

# SUPERMAN

Hope's Dawn



## Clark

The sun rose that day in Smallville, Kansas like any other day. My parents, Martha and Jonathan Kent had no idea just how much their life was about to change. My folks were the humble kind that tried to not cause a ruckus but stood up for what they believed in. They knew what to fight for and when to agree to disagree, together that is. Pops, however, would get himself into all sorts of trouble because of how stubborn he was. Ma could, however, always cool Pops down and get him to think it through, or she would support him all the way if he wasn't just being stubborn.

Ma had always wanted a child of her own and they tried for a long time with little success. They didn't have the money to pay for any kind of doctor's visits in the big city and so they kept it a secret. Small towns have a habit of spreading misinformation and so my parents didn't tell anyone of their problems having kids. They just kept living their lives until I crashed right into their lives.

## Jonathan

It was a nice sunny winter day, but the weatherman had forecasted a storm would roll in that might make travel next to impossible out in the farmlands. I suggested to Martha that we head into Smallville and grab more supplies just in case we got snowed in. She was against it thinking this storm would only last a few days, but I had a feeling in my gut that told me otherwise. So, we loaded up in my pickup and set out for Smallville.

Fred Cramer, the owner of the Cramer General Store, told us that we were the last ones today before he bunkered down and closed up shop. They weren't expecting the storm to hit the town as hard, but they were getting prepared, nevertheless. We told him we would hurry up our supply run and be out of his hair.

As we finished up our supply run, we walked out the door with Fred. As we were both getting into our trucks, he rolled down his window and said, "Congratulations on the baby, Martha. I didn't even know that y'all were expecting."

Martha, red-faced, turned away from the window, and I got out of the car to give Fred a piece of my mind. I made it to where he had parked his car, but he was already gone. I turned around and saw him wave back at me as he headed down the street. He had no idea how hard it had been for us, no one knew. Martha was in tears as we headed back to the farm. The first snowflakes started to fall, as we saw it. It was like a shooting star but much brighter and falling right in front of us.

I pulled over to the side of the road as the object crashed 500 feet ahead of us in one of the corn rows near the farm. Martha had gone out with me to check and saw it first. It was a little rocket with what looked like an S emblazoned across the front. “Now, be careful Martha. We don’t know what that might be or if its even safe.” I told her as she got closer to the rocket. Even after my warnings she still touched it. I took a step back as the rocket opened and I heard a cry.

### Martha

It was a baby. A baby was in the rocket, and it was crying, “It’s a baby, Jonathan.”

“Now look here, Martha. We don’t where he’s from or why he’s in this rocket,” he said to me. “Well, we can’t leave him here, he’ll freeze. Let’s bring him home and once the storm blows over, we can take him to the orphanage.” Jonathan nodded his head and for the first time I hoped we would be snowed in. I needed the time I would get with this baby; it had been so hard on me to keep trying for a baby and never see the anything from it. I hoped that while we were stormied in Jonathan would come to love the baby. I even named the baby, Clark, after my maiden name.

“I don’t think we should leave this rocket here either, we can take it back and put it in the barn.” He said picking up the rocket, it looked heavy, but Jonathan said that it was surprisingly light for its size. Baby Clark was wrapped in a red and blue cloth, but it didn’t look too warm, so I wrapped him up into a new blanket that we had got at the general store and headed home. When we got home, we could barely make it up the driveway. Jonathan,

however, insisted we would be going back out tomorrow to take baby Clark into the orphanage. In a record-breaking storm, we were stuck at the farm for five months.

## Five Months Later

### Jonathan

The snow had finally started to melt, and we were able to leave the house. As I looked out the window to watch the sun come up and start to melt the snow. I thought back on the last five months, at the beginning of the storm I was determined to take Clark to the orphanage but the longer the storm lasted, the more I grew attached to him. I knew somehow deep down that he was sent to us for a reason. But I started to worry someone might come and take him away from us. So, I started inspecting Clark's rocket to see if it could tell us anything about where he came from. I had always assumed he was from somewhere here on Earth, but the rocket was definitely alien. I was worried the government would take Clark away from us and I waited with silent dread. The sun melted but they never came, Clark was ours to keep it seemed.

"So, how do we do this?" Martha asked, "How do we make sure Clark can have a life without questions?"

"We present him as our son. Fred Cramer already, curse him, already thought you were pregnant and with the length of the storm, we had Clark at home while we were snowed in. His birthday can be February 29<sup>th</sup>, a special day for a special boy.

"That might actually work, Jonathan. How long have you been thinking of this?" Martha asked.

"I've been terrified they are going to come and take Clark. So, I have been thinking of the most logical way to explain his appearance. Claiming him as ours just makes sense." So, that's what we did, we took Clark out to visit with the Langs and to visit Ben Hubbard. Eventually, we worked up the courage to take him into Smallville. Fred Cramer was beaming with pride that he knew before anyone else did and made sure that everyone knew it. The

rest of the townsfolk just fell in love with Clark and slowly that worry of Clark being taken away from us faded to the back of my mind. That is until Clark got older, and we learned that he was special in lots of other ways too.

## Clark

My parents always called them “accidents”, there were times when things would happen that didn’t make sense, but they would try to explain it away. The first one I can recall was at the age of eight when I was in our backyard playing catch with Pa. I went to throw the ball to him, and I swear I saw it soar over his head and disappear into the corn fields. Pa told me that the sun must have been in my eyes, and I lost track of the ball.

Another distinct time was when I was 11 and we were putting up a new fence. I had the T-posts ready to go in the ground and they would just slide in like butter. I told Pa and he said I must have hit a soft spot of dirt, I assumed he was right because the next post I did was tough as ever.

These incidents started to increase exponentially when I hit high school. Smallville High was a great place to go to school. I would take the bus to school with my two best friends Pete Ross and Lana Lang. One day, Pete and I were playing baseball in the backyard, and he hit a home run into the corn rows. I ran after trying to catch it and I actually started to match speed with it and felt my feet go off the ground as I reached out to grab it. I had caught it literally in mid-air. I heard Pete calling out to me asking if I had found the ball yet. The strange part was I shouldn’t be able to hear because the corn rows always muffle the sound. I tried to convince myself that my mind was just playing tricks on me as I hurried back with the ball. I was able to fool myself all the way up to the night of that year’s Prom.

Lana had been asked to Prom by an upper classman named Lex Luthor. Nobody really liked Lex, but everyone certainly feared him. Lex was smart enough to ruin your life just by looking at you. The word around the school was that he had saved a ton of money to get himself out of Smallville, but his old man had spent it all on booze. Lex was furious about this and had to stay in Smallville, a little longer than he had planned. Why a junior like Lex

would ask a freshman like Lana to a dance, I'll never know but that night did not go well for either of them, which made the tornado sirens that much worse.

Lex had somehow made Lana furious with him and she decided that she needed to leave in the middle of a tornado warning. Granted most of the time, that's all, it was just a warning. Tornados touched down near us all the time and to be safe we always sought shelter but most of the time it was just warning, and we ended up being fine. Lana decided to take that chance and drove away in her small Ford Ranger.

Ma and Pa had gone to get groceries at the store and when the sirens sounded, I knew they would be taking shelter somewhere in the city. I was getting ready to head down to the basement when the sirens increased in volume, and I got hit by what seemed like every sound in the world. I fell to my knees, but one sound brought it all back into focus, I could hear Lana screaming for help. Acting purely on instinct, I ran towards the sound of the screams and arrived at the base of a tornado.

