

Reboot

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Rated: PG

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Summary: Clark comes to a startling realization about where he is in his life while talking with his girlfriend... Crossover of sorts with the New 52 Reboot.

"I am Clark. I need to be Clark. I'd go crazy if I had to be Superman all the time!"

—Superman: TAS

Clark floated through the clouds aimlessly. He felt so... lost. Confused. Logically, he knew what his place was in the world, and that he had jobs to do that must be done. But for some reason, somewhere buried deep inside of him, Clark had the feeling that something was just not *right*.

Which made no sense. He had it all: The powers, the girl, the job — well, not the job. Not anymore. He sighed. He wasn't sure that it was the greatest decision on the planet to quit — he'd been quite fired up at the time, and with the things he'd said on leaving, he doubted there'd be any way the Daily Planet would take him back.

Not that he was so sure he wanted to go back. He'd meant the things he'd said. Truth, justice, the American way — sacrificed in the name of selling papers. And it had obviously resonated — Cat had gone with him. And while he'd have much rather it to have been Lois, Clark greatly appreciated the gesture of Cat Grant stepping up to the plate with him.

Still, things had started to feel off since then. Perhaps even before that. Before he and Diana got together, long before any of the problems with H'el — things just weren't right in Clark Kent's universe right now. And he wasn't sure why that was.

Not that he'd had much time to just relax and be Clark of late, either. Superman had kept him quite busy — and when that didn't get in the way, Diana did. It felt weird kissing her, dating her. She was a friend, a fellow hero — and for some reason deep down, every time they kissed, it felt like cheating to Clark. No one else knew, or noticed his discomfort in his newly designated life. But it felt strange nonetheless. He'd been spending more of his days as Kal'El than anyone else.

It was draining.

He needed to be Clark Kent again. He was going crazy without him. And he had no one to be Clark Kent for.

"Hey," Diana's voice wafted towards him as softly as she drifted through the air. "What are you doing up here, Kal?"

The name felt like a stab to the heart. Clark squared his jaw and ignored her question.

"Kal? Is something wrong? Was it a mission? You know you can't take responsibility for every rescue —"

"No, Diana, it's not about — just, it's not that," he murmured, eyes darting back and forth across the ground, thousands of miles beneath him. Clark grew quiet again, even though he knew Diana hated it when he got introspective. He couldn't explain what he was feeling, not to her. She wouldn't understand. She had never invested enough time in a secret identity, not like he had. Clark Jerome Kent wasn't just a secret identity — it was his life.

She nudged him with her elbow a tiny bit harder than she'd intended, and he started drifting away from her slowly. "Kal'El," she sighed, exasperated now, "Come on. What's wrong with you?"

"Nothing," he shot back quickly.

"Doesn't seem like nothing to me."

Clark sighed, closing his eyes briefly and taking a few deep breaths to calm himself. Finally, putting on a smile for his wonderful girlfriend, he flew back over to her side. "It's not important. I'm sorry."

She eyed him suspiciously. "Do I need to get out my lasso of truth?"

He chuckled. "No. I promise."

She grinned. "Good. You worry me sometimes, Kent."

A smile split across his face. He couldn't explain the amount of joy that spread through him when she called him by his name — his real name. Clark grinned and leaned in close to her face. "No need to worry about little old me." He grinned as she closed the distance between them and sealed their lips together in a passionate kiss, her tongue immediately reaching out to caress his lips.

The word *WRONG!!* flashed through his brain suddenly, and his lips burned at the mere touch of her lips. He wrenched himself away from Diana as quickly as he could.

A vision of his life as it should be seared itself into his mind's eye, and suddenly, he was somewhere else, kissing someone else, enjoying it. He pulled away slowly to see who it was and was greeted by the face of none other than Lois Lane. She seemed dazzled by their kiss, looking up at him with such love in her eyes that he felt practically swept off his feet.

"Kal? What happened? Are you all right?"

Diana's voice came to him as though from a great distance and he was under water. Clark barely registered her words as memories — or half-remembered dreams? — flashed before his eyes in rapid succession. Meeting Lois for the first time at the Daily Planet, with her interrupting his interview. Becoming Superman. Kissing Lois, in several scenarios. Rescuing Lois. Lois throwing herself at him in the skimpiest bikini he'd ever remembered seeing. Lex Luthor proposing to Lois. Lois saying no to Lex at the altar. Lex's death. His first real date with Lois. Their first real kiss. Their first fight. Their break up, over someone who looked like he jumped out of a bad Miami Vice episode. Getting back together. Proposing to Lois. Lois finding out about Superman. Apologizing, repeatedly. Proposing, repeatedly. Lois accepting his proposal. Millions of kisses and adventures and attempted weddings and finally their actual wedding.

That was the memory that ultimately snapped Clark out of it. Head reeling, he looked about himself, putting some distance between himself and Diana. He felt his elevated heart rate, perspiration beading at his hairline, palms wet and clammy. What just happened?

"Clark! Can you hear me? Say something?"

He quickly darted his eyes over to Diana's concerned face. "I-I-I don't know what just happened," he said slowly, gathering his thoughts. "I-I'm sorry, Diana. I just got this sudden feeling that... that I really don't belong here."

