

Moving On

By Lynn S. M. <lois_and_clark_fan_at_verizon.net Replace at_ with the appropriate symbol.>

Rated: G

Submitted: July 2011

Summary: Clark thinks about his past and contemplates his future while sitting beside Lois' grave. This story is more introspective than it is emotional, so it isn't too WHAMmy.

a/n: My thanks to my beta readers Female Hawk and Virginia R for their honest feedback on what worked and what didn't, as well as for their suggestions for improvement. My thanks also to my General Editor extraordinaire Déjà Vu for giving of her time and talents to make this story better.

Disclaimer: Lois and Clark belong to DC Comics and Warner Brothers Studio. But you probably already knew that.

Clark sat silently beside Lois' grave. He mourned less for Lois than he did for himself. After all, Lois had led as long and as full a life as any human could reasonably be expected to do. Thanks to modern medicine and — the ghost of a smile came unbidden to Clark's lips — her sheer force of will, she had topped the century mark. She had attained the Pulitzer Prize not just once, but three times over the course of her illustrious career, and their bookshelves were groaning with all of her Kerths and Merriwethers.

Lois' personal life had been a success as well, despite its rocky beginning. She and Clark had shared many happy years together. Just the other week they had celebrated their 75th wedding anniversary. She had lived long enough to see their children, grandchildren, and great-grand-children grow up, and she even lived long enough to sing lullabies to a few great-great-grandchildren. Her voice may have weakened a little towards the end, but it was still beautiful to Clark. Although she hadn't lived long enough to see the full advent of Utopia, she had seen its seeds sown and sprouted, and she had done much to contribute to it herself. The emotional support, the love and the discipline she had shown to their children and to their children's children and grandchildren had helped shape the characters of three generations of heroes. Thanks in part to her, their descendents had already done much to improve society.

She had died as she had hoped she would — peacefully in her sleep in her husband's arms.

No, Clark would not mourn for Lois — at least, not much, even though he would miss her terribly. She had had everything she'd wanted in life, and in far more abundance than even she could have ever imagined. As had he, because of her love for him.

Instead, Clark grieved for himself, for being the one left behind. He knew he wasn't likely to follow her any time soon. Although over a hundred himself, his body looked and behaved more like that of a man of 40. In order to appear older, he had started dying his hair grey decades ago, and he had bought a cane to use as a prop sometime thereafter. It had been sheer torture for him to force himself to use the slow, shuffling steps that he thought the public would expect of a more senior citizen. At least the disguise made it less likely that anyone would realize that he was also the much younger-appearing Superman.

Superman had gradually become slightly less 'super'. He was still mostly invulnerable — although he did get a bruise that

lasted a few hours when he was shot at point-blank range. Fortunately, all but the dumbest criminals had given up bothering to shoot him well over half a century ago. He was still faster than any human and almost faster than the human eye could see, but his days of racing bullets were past. And now not just lead, but also a variety of other substances blocked his x-ray vision. His family had been urging him to retire for quite some time. After all, as they were quick to point out, they themselves were well able to protect the citizens of Metropolis and the rest of the world. Perhaps they were right. He should at least think about letting the younger folks handle all of the more mundane crime-fighting. Perhaps from now on he should stick to helping out at large-scale disasters.

He sighed. Who was it who wrote, "All, all are gone, the old familiar faces"? The only one left now was Jimmy. After Lois had retired, Jimmy had taken over as editor; but he, in turn, had retired some time back and was now living in Florida. He had come up for Lois' funeral but would be heading back south tonight. Clark should pay him a social visit soon.

It really was time to move on. The only thing keeping him in Metropolis these days was his extended family, and they could get together within minutes no matter where any of them happened to be living at the time. If he left the Big Apricot and had some new identity papers forged, he could shuck off his old-man demeanor and start somewhere else as a man just past the prime of his life. It would be nice not having to fiddle with hair dye and canes and to be able to walk in public once again at a decent pace without having to wear spandex to do so.

If the speed of his aging thus far was anything to go by, he still had many decades of life ahead of him. He knew he would miss Lois every minute of that time and he would never so much as look at another woman. In fact, he felt like doing nothing but moping for the rest of his life. But he also knew that Lois would not want him to fritter his life away pining over her. And so, out of respect and love for her, he would honor her wishes and try to lead as full a life as possible by himself.

He would spend a year or two touring the world. He would retrace the journeys he had taken as a novice reporter. He could see how places had changed and what had remained the same. Maybe even see if any of his old friends were still alive. If so, he could visit them and claim to be Clark's descendent. And there were still so many places he had never seen; once he and Lois had become parents, they had been too busy to do much sightseeing. They had thought they would travel when their kids had grown up, but they hadn't counted on spending so much time with the generations which followed. And as Lois got older and frailer, Clark had to fly ever more slowly when carrying her, thereby increasing the likelihood that Superman would be seen with Lois Lane. They had decided long ago that for the sake of the non-super members of their family (offspring and spouses), and for the privacy of all, the original superhero and the former reporter should never again be seen together in public.

So, what with one thing and another, they hadn't travelled much in recent decades. But he thought a change of scenery would do him good now. Perhaps he could even buy an oxygen tank or two and engage in some space exploration. Then, when his wanderlust had been sated, he would settle down in some new job. He wasn't sure what, precisely. He didn't think that he could go back to being a reporter again, not without Lois. It would just be too hard to conduct investigations without his partner. Maybe he would write some fiction. Or, given the number of super descendents he already had, maybe he would start a school for superheroes.

Clark stood up, bade his beloved wife goodbye, promised to come back soon, and then turned to start his new life.

THE END

a/n: The quote about the old familiar faces was taken from the poem “The Old Familiar Faces,” written by Charles Lamb.