As I looked at the tornado, my vision started to flicker and then focus in on the tornado. Then I saw into the tornado and through the truck that Lana was trapped in. I saw her hit her head as she was tossed about and passed out. I shook my head, and my vision went back to normal. I jumped into the tornado and tore the door off, I grabbed Lana and threw ourselves out of the tornado. I covered Lana with my body and braced for impact. I hit the ground and created a crater in the ground and had absolutely no scratches on me. I grabbed Lana and rolled away as I saw the truck get hurled by the tornado and land in the same spot we did. It made a dust cloud but hardly cratered the ground the same way I did.

That was the moment I could no longer ignore something was different about me, but I would deal with that after Lana was safe. I grabbed Lana's phone to dial 911 and let it ring. I set Lana near the truck and backed away into the shadows to wait for the ambulance and police to arrive. The EMTs checked her over, looking confused on how she survived the catastrophic event that caused her truck to look the way it did. I was confident that Lana was being cared for and now I needed answers.

I was waiting on the front porch when my parents got home. Ma was first out of the car, complaining about the state of my clothes. “Clark, your clothes are a mess. What have you been up to while we were gone?”

“I survived a tornado.”

“Now Clark what have we said about making up excuses to get out of trouble.” Pa said, getting out the truck and handing bags of groceries for Ma to run inside. He sat down beside me, “I’m going to ask again. How did you damage your clothes?”

I took a deep breath and looked him straight in the eyes, “I heard Lana screaming for help. So, I ran to where she was, and I could see into the tornado. I saw her screaming, so, I flew to her in the tornado, ripped the door open and cushioned our fall with my body. I left a crater in the ground, Pa.” I was about to explain what happened next when Ma came out.

“The Langs just called, Lana is in the hospital. They are saying she somehow survived a tornado. Only a few scratches on her but nothing broken. It’s a miracle.” She said exasperated.

“Actually, Martha its time”, he said looking towards her then back to me.

“What is going on? What am I? Am I some kind of freak?”

Ma started to cry, and Pa went up to comfort her, then he stepped off the porch and headed to the barn. “Follow me, Clark”, he said.

We headed into the barn and walked to the very back where Pa’s junk pile was, this spot was Pa’s *I’ll get to it one day but don’t come over here and break anything more* spot. “Help me move these machines away from the center of the room” he said.

“Why are we back here?” I questioned Pa as I was moving old parts and he pulled on rope to hoist up an engine block that had been sitting there for years. “Pa, what are doing back here. I know I wasn’t supposed to, but I’ve been back here before.” I was just about to question him again when he swept away some dust and pieces of feed. He put a lock into the floor and lifted up a panel in the floor. It led down to a little cellar beneath the barn.

“My ancestors had this built during the Prohibition era to hide his undesirables. It was a rumor it held the best aged wine in the country. When I was a kid...”

I cut him off, “What does this have to do with me flying?”

“Clark Kent, I have raised you better than to cut someone off. Now can I finish what I was saying?” he said sternly.

“Yes, Pa. Sorry, Pa.”

“When I was a kid,” he resumed his tale, “I found the key in a dusty cabinet in the attic, and found it fit this hole here. I was disappointed that the room had no wine it, and no general use for it and locked it back up. That is until the five-month storm hit us, and we needed a place to hide this.”

We had made it down the stairs and he had opened a rickety wooden door, revealing what looked like a spaceship. It was roughly about the size of a haybale and had an S emblazoned on its front.

“I hope this has all the answers for you.” My father spoke softly like we had to be reverent around the rocket.

“What do you mean this has all the answers? What is this?”

Ma came down beside me and rested her hand on my shoulder, “Clark, we have never told you this, mostly because it has been too hard for me, but you are not our biological son. 15 or so odd years ago, Smallville had the snowstorm it has ever seen. As the first flakes started to fall, we were headed home from the general store when this rocket crashed in front of us, and you were inside.”

“I was in this?” My mouth was open, I couldn’t take in what they were telling me.

“Yes, Martha and I found you in this and we brought you home to get you out of the cold. We were sure that someone would show up and take you away, so we hid the rocket and told everyone that you were our son born during the snowstorm. We have always feared

“someone would come and take you away, which is why we have kept all of this a secret for so long.” Pa said to me with a tear in his eyes.

Ma walked to a chest that was on the ground near the rocket, “Now that you know, there is something you should have. The blanket you have always thought was your baby blanket is just a blanket we wrapped you in that we got from the general store. This is what we found you swaddled in.” She handed me a blue and red fabric that was surprisingly smooth and intact after sitting in a moth ridden cellar for 15 years.

I couldn't handle all of this information, so I started to back away. Not watching my surroundings, I backed into the ship touching it with my hand. That activated a 3-D hologram of two people standing in foreign clothing, speaking a foreign language.

“……………” I couldn’t understand them. “……………”

“What did he say?” asking my parents thinking that they would know any better.

The man spoke again but this time in English, "Hello, Kal-El. I am Jor-El. I am your father. This is Lara," he said pointing to the woman, "your mother."

I turned to Ma to see she had tears in her eyes, "Ma..." I went to go comfort her, but the man was not done speaking.

“You were not born on Earth, Kal. You were born on the planet of Krypton. A world of great scientific achievement and adventure, but also a world of great tragedy. Krypton was a victim of its unstable red sun, but ultimately our fate was sealed because of **my** failure. I couldn’t save Krypton, Kal-El but I will save you.” As he spoke a clear crystal came out of the side of the rocket, “This sunstone crystal from the house of El contains everything I can give you after my death. You were sent here with reason, Kal-El. You will be protected on this new world by the abilities its environment will provide you. And you will be free to move among the people of Earth. But never forget, although you look like one of them. You are not one of them.”

I felt my eyes get hot as he said those words, “you are not one of them”. I yelled “No!” and red blasts of heat shot from eyes, but the man was still not done ruining my life.

“Chief among your protective abilities is your enhanced strength, fueled by the yellow rays of Earth’s sun.”

I rushed forward hitting the rocket causing it to shut off. Then I ran. I kept telling myself it wasn’t true; I was Clark Kent not some alien baby. I was Clark Kent and yeah, I could do some weird stuff, but I was Clark Kent. I busted through the corn and fell to my knees.

Pa came up behind me, “I know this is scary.”

“Why did you show me that? Why?” Tears were filling my eyes.

“I didn’t expect that, I only wanted to show you the ship. We thought you deserved to know. I thought it might help you understand.”

“I don’t want to be someone else”, the tears were streaming down my cheeks now. “I don’t want to be different. I want to be Clark Kent. I want to be your son.”

“Clark, you **are** my son.” Pa held me tight for a long time after that. I knew that I couldn’t go back to not knowing but I would always be the son of Jonathan and Martha Kent.



Life didn’t actually change all that much after that, I was still Clark Kent, and I was still a teenager at Smallville High with my best two friends. Lana was still recovering from her accident and hadn’t made it back to school. I wanted to tell her and Pete everything, but I promised my folks I would keep quiet about my alien origins. So, for the next two years life went on without much of an incident. Lex left Smallville after his father got in an accident and Lex cashed out on the insurance policy. The word around school was that he caused the accident to replace the money his father stole.

