

Miracle

By **Deadly Chakram** <dwelf82@yahoo.com>

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Summary: Lois' thoughts as she watches Clark on the night of their son's birth.

Disclaimer: I neither own, nor make, anything. All *Lois & Clark* characters, plot points, and lines of dialogue belong to DC Comics, Warner Bros., December 3rd Productions, and anyone else with a stake in the Superman franchise. As always, I'm just playing with my toys.

Special Thanks: Go to my twin daughters and my husband, who inspired this story.

Night.

The most wondrous and magical night I've ever had.

The first night of our new life.

The night our child was born.

It still seems like half a dream. It still feels unreal. It still feels somehow remote, like I'm witnessing it happen to some other couple, watching some other child.

Because it shouldn't be happening. Not to us. It shouldn't be possible. Doctor Klein and my own father both agreed that, biologically, Clark and I are not compatible. That humans and Kryptonians cannot have children together. Because all the months and years of trying anyway have produced only heartbreaking negative pregnancy test after another.

I can't even remember the pain of childbirth anymore. I'm only dimly aware of how many long hours I labored to bring this little person into the world. It no longer matters. Hours or days, in an instant, it was irrelevant. As soon as our baby was out into the world, all I was aware of was him. That button nose. Those curious brown eyes, half squinted against the sudden onslaught of light. Funny, I thought most babies were born with blue eyes. But already, his eyes are unmistakably Clark's.

Perfect fingers, tiny toes. Healthy lungs screaming his displeasure at being forced out of his nice warm home in favor of the cooler outside world. Black hair sticking out from beneath the white and blue striped hat they stuck on his head. Hands fisted in defiance as he cried, before the doctor so expertly wiped him clean and bundled him into a tight swaddle.

This is all I saw. This, and the happy tears welled within my husband's eyes; pride and pure love made tangible. And my heart actually broke with a love I hadn't known I was capable of. Not just for my son, but for his father. I've always loved Clark with such fierce intensity that I cannot put it into words, because mere words are laughably inadequate. But seeing him now, in this new light of fatherhood, brings that love to a level I could not have ever imagined.

It's quiet now, here in this hospital room, at this small hour of the night. Peaceful, even. For the first time in what feels like forever, we are alone. No doctors. No nurses. No one coming to monitor me. No one coming to check on the baby. No beeping machines monitoring my blood pressure, the baby's heartbeat, my contractions. We are finally alone, just the three of us. The Kent family.

Family.

There once was a time when that word left a bad taste in my mouth. Family meant fighting. Family meant unhappiness.

Family meant brokenness.

And now...

Family means safety and security. It stands for love without restrictions or limits. It's a sense of being home, no matter where I am or what I'm doing. It's acceptance and support and belonging, a sense of worth I'd never before felt in my life. It is comfort and peace.

Family is Clark.

Family is our newborn son.

Family means miracles.

Before Clark was so unexpectedly thrust into my life, I was barely aware of how unhappy my life was. On some level, I guess I knew something was missing, but I didn't realize the depth of my loneliness. Somehow, I'd convinced myself that I didn't need anyone. Didn't need love. Didn't need a family. Correction — didn't *want* a family. And who could blame me? The absentee father and the alcoholic mother. The sister whom I loved, but who was slowly ruining her life by dating loser after loser. So I focused on my career and shoved thoughts of family from my thoughts. I had my dream job, and I was damn good at it. I'd won more than one prestigious award, and had my eye on the Pulitzer. For me, change would have taken a miracle.

And then Clark waltzed into my life. Saddled with him as an unwanted partner, I tried to hate him. Tried to pretend that I was better off without him. Tried to ignore the fact that he was the most decent and polite man I'd ever met. It was safer that way, I thought. Safer for me to remain hidden behind the defensive walls I'd built around myself. Safer for my heart, if I didn't allow him access to it.

But, slowly, he broke down those walls, slunk in through the cracks and pulled the stones apart, one by one, before I could even realize what was happening. He became my friend, my best friend, my love. And each development, each new day, was a new miracle. Soon, we were married and enjoying our new life together, now as husband and wife. And I thought nothing could make me happier.

But there was still something missing. Some element of life that wasn't there. Children. We needed to share our love with a baby, because there was so much there for us to give. And when we were told it would never happen, our heartbreak was beyond description. *Never*. Such a final and cold word. *Never*. I would never know what it would be like to be pregnant, to feel a child grow within me, day by day as I counted the weeks until he or she would be in my arms. Would never give birth. Would never have a child that was the best parts of Clark and me.

I felt so hollow, so inadequate, so broken. I felt that it was somehow my fault, that my DNA and Clark's were incompatible for reproduction. I felt so...absolutely powerless, because there was literally nothing I could do to change the situation, to heal the hurt I knew Clark harbored in his heart, hidden away as best he could while he put on a brave face for my benefit. But... I knew. I knew he'd always wanted a family — children of his own, not just a wife to love him.

And then — a miracle.

After exploring every option, considering every route, and finally starting to accept our childless fate, it happened. We were pregnant. Somehow, we'd beaten the odds. No, more than that. We'd achieved the impossible. A child, created of our love, was growing within me. Clark would have the son or daughter he'd always envisioned. He would finally be the greatest superhero on Earth — a daddy.

