

The Choices of Others

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Rated: PG

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Summary: Superman's daughter made a choice, and now she must tell her parents about it.

This is my response to the [Clark Kent, Teen Dad](#) Challenge. I want to thank my Beta, Virginia, for the fantastic feedback and encouragement. This story wouldn't be what it is without her.

Disclaimer: This is a fanfic based on the television show, Lois and Clark: The New Adventures of Superman. The pre-existing characters are not mine, I'm just borrowing them. The new story elements are mine. No infringement is intended by this work.

A young woman rested in bed. Her head sat perfectly tucked into the crevice of an arm belonging to a dark haired man. Her long dark brown hair scattered across his muscular chest. Her dark brown eyes tracked her right hand as it mindlessly wandered over his bare skin drawing arbitrary patterns.

"Sweetie, do you think it's going to work this time?" asked the dark haired man as he pulled her in closer, placing a soft kiss on the top of her head.

She grinned and stopped her hand as she shifted in his arms, rolling over to face him. "I hope so. We've been trying for awhile. It should happen eventually. Maybe we just need more practice." She bounced her eyebrows suggestively.

"Give me a minute, and I'll be ready for another round."

The woman just smiled back at him as he pulled her head down to meet his lips.

348 Hyperion Ave. March 21, 2017.

The second day of spring had been a mild and sunny day in Metropolis. Perfect, if one had asked Lois; she would have rather of been outside enjoying the sun than what she had spent her day doing. She had wasted the afternoon by herself at the Planet, digging up background information on their latest story and getting nowhere, while Clark and their two sons were out in Colorado, battling a massive forest fire. It was just past six as she walked through the door to the old town house.

Tara stood at the bottom of the stairs to greet her mother as she entered the house. "Hi, Mom, where's Dad?"

"Oh, hi sweetie. He and your brothers had some fire in Colorado to put out. Why? What's up?" Lois walked over to the couch, dropping her bag and a stack of papers on the coffee table before turning back around to face her daughter.

"Oh, I just had some stuff to discuss with both of you. Nothing big. I guess it can wait until he gets back."

"They've been gone since about two, so I would hope between the three of them they'd have it under control by now. I'll get dinner started in the meantime, unless you want to tell me what's on your mind now. I know I'm not as good of a listener as your dad, but I've had lots of practice developing that skill over the years."

"It's fine, Mom, I can wait. I don't really want to go over it twice. I'll just finish my homework. It should only take me a few more minutes."

"I remember when I was seventeen and came home with as much homework as you do. It use to take me hours. I guess having that super gene has given you kids quite the advantage."

"It's nice, but I was actually going to finish it up at normal speed. I've been working on it since I got home a few hours ago. I may have all of Dad's powers, but you know I still like doing things the normal way. Let me know when he gets home."

"Like I'd really need to tell you," Lois said sarcastically.

Tara turned and headed back up the stairs, but paused when her mom started speaking again.

"Oh, before I forget, are you going out with Justin tomorrow night?"

"Probably, why?"

"Well, your father and I are going to be out late tomorrow night. I just wanted to know if I need to make a little extra tonight, so you could heat up leftovers for tomorrow. I won't worry about it though, if you're not going to be here."

"Mom, I'm seventeen. I know how to make dinner and besides it's not like I even have to eat."

"I know; it's just that I don't want you to think we forgot about you. We've been really busy with work lately and Superman has been just as busy. I want to make these last few months at home for you, special."

"Mom, I'm not a little kid anymore. I accepted your and Dad's careers years ago. It's not a big deal. You both have always had busy lives. I also understand what Dad does is extra important and that he has spent all the time he could spare with us. Besides, even when I move out, it's not like I'm ever going to be that far away. I can fly, even if I don't show off like my brothers do. Now, I've really got to get my homework done. Let me know when dinner's ready."

"Okay."

Lois had been in the kitchen working on dinner for twenty minutes when she heard the familiar whoosh announcing her husband's arrival. "Hi, honey, I've got dinner almost ready."

"And it actually smells like it," Clark teased.

Lois stops her chopping to look up, pretending to be offended. "Ha ha. I do know how to cook. It may have taken me twenty years but eventually I caught on."

