

# Green with Envy

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Summary: A favorite “frenemy” shows up knowing a big secret about Clark Kent! What does he intend to do with that information? And what secret does Lois discover? (Story is intended to take place right after the series finale—pretend that it hasn’t really been 25 years since the show ended!)

Story Size: 12,342 words (68 kB as text)

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## Chapter 1

*“Mom and Dad, and uh, Mom and Dad...we have something to tell you,” Clark started as Lois emerged from the other room carrying a baby wrapped in a blanket.*

With that, Lois woke up with a start. It was a dream. It was all a dream. There was no baby. Lois tossed in bed. She looked at Clark, sleeping peacefully beside her. The conversation that she had with Clark a few days prior replayed in her mind.

*“Dr. Klein ran every test he possibly could. Poor guy could barely even face me. The truth is that the biology between Superman and an Earthling is incompatible for reproduction.”*

Lois couldn’t believe that just several short months ago, she wasn’t even sure that she wanted to have kids. Now that she’d been told she wasn’t able to have kids, it was the only thing she wanted. She rolled over onto her back with one hand behind her head and one lying on her stomach.

“Honey?” Clark mumbled, stirring beside her.

“Sorry I woke you,” Lois said, giving him a quick kiss. “I’m just having a hard time sleeping.”

“I know something that could help you,” Clark told her, suddenly more awake.

Lois couldn’t help but smile at him. “Somehow, I don’t think you’re trying to help me fall back asleep.”

“If you fall asleep, that means I’m doing it all wrong,” Clark told her, kissing her mouth gently while his hand slid from her hip to her inner thigh.

“Noooo,” Lois moaned in a sexy whisper. “You’re doing it *all* right.”

The next morning, Lois woke up to sunlight pouring into their bedroom. She rolled over to see that Clark had scribbled her a quick note letting her know he’d heard a bank alarm around 6:30 a.m. and would be back as soon as he could. Lois put her silk robe on, tied it, and headed

downstairs as she heard the front doors to their brownstone close.

“Morning,” Clark greeted her. In his hands were two cups of coffee and some bagels from the local bakery. “I picked us up a little breakfast treat since I was out and about.”

“Great, thanks,” Lois said with a warm smile. Clark set the food and drinks in the kitchen and walked back to her for a kiss.

“Last night was fun,” he said with a big smile.

“Yes, it was,” she agreed as she took the lid off of her coffee cup and poured in a splash of cream. *Last night WAS fun*, she thought to herself. *Who am I to wallow in self-pity about not being able to have a baby? I have a SUPER husband. Literally. I am popular, well-liked, and well-respected by the community. I am Lois Lane. I am NOT a wallower.* She felt her mood lighten.

“Honey?” Clark asked.

“Hmmm?”

“You’ve been stirring cream into your coffee for a good forty-five seconds,” Clark observed.

“Oh,” Lois said, smiling sheepishly. “I guess I just got lost in my own thoughts.”

“Anything you want to talk about?” Clark asked as they sat down at the breakfast table.

“Well...to tell you the truth, I guess I’ve just been feeling sad,” she said, locking eyes with his.

“Because of the baby news?” Clark guessed.

“You know me well,” she affirmed.

“You are my wife,” he said. “I’m supposed to know you better than anyone else, and you’re supposed to be able to talk to me about your fears and worries.”

“I really didn’t even know that I was this upset about the fact that we’re not able to have children. Until last night. The reason I told you that I was having a hard time sleeping

was because I had just woken up from a dream where we found a baby, wrapped in a Superman blanket, in our house. At that moment, I was so happy. And then I woke up...and I realized it was all a dream. There was no baby for us." Her eyes remained fixed on the breakfast sitting on the table in front of her. Clark walked around to her side of the table, knelt down, and used one finger to gently lift her chin so that they were looking eye to eye with one another.

"Lois," he started. "I'm sorry that you had that dream. I'm sorry that it made our situation more real and more difficult for you. But just remember this. It is *science* that's telling us a Kryptonian and an Earthling are incompatible for reproduction. It's also *science* that tells us that men are not able to fly, men do not have the strength to bend metal with their bare hands or leap tall buildings in a single bound. Yet here I am. Able to do all of that, and more. There is so much that science doesn't know about us."

"I love you so much, Clark Kent," Lois told him, her almond-shaped eyes narrowing in determination. "If there is one thing I know about you it is that you defy all the odds. I was the woman who never wanted a man, never wanted to get married, and definitely never wanted to have children. Just look at how you entered my world five short years ago and changed everything. I've already decided that wallowing in self-pity will not help anything. Besides, what have I got to wallow about, really? I have a SUPER, sexy husband"—Clark smiled warmly at her as she continued—"an incredible career, a great reputation... I have so much already. And I'm used to working hard to get whatever I want." She paused briefly before continuing. "I want a baby." She leaned in closer to Clark with a sexy smile on her face. "And I'm willing to try for as long as it takes."

