

Superman 2012

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Rated PG-13

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Summary: Life in the digital age is tougher than any villain Clark has had to face.

DISCLAIMER: I don't own Lois and Clark or any other recognizable characters.

It would have been easier if he'd started in the nineteen nineties.

The whole Superman idea hadn't been a bad one, but it would have worked better in simpler times. Even twenty years before he'd have been able to slip in, do a rescue and slip out without any problems other than occasional quotes to local reporters.

Now, every little gaffe was reported for posterity, and long after he was dead, every humiliation would be on the Internet for generations to laugh at in the future.

The incident with the cat in the tree still stung. He hadn't wanted to hurt the thing, and it had gone berserk, turning into a whirlwind of fury.

The video had gone viral within hours. Three days later, someone had added a light saber effect to the cat and that too had gone viral.

It was just the latest in a long list of humiliations. According to the tabloids, he was dating Paris Hilton. The National Enquirer had even insinuated that he'd given her space VD, or possibly gotten it from her; Clark wasn't entirely certain.

Cat Grant loved to torment him with every new humiliation. While he knew that Lois was right and that he should ignore her, he couldn't help himself.

He could move mountains and defeat tidal waves, but against rumor and innuendo he was helpless.

False Facebook pages in his name had popped up all over the place, mocking Superman and everything he stood for.

The Superman Foundation had tried to bring suit against the false Twitter pages, but the response had been that they couldn't prove these people WEREN'T Superman.

It had almost been enough to tempt Clark into swinging by the Facebook server farms and causing a few "accidents."

Unfortunately, his mother was quite active on Facebook and would never forgive him.

Clark gritted his teeth and dove into the subway entrance. He moved through the system too fast for the human eye to see, then he spun into his suit just as the subway train stopped. He slipped into the crowd as they spilled out of the train, intimately familiar with the locations of all the cameras.

Twenty years before he'd have been able to just change in some alley. The worst he'd have had to worry about would have been the occasional hobo.

Now, there were cameras everywhere. The last thing he needed was someone on Google Earth watching him changing into his boxers in slow motion.

He climbed up the steps and headed for the Daily Planet.

He hoped they weren't due for another round of layoffs; the upper management was hinting about wanting to go completely electronic.

Sometimes it was enough to make him want to "discover" a sunken ship or two as Clark Kent, buy an island and hide away

from the world.

He waited patiently as the elevator creaked its way up the building.

The silence as he walked into the bullpen was resounding. It seemed as though the entire female office staff was collected around Cat Grant's computer and when he walked in they all looked up at him guiltily.

They scattered as he walked into the room. Some were snickering, others were blushing. No one wanted to look him in the eye.

Clark grimaced. He gritted his teeth and straightened his shoulders. He might as well get it over with.

"What is it this time?"

Only Lois and Cat were still by the computer. Lois stepped aside and Clark froze.

Cat's computer had a porn website up, one that had celebrity fakes. People apparently cut and pasted celebrity heads onto porn images for reasons that utterly baffled him.

Only this time, it was Superman's head pasted onto a naked and...apparently excited body.

Without the costume, it was clear that Superman looked exactly like Clark Kent...except for one or two minor details.

Lois stared at him and tapped her foot. She scowled.

He felt as though his life was collapsing around him. He'd have to call his parents, create new identities for them. Even setting the villains aside, the paparazzi and the press would make their lives a living hell, and unlike most celebrities they couldn't afford body guards, walls and locked gates to protect themselves.

His life as Clark was over.

"Did you have something you wanted to tell me?" Lois asked frostily.

For once, Clark found himself speechless. He wanted to tell her how sorry he was that he'd lied, to beg her to help him to find some way out of this predicament.

He'd have to quit his job, leave everything and everyone he cared about behind.

Cat stepped up to him and clapped him on the shoulder. "We've got ourselves a genuine celebrity."

Clark grimaced. Superman was the celebrity. Clark was supposed to be his refuge.

"That's not me," Clark said. Every fiber of his being told him to deny everything.

"Of course it's not," Lois said, frostily. "But apparently somebody thinks you're enough of a celebrity to stick your head on some beefcake."

Clark gaped for a moment.

Without the suit, nobody realized it had been intended to be Superman. They thought the nude picture was supposed to be Clark Kent.

He found himself blushing.

"What are you angry about?"

"You've read the bylines...it's Lane and Kent, not Kent and Lane."

Clark shook his head. "I'm still not getting it."

"She can't stand that you are more famous than she is," Cat said, smirking. "It's eating her up."

Was she that competitive? It was hard to believe that even Lois could be that bad. "So you *want* people to paste your head onto nude bodies?" Clark asked slowly.

Lois shook her head and said, "I'm starting a twitter account." There was a note of challenge in her voice as she walked away.

Cat called out to Lois, "He's already got his own fan page!"

"I'm the one getting humiliated here," Clark protested. "How did this end up being about her?"

"I don't suppose you'd let me compare the man to the picture?"

Clark looked down at her for a second and frowned at her hand on his arm. "It'll never happen."

Well, not until those cameras that could see through walls came to market. Then who knew what would happen.

Somehow Clark had a feeling that life wouldn't have been like this twenty years ago.

He glanced at the computer. Cat had changed away from the porn page when Perry had entered the room.

"There's fanfic about me?" he asked incredulously. "Who's this KatManDew 1939?"

If he didn't know better, he'd have thought Cat was starting to blush.

THE END