

# Seeing Clearly at Last

By Bren Ren <bren\_ren@yahoo.com>

Rating: PG

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Summary: This is the author's story of what happened after Superman thawed Lois in the episode "And The Answer Is..."

Disclaimer: Not mine, never have been, never will be. Just playing with my Cyber-Barbies again. I'll put them back as good or better than I found them, I promise.

Author's Notes: There's this great big window of unseen interaction between Lois and Clark after she gets thawed out in "And The Answer Is..." It always drove me nuts that we didn't get to see Lois's and Clark's reunion right after she saved his parents' life at great risk to her own; I couldn't imagine that he would wait to see her until their walk in the park. Thanks to the wonderful world of fanfiction, we can fill those empty gaps any way we like. This is what I think happened.

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You come to love not by finding the perfect person, but by seeing an imperfect person perfectly.

— Sam Keen

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I cling tightly to the man flying me back home. I can't name him, even in the privacy of my own mind. The truth is that I'm simply not sure who it is holding me so close to his body that I can actually feel the beat of his heart.

I feel gravity reassert its power against us, realizing belatedly that we must have landed.

"Lois?" His voice is soft and his breath warm against my ear. "You're home."

I wrap my arms even tighter around his neck, squeezing my eyelids shut tightly against reality.

"Can you stand?" His warm voice is full of so much concern that I feel an awkward lump forming in the back of my throat. I shake my head against his shoulder, and I feel him begin walking, still cradling me in his strong arms.

A moment later, I feel my body being lowered, and then I am resting on the soft mattress of my own bed. Reluctantly, I let my arms fall away from his neck and they drop heavily onto the bed. I feel his lips graze my forehead, and then the warmth radiating from his body begins to fade away. I choke back a whimper of loss as I hear his soft footsteps moving farther and farther away.

My eyes fly open and I sit upright quite suddenly. I instantly regret the action as a wave of dizziness sweeps through me. I blink fast as I fight the sense of vertigo, and it passes quickly.

"Wait!" I call out, and he turns to face me. I stare at him for a long moment as I realize that I have no idea how to address this strange chimera in my room.

He walks back over to my bedside and reaches one hand out to gently cup my cheek. I gasp as my eyes drift shut once again, and memories assail me faster than I can keep up. That same hand at my cheek. Those same eyes bore into me with emotions so intense that I cannot tear my gaze away. And again, that gentle hand caresses my cheek. Recognition, realization dawn on me.

My eyes fly open once more, and again I stare at him—his face, his eyes... so familiar, and yet, somehow, foreign and strange at the same time. His hand drops away, and once again he turns to leave.

"Clark!" The name pours from my lips without conscious

thought. I watch him stop dead in his tracks. Slowly, he turns back around to face me.

There is confusion in his eyes, along with apprehension, and even... fear? But what could *he* possibly be afraid of?

Suddenly, I was afraid, too. Nervous and uncertain, I wasn't yet ready to confront him with my newfound knowledge. I needed time to process the information, to sift and sort through the conflicting feelings that were jumbled up in my head and heart.

"I need to see Clark," I finally tell him.

I can see the indecision in his eyes. I can practically hear the gears grinding in his brain as he visibly weighs his options. I find myself chewing on the bottom corner of my lip as I wait for his response.

Finally, he nods his head. "I'll make sure he's here as soon as possible," he says. Then, before I have a chance to say anything else, he walks out of the bedroom, and the loud whoosh of air that is immediately followed by a sonic boom from outside tells me he has left my apartment altogether.

I fall back onto the mattress and let my eyes drift shut as the memories and feelings churn through my weary mind.

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"Lois Lane, Clark Kent."

"You like to be on top. Got it."

"It's nine o'clock. I thought you'd be naked—ready."

"Lois, trust me on this. I'm not your typical male."

"I think I've got you figured out."

"Oh, really?"

"I want to kiss Clark goodbye."

"Clark's the before. Superman's the after. The way, way after."

"You look a lot like... Superman!"

"Lois, I can't take it anymore. If you really want me, I'm yours."

"Lois Lane. I love you."

"Oh, Superman, you don't know how long I've waited to hear you say those words... but you're not yourself, and so I couldn't take advantage of the situation... Oh, what the..." That kiss... Oh, the passion in that kiss...

"Are you insane? This is not funny—"

And *that* kiss... even more passionate...

"Doesn't anybody knock anymore?"

"I've been in love with you for a long time..."

"If you were an ordinary man living an ordinary life, I'd love you just the same."

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That particular memory rang out loud in my mind, stopping my thoughts cold. Had I really? I had. I had rejected him in one form, only to throw myself at the other moments later. It's no wonder he had been so cold, almost cruel that night. It was nothing less than I deserved. I feel a tear slide down my cheek, and I swipe it away as more memories flood my mind.