Clark paused to remove his boots, which were covered in mud. "It's a good thing because on nights like tonight, dinner would have probably been takeout otherwise. That fire took a lot longer than any of us expected."

"Well, from the looks of you, it wasn't a simple freeze breath job."

"No, it wasn't. Let me take a quick shower before this soot and smell get's everywhere."

Lois took a good look at Clark as he turned to head upstairs. He was covered from head to toe in brown and black grime. The cape was black and charred beyond repair. She chuckled quietly thinking that as dirty as he was, he was doing a better impression of Batman rather than Superman. All Clark was missing to complete the ensemble was the little ears.

"Okay. Don't take too long," Lois suggested. "I've just got to finish the salad, and Tara has something she wants to talk to us about. She wouldn't tell me what; just that it had to be to both of us."

"Alright, just give me a few minutes. I've got to get this suit soaking or it will never come clean," Clark called as he headed up the stairs.

"Tara, your father's home and dinner's just about ready." Lois barely raised her voice to inform her daughter. She didn't really need to call her; Tara could hear her father coming home from miles away and the big whoosh that accompanied his arrival was a dead giveaway. Although she had all of her father's superpowers, Tara usually refrained from using them and preferred to do things the "normal" way but super hearing, combined with a mild touch of telepathy, would always give away her father's arrival.

Raising Tara had been entirely different from her two older brothers. She didn't embrace her Kryptonian heritage as much and, even from a young age, endeavored to be more like her mother. As such, she was more than a bit independent and a tad reckless, but Tara always held back when it came to using her superpowers.

Clark had insisted that Tara develop them with his guidance, so she could at least control them and use them if need be. It had been a struggle for him to get through the importance of this, and in the end Tara had only accepted the training when she realized what a threat they could be to others if they were not managed properly. For the first few months, she would protest every time Clark wanted to take her out for a lesson. It was difficult for him not to give in and put it off to another day. Appearance wise, except for her eyes, Tara was all Lois. Tara was a little taller but same build, same hair, and same mouth. When she combined that pouty frown her mother did so well with her father's big brown puppy dog eyes, it was all he could do not to concede defeat. But Clark had prevailed, and she had in the end learned enough control over them for Clark to deem her not a threat to anyone.

When it came to academics, Tara was a good student and pulled in good grades. She never fussed about going to class or having too much homework. It all came really easy for her. However, unlike either of her parents, she believed having a normal teenage social life and doing things that regular all-human teenagers would do were just as important as school or learning to be super, even if they were things her parents wouldn't approve of. Her parents knew that she occasionally went to parties, which included underage drinking. Even though they trusted her not to partake in that social affair, having a few drinks wasn't going to get her drunk and most likely would have little effect on her at all. Clark hadn't been drunk a day in his life and regularly enjoyed a glass of wine or a few beers. Still, they felt that since being normal was important to her they weren't going to interfere. If she happened to be at a party where there was drinking, at least she could look out for her friends.

Lois had just finished placing everything on the table and was taking her seat when she heard her daughter saunter down the stairs towards the kitchen.

Tara took a seat on the far end as her dad re-entered the room. "Hey, Dad, how was the fire?"

Clark pulled out the chair across from her and took a seat. "It was large. They had a major thunderstorm come through and four separate lightning strikes hit near the same area, catching that whole section of forest on fire. It took your brothers and I three hours to get it under control. Unfortunately, it destroyed two houses and damaged a ranger station, but no injuries were reported. I'm just glad it's barely spring and everything is still green and damp out there. If this had been summer, I'd still be there with your brothers trying to control an inferno. So, how was school?"

"It was good. We're prepping for all these AP test next month. I'll be glad when that's over. Right now, every class is basically trying to review a year's worth of material in the next three weeks. I must be the only one in the class that finds it so mind-numbing because I already know all of it. It's all I can do to pretend to pay attention and look like I'm taking studious notes. I have no doubt I'm going to get perfect scores on everything. It's such a joke. I wish I could just take the tests now to get them over with and then do something new in class. It's just so boring."

