

## WARNING

This story doesn't contain a warning at the beginning.

(Actually, this story contains scenes of violence and struggles for power. There is no gore in this chapter. However, there is implied rape. You have been warned.)

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"Zack, we're here." Kara called. She felt Zack stir inside her stomach. She started regurgitating him slowly, trying to be as gentle as possible with his small form. Zack emerged into her mouth to be attacked by her tongue. Kara cleaned Zack of her juices as best as she could. Zack fought with her tongue playfully as she licked him clean. She reached in a clawed hand and grabbed Zack. The dewy grass chilled his toes as he was placed on the ground.

"Here." Kara said, offering up his clothes. She reached inside her maw once again and pulled out his underpants, soggy from her saliva. "Sorry about that," she said awkwardly. She looked away while Zack dressed. He quickly put his saliva-covered underpants and then put his pants and shirt back on.

"So what do you have planned for me today?" Zack asked.

"I'm going to teach you to defend yourself." Kara replied.

"Kara, I am able to fight people, I just choose not to."

"I'm not worried about people, Zack, I'm worried about... Agnidev."

Zack looked at her, confused. "How am I supposed to fight Agnidev? He could just squish me if he wanted to."

"That's why I'm going to teach you some combative magic."

Zack looked at her doubtingly. "How am I going to learn magic in such a short time?"

"To be honest Zack, I don't know if it's going to work. I only know that it is easy for dragons to learn magic. I don't know how fast a human will be able to learn magic. I'm not sure if humans can learn magic."

Zack continued to look at her skeptically but was willing to try. "Okay Kara, let's do it."

Kara smiled. "I knew you'd be willing to try."

"So what's first."

"First you must learn to empty your mind. Do not think about anything. Do not focus on anything."

Zack closed his eyes tight and tried to empty his mind. Kara immediately poked him in the stomach. "No, you can't even focus on not thinking. It must come easily and without any force. Just relax"

Zack closed his eyes again and breathed deeply. He felt his heartbeat slow and his breathing quiet as he relaxed himself. His mind was slowly emptying.

Kara watched him as he slowly entered a trance-like state. She stared at him for quite a long while as he stood completely still, emptying his mind. Kara closed her eyes and focused on Zack's mental energy. She sensed that he was getting close.

Zack's heart rate was slowing down significantly as he neared the nothing state. Kara felt Zack completely empty his mind successfully. Impressed with his progress, she tapped him on the shoulder.

"Hey Zack, that was great." Kara said happily.

Zack opened his eyes slowly, letting them adjust to the light. He saw Kara smiling down at him. "Was that okay?"

"Okay? That was fabulous. It took you a while but you did get there which is good." Kara said, licking his cheek.

"What's next then?" Zack asked.

"You have to keep doing that until it becomes almost instant; then we can move on."

"Okay." Zack said enthusiastically. He closed his eyes again, slowly entering the nothing state again. Kara continued to watch his progress.

Hours passed as Zack repeated the process, slowly improving with each repetition. The late afternoon arrived and Zack was starting to be able to enter the nothing state within minutes.

"Zack, I'm really impressed at your persistence but I think you've had enough for one day, you look tired."

"Yeah, I agree. Do you want to grab something to eat? We can go into town if you want."

"Sure, that sounds great. Just let me go get my ring, I left it back at the cave." Kara said, turning and running towards the mountain. Zack sat quietly, waiting for her return.

Suddenly, a rustling was heard in the bushes behind him. Zack spun around in a flash. "Who's there?" he called out.

A chuckle was heard from within the vegetation. "Did I scare you?" A familiar voice echoed. Agnidev's muzzle slowly appeared through the trees. "It looks like Kara has left her little friend all alone in the woods. What a shame. It's too bad to see her care so little about you that she would leave you vulnerable. There are so many dangers in this forest," Agnidev hinted as he sauntered into the clearing.

“There are all sorts of predators that are just dying to get a taste of something so vulnerable.” Agnidev said to Zack, starting to circle his catch.

Zack was petrified. He didn’t know what to do. Agnidev gave him no chance to do anything, pinning him down in one swift motion. Zack struggled under the immense weight of Agnidev’s claws, hardly able to breath.

Agnidev brought his head down and sniffed his quarry. “You smell delicious. The fear that I can smell just makes it that much better. I don’t know how Kara can stand having such a delectable morsel around her all the time without succumbing to instincts.” He looked down at Zack hungrily. “Well, I guess that was an opportunity that she missed.” He picked up Zack with his claws and held him over his gaping maw. Zack dangled by one leg, struggling for freedom.

Suddenly, Kara blasted through the trees, tackling Agnidev. Zack was tossed upwards as the dragons fought madly below. Zack started plummeting towards the ground. Bracing for impact, he wasn’t sure he would be able to survive the force of the imminent impact.

Kara turned her head skyward, watching Zack fall. It seemed to happen in slow motion. With Agnidev pinning her to the ground, she couldn’t reach him. Her hand feebly stretched towards her falling boyfriend, her effort appearing futile.

Zack could only watch as the ground came ever nearer. He winced as he saw Kara reach for him fruitlessly. He looked in her eyes, the same fear and anguish being reciprocated back at him as she watched him rush towards the earth. He saw Agnidev, his claws at her throat, pinning her down with immense strength. He saw her other hand trying to push his face away as he licked the side of her neck. Kara’s eyes widened at the touch of his tongue, silently wishing for help from Zack. The glint in Agnidev’s eyes was telling. Kara knew what was about to happen. Zack knew. Zack felt an overwhelming sense of compassion and sympathy for Kara. As Zack plunged towards the earth, Kara’s legs were forced open. Each of them struggled to battle an equally unrelenting merciless force.

