what she wants.

Lois: I know who you are, both of you.

Richard: I figured. Is Clark denying it, putting it all down to some weird fluke?

Lois: Oh, yes.

They both laugh.

But Richard's laugh is forced.

Richard: How about Saturday afternoon? Noonish. I will send directions via email.

Lois: Sounds good. I will need to check with Jon and Jordan's schedule.

Richard: Sounds fine.

They hang up.

Richard walks down the hallway heading to the bathroom door.

Richard: Kara? Open please.

Kara: Why?

Richard: They are coming.

Richard winces, while feeling lower than dirt that he is forcing Kara to do something that makes her so miserable.

Kara opens the door.

Breathing very, very hard, Kara's eyes are beet red, nostrils flaring, glaring at Richard with deep anger.

Kara: When?

Richard: Noon on Saturday.

Kara: Good, I will have a few days left.

Kara pushes past Richard hard.

Kara: Where the hell is the damn Rocky Road!

Kara flies down the stairs. Richard moves more slowly. When Richard gets to the dining room table, Kara is at it, eating ice cream. The boys are hitting each other with wiffle bats.

Kara: I made a plate for you earlier in the fridge. Make sure to eat your vegetables.

Kara finishes the pint, then throws it, along with the spoon against the wall. Richard, without a word, goes to clean it, which Kara ignores as she shakes her head. Richard notes that she must have consumed the ice cream at super speed. Richard in one motion bends down to pick up the ice cream pint, along with the spoon. Kara crosses her arms, as she sinks against the chair. Richard takes out a plate, warms it in the microwave. Pours himself some water.

Richard: Maybe it will not be so bad, huh?

Kara: Go to Hell.

Kara stands up, flies back to the bedroom, then slams hard the bedroom door. Richard thinks he hears a clicking sound locking it. Richard spends the rest of the evening with the boys. Around 9 or so he announces their bedtime, overseeing them brushing their teeth, then reads *Horton Hatches a Who* to the two boys. Richard then tucks them both in for the night. They say the Lord's Prayer together.

Thaddeus: Dad, will Mom ever forgive you?

Richard: It will be fine, Thaddeus.

Richard then turns out the light. Richard gets out his emergency toothbrush, brushes his own teeth. Richard could sleep in the guest bedroom, but Kara he knows would consider that more work for her by needing to make the bed again. Instead, Richard chooses to sleep on the couch. Richard tries to lighten his mood by turning on TCM to watch the *African Queen*. Eventually, sleep beckons, Richard turns his back to the TV, trying unsuccessfully to get more comfortable.

Kent Farmhouse

Superman comes back from a mission. The boys are doing homework or pretending to do homework.

Lois: We are going to Wichita Saturday. I talked to Richard. Richard confirmed it to me, I was right, you were wrong.

Superman groans, then sits down.

Lois: Our sons are also coming with us. It will be a family affair.

Superman: But why?

Lois thinks to say because I said so. But instead, Lois says something a little softer.

Lois: This family is the only one you have in Kansas.

Superman nods, then reluctantly says OK.

Lois: If it helps it sounds as though Kara is pretty pissed, not really looking forward to it either. Try Clark to be on your best behavior. Kara is pregnant, you can be a little brusque at times.

Superman: Me? I don't know what you are talking about.

Superman: Wichita? How the heck did they even end up there?

Lois shakes her head.

3 AM Grayson House

Richard is trying to get comfortable on the couch but has not slept much. Richard hears the soft steps going down the stairs. Kara touches him.

Kara: Come to bed, Richard. I have decided to forgive you.

Richard sits up: Oh, you have, have you?

Kara nods.

Kara: Now come to bed as the two of us will have a lot of work to do by Saturday.

This house is going to need to look clean enough you can eat off the floor.

Richard: It already looks that clean.

Kara: Well, it will get even cleaner then. God knows what flaws Clark is going to find here! Mocking voice -- Oh Kara, you are so fat. Oh Kara, why didn't the boys wear a better shirt? Oh Kara, you are not going to wear that are you?

Kara slowly ascends the steps.

Richard sits up: God, I love you woman.

Kara from the bedroom doorway: Good, because this goes above and beyond the call of duty!

Richard slowly ascends the steps. Takes off his clothes, then climbs into the bed.

Kara cuddles against him, as they both go quickly to sleep.

Saturday Kent Family on the Road

Jordan Kent: So, who are these people again?

Jon Kent: Please, please not another multiverse explanation.

Jordan: I just do not get it. It makes no sense at all.

Clark: Jordan, imagine that there are a multitude of planets, then you have a collapsing event.

Jordan: So, Richard Grayson and Kara Grayson lived on some other earth, it collapsed, they ended up here.

Lois: You got it. Bingo!

Jordan: But that means that they are not really family, we should not have to travel two hours down to Wichita.

Jon sighs deeply.

Lois: We are going, we are all going.

Jordan: But if they are not our family, then why should we care?

Lois: Because they are close enough to our family that we can go visit them. Plus, Richard Grayson offered your Dad a job that will allow this family to survive.

Jon: So, what do we call them?

Clark: They are not “them” they are people just like us.

Jordan: Well, not really like “us”. They are sort of like “us.”

Clark: Actually, I agree with you on that one.

Jon: Good point.

Lois: Enough! I the queen of the car has made an executive decision that we are all traveling down to Wichita, to meet our extended family.

Jordan: Dad, why does Mom get to make the executive decision? Shouldn't that be your decision?

Clark sighs: Do not get me into trouble. I am not happy either.

Jordan: So, what do they look like? I know the "real" Kara, but do pictures exist? How do we know whether this is all fake?

Lois: Are you questioning my journalistic ability?

Jordan: No, Mom.

Lois: Good. Enough talking.

Lois turns around to glare at her sons.

Lois: Richard Grayson is the brother I never had! You will call them Uncle Richard and Aunt Kara. You will be nice to their children, John, and Thaddeus.

All we are doing is eating lunch!

Jon: Wait, wait, one of their kids is called John?

Lois: They spell it the other way.

Jordan: Maybe they want money? Has anyone thought about that?

Clark: The people without money are us. The Grayson's are well off.

Jon and Jordan: How much, Mom?

Lois: Richard Grayson is a billionaire; he is one of the richest men in the world. I mean Richard runs the Grayson Media Group.

Jon: You mean that Richard Grayson!

Jordan: Just our luck that we have a billionaire in the family, but he is a communist.

Jon: The Commie from the Heartland is our uncle?

Jordan: That was last week on the Fox News Channel, this week Richard Grayson is the Karl Marx of the Prairie.

Jon: Are you sure?

Lois very exasperated now: Richard Grayson is not a communist! So, Richard is a progressive that believes in paying people a living wage, a health care system that works, raising the minimum wage to \$20 an hour. Addressing climate change.

Jordan: I heard Grayson on CBS going on and on about child poverty.

Jon: We talked about Grayson in civics. The whole class took a vote. We decided he was most definitely a commie.

Jordan: What was the vote?

Jon: 25 kids said Richard Grayson was a communist, but we had one kid who thought he was a social democrat because he and his family go to church every week.

Lois: Tell them Clark that Richard is not a communist.

Clark: Richard Grayson is not a communist, kids. He runs a highly profitable media empire.

Jon: I don't know Dad.

Jordan: Seems radical stuff.

Jordan: What about this "Aunt" Kara?

Lois throws the book by Kara about the abolitionist movement. Lois had tried earlier to swat these questions away, but the attitude of her sons has left her very frustrated. The boys open the book, then look at Kara's picture on the back cover.

Jordan: Man, she is hot looking.

Lois: I beg your pardon. Did this just happen? Is one of my sons objectifying women? Is that what we have come to?

Clark sighs deeply: Women are not sex objects kids.

Jon: Dad, are you sure? I mean she was probably some eye candy that this Grayson guy started banging when she found out how rich he was.

Lois: Clark, where did we go wrong? Kara Grayson is a Pulitzer-prize winning historian who writes about the antislavery movement! The misogyny in this car shocks me!

Jordan: I do not know Mom. How successful could she really be? I mean they live in Wichita.

Jon: Very good point.

Lois: Complete silence the rest of the trip. NO one talks!

Clark tries very hard to suppress a grin.

Jon: Wait, has anyone thought about what we are going to eat? I am a growing boy.

Jordan: I am too. It is probably a lot of soy and kale because they are radical environmentalists.

Lois: Jesus Christ! They live in Kansas! Everyone out here eats meat! They will probably be serving steaks.

Clark laughs, while Lois glares at him.

Jon: Steaks will probably be pretty good because he is loaded.

Jordan: Unless this Grayson guy burns them.

Clark: Boys if you want to survive this trip be quiet.

Lois: Thank God.

11:30 AM Grayson House

Kara is chopping up vegetables, while Richard is working on seasoning steaks and chicken for the grill.

Kara: Only one thing bothers me.

Richard: Only one?

Kara: You have not apologized lately for ruining my body.

Richard: I do not believe that I have apologized for that ever. History will absolve me.

Kara: Oh my God! Did my progressive human rights husband just quote Fidel Castro? What has happened to the man I married who believed in human dignity, fighting for the sacredness of free speech and democracy.

Richard laughs: Not a great shock if you watch Fox News. Aren't I the Kansas Stalin? But I promise once we are done with lunch that I will personally lead a revolution that will drive the remnants of the Castro family out of power.

Richard: Besides, you will have our daughter soon, then everything will go back to normal. I do not know what you are complaining about. Sheepish grin. I did all the important work.

Kara rolls her eyes: For four and a half months you have been telling that awful joke! Think what life is like for these Earth women.

Richard: You are an Earth woman. You just are not human.

Kara: Oh My God! You did not go there. You know how much I hate it when people say we Kryptonians are not human, that we are supposedly some "evolved" superbeing! Do not even get me started on that meta crap!

Kara: I want to hit you so bad.

