

Family Hour Baby's Story

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Rated: PG-13

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Summary: It always bothered me that the baby arrived with no follow-up. So I decided to answer the many questions left by the last episode. Join me on the journey through new territory to seek the answers.

Disclaimer: This is a story that is loosely based on the television series, *Lois & Clark: The New Adventures of Superman*. I borrowed it to expand on the last episode of the show, but since I do not own it I will return it to the people at Warner Bros. with a few minor changes.

To be able to get to the point where the last half-hour of this episode makes sense, I took liberties with canon Lois & Clark. We will need to get off at a different exit and take different roads to get to the place where it all meshes. So get on board, fasten your seatbelts, and enjoy the ride.

The asterisks between lines indicates time moving forward. It might be a notation of hours of the same day, days at a time, weeks later, or in some cases, a few months have happened. It will be obvious to the reader within the first few sentences just how much time has progressed.

Lois and Clark had finally done it! Even though Perry had been called upon at the last second to officiate when Reverend Bob cancelled, it was a beautiful wedding. Clark was overwhelmed by his beautiful bride. She had been every inch the woman of his fantasies, and tonight he was going to get to spend the night with her without having to dream about the ending.

At the reception, Lois and Clark spent time enjoying the happiness of the occasion and the well-wishes of family and friends. Ellen Lane had outdone herself with the menu, and even though there were anxious nerves about getting to the honeymoon, both Lois and Clark enjoyed the meal and the wonderful seven layer wedding cake. They danced until the early hours of the morning, and when they got ready to leave both were so happy that their cheeks hurt from smiling so much. As they climbed into the limo that Ellen had insisted upon, there was no reason to slow down the passion. They kissed and explored each other's body, ever mindful of the driver beyond the partition dividing the car. By the time they reached their apartment, both of them were in a state of honeymoon-fever. Clark carried his bride over the threshold and down the stairs. Lois had her veil and slip off before he had set her down on the floor. She tried to unbutton the long line of small buttons down the back of her wedding dress, but gave up and asked for help from her husband, who made short work of it. In a few seconds she found herself in the bathroom putting on the beautiful silky white nightgown that had been a shower gift from Lucy.

That night Lois and Clark started a marathon to make up for all the days that they had waited. There was very little sleep that night. The next morning the happy couple went by SupermanExpress to Hawaii for the rest of their honeymoon. Two weeks went by so quickly, they were both surprised when reality intruded and they had to return to work.

The last day of the honeymoon, Lois started to fidget. She was not happy to go back to Metropolis. Clark thought it was cute that she was unhappy to end the honeymoon, and he tried to reassure her that the honeymoon would never end. Besides, he reminded her, Superman should return to the skies, because he had not gone on one patrol since they got married.

When the happy couple returned to Clark's apartment Lois told him she had to leave to handle some business. He volunteered to go with her, but she insisted that she needed to handle it by herself. She kissed Clark and slipped out the door.

Lois went to the abandoned subway tunnel under the streets where Luthor Enterprises used to be headquartered. When she found the hidden door to the next room, she quietly tiptoed into the room and found that her counterpart, Lois Lane, was drugged and handcuffed to an army cot. Knowing a little more about Lois now than she did when Lex had sent her to stand in at the wedding and honeymoon, she became sad that it was not really her life and Clark had not really loved her so much. He would be so disappointed when she told him that she was just a clone. She wished beyond all wishes that she was the one who owned that life. But she was created to be a simulation of the real Lois Lane. Lex Luthor had what he wanted and he had left her to play a part: making Clark believe the fantasy of their marriage.

Lois looked around and found that Dr. Gretchen Kelly was in charge of keeping the other Lois drugged until Lex determined how Asabi would make Lois happily, compliantly married to Lex. She knew that it would take more than just mystic magic for the other Lois to want to settle for Lex instead of Clark. Lois went over to Dr. Kelly and asked where Lex was and followed the instructions down the dank and dreary tunnels of the subway. She found Lex in deep meditation with Asabi in control of his chanting. Asabi signaled for Lois to keep quiet, so she sat down for a while to wait for her turn to talk to the man who had promised her a million dollars if she could keep Clark Kent happy and occupied for a month.

About a half hour later, Lex was brought out of his trance and returned to consciousness. Lois spoke briefly with him and was told that it might take a little longer than the month originally agreed upon before she could walk away from her "marriage" to Clark. Lex told Lois she could have an additional million for each week it took beyond the month and Lois agreed. She asked for an advance and was given a packet of bills that Lex said was \$100,000. Lois left the subway and went straight to the bank where she rented a safe deposit box. She placed the money inside and went back home to her new bridegroom.

The newlyweds were the talk of the *Daily Planet*'s gossips. They were very affectionate but fought like never before. Lois was also a little less interested in her work at the *Daily Planet*. Her writing style was just as good, but it took so much work on Perry's part for her to even start a piece, that he gave up and let Clark handle most of the heavy writing and assigned Lois to press conferences and the interviews of people who had managers to set up the interviews. Clark and Perry were both surprised that she did not object, but Lois was Lois and there was no predicting what her mood would be. Clark was just happy that his bride was affectionate and put up with his Superman duties. She was his ideal wife.

Clark had begun a series of medical tests with Dr. Klein at S.T.A.R. Labs. He had started to experience a whiplash effect from his previous exposure to Kryptonite, and on occasion he would have a migraine-like headache and would experience temporary cessation of his Super Skills. It did not happen often, but about once every three months. As a result, Clark confided his true identity to Dr. Klein and together they had begun to run very involved and highly confidential tests on Clark. While he

was undergoing these tests, it was mentioned that maybe he should be tested to see if he could father children with his wife, an Earth woman. The result of the examination determined that it was impossible for a Kryptonian man and an Earth woman to be compatible. There needed to be a hybrid link of their two blood types that would act as a catalyst before Lois could get pregnant. Because they had just gotten married, and children were not something that they needed to discuss right at that time, Clark kept this information to himself. He wondered if Lois would rather know, but decided that he could share it with her when the time came that they started to talk about children.

Lois and Clark celebrated their six-month anniversary. Clark was so amused by the subtle changes in Lois since their marriage. She was not a workaholic any longer and she had begun to learn to cook. She had gentled down to the point that they were even getting along much better. Lois did not disagree with Clark much, and was becoming all the things she used to think were a curse of being a woman. She got a real charge out of keeping Superman's suits and capes washed and ironed. She dressed softer, with the business suits she used to like to wear being exchanged for flowing dresses made of soft material. She gave up most of her dark wardrobe and wore a lot of pastels. She even went to the beauty shop regularly and had her nails done while they were fixing her long hair.

A week after their half-year anniversary, a series of things happened that sent Clark into a tailspin. First of all, Lois found that she was pregnant and Clark was beside himself with happiness. He wanted Lois to go to Dr. Klein to see how she happened to get pregnant and also for him to take care her during her pregnancy. Lois absolutely refused to go to S.T.A.R. Labs. She would not even discuss seeing Dr. Klein. To compound Clark's problems, he started to get vibes from somewhere that Lois was calling him. It rattled him, because most of the times he felt and heard her calling they were in the same room, and he knew that she was not saying a word. He feared for his sanity.

