

Anchor: Epilogue – Jonathan Kent

By [Bek <superbek1984@gmail.com>](mailto:superbek1984@gmail.com)

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Summary: In this short epilogue to the fanfics *Anchor: Parts I and II*, Jonathan Kent reflects on the events following his son's death and the arrival of the other Clark.

Story size: 2,067 words (11Kb as text)

Author's note: This should definitely only be read after having read *Anchor: Parts I and II*. I tried to wrap everything up well enough at the end of *Anchor: Part II*, but I hope this little extra bit here goes just a tad further. And I know everyone wasn't terribly happy with this version of Jonathan Kent. So, maybe this will...help? Or at least, it will be a start. :) Thanks for reading!

Read the previous stories:

[Anchor: Part I](#)

[Anchor: Part II](#)

The phone is heavy in my hands. Like everything else, really. Everything feels heavier lately. And it's not only been since my heart attack and surgery. No, this heaviness, the guilt, the grief...I've carried around with me for too long. Been unable to shake it, unable to just let it go...

I hold the phone, still, even as the dial tone drones on, and I find myself wondering why I'd done things the way I had — why I'd allowed myself to get so lost to all that grief and pain and guilt.

Because they're right. He is a good man.

I've known this for a long time, really. I've known this since that tragic school shooting. Since I saw him on television, carefully, dutifully helping transport the victims to the hospital.

He is a good man.

He's just...not my son.

And it made me so angry when he'd been pretending to be. Pretending. Wearing that suit that Martha sewed. Living in my son's apartment. Accompanying my son's fiancée to work. Using my son's name as his byline.

Clark Kent is my son. This other man is not.

And the grief I'd felt when I'd heard that my son had died — and the guilt of knowing I hadn't done enough to prevent it, to keep him home, to keep him from leaving — had completely consumed me.

Martha had tried to get through to me. Lois had tried too.

But until I saw him handle that school shooting with such care and compassion, I just hadn't been able to accept it. And even then, I still couldn't accept *him*.

I lower the phone back into its holder. Martha stands a few feet away, in the kitchen. She's baking. Again. She always bakes when she's anxious. And I've made her anxious. Again.

"He'll be here in five minutes," I tell her, and I watch, quietly, as she pauses her mixing and gives me a small smile.

"I'll get these brownies in the oven and then get out the apple pie," she replies.

And I nod. I'd like to offer to help her, but I'm supposed to be resting, and I've probably already done too much for the day. Lousy heart problems... I'm incredibly lucky.

I close my eyes and try to stop myself from reliving that day again. I don't remember much of it anyways. Just waking up in the hospital to have Martha and Lois and Clark, pale and worried and fretting, hovering over me.

He'd saved me, they'd said.

He'd heard my heart stop, all the way from Metropolis. Somehow. And then, he'd been there in seconds.

It was some sort of miracle, really. A few minutes later, and the outcome would have been very different.

Why I didn't immediately welcome him with open arms afterwards, I'm not sure. I guess I just felt like everything was all still too tenuous. Too fragile. And I still felt the guilt. Always that heavy, heavy guilt.

My son had left us to go fight a war that he had no business fighting. I'd told him he should stay. I'd tried. But not enough. Not enough. Not even close to enough. His death was my fault. That is...how I still feel. Even now. Even after having him back with us for several weeks now.

I should have done more.

I feel an unsteady sort of lightheadedness, and I shift uncomfortably in my seat at the table. Quiet sounds of Martha pulling plates out of the cupboard ring in my ears, and then I hear her walking toward me.

I smile weakly as I open my eyes, and she returns my smile. But I can see she still doesn't fully trust me. There is a hint of something in her expression, tamping down her usual brightness and enthusiasm. Maybe it is that she doesn't trust me, or maybe she's still thinking about all the things Clark told us earlier.

I've been trying to push those things out of my mind as well; thinking about what he'd gone through only makes my guilt more prominent, more painful.

Martha sets three plates on the table — one for each of us — and then, she pauses. The troubled expression in her

eyes seems to pulse for a moment as she lets out a long breath.

“You’re going to do this right this time, you promise me that, Jonathan Kent?”

She really doesn’t trust me. Guess I can’t blame her.

I nod. “I should have done this a long time ago, Martha. You’re right.” With a bit of effort, although I hide my grimace of pain from her, I stand up and move the few feet to her side. I place one hand on each of her hips and then plant a kiss square on her forehead. “You’d think after almost forty years of marriage, I’d have figured that out.”

She doesn’t laugh, and her expression just tightens more.

“Jonathan, this Clark...he deserves so much more respect than you’ve shown him. And I will not have it anymore if you choose to...change your mind again. It’s not fair to him. I hope you really do understand that,” she says, her voice quiet but firm.