Richard: Promises, promises. The house looks great by the way. Good enough for a JSA reunion. Should I tell a Wildcat joke?

Kara: Don't you dare! God, I am so glad you got over being in a superhero group. It is just a bunch of men sitting around drinking coffee, eating donuts, and talking a lot. God, every story they told was about the good old days!

Richard laughs does Wildcat impression in a mocking tone: Did I ever tell you young man about the time that Green Lantern and I fought the Sportsmaster in 1948?

Kara sighs deeply: No, more Wildcat impressions ever again!

Kara: How clean the house is will make no difference for Clark. I have noticed that you never want to have sex with me anymore.

Richard: We made love twice early in the morning hours.

Kara: Only twice. Nothing this morning.

Richard: That was only because we got up at 6:30 in the morning to vacuum everything again.

Kara: The point I am trying to make middle-aged boy wonder is that you did not try very hard.

Richard rolls his eyes.

Richard: Are you really mad at me or is this a fake fight?

Kara: Fake fight, I am trying to blow off steam before Clark gets here to call me fat.

Richard: He would not do that.

Kara rolls her eyes.

Kara: I know him better than you.

Richard: I am so glad to be married to you.

Kara: Why do you want to be married to me anyway?

Richard: So, I can kiss you anytime I want.

The two share a long, deep smoldering kiss. Their foreheads touch.

Kara: Oh, Richard, let us just get through the next few hours.

Kent Family Car

Jon: Boy, the houses around here are ritzy.

Jordan: Except for the Grayson's. I mean it looks OK.

Clark: The Grayson's donates a lot to charity.

Jon: I sure would not do that if I was a media mogul. I would pay my workers
jack, pocket the proceeds, and live like a king.

Lois is about to say something when Clark pulls into the driveway.

The Kent's get out, as they walk to the door, then ring it.

Kara: The sound of doom has come. Best to face the music from Attila the Clark.

Richard: Boys come and meet your cousins!

Scampering is heard from the back of the house.

Kara opens the door, she greets Clark and Lois, along with their sons Jordan and
Jon.

Clark: Hi, Kara, you do not look that bad for a pregnant woman. I mean you are
not as fat as I thought you would be.

Lois sighs.

Clark has been searching for words, but he has found the wrong ones to use.

Kara closes her eyes. Then Kara opens them to glare hard at Richard.

Kara: Oh, come inside everyone!

Kara accepts the bottle of wine.

Kara: Lois, great to see you!

The Kent's walk in, shake hands with all the Grayson family members.

Jon: Say Uncle Richard where is the hammer and sickle flag?

Richard: It is out being dry cleaned. It will probably be back on Wednesday.

As the Kent boys move inside, they notice a framed poem with writing in Kryptonian. They ask Clark to translate, but he deflects, bothered by the sexual content.

Lois: OK why don't the kids play outside.

Richard gets drink orders, as he puts the wine in the kitchen.

Lois: Kara, how far along are you?

Kara: Nine months. Any day now.

Of course, that was a white lie. Kryptonian women's pregnancy only lasts typically for 18-20 weeks. However, Kara does not want to hurt Lois' feelings.

Richard raises his eyebrows, while trying hard not to laugh. Kara gives Richard a look, but he quickly makes the surrender pose.

Clark and Kara warily approach one another.

Richard: Did you have a good drive down?

Lois: It was eventful.

Clark: How long have you been married?

Kara: Fifteen years. Wonderfully happy once we got past the Diana Prince incident.

Lois thinks oh this will be good.

Richard thinks to himself, please not Diana Prince. God, when will Kara let this go?

Kara: Think of it Lois here I am weeks from my wedding. Flying down to DC and after calling around for hours surprise my fiancé at dinner where this complete uh

There is silence as Kara pretends to be searching for a word.

Lois: Slut.

Lois says with a grin, reflecting the easy closeness between the two women.

Kara: Yes, thank you Lois. The Mata Hari of Georgetown was kissing Richard.

Richard: I was completely innocent. She kissed me!

Kara and Lois: No man is completely innocent!

Clark: I do not understand your attitude, Kara! Diana is a sweet, wonderful woman with deep spiritual values.

Kara mouths the word attitude.

Richard thinks to himself for a second how did we get here? Then Richard reminds himself who he is married to. Of course, an injured and brilliant woman like Kara would take us here. Especially if Kara felt that Clark was pushing her against the wall with no escape.

Richard: Clark, buddy, thinks it is time to put on the steaks.

Clark gets up to join Richard outside.

The women hoot and holler as the men get up.

Lois and Kara: Yes, yes, run away!

When the men reach the grill, Clark is still going on about Diana Prince/Wonder Woman, along with how unfair Lois and Kara have been.

Clark: I mean, Lois' attitude is amazing considering we were not dating at the time.

Richard: Well, I cannot make that claim. But the girls were just having fun teasing us.

With that another howl comes from the living room. The men grill the meat and the vegetables, while the women make salads. The extended families sit down to eat, unaware that the language divide between them is about to explode like a landmine.

Richard: John, my son, say grace.

Saying grace in Kryptonian for the Grayson family is as common as a Latino family saying a prayer in Spanish. Little does Richard realize that only Clark can speak Kryptonian in the Kent family.

John begins saying grace in Kryptonian.

Jon and Jordan: Hey, what language is that?

Kara super pissed off: OH MY GOD! What language is that! Your own children do not know the language of our people!

Richard: Now, Kara. Perhaps they simply have not learned.

Clark: That is true. But it is a complicated language. I doubt many people from Earth could ever learn it.

Clark should have noticed that his nephew, John, speaks Kryptonian. But, Clark is a little flustered at the moment.

Richard: Oh, I do not know about that.

Richard (Kryptonian): Climate change is real.

Kara is dying laughing at this point.

Clark is shocked, but most of the Kent's are like what the hell is going on.

Clark: Richard, you speak Kryptonian?

Kara: I taught Richard. I made him learn a new phrase of Kryptonian every night before we had sex.

Lois giggles.

Kara: Richard was highly motivated.

Clark: Perhaps this explains the erotic poem.

Jon and Jordan: Erotic poem?

They move to go to the living room.

Lois: Sit down.

Lois: I would love to have learned Kryptonian!

Kara: Clark did not teach you?

Kara is genuinely shocked.

Lois: It never came up.

Clark: It is a very complicated language.

Kara mouths complicated.

Richard says grace in English. The two families fall into easy conversation.

Kara is still highly agitated and annoyed. The meal ends, people start to clear the table. Kara gets up to confront Clark over language, but her water breaks with a huge fall of water splattering on the floor.

Jordan: What does that mean?

Richard: That means we are now at Defcon1.

Richard gets up, his acrobatic body allows him to leap across the whole table with ease, he then goes to grab the already prepared go bag.

Lois: Boys you watch your cousins! Clark let us go.

The four adults pile into the Grayson Ford Explorer. Clark drives, Lois in the passenger seat, with the Grayson's in the back. The hospital address is entered, with what follows is a long drive through heavy traffic.

Kara in between huffing: Clark, why didn't you teach Lois Kryptonian?

Lois: I would like to know that too.

Clark: It is a hard language to learn.

Grayson's laugh.

Kara: My children can read and speak Kryptonian. Of course, they are children, so their vocabulary has some limitations. But it is amazing a man who would go on and on about the "purity" of the Kryptonian tradition, would deny it to his wife and children.

Clark: You raise a very good point about purity.

Kara mouths the word purity.

Clark: I must say though, Kara, that your inclusion of a "questionable" poem in your home is in very bad taste.

Kara: Bad Kara, very bad Kara.

Richard: Kara loved my poem, Clark! But thanks for telling my sons that it was erotic, they would not have known otherwise! I can guarantee you ready money that Jon and Jordan are plying their cousins for a translation while we are gone.

Lois: Do you think they would translate?

Richard: Depends whether Jon and Jordan brought cash. They are my sons so it will be a cash on the barrelhead kind of deal.

Lois: Well, it is now a cashless society, so we are probably in the clear.

Kara: It was a lovely poem, dear. We just thought our kids were too young to notice the language. We probably should have taken it down before the Kent boys came to visit. A normal Kryptonian family, such as mine, would not think it a big deal talking about basic sexual activity. Not erotic at all, it is just that Clark is sexually repressed. You are just uncomfortable with celebrating the classical female physical form. While we are on that subject. I want to thank you for that lovely speech to all the JSA men about how Kryptonian women are nymphomaniacs who could have sex for hours.

Richard puts his head in hands.

Richard: Kara, is this the place to discuss all this sexual talk. Besides, you know (tries to whisper) we do make love for hours.

Kara: Richard, I am shocked at you. After all the progress you have made sexually, why should we be ashamed of us being a sexually active heterosexual married couple! Let our freak flag fly! What I object to is Clark holding Kryptonian women up as an object of scorn. These Earth people cannot help their ridiculous attitudes about sexual activity, but Clark did not have to go join them.

Kara: It is a principle, involved, Richard!

Kara: Now let us get to the real issues involved. Richard, do you deny that you were intimidated on our wedding night, along with the first year of our marriage?

Richard: No, I was rather nervous. Clark's remarks were a little frightening. But it turned out fine. We have been very happy, you are about to give birth to our daughter.

Kara: I just want it on the record that Clark's sexually repressed beliefs meant I had to do mission work the first year of our marriage.

Lois is dying laughing, but Clark desperately wants to change the subject.

Clark: If we are putting things on the record, I want to discuss the unfair way that Kara and Lois discussed Diana Prince.

Richard throws up his arms in frustration. Rolls his eyes in a deeply frustrated matter.

Kara: Say Lois, can I borrow your barf bag?

Lois: No, I need mine.

Clark: I do not understand why this is such a big deal.

Lois smirks and rolls her eyes.

Clark: We were not even dating. She is just a deeply spiritual woman, who would do anything for anyone.

At this point, Richard and Clark went into a lengthy dispute in Kryptonian.