Clark arrived at home and expected to see Lois involved in a project as she had been home for her day off. Instead, he was greeted by an empty house. It did not concern him until he went into the closet in the master bedroom and discovered that most of Lois's clothes were gone. The only clothes left behind were those suits and darker clothes she used to wear before she married him. He quickly scanned the dresser and found that it did not contain any of Lois's belongings. Even her jewelry box was missing. He quickly spun into the suit and flew the length and width of Metropolis. While he was in this panic-stricken state, it occurred to him that maybe Lois had left him a message at home and he had not seen it. He returned to their apartment and turned the place upside down to find a note or a message of any kind from Lois. There was nothing.

Later that evening, a very depressed Clark started to get the vibe of Lois calling to him and he faintly heard her say that she was down under the street being held prisoner. It ended almost as soon as it started, and Clark was just about to discount it as his own insanity when the voice mumbled something about Lex was alive and holding her. A chill ran down his back and he wondered if it was possible that Lex Luthor was alive. Lex would do anything to possess Lois, but why had she stayed married for six months before Lex claimed her if he indeed was alive? Clark spun into the suit again and took to the skies but this time he tried to look down under the street to see if he could spot Lois.

An exhausted Clark walked into the Daily Planet the next morning. He had spent his whole evening looking for his bride. He had no clues where to start to look other than that mysterious whisper that told him to look under the streets, and that was most likely just his imagination. He wandered into Perry's office and

asked if he could talk to him about Lois. Perry sensed that the conversation was important and he closed the door for a long talk with Clark. Clark told him of all the recent events, the pregnancy, Lois packing up her belongings, and the vague voices he had been hearing for a little over a week. Clark wondered, out loud, if he was going crazy and if he was imagining that Lois was changing over the past six months. Perry, for once forgetting his Elvis stories and dealing with reality, told Clark to go to talk to Bill Henderson. With all the trouble that Lois had stirred up in her lifetime, it was possible that some of this was very explainable as a hoax of an enemy. Clark cautiously asked Perry if he thought it was possible that Lex Luthor could be alive and behind the disappearance of Lois and the disruption of their lives. The shocked look on Perry's face told him he most likely should not bring that subject up again. Everyone knew that Lex had plunged to his death from the 118th floor. There was hardly anything left of him to autopsy.

Clark spent the next week dividing his time between the skies and the *Planet*. He slept little and did little work. Perry cut him some slack and let him make his own schedule. The voice in his head did not speak to him the whole week, and he was ready to conclude that it was indeed just his own insanity that made him hear it in the first place.

Toward the end of the week, Clark flew back home to Smallville to visit his parents. He told them the same things he had told Perry, but their reaction was a little different than Perry's had been. His mother told him to go with his gut instincts because Lois and he were joined on so many other levels than just the physical. His father told him that Lex Luthor was the only person he knew that could pull off coming back from the dead. Clark was in such a state of exhaustion by then that he said he would think about what they had said before he talked to the police. His mother talked him into staying and sleeping in his old room instead of taking to the skies.

The next morning, Clark awoke refreshed and after breakfast he flew back to Metropolis. He went to the Daily Planet and told Perry that he would be taking some time off in order to sort out his life and to find his wife. Perry told him to take all the time he needed and to bring Lois back with him. Perry would talk to the suits upstairs to make sure that they had jobs when they returned.

Clark's next stop was the police department to report Lois missing. He had a talk with Bill Henderson and told him that Superman had consented to help him hunt for Lois. He left a picture of Lois with the police. He did not have one of her with her newly grown-out long hair, but most of the police already knew Lois on sight. They all said that they would be on the lookout for her.

Clark went to S.T.A.R. Labs and talked to Dr. Klein. He told him about the baby and how he wanted Lois to come into S.T.A.R. Labs for an examination, which was when she left him. Dr. Klein looked embarrassed, and asked gently if it was possible that Lois was having an affair and had gotten pregnant that way. Clark considered the question for a second, and then he just said, "No way." Clark's response was so positive that Dr. Klein let the subject drop. They discussed how a pregnancy could have happened, given his origin, and agreed that they needed to find Lois so they could answer the questions, but also to protect her health as there had never been a Kryptonian/human birth before, and the mother might have complications with the pregnancy.

Clark awoke suddenly and sat up in a cold sweat. He had just had a nightmare that left him trembling. He looked over at the nightstand and saw that the clock read 2:21 a.m. Clark searched his memory as to what had left him in that state of panic, but he drew a blank. He got up and went to the kitchen to get a drink of water and about the same time as he put the water to his mouth,

he heard the screams.

"Help me, Clark!!! Under the subway... help!" It was a full-fledged yell and not the nagging at the back of his subconscious. He spun into his suit before the glass hit the kitchen floor and was out the door. He listened for more directions from Lois's voice, but there was nothing. Since the only things he had ever heard were about under the streets and now something about the subway, Clark took himself below the street and flew down the subway line, following the tracks branching to the right. The tracks soon ran out, even though the tunnel seemed to stretch onward. Clark flew to the end of the tunnel and found nothing, so he reversed himself and went back to the main line and took it further into the subway system. Again the tracks seemed to branch off to the right and Clark decided to take that branch and look carefully into whether it was like the first. The tracks seemed to run into a dead end wall and Clark was about to turn around to go back to the main line when it occurred to him that he could hear machinery beyond the wall ahead of him. He engaged his vision and found that there were lights on and he heard Lois's heartbeat beyond this wall. In a scan of the area he saw that there was also a door off to the left side, cleverly hidden from view of most people. Clark went to the door and hit the brick that released the door. It opened to a large room with what looked like a high school chemistry lab and two small cots with a Lois bound to each one of them. Clark started to go toward these sleeping forms when it occurred to him to see if there was anyone else around who would stop what he was doing. He found no one nearby, but he heard a few voices in the distance. He quickly broke the handcuffs of both the sleeping forms and picked them up and flew with one Lois under each arm to S.T.A.R. Labs. He stashed them in Dr. Klein's lab and went to get a security guard to call Dr. Klein and request his presence.

Less than an hour later, Dr. Klein appeared at S.T.A.R. Labs. He found a very worried Clark, still in his Superman suit, and two female forms both appearing to be Lois. Clark told Dr. Klein that he was unable to awaken them and that he was unsure which one was his Lois. He reminded Dr. Klein that his Lois would be the one that was pregnant, so to please take care not to do anything that would hurt their unborn child. Dr. Klein started to work on the Loises, taking blood samples from each one of them. After a short time he told Clark that they had been drugged, and since both of them were pregnant he would let nature take its course and when they awoke, naturally, he would then be able to make a diagnosis about some of the other problems. Clark was so upset about the situation that he almost forgot that Lois (whichever one she was) was safe, but there were still people in that tunnel who needed to answer to the Metropolis Police.

When it finally occurred to Clark that he needed to find out why he had found two different Loises in the tunnels, he left the women in the capable hands of Dr. Klein. He then flew to the police station and asked if Bill Henderson was available for a conversation. Superman explained the situation to Detective Henderson, telling him that he had been trying to find Lois for about a week. Since Clark had filed a missing person's report the week before, Bill was familiar with the fact that Lois was missing. What surprised him was that Superman had found not one but two Loises. He knew that both Loises were now safe and agreed with Superman that it was time for someone to answer for her kidnapping. He collected some of his most trusted men, and Detective Henderson, Superman, and five well-armed policemen went into the subway system to arrest the people responsible for Lois Lane's disappearance. When they arrived at the secret entrance in the subway, Superman became upset. The machinery sound that he had encountered was quieted, and when he opened the door into the space, all the lights were shut off. Clark had a sinking feeling that in the less than five hours it took for him to bring the police back to the area, it probably had been scrubbed

clean of any clues as to the identity of the kidnappers.