A look of confusion crossed her face. "What are you talking about, Kal? Of course you belong here."

He shook his head fiercely. "No, that's not what I mean. I meant... there's something wrong. I don't belong *here*. I need to be home. At the Daily Planet. With Lois."

She looked stricken at that, all traces of merriment completely gone from her expression. "What?" she rasped.

"It's not you," he rushed to explain. "It really is me. And I don't know why, or how it's even possible, but this isn't my life. It's like... I've switched bodies or something. You have to believe me."

Diana looked hurt and confused. Clark wished he could make it clearer for her. "Kal —" she began, but he had to interrupt.

"That's another thing. I don't like being called Kal. My name

is Clark Kent. Superman, or Kal'El, is what I can do. Clark is who I am. He's the guy who goes to visit his parents in Kansas on the weekends and works at the Daily Planet with Lois Lane. And I'm sorry, I don't mean any offence, but she is the most amazing woman I've ever met in my life. And I could never cheat on her willingly."

Wonder Woman's mouth hung open in shock. "I — What?"

Clark looked at her with apology in his eyes. "I'm sorry, Diana. I truly am. But there's something I really have to go do right now."

With that, Clark took off through the skies, a sonic boom sounding several feet below her.

The knock that woke her in the middle of the night had Lois grumbling unhappily. When the knocking refused to stop, she begrudgingly cracked an eye open to glance at the digital clock on her bedside table. She swore as she rolled out of the bed. "Two thirty?!" She exclaimed. "There better be one hell of a reason for this, otherwise I'm going to kill whoever's on the other side of that door!"

She grabbed her robe off the back of a chair and slipped into it quickly. As though the knocker had heard her vehement response, the next knock was softer and came much later than the others. With a heavy sigh, she swung open the door, fully prepared to launch into a tirade and give this hellraiser a piece of her mind when she suddenly recognized who it was. "Kent? What are you doing here? Don't you know what time it is?"

Clark seemed to shift nervously on his feet, fiddling with his glasses and then his tie. "Uh, sorry. Is your boyfriend here?"

Lois rolled her eyes at him. He was so hopeless. "No, I dumped him. And anyway, what's it to you?"

Clark's eyes lit up at that piece of information. Before Lois even knew what was happening, he took two long strides forward, so that he was standing just inside her front door, stepping into her body's space. He cupped her cheek in his hand, running his thumb over her bottom lip slowly, caressing it delicately. A gasp was pulled from her throat at the vaguely familiar feeling.

Reassured by the sound, Clark bracketed her face with his large hands, leaned in all the way and kissed her firmly on the lips.

Immediately, Lois' lips returned the gesture, opening up to him fully and embracing the feeling of his silky lips tasting hers. She swiped her tongue along his bottom lip, drawing a groan out from him. She could feel the noise as it rumbled out of his broad chest and transferred to her own body. A sort of awareness landed on her and it felt as if some sort of weight was lifted from her shoulders. It felt like all of their kisses combined into one, as memory after memory of their kisses washed over her as their lips currently played together.

Lois pulled away to gasp for breath, keeping her body pressed against his. She looked up into his eyes with love and surprise, a smile of pure joy spread across her face. He grinned right back at her. No words were necessary between them, their eyes said it all.

Lois surprised him by grabbing his face and bringing him back down to kiss her again, and they dueled for superiority for several long minutes but felt like mere seconds.

A throat cleared from behind them, outside on Lois' doormat. They broke apart briefly to find a small man in a bowler hat smiling politely at them. "Well, it's about time. I was wondering when the two of you were going to finally figure it out and need to be taken home."

Clark felt his jaw unhinge for a moment. "Wells? If you knew all this time, then why didn't you just take us back?"

The man shrugged. "I wasn't supposed to interfere until you two figured it out. This universe's Lois and Clark were quite

preoccupied and, well, to do the least damage..."

"You did this to us?!" Lois exclaimed. "You took almost a year of our lives away from each other?"

"I assure you, Miss Lane, I will put you back right where I left you. You and your husband can get back to your lives."

"Come on, honey," Clark soothed, running a hand up and down her back. "Think of it like a second honeymoon. We're back together again. We always come back to each other."

Lois couldn't help but smile at her sappy husband's point. "I guess you're right. But first things first, I want to take a few vacation days and go to a remote island somewhere to celebrate this second-honeymoon. And somewhere warm, at that."

Clark grinned as he leaned in to kiss her once more. "Absolutely."

Herb cleared his throat again. "Um, we really must be going. This is all going to start falling apart around us if we don't get out of here soon."

"What do you mean?" Lois frowned as they followed H.G. Wells outside. Her arms encircled Clark's waist and his wrapped around her as well.

"Yeah, what will that mean for this world's Lois and Clark?" Clark asked curiously. He hoped they didn't do too much damage.

Wells shrugged. "Nothing too concerning. Just every now and then, a universe needs to be rebooted. This one wasn't exactly on the right path anyways."

Lois and Clark shared a knowing look, and said nothing. They couldn't disagree.

Any universe where they weren't together was not the one for them.

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