Richard (Kryptonian): What the hell, Clark? Why are you giving the girls a two by four to hit us over the head with man?

Clark (Kryptonian): It just seems that if we make a clean breast of things that we can see things logically, rationally.

Richard (Kryptonian): Maybe the “other” Kara will, but I guarantee you mine never will. You saw how she took pleasure in bringing up the Diana Prince incident.

Clark (Kryptonian): Your willingness to allow yourself to be henpecked by Kara, is rather disappointing to be honest.

Kara laughs uproariously at henpecked.

Richard (Kryptonian) This is fine talk for someone who behaved the way you did toward Lois. I have not wanted to get into it, because she took you back, but let us face it, Clark, you are unworthy of her.

Lois, as the only one in the car who does not speak Kryptonian, picks this moment to figure out why her brother and husband are having this animated discussion.

Lois whispers to Kara: What is going on? Richard looks pissed.

Kara whispers to Lois: Richard and Clark are debating him leaving you for Wonder Woman. Do not worry, Lois, Richard has your back.

Lois' head in her hands.

Richard (Kryptonian): Have you ever apologized to my sister?

Clark (Kryptonian): Technically, you are not her brother.

Richard (Kryptonian): If my last name was Lane, then it would be different.

Clark (Kryptonian): Not really.

Richard (Kryptonian): Let us discuss your conduct. Humiliating Lois both privately and publicly, mocking her at every opportunity, then when it was over going back to her. Your entire life with Lois has been you treating her like an orange, that you can squeeze everything out of it, then you throw the husk away.

Lois: English, please!

Richard: Sorry, Lois.

Clark was very flustered at this point. Richard remembers everything that enraged him about Clark's behavior toward Lois. Richard has long been incensed for years about the whole Clark-Diana relationship. Kara decides now would be a good time to get her shots in on Diana.

Kara: So, Clark, if it offends you to call Diana a slut, how about the Whore of Themyscira?

Lois: Works for me.

Richard and Clark are too angry right now to say anything.

Kara: I know those breasts are fake.

Lois: They must be.

At this point, Clark decides to rejoin the conversation, by telling a joke. It will turn out to be a major mistake on Clark's part.

Clark: They are real and spectacular.

Richard looks up as though he has been shot. Clark did not just say that about Diana while Lois, his own wife, was sitting right beside him. Richard could not believe Clark would mock Lois, while he was inches away from his big sister. What sort of sick hold did Diana have on Clark? Well, I hope you like this one Big Blue. Here is what you get for screwing Lois over for years.

Kara: I am surprised you noticed, Clark. You have always been sexually repressed.

Richard: Oh, I do not know about that.

Lois and Kara look at Richard.

Richard: There was that sex tape that Clark did.

You will notice that Richard slowly draws out this discussion, enjoying Clark's humiliation. As Bruce Wayne put it once, when Richard Grayson wants to, he can be a "real bastard."

Clark groans: Now, wait a minute Richard that does not count! I was under duress by supervillains!

Lois icily: I find it surprising that after fifteen years of marriage this is the first, I am hearing of it.

Kara: When you say sex tape do you mean random sex or porn? And do you have copies?

Kara is enjoying this immensely. There are no words in the English language to describe how much pleasure Kara derives from this. Now, Kara disapproves of porn. But Kara is no prude, she simply thinks that Earth people should engage in a lot more sexual activity, then there would be no need to sneak off to watch random strangers on the internet. But Kara finds it hilarious, that Mr. Morality has made a pornographic film.

Clark: There is never a natural disaster when you need one.

Richard: Oh, it was porn.

Lois groans, while Kara laughs uproariously.

Richard: But, honey, I did not really watch it, just fast forwarded through it to make sure it was Clark. It was Clark alright, he certainly appeared to be enthusiastic. I had heard through sources that it was around, then managed to get all the copies. I then had all the tapes destroyed. Yes, Kara even the negatives!

Clark: Well, thank you at least for that, Richard.

Kara: Richard, how far did Clark get?

Richard: Third base.

Richard these words are said very slowly: What I wonder about is what you said afterwards to the married man whose wife you were trying to bang the whole time. Sorry, it just does not seem strong enough. But that is just me.

Lois saying the words slowly: OH MY GOD.

Clark: Please whatever spiritual beings that control the universe kill me now.

Lois: You better hope they do.

Kara: Who anyway was the husband?

Richard: Mr. Terrific.

Kara: Oh, that explains a lot.

Through all this Kara has been huffing away, while Richard has been timing the contractions.

Clark: Traffic is very slow.

Richard calls their doctor, Dr. Elizabeth Oni, telling her how far away they are.

Lois: I am just in shock. You really are incredible.

Clark: I am totally innocent.

Lois and Kara: No man is ever totally innocent!

Kara: I cannot believe you watched this without me!

Kara pretends to take a swipe at Richard.

Lois: I cannot believe that the sweet boy who asked me out, was suddenly fast forwarding through my husband's porn tape.

Lois rolls her eyes, while she glares at Clark.

Kara: You went out with Lois?

Richard: Well, not really, I was 8. She bought me a burger and fruit.

Lois: Richard called me Miss Lane throughout.

Clark: I always wondered what happened on that “date.”

Lois: Richard did kiss me. Well, on tippy toes.

Kara: I am just shocked. Laughs. We should have told this story to our kids at lunch!

Clark annoyed: I have had just a little bit enough of this. It is not as though you all are so pure! Lois went out with Bruce.

Kara: You dated Lucifer.

Richard: Now, Kara, Bruce is not that bad.

Lois: He was very sweet. I still get a Christmas Card.

Richard: Alfred sends them out. I doubt that Bruce even knows. You know, Kara, Alfred makes the greatest pies.

Kara: I am so sick and tired of you going on and on about Alfred’s pies. Besides, it was child abuse the way Bruce Wayne let you fight crime when you were 8. Do not even get into which earth we were supposedly on when this happened.

Kara: Whichever Bruce Wayne we are talking about is a complete nihilist with no moral stature at all. I threw that in for you Clark, I know how important “social stature” is to you.

Clark rolls his eyes.

Kara: It really is amazing that you and your sister turned out sane. You even managed to escape the Hellhole of Gotham City.

Clark: Oh, I do not know about that. Richard did go out with his sister.

Kara horrified: You went out with my best friend! Appalling! But then you are a man!

Richard: Helena didn't have any blood relationship to me, she dumped me after a month or so. You have known about her for years. Do not pretend to be shocked!

Kara: I know. But I thought Lois would enjoy my moral outrage.

Lois: Did you sleep with her?

Lois says this in a teasing kind of way.

Richard: I do not remember.

Richard has not forgotten, it is impossible for him to forget anything about Helena, but he just prefers not to say. Richard does think of Helena as his sister, but he had no formal family standing. Bruce had made Richard his “ward,” but left him in a sort of limbo, part of the family unofficially, yet not. It would be hard to describe how deeply that had hurt Richard.

The women howl at that.

Lois and Kara: That means they did it!

Richard: Besides, it does not matter what did or did not happen. After we “de-aged” we agreed on a fresh start, it was a clean slate.

Kara nods her head.

It really is not a big deal to Kara; she knows that Richard felt deeply for Helena. Kara has also known that Richard as a ward wasn't quite a brother, but then he was more than simply a guy hanging around the mansion. In Kara's view, the ambiguous position of Richard in the Wayne household, was all the fault of the Earth-2 Bruce Wayne, who was a callous bastard. But Kara also knows that Richard's feelings for Helena are also that of a lost love. For Kara none of that really matters, she was the one that got to spend the rest of her life with Richard.

Lois: You are telling me that Richard Grayson, the great lover, was a virgin on his wedding night? The press is going to love that when you run for president.

Richard: That is my story, and I am sticking to it.

Kara: That means that when I had my evil way with you on our wedding night, you were a virgin. How sweet!

Richard and Kara kiss softly, but then a hard contraction.

Clark: Oh, I do not know about that. Kara once French kissed me.

Lois: Kara! How could you! Your own cousin!

Kara: It was a distraction! It was a great distraction!

Kara reenacts the moon face from Clark.

Lois laughs very hard.

Kara: Oh, Lois, you should have seen the look on his face!

Clark: Alright, alright all of this was long ago. We have been happily married for years, with us having two kids, while the two of you are about to have your third.

Everyone in the car applauds. Kara is huffing very hard now.

Lois: Great speech dear.

But Clark cannot resist being the Kryptonian patriarch.

Clark: Kara, I know that I am at times a little hard on you.

Kara: Oh, is that right Clark?

Clark: But we have a larger purpose. We Kryptonians are gods that have super-powers that make us not like everyone else, we have a divine meaning. We must set an example for humans.

Richard thought good luck, Clark, selling a Proverbs 31 woman on this idea.

Kara howls with laughter

Kara: Do you hear this, Lois; Clark and I are gods! Lois, you really need to get this boy to church, mosque, synagogue something! That is beyond doubt the dumbest thing you have ever said to me, and you have said amazing things to me over the years.

Kara: Before I get into that crap, I would just like to point out that you and I are human too, Clark! We just came from further away than most immigrants to the United States! Richard, that is not the time for any of your I married a space alien jokes!

Richard: Once you go Kryptonian, you never go back.

Richard and Lois fist bump.

Kara rolls her eyes, while Clark sighs deeply.

Richard: Listen, Kara, did you know it was impossible for Power Girl to make love to a human or have children?

Kara: You are heading for a bruising, Earth boy.

Clark and Lois try to suppress a grin.

Kara: Listen, Clark, I will try to be respectful here. We are not like gods. Yes, we have great powers, but our powers always have limits. We can fly, run, and at great speeds, we are also very strong. We can use cold and heat, x-ray vision as well. But all of that is just simply a reflection that the Kryptonian environment was radically different. But there are also a multitude of ways in which we are not like the divine.

Clark: Are you saying that as a Christian?

