

Mxyover

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Summary: An elderly Lois Lane Kent gets an amazing offer from a visitor with the ability to alter time and space.

Disclaimer: This is a fanfic based on the television show, Lois and Clark: The New Adventures of Superman. I have no claim on the pre-existing characters whatsoever, nor am I profiting by their use. The new story elements are mine. No infringement is intended by this work.

Lois loved the view of the mountains. After all those years in the city, who could have imagined that she'd fall in love with open grasslands and distant snow covered peaks. A lot had changed in the 124 years she'd been on this planet. Her own role in those changes left her in a constant state of disbelief.

But all good things must end. She'd been feeling death hovering nearby for several weeks now. Thanks to the combination of her husband's care and advances in medical science, she'd lived comfortably, far beyond the span she'd expected as a young woman. But the race against time was a contest that everyone lost in the end.

She was in their sitting room waiting for Clark to bring her lunch. Thanks to his nature, he was in much better shape than she was, but even he showed some of the ravages of time. Perhaps it was selfish, but she was forever thankful that they'd grown old together. He'd aged a little more slowly than her, but he had aged.

Without warning Lois felt a sudden sharp twinge in her chest. For the briefest second the pain was intense, but then it disappeared as suddenly as it had come.

"Excuse me," came a pleasant voice from behind her.

She turned around. She saw an elderly woman that she didn't recognize. The visitor looked to be in her seventies and reminded Lois of several of her granddaughters. She was surprised that anyone could be there without Clark having introduced them, but once she passed the century mark, she'd learned not to worry about things beyond her control. "Do I know you?" Lois asked.

"No, but you can call me Ellie."

"It's nice to meet you, Ellie. Can I help you?"

"Actually, I'm here to help you. Do you remember a... person who calls himself Mxyzptlk?"

Lois rolled her eyes. "Of course I do. He's been a thorn in our sides a couple of times. Is he about to make another appearance?"

She chuckled. "No, the portal that allows him access to this plane is not due to open again for many years. But he's the reason that I'm here."

"Well, if you're going to pull the kind of stunt that he usually does, I don't think either Clark or I are strong enough to do anything about it. But I warn you, the family is well aware of his capabilities."

"I'm not here to cause any trouble at all," Ellie said reassuringly. "I'm here as... well, as a sort of apology."

"Apology?"

"Yes, you see I come from a place very similar to that of Mxyzptlk." She paused as if to consider her words. "You remember that he describes himself as coming from the 5th dimension?"

"Yes," Lois agreed cautiously.

"You can think of me as coming from the 6th dimension. My abilities are similar to Mxyzptlk's, but I'm far more powerful."

Great, someone who can cause even more trouble, Lois thought. "Why are you here?" she asked, a tone of displeasure creeping into her voice.

"As I said, I'm here to help. Lois, you need to understand that most of the inhabitants of Mxyzptlk's plane are fine entities. And those who aren't are generally confined to their own plane. Mxyzptlk is the exception. He is powerful, clever, and inclined to disrupt the lives of beings whose only fault is being less powerful than he."

Lois tried to relax. "So what does that have to do with you?"

"You can think of me as an adjuster. Where necessary, I intervene to prevent the disruptions caused by beings such as Mxyzptlk."

"So where were you all those times he caused so much trouble for Clark and me?" Lois asked. Despite her long years, she still had trouble tolerating people who would not get to the point.

"Because of the presence of you and your husband, Mxyzptlk's actions actually resulted in positive impacts on your world. They were small, but each time he interfered, there was a net positive result.

"So why are you here now?"

"Because you suffered at his hands," she said simply. "We allowed him to interfere because of the benefit to your plane, but we felt that we owed you a small measure of compensation for the challenges you were forced to endure."

"That's not necessary," Lois said. "Clark and I were happy to do it."

Ellie smiled. "Of course, that's exactly the point. In any case, I'm here to give you your gift."

"Fine," Lois muttered in a resigned tone. "But couldn't you have given us a reward when we were young enough to enjoy it? Why did you wait so long?"

"This was the only possible time," Ellie said cryptically. She walked around to the window that Lois had been looking out of. "Do you see the eagle?" she asked, pointing at a bird in the distance.

