

Man of the House

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Rated: PG

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Summary: During one of Superman's many political obligations, Lois and Clark's son shows what a help he is.

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Note: Also, the countries of Azerbaijan and Armenia are real countries in Eastern Europe. I merely borrowed these countries' names to use in my story. In no way am I aware of the history or current state of these countries and am in no way implying that they are having border disputes <grin>. With that being said, I hope you enjoy this little story. **'s denote emphasis.

I also want to thank Corrina for BRing my story. Because of her insightful comments and suggestions this story turned out to be much better. I have thoroughly enjoyed her stories as an author and was thrilled that she could give me a little help with this venture. Thanks again, Corrina!

Lois sat idly at her computer. It was early evening on a Thursday night, and her husband of ten years was out on a rescue. She sighed. It wasn't a rescue exactly but more of a diplomatic obligation. Superman was helping negotiate a peace treaty between the countries of Azerbaijan and Armenia and had left the house earlier that day to attend the proceedings. Clark had assured Lois and their son, CJ, before he left that he would return as soon as possible. Lois smiled as she recalled the conversation between her husband and young son.

Daddy, how long will you be gone?" CJ inquired, looking up at his father.

"Hopefully, only a few days, little guy," Clark said as he tousled CJ's hair. The little boy ducked to get out of his father's grasp then squealed as Clark grabbed him from behind and proceeded to tickle him.

"Daddy!" CJ cackled, unable to keep his laughter contained. "Stop it!"

Clark sat down in a nearby chair and put CJ on his knee, smiling down at his son.

"Why do you have to go? Can't Mommy and me go with you?" CJ said, pleadingly. He looked over at his mother sitting on the couch as if trying to employ her help in convincing Clark to take them along. Lois smiled at her mischievous little boy and turned her gaze to her husband.

"Well, right now, CJ, there is a place far away from here where people are fighting and not getting along," Clark explained patiently.

"You always said we're 'posed to get along with someone even if we don't like 'em, right Dad?" CJ said pointedly, looking up at his father.

Clark smiled. "That's right, son. Some of the people that live in the place where I'm going *do* want to get along. That's why they've agreed to sign a piece of paper saying they won't fight anymore."

CJ thought for a moment and said, "But you and Mommy don't do that when you fight. You just kiss and say you're sorry."

Lois giggled at her son's innocent reflection of political diplomacy, imagining a room full of well-dressed world leaders

trying to kiss and make up. The thought was preposterous but, nonetheless, a little amusing.

"No, you're right," Clark smiled, "but your mommy and I are married. Fighting is a little different when you're dealing with a whole country full of people. After the leaders of Azerbaijan and Armenia sign a peace treaty, I'll write up a story for the Planet and be on my way home to you and Mommy. And maybe when I get back, we all can go see the new Harry Hippo movie."

CJ's eyes lit up with excitement. "Yay!" he screamed as he jumped up and ran over to Lois. "Mommy, did you hear that?"

Lois caught her son as he bounded into her arms, holding him close.

"Yes, I did, sweetheart, but I don't think your daddy was finished talking," Lois said, trying to rein in CJ's enthusiasm for the moment. CJ stepped out of Lois' embrace and walked back over to Clark.

"Now while I'm gone, you know you've got to be the man of the house," Clark stated, scooping CJ up into his lap once again. CJ's eyes grew wide at his father's statement.

"That's a big 'sponsibility, huh, Dad?"

"You bet it is," stated Clark. "Do you know what you need to do while I'm gone? Remember how we've been talking about ways that we need to be safe?"

"I 'member," CJ said, swinging his legs back and forth.

"Okay, tell me what to do if someone knocks on the door." Clark prompted.

CJ scrunched up his face in concentration. "Ummmm ... let Mommy answer the door."

"Good. What if you want to go outside? What should you do?"

"I need to ask Mommy first," CJ said, pointing to Lois on the couch.

"Right."

"And," Lois added. "If you answer the phone and someone asks for your dad and he's not here, what do you say?"

CJ put his finger next to his mouth and thought. "I say that he's not here right now," he finished.

Clark shook his head. "Now listen, CJ. If I'm not here just tell whoever is calling that your dad can't come to the phone right now but that your mommy can talk, okay? That way no one will know it's just you and your mom at home," explained Clark.

CJ nodded his head.

"So if you answer the phone when someone calls and asks for your dad and he's not here, what should you say?" Lois asked again.