Kara: Richard and I are Evangelical Protestants. We are not pushing that on the two of you. People can believe what they want. But we have none of the abilities that gods can provide. We cannot get people jobs, find them a place to live, help

when going through trials. As a Christian, compared to what Jesus did on the cross, being able to fly around is not much.

Clark: But I hear people's prayers.

Kara: That is only because you are intentionally tuning in to them. Listen, super hearing is a pain, especially Lois when I must hear women bragging about how they are going after my husband. But you should not confuse the words people on Earth use with a divine purpose.

Kara: Where did you get this from anyway?

Clark: Darkseid.

Richard throws up his arms, while Kara is appalled.

Kara: Never listen to a supervillain! But getting your conception of divinity from one is ridiculous.

Kara: But I think there is a larger problem here that is all connected to Krypton. You wanted to think that being on Earth made you some all-powerful being, so you were susceptible when Darkseid spun his crap.

Richard: I have no superpowers, but I will have my shot at him.

Kara: Please not this, Richard.

Richard: I need to atone for not overthrowing apartheid in 1977.

Kara huffs real hard.

Lois: South Africa is free now, Richard.

Kara: You see what I must put up with Lois. Please, please not the Richard Grayson discussion of South Africa!

Richard: I had it all figured out. After I swam across to Robben Island, then it would be easy to overwhelm the jailors, free Nelson Mandela, along with the political prisoners. The next step would be an invasion of the mainland, with the liberation of South Africa following quickly afterwards. But I believed back then in working through the political system. What a fool, I was! 17 lost years! I have been reading about what a tyrant this Darkseid guy is for a long while, he needs to go down. The people of Apokolips are living under great oppression. When I kill Darkseid, then throw him in the lake of fire in Hell it will be a good day.

Clark: You have no shot against Darkseid.

Richard: I have a plan.

Kara huffing and puffing a lot: You cannot have a plan, Batboy! I am the planner; you may have a scheme.

Kara: Please, not right now.

Richard: OK, but someday I will get my shot. Tyrants must be confronted, defeated, their empires overthrown.

Clark: Darkseid would crush you, Richard, in a second.

Richard: That is what the Joker told me, when I was 8. After I got through with him, the Clown Prince of Crime could only slurp soup.

Richard: Kara, do you know I have NEVER lost to the Joker?

Kara: I know dear.

Richard: I am never going to lose to the Joker either. Anytime that asshole wants another butt whipping he knows where to find me.

Richard: I am still mad about that damn *Joker* movie.

Kara: Richard, we are not listening to you rant and rave about the *Joker* movie, how you are going to kill Darkseid, or how you are looking forward to administering the greatest beatdown in human history to Bane.

Richard: You forgot finding a way to avenge sweet Helena's death.

Kara tries to quickly change the subject before Richard gets too far into discussing Helena Wayne.

Kara: But back to our powers and Krypton. You and I just have a fundamentally different view of where we are regarding our place on Earth. You think that we are some divine being. A lot of it comes from that damn Fortress of Solitude. One of my fantasies is that when no one is there, I go empty all life, then burn the whole thing down.

Lois: But why?

Kara: Hernan Cortes when arriving in Mexico burned his boats. Part of what Cortes was saying to his men is there was no going back. This extended family of ours must either live in the past or move forward to the future. Keep the literature, the language, the scientific achievements, but accept that Krypton is dead. Of course, the "other" Kara has not had children yet, she may not do so, but they would also be part of the last refugees of Krypton. So long as we keep pushing a button so "the glories of Krypton" can live again, we will be in the past. Burn down the Fortress of Solitude!

Clark: This is insane.

Kara: Only because you will not let Krypton go, nor will Peaches and Cream in National City. But let's not get into the handmaiden of the Kryptonian patriarchy. What is Krypton at this point, but something that prevents us from putting down firm roots on Earth, helping it achieve its destiny. My great fear – is that what happened on Krypton will be repeated all over again.

Richard: It is OK, honey, I do not think Clark will understand it anyway.

Lois: That is what climate change is for the two of you?

Richard and Kara nod sadly, then say together: Yes.

Richard: Our planet is on the path to genocide.

Clark: There is no evidence that this planet is going to explode.

Richard: But, yes, that is what climate change is all about. Not giving huge cash payouts to companies, not about paper products, windmills, recycling, nor even whether we are good stewards of the environment. But whether we can achieve global survival.

Richard: But that will only take place once we get rid of clickbait. We need to reorient the way we think. It is not “they” vs. “them”, but “us” and “we”. I get so

frustrated by those assholes in the Democratic and Republican party, who refuse to face the fact that we need to work together to solve problems. That is why the political system needs to be overthrown, for a full second American Revolution.

Kara: This is our planet, Clark. I have lost two worlds; I am not going to lose a third. You want to know what Krypton is Clark? It is you, me, Lois, Richard, Jordan, Jon, John, Thaddeus, Helena, the “other” Kara, her partner, plus whatever children she ends up having or not having. It is not about crystals. Besides, Kryptonian society was deeply dominated by men, with all their family houses crap. As a woman, I am not interested in being controlled by the House of L.

Kara gasps loudly, as contractions speed up.

Richard: We are now at a minute.

Lois: There is a gap with other cars, speed up dear, we are at the important part.

Clark: This is a hard family to lead.

Clark speeds up the car as they have reached the hospital at last.

Richard is first out of the car with the go bag, gets the door to help Kara out. Lois hops out. Clark takes a moment to gather his thoughts.

Lois: Do not dawdle, dear, it is about to get real.

Clark goes to park the car. The line toward the nurses as Kara starts to make louder noises, Richard goes to the front to point out how fast her contractions are at this point. They are quickly moved to one of the adjoining areas of the E.R. The nurses move Kara to a middle area where they give her a hospital gown, while they take her vitals. The whole I.V. issue is belayed, because her doctor has already made specific instructions that no attempt be made to use needles or attempt to puncture her skin. Of course, had they tried, Kara's invulnerable skin would have made it an impossibility. Now that Kara is settled, Richard goes to get dressed so he can go with her. Richard has not brought any device to record the pregnancy. Kara thinks it is ridiculous that anyone would want to watch the so-called "miracle of childbirth."

Dr. Oni: How is my warrior princess?

Kara: Ready to get this over with.

Richard returns fully prepared for the operating room.

Kara: Remember, Richard, when we get there to stay up close with me. I have heard of some men having problems later if they look at the wrong stuff. I do not want our sex life getting screwed up.

Richard: I think you mean lovemaking but get your point.

It is a few more minutes, but then they come to take Kara away. Lois and Clark then go to the waiting room. Over time, Clark becomes especially agitated as the seconds stretch into minutes, then hours. It is something of a relief for Clark then when a jumbo jet liner in Peru seemed about to crash. Clark gets up to go save them, until Lois stops him.

Lois: Where are you going, cowboy?

Clark: Lois, I must save those people.

Lois: No.

Clark: What do you mean no.

Lois: I may not have a wife veto. Kara told me that she has one over Richard. But you are not going to run out on your sweet cousin.

Clark: Those people may die.

Lois: Yes, that is true. I feel very sorry for them. But I have news for you. Before the arrival of Clark Kent, we had pestilence, flood, murder, kidnappings, burglary, all the rest. We survived.

Clark: What if I went anyway?

Lois: Well, that will be a hard thing.

Clark gets up to go.

Lois: I am your wife, not someone who controls your every move. But I will remember this day. The moment when your 34-year-old cousin faced death, you were antsy, so you went off to save a plane full of strangers.

Clark: What does Kara's age have to do with anything?

Lois: Come on, Clark. You are too good a reporter to not know what the death statistics are for pregnant women in the mid-30s. We do not live in Medieval Europe anymore but the older that a woman is the higher the possibility of problems during childbirth. Then throw in a woman who cannot receive an I.V., blood, or a multitude of other forms of assistance. The go-to move when a woman is really in trouble is a C-section, but good luck trying that on a Kryptonian woman. You think my brother is not freaking out right now?

Clark: Richard, is not technically your family.

Lois: Richard certainly is more my family than my father or my sister. If you EVER say that about Richard, I will put you on the floor. I consider Richard my brother, he considers me his sister, your opinion on this is irrelevant.

Clark: If I do go then, you will sabotage me is that the point.

Lois: No, Clark, I love you I would never do that. But I would remember this moment when you ask for emotional support. How disappointed

Lois then mouths the words disappointed a second time.

Lois: I would be in you, if you doubt me, just fly to Peru.

Clark sits down.

Lois: Good call, dear. I know this is hard for you. You started out a god, then you became the family patriarch, now you are down on the ground with the rest of us. But you will survive.

As it turns out the plane can land safely, but the wait for everyone was just beginning.

In the Operating Room

At first it went very well, although more slowly than anyone expected. By midnight it certainly appeared that this would all be over quickly.

Oni: Push, a little harder, Kara.

Kara was straining

Helena Grayson poked out her head, followed quickly by the rest of her body. Then came the most delicious wail sound that made clear she was alive. The nurses then presented her first to Kara, then to Richard. The feelings for both were so incredible. They had waited their entire marriage for Helena's arrival. But these feelings of jubilation soon passed as a surprise was presented to everyone.

It is extremely rare, but occasionally an ultrasound does miss a second baby, what medical personnel call a "hidden twin." That speck on the ultrasound in Grayson's case was in fact a small, baby boy that was now ready to come out. Unfortunately, its little head had gotten twisted in a variety of different ways, the umbilical cord had gotten partly wrapped around his throat, meaning its breathing was obstructed, but not fully blocked. Additionally, the baby was turned improperly, making it hard to move quickly through the birth canal. Kara was doing her best, but progress was minimal. The hours that passed were

excruciating for Kara, with a heavy loss of blood, Richard could see she was dying slowly by inches. At that point Dr. Oni called a break, bringing Richard to her side. Kara was trying hard, but the baby was just stuck, while she was going in and out of consciousness.