I tried out for the football team and made it, but Pa told me I had to quit because it wasn’t fair to the other kids since I had extended abilities. So, I started to work for the school paper

and found that I really loved the reporting and looking into things. Mostly, I just reported on football games and student debate clubs, no stunning exposés. But the experience is what I enjoyed most about the school paper. Overall, life was a great time to be a teen in Smallville, that all changed at the end of my junior year.

The day started like any other, farm chores in the morning then running to school and beating the school bus to the school. After school, I hung out with Pete and Lana for a bit before I had to get home to help Pa with chores. When I got home Pa had already started on the chores, I told him I was going to put my bag down and I would be back out to help him.

As I went inside to drop off my bags, I saw Ma in the kitchen and went to go give her a hug. She turned to me and opened her mouth to welcome me home, but no sound came out and she seemed to slow to a halt. It was then I realized that I couldn't hear Pa's heart. I dashed outside to catch him as he fell towards the ground. I yelled back to the house, "Ma! I can't hear Pa's heartbeat." Pa had a close call with a heart attack and since then I have tried to always keep the sound of his heart in the back of my mind.

Ma rushed out of the house in tears as she knelt down beside me, "Oh Jonathan. Jonathan no no no." Ma was sobbing, so I rushed inside to dial 911 and tell them what happened. They were on their way, but it would take too long for them to get here, for a second that stretched for eternity I thought about running him to the hospital. I was frozen in that decision until I heard Ma starting CPR. That snapped me back to reality and I headed back outside.

"I can run him to the hospital." I told Ma tears welling up in my eyes.

"Now, you look here Clark," she said more than I had ever seen her, "you made a promise to your father. You don't save his life by breaking it. I won't stand for it. He would want you to stay hidden and protect yourself. Now help me with this CPR."

I had to be careful while doing compressions, push down too hard and my increased strength my send my hands through his chest. So, I lightly did compressions until the EMTs arrived and loaded him into the ambulance. I wouldn't see him again till the funeral.

School suddenly had no meaning, Lana and Pete tried to help but they didn't understand. I had so many gifts, I could see the blood clot while I performed CPR, but I could do nothing but as it killed my father.

The funeral came and went, and I still felt nothing. I felt purposeless, everywhere I went in Smallville reminded me of him and the times we would have together. My mother saw how this was weighing on me and approached me about an opportunity.

Metropolis University was going to be hosting students from various high schools in Kansas, and Smallville had been chosen to send one student for their study abroad program. The program would replace his senior year and help him to get some reporting experience in France. To be chosen for the program the student had to write an application essay and include a portfolio of his work.

I submitted my application and 2 weeks before the start of senior year, I received a letter with from the university detailing what I needed to do and bring, the letter also contained a bus ticket from Smallville to the Metropolis Airport where I would be meeting the rest of the group.

Now that I had a chance to actually leave Smallville, I started to worry about Ma being here all alone. I almost called the university to thank them for the opportunity and say I needed to decline but Ma hung up the phone on me before the line started ringing.

“Clark Joseph Kent, you are not giving up on this once in a lifetime opportunity just to watch out for Ma.” I tried to object but she didn't let me get a word out. “Ben Hubbard has offered to help me with the farm, and I will have plenty of other things to keep myself busy. You, need to go find yourself so don't you worry about me.”

I sighed knowing I had lost the battle, “Thanks, Ma. I love you and I will always be here for you, if you need me just shout and I will come no matter where I am in the world.” I wrapped her tightly in a hug, as we sat there thinking about what came next.

The next few days I spent saying my goodbyes and packing up what I would need. As I said goodbye to Lana, she had a look like she wanted to say something and I could hear her

heart racing, but all she gave me was a kiss on the cheek and a simple goodbye. Pete gave me a fist bump and told me I was going to do great. I waved to them as we got into the truck and drove to the bus station. Ma embraced me in a hug when we got there and told me to find what I needed to and capture it. Then she kissed me on the forehead, and I got out the truck and boarded the bus, leaving Smallville for the first time in my life.

## 6 Years Later

My time in France flew by, I studied hard and learned the skills of an actual journalist with stories that actually mattered. As my time came to a close, I was offered the chance to stay on for the abroad program and to work on a bachelor's degree in journalism. I would get the opportunity to freelance report across the world while earning credits for my degree. I came to love meeting new people and learning their languages and cultures. I learned that I could quickly learn any language, and this gave me the opportunity to work in news outlets on almost every continent. I made sure to email Ma frequently to keep her in the loop and reassure her I was keeping myself fed and being safe although I knew I couldn't be hurt.

In the warring state of Bialya, I saved a family from a bombing. In Asia, I pushed a man out of the way of a falling building and in London I saved a jaywalker from being hit by a car. I was always careful to stay in the shadows or be quick enough that no one saw me but rumors of a flying man traveling the world saving people started to circulate.

Then, six years after I left Smallville I landed my biggest assignment yet. The Zimbabwe paper had hired me to write an exposé on a dangerous radical that was causing trouble with the government. I started my research by interviewing the government about their views on this so-called radical. They told me that they saw this as only a brief problem and that it would fizzle out if no attention was given to it. On this regard, they were not happy the paper had sent a white boy to report on it. I thanked them for their time and went to go find this radical.

This radical that had been deemed a warmonger by some, was actually just a man willing to stand up for change that needed to happen in his country. As I spoke with him, he told me

that he is attempting to give his tribe more of a voice in the government and in their Parliament. He showed me how the government had been erasing their culture and heritage by re-writing textbooks and teaching their children this new revised history.

As a gift to me for coming to speak with and reporting on his side of the truth, his people put on a cultural festival and dance for me. He told me that nothing was more important than his heritage and the purpose that he had been given to represent his people. We talked late into the night about one's responsibility for others. He believed that if one had the ability to help others, they were duty bound to provide that help. I agreed with all the things that we spoke about and promised a good view of his side in my exposé.

The next morning, I accompanied him to a peace talk at the capital before I had to return to the paper. As soon as he started his speech, I heard screams coming from his people. They were being attacked in an attempt to silence him. I knew how important this message was to get out, so I quietly stepped away and took off for the village.

I could see and smell the smoke before I got there. The people were being viscously attacked and families were being gunned down. Taking to the skies I used my heat vision to melt their guns and used my freeze breath to extinguish the fires. Next, I rounded up the thugs at super speed and placed them in a deep hole so they couldn't harm anyone. As I was finishing up, I heard a knife slide into my friend's abdomen, and he fell to the floor.

I rushed to his side, holding pressure on the wound. He couldn't die this man had too much to do still. He pulled me in close and whispered to me, "My purpose will live on with my people, they will grow only more resilient after I am gone. This is and always has been my purpose to be a beacon for my people. What is your purpose? Will you wander the world till you are old and grey? No, you must find where you are needed and firmly plant yourself there as a beacon of that which matter most, truth and justice." His last words got quieter until I could no longer hear his heartbeat.

I stood up and with my x-ray vision scanned the crowd to see who was holding the knife. I threw him against the wall and demanded he tell me who put the kill order out on my friend. He pointed to the man I had spoken to previously in my trip here, the Prime Minister. My

exposé turned out to be showcasing the truth of my friend's cause and the lies of their Prime Minister. Having finished my article, I turned in my press pass. I knew that I needed to go home and start down the road I had been avoiding since I first saw that message in my pod.