A coldness seems to settle in me as I nod in agreement. “I understand, Martha. And I...I know I made a mistake, and I will do whatever I have to in order to make up for that.”

She sighs, but still does not look convinced. It’s not her fault; my reputation for being stubborn is well-earned. And she does know how I feel responsible for our son’s death — we’ve talked about it some, and of course she’s much too perceptive. Nothing gets past her.

She also knows that I am a foolish old man who is often too proud to admit when he’s wrong.

But that’s what I’ll do now.

A soft knock at the door announces his arrival.

Martha frowns as she unties her apron and pulls it off over her head. Her stern look almost stops me as I start to turn toward the door.

“You sit, and I’ll — ”

“No, Martha. You finish setting the table. I’ll let him in,” I cut in. I touch her shoulder gently with one hand and then kiss her on the cheek. “You have nothing to worry about, I promise.”

She nods, still skeptical, and turns away from me, heading back into the kitchen to get the pie.

And I turn in the opposite direction — toward the front door, where he no doubt stands, patiently waiting. The five steps to the door seem long, and I shake away my feeling of weakness as my hand reaches the door handle.

I *will* do this right this time. I *will* welcome this man, who shares a name with my son, but is not my son. I *will* welcome him into our home and into our lives. Because he’s a good man who deserves my respect and support.

With a deep breath, I open the door, and my resolve only grows stronger when I see him standing on the porch a few feet back, his hands shoved into his pockets and his

expression hopeful but tentative.

“Clark, it’s good to see you.”

His eyes widen slightly in surprise, and I chuckle as I realize I mean it. It is good to see him.

Some of the weight lifts. Some of the grief and guilt fades, just a tiny bit, as he nods.

“It’s good to see you too, Mr. Kent, sir.”

“Please, come on in. Martha has pie. Well, that should be a given, I suppose. When doesn’t she have pie?”

He doesn’t laugh, like how Martha didn’t laugh earlier, but I see him try to smile. There is light inside him...a bright light, just bursting to come out. A light that he’s had to hold inside for so long.

And I’d smothered that light. Without even really giving him a chance.

Stubborn old man.

I hold the door open, and he follows me inside. I expect him to head over to Martha, who has started to slice the remaining half of the pie into much-too-large slices. But he stops just inside the door, his hands still deep in his pockets and his shoulders hunched.

“Sir, I want to say that I’m — ”

“Clark, I owe you an apology... Another apology, that is,” I interject, shaking my head. He blinks and lowers his eyes to the ground as he scuffs his shoe against the hardwood floors. *Smothered*. My jaw sets as I frown. “Clark, I’m sorry for the way I’ve acted. I could try to give you an explanation or a reason or an excuse for my behavior, but I think I’d rather just move past it and...”

I trail off for a moment as he looks up at me with the same hopeful expression. His eyes are not hidden behind those darn black-rimmed glasses I’d gotten so used to seeing my son in, and their intensity surprises me. Bursting with light. And hope.

“...and say that I’m sorry,” I continue. “I’d like to welcome you to our home, like I should have on day one. And I’d like to thank you for bringing our son home and helping our world to find peace again and...for saving my life. I’m sorry that I treated you so poorly, and I hope that you can forgive me for my actions.”

A small smile inches onto his face, and he gives and almost imperceptible nod and extends his hand out toward me in a familiar gesture. I grasp his hand — God, he’s got a sure, strong grip — and we shake.

“Thank you, Mr. Kent. I-I’m — I’m so very grateful to be here and to have this opportunity to...to get to know the two of you...” He hesitates and glances to Martha, unable to hide some hint of sadness from his expression. But then he smiles again and shifts his gaze back to me. “I really appreciate it, sir.”

I know he lost his parents when he was ten. Which is why everything I put him through has been so much worse.

And so, his words now show me — yet again — just what kind of person he is. He’s thoughtful and kind and honest.

Everything that I accused him of not being.

I have a lot of fixing to do.

I motion to the table, where Martha now stands with her arms crossed over her chest, watching us.

“Here, Clark. Let’s sit and have some pie. And maybe you can tell us about how you stopped that runaway train near St. Louis last week. Do you know Martha and I were actually passengers on a runaway train once? I remember it like it just happened yesterday...”

And we all settle in at the table as I start my story.

We eat pie and talk for a long time. Martha and I tell him stories of our lives, and he tells us stories of his life. Eventually, he relaxes. Eventually, he smiles. Eventually, he even laughs.

And I watch quietly as his eyes light up while he speaks about volunteer work he’s doing as Superman. He becomes even more animated. His smile briefly touches his eyes as he nods to a question from Martha. Tiny bits of light and hope, beginning to burst free.

It’s still not enough, I know. I will be apologizing for this for a long time still.

But it is a good start, I think.

He laughs at one of Martha’s jokes, and I see it again — tiny bits of light and hope.

Yes, it’s a good start.

THE END