Oni: Richard, you are going to have to leave.

Richard swallows hard: OK.

But Richard felt agreeing was the ultimate betrayal.

Oni: You can see what is happening, do you need the medical explanation?

Richard: No, I do not.

Oni: I know how strongly the two of you feel about life issues. But if it comes down to it, Kara is conscious at best 40% of the time right now, what do you want me to do?

This was the question that Richard had prepared for during his entire marriage. Kara, Richard knew, because she had told him repeatedly, would say take my life, but save my baby at all costs. Richard just could not say that, so he took a more pragmatic course, although at this point, he felt sure both lives were

already lost. Richard then had his *Sophie's Choice*, as to whether his wife or son should live.

Richard: Save them both. But if that becomes impossible, then Kara over the child.

Oni nods her head slowly.

The level of pain and agony rushing through Richard right now is all but impossible to describe. Waves of sadness descend upon Richard, *Kara is dying, and you cannot stop it*, repeats in his head on a loop. Somehow, Richard walks to Kara while the medical personnel take a break, to spend a last moment with her. Richard softly runs his hand through her white-blond hair, so long it reaches the middle of her back, tears come slowly down his face.

Richard (Kryptonian): Beloved wife, I have loved you with my whole heart. You have been my whole world; I will honor your sacrifice. See you on the other side.

Then Richard bends down to kiss her forehead softly, her lips obstructed with a medical mask. Richard wants to collapse on the floor, but instead he walks slowly out of the operating room. It is a relief, when Richard leaves the room, no

he does not look back like Lot's wife for one last look. Richard is praying hard now for a miracle, but death has stalked him all his life, he is not counting on one.

The words to Johnny Cash's *Hurt* run on a loop in his head. It fully describes Richard's mood. Everyone Richard Grayson has cared for has ended up dead, it is all his fault, especially the death of his beloved Kara. The pain of this moment is excruciating, with a long walk through several hallways, elevators to go down to reach Lois and Clark. His mind is on overdrive. You are so fucking stupid, Richard Grayson! You should have seen it coming! You told yourself after Helena died, was murdered you mean, that would never happen to anyone in your family again! Well, once again you did not see it coming, Kara is going to end up dead! You knew that little spot on the ultrasound was something, but that does not get you anywhere, you know that, but you broach it just to remind yourself how dumb you are.

Because even if you had recognized that it was a baby that could kill Kara, no way she would ever have accepted an abortion. Not someone who survived the Kryptonian version of Auschwitz. Kara is so personally offended by abortion, that she does not even like the word to be uttered in her house. The reality is that we

would still be where we are right now, Richard must reluctantly admit. That is not a source of comfort.

Then it became time for Richard to revisit all of those that had died or had been let down by him. It always seemed to go back to Boss Tony Zucco. Remembering that moment when Zucco, along with his goons murdered Richard's parents. Richard will never forget Zucco, while his underlings laughed with glee as his parents plunged toward their deaths. Imagining a grave where first Richard's father John Grayson was dumped, then beside him his mother Mary. Second, was Bruce Wayne, his earth's Bruce Wayne, who had rescued him after Zucco slaughtered his parents. Richard remembered being there for Bruce Wayne's funeral, his second father, all those feelings as they put him in the ground. Richard and Helena holding hands while dirt was thrown on the coffins of Bruce and Selina Wayne, Kara who was not his Kara yet, was there too, how sad she looked.

But then Richard came to Helena. Kara usually would tell him not to fixate on Helena. Well, Kara is not around to tell him not to right now, is she? Never saw that one coming. But does that matter right now? Remember how thrilled you were to have someone you thought of as a sister? Of course, Helena was not just someone Richard considered a sister, she was his world, his everything. Making it

even more complicated was that they weren't really brother and sister, they dated for a time. But then for Richard Grayson: Helena Wayne's pedestal is so high it would take the power of flight to reach it. There have only been two women that Richard *really* loved romantically: Helena Wayne and Kara Grayson. Well, what can you say, no one ever said that Richard Grayson didn't have good taste. There is an irony in Helena Wayne's death, it served as a release for the hold she had on Richard's heart, that ultimately made his marriage to Kara possible. If Helena had stayed alive, Richard would have just made himself miserable, hoping she was happy with someone else.

Richard tries very hard not to cry, but he is failing. Richard will only truly cry when he gets to Lois. Richard is telling himself just to get to his big sister, Lois, she will help him somehow. Zucco took so much from him, but the moment that Helena was born, it felt so different. No one ever understood the depth, the power of their relationship. It was Helena, after all, who had first given him the gentle nudge toward Kara.

Helena: I told her, Dick.

Richard: Told her what, Helena.

Helena: All of the JSA women were going over who would be perfect matches.

Richard: For all those married women?

Helena: No, those of us who were single. When Karen came up, I said you.

Back in the pre-crisis days, Richard had a horrible crush on Kara. Of course, being neurotic Richard Grayson, he did nothing with it, except to make himself miserable. Richard figured back then Kara did not know he was alive. If it sounds like pre-crisis, Richard was this very confused older man, then you have it figured out. Ultimately, Richard would in his words “win the lottery,” by getting to be Kara’s husband. Kara’s view was that Richard was “damn lucky” that the Crisis on Infinite Earths bailed him out. But back to our flashback, where Helena tries to get Richard moving to Kara.

Richard howls with laughter.

Richard: I am so unworthy of her, of any woman.

Helena: You are not, you just think you are. Remember, I know you. They all laughed, except for Karen.

Richard: Really? She did not dismiss me out of hand.

Helena: No, Karen said Dick thinks life has passed him by. It would take an event

to make Dick change his mind. I told Karen that if such an event took place, that she should not let you go. Do you know what Karen promised me? I will not.

I gave Kara fifteen good years; God I am so sorry that I let you down. What is the point now of going on and on over Helena, the point is that the two of them are linked. Helena my sister, Kara my wife and best friend. If Kara is in fact dead, I will need to honor her to take care of our three children. As Kara's life appears to be ending, Richard feels that the dance they had at the wedding is finishing, their married life will soon be over. Every positive memory of Kara runs through his mind, chills go up and down his spine. Tears flowed gently down Richard's face. The moment Richard first fell in love when she put the hero Wildcat in his place. She was merciful, starting their whirlwind courtship back when they were both students at KU.

All those times that Richard tried to fend her off because he felt so unworthy of her. How pleased and excited Richard was when she cut through his defenses. That moment when Richard proposed, got married, the first time they made love. Yes, Kara, made love. Getting memories mixed up. Thank you, Kara, for being my wife. The birth of their children, all three of them, mixed feelings about the fourth. All the joy, the pain, the sacrifice, how Richard never thought it would end

like this. Well, Richard has finally reached Lois. Somehow Robin, who has defeated so many foes, finds the strength to go through the double doors. Richard staggers in at 3 in the morning into the waiting room. Richard finds a seat, but then the sobbing comes for Kara, he is just crying and crying unable to form words. Kara, if you can hear me, I will raise our children the way you would have wanted. Lois immediately takes Richard into her arms, while Clark is shocked that Richard would cry this way. But that does not stop Clark from hugging Richard with all his strength.

Eventually, Richard can talk, but his voice is very soft, almost a whisper. Kara was so weak when Richard left, her body so broken, that he just did not see how they would get to a positive outcome.

Richard: I am sorry for crying.

Lois: You have a gentle heart, little brother. Tell us what is going on.

Richard: The daughter, Helena, was born without difficulties. But then they saw an error.

Clark: Error?

It is the first time that Clark Kent had ever considered that Kara might die.

Richard: It is called in medical terminology a “hidden twin.”

Lois: A baby they do not pick up on an ultrasound.

Richard: This baby is stuck right now, not coming out the right way. Kara is bleeding a lot.

Clark turns white as a sheet, overwhelmed by the fear of losing Kara. Lois worried about this very possibility, liking Kara so much, frightened of this very result as soon as she saw her pregnant. What followed then was an excessive amount of wait, while the wheels inside Richard’s head were on overdrive.

Waiting Room

Richard has been expecting the worst for quite a while. At one point, so frustrated, Richard got up taking out a bulletin board with a series of punches. Clark is by 4 in the morning bored, frustrated, deeply angry. It is an unusual situation for Clark to have to just sit, wait, to be helpless to do anything. The fact that all Clark can do is to be dependent on other people is maddening, he is pacing constantly, while cursing.

Clark: I do not fucking believe this! She was fine in the car, then poof she might be dead! There has got to be something that we can do.

Lois: Clark, be patient.

Clark: This has gone on for hours, with no word.

Richard looks up, trying to pay attention after being lost in his thoughts.

Lois: Honey, we just must hope they can get the child out of her body.

Clark picks up a coffee table to destroy, but then figures out what is the point. It is slammed hard down on the floor. Clark then slumps down in his chair, his body in torment. Richard pats his knee.

Lois has been steadily praying, but silently, while watching Richard on edge with the wheels turning in his mind. Lois decides it is time they talk, but without Clark, who could use a break anyway. It is big sister-baby brother time! Lois asks Clark to step out for a minute, sending him out for coffee. Of course, Richard does not drink caffeine, but you get the idea.

Richard: How is the gentleman farmer of Smallville? Can you believe that financial shit?

Lois sighs: Clark doesn't think like you do, Richard. Don't try to change the subject. I know you. The wheels are spinning, the guilt, the self-doubt. We can talk about Clark later.

Lois: What did you tell me long ago? All those Earth-2 memories. Only three women have ever understood you.

Richard: Calling our world Earth-2 would piss off Kara.

Lois: Richard, please?

Richard: You, Helena Wayne, and my Kara.

Richard cries a little more: Oh, Lois, you should have seen how weak she was. I was so stupid.

Lois: We women are a lot tougher than you think, do not give up on her yet. A woman's body is incredibly designed by God.

Lois cannot help but noting, that the two most important men in her life are falling apart.

