

The Forbidden Necklace

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Summary: He told her to never wear the necklace.

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Author's Note: This is in response to Kerth Challenge #1, which had the prompt of "He told her to never wear the necklace."

He told her to never wear the necklace.
But she hadn't listened.
And now a man was dying because of her defiance.
Stupid.
He'd been so *stupid* to bring the pendant to her attention.

But he'd wanted to make sure she knew it was off limits. Maybe he'd been wrong to withhold *all* of the information from her, but he'd thought, at the time, that he was doing the right thing. Certain secrets needed to be protected, after all. And even though she was his wife now, given her history, he hadn't been *entirely* sure he could trust her with the knowledge of what powers the necklace held.

He should have known that simply forbidding her from wearing it would draw her like a moth to a flame.

If his friend died because of his mistake...

Ugh! Why couldn't she have been content with all of the other jewels he'd given her? Why did she feel the need to touch the one, single piece that was off limits?

All of this passed through his mind in a split second and he launched himself across the spacious living room. Time slowed down around him as he tried to utilize every precious moment. He knew he had more time; a few seconds of exposure to the demon gemstone wouldn't be fatal. Excruciatingly painful, but not an immediate death sentence. Much more time would be required for that. But this was his *friend*. Even the handful of heartbeats he'd been in contact with the necklace was too much. The poor man was curled in a fetal position, groaning and writhing in agony on the floor while his horrified wife was distraught. Her eyes frantically searched for the cause of her husband's distress.

For a second, she gave him a murderous look, as though this were all his fault.

He wanted to explain that it wasn't, but was that really the truth? Would this have happened if he had just let the necklace languish in the secure location he'd always hidden it away in?

The look was short-lived.

She saw the necklace at the same moment he finally made it to his own wife's side. His wife flinched and shrank back as the two of them nearly tackled her in their haste. Her hands flew up to ward off the impending crash and her mouth parted in an O of surprise.

"What the...?" she managed, her question cut off as she struggled to process what was happening.

He reached her first and made a grab for the necklace. She shrieked and drew away as he wrapped the leather thong around his hand and then gave it a firm tug. The leather snapped and he closed his fist around the stone dangling from it. Without a word, he spun on his heel and exited the room, taking the accursed pendant as far away as he could. He made his way into the kitchen and threw open the drawer where the dishtowels were stored. With all speed, he wrapped the necklace up in several layers of the fabric, then stashed the whole thing in the freezer.

Breathing a sigh of relief, he leaned his back against the refrigerator, letting his adrenaline rush recede before he rejoined everyone in the living room.

By the time he stepped foot back in the room, his friend's ashen face had returned to its full color and he was standing, albeit it a little shakily, leaning on his wife for support. It would be another minute or two before the effects of the necklace wore off.

"I'm sorry, Clark," Bruce offered as he made his way back to where everyone stood. "Selena didn't know any better. I should have told her what that necklace was capable of."

Clark grunted and nodded. "You made a necklace out of Kryptonite?" he asked, rubbing the back of his neck, either in confusion or to relieve some lingering ache, Bruce wasn't sure. "I gave it to you in case I ever lost control and needed to be stopped. Not as a fashion accessory."

"And?" Bruce prompted.

Clark shrugged easily, already looking back to normal. "So...I mean...a necklace? Really? Not very manly of you, Bruce," he teased.

Bruce laughed. "It seemed...more surefire than a weapon that could easily miss you. Uh, provided I could get close enough to you. Which, let's face it, I *am* that good. But if you want, I can have a whole slew of other things made. Spearheads, bullets, arrows, a cargo net...I *do* have contacts within S.T.A.R. Labs you know." He arched an eyebrow, daring Clark to take him up on the offer.

Clark chuckled. "On second thought, the necklace is fine. Tasteful too." His tone was light and joking, as though he hadn't just had a brush with the one thing on Earth that could kill him. Bruce wondered at his occasionally irritating optimism. "Just, uh, maybe secure it a little better next time. So it doesn't fall into the wrong hands. No offense," he added with a wink to Selena.

Selena shrugged, her earlier horror and confusion replaced by casual confidence. "It's not his fault. He actually had it in a really secure vault. Child's play for a former master cat burglar like myself, but then again, I was always a cut above the rest."

Lois shook her head. "Well, this has certainly been an interesting evening so far," she quipped.

Bruce nodded. "So it would seem. I apologize. This is

not how I envisioned this night would go. Still, no harm done, right, Clark?”

Clark good-naturedly rolled his eyes. “Nothing wounded except for my pride.” He shook his head. “Come on. We’re going to be late for our dinner reservation.”

THE END