Lois looked more carefully. There was a large golden eagle less than a quarter of a mile away. The bird's presence wasn't unusual near her home. What was unusual was the fact that the majestic bird was frozen in the air. "It isn't moving," Lois commented.

Ellie turned to face her. "Haven't you wondered why Clark hasn't interrupted us? With his hearing you know he'd be concerned about a stranger appearing in your room."

"I was beginning to wonder about that," Lois admitted.

Ellie walked back across the room and sat down in the chair facing Lois's own. "From the perspective of entities on your plane, the greatest difference between your people and mine is time. As is true to a lesser extent with Mxyzptlk, for my kind, the dimension that you call time is a malleable thing. We can control it or move from point to point as easily as I can walk across this room."

"You've stopped time," she accused.

"Yes. Do you remember a sharp pain just before I appeared?"

"Yes."

"That was the first shock of your death. In this particular variant of your linear existence, this instant would be the end of your life. I'm here now to do you that small favor that I mentioned."

"You're going to save my life?"

"No. I'm here to give you the chance to go back and change something in your past. You will have the opportunity to live your life again from that point forward."

"You can't be serious," Lois said in disbelief.

"I am. The choice is yours, but I suggest that you go back to a time when you were relatively young. I dare say that you would find only a minimal benefit if you were to go back only a few days or weeks."

"Will I retain my memories?"

"Yes. You will carry with you all that you know now. But you must realize that your presence with your memories of the future will create ripples in your time stream. Many will be small, but others will be significant. Things will not be exactly the same. But of course, that is the point."

"Then I don't want to go at all," Lois insisted. "I won't risk hurting Clark or my family. If my presence will change the future, who knows what damage I might cause?"

Ellie smiled knowingly. "I understand. I promise you that this is not a trap. When you select a point in time to which you would like to return, I'll inspect the time line that plays forward from that point. If I see anything that you would find negative, I'll warn you and suggest that you pick another destination. As I said, I'm here to give you a gift, not to cause you pain."

"So you really mean that this can only work out for the better?"

"I can only guarantee so much. The paths that define your cone of probability are nearly infinite. I can survey the cone for all likely outcomes. However, you retain your free will. If you chose to deliberately follow a destructive path, then you can disrupt your future. I will look for indicators and do my best to warn you away from a path where that would be likely if such exists based on your destination."

The chance to share another life with Clark was tempting. And better, what if she could meet Clark even earlier? "Could you send me back to when I was a teen? I'd love to head for Smallville and be with Clark that much sooner."

Ellie closed her eyes for a few seconds. "No. There are significant negatives that would result in most possible paths if you were to go back to a time before you met your husband. Remember, you will have your memories of the future, but he will only have his own experiences. If you, with all your knowledge and life experience, meet him too soon, he will misunderstand and fear you."

"Oh. So I should pick a time soon in our relationship, but not too soon."

"That would be my advice."

Lois considered for a long moment. "How about..."

"That's perfect!" Ellie said.

"You can read my mind?" Lois said, shocked.

"I can hear some of your thoughts. As I told you, I'm far more powerful than Mxyzptlk."

"In that case, I'm ready," Lois said suddenly.

"Remember what I said. Just because this path is at least as good for you as your original, that doesn't mean you're invulnerable. You still have to work to live."

"I understand."

"Take a moment before you go. Think of what you remember from that time. You need to be ready to step back into that life."

Lois fixed that scene in her mind. It had been so painful the first time around. It would be better now. "I'm ready," she said after only a few seconds.

"It was nice to meet you, Lois."

A thought suddenly occurred to Lois. "Wait!" she said abruptly.

"Yes?" asked Ellie.

"What about Clark. He did all the heavy lifting those times we had to deal with Mxyzptlk. Does he get a gift?"

Ellie smiled knowingly. "Of course, this is also his gift. Consider the impact that your current knowledge and feelings will have on him early in your relationship."

She had to concede that Ellie was probably right. "Okay, now

I'm ready," she said.

Lois felt a warm wave hit her. Then she felt an echo of that shooting pain in her chest. She closed her eyes in shock, but in an instant it was gone. Now the silence of her room was replaced by the bustle of city sounds from a century ago.