Richard: This is all on me.

Richard: We did not need another child. But we wanted a daughter. Well, we got her, but the only price was Kara's death.

Lois: How exactly was this your fault?

Richard: I should have avoided making love to her when it was dangerous.

Lois: Richard, that is absurd.

Richard: My lack of self-control got us here. I am the only one who can be blamed. There is no pregnancy without me.

Lois: God, you can be so infuriating when you head off to your brutal logic! But as much guilt as you might feel, Kara signed up for this too. I could tell how much she was looking forward to this. Could you really hold her off?

Richard sighs: No, she wanted a daughter badly. As much as I did.

Lois: Have to face it little brother. This was just something that happened. But do not worry about it too much. I am here now. Win or lose tonight I will be here to help.

Richard laughs: It is supposed to be the other way.

Clark returns with coffee for everyone, but Richard puts it to the side, he will not drink. The coffee is poor, but Lois' pep talk has improved the mood in the room. Richard has perked up just a little.

The Operating Room

The situation for Kara is now reaching the desperate stage because her vitals are crashing. Dr. Oni has now called an emergency meeting. Kara is still breathing, but she has lost a lot of blood, not doing well at all.

The surgical team is clustered like in a football huddle.

Oni: We can all see the problem. Vitals crashing, bleeding, baby twisted up, child maybe dead. We do not know. Anyone have a solution?

Nurse Cartwright: Think it is two problems. We need to disentangle the child, then get him through the birth canal and out.

Oni: Oh, I see.

Anesthesiologist: If we are going to do that, then we need to really knock her out. Her energy level is getting low.

Oni: Any other plan?

Silence.

Oni: Let us make it work. I do not want to be the one to tell Richard Grayson his wife is dead. Not for a man who worships the ground his wife walks on. No, I do not want to have that conversation.

Kara is rendered unconscious. For the next 45 minutes Oni and a series of doctors reach inside to disentangle the baby from its umbilical cord which was making it hard to breathe. It goes without saying that moving the baby around was no easy task. Luckily, the baby was not strangled to death inside Kara's womb. Then slowly, ever so slowly, the baby is dragged through the birth canal.

Oni: Wake, Kara, up.

Smelling salts are applied to Kara.

Oni whispers to Kara: Few more pushes, then we are done.

Kara draws on every ounce of her Kryptonian heritage, shoves, pushes, then at last the baby is free.

Cartwright: Is the baby dead?

Nurse Washington: Cannot possibly be alive.

Then they hear the loudest possible cries.

Oni: Sweet Jesus. How the hell did it survive?

Kara however at this point flatlined.

Oni: Crash cart!

They then give a jump to the heart. Kara's heart immediately surges, then it is beating normally.

Cartwright: Wow! Just wow!

Oni: This is why we do medicine, people! The baby survived, Kara survived, just do not ask me how.

Oni fingers a golden St. Andrew's cross.

Of course, the situation for Kara has been resolved, but as is usual a delay in relaying information has taken place. The hospital has also waited for Kara to recover a little, to be placed in a new room. Finally, at 5 in the morning, Dr. Elizabeth Oni arrives. Oni motions for the Grayson family to follow, so they can talk in an accompanying small room. Richard expects the worst, just wants it to be over with so he can plan for the rest of his life, determined no matter what any letter, or video from Kara might be found that he will never date again. Richard can hear Kara, "I don't care how much you hate it, Batboy, my children are going

to have a mother. You can be the man, but I won't let you be the man and the woman, so get over yourself.”

Oni: Well, it was touch and go, but we made it.

Richard wants to faint, but instead finds a chair. All he can do is think Thank God.

Richard just cries and cries and cries. Praise Jesus, Richard thinks. Oh, thank you for this miracle. Oh My God. Lois softly rubs Richard's back, while Clark hugs him so hard that Richard nearly has his back broken. Clark wipes away tears, with a smile so bright that it could heat suns. Lois is sobbing gently, relieved to be able to release her emotions. For so long Lois had to be the strong one for her family, but now she can release her feelings. But only for a moment. Then Lois dabs her eyes, smiling happily.

Oni: Mother is fine and resting. We will need to keep Kara in the hospital today. But tomorrow you can take her home.

Oni: Children doing fine. We do need to know names, along with any special instructions.

Richard: Helena for the girl. George for the boy. If you still do circumcision, then circumcise the boy.

Oni: We do, we will follow your preferences.

Clark: Really, Richard?

Richard: It is in the Bible. Besides, it makes it easier to keep the boy clean.

Oni: You can all see her, but no more than 5 minutes.

Lois: Thank you so much, doctor.

Richard shakes Dr. Oni's hand: I am so grateful. You ever need anything, you or that team, you let me know.

Clark: George?

Richard: You know, George Washington. If Kara hates it, we can always change it, the baby is not going to know his name for a while.

Room 528

It took a good hour for them to properly feel that Kara has recovered, but eventually they put her in a room of her own. Medical bureaucracy moves slowly. The three of them make it to the room first, but slowly a very battered and tired Kara is wheeled in. It is time for quick conversations.

Clark: You did so well, my sweet cousin.

Clark kisses Kara's forehead, the harsh words, recriminations have long since been forgotten. Kara is too tired to fight anyway. Clark got quite a scare.

Lois: You just rest, it will be alright Kara.

Kara: A favor, Lois.

Lois: Anything.

Kara: First, I want to formalize our relationship. In Kryptonian there is a word for a woman who is not part of your family, but for other women is more important than their actual family. There is no English equivalent. Of course, you are my sister-in-law, but I'm giving you the title anyway. Beloved sister is the term that would be used in English.

Lois is very touched.

Clark: It is considered a very great honor.

Kara: Please, make Richard go home, take care of things for me today. Clark can fly the boy's home.

Lois kisses her cheek, then promises to do so.

Richard and Kara kiss softly. But Kara's voice is very faint, she is tired. Richard is all but broken.

Kara: Please go home with Lois.

Richard: I just want to be here to protect you. I'm supposed to be your covering, your shield.

Of course, it goes without saying that it is absurd to think that Robin would ever need to hold up a shield to protect Power Girl. But it is the idea that as Power Girl's husband she should want him holding up a shield to protect her, to surrender his life to save hers.

Kara: Richard, it would mean the world to me if you got some rest. It is six in the morning. You are probably going to get a migraine anyway. Promise? Besides, I may not have the energy to nurse, it might be necessary for you to feed our babies with baby formula. Get your strength up, you are going to need it.

This is a little white lie, perhaps even a big white lie. But Kara is determined, she gets her way, they all depart. Kara closes her eyes, then falls right to sleep. She does not get much sleep in the hospital, because well you do not. But she is relieved her husband is not trying to sleep in a chair or couch.

The Car

Lois insists on driving because she is sure that her driving skills are better.

Also, because Lois hopes Clark in the backseat will cheer up Richard. But Richard at this point is broken. Richard's best friend nearly bled out on the operating table; he is not in a ha-ha kind of mood. Clark tries to get Richard into conversation, but it does not work very well. Lois decides to try instead.

Lois: We know a lot about the "other" Kara, maybe we can fill in some gaps about yours.

Richard brightens a little.

Lois: Chocolate?

Richard: We try to avoid it in my house. I cannot eat it, because of migraine headaches, it is a trigger for me. Kara thinks it is fattening anyway.

Clark: Chocolate is your kryptonite.

They all laugh, Richard especially.

Richard: Thank you, brother, for that.

Richard squeezes Clark's hand to let him know how much he loves him, despite the harsh words of today.

Richard: You had a great play on words. I only did a lot of puns in the old days because it drove Bruce crazy.

Richard is sad for a moment, remembering his Bruce.

Clark: Bruce, your Bruce, always loved you, Richard.

Clark was surprised by the sudden onset of an Earth-2 memory.

Lois teasingly: Lingerie?

Richard laughs hard.

Richard: We had just gotten married. Kara bought some fancy lingerie, but it just does not do much for me. Kara got so angry, she took it off, then set it on fire with heat vision.

Clark: The Kara we know loves *Terminator 2*?

Lois: *Wizard of Oz*.

Richard grins: We watched *Wizard of Oz* once when we were students at KU.

Kara was appalled at the picture of Kansas farm life. Why does Dorothy even

want to get back there? The idea that Dorothy must straighten out these male idiots, then at the end she had the answer all along by clicking shoes. God does Kara hate that movie.

Lois and Clark laugh.

Richard: Kara loves *The Sound of Music*. It is very much a Kara kind of movie. Good v. evil with the good guys winning. She loves it when Chris Plummer tears the Nazi flag in two. Laughs. Kara always applauds. Yes, voice trembling, my Kara is very much a climb every mountain kind of girl.

Lois: Flowers?

Richard: Kara hates what she calls the flower cartel. Never bring her roses. Whatever is cheap or pretty. But she never wants flowers around Valentine's Day.

Clark: Even though you are at a point where money does not mean that much.

Richard: With Kara frugality is always a virtue.

Lois: Home sweet home.

The three go inside. Lois makes it clear that she will work on breakfast, before everyone scatters. Another meal, but a more relaxed one.

John: We have a brother and sister?

Richard: Yes, Helena and George for our first president.

Jon: George Washington is a lot of pressure.

Richard: He will just have to grow into it.

Richard: You will note my nephew, that he is not named for Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin, or Josef Stalin.

Jon: We got it, Uncle.

Richard: See you remember.

Jordan: I will remember too.

The Grayson boys are busy playing. Lois and the Kent boys handle the dishes.

Richard shows a secluded area to Clark that Kara uses to take off in the backyard.

Richard: Clark, I know we got a little rough today. But we all love you.

Clark: I know that. I am just relieved that Kara is going to be fine.

Richard: You just need to work on a few things.

Clark: I find it hard to balance work with family.

Richard: With us, Kara has a wife veto. If she doesn't want me to go, I do not go.

Clark: You let her have a lot of power over you.