I flew back to Smallville and on my way I thought about how my father always wanted me to keep my abilities a secret. He felt using my abilities for good was needed in today's world but having them known would ruin my life. So, I realized that I needed to learn more about Kal-El from Krypton, he could protect the world that Clark Kent could not.

I landed in the backyard as my mother was sipping her iced tea and working on a new crocheting project. She looked up her project and gasped, "Clark, your home." Immediately, she got out of her chair and ran to give me the biggest hug I had ever gotten. "Hi, Ma. I'm home."

"Come inside and sit down", she said letting me go from her hug, "You have to tell me all about your travels."



"Now, Clark, I have absolutely loved hearing of your journeys" she said after hours of me going over story after story. "But, what's next for you?"

"I want to do what you and Pa always knew I could do. I want to use my abilities for good and protect people that need it. I know you're worried about this secret coming out, but I have decided that Clark Kent will not have any connection with the superhero life. I need to keep a normal life intact, which is exactly why I need to learn more about my other family. Kal-El of Krypton can save people in ways that Clark wouldn't be able to. But I will always be Martha and Jonathan's son at my core."



The cultural clothing that I had saw in Zimbabwe really hit home with me. They embraced their heritage and the legacy of their ancestors. I wanted to do the same, so I returned to the place I had run from 9 years ago. Ma had the key for the cellar, so I got that from her and then moved all of the old parts that cluttered about this area of the barn. Fitting the key into the lock, I opened the hatch and started to descend into the cellar. I came up to the pod and on contact it started to replay the message I had heard before. I let the message continue to play knowing it would switch to English. It just continued in the foreign language, however, and I realized it had changed languages when I spoke to it. I asked the hologram if there was anything more it could tell me, the language changed to English but I continued its message. The rocket reopened revealing the sunstone I had tried to blast with my heat vision. This time I took it and the message continued.

“Always hold in your heart, your special heritage. This is all I...”, he paused for a second as tears came to his eyes, “all I can send you with my little Kal-El.”

Jor-El and the woman Lara fade from view and I was left wondering how I could honor my heritage if I didn’t know without knowing anything about my people or planet. As I sat pondering, I noticed the chest my mother had placed my baby blanket I was found in. The blanket still looked like it did nine years ago when I first saw it, the colors were still as vivid and there were no signs of wear and tear. As I held it in my hands an idea started to form in my head.



“Clark, I have gone through three pairs of scissors and bent all of my bobby pins. This is fabric is impossible to work with”, Ma said looking quite frazzled.

“Well at least we know it probably won’t tear when I am helping people right”, I said sheepishly, “Maybe we can use my heat vision to cut the fabric.”

“Do you really think that could work? Can you focus it that finely?” she said putting away a new pair of scissors she had got out.

“I’ve been practicing, Ma. I know I can do this. We can do this. Together.” I told her and that’s what we did working through the night together we got part of my super suit ready.

The suit started at my collar bone with sleeves that went to my wrist. The chest and torso were all sky blue until it touched the yellow belt and red tights that separated the suit into a distinct look of a top and bottom. Below the belt and tights, the blue fabric continued for my legs all the way to my ankles. Ma had crafted sturdy, well supported, glossy red boots with the help of my heat vision. The boots went up to just below my calves and my mom wanted to make my me gloves to go with the boots, but I wanted my hands free.

The last part of the suit was a red cape that Ma had crafted from the remains of the blanket. The cape hung around my neck and looked as if it was just tucked in well, although it was sewed on. The cape reached just before my Achilles heel and featured the exact same S symbol, I had seen everywhere this time in all yellow.

I tried to learn what the symbol meant or why it was everywhere, but the recording wasn’t much help in that regard. Ma had theorized that it may not be an S and was actually a shape from my home planet that only resembled an S. She thought it could have been a family crest, that my family wore with pride. If that was true, I wanted to be able to represent my family well.

“Do you think you have enough fabric, to put the symbol on the chest?”

Ma looked at the what she had left, “Depends on what color you want for it.”

“I was thinking a yellow background with the actual S being red.” I said, grabbing a pencil and sketching out what I had in mind next to our previous sketches for the suit.

“I can definitely make that happen.” Ma said with a smile on her face. We went to work on creating the new chest symbol. As we finished up Ma turned to me and said, “You’ve got the suit now, what’s next? Are you planning on wearing it around Smallville?”

I chuckled, “I’m going to go to Metropolis. I saw an ad that they were looking to hire another experienced reporter. I sent in my resume and got a call that I would need to meet the

editor-in-chief but it's almost a guarantee. If I don't get it, I can always apply at the Daily Star, but that place is more tabloidy than I would like. The Planet is the heart of Metropolis and I intend to be at the very center of all the action."

"Okay, so you have thought this through. What about a place to live though? I assume you're not going to fly to Metropolis every morning for work. As much as it pains me, you can't live out your whole life here", Ma said to me.

"I know, Ma. That's why I have already applied for a lease and yesterday before we started on the suit, I got an email saying I got the apartment. It's a one bed one bath in the center of Metropolis. It's not sketchy or run down but it does fit into my price range."

"Well Clark, I'm excited for you. I think you are on the right path, and I support you 100%" she said getting up and handing me the suit.

I grabbed it from her as she pulled me in for a tight hug, "I don't know about you but I'm tired." I told her as the air was squeezed out of me. "Let's get some rest before I leave."

The next few days, I had a few things to do before I could leave Smallville. I started re-packing my bags along with packing up parts of my room I wanted the movers to take to my new apartment in Metropolis. I also need to see Lana one more time.

She had shared her feelings with me while I was in France, and I was just not in the right headspace and those feelings never got reciprocated. After my time in France, communication got spotty as I started traveling through third-world countries. The times I did get to call back home, I chose to spend it talking to Ma and seeing how she was doing. I knew I needed to say something to her before I left and let her know that I didn't feel the same way as she did.

I headed for the Lang family home to ask them where I could find Lana. As I was still a little way off, I could tell that Lana's truck was in the driveway with my super vision. Perfect, I wouldn't have to go through the awkward situation of explaining why I wanted to talk to Lana. I took a look inside the house to avoid any other potential awkward situations. I saw her parents and I saw Lana sitting in the living room. But I also saw Pete Ross sitting next to

Lana holding her hand with rings on both of their fingers. I was taken back; my two best friends had gotten married to each other while I was gone. I no longer had the desire to talk to Lana anymore, she didn't need me bringing up old feelings. So, instead I walked back home and finished packing my bags. I said goodbye to Ma as she dropped me off at the bus station and then I left Smallville for the second time.



The sounds of traffic woke me up every morning and the apartment was a lot smaller than I thought but I was surviving. Today was the day my interview with Mr. White, the editor in chief. Two things were crucially important for me to accomplish today. First, I needed to establish Clark Kent as clumsy and unsure of himself. I also had my glasses that I started to wear in high school to help me control my heat vision. I have learned as well that I could compress my spine making me shorter than I actually was. As my superhero identity, I have got the opportunity to go out and save people, and I didn't hide myself, but I also was too fast or too far way for anyone to get much of a picture. I knew one day though I wanted to do an interview that so revealed me to the world I just had to find the right person. All of this was crucial, so no one would recognized Clark and my new hero identity as the same person.