Detective Henderson and his men set up their equipment and did a sweeping search of the area and found very few clues as to the identity of its occupants. They did find a young blonde female in the back room who had died in the very recent past, but there were no clues about living people who might have been there. Superman excused himself halfway through the examination and told Henderson that he would be back soon.

Clark flew back to S.T.A.R. Labs. He had a heavy heart that they had not been able to catch the people who had done this to Lois and he also was very curious about what further findings Dr. Klein had made in his absence about why there were two Loises.

When Clark appeared back at Star Labs, Dr. Klein was in a state of panic. He had a female lab assistant helping him with the delivery of a miscarriage that was spontaneously happening to one of the Loises. Superman told Dr. Klein and the female that he would be back as soon as possible with "Clark." Dr. Klein looked at him and nodded. When Clark returned in a matter of minutes, he called over his shoulder "Thank you, Superman" as he walked into the lab. He asked Dr. Klein what was happening, and was told that the Lois who had been drugged for a long period of time was losing her baby. The other Lois was still being examined and they had some conclusions about her that he would discuss as soon as this crisis was over.

Clark waited patiently as Dr. Klein finished what he had been doing and the female assistant cleaned up Lois and checked her vital signs. She pronounced that Lois was healthy, with good blood pressure and that she appeared to be coming closer to waking up. When the assistant was done attending to Lois, Clark walked over to look at the Lois who had just lost her baby. She was so very skinny and her coloring was of someone who had not seen sunshine for quite a while. He leaned over and kissed her and told her he loved her. She stirred just a bit, but did not regain consciousness.

While Dr. Klein was in his "mad scientist" mode, Clark went over to the other Lois. She looked much healthier and he noticed that she had a diamond ring and a wedding band on her left hand. It was definitely the set that he had given her. He leaned over and kissed her also, and whispered in her ear that he loved her. She did not stir. He wondered why the healthier-looking of the two would not respond when the other one did.

Dr. Klein was still busy with the lab work that he began right after the baby miscarried. Clark walked around the lab and found a stack of papers with Lois Lane's name on them. He took the papers and sat down to speed-read them. He had finished almost all of the papers when the lab assistant saw what he was doing and asked him not to read something that he could not possibly understand. He hurriedly finished the papers and told her he was sorry. Clark tried to distinguish what all the scientific jargon was, but it seemed to him that Dr. Klein had found that one of the Loises was really Lois and the other one was a clone. It also appeared that the clone was almost three months pregnant while the other Lois was just a little over one month pregnant. Both had many puncture marks mentioned as if they had been medical experiments. The unhealthy-looking Lois also had the feeding tube removed from her throat so that she would not gag as they brought her back to consciousness. The clone did not have one, but several lines of liquid running into her arms.

Clark tried to be patient waiting for Dr. Klein to come back and talk to him, but it was just taking too long. He walked back and forth from one Lois to the other, and mumbled to himself until he just could not wait any longer. He then went over to Dr. Klein who seemed to forget that there was anyone else in the room with him. Dr. Klein jumped as Clark put his hand on his shoulder. He looked over his shoulder at Clark, and asked for ten minutes more before he would try to explain all of what he had found. He told Clark that he had some real answers, but that he

would need a few more minutes to check his findings. It seemed that something he had found was making him check because it just was not possible. He promised Clark that he would talk to him in just a few more minutes.

Dr. Klein checked the Loises one more time and dismissed the assistant. He took Clark, the huge stack of papers, and they went into his office. He closed the door and asked Clark to sit down. It was not easy for Clark to calm down enough to sit still, but he made an effort. Dr. Klein asked him how much he knew about what was going on in the lab and what they had found as a result of the tests they had run. Clark told him that he had read the folder but was not sure exactly what he had read. Clark said that he thought he understood that there was a "real" Lois and a clone. Dr. Klein nodded his head and sorted through the papers. He told Clark that the Lois who had just lost her baby was the real flesh-and-blood Lois. He also told Clark that she had spent many months drugged in an unconscious state. Her hair sample showed that she had probably been under the influence of drugs for over six months. She must have had some medical attention, because the feeding tube that was running down the back of her throat kept her alive and as healthy as it was possible to be when you did not eat or any get any physical activity.

He said that the other Lois, the one that was a clone, was in a terminal state. Her body was failing, and she probably should already be dead. For some reason that was not obvious to Dr. Klein, the cloned Lois was still alive, but just barely. But Dr. Klein told Clark that the baby she was carrying seemed to be very, very healthy. The baby had a steady heartbeat, and the ultrasound they did showed that it was moving all around.

Clark's mind sputtered. If he understood this correctly, his baby was healthy but it was in a dying clone. And Lois was on the upswing, health-wise, and would soon be back to normal. His whole being wanted to go back into the lab and hold both of the Loises. He was not sure which one he was married to, but he knew that any Lois was someone who made him smile. His heart was full of love for the person who was named Lois Lane.

All of a sudden it occurred to Clark, if the other Lois had been drugged for over six months and had only gotten pregnant in the last month, she was not a willing participant in making the baby that had just died. He felt his blood beginning to boil as he thought of Lois being treated in such a manner. His mood change was noted by Dr. Klein and they had a discussion about what had happened to Lois when she was in captivity.

Dr. Klein and Clark talked for a while longer, and then Clark went into the lab and kissed both Loises. He immediately spun back into the suit and flew as Superman back to the underground where Detective Henderson and his crew were just finishing up their examination of the facilities used to house the two Loises. Henderson told Superman that they had ventured farther down the tunnels and had found living quarters where all of the occupants of the tunnels had lived. They had managed to find a few fingerprints in that series of rooms, and hoped that they would be able to match them up when they got back to the station.

Superman told Henderson that he needed also to contact Dr. Klein at S.T.A.R. Labs. He gave a brief overview of what had happened and told Henderson to tell Dr. Klein that Clark requested the police to be kept in the loop about all the developments. Superman told Henderson that Clark would be contacting him in the very near future.

Over the next two days Clark was constantly at S.T.A.R. Labs, watching Lois's gradual return to consciousness. Dr. Klein had hooked up a feeding system to Lois so that she could begin to recover in the time before she was able to eat again. He worried about the miscarriage, and consulted doctors at Met General about signs he should be looking for that Lois was entering a

danger zone. He monitored her blood pressure and temperature and took it as a good sign that she was within normal limits. He worried about dependence on the tranquilizers that Lois had in her system for such a long period of time. Dr. Klein informed Clark that there was a slight chance that Lois would awaken with a health problem that could not be cured. She had hovered for so long on the edge of life and death, it was possible that she might have brain damage. There were so many things that could go wrong, and losing the baby was just a sign that something was abnormal. Clark was very quiet and seemed to hover over Lois even more after the talk.

Late on the second day, Lois opened her eyes. Clark let out a whoop! Dr. Klein came running over to check her, but she seemed to slip back into the darkness where she had resided for so long. Dr. Klein moved her bed into an upright position, so that she was more sitting than sleeping. She squeezed Clark's hand and said his name, softly, but she did not open her eyes again. Dr. Klein looked at the monitors and told Clark that she was asleep again.