"Twenty-four/seven?" Clark asked as his mouth closed in on hers.

"Are you up for the challenge?" she whispered seductively as she felt her husband untying her robe and sliding it off of her shoulders.

"There's nothing I like more than a good challenge," Clark replied as he whisked Lois upstairs at super-speed.

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"Did you get it?" Dan Scardino asked the other man standing on one of the boat docks in Hobbs Bay.

"Right here," the accomplice affirmed, showing Dan a lead box. He opened it to reveal a green, glowing chunk of kryptonite.

"Perfect," Dan said, an evil grin on his face. He pulled out a small duffel bag and unzipped it to show his accomplice all of the neatly rubber-banded piles of twenty-dollar bills

contained in the duffel bag. "Five thousand and I was never here, and this never happened, got it?"

"For five thousand dollars cash, I don't remember anything or anybody," the man replied. They did a quick swap.

"Pleasure doing business with you," Scardino said as he quickly whipped out a revolver and shot the man in the chest.

The man groaned, looked at the blood gushing from his chest, rolled his eyes back in his head, and fell backwards into the water.

Dan looked around to make sure nobody had seen the interaction take place, picked up his briefcase and the lead box from his "former" accomplice, and whistled as he strolled back to his car.

## Chapter 2

\*\*\*\*SIX WEEKS LATER\*\*\*\*

"Lois! Clark!" Perry's voice bellowed as he rushed out of his office. "I need you two at S.T.A.R. Labs pronto! There's been a bomb threat!"

"On it, Chief!" Clark yelled. He rushed over to his wife's desk. "I'll meet you down there," he whispered in her ear.

"Be careful," she responded, giving him a quick kiss as he tugged on his tie and took off out of sight.

Once at S.T.A.R. Labs, Lois quickly spotted Dr. Klein. "Dr. Klein!" she called as she headed his way. "How are you? Are you alright?"

Dr. Klein was using a handkerchief to mop his forehead. "Yes, Lois, I'm fine. Physically, anyways."

"Physically?" Lois questioned. "Are you not fine in some other way?"

Dr. Klein pulled Lois away from the group and lowered his voice. "I need your promise that anything I say to you right now is strictly as a friend, and it is to be kept off the record."

"You have my word," Lois said solemnly.

"I think Superman may be in immense danger," Dr. Klein told her.

Lois could feel the hairs on her neck stand on end at Dr. Klein's admission about her husband. Her eyes grew wide. "Go on," she urged, trying to fight back any emotion.

"About six weeks ago, our labs were broken into during the middle of the night. There were a few computers stolen, some paper files, and we think a chunk of kryptonite was taken as well," Dr. Klein started.

“You *think*?” Lois questioned. “How do you not know for sure?”

“Kryptonite is kept under extreme lock and key at the lab for obvious reasons, but there is absolutely no paper trail of it. We don’t want the wrong people to be able to find it. When I went to extract it from the vault for research purposes, it was gone. There are only a few other scientists who know where it is kept and how to retrieve it. I questioned them all, all except for one by the name of Dr. Travers. He has been on a government-funded research project in an undisclosed location, so I couldn’t get a hold of him to find out if he had the kryptonite. Anyways, fast forward to today, and a bomb threat is phoned in. The alarms immediately started going off, and I left in a hurry, but I didn’t lock my computer. I was already outside when I realized that anybody could access my computer. Since I work on the first floor and don’t need the stairwell, I decided to take my chances and run back to my office to properly secure my computer. As I was turning the corner to head into my office, I saw a man running out of my office through the back door. In the few minutes I was gone from my office, this man planted the bomb in my office and stole my computer,” Dr. Klein continued, obvious panic in his voice. He mopped sweat off his forehead.

“Oh my God,” Lois whispered, complete fear overtaking her. “Dr. Klein, please tell me that you don’t keep all of Superman’s confidential medical files on that computer?”

A look of panic came across Dr. Klein’s face. “Okay. I won’t.”

“Please tell me that the files are at least encrypted?”

Another look of panic. “I’m afraid I can’t,” he said.

Lois exhaled slowly. “Please tell me that you at least got a good look at the guy who took your computer and can give a detailed description to the police?”

Dr. Klein winced at the suggestion. “He was wearing a ski mask.”

“Oh my—” Lois started. “I think I need to sit down after hearing all that.” The fear coursing through Lois’s body made shivers go up her spine, and she suddenly felt light-headed. She carefully lowered herself to the ground and put her head in her hands.

“Lois, are you alright?” Dr. Klein asked, kneeling beside her.

“Yeah,” she answered. “I haven’t eaten much today. I guess hearing all this news combined with an empty stomach just caused my blood sugar to crash.”