Richard: I know you really do not care about our ways. But the truth is in our relationship no one really has power, we just share responsibility. But our men have been conditioned to place themselves last, while making their wives and children first. If you start to think that way, it all has a way of falling into place.

Clark: I love you, brother.

The two men hug and embrace. Richard goes back in the house, to head to bed, so the Kent's can say goodbye. Lois and Clark kiss, as Jon and Jordan Kent come out of the house.

Jon: Have you noticed Mom is talking a lot like Aunt Kara?

Lois: Maybe Aunt Kara has always sounded like me.

Clark: Hold tight, boys, if I drop you, your mother will never let me hear the end of it.

Lois smiles at the last, how it would please Richard to have Clark quoting John Wayne. It is a scene from *Big Jake*. The Grayson boys are reading quietly, but Richard has gone upstairs. Lois, before going to the guest bedroom, decides to check in on Richard. Softly Lois goes up the steps, making her way up the

Grayson staircase to the upper levels. Down the hallway that has seen so much traffic over the years. Richard is on the right side of the bed but turned on his left. Richard certainly appears to all intents and purposes asleep. Lois has chosen this moment to give Richard, her baby brother, a love poem from her heart. Little does Lois know that Richard is not asleep, her words will touch him so deeply, that they will nearly bring him to tears. Robin may be a fierce street fighter, the ultimate Cowboy Up, but he has a tender heart, especially about his family.

Lois: Sleep well, little brother. I know that today was very rough on you. Your emotions were bubbling forth when you thought your best friend, your wife was dead. But a man who cannot express emotions at that time is not worth a damn. I have never seen anyone be so controlled, yet firm with Clark in my life. You chose well with Kara. She is so perfect for you. Kara loves you completely, absolutely, would fight with you to the death. She has no filter. But every word she utters comes from a position of love. You are her rock. She needs someone like you who can let her be herself, but also someone tough enough to protect her. Watching the two of you today was such fun, such a joy.

Lois softly then reaches out a hand to maternally brush the hair out of Richard's eyes.

Lois: I do not care how dumb anyone thinks it is that we consider ourselves brother and sister. That is what we are, let others criticize if they want, certainly Kara knows what we are, desperately wants the two of us together. Kara knows you need that older sibling, that person who is not her, who will love you, but stand with you always. I remember our little “date.” I am so proud of the man you grew up to be.

Lois pulls Richard’s covers up tight.

Lois voice breaking, tears running down her cheeks: Oh, Richard, how important you are to me! I’ve always put on this tough demeanor, but I need someone who will have my back, who will fight my battles with me. That is always you: the underdog who will fight no matter how big the odds are against you. Unafraid, wholesome, standing for what is right, but knowing in the end that good, decency will always win.

Lois bends down, then softly kisses her brother on the forehead. She then softly leaves the room, shutting the door carefully. Richard had tried to go to sleep right away. But the events of today where Kara had nearly bled out on the operating table upset Richard greatly. When Lois entered the room, Richard had not wanted to embarrass her, he had pretended to be asleep. As soon as Lois was

clearly gone, Richard sits up straight then speaks these words quietly, they are delivered slowly, but firmly. They reveal the values that Richard has treasured his whole life: that wealth, power, success is meaningless to him, family is everything to him. Richard failed Helena, at least by the Richard Grayson code, he has taken an oath on the altar of God that will never happen again.

Richard: Do not worry big sister, about your family. I got this. I am on it. The Kent family in Smallville will not fail. I will not allow it. Not on my watch.

Then Richard moves the covers a hair down, settles back, but finally sleeps. Richard's final thoughts before sleep comes are that if he needs to put Clark, Jonathan, and Jordan on his back to drag them across the finish line he will do it. Kara does not sleep much in the hospital. The leg monitors to check for blood clots are going backwards and forwards, blood pressure monitors are working at full tilt, but Kara endures it as much as she can. Her Kryptonian physique started to kick in as soon as they put her in the room. The beaten down Kara lasted only a few hours. Despite Kara's best efforts, Dr. Oni made it clear that Kara was just going to have to be there all day. Kara did brighten considerably when she got to hold Helena and George. Kara also made it clear that she didn't want her family to come see her at the hospital, wearing the ridiculous hospital gown. Richard and

Lois could come the following day when they came to liberate her from this medical prison.

As Kara feared, going to bed at 9 in the morning would be a problem for Richard. The migraine was severe at 1. Lois had made sure the boys were situated with a video, then she laid down. Lois had been up for a few hours, by the time that Richard finally awakened. Lois insists on making Richard a sandwich, putting apples in his hands to lessen some headache.

Lois: Some dictator you are little brother. It is going to be hard to bring communism to Kansas today.

Richard: Like our first date. You just cannot get away from the fruit.

The rest of the day was at a quiet pace. Richard stayed up to sleep more normally, his head finally did calm down especially after lunch. By 10 he was in bed, asleep, trying to reboot his body. It became a day for Lois, where she communicated with her family via phone, with everyone else trying to keep Kara relaxed. "Only a woman would be made to go through this crap, Lois," an exasperated Kara pointed out. The next morning everyone was up early, after breakfast Lois and Richard made the trek to rescue/liberate Kara.

The Hospital Room

Knocking.

Lois brings fresh clothes, while Kara insists that Richard wait in the hallway.

Richard: We have been married 15 years, Kara. We have four kids together.

Kara: I know how many children, who do you think delivered them? Just give me some privacy, Mr. Grayson. You can come back in five minutes.

Richard departs with a grin. Eventually he finds a place to sit but is unsure how long to give them. 20 minutes later Richard is fetched by Lois.

Kara: I said five, yet you were out there 20.

Richard: I am horrible, why do you want to be married to me anyway?

Kara: So, I can kiss you anytime I want.

Kara kisses Richard softly.

Kara: I will be so glad to get out of here. It was so ridiculous I had to wait.

Lois: But you got through it.

Kara: I think we made progress with Clark yesterday, but you have a horrible burden with him. Those women on Earth who complain about the patriarchy have no idea what a Kryptonian male is like.

Lois: I love him, but his brain seems stuck in the 1950s at times. You are going to have to get through to my sons, baby brother.

Kara: Missionary work, beloved husband.

Richard knows the drill. but enjoys watching Kara insist that he has responsibility to provide male leadership to the other members of the family.

Richard: Hold on, why is this my responsibility?

Kara: Do I have to explain that you are the only adult covenant male in our extended family?

Richard: What about Clark?

Lois: We need another male voice in the family. An uncle would help. Someone who could help focus on issues other than superpowers. I worry that Jon is falling through the cracks.

Kara: Quit stalling. Besides, Lois is going to help me when Helena gets to be their age.

Richard: I am on it, got it in hand. But sis they think I am Stalin, so this may take time.

Lois: I was really losing it on the way to Wichita, while they were saying the most misogynistic things.

Richard: What did Clark say?

Lois: Oh, he was laughing away, egging them on. Clark is a closet reactionary you know.

Kara: Typical Kryptonian man! You have quite a burden with him, there is no doubt. Richard, that is why you are up.

Richard: They watch FNC. What do you expect? But there are enough mini-Ted Cruz and Rand Paul types out there, we certainly do not need to grow them in our family. But it is easy for us to say, John is 7, while Thaddeus is 5. The teenage years are challenging. Seven years from now I would hope that our son John is further along.

Kara: Along those lines, Richard, I have written a few “suggestions” for improvement as we get used to 4 children, rather than three.

Richard: Oh, I get to plan now?

Kara: I am the planner, Batboy.

Lois laughs.

Kara: I just thought the Head of the Household would like to know what we are going to be doing in the house.

Richard starts to look at the 30 pages that Kara has written while in the hospital.

Richard: I had to come up with a name at a spur of the moment. Figured if you did not like it, we could change it later. How about George Washington Grayson?

Kara: Excellent, excellent Richard! Best part is this will horrify all those liberals who want you to be president. Wish they would shut up about that, you do not want to be president anyway.

Richard: I did think about Wolfe Tone.

Kara rolls her eyes.

Kara: Listen, here, my radical Irish rebel, no way I would have agreed to name a boy Wolfe. Don't you dare start singing, *A Nation Once Again*.

Lois: You two are too funny. But I do have some questions for you, Richard, I was doing a piece on you for the *Daily Planet*, but just for my curiosity. Kara has, after all, broached the Grayson presidential run.

Lois: You clearly cannot stand the leadership of the Democratic party?

Richard: What gave me away.

Lois: In a few sentences, what is their greatest failing?

Richard: I will focus mainly on Democrats but make it wider to talk about our political system. In Evangelical Protestantism the biggest insult, worse even than a curse word, is to call someone a sellout. That pretty much sums up everyone serving in the Joe Biden administration, along with every Democratic member of congress. All these so-called progressive icons are just people who say the words people want to hear. But when you come down to it, they are bought and sold for by corporate interests. The Democratic party is supposed to be the party of the people, but they betrayed working-class people long ago. Of course, Republicans are even worse, pursuing policies that are deeply evil. But if you have two bad options, it should tell you that what is needed is not a or b, but a transformation of our political system. The only hope is that if we start remembering that we

Americans are revolutionary republicans, that is our heritage, it is time to get back to the principles of 1776.

Richard: I think Republicans have lost their minds. But Democrats are a great disappointment, they are little more than a click bait party now. I do not understand this bizarre fascination in me by Democrats.

Lois: Come on, Richard, you are young, very left wing, from the heartland, go to church, drop dead gorgeous. Plus, we all know that you never lose.

Richard: I am not that good looking, so that is bizarre.

Kara: Lois, give up trying to tell your brother he is good looking. Richard has not believed me for 15 years! It is all a part of his neurotic self-loathing persona. I have nearly killed it off, but remnants are still around.

Lois: The point is they think you are some Protestant JFK. It is like a Democratic party's wet dream.