A few hours later, Lois opened her eyes again. She looked around and asked where she was. Clark told her that she was at S.T.A.R. Labs with Dr. Klein. He wondered if maybe it might be time for them to move her to a hospital, but he did not know how to propose it without hurting Dr. Klein's feelings. Dr. Klein checked Lois over and pronounced that she was healthy. He then asked her how much of the past she remembered. She told him that she had awakened occasionally and had called out for Clark. She said that as soon as she did that she was always given a shot that put her back out. She was not sure where she was held but she did say that a blonde lady doctor was there and that Lex Luthor and Asabi were there on more than one occasion. Clark asked her if she remembered, back when she wanted to marry Lex, that he had committed suicide. She thought for a long time and said she remembered that he had jumped off his building, but she was not crazy, that Lex had been there telling her that the two of them would be married as soon as he worked out a few problems. Clark did not know what to make of that, but he did not challenge Lois.

Dr. Klein called Lois's father into S.T.A.R. Labs to confer with him about Lois. Dr. Lane had not practiced general medicine for quite a few years, but both of them agreed that Lois was healthy enough to go home with Clark. Before Lois and Clark left to go home, Clark asked a lot of questions about the clone and the baby she was carrying. The clone was not in good health but for some reason she seemed to continue to live. Clark asked for a paternity test and a test to tell if the baby could survive for the five months it would take for it to become a full term baby. Dr. Lane checked over the pregnant mother and the condition of the baby. He agreed that the clone was not in good shape but that the baby was thriving. It seemed that the blood that passed between the baby and the mother seemed to get clearer of disease after it passed through the placenta. No one could explain why this was happening, but Dr. Klein confided to Clark his speculation that the baby being a super child caused a lot of things to happen that could not be explained by any other cause.

Lois met her clone before she left S.T.A.R. Labs. Clark knew that they would have to talk about the things that had happened over the past six and a half months. Life had gone on for both of them and nothing would be exactly the same again. Clark knew that he would have to tell Lois about the time she was held captive and how he had married a clone, but he put it off until he felt that they would be able to deal with it as rational and healthy adults.

Clark took Lois home. She noticed the things that had changed, the new curtains and throw rugs that the clone had picked out. Clark said she could throw away anything she did not

want. He told her to think of it as keeping or discarding items left by a visitor. Lois was so glad to be back home with Clark that she did not even fuss much about the differences.

The one thing that Lois did ask after was her engagement ring and whether they were still getting married. Clark told her they would go shopping for new rings and that they would get married as soon as possible. After some thought, Lois finally told Clark that she would rather just run off and get married instead of going through all the steps it took to replan her wedding.

A few weeks later, when Lois was healthier, Clark took her to Kansas for a visit with his parents. While they were there, the two of them went back to the jeweler where Clark had originally bought Lois's ring and they chose another ring. Clark told the clerk that she had lost her ring and that Lois would be able to choose another one this time instead of having one chosen for her. It surprised him that she chose almost the same ring, in white gold this time. She told him that she loved his taste in jewelry, and he could purchase jewelry for her again at any time. Clark laughed.

Lois just could not take her eyes off the ring on her finger. Clark decided that her good mood was a wonderful time for him to explain the last seven months to her. He took her up into the tree house and sat her down on the futon. As he put his arm around her, Clark was sure that they would be able to weather any storm that came along. He just hoped Lois would sit still long enough for them to make sense of the past seven months.

He told of their wedding and Hawaiian honeymoon and the changes he had seen in his wife. He told of the S.T.A.R. Lab tests about Kryptonite and how it was determined that he would not be able to father a child with an Earth woman. He told how his wife had gotten pregnant and then disappeared. He told how he had heard her calling to him but the sound had not lasted long enough to follow. He told her of his panic when she had disappeared and how he heard the scream for help just before all went silent again. He told of his searches for her and, when he found her, that he actually found two different Loises.

In all of the recounting of the last few months, Lois sat quietly and listened to Clark. She seemed overwhelmed by all that she heard. When Clark prompted her to tell him what she was thinking, she broke into tears. Clark gathered her up gently like a child and cradled her in his arms. He rocked her and told her how much he loved her. It took a while, but slowly Lois quit crying and started to talk. When she began, she told him a lot of what she had been thinking the last few weeks.

Lois told Clark how she was kidnapped from the room where she had been getting ready to meet him at the front of the church. She said her last memory was looking in the mirror at her makeup and catching sight of her wedding dress hanging on the back of the door in the room. She said she remembered turning around to get the dress and put it on, and smelling something sickly-sweet, then losing consciousness. She recalled waking up a few times to have Lex tell her something, or to answer questions for Asabi, and then losing consciousness again. She said she thought she had been in captivity for a little over a week and that she was so surprised that it was so many months later before she was rescued. She got tears in her eyes as she told Clark that she did understand he had not realized she was missing since her double had been living with him. Lois told of how she was slow to respond after she regained consciousness, and when she finally cleared the cobwebs enough to realize that she was being held against her will, she would call out to Clark or Superman to come and get her. She said she always was put back to sleep immediately after she called out his name.

Lois and Clark spent a few days recovering in the sunshine at the farm. During that time, they discussed getting married again. Technically they were already married, on paper at least, so it

would have to be done as a renewing-their-vows sort of thing instead of a wedding. Lois told Clark that she would prefer to just run away and get married instead of making everyone question why, after only seven months, they felt it was necessary to renew their vows. Clark told her that she was in charge of telling him when and where, and that he'd be there with a good suit on! Because Lois had just lost a baby, it would be a while longer before they could start the honeymoon, but Clark was looking forward to another honeymoon with Lois.

They decided that they would go to Las Vegas and get married. Lois went shopping for a nice dress and Clark flew back to pick up his good charcoal suit and a tie that was not too loud. While he was at the apartment, he also picked up their marriage license to take with him. He was not sure if they would need it again or not, but he tucked it into his suit pocket. He placed a call to Dr. Klein to see how the clone was doing but was told her condition, and the baby's condition, had not changed. The clone was dying, and the baby was growing steadily. With a heavy heart about the news of the clone, Clark flew back to the happiness of a wedding to Lois.

Their wedding was a simple, streamlined version of the wedding held seven months before. Lois looked radiant in a short white gown with an off-one-shoulder strap decorated in beading. She had picked a bouquet of flowers in Martha's garden and pinned a small yellow rose to Clark's lapel. They arrived at the Little White Chapel in Las Vegas and went through the motions of getting married. They were not sure of the credentials of their boss who had married them the first time, so they wanted to do it again just in case they were not legally married. He filled out the paperwork just as if it was their very first wedding. Clark kissed his beautiful bride and the two of them went to a casino right around the corner and had supper before going upstairs and beginning their honeymoon.

For all their happiness, both Lois and Clark also experienced a slight sadness as well. Their lovemaking was wonderful, but Lois was so sad that she had missed being the first that Clark had experienced. Clark was sad because Lois seemed reserved about giving herself to him fully. Both kept their thoughts to themselves, but seemed to realize that they both felt cheated.

The couple stayed for two days in Las Vegas and returned to Metropolis, both of them focused on returning to work at the *Daily Planet*. Clark had not stepped inside the Planet in over a month, and even though it looked to the rest of the world like Lois had not been back for the same period of time, it had been almost eight months since she had been there. A huge grin wrapped around her face as she stepped off the elevator and back into the bullpen. She was spotted by Perry as she came off the elevator, and the two of them hugged. Perry was in such a good mood that he grabbed Clark also and half-hugged him. He welcomed them back and asked how much of their story they could tell to the paper. Both Lois and Clark told him that they did not have the ending of the story yet, so they would hold off publishing anything until the police could get the whole story.