"Tara, I know school's not your favorite thing, but you've only a few more months of high school. College will be better. Trust me." Lois had actually liked high school and had found it challenging, which was easy to do when you had to be the best at everything. She knew very well what her daughter was trying to convey to her though. After working with Clark for twenty-five years, she was intimately aware of how much learning capacity

the Kryptonian mind had. Being married to a walking encyclopedia had definitely had its advantages, as well as its annoyances, over the years.

"It's not that I don't like school; it's just not challenging. No matter how much I try to fit in and be like my friends, I'm just not ever going to be normal. Writing book reports, finding derivatives, and graphing sine waves is no challenge when you can speed read and have a photographic memory. I have to force myself to use a calculator in class just to blend in, when I already have the problem solved in my head. The only thing I've found mildly interesting was foreign languages and I took all six that school offered. My teachers were all amazed at how easily I picked up new languages. It's just not all that impressive when you can speak three hundred and forty-seven of them, Dad."

"Sweetie, it is impressive. How many kids do you know can speak six languages? Maybe some kids can speak Spanish, Italian, and German but not also Russian and Japanese. I am proud of you, sweetie. And I need you to believe it will be better in college. You'll be on your own. The subjects will be more interesting and you'll have more of a say in what you want to take. Plus, there will be plenty of other distractions like football games in the fall and basketball in the winter to go to. You really will enjoy it more."

Tara was hunched over in her chair fidgeting with her napkin, showing obvious signs of nervousness.

"Well, I'm not so sure. I have something to tell you, and it's not exactly easy to say."

"You're not thinking of skipping out on college, are you? I mean it's okay if you want to do some traveling or something first and then go to school. You know both your father and I traveled a bit after high school. Your father obviously a bit more than most people."

"No, I still plan on going to college next year. It's just that I don't think I'll have time to go to football games and things like that. I'll have my hands full come October." She paused to tilt her head up and look both of her parents in the eyes. "Mom, Dad, I'm pregnant."

Lois was in shock. She didn't know what to say, which was a rarity for her. She had never expected her high schooler to announce that she was pregnant. What parent did? Tara was an honor student with a full scholarship to Met U. What was she thinking? Was she even thinking at all? Was this an accident, or could she have done this on purpose? No, she wouldn't have. Why would a kid want to do this on purpose? Lois was interrupted before she could finish that train of thought.

"You're what?" retorted Clark.

"I'm pregnant," Tara responded definitively.

"You're serious?"

"Yep, six weeks."

"I'm not really sure what to say. I'm not going to congratulate you, if that's what you're looking for." Clark leaned back in his chair, crossing his arms to assume a seated Superman pose.

"I didn't expect you to, Dad. And I don't expect you to understand, either of you." Tara looked at her mother, who had remained unusually silent.

Lois looked back at her, but kept her mouth shut. She was doing a good job of biting her lip while she let Clark get in what he had to say first. Lois knew she was normally the irrational one; always jumping in feet first without checking the water level or flying off the handle over nothing. When it came to their daughter though, Clark had always been the more irrational one. She was always going to be his little girl, no matter what her age was. That led him to be the standard overprotecting, and sometimes suffocating, father. Lois knew that he hated the fact that Tara was dating, and had been in a long term relationship with Justin. Clark had argued with her on many occasions that

Tara should be less serious and date around more. Tara was just as strong willed as Lois was though and would never cave to her dad's compulsive need to overprotect her. Tara hated it as much as her mother did.

"Understand? What makes you think getting pregnant in high school is understandable? Is Justin, at least, the father?" Clark said.

"Of course, he is, Daddy. Who else would it be?"

"Oh, I don't know, some random high school kid, willing to do what it took to get you pregnant. I'm guessing by your attitude that this really isn't an accident." It was more of a statement than a question.

Lois knew Tara would chose to ignore the last statement for now. She was obviously infuriated by the first one and rightfully so. Clark had just insinuated that his daughter was easy, and this would be maddening to any woman, let alone one with Mad Dog Lane genetics. She had never known her husband to make such rash statements about anyone. He always looked for the good in everything and everyone but this had obviously struck a nerve with him. Lois took a sip of wine before she leaned back in her chair to watch the battle between Tara and Clark's irrational side play out.