She opened her eyes to find Clark's face only a few feet away. She's almost forgotten how handsome he'd looked when they'd met. But she knew that look. Something was very wrong. "And Luthor? Do you love him?" Clark asked in an accusatory tone.

This wasn't right. "What?" she asked.

"Do you love Luthor? You say you don't feel that way about me. Do you really feel that way about him?"

This was a few seconds too late. How could Ellie do this? Lois had chosen that moment specifically to save Clark from the pain her answer had caused him. Lois was supposed to arrive before Clark confessed his love.

"Lois?"

She had to stop this now. Lois lunged at Clark and threw her arms around his neck. "I'm sorry," she pleaded. "I didn't mean that. I do love you. I'll always love you."

Clark was silent for a moment. "But... I... Lois, I don't understand."

It bothered her that he hadn't pulled her into his arms. But he had to be in shock at her sudden extreme change in attitude. That was probably why Ellie had refused to send her back to a time before they'd first met. This Clark hadn't been the love of her life for the last ninety or so years.

She backed away and slid her hands down his arms so that their fingers were entwined. "Clark, I know this is sudden, but I can't explain everything here. I do love you. I can't imagine loving anyone else."

"But how... Then why... why are you considering Luthor's proposal?"

"I'm not. Not now. I'm not the woman I was just a few minutes ago," she said as she ransacked her memory to recall this conversation. "And you were right. I never loved him. It's just that the loss of the Planet had me all confused. Lex... he arranged all this to knock down my support system. I should have seen it, but I was too busy wallowing in grief."

Clark looked as confused as she'd ever seen him. But Lois knew she had to be the one that navigated this point for them. She put her hand to his cheek. "Clark, the truth is that you've been too good and too close every day for me to notice what was happening. I've been slowly falling in love with you too. I think I first felt it when we were chained together waiting to die at EPRAD. I didn't see it then, but I'm sure that's when it started."

Now he believed her. She could see it. "Lois, I..."

She put a finger to his lips to silence him. Then she leaned in for the kiss she'd wanted from the instant she'd arrived. As their lips touched she felt the flood of a lifetime loving this man pass through her. Clark's kisses had always moved her like nothing else. The kiss had stretched on for several delicious moments when she suddenly noticed a familiar sensation of floating.

She broke the kiss suddenly. They were almost certainly under surveillance. She didn't care if Lex's spies saw her kissing Clark. In this time at this place she had all the advantages. She knew what Lex was really about, she knew who blew up the Planet, and she knew about that damn Kryptonite cage. But it wouldn't do for anyone to see Clark start to float as a result of their kiss.

Clark was looking a little confused at the way the kiss ended. Now she just had to smile. He always had zoned out when they kissed. "I'd love to do more of this," she said. "But not in such a public place. Can we go back to your apartment?"

"Don't you need to get back to LNN?" he asked.

"No," she said dismissively. "I'm done there."

Now he looked confused again. “I don’t understand. Just a little while ago...”

She squeezed their still-clasped hands. “I have some amazing things to tell you. You’re going to find some of them hard to believe, but I have to ask you to trust me. You’ve said you love me, and I know that’s true. But do you trust me?”

He suddenly looked like a kid caught with his hand in the cookie jar. Then it hit her. He hadn’t trusted her with his secret yet. And her poor, lovable husband-to-be got all fidgety when he had to tell a direct lie. “Come closer,” she said.

He leaned in and she moved so that she could whisper into his ear. “Now, please don’t panic. I know you trust me. I know that’s true even though you’re still pretending to be two different people.”

She felt him stiffen, but he was still there, so she pressed on. “Clark, I would sooner die than hurt you. I promise that I will never reveal what I know. I said that I love you, and I mean it more than you can understand.”

She pulled back. He was confused, but not terrified. That was a good sign. “Now, can we please head for your apartment? I have an amazing story to tell you. And then we have a lot to talk about.”

She stood, still holding his hand. With her encouragement, he stood beside her. As they started for the place which would be her home, she hoped that Ellie was right. It had been amazing the first time around. She was going to make sure that this time was even better.

THE END