"I say that he can't come to the phone right now and give the phone to you, Mommy."

"Very good, CJ!" Lois beamed.

"Good, job, buddy!" exclaimed Clark, giving CJ a high five.

CJ smiled, then turned to Clark and asked, "Daddy, can I go outside and play with Patches for a little while?"

"Sure, CJ, but I'm going to leave in just a little while so you'll need to come back in soon."

As CJ ran for the door, Clark got up and walked over to the couch where Lois was sitting. He pulled her to a standing position and enveloped his wife in his arms. Lois reveled in the feel of her husband against her body, relaxing against him and allowing some of the tension from his anticipated departure to leave her.

"A few days, huh?" she questioned. "Well, I guess it's a good thing that our bureau over in Eastern Europe could make accommodations for a certain award-winning reporter," she finished with a twinkle in her eye. "Don't worry about CJ and me, we'll be fine. I'll order takeout."

Clark laughed a throaty laugh, a sound Lois adored. He squeezed her against his chest more tightly, swaying slightly from side to side. Clark reached down and captured her lips in a sweet,

longing kiss before reluctantly letting her go.

“Is that a promise?” he quipped, causing Lois to swat at his shoulder playfully.

“Clark, be serious,” she sighed, frustration showing on her face.

Immediately, Clark reached for her to pull her back into his embrace. She drew back instinctively, but he caught her arm and gently returned her to his chest, facing away from him. He kissed her neck tenderly and tightened his arms around her middle causing her to moan softly. As they continued to sway slightly back and forth, Clark spoke, knowing full well that he might or might not receive a straight answer.

“What’s wrong, honey?”

Lois sighed again. She knew she was being a bit ridiculous but wasn’t sure how to voice her concerns to her husband without sounding, well, ridiculous. She turned out of his arms and gazed up at him.

“I’m sorry, Clark,” she whispered, resting her head against his shoulder. She gazed up at him after a passing moment. “It’s just I get a little nervous when you go off for an unspecified amount of time. It’s not that I can’t take care of CJ and myself,” she mused. “We just don’t have the best track record when it comes to safety measures. Sometimes I feel like we inadvertently send out telepathic messages to criminals ‘Superman is out of town! Come get us!’”

“Lois ...” Clark started, a slightly amused look on his face.

“Okay, maybe, it’s me who’s not that great with the safety measures, and maybe I’m the one who ...”

“Lois!”

Startled out of her momentary babble, Lois looked at her husband.

Clark smiled softly at his wife then moved to sit on the couch. He patted the seat beside him, silently asking her to sit down. It wasn’t often that he left his wife and son for long periods of time. Clark especially hadn’t done it when CJ was younger. Lois recalled conversations that she and Clark had shared over the past months about him making more Superman appearances. Now that CJ was a little older, they had both agreed that Clark had more liberties with how much time he spent in his superhero guise. And when it came to something of international importance such as this peace treaty, they both felt it was worth the time he had to spend away from his family.

“I know I haven’t taken many long trips since CJ has been in the picture, but Lois, this could mean a break-through in peace talks in this area of Eastern Europe and even parts of the Middle East if we can get this to go smoothly. I will be back as soon as I can, okay?” Clark stated, reassuringly. He cupped her face in his hand, a gesture he had repeated many times since they had been a couple. “Lois, you are a formidable woman. I’d be afraid for anyone who tried to get to you *or* CJ,” Clark finished.

Lois smiled and chuckled softly. “I guess you’re right. I am being a little silly,” Lois said, admonishing herself. “And I know that what you’re doing is extremely important.” She looked deeply into her husband’s eyes. “Have I told you how proud I am of you, Mr. Kent?”

Clark smiled and lightly kissed her mouth. “Not today, my dear,” he sighed.

She chuckled lightly. “Well, I’m very proud of you, Mr. Kent.”

Lois was remembering the passion-filled kiss that she and her husband shared after her encouraging words when suddenly she was brought out of her reverie by the phone ringing. Before she could begin to get up out of her seat, CJ raced across the room to answer the call.

“Hello?” said CJ, pausing to listen to the caller. “My dad?”

Lois looked expectantly at her son as he spoke to the unknown caller.

“No, he can’t come to the phone right now.”

Lois smiled in relief at her son’s perfect reiteration of their earlier conversation and then immediately cringed when he spoke again.

“Call back in a few days.”

THE END