Real life settled in for the newlyweds. Lois slowly regained her color and weight, and looked more like her old self as each day passed. Dr. Klein kept watch over Lois and was thrilled that she had so little problem with the withdrawal of the tranquilizers from her system. The miscarriage was explained to Lois and she was sad that she had lost a baby until she realized that it was the product of rape. She knew that Clark would make a wonderful father when they had children, but she wondered if Lex Luthor had been the father of her child. She mentioned it to Dr. Klein and he said he would check the possibility. Lois also decided to visit Dr. Friskin because she just could not shake the feeling that she was cheated out of something because Clark had spent seven

months with a clone of herself. Dr. Friskin helped her understand that she was reacting to things that had happened on a subconscious level. She knew that she had been abducted, raped, had lost a child, and lived in a drugged state for months. None of those things were normal, but they were hard to deal with in real life. Lois was learning, slowly, to take each day as it came and to enjoy it.

Perry was thrilled to get his star reporters back on the job. What thrilled him even more was that Lois seemed to be back to her old self and chased after stories with a reckless abandon. It had been so long since he had seen that side of Lois. He gently reminded both Lois and Clark that they owed him a story about her abduction, but both told him that it was still too soon to have a resolution of the matter. They assured Perry that the exclusive would be the property of the *Daily Planet* as soon as the police had concluded their investigation.

As the one-month anniversary of their wedding approached, Clark realized that they needed to make peace with the months that were missing from both of their lives. He had been quiet about his life before he found Lois, and he knew that she was very curious about the differences between the two Loises. Clark decided to make her favorite chicken dish and to have the discussion while they had two days off from work. He expected a lot of tears and a lot of shouting, but also a lot of sadness about the missing seven months in their lives.

As they sat down to eat at the candlelit table that Clark prepared, Lois let all the questions that were bubbling just below the surface come up again. She was happy, she was in love, and she was content with her life, but she still had so many unanswered questions. A lazy tear drifted down her cheek as she thought about all that she had missed out on in the past seven months. She was happy, but she was also sad. How could she be both of those at the same time? Finally, not wanting to wait any longer, Lois looked at Clark and asked the first question and then the second and then went into babble mode, so Lois.

"Have you thought much about the differences between the clone and me? What was it that first tipped you off that she wasn't me? Why did she fit in so well when we all know that she was just a hollow shell of me? Didn't she do anything that tipped you off that she couldn't be the real Lois? Why was she so perfect a reproduction of me that you didn't even notice the differences? What—"

Clark reached over and firmly clamped his mouth over hers. He gently kissed her until he felt her body go limp in his arms. He put his hand up to her face and stroked her cheek. Then he pulled away from her and looked her in the eye just as the waterworks started, and Clark realized that it would be a long night of intense talks to get to the bottom of this discussion.

"Lois, my heart and soul are on the same wavelength as yours. The fact that I was fooled by a clone of you is not too surprising. I LOVE LOIS LANE!" His hand moved over her head to soothe her troubled spirit as he spoke to her. "I thought some of the changes in you were because of our marriage. I assumed, and I know now I should not have, that you had taken a leave of absence from your job to concentrate on being my wife. You changed in subtle things such as the colors of your clothes, so I didn't know whether you were trying to please me or if you just had a change of attitude. You learned to cook and I thought that was a domestic side of you that you did not know existed until after we were married."

"But these things were so different from the real me. Why did you not get suspicious when they were happening?" asked Lois in a high-pitched, whiny voice. "If you love ME why did you not question the differences?"

"Lois, I love you. If you want to wear men's clothing and work in a sewer, it is okay with me. Whatever will make you happy will make me happy." Clark looked deeply into Lois's

eyes. He hoped that she was understanding what he was trying to say to her.

"In other words, you were being Clark and you were allowing me to be Lois, even though it wasn't Lois, really. I get what you are saying, but didn't you ever wonder what had happened to the me who wanted to wear suits and dangle over the edge trying to get a story? Did you ever wonder why she left?"

Clark sat still holding Lois to his chest as he contemplated how he would answer Lois. "Honey..." he choked out and then swallowed hard. "I fell in love with you before I knew those things about you. It was such an immediate and intense feeling I had toward you that your personality had nothing to do with it. I loved you before I even knew you."

"Oh, Clark, I guess I'll never understand this completely. But, I am soooooo glad that you love me."

Early one morning the phone rang at the Daily Planet. Jimmy answered it and directed the call to Clark. The caller had asked for either Clark or Lois, and since Lois was busy in Perry's office, Jimmy told Clark to pick up on line three.

"Clark Kent."

There was a pause on the other end of the line, and then a voice said, "Dr. Klein here from S.T.A.R. Labs. I thought you would like to know that the clone died early this morning. Since she had no family, we will just dispose of the body and that will be the end of it all."

"What happened to the baby? Did it die also?" Clark asked with a heavy heart.

"No, he was old enough to survive being born, but I do not think he will survive much longer. He is a very premature, only about a pound and a half," Dr. Klein explained. "We have put him in an incubator, and will send him over to Dr. Sall in the pediatric unit of the hospital. He's the best at giving these little ones a chance to live. Do you wish to be kept up to the moment about his progress?"

"Yes, please, Dr. Klein. Thank you for telling me about the events of the past few hours. I will tell Lois and we want to be kept in the loop about all that happens."

When Lois ended her meeting with Perry, she came out carrying her notes loosely in her arms. As she came closer to Clark's desk, it was obvious to her that he was unhappy about something. She stopped at his desk, and asked what had happened.

Clark put the phone back and turned around to Lois. "Honey," he said, "we need to go somewhere we can have a long talk. Want to go home or an island I know in the Pacific? We need to have a talk about something I have been trying not to talk about."

An hour later, Lois and Clark were locked into a deep and passionate time after a heartwrenching talk about the clone that had died and the little guy who was so small that his chance of making it was very microscopic. The sadness could not be explained, because the clone was a part of Lois and a memory to Clark, but she was just a substitute for the real thing. And the baby was Clark's child with someone other than Lois. His heart was broken by the thought that his son might not survive, but he knew that the child only had a small chance to make it.

As darkness fell over the apartment, both of them awoke from their nap and as they went to make supper they did so with a sense of loss. It occurred to Lois that maybe they should have a memorial service for the clone, as a means of gaining closure. She mentioned it to Clark, and he said he would talk to Dr. Klein to see if they could have a memorial service to celebrate the life and times of Louise.

The phone call came early the next morning. "I'm sorry, but

Dr. Sall just called me to tell me that the baby did not survive. He was just too small." Clark asked a few questions and then was told that they would cremate both of them the next day, and give them a short service. Lois asked if the death certificate could read LOUISE KENT. With very heavy hearts they decided to name the son they never got to hold, James Perry Kent, which would be reflected on his birth and death certificates.

Clark kept in contact with Dr. Klein who was examining the umbilical cord from the baby and had stored the blood from it to make the hybrid-blood type that was needed to help Lois and Clark conceive. When Dr. Klein called and said he wanted to talk to Superman about a health problem that they had encountered, Clark made a snap decision not to tell Lois yet about the medical problem with conceiving a child. As soon as Clark could clear his schedule, Superman made a quick trip to S.T.A.R. Labs to see Dr. Klein. They talked about the fact that the child had supplied the missing blood type necessary for their incompatible biologies to have children together.