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Zack opened his eyes. His entire body ached like nothing he had ever felt before. It took awhile before his eyes adjusted to his surroundings. He was in the same place as where he had landed, left for dead by Agnidev. He lifted his head up, looking for Kara. He immediately saw her lying a few meters away. She was unconscious. He tried to get up, but his leg wouldn’t move. He looked around for some sticks which were luckily close by. He ripped his shirt off and tore it in half. After placing the sticks around his broken leg, he wrapped pieces of his shirt around his leg tightly to brace his leg. He tried getting up. Pain shot through his leg like lightening, causing him to collapse. After a few failed attempts, he managed to stay standing. He limped over towards Kara, who hadn’t moved since he first looked at her.

“Kara? Kara, wake up.” Zack called to her, limping closer. He couldn’t tell if she was breathing. He brought his head close to her maw, which lay open slightly. She was breathing faintly. She showed an

anguished, defeated expression as she lied there. Zack couldn't bear to imagine what happened while he was unconscious. 'How am I going to get her out of here?' He asked himself. Something on the ground caught his eye. He bent down as best as he could and picked whatever it was up off the ground. It was Kara's ring. Immediately, he limped over towards one of her clawed hands that were sprawled out. He put it on one of her claws while simultaneously closing his eyes. A flash tried to invade through his eyelids, causing him to see red as he shut his eyes tight. After the red color dissipated from his eyelids, he opened his eyes back up. He wasn't aware of how badly she was injured until now. Kara's injuries were passed on as she turned into her human form. She openly bled from quite a few places, bite marks seemed to travel from her neck down her shoulders. "I'll kill him" Zack said under his breath, his fiery anger showing through with the intensity of his whispers.

Zack started using the excess shirt pieces to bandage her wounds. He had to get her to his house. He struggled to pick her up as he was weak from exhaustion and shock. She drooped slightly as she hung over his shoulders. He found a larger branch laying close beside her and used it as a crutch to get on his feet. He silently thanked the fact that his house bordered the forest. Nobody would have to see them enter the city. He started limping in the direction of his house, struggling with the extra weight of Kara on his back.

Kara drifted in and out of consciousness, barely able to stay awake, succumbing to the ease at which she was able to sleep. She saw Zack near her. He looked hurt, he wasn't walking right. She had to wake up. She couldn't move... A flash of light, She feels lighter. Her senses are diminished. Zack appears in her view again. He's ripping something... The rocking clumsy movement underneath her was confusing. She felt as though whatever had her was going to fall over. They seemed to be catching itself from falling every step they took.

Zack reached his back yard with a sigh of relief. 'Only a little more to go,' he encouraged himself. As he entered the house, he looked at the daunting flight of stairs to his room. He repositioned Kara slightly and began. Every step he took was a challenge. Pain rocked his body like he had never felt before. It was as though his leg was being seared every time he made another step. The walking stick barely helped on the wooden stairs. It would slip around and cause him to lose his balance.

Finally reaching the top landing, he turned into his room and laid Kara down on his bed. She seemed to shiver and curl up so Zack put his blankets over her, tucking her in and keeping her warm. Kara's Distressed Expression lightened up slightly and she visibly relaxed, sleeping a bit more peacefully now. Zack sat on a chair nearby and started assessing his damage more in depth. It felt like most of his ribs were bruised but only his leg seemed to be broken which was lucky. He managed to fall somewhere relatively soft. He checked himself over again. And again. Zack began to obsess about his injuries and if he was okay or not. His mind was being wound up in his situation. He stopped thinking about himself for a second and felt his mind start to wander again. He knew where it was trying to take him. He did not want to think about what happened to Kara, he wanted to keep thinking about his injuries.

Kara slept soundly while Zack re-banded his leg. He sat next to his bed while she slept. He stared off into space, thinking about whatever came to mind while he passed the time. He was glad that his

parents were gone for the long weekend. He started thinking that he should maybe start looking for his own place. He was now an adult, he didn't have to stay with them. 'I'll bring it up next time we have dinner.' He thought to himself.

The bed-sheets rustled as Kara stirred. Her eyes opened slowly and her head rolled over to look at Zack. "Where are we?"

"In my house," Zack responded calmly, reaching over and petting her hair. "How're you feeling?"

She sat up, slightly wincing in pain. "Awful." She looked down at his leg, her eyes widening in horror and worry. "Are you okay?"

"Yeah, I'm fine. The fall broke my leg but I'm okay otherwise."

"This is all my fault, I should not have left you alone." Kara said, looking as though she was about to cry.

"No no, it isn't your fault Kara. How could you have known? If anything, it is my fault for being so vulnerable.

Kara looked down sadly, knowing that he was right. She needed to teach him how to protect himself from dragons.

"Kara, are you okay? I know that what you went through was a lot worse than a broken leg. I understand if you don't want to talk about-" Zack paused, looking up at her. She was crying quietly, not sobbing, just unable to control her emotions. He body fought with itself, trying to be strong but failing to keep her emotions hidden.

Zack sat on the bed beside her and put his arm around her as she curled up into herself, squeezing tightly in a mix of sorrow and embarrassment. She suddenly opened up and rolled over on top of Zack, crying into his shoulder. Zack hugged her. "Hey, listen, he's not going to hurt you anymore." Zack said, looking down at her. Kara looked up from his shoulder. Zack hid the fear that he felt and looked at her reassuringly. "I won't let it happen again."

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TO BE CONTINUED