"Did you actually hear what you just said? I can't believe you would think of me doing something like that, Dad. How dare you come off saying something like that? Justin and I've been together for three years and, not that it's any of your business, we did wait a long time until we were both ready. You didn't actually think I was going to wait until marriage, did you? People don't do that anymore, Dad. Besides, that's just about as long as you and Mom knew each other before you got married."

Clark relaxed again in his chair dropping the Superman pose. "That's different. We were adults, we had established careers, and we were a decade older. You're a high schooler and not even eighteen yet."

"I'm going to be eighteen soon and I'm graduating in a few months, with honors, Dad, in case you've forgotten. I'm not a little kid. I can make my own decisions and I can take care of myself. I'm in control of my future and I don't want to be a superhero like you, CJ, and Jon, or a career woman like Mom. I want to be normal or at least as normal as I can be. You're the one who always said you wanted to lead a normal life: friends, a job, get married, and have kids. That's the whole point of Clark Kent, right? He's just a normal guy that everyone likes. So, who are you to judge me wanting to lead a normal life? Nothing academically challenges me and nothing physically really does either. I purposely answered a few questions wrong on the SATs just so that I wouldn't take too much flak from my friends for getting a perfect score. Did you know that?"

Lois looked at her husband and she could tell that this was news to him just as it was to her. Before she could get an appropriate thought together though Tara had already continued on.

"You know full well that I can't play sports without exposing myself, or holding back. It may have been good enough for you, Dad, to play college football pretending to be only so good but it's not for me. I don't find holding back my speed, or strength, to be challenging in a fun way at all. I just want to do something where I can be me, the real me, and still have it be challenging. So, I decided to take on the challenge of being a mom. Maybe becoming a mom at eighteen isn't normal but, thanks to you, I can never be fully normal. And I'll have an advantage over every other mom out there because I am super. I don't need to eat or sleep like a normal person and, thanks to super speed, I can get things like homework and cleaning done in a few minutes, so I decided to move the 'have a family' date up. I don't see what waiting would accomplish."

"How about life experience and getting to know your

boyfriend beyond the confines of high school? Apparently, you don't think that that's important. You don't think that experiencing a few years of independence and learning to become self-reliant isn't important then, fine." Clark paused to take a roll out of the basket as cover for gathering his thoughts together. He picked at the top, removing a few small pieces and ate them quickly before continuing. "You really think you've thought of everything? What about the basics like a job or a place to live? How are you going to support yourself and this kid? Are you and Justin going to raise it together?"

"Yes, we're going to be moving in together to an apartment near campus. We've both got loans and scholarships so tuition and housing are financially taken care of. He's still going to med school so he won't have much time to help out but I don't think I'm going to need that much help. Look at you, Dad." Tara pointed straight at Clark for extra emphasis. "You raised three kids and held down two fulltime jobs, both of which could interrupt your plans at a moment's notice. I would never consider just dropping everything and rush out on my family; that's not me. But you did it time and again, even with all the cutbacks you made to social appearances. There were still all those natural disasters, for which you just left at a drop of a hat. Not me," Tara dropped her index finger down on the table to stress her statement causing the table let out a small creek from the impact. "I will be here for this child's every moment. And once Justin is a doctor, we'll be well taken care of. He wants to start a family, too. We made this decision together, and it wasn't a spur of the moment one."

"So maybe I did rush out often but I had your mother's help. She was always here for you. Justin needs to focus on school; pre-med isn't a walk in the park program. He's not going to be able to help as much as your mom does. Does he even know?"

"That I'm pregnant?"

"No, that you're super?"

This finally had struck a nerve with Tara as she shrunk back into her chair.

"No. I haven't told him yet," she answered in a voice much smaller than a minute ago.

"Don't you think that's an important thing to share if you're considering living and having a life together? I mean, I know you've never liked the fact that you have super powers. You made it clear, early on, that you wanted to be a normal kid, but they are there and you will most likely have a super kid. Trust me; you're not going to be able to hide them forever. Don't you think it's important to have told Justin what he's getting in to?" Clark leaned back in his chair folding his arms once more to make it clear that this point should be taken seriously.