Clark/Superman asked Dr. Klein if he should wait until Lois was ready for children, or whether there was a shelf life to the blood sample? He was assured that the child could be conceived at any time when the two of them were ready to have a child. Somehow that information freed his mind. He understood that the two of them could have a child, but there was no hurry for that to happen. Lois had had a very rough year and his had been nothing to write home about.

Weeks went by and life got back to normal. Clark was relieved to see that the "old Lois" was back and that he was married to the one woman in the whole world who made him want to have the next heartbeat. He was also very happy at all the domestic things that they had accomplished. They had purchased a beautiful, turn-of-the-century townhouse and spent many hours making it into their own world. After they finished redecorating of the master bedroom, they took on the three other bedrooms. One by one they took shape until there was only the small room nearest to the master bedroom remaining; Lois was the one who mentioned that the room was perfect for a nursery. Even though they had not been married but a few months, and a child was not in their present plans, Lois pointed out that it would be stupid to make the small room into anything else and then have to redo it. So, they painted the room a soft yellow and put a cute rubber duck border above the chair rail of the room. Lois shopped until she found a set of curtains that had yellow ducks and green bunnies and pink giraffes on a white background. She thought they were so cute, she bought them without even wondering whether Clark would approve. When she got back home Lois went into the room and hung the curtains. She moved a white rocking chair from the front porch upstairs and when Clark came home he found her sitting in the center of the room looking at the empty room with the new curtains and the soft paint. His heart jumped at the thought of a child with his beloved. He stooped down to pick her up and sit her on his lap, then he kissed her on the cheek and asked her what she was thinking.

"Well, I guess I never really thought about us having a baby of our own." Lois was close to tears, but she seemed to not know what to say.

"Sweetheart, are you saying that you want to have a baby soon?" asked Clark.

"No, but I do want us to consider how it would be for us to include another person in this marriage. Do you think we'd be good parents to a baby? Or do you think that a career-driven person like myself should not even consider a child. After all, I have no basis for thinking that I would be able to care for a child. My role models were so fractured that if it hadn't been for your parents, I'm not sure I'd even want to consider having a baby. All

I know right now is that this is a cute nursery and when we are ready for a baby, he or she will enjoy this room."

Clark got up and put her back in the rocker and told Lois to sit still for just a little longer. She heard a swish of Superman taking off. About ten minutes later he returned to find Lois still sitting in the rocker. He walked into the room in his Superman get-up, carrying a white bassinette in his hands. He explained that it was his from his mother's attic and that she had offered it months ago, but he did not think it would be welcomed back then. He placed it against the wall near the window and stood back and looked at the effect of the small room with the bed and rocker, in the small decorated space. Both of them let out a sigh that they did not know they had inside of them.

Lois was in a tizzy. She was cleaning the already clean townhouse and was on verge of tears about everything. For a career woman, she was being so very hormonal about the visit of her parents and Clark's parents for the weekend. As she restacked the magazines on the coffee table for the fourth time, she sat down on the floor and then jumped back up all in the space of a few seconds. Clark arrived just as she was bent over trying to straighten up the rug where she had matted it down by sitting on it. He stopped and watched Lois for a moment before going over and putting his arms around her to still her manic reactions. Her response was to burst out in tears and tell him she had changed her mind about asking the parents over for a visit to their house. Clark drew her up to him and ran his large hand over her back in a soothing manner. He kissed her hair and waited for her to tell him what he could do to help her.

"Oh, Clark. I'm so inept about all this domestic stuff. I can't clean, I can't cook, I can't even decorate this place right. I should have had a real decorator come in and do this place. Then I wouldn't be so panic-stricken about having visitors for the weekend. My parents are going to find fault with everything, and your parents are going to shake their heads about this woman who married their SUPER son. I am going to disappoint everyone."

"Lois, why would you say that? This is our style, and we are very happy with the way it turned out. Why would you care if anyone was upset about our taste in furnishings or paint colors or the way the magazines are stacked, if they look right to us?"

Clark looked into her eyes as he kept stroking her on the back.

"I just wanted everything to be perfect. My mother always had a decorator to furnish her house and your mom has such a wonderful casual atmosphere that both of them are going to shake their heads at the way I chose this mismatch of furniture. And do we put your parents in the peach room with all the quilts on the walls and show them that I don't have a clue about country style? Or do we put them in the off-white room with the cobalt blue and neon green furniture? Neither is suitable for them, and my mother is going to hate either one we put her into. And a nursery for a non-existent baby that is already decorated before we even find out if a child is a boy or girl. What made me want to do that to that room?" Lois ran out of steam about the same time she finished the rant about the furnishings.

"Lois, this is our house. It is perfect. And it is perfect because it is our taste and our choices. If it is not acceptable for the parents, then that is their problem. You would hate to have those designer sofas from your old apartment back here. You learned that *decorator* is a buzzword for *uncomfortable*; we did it just right."

Clark moved slightly away from Lois as he looked into her tear-stained face. She wiped her eyes and followed him into the kitchen as he started supper. They had a quiet lull before Clark left to get his parents. Within two hours the house was lit up and full of chatter and people preparing to sit down for a meal. Lois had calmed down a little by the time that they were all together.

Lois took her mother and mother-in-law through the second floor of her house and asked which bedroom each couple would like to occupy. Martha deferred to Ellen, and after Ellen chose the cream-colored room with the king-sized bed, Martha told Lois she loved the way that the family quilts were displayed in the room that she and Jonathan would share. As they neared the master bedroom, Lois slowed down at the nursery and opened the door for the prospective grandmothers to see the room. Lois had added a mint green rag rug in the center of the small room and put animal prints on the wall. The only other piece of furniture was a small, three-drawer chest of white wood with yellow, pink, and mint green handles. Both of the women let out an "awwww" and Martha asked Lois if she had an announcement she wanted to make. When the negative answer came, both women said they loved the nursery and that when the time came their baby would have a wonderful room in which to grow up.

By the time they reached the master bedroom, Lois's mood was elevated. She showed her female relatives the room where Clark and she retreated from the rest of the world. It was so comfortable with the extra pillows and the soft tones and oak furniture. It was obvious that Lois was feeling much better about her choices. Watching others see it for the first time made her confident of the beauty and simplicity of her decorating skills.

Lois took them upstairs to the third floor that was almost untouched by decorating yet. It showed just how an old house without Lois's gentle touch would look. There were three rooms under the eaves of the house that were not done yet, and made the second floor look like it was a bed and breakfast in comparison to the third floor.

As the females of the Lane and Kent households returned to the first floor, Lois's attitude was changed completely. They all sat down in the living room and talked about the past, the present, and the future. It was about midnight in the townhouse before all were bedded down. When Lois was alone with Clark, she was so affectionate to Clark that he wondered what had happened to change the manic pre-supper Lois into this relaxed and affectionate person. He did not spend too much time thinking about it, but took advantage of the fact that she was in such a good mood.

As they finished their lovemaking, Clark sat straight up in bed. Lois was disappointed that she would not get to fall asleep on his chest but would have to do with a lonely bed while Clark took care of an emergency. Instead of spinning into his Superman uniform, he reached over for his glasses and his robe. Lois sat up in bed and asked why he was rushing away from their bed if he wasn't needed as Superman. He handed her robe to her, and told her to follow him downstairs. She asked again what was the problem, and he kissed her, hard, and told her to follow him. She did as he asked.