The second crucial thing was to get the job. The Daily Planet was where I could do the most good outside of my super heroics. So, I needed to impress Mr. White, I put on a new suit that I had bought for the occasion and tied my lucky red tie. My shoes were polished last night and ready to go. I grabbed my messenger bag and headed to the Planet.

I walked out of my apartment and down the street towards the Planet. I had thought about bringing my pickup to Metropolis, but I knew traffic would be a nightmare. Besides if I need to get anywhere in a hurry, I could just fly or run there at super speed.

The sun was out, and it was a beautiful day. I was shocked that everyone had their heads down absorbed in what they were doing. I wanted to enjoy the day outside, so I kept my

head up looking around. I was paying enough attention though and bumped into a lady. I quickly apologized and helped her gather her things.

“What are you trying to do, rob me?” she exclaimed pulling the things out of my hands.

“Watch where you’re going! Darn tourists!”

I tried to apologize again but she was already gone. I continued walking towards the Planet, this paying more attention to my surroundings. Thankfully, I was able to make it to the Daily Planet lobby and have the nice lady at the desk help direct me in the right direction.

As I rode up the elevator, I focused on what I could hear was happening on the chief’s floor. The elevator opened and I walked up to his office and tapped on the door. “Mr. White, uh um I don’t know if they told you”, sliding my glasses back up my nose, “but my name is Clark Kent. I have an interview with you, sir.”

“Kent! Kent. Why do you want to be a reporter here kid. Why the Planet?” Mr. White shouted at me, not looking up from the papers on his desk.

“Sir, I wanted to come to the Planet because you stand for the truth. Your paper is the pinnacle of the truth, everyone reads the Planet. Your stories aren’t afraid to stand up for themselves, no matter the opposition. The Star already offered me a job but respectfully, sir, they aren’t the kind of paper that I could work with in good conscience. They too often twist the facts to fit the story, not the other way around.”

“I like you, Kent”, finally looking up from his stack of papers, “and I can tell by your résumé and your articles I have got here. You are just what this paper needs.”

I was shocked, all of the papers on his desk were my articles. I walked forward to shake his hand and tripped on an extension cord. Even though I could have corrected my fall immediately at super speed I let it happen, on my way down I grabbed his desk to steady myself. I prevented a complete fall, but I knocked over a cups holding pens and pencils. I hurriedly tried to put the pens and pencils all back in the cup when Mr. White came up behind me.

“Leave it, Kent. We’ve got places to be, I’ll have Olsen clean it up for me.” He left his office and started walking out into the bullpen. “I want you to start out working with Lane. She is our most experienced writer and she’ll have a lot to offer you even with your experience.”

“Lane, sir.” I puzzled.

“Who told you to wear a tie?”, a woman said behind me.

I turned to see who had spoke and saw the most beautiful woman I had ever met, “What?” I was actually struggling to get out words.

“Was it Lombard? I bet it was Lombard. Well, try to keep up.” She said walking away from Mr. White. “Lois Lane, reporter for the Daily Planet and you are?”

I was confused should I keep following Mr. White or go with Lois, “Kent Clark. Clark. Clark Kent.”

“Okay then, the city of Metropolis needs you, so quit dilly dallying and follow me.” She got further from Mr. White, and I reluctantly followed after her. “Where you from? Saw your portfolio, some top-notch reporting in there. Especially, the exposé on the Zimbabwean government, you did good there.”

“Smallville is where I was raised. Also, thanks, I just tried to represent the injustice that was happening there in the right light.”

“Well, I was impressed, Smallville. That doesn’t happen often so I asked Perry if I could take you underneath my wing. I need some extra help with a story I am working on, no shared by-line though. You’re still a rookie hear in everyone else’s eyes.”

As we continued back to the desks, a man stopped in front of us, “Guess who got the front page again, Lane. My flying man is going to win me a Pulitzer. I know it.” He said to Lois.

“Come on, Ron, at least my story will be impactful and help real people.” She turned to me, “That is Ron Troupe, he has been working on learning more about the mysterious red and blue flying man that has been spotted in Metropolis the past little while. Ron thinks Metropolis needs to know more about the flying man.”

“And you don’t agree with him?

“Well, this flying character may be helping save kittens out of trees and help put out burning buildings, but all that attention is pushing the real issues off of the front page. Like this,” she grabbed a newspaper off her desk and flipped to the inside. “my story on the vagrant population slowly disappearing has been pushed out of the front in the last three issues of the Planet, because everyone would rather read about a superhero than about people going missing.”

“Oh, I didn’t know about that.” I told her.

“No one does and no cares either. These are real people with lives and goals, they’ve just hit a rough patch. They don’t deserve to be abducted.” Lois explained.

“How can I help?” I asked her, as a smile started to show on Lois’ face.



Lois was an amazing reporter with a knack for finding the truth no matter what. I was honestly worried that she might suspect my double life, but that wasn’t her focus so I knew I could scrape by under the radar for now. Over the next few weeks, I helped Lois with several things dealing with the story.

One of the first thing Lois set me on was interviewing other transients that might know or be aware of the people that went missing. This turned out to be a dead end, but using my super hearing I was able to hear them talk to each other. They were worried that if they talked about what was happening, they would get snatched up too. I told Lois that even the transients were scared of what was happening and didn’t know anymore than we did. She looked shocked that I could hear their conversation, but I convinced her that the alleyway made sound travel a lot farther.

Multiple times, we would head back to the Planet to add what we had learned to our research board. Lois would always stand puzzled in front of the board, like she was trying to

piece it all together in her head. Then, a hint of despair would cross her face as Ron Troupe would enter the bullpen with another front-page story. I knew Lois cared about the story, but it had to hurt being passed up over and over again. We have published a few articles with our findings but nothing groundbreaking or front-page worthy.

One night as we sat working on our research board, I got up to leave but before I left I turned to Lois and said, “I’m going to head out but you know you’re really good at this.”

“Thanks”, she said a smile on her face. “And Clark, I can’t thank you enough for all the help you have been on this story. If you want, I can talk to Perry tomorrow about you getting your own beat.”

“Um no, I would rather be here.”

“For the story or for the company?” she said looking straight through me.

“I feel like that’s a trick question, Lois.” I said sheepishly back to her. I was worried my heat vision would activate because my face felt warm, but it was actually just my cheeks blushing.

Lois didn’t press the matter, “Goodnight Clark.”

“Good night, Lois.”

The next day, Lois had wanted us to interview the cops that worked on the missing cases but a lot of them avoided our question. One of the cops, Dan Turpin, shared with us that the all of the disappearances he had worked on were in the same general area. This was the break in the case that we needed to crack it wide open.

The next step was to get records from the city and other reports that would tell us where activity was happening. We could rule out reputable businesses that had records of their activities. That left us with two locations that they could possibly be at. Lois took one of the locations and I took the other one.

As I approached the location, I could already tell that my location was the spot. I saw a bunch of thugs sitting in a warehouse talking about how they were close to a big pay day,

and they didn't even have to spend money on labor. I called Lois up on the phone and told her that I recognized the thugs at the warehouse as known associates of Bruno Manheim. She told me to stay there and keep watch over them, she had found the homeless people, and they were finishing up building some kind of giant robot. She was going to sneak in and get a closer look at the robot.