"Dad, I don't hate the super powers. I know you don't think so but I am very grateful for them. I just don't want to be a super hero. I'd rather be a super mom." Tara smiled at that thought. "And Justin loves me. He'll accept this. It's not like you have much of a leg to stand on, Dad. You asked Mom to marry you before you told her about Superman."

Clark relaxed again, acknowledging her statement. He took another piece of crust off the top of the roll and popped it in his mouth. "Okay, I did, and it was a mistake. It caused problems in our relationship. But trust me, hiding them when you're around someone all the time is not easy and starting a relationship out under false pretenses, like this is, is just going to make it harder in the end to tell him. You are going to tell him, aren't you?"

"I haven't decided. What do you mean 'starting a relationship out'? We've been dating for three years. Would you have rather I had been up front about it, when I was fourteen, and just said 'hey, Justin, just in case you wanted to know before we start going out, I'm Superman's daughter. Are you okay with that? Better not do anything to make him mad.' Is that what you wish I had done?"

“No, I’m not saying that.”

“Then what are you saying?”

“I’m just saying that the longer you hold off telling him, the harder it’s going to be.”

Lois was still patiently waiting for her cue to chime in during this exchange and thought that this was a point that she knew well and could emphasize. She had over two years of lies and deceptions to think back on, and knew that Justin deserved to know the truth. Tara might not be pretending to be two different people to him, but she was hiding her true self. She might not notice it, but she did use her powers every day in the comfort of her home. They were a part of her. Until Lois had been allowed to see Clark for who he really was, the powers and deceptions that went along with them were always an invisible barrier in their way.

“He’s right, Tara; the longer your father put it off, the more it pushed us apart. I could tell he was lying about something. I tried to ignore the feeling for so long but we got to a point where it nearly destroyed our whole friendship, not just our romantic relationship.”

“But he was running off to be Superman. I won’t be. I really just want to lead a normal life. If I tell Justin, then we won’t be a normal couple. What if he starts to expect I use my powers all the time or decides that he doesn’t want to be with an alien?”

“Well, that’s a risk. It’s your choice to tell him, or not, but having been in his shoes, it was better once I knew the truth. I can’t say I was happy what your father had done, I was far from it, and there was still a lot for us to work through. But everything was so less complicated once we could both be our true selves.” Lois paused to give Tara a few seconds to mull over that thought. She knew exactly what her daughter was planning as a response and needed to squash it first.

“And it wasn’t just the always coming up with lame excuses and rushing off. That had its place but there were far more subtle things as well, things that Justin will start to question once you’re living together. You do use your powers more than you think. Living together, he will start to notice little things that don’t make sense. You have done a good job training yourself on being human, but you’re not perfect. How often do you use a blow-dryer in the morning or a razor to shave your legs?” Satisfied with getting that point across, Lois paused to reach across the table and grab herself a roll. Dinner was, of course, cold by now, but she was starved and rolls were good warm or cold.

“Mom, I get what you are trying to tell me,” Tara picked up her fork drawing her attention away from her parents to admire the shiny stainless steel object. She twirled it around in her hand keeping her eyes on it as she continued, “But I don’t see it as the same situation as you and Dad. I’m not asking him to share me with the rest of the world, or worry if while I’m out that some criminal is going to jump out at me with a chunk of kryptonite.” She put the fork down and returned her eyes to her parents.

“I know that there are some things that I can’t hide like not needing to eat, sleep, or exercise like a human, but for now I can excuse it as hormones. So I’ll have to buy a razor and take a little longer getting ready in the morning, but that’s all little stuff. Maybe in a few more years, I’ll tell him, but I want him to focus on school right now. He’s going to make a great doctor.”

Lois looked at her husband. Their eyes told each other that this was getting them nowhere. Lois decided to change the subject. Sometimes Tara could be just as obstinate as her father.

“Have you guys ever discussed your opinions on Superman?” asked Lois.

“No, I always try not to bring it up to not draw any attention. Why?”

“I just think it might help you decide what to do if you knew his opinion on the matter.”