As they walked down the stairs, Lois heard a sound of a small animal whimpering. She headed toward the front door while Clark headed toward the sectional sofa of the living room. He reached for her arm and pulled her after him. As he got to the sofa, there was a basket with a small baby wrapped in the cobalt blue Superman blanket with the crest of the House of El on it. In the basket was a note that simply said, "Lois and Clark, this baby belongs to you."

Clark picked up the baby and checked it over with his glasses off the end of his nose. He handed the baby to Lois and told her to hold it until he got back. Then he rushed out the window to see who had left the baby. He found no one, so he came back in through the window just as his parents came down the stairs. He closed the living room window and went toward Lois who was gently holding the child. Martha and Jonathan came into the room and started to ask questions when the child let out a huge yelp. Lois put the baby over her shoulder and patted him gently

on the back. He seemed to settle down a little. A few minutes later Ellen came down the stairs. Clark grabbed the blanket that the baby was wrapped in and put it under the cushion of the sofa. Lois continued to stroke the child.

"What is this?" said Ellen. "Where did this baby come from?" Lois and Clark looked at each other.

"We heard this baby down here, and we JUST got here ourselves. I don't know the answers to those questions. There was a note attached to the child, 'Lois and Clark, this baby belongs to you.' We do not know what that means. But we are not set up for a child. We have a nursery, but no formula, no bottles, no diapers, no clothes other than what he is wearing, and we need to do something about that, I guess. Mom, how about you and Ellen help Lois care for this little fellow while I go shopping."

"Clark, how about you help Lois and we'll go shopping?" said Ellen. Jonathan and Martha looked at her with a look on their faces that said it wasn't a good idea. They pleaded fatigue and said that it would probably be a better use of time for the youngsters to do the shopping. Just then Sam arrived and agreed that he was not in any shape to shop. Sam looked the baby over and decided that he was a healthy little guy. Clark rushed upstairs to slip into a pair of jeans and a t-shirt. When he landed back on the first floor he was welcomed by the sight of Lois and her parents and his parents all cooing over the little fellow. He slowed down and asked for a list of things he needed to buy, and wrote a list of things suggested by Lois and the parents. They all assumed from the size of the child that he would need the newborn-sized diapers and clothes. He was a very young baby.

Clark went to the garage in the basement level of the townhouse and drove the Jeep about four blocks before he parked it and took off, flying to the Walmart in the next town. He filled the list, and picked up a few soft toys that caught his eye. He flew back to the Jeep and loaded the purchases into the rear. When he arrived at home, he picked up less than half of his purchases and took them inside to find the small baby sucking peacefully on Lois's finger. He was not in distress at all. He seemed to be taking in all the love being shown to him by the people that were sitting down near Lois. Clark quickly made a bottle for him.

After he drained the bottle and they changed him, the new little fellow was taken to the nursery and left in the bassinette that had been Clark's as a baby. Lois and Clark stood over the sleeping child, watching him for a while. The exhausted grandparents had gone back to bed, so Clark went to the garage and got the rest of the purchases he had not brought in earlier. He pocketed the receipt that showed he had gotten everything miles from where he should have been. Clark also brought the blanket that the baby had been wrapped in and put it on the top shelf of the baby's closet.

Lois was so tired, she barely let Clark know how puzzled she was about the origin of the child. Clark said he would take the baby to Dr. Klein's lab in the morning and have a paternity test run on him. He did not think that the baby was a test-tube birth, but he did not have a clue about where this child came from. But, both the exhausted parents were very sure that they could and would love this child.

After breakfast, the family all decided to go in different directions to accomplish a few different things. The grandparents had a list of things they wished to purchase for their first grandchild. Both sets of parents, the Lanes and the Kents, climbed into the Lane's Cadillac to go to the toy store that they had seen in downtown Metropolis. Lois and Clark loaded the baby into the car seat that Clark had purchased and installed in the Jeep, and headed toward S.T.A.R. Labs. By the time they realized that they should have called to see if Dr. Klein was available, they had almost arrived. Lois called Dr. Klein's lab on her cell phone just as they arrived in the parking lot. They both

breathed a sigh of relief as they saw his motorcycle parked near the entrance to his lab. When Dr. Klein seemed to expect them, they cleared security quickly and the three Kents marched upstairs to Dr. Klein's lab. They were met by a smiling Dr. Klein. When they quizzed him about the baby, he admitted he should have written a better note, but had wanted to deliver the child to them as he was not capable of caring for a baby so young. Dr. Klein asked Lois and Clark to take a seat so that he could explain why this baby was theirs.

"You remember that baby that Louise had back a few months ago? Well, there was a clerical error when he arrived at the hospital. At the same time he was being admitted, the nursery was taking in quads who were just as premature. He was mistakenly registered into the nursery as a member of the four babies born at the same time. One of those male children did not survive and was cremated as your child. This fellow thrived better than the other children, and was ready to be released from the hospital when it was found that he could not possibly be the child of the other parents. It was then that they realized that the baby was yours and not a member of the other family. Since he was being discharged from the hospital late last night, I decided to deliver him to you and explain it later. I knew he would be okay downstairs until he needed to be tended to, and then he would make his presence known to you guys. I take it you are happy about it?" Dr. Klein seemed to think for a second before he concluded, "Oh, I need to change the death notice of James Perry Kent as a mistake, because he is in good health and very much alive."

The smiles on the faces of Lois and Clark filled in the question whether this little fellow was a blessing or a burden. Lois loosened his restraints in the car seat and took little Jamie out of his seat. She looked at him with the awe of a new mother. Clark reached over and drew his wife and child nearer to him. Both parents were stunned, but happy about this change of status. All of a sudden they were a happy little family of three.

Dr. Klein was expected at the townhouse for breakfast. Clark was fixing a farm-style breakfast while Jamie, a growing toddler, sat in his highchair eating the loose cereal that Clark had put on the tray. As Lois arrived in the kitchen, Jamie broke out in a smile that showed off his four new teeth. Lois leaned over and kissed her son. Just then, Clark turned around and stuck his puckered lips out for Lois to share with him too.

"What exactly did Dr. Klein say again?" asked Lois. "I did not think there could be any more surprises left for us." She planted a kiss on his lips.

"I told you about the tests he ran about a year ago. We forgot all about the results as our lives changed so much. I got the impression he had something to tell us about Jamie's conception and how you and I are going to be able to give him ten brothers and sisters." Clark backed away from the swat he knew was coming from Lois with that remark.

"Well, Mr. Kent, you are going to have to get a few more wives to handle all that birthin' and raisin' of yous chillens." Lois's face was covered by a huge smile as she spoke.

Clark escaped to the front door and let a surprised Dr. Klein in before he knocked at the door. The two men shook hands and Clark led the way back to the kitchen. Lois was busy setting the table, and she welcomed Dr. Klein as their shy little boy spotted someone he did not know. Jamie ducked his little head down into the cereal of his highchair tray.

Dr. Klein just stared at the little boy. He remembered the one-and-a-half pound newborn that everyone had thought would never survive. Jamie was now almost a year old, and even though he was smaller than most children his age, it was obvious that he was healthy and very bright.

The three adults sat down and started to pass the many

servings of breakfast around to each other. Lois brought the coffee carafe to the table and it was not long until all of them were eating eggs with cheese, ham slices, cantaloupe wedges, strawberries, and pancakes. Bites of all of the different dishes were put on Jamie's tray, and he forgot to be shy as he stuffed his mouth. He seemed to squeal every time he ate a piece of strawberry, but it didn't stop him from eating them.