I had every intention of staying there to watch the scene when a green car pulled out of the warehouse at breakneck speed. As they sped past, I listened in on them and heard them talking about how word had come down from the boss it was time to tie up the loose ends. I didn't hesitate to go after them knowing Lois would be in danger.

Running after them, I pulled open my shirt revealing the S symbol of my suit underneath it. At super speed, I stashed the rest of my civilian wear and took to the skies. Using my super vision I located the car; it had just joined onto the highway and was weaving its way through cars. I flew up next to the car and tapped on the window, "Hi, got somewhere to be?"

The driver jerked the wheel in shock causing the car to go flying off the edge of the interpass. I swooped down catching the car before it hit the ground. As I set the car down, I heard the snap of a camera. I looked to see a red headed kid with freckles standing there with his camera aimed right at me. I checked the occupants of the car vitals, they were all unconscious. Then, I blasted off and after a speedy quick change I walked up behind him as Clark.

"Is that the car," I said, pretending to be winded "that was going out of control on the road. I tried to follow it but lost it when they got on the interstate. I decided to head to this location since I figured this is where they were headed."

"Wow, that must have been quite a run." The kid said.

"Who are you exactly, kid?"

"Oh sorry," he said extending his hand out to my mine, "the name is Jimmy Olsen. I'm an intern at the Planet but I mostly shoot photos for Miss Lane. You must be Clark; Lois says a

lot of great things about you even though word around the Planet paints who as mild-mannered and accident prone. By the way, did you see the Flying Man?"

"Nice to meet you Jimmy, but no I didn't get a chance to see him. I must have missed him." I clenched my fists to my sides as if I was greatly disappointed.

"No worries, man. I got a picture." Jimmy said, pulling out his camera and showing me the picture on it.

I was stunned, he had captured a fantastic shot. I was folding the green car above my head with the front of the car pointing downwards. The front end of the car was smashed from where it had gone of the interpass and the passers-by in the background of the looked scared. I could see from a certain point of view; it looked like I was the one smashing the car.

"Wow, Jimmy. You really are quite talented." I complimented him.

"Well good or not, we need to get to Miss Lane before she causes some trouble. Not that I mind but its usually makes great photos." Jimmy said before hurrying off towards the warehouse. I followed him and we snuck over to the window. Jimmy stealthily took some photos. There was a rustle of noise, so we ducked down only to see Lois come around the corner.

"Oh, Smallville. I see you've met Jimmy finally." Lois said standing and grinning.

"Lois," I motioned for her to get down, "they'll see you."

"Ha there's no guards here anymore, Smallville", she said. "I took them out already." She brandished a taser that she held in her hand still charged up.

"So, are the people safe? Where did they go?"

"Yeah, after I subdued the guards, the people were all locked up still. So, I took a fire extinguisher to break the lock and I let them go, after getting a statement of course." She took my hand next and pulled me forward into the warehouse. "You have to see this, Smallville."

We walked further into the warehouse until I saw it. It was a giant toy robot, it looked exactly like the kind of robot you would wind up and let walk around. It had a square silver face with an antenna on the top of its head. The head also had flat round disks on the sides that seemed to be the robot ears. The body was square with skinny tube-like arms and legs. In the center of the chest, there was a clear window where you could see into the robot. It had a seat in it, obviously someone had used the homeless people to build it but once they were done, they wanted no witnesses. That's why the thugs were on their way to kill these people.

“Cool robot”, Jimmy said snapping pictures.

“What do you suppose, they were going to do with it?” I asked Lois.

“Well, Smallville. My guess is if we ask those thugs the police are hauling away out there, they will be able to tell us.” She said hurrying back outside to go question the thugs. She turned back to me who was still standing there looking at the robot. “Come on Smallville, let’s move. We got to move.”

We walked over to where the green car was at, to see the police handling the scene, our friend Dan Turpin was there working at the scene. “Hey, Dan. Mind if I ask these guys some questions?”

“Go right ahead.” He said, opening the door to his squad car.

I walked up to the first and asked if he knew was running this operation. He looked at me and spit at my feet, “I ain’t telling you nothing.”

“I understand the sense of loyalty you have. I respect it.”

“You ain’t getting nothing from me. So, you might as well back off”, he said to me again.

I heard his buddies whispering to each other in the car over, “Don’t worry as long as we keep our mouths shut, they won’t know about Max. He planned it all out, only thing they got us on is reckless driving.” They must be talking about Max Danner, one of the low-level leaders in Intergang.

“Max Danner hired you”, I said to the thug, “and he will get rid of you just as quick. I’m sure he gave you some protection deal but what’s going to happen is he will issue a statement while you’re on your way to lockup that places all of this on you.”

“How you know about, Max?” The thug looked stunned.

“I didn’t know for certain and until you just confirmed it. Now tell me what’s going on, or there will be worse things happening for you.”

After that he told me everything, he said that Max had come to them telling them he had a plan to get rid of the flying man. He told them that he had contracted with a guy to give them the blueprints for the giant robot that was inside the warehouse. The only problem they had was finding the labor to build the thing and do it secretly. Max suggested they pull people from the homeless community as he believed no one would miss them. After they finished the robot, Max sent them the signal to take out everyone who worked on the robot. Then they crashed their car when the flying man stopped them.

I thanked the thug for his time and told him I would let Officer Turpin know how cooperative he had been. Lois had also finished her interview and we swapped stories. Knowing what we did now and with the assistance of Officer Turpin, we located Max Danner and got him taken away. We returned to the Planet to write up the article and turn it in to Perry.

As we sat at our desks talking about the case and what came next, I turned to Lois and said, “You know, Lois I was uh going to heat up a frozen pizza tonight, but I feel finishing this story deserves a better meal. Would you be against grabbing a bite to eat in celebration?”

“Smallville, I would love to. Let me grab Jimmy, he had a part in this too and then we can go eat”, she said.



The next day our story hit the front page titled, “Low-Level Crime Boss Abducts Transient Population to Build Giant Robot”. I was surprised to Lois had shared the by-line with me,

but things were certainly changing between us. I was sensing we both wanted to be more than friends but neither of us had said anything to each other.

Feelings or not, the days still continued going on by. Perry gave me my own assignment and Lois was working on a new trail to go down. She knew that Max Danner didn't have the resources to pull off what he had accomplished and had to have taken the fall for Bruno Manheim. A week after our article came out, she saw that a Charity Gala was being held in Gotham and all of the big names would be there. People like Bruce Wayne, Lex Luthor, Simon Stagg and of course, Bruno Manheim would be in attendance.

Lois got permission from Perry to use the Planet's helicopter to get to Gotham. She didn't want to drive there because arriving in a taxi wouldn't give off the right message she said. I, however, was done for the night. So, I wished Lois good luck and took the elevator down. On my way down, I listened in to see if Lois had left yet, and instead heard the maintenance crew getting the helicopter ready.

"It's simple" one said to the other, "we pretend we are doing a takeoff check, but we actually loosen the bolts on that hold these electric cables down. Then, when the helicopter takes off it snags on the cables and goes down in a freak accident. Miss Lane can't talk anymore, and the boss is safe."

Lois was in danger, but I was still in the elevator. I heard the helicopter fire up and Lois get in before I got out, but as soon as it opened it dashed outside and heard Lois screaming for help and dangling from the top of the Daily Planet. The helicopter had got stuck on its side near the edge and Lois must have fallen out. I ducked into a nearby phone booth and changed into my hero identity at super speed. I made it to Lois right as she started to fall.