Tara looked back down at the silverware sitting next to her plate and mumbled, “Maybe. I guess I could start there.”

“I think you should do it as soon as possible. Revealing yourself will most likely be more difficult for you. Your father already knew I had accepted him as Superman; that wasn’t the issue. He was waiting for me to accept him as a man,” Lois said, giving Clark a little smile to remind him how happy she was with him.

“You, sweetie, have it the other way around. He’s accepted you as a woman, which he should. To his knowledge there aren’t any Superwomen, so he’s probably never considered it. Now, you need him to accept that side of you. Finding out his opinion about your father will hopefully give you some insight. But don’t think that conversation is going to be easy and, unfortunately, your father and I can’t help you there that much.”

“And, Tara”, Clark added. “I want you to be very careful on what you tell him, based on his response about me. If he responds negatively, or suspiciously, I would hope you would choose good judgment and refrain from telling him the secret. Remember, it’s not just about you. This will affect all of us. You need to be careful. I know you trust Justin now, but I just ask you to be careful. There are other people to consider in this.”

“Don’t you think I know that, Dad?” Tara snapped. “I’ve spent my whole life with that statement drilled in to me. It’s just as bad as your father and his ‘locked in a lab and dissected like a frog’ argument.”

The room became quiet. Lois had to agree with her on that point. From an early age, once they found out about their father, the kids had been continually reminded to protect his identity for the safety of all. After a decade, Tara didn’t need to be reminded. She was visibly upset at many of the assumptions her father had made about her tonight. Clark was obviously rattled by this news and wasn’t reacting with a clear head. To that end, Lois had to keep an open mind and be the rational one.

Lois had listened to all that had been said about their lives, her daughter’s life, Justin’s life, but nothing had been said about this baby’s life or its journey for the next several months. She was a lone pioneer in this venture. Lois may have delivered three human-Kryptonian hybrid babies but she could still receive any treatment available had a problem arisen during pregnancy or delivery. This was not the case with Tara.

“Have you talked to Dr. Klein yet?” Lois inquired.

“No, I was hoping to just treat this like a normal pregnancy. I know you guys told Dr. Klein when you found out about CJ, but you never had any troubles with any of your pregnancies.”

“True, but there was always a chance that something could go wrong, or be different, and so we had him monitor all three of you. But I think there are some things that you haven’t considered, things that most people don’t want to think about happening.” Lois hesitated to put on a sympathetic face for her next statement.

“You’re invulnerable. If something goes wrong, a c-section is not an option unless there’s kryptonite involved, which probably isn’t a good idea. And things can go wrong in many ways involving delivery that have nothing to do with the baby not being fully human. I am human, so a c-section was always an option. I could go on and on with a list of scenarios that need to be considered, but I think you get the point, and that you should talk to Dr. Klein. He can at least begin to come up with an emergency plan. He doesn’t need to replace your OB, but he should be informed.” Lois waited to see if Tara had anything to say, but she remained silent, probably filling in the list of things that could go wrong.

“Besides, knowing him, he’s probably already thought about this scenario and may have some ideas already. Even at his age, he still loves problem solving,” Lois added to lighten the topic.

Tara tried to smile at her mom’s comment but it quickly turned into a frown. “I guess I hadn’t really thought of my invulnerability in this. This will be a first, won’t it? It’s not like

women on Krypton were invulnerable. I suppose I'd better give him a call on Monday."

Lois's didn't have much more to say on the subject; Clark had gone quiet as he finished picking apart his roll, probably praying for a cry for help, and Tara was slouched in her chair, back to fidgeting with her napkin. The discussion was over for now. Time for dinner, not that anyone was hungry anymore, but they all needed a break from the discussion.

"You do that and keep us informed on what he says," Lois suggested. "Now, I know you two don't need to eat, but I'm starved, so let's eat. I'm sure everything is cold by now, so, Clark, can you warm dinner back up?"

Clark stood, removed his glasses and trained his heat vision to all the food that wasn't to be served at room temperature. He sat back down, and the ladies started dishing themselves out food.

Other than the clanking of silverware against porcelain, dinner was eaten in silence; each lost in their own thoughts about what challenges tomorrow would bring.

THE END