When breakfast was over, Lois took Jamie out of the highchair and cleaned him up. Clark told Dr. Klein, Lois, and Jamie that he would be in the other room in a few seconds and he put the rush on cleaning up the kitchen. He sat down on the sofa and reached for his son from his wife just seconds after the others had taken a seat. Clark took a bottle out of his pocket and started to feed Jamie.

As everything quieted down, an impatient Lois started the conversation. She knew that Dr. Klein would eventually start it, but she was curious.

"Dr. Klein, why did you request this meeting? What do you know that we do not know?"

Dr. Klein looked at Clark who was intent on getting Jamie to settle down for a morning nap. "Clark, is there anything you want to explain to Lois about our experiments of a year ago? I don't want to say anything that would make you uncomfortable. I know that Lois was not around during the time when we were doing all the experiments with Kryptonite. So do you want to start the conversation or is it all right if I get down to the scientific facts of this little boy and your ability to have another child any time you want to try for another?" Dr. Klein sat patiently as he waited for Clark to tell him what to say.

"Honey, you remember that I told you in passing that it was impossible for an Earth woman and a Kryptonian man to have a child? Do you also remember about the time we were supposed to get married, but you were kidnapped, that I was running into a problem with my powers coming and going with a headache? Well, we got sidetracked when Louise got pregnant with Jamie and let all of the other stuff go. So, there was a medical test we ran last week that reminded Dr. Klein and myself that we had done all of this back a year ago." Clark looked back down at his son who was gently emptying the bottle that his dad held.

"Just tell us all of it, Dr. Klein, and if I have questions I will ask them along the way or after you are done," answered Lois.

"Well, when Clark was having days where he lost his powers, he was a newlywed. We did not have much time to do all the tests we really needed to do because Clark was working at the *Daily Planet* and as Superman, and had a new wife, so he needed time at home. So we ran a series of tests to see if we could make him immune to Kryptonite. Along the way, I discovered that an exposure to Kryptonite also seemed to make his DNA change slightly. When he was under the influence, he was closer to a human in blood type than usual. It was about that time that Louise got pregnant. We did not know at the time that she was a clone, but since I examined her when she was pregnant with Jamie, I found that her cloning and the introduction of Kryptonite caused her to no longer be incompatible with Clark. As a matter of fact, if she had lived, she would have been able to get pregnant just like two parents on Earth get pregnant." Dr. Klein paused for a few seconds and looked at Clark and Lois to see if they were getting what he was telling them.

Because neither of them said anything, Dr. Klein continued. "When Jamie was born, I put his umbilical cord blood in the freezer and did a few tests on his blood. I kept the blood to make a vaccine for Lois so that she would be able to have another child. In the process, I found out that Jamie has Kryptonian characteristics and will most likely be able to have his father's powers."

That news caused a smile to break out on both of the parents' faces. Clark slowly pulled the empty bottle out of the mouth of

the sleeping child. He gently floated up from the sofa and took Jamie to his nursery for his morning nap. In a matter of seconds he was back and told Dr. Klein to continue.

"The first mix of Kryptonite that I made seemed to cause Clark to not have the flashbacks where he would lose his powers. About that time we found out that you had been kidnapped and that he was married to a clone. The experiment was just forgotten, but it seems that he has not had a problem since taking the shot of red, green and yellow Kryptonite mix. And since he took it before Louise conceived, it seems that Jamie has an immunity to Kryptonite. He should not have the problems that you had with losing all your powers and being in such pain when green Kryptonite is around him."

Lois and Clark looked at each other. No parent wants their child to have pain if it is not necessary. Their grins were evidence that they thought Dr. Klein had given them good news.

"So, other than Kryptonite exposure, and the fact that you were not able to naturally conceive, you two have any other problems?" Dr. Klein was in a jovial mood and it was evident that he was happy to deliver good news to the couple.

"Yes," said Lois with a grin on her face. "You have a way to make house payments go away?"

Dr. Klein stayed a while longer, and had a third cup of coffee before he left to go back to the lab.

Lois juggled the baby on her hip as she opened the mailbox in the vestibule of the townhouse. Jamie was walking, and if she set him down even for a second, he would be gone like a shot. Since there was a steep staircase leading to the main doorway, she tightened her grip on Jamie. As she let herself into the living room, she took his little jacket off and set him down to run over to the toy box that was the newest addition to the living room. After she was sure that the front door was secured and Jamie was busy, she began to open the pile of mail she had collected as she came into the townhouse. The first letter was from her mom about the newest pre-school for Jamie. Ellen was interested in Jamie getting into the Winky Tink School with the rest of the socially climbing toddlers. Lois and Clark were very happy with the *Daily Planet's* daycare, so Lois just threw the letter into a discard pile. The second letter was a statement from her gasoline credit card. She knew that it was important as they were able to get reimbursed for gasoline from work. It went into the pile on the end table. Lois picked up the third letter and noticed that it was from a bank that she was not familiar with and that it was addressed to Lois Lane-Kent. She usually used the names individually, with Lane as her name at work and Kent as her name at home. She ripped open the top of the envelope and let out a shocked scream. Jamie looked up from his stacking of toys.

"Superman, I need you NOW!" Lois hoped her timing was not bad, but she could not believe what she was seeing.

A whooshing noise happened and Jamie looked to the front window to see his dad come into the living room. "Lois, what's the problem?" asked a very worried Clark/Superman.

Lois thrust the letter in her hand into the sight of her husband. He read the letter in seconds and asked her what it was. Lois did not know the answer to that question.

Clark took the letter from Lois, kissed her and Jamie and went back out the front window.

A few hours later, as Clark walked through the front door to greet his little family, he handed the letter back to Lois. He told her to follow him into the kitchen as he started supper. He had learned a few things about the letter, and drawing upon memories of that time, he was able to draw a few conclusions for Lois.

"Honey, the notice about the bank account that we received today was just recently forwarded from a postal mailbox that Louise had purchased. When she no longer paid for it, the mail must have collected for quite a while before they decided to send

a test letter to you at this address. Anyway, I went to the bank and found out that a Lois Lane-Kent opened the account just after I got back from the honeymoon with Louise. There was also a safe-deposit box that was delinquent. The bank was just about to open it, and we would have been very embarrassed. It seems that Louise left notes of how Lex Luthor contracted with her to be a 'stand-in' for you. The notes in the box also led me to think she might have been promised more money. Actually, I only got a chance to examine the contents of the box by x-ray, so you will need to read it all tomorrow. There was \$100,000 in new bills in the safe-deposit box, and as you can see, three million dollars in the account. You will have to show your identification to get it, but I don't think we will have problems ever again with cash flow. And, we will know more about this arrangement between Luthor and Louise and how we came into this money after you get a chance to read the notes."

Lois sat back and reread the statement from the bank. She looked back up at Clark and smiled. Jamie came into her vision, and she looked over at him and grinned. Then she looked back at her husband.

"Since we are not going to be living paycheck to paycheck any more, you want to call Dr. Klein and have a brother or sister for Jamie?"

A huge smile broke out on Clark's face. He seemed unable to talk. As he cleared his throat, he reached over and stroked Lois's face.

"Oh, Lois, you make me feel like the richest man in the whole world. And that was before you came into all the money in the bank. I cannot think of anything I would rather do with you besides make another beautiful baby."

I somehow think that we should end this tale with "AND THEY ALL LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER."

Many thanks to my Beta, Hank Bernath. He had a very gentle touch with this piece of work. Thank you so much for helping me out.

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