"Don't worry, Miss. I've got you." I said ascending back up to the top of the Daily Planet.

"You've got me? Who's got you?" she said shocked, then she shouted, "Watch out!"

The helicopter had come loose from the railing that was holding it in place. Holding Lois with one arm, I reached out the other arm and caught it. I took both Lois and the helicopter

back up to the helipad. “I hope this doesn’t put you off writing, Miss Lane. I value your stance for truth.”

“Who are you?” she said.

“Just a friend” I said taking to the skies.

As I flew away, I heard Lois mutter to herself, “Not a flying man, a super man. Ha Superman, that works.”

The next day, Lois had published a front-page story entitled, “My Rescue by Superman”.

Ron Troupe was furious, he had been reporting on the flying man all this time and in one fall Lois had actually spoken to him, named him, and courtesy of Jimmy’s zoom lens on his camera, actually gotten a good picture of him.

“Lois! Congrats on the um uh the Superman story. Fantastic work.” I told her when we were heading out that night.

“Thanks, Smallville. But if you really want you show your appreciation, I’m starving and your paying. So, let’s go eat.”

“I would love that, Lois.” She took my arm, and we headed outside.

## Lex Luthor

I slammed the Daily Planet down onto my desk as I looked out over Metropolis and the sun setting on the skyline I had built. I was in charge of Metropolis, seven years ago I had come to the city of tomorrow and brought tomorrow with me. Metropolis was nothing without me, and now this big blue boy scout wanted to take that all away. He wanted people to trust in the goodness of people and protect others. That I could not allow, people worked for me best when they were afraid, he could crush them, but that didn’t work if they hoped Superman could save them.

“Mercy!! Come here now!” Mercy Graves was my assistant and personal bodyguard, also the only person I trusted with outside delicate matters.

“Yes, Mr. Luthor.”

“Mercy, tell me what the press is saying about right now about this Superman.” I asked her, my back to her as I gazed out the window.

“Yes, Mr. Luthor. The Daily Star says, ‘Why We Shouldn’t Trust This Outsider’. The Metropolis Times reads, ‘Look Up In The Skies, It’s a Menace’. The Galaxy Gazette reads, ‘How Can We Stop A Man Who Can Fly?’. You have successfully swayed public opinion about this Superman.”

I grabbed the Daily Planet and turned to face her, “Then why does the Daily Planet have an article,” I threw down the newspaper pointing at the title, “titled, ‘My Rescue By Superman’!”

“The Planet, Mr. Luthor is an outlet we do not control. They have resisted every attempt of a buyout. They are still free to print what they...”

I cut her off, “No one Mercy is free to do what they want. They maybe think that in the quiet moments of the day, but everyone in Metropolis acts in the ways I want them too or we ruin their lives and take them off the board. I need you to redouble our efforts to get the Planet under our control. And get me Bruno Manheim on the line we need to talk.”

Mercy left my office and a few minutes later, the phone rang. “This is Manheim.”

“We are on a secure line, but you failed me, Bruno. You were supposed to take out Miss Lane before she could publish anything about this Superman.” I yelled into the phone.

“Signor Luthor, come on I had plans and sometimes plans don’t work out. I had hoped to catch her with a spray of bullets when she showed up at the warehouse, but Superman stopped that. Then, I was sure we would get her on the helicopter but Superman once again.”

“Well, whatever you had planned isn’t working. We need to bring in the consultant.”

“No way, he’s not right in the head. He thinks everything is a game and thinks of people as toys to play with.” Bruno said a hint of worry in his voice.

“His designs are perfect; I have gone over them and they are what we need to defeat this Superman. Get me in touch with him and I will give him the supplies he needs to build a new robot quicker than it took you guys. We are going to ruin this Superman, no matter what it takes.”

### Lois Lane

Superman saving my life changed everything. First off, I knew he was real now and not just a figment of Ron Troupe’s imagination, but I also knew he was here to help. I could see it in his eyes. I only wished I knew how to get ahold of him, there was so much that I wanted to still ask him. Thankfully, I would get the chance sooner than I thought.

After leaving my dinner with Clark, the night of my article on Superman, I took a cab back home. I went out to my porch where I often go to think and reflect. However, my porch was not quite as empty as I would have thought, Superman was there waiting for me.

“Sorry, Miss Lane I don’t mean to intrude but I figured that you would have questions and I would like to answer them.” He said it with a posture that showed respect but demanded attention. He certainly was taller than Clark was, at least a few inches taller.

“Oh, its...”, I was still shocked he was here, “its fine, no apology necessary. You are correct, I do have lots of questions. But I was hoping I could get them answered on a live broadcast, if that’s not too much to ask.”

“Of course, Miss Lane. I have nothing to hide, when would like to do it?”

“I can schedule a segment for tomorrow morning, that way we can air it tomorrow night.”

“That sounds great, Miss Lane. I’ll be off then,” he said as he started to lift off the ground, “Buh-bye now.”

The next morning was a flurry of activity as everyone at the Planet raced to get ready. The chief had called this interview, “the greatest interview since God talked to Moses.” I was already to go, but I was looking for Clark, because I wanted him to be in there with him, but he was nowhere to be found, he must be out on a story.

Superman arrived shortly and informed us that he would stay as long as he could, but if he was needed elsewhere, he would need to leave. I agreed and then we opened the interview with a welcome viewers and got right into it.

“Superman, thanks for joining us today.”

“I’m happy to be here”, he said smiling with that contagious smile of his.

“As you know, rumors of your existence have been circulating since you first arrived, the earliest rumor going back 4 months. Why now have you chosen to make yourself known publicly?”

“Well, Ms. Lane you could say I was waiting for the right reporter. But my intention was never to obscure my identity, My first few months I just spent dealing with more low time stuff that didn’t require much of a direct presence”, he explained.

“Could you give us an example?”

“Well, the first thing I did in Metropolis was to help a young girl get her cat out of her tree. I heard that she had told her mother and friends but none of them believed her. Also, when I was quite new in Metropolis, I helped stop a bank robbery at First Metropolitan Bank at superspeed, so no one saw me but I’m sure the cops were confused. But when a beautiful reporter falls from her helicopter that had crashed, and she is stopped from falling people tend to notice.”

“Makes sense, well another question that is being asked is if you have spent your whole life here.”

“In Metropolis, only a short time, but I have spent my entire life here on Earth”, he said.

“So, you were born on Earth.”

“Actually no, I was born on a planet called Krypton. Shortly after my birth, the planet was destroyed by the planet’s core erupting. I was saved from the death of my people by way of a baby rocket, that landed me here on Earth. I was raised the same way as anyone on Earth is with loving parents who taught me good from bad, right from wrong, and truth from lies.”

“And where would it be that you crashed, the assumption is that it was in the United States.” I asked him, probing further into his backstory.

“I am not ready to reveal that just yet but don’t think because I speak English, I am American, *<Ahantu hose birashoboka>*. That means anywhere is possible in Kinyarwanda. At a young age I wanted to learn more about the world, so I traveled the world and learned their languages.”

“So, is one of your powers, multi-lingual.”

“I do believe I learn and retain things better because of my abilities, but everything I can speak I learned from studying.”

“How many languages can you speak?” I asked skeptically.

“All of them, at least I think all of them that I know of.”