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Standing at the altar... "I can't."

"I would have said anything to stop you from marrying him."

Gunshots ring out as Clark slumps to the ground. "Clark died without ever knowing..."

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Again my eyes fly open. He was never dead! My god, how could he let me think he was dead? How could he put me through that? I thought I'd lost my partner, my friend. I thought that I would never again see him smile at me... but he was fine all along! That rat!

Somehow, though, I just can't hold on to my anger tonight, and I find myself remembering exactly how elated I had been to see him walking towards me on the dock that night so long ago.

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"I know our relationship has always been... difficult to define. But when I thought about how much I missed you, how much I was going to miss you for the rest of my life... Well, I started to think, maybe there's more to our relationship than just friendship..."

"Lois, I want to go out with you!"

"What? You're asking me out?"

"Yes! You know... like on a date?"

"A date? You mean, a real date? Like where I take out my best perfume, the one I bought after seeing 'Love Affair', the good one—not the remake, and put a dab behind my knee, even though I have no idea why?"

"To our almost first date."

"...the only time people really express themselves is when they're passionate and the polite veneer of society comes off. Like when they fight."

"Or make love."

"I've tried to love you... but I realized today how selfish that is. You're not just here for me... you're here for all of us... I'll always need you. And I'll always be your friend... but there's someone down here who needs me, if I can just get him to see it."

"...the only reason we hide is, we're scared."

"Of what?"

"The fact that we're partners... and best friends... and this..."

"If you want to run away from this, tell me now."

"I won't run, Lois. I'm ready to take the next step if you are."

"I'm just going to say this as simply and as honestly as I can. Lois, I'm Super—"

"What you owe me is respect. I'm tired of the lies, Clark. What kind of relationship can we have if you're not honest with me?"

"I've always been honest with you, Lois. Except for one thing. And when I tell you what it is... well, I hope you can understand."

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My eyes flutter open once more. *Except for one thing.* Those words reverberate through my brain for a second, and I almost laugh. Yeah, there's one tiny little detail you forgot to mention: you fly around moonlighting in spandex tights and a cape.

That one thing has led him to lie to me, over and over again, for two years. So who is this man, really? Who is this strange visitor from another planet who became my partner and the best friend I thought I'd never have, who managed to sneak past every one of my carefully constructed defenses to earn my respect, my trust... my love...

A soft knock at my front door interrupts my thoughts, and, somehow, I immediately know that it is Clark.

Oh, god, what am I supposed to say to him now?

I call out to him, telling him I'll be there in a minute. I'm stalling for time as I try desperately to gain some semblance of composure. When I finally feel like I can stand without knocking my knees together every other step, I get up off my bed and slowly make my way to the door. I take my time with each of the cumbersome locks, then pause, screwing up my courage before finally opening the door to admit him back into my home, my life, my heart.

He enters bearing a shy smile, and the next thing I know, I'm in his arms. My whole body trembles, and suddenly I can feel again the aching cold deep inside my very bones. I cling to him like a life preserver in a stormy sea, and he holds me close, tight, murmuring nonsensical reassurances as his hands gently stroke my hair and my back.

After a long, long moment, I pull away, and only as his hands come up to my cheeks do I realize that I've been crying.

"Oh, Lois," he says softly. "I know what you did today... the chance you took to save my parents... and I can never possibly

hope to thank you enough," he tells me in a choked voice.

"Oh, Clark." I breathe the words out, my voice hoarse and cracking. "Don't you know that there isn't anything I wouldn't do for you?"

His eyes close, and his face contorts slightly with his next words. "If I had lost you tonight..."

"You didn't lose me," I tell him. "I'm right here." His eyes open, and they are dark with such incredible, powerful love.

"Would you stay with me tonight Clark? I just..." I falter, then shake off my reluctance, swallowing my pride before finishing. "I need you, Clark. I just... I need you to hold me."

His arms tighten around me as a small smile begins to play at the corners of his mouth. "Good," he whispers. "That's good... because I really need to hold you."

I nod, then step out of his embrace. I take his hand in mine and lead him back to my room. No more words are exchanged. None are needed as we lay down together. It doesn't take us long at all to get comfortable, and I settle against him with a deep sigh. I rest my head on his chest, and the sound of his steady heartbeat is soothing. I feel the tension slip away, seeping out of me into the darkness of night. His lips lightly caress my forehead, and I drop an equally soft kiss onto him. I feel safe, cherished... and for the first time since waking up in his arms a couple of hours ago, I am warm.

There will be plenty of time tomorrow for revelations and confrontations. For tonight, I am content to be held in the arms of the one and only man I have ever truly loved, Clark Superman Kent.

THE END