Roasted Garlic-Lentil Soup, from Cook Yourself Sexy by Candice Kumai

Ingredients:
Makes 6 Servings
2 garlic heads
1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons canola oil
4 ounces pancetta (optional), cut into cubes
1 yellow onion, chopped
1 medium parsnip, peeled and chopped
2 carrots, peeled and chopped
2 fresh thyme sprigs *(*a sprig is so tiny. Can't believe I paid $3.50 for a whole pack that I'll never use up!)*
1 bay leaf
1 1/2 cups brown, red, or green lentils
8 cups chicken stock, divided into 6 cups and 2 cups
1/2 large bunch Swiss chard, chopped *(*Swiss chard is the same as any chard in your produce aisle - I chose green chard for my soup. See below for chopping instructions.)*
1/4 teaspoon sea salt

To prep the chard: Fold the leaf inwards, slice off the stem, then chop horizontally and then into smaller pieces as you see fit, then chuck it into a colander and rinse.

Tip: (probably obvious to more experience chefs) - prep your other ingredients the night before - it makes things so much easier when you're ready to cook! I chopped my carrots, parsnip, and onion the night before and put them in bowls in the fridge, then pulled them out when I was ready to start cooking. I don't know why I don't do that more often.

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Cut the top of the garlic in half horizontally (almost like you beheaded it), drizzle with 1 teaspoon olive oil, and wrap it in an aluminum foil "tent". Roast for 1 hour and set aside until it's cool enough to handle, then remove the cloves from their skins. (Beware: roasted garlic is surprisingly sticky, something I've never thought about!)

2. Coat the bottom of a large Dutch oven or stockpot with the canola oil (I used vegetable oil since I didn't have canola, and I don't think it mattered). Add the pancetta if using, and saute over medium heat until crispy. Remove from the pot using a slotted spoon, place on a paper towel, and put it to the side.

3. Add the onion to the pot and saute until fragrant and translucent, about 6 minutes. Add the parsnip, carrots, thyme sprigs, and bay leaf and cook for 5 more minutes.

4. Add the lentils (uncooked) and 6 cups of chicken stock. Bring to a boil, cover, and gently simmer for 25-30 minutes, or until the lentils are soft.

5. When the soup is ready, mix in the Swiss chard, sea salt, roasted garlic, and pancetta (if using). Simmer on low heat until the chard is just wilted, about 10 minutes. Add the remaining 2 cups chicken stock after the Swiss chard wilts, to finish.