When I told him this — that he was going to be a father — it was the first time I'd ever seen him cry. Tears of the purest joy sprang into his eyes as his face erupted into a smile so vast, so bright, it made the sun look dark in comparison. And he hugged me, so securely and tightly and gently, all the while laughing and kissing me. I could almost imagine that I could feel his

excitement actually reverberating through his entire body. Such joy came from him, such love. I've never before seen a happier man.

Every new development in my pregnancy was a cause for celebration. The first time I wore a maternity shirt. The first ultrasound. The first time we felt the baby kick. Clark even woke me once, about six weeks into our pregnancy, in the middle of the night, with a huge grin on his face, just to inform me that, while he'd been laying next to me after a rescue, listening to my heartbeat, suddenly I had not one, but two. Still, every doctor appointment was a source of both stress and relief. Stress because we hoped and prayed that everything was progressing well with the baby's development. Never before had there been a baby with both human and Kryptonian DNA. Would that combination cause complications? Would it prove to be fatal to the child? Relief because every time, we were assured that all was perfect with our baby.

From the first moments, Clark was the most involved father I've ever come across. Long before the baby could even hear, he was talking to him, reading to him, telling him how much we both loved him and couldn't wait to meet him. Long before the baby could kick, Clark was there, resting his hand on my expanding stomach, hoping to feel movement, trying to impart love to the baby, trying to protect his boy. Long before I could possibly feel any discomfort, my husband was already doing his utmost to ensure that I was comfortable, well-rested, and had all my favorite (and new favorite) treats at hand. Of course, it made him even more overprotective of me than usual, but for once, I did not mind. We had our miracle baby on the way, and that was all that mattered.

During the delivery, Clark never left my side. Sometimes he sat next to me in the high-backed hospital chair. Other times he paced the room, filled with a nervous energy I'd never witnessed from him before. Superman may have delivered his fair share of newborns, but never before had Clark Kent seen his own flesh and blood born. All through the pushing, he was right there at my side, mopping my sweaty brow with a cold, wet rag. He tenderly stroked my hair, he allowed me to crush his hand in a grip that rivaled Superman's when the pain was too much. And his words of love, support, and encouragement never stopped. He was a cheerleading squad and labor coach all rolled into one single man.

I could see from his expression the moment our son was fully out into the world, before I could feel it in my body, before the doctor could announce our boy's birth. The wonderment. The unbridled love. The almost disbelief that our son was really here. That half-second seemed somehow frozen in time to me, stretching on into infinity even while the world raced on around him, us. And then he turned to me, forcing his gaze from his newborn child, to tell me how tiny and perfect he was just before our boy's unhappy howl filled the room as he took his first breath.

Now, however, the baby is quiet, here in the dead of the night. Swaddled in his hospital-issued blankets, a fresh and clean hat on his head, he sleeps, nestled comfortably in his daddy's arms. Neither of them is aware that I am awake. I know because Clark always seems to know when I'm looking at him. His eyes will capture mine and a smile will play across his features as he is broken from whatever task he's been working at. But not now. Now his attention is focused solely on the tiny infant cradled in his arms as he stands, half turned away from me, rocking his body from side to side. And that's exactly how I want things; I want to just lay here and watch father and son interact. I see Clark's lips move but hear no words — a secret, nearly silent conversation he's having with his son. I don't doubt that he's once again telling him how much we love him and how long we've waited to meet him.

Clark's features are soft in the dim lighting of the room; he's turned on only the barest minimum by which to see. But the low lighting somehow frames his face in a way that transforms him, making me see him in a way I never have before. He looks almost...angelic, standing there, transfixed by the newborn he's holding. Older and wiser too, but somehow looking as though years have fallen from him in the same instant. Since the moment I first met him, I was aware, on some level, of his tenderness. But now...now his loving, gentle heart is plain for even a stranger to see, all by the way his eyes sparkle and dance as he gazes down at the miracle we've created.

He sits now, sinking easily down onto the padded rocking chair in the corner of the room. I close my eyes until they are open but a slit, still unwilling to be more than an observer of this magical moment. But I needn't worry. Clark still has eyes only for the baby. A heartbeat later I can just barely hear the low hum of a lullaby as he begins to rock his sleeping boy. A smile crosses his lips as he hums his song, the awed expression never leaving his face. And my heart melts.

This was always meant to be. I know it now. Whatever hardships and disappointments we've faced have only made us stronger. All the moments of despair and doubt have only prepared us for this indescribable happiness. All the bitterness of closed doors and negative tests have only made this moment all the sweeter.

Clark will be a great father. I've never once doubted that. Whether to a child of our own, or one we'd adopt, or even one we might have chanced to find in a spaceship, there is no one who could love a child more than my husband. And I know now that's true of myself as well. There is no woman on Earth, Krypton, or any other planet who loves her child more than I love this perfect newborn boy. And that's really the important thing, isn't it? I know that Clark and I will both make mistakes as we learn what it is to be a parent. I know we'll have bad days along with the good ones, where we'll both wonder if we truly are suited to the task of raising another human being. But our boy is lucky — he's got a mom and a dad who are willing to do anything to ensure his happiness, his safety, his success in life.

Baby boy, you don't know it now, but you truly *are* a miracle. A son of Krypton and a child of Earth, carrying on the best of both worlds. A perfect blend of your parents. A son born out of the purest, fiercest, truest love imaginable.

Thank you, for letting us be your parents.

Welcome to the world, and happy birthday.

THE END