Richard: People who think I am like another Kennedy are delusional. They have not paid attention to anything I have said for 60 years. I mean Kennedy was the asshole who got this country into Vietnam! If they think I admire Bill Clinton, or

Barack Obama they have another thing coming. The problem we have on the left is a lot of our supporters are too lazy to study political policy, especially history.

Kara: That is why I retired from Wichita State.

Richard: I have been looking over your mighty tome, I do not know about all of this, Kara, seems expensive. A minivan? I had my heart set on a Koenigsegg which does 330 MPH. Need to save cash for my midlife crisis.

Lois: Someone seems to be changing the discussion.

Lois: I will need to work on you some more.

Kara thinks it has gotten too heavy; she tries to pick up the thread of a previous conversation.

Kara: Sorry, Richard. You are not allowed to have a midlife crisis. You want to go fast; I will take you in my arms, we can go break the speed of sound.

Richard rubs his chin: I do not know, the last time you flew me fast was when we went out to Simi Valley. I so loved being able to piss all over Ronald Reagan's grave. You wimped out if memory serves.

Kara: Listen, here Richard, a woman just does not squat, to piss over a dead president's grave in the middle of the night! I still cannot believe you did it.

Lois is laughing so hard she looks like she might burst.

Richard: Time for the serious questions for Lois.

Lois: Ruh-roh.

Richard: You have let Clark skate on a lot. Why do you let him push you around?

Lois: Richard!

Richard: I bet Clark even thinks you were fooled by his secret identity all those years.

Kara: Oh, Richard, Clark can't be that vain.

Lois: Uh ... actually

Richard sighs, puts head in his hands.

Richard: Clark still thinks you never knew he was Superman. I first learned that when I was 9. I would have thought Clark was smarter than that.

Kara: Richard, Clark is a Kryptonian male! They would never let go of their patriarchal personalities under any circumstances!

Lois: Do you think it would make a difference?

Richard: Clark needs to know how smart you are. I am not trying to run you down. God knows, I revered Clark when I was younger, he was a mentor. Clark and I will never agree about politics. But Clark has done a lot to take advantage of you. After all, Clark strung you along for years. Nor have I forgotten; Clark forced you into moving to Smallville with your finances as a result in ruin. That does not even include Clark's behavior during his Diana Prince incident.

Kara: Look who's talking.

Lois: Clark cannot know that I knew all along. It would wound him too much. But your points may have merit. It is just in marriage you must compromise.

Richard and Kara: Compromise is a lie of the Devil.

Richard: We Evangelicals feel the same way about individualism, but that probably does not apply here.

Richard: Why did you not just tell Clark point blank that you knew?

Lois: Every time that I tried, Clark came up with some bizarre way of weaseling out. I just came to feel Clark had to tell me in his own way. I started to wonder if he would ever get there. Besides, you and Bruce bailed him out a time or two.

Kara: Lois, can you give us your surprised face when Clark revealed he was Superman?

Lois gives the look of surprise she gave Clark.

Everyone dies laughing.

Richard: Jesus, that must have been something.

Kara: Lois you were not the only woman in America, who wondered if their boyfriend would ever get there, then when they did it was weird. Lord, Richard is the only man who would propose after eating at the university cafeteria. Besides, you were so shy I had to ask you out first if I recall our KU days.

Richard: I got there in the end, didn't I? Besides, I asked you out first for coffee.

Kara: That was not a real date! Our first official date came when you made me throw out feminine pride, ordering you to show up.

Richard confesses: It was a relief when we could just start going out.

Kara: We understand where you are coming from Lois. But we all reach a point in time where it becomes necessary to face things. This may be more mission work for you, Richard.

Richard: Great, I get to not only straighten out my nephews, but my brother-in-law.

Lois very cagily, frightened this may just be said in the heat of the moment.

Lois: Richard, you will keep that secret.

Richard: I promise not to tell Clark until you give me specific permission. God, it will kill Clark when he learns the truth.

Lois sadly nods her head.

Kara: Are all the copies of the sex tape really destroyed?

Elderly nurse with discharge papers arrives as do the children.

Lois: Love the new baby smell.

Nurse Sally Jones: Yes, OK, here are your children.

Helena Wayne Grayson and George Washington Grayson are dozy.

Attendant comes in with a wheelchair.

Jones: All of the women must use a wheelchair when they leave.

Kara: Did you hear that, Lois?

Lois murmurs

Kara: The men get to walk out, but women must use the wheelchair! This is the patriarchy, well I for one will not stand for it!

Jones: Then you will stay here all day.

Kara: I would like to see you stop me.

Jones: With brute force if necessary.

Richard bends down, gently whispers to Kara: We are dealing with entrenched hospital bureaucracy. Let us get on with our lives, so we can move forward to get on home.

Kara: Alright, I will this one time give way the great cause of women's rights to consent to use this wheelchair.

Kara gets up, then resignedly sits in the wheelchair.

Jones: One last thing. She can go, but Mr. Grayson no sex for the first 30 days after release, doctor's orders.

Kara: I get to go, but my husband gets a lecture on sex practices. Is this 1400?

Jones speaking directly to Richard: No sex for a full 30 days, nothing of any kind with the patient checks name, Kara Grayson.

Kara: This is positively ancient and medieval! Surely this is a guide.

Jones still refuses to acknowledge Kara: No all 30 days.

Kara signs the paperwork in a furious mood.

Lois and Richard follow behind.

Eventually, Lois gets ready to drive. Kara in the passenger seat. Babies strapped in one of the back seats, Richard with them.

Kara: No sex for 30 days.

Richard: Well, that applies to me too.

Kara: But you are a man, it is not a big deal for you. You will just watch a KU basketball game, kiss me on the forehead, roll over, then go to sleep.

Lois is about to interject, but then thinks better of it.

Richard: Let us be honest the first 30 days are going to have us hopping.

Kara: Yes, other things will be a priority. Well, sister-in-law give us the speed we must get this family moving forward.

Lois: Up, up, and away.

Richard: Jumping Jehoshaphat.

Kara: That is my husband, he will be here all week. Batman's conscience, but the worst puns anywhere.

Kara: Why am I married to you anyway?

Richard: We cannot do it because we are too far away.

Kara: We are not. Why am I married to you anyway?

Richard: So, you can kiss me anytime you want.

They have a soft and long kiss. Lois smiles.

Kara: Sorry, Lois, but you should start doing that with Clark. It might help.

Richard: That, plus start listening to Garth Brooks, Dierks Bentley. Take all that emo music Clark likes, burn that shit up.

Lois: Richard, you really love Garth Brooks.

Richard: Garth Brooks is horribly underrated.

Lois: He's won just about every award that you can! People put Garth Brooks up there with the Beatles and the Rolling Stones!

Richard: They should give Garth Brooks grammys, CMA awards every year.

Brooks doesn't even need to have come up with an album.

Kara laughs: It is pretty damn hard to disagree. I think my husband has nailed this one.

Kara: I do think Lois' style is more Miranda Lambert.

Kara: Please do not sing, *Cowboy Up* or anything like that right now.

Lois: You two seem to like Country Music.

Kara: We do live in Kansas, beloved sister.

Richard: It is the authentic music of the working class.

They speak that way all the way home to the Grayson home. Teasing, laughing, joking, enjoying Helena and George, who are tired and resting. But that will not last long. Then it is time for goodbyes as Lois hits the road. John and Thaddeus are thrilled to see Helena and George. Lois pulls out of the driveway, for the two-hour northern drive up to Smallville. Lois does not mind, for Clark is waiting for her, the two parts of the family have nothing but time.

Epilogue

A month after the release from the hospital, it has been a busy time for the six in the Grayson family. Lots of short nights, early mornings with crying babies, Richard has not been able to go on patrol. Wichita will have to make do without

Robin right now. The twins do a lot of eating, pooping, and gurgling. John and Thaddeus both doubt they were ever that much trouble. Eventually, Kara is scheduled for a follow-up visit with Dr. Oni, it went well. Except for the part where the nurse who released Kara at the hospital had it wrong, it was just guidance. Kara was furious. Kara stalked out of the doctor's office in her high heels, while Richard dealt with the follow-up visits, payment, the usual process as you checkout. By the time Richard arrived at the car, Kara was in a foul mood. Kara did allow Richard to buckle himself into the passenger seat, then she went off.

Kara: A whole month, Richard!

Richard: I know, Kara, I was doing it too.

Kara: You are a man, so that does not count.

Kara: For nothing! Do you have any idea how angry I am right now! You had better make it right, Mr. Grayson!

Richard picks up the phone, which only enrages Kara further.

Kara: Sure, sure go play with your phone, keep it up, I will throw it out just to drive the car over it. You had better be calling a divorce lawyer if you are not making this right!

Richard: Ann, tell me about my schedule today? Yes, push off those discussions of moving into Boise, cancel all my afternoon, nothing until 10 tomorrow morning.

Richard hangs up the phone, much to an overjoyed Kara.

Kara: Oh, how nice!

Kara claps her hands with anticipation.

Kara: Let us see it is 11:30, that is nearly 24 hours.

Richard: Have you forgotten we have 4 children?

Kara: We can just stop if they have a problem.

Richard: Kara, I am just a man, I am not made of steel.

Kara: Are you challenging me, Batboy, you know how much I love a challenge!

Then Kara reaches over to softly kiss Richard.

Kara: How did I do as the wounded wife?

Richard laughs and laughs.

Kara rolls down the window of her car seat.

Kara: Hey, grandpa, do you want us to kiss again so you can record it, or was that good enough?

Kara then pulls out of the parking lot at great speed.

Kara: This is the problem with this country, Richard! A wife cannot innocently attack her husband without it being a crime. Sad, sad, so sad. Say do we need to get you oysters or Red Bull?

Richard: Well, I do not like oysters, while you do not want me to take Red Bull as it is bad for my heart.

Kara: That is right.

Richard: Besides, you always tell me you will not allow me to fail.

Kara: Not on my watch.

THE END