“Well, Superman having traveled to so many countries and different cultures, what guides you. What provides your moral compass?”

“I have always just wanted to do good and help where I am needed. To uphold truth and justice.”

“And the American Way?”

Superman chuckled, “I think someone wants me to admit I am from the States.”

Right then, my mic started to give off bad feedback, so we cut, and I went to get my mic fixed. Jimmy was standing on the sidelines watching while I was getting my mic fixed. “Gee Miss Lane, I think Superman’s into you. He keeps grinning at you like a boy with a schoolgirl crush.”

“Jimmy, come on its Superman. That’s literally his whole schtick.” I said brushing it off.

“Just go for it, Lois. I mean there is some serious chem...”

I cut him off, “Jimmy.”

“Serious chemistry.”

“Jimmy. I can’t go after Superman because I like Clark. I mean Superman is super but he’s not Clark.”

“Uh Superman is looking at us right now,” Jimmy said, “he doesn’t happen to have super hearing, does he?”

“Oh no he does, he most certainly does.” I said my flushed red but given the okay to return back to the set.

I sat down next to Superman and before we started, “I’m sorry. That was unprofessional.”

“Don’t worry. He’s a lucky man.” He smiled like he knew the answer to a question that nobody else knew, as the camera rolled, and they called action.

“Circling back to how we started our conversation, about staying obscure or under the radar. As someone who was once viewed as an urban myth, what do you have to say about the mythic bat vigilante that is preying on criminals in Gotham?”

“I first off want to say that I understand staying under the radar. If you look hard, you can find reports all over the world that talk about a flying man saving them. At that moment, I wasn’t ready to show myself to the world. I still had to become the man I am today, but I came to Metropolis to help others and be a beacon for hope. It all comes down to a simple saying my father had, ‘Sunlight is the best disinfectant’ he would always say.”

Superman paused after that sentence like he was listening to something. Then suddenly he got up and excused himself. In a whoosh, he was gone, and I was left wondering what I was supposed to do with the 30 minutes of airtime we had left.

## Clark

As I finished talking to Lois about the quote Pa used to tell me I started to hear screams and car alarms all around the Daily Planet. I excused myself from the interview and flew outside to get a look at the cause of the commotion. There was a gigantic robot crashing, step-by-step, through the streets of Metropolis. It reminded me of the one we found in that

warehouse, but whereas that one looked like a generic robot. This looked exactly like a Rock-Em Sock-Em Robot.

“Hello, Superman. I am The Toyman and today we are going to play a little game. You ever played Rock-Em Sock-Em Robots? You know the rules and you know the players” the robot said.

“I don’t want to hurt you, give up now. You’re hurting a lot of people.”

“Ha ha ha ha, Why would I give up when I got a friend paying me big bucks to Rock and Sock you, Small Blue.” He said giggling the whole time which took my attention away from the fist hurtled right at me.

That fist hurt. I went flying uncontrollably through several buildings unable to slow myself. Still flying uncontrollably, I was able to snag a water pipe sticking out the ground in the third building I crashed into. Using the pipe, I flung myself back towards the robot.

“This ends now.” I said to the man as I let out a blast of heat vision. I was stunned to see robot absorb the energy that came from heat blast. That energy was transferred into a fist that I dodged but missed an uppercut by the other fist. I remembered seeing a cockpit in the other robot towards the center of the chest. So, I threw all my weight against it only powering it up even further.

“I wasn’t really planning to use these but since you had to target me personally.” He blasted an energy blast out of his eyes. I did not remember that from the original toys.

The energy blast that hit me, hit me hard. I was dazed, no one had ever hit that hard. I used my x-ray vision on the robot and could see conduits leading to all parts of the suit. That’s how he was transferring the kinetic energy. However, all of the tubes flowed into the center of the robot. I tried to see where they were at, but the center was not visible to me. Something was blocking my vision, but for now I just had to worry that no energy conductors were near the jaw.

I suddenly remembered the goal of the toys is to pop each other's head's off. I decided to I needed to play the game and knock his block off. "Alright, Toyman. Time to end this."

I flew forward, weaving past fists and eye blasts, I made it to the robot's jaw. I pulled back my arm and released a punch into the robot's jaw. The head popped clean off.

"Till next time." The robot started to go dark, and all of the parts came apart, the panel used for the chest happened to be made from lead. Good one to know, I can't see through lead. As I continued checking through the rubble, I saw microscopic remains of Lexcorp parts.

Lex had been slandering me ever since I got to Metropolis. He was trying desperately to convince people I was a threat and that I was a danger to anything other than his fearmongering. I did the interview Lois because I wanted on the record how open I was out helping the people of Metropolis.

I flew to Lexcorp and waited outside of Lex's window. Lex had his back turned and was on the phone. He yelled something like you listen here and the other person on the line mentioned how they were done playing for now. After that, Lex slammed the phone down and saw me in front of his window.

"Sorry I already have a window washer." He said opening the window via the control from his desk. He was definitely shocked I was there but trying hard to be smug.

I floated silently in place with my arms crossed and staring right at Lex.

"Nothing you heard will stand up in court" he shouted at me, "I own this city. Everyone uses my products, and everyone wants them. ½ or more of the city works for me in one capacity or another. The other just don't know yet that they are mine."

As I stayed quiet, his voice continually got louder until he was screaming himself hoarse.

"YOUR ALIEN SCUM! THAT WILL NEVER CHANGE!" He grabbed a trophy for desk and threw it at me, "SAY SOMETHING!!"

I caught the trophy he had thrown at me. It was Metropolis' Most Generous Man Award. I crushed it to dust in my hands and said, "I'll be watching you." Then, I flew away.

The next day as I walked the street to the Planet, I saw people staring into the sky. A guy bumped into the same lady I had bumped on my first day. I watched anxiously for her to erupt on him as she had done to me. He hurriedly helped her pick up her stuff and offered hundreds of apologies. Then, she surprised me and said, “Don’t worry about it. We all look up at the sky. We wonder was that a bird, was that a plane or was that Superman?”.

I smiled as I continued walking to the Daily Planet. Metropolis was a better place now than it had been when I arrived. It was all I wanted. That and one other thing, or person I might say I had always dreamed about. She was waiting outside the Planet when I got there with coffee for the both of us.

“Smallville, there is something I need to say.” She said taking a sip of her coffee and handing mine to me. “It’s something I was able to tell Jimmy and heck I even accidentally told Superman. But never you. Smallville I...Clark. Clark, I like you. I like you a lot. You can be a clumsy dork sometimes, but you’re my clumsy dork. We’ve been to dinner as work partners, but I would like you to take me on a real date as two people in a relationship.”

I pushed my glasses up my nose and said, “Oh gee, Lois. That’s really swell. I like you a lot too.”

“Swell, Clark? Oh boy don’t make me regret this. Also, I won’t go easy on you now because I told you I feel about you and don’t go easy on me. We both have to work hard for our stories, no matter what.”

“Of course, Lois. I’d never dream of standing in your way, but you are kinda blocking the entrance.”

She laughed and grabbed my arm as we headed into the Daily Planet for another day of work. I knew I needed to learn more about this Toyman character, and I had to keep an eye on Lex, but for that moment I was happy. I could feel Pa patting me on the back, letting me know I had done it. I found my purpose and I wasn’t going to let it go for anything.

Not The End