At that moment, Superman walked out of S.T.A.R. Labs and over to a group of reporters who were waiting around

with recording devices to get a quote. Lois and Dr. Klein quickly stood up and rushed over to join the reporters. Lois pulled out her voice recorder.

“Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to make a statement,” Superman declared. The reporters hurried and got out notepads and turned on their cameras and other recording devices before Superman continued. “There was a bomb found in the office of one of the scientists here, a Dr. Bernard Klein. It has been diffused and properly destroyed so that it poses no additional threat to this building. It also had a very personal message that was intended for me to see that I take very seriously. To whomever planted this bomb, just know that I will not accept this kind of cowardly behavior from you! If you have a problem with me, you take it up with me. Leave everybody, and I mean *everybody*, out of this sick game you think you can lure me into! Thank you.”

Lois turned her attention to Dr. Klein and dragged him away from the group. “Did you see the note?”

“I did,” he answered, avoiding eye contact.

“Care to tell me what it says?” she asked.

“I’m sorry, Lois. Since I am Superman’s doctor, there are things that I can’t share with you without his approval. I have to respect doctor-patient confidentiality,” Dr. Klein answered.

Lois could feel her blood boil. She had no reason to be so upset with Dr. Klein—he had technically done nothing wrong other than being careless. She shot him a glaring look.

Before Dr. Klein had a chance to say anything, Superman approached. “Ms. Lane, can I speak to you in private?” Superman asked.

“Superman, if I may interject real quick?” Dr. Klein asked. “I need to speak to you right away. It’s of a very urgent matter.”

“Of course,” Superman agreed. “Let me speak to Ms. Lane for just a second, and I will come and talk to you.”

Lois silently followed her husband away from the crowd. “Clark, what is it?” she asked in a hushed whisper when they were out of earshot of anyone.

“I can’t say too much here because I don’t know who may be watching or listening, but what I can tell you is that this bomb was planted for me to see. I’ll tell you more when we get back to the Planet. I was going to try to duck out and return as Clark and accompany you back to work, but I just told Dr. Klein I would speak to him. Please promise me that you’ll be careful,” Superman pleaded.

“Come on, Clark, you know me—” Lois started in a nonchalant tone of voice.

“Exactly,” Superman interrupted. “I do know you. Which is why I need you to promise me that you’ll be careful. Now, I have to go back and speak with Dr. Klein. I’ll see you back at the Planet soon.”

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“Hey, Lois, why the hurry?” Jimmy asked as Lois practically flew out of the elevator.

“Not now, Jimmy! Have you seen Clark?” she asked.

“No, not in person, but I assume he’s here somewhere because of the flowers on your desk.”

“Flowers?” Lois repeated. As she rushed down the ramp and her desk came into view, she saw a large bouquet of red roses on her desk. There was a card sitting on her desk right below the roses, and she opened it up to read.

*Roses are red,*

*Lilies are white,*

*Your husband is Superman,*

*This isn’t alright*

*We’ll be together forever,*

*This much is true*

*I’ll get rid of your husband*

*Because I love you*

Lois felt her knees go weak as she reread the threatening note. She felt a hand touch her back, and she was startled back to reality. “Oh!” she gasped. She looked up and saw Clark standing beside her, a concerned expression on his face.

“Sorry, hon, I didn’t mean to startle you,” he told her.

“Clark!” Lois exclaimed, relief washing over her.

“Who are these flowers from?” Clark asked.

“Nobody who we want to be friends with,” Lois said, handing him the note that she’d received. He read the note quickly and then met her eyes with a horrified look.

“Let’s go to the conference room so we can be in private,” Clark said. “This is serious.”

“What was the personal note that you found on the bomb?” Lois questioned.

Clark wordlessly pulled out a piece of paper and handed it to her, a solemn look taking over his face.

Lois took the note and read it out loud. “Your tights are blue, your cape is red. Your wife will be mine...and you

will be dead.” Lois finished the last sentence slowly. “Who is doing this to us? Somebody lured you there just to let you know he’s figured out your secret, and I’m guessing whoever left you this note is the same person who left the note and flowers for me.”

“Lois, there’s more. Since Dr. Klein saw this note, he figured it out pretty quickly that I’m Superman,” Clark told her.

“I kind of figured,” Lois admitted. “I talked to him a bit before and after your statement that you gave to all the reporters. He wouldn’t tell me straight out because you’re his patient and he had to respect doctor-patient confidentiality, but the way he was acting, I could tell that he knew more than he was saying. How do you feel about him knowing? I mean, I believe we can trust him not to tell anyone on *purpose*, but he can get kind of squirrely. I’d be afraid he would let information slip purely by accident.”

“I trust him,” Clark said. “Besides, there’s nothing we can do about it now.”

“Did he also tell you about the disappearing kryptonite and the disappearing scientist?” Lois asked.

“Yes, he filled me in on everything, and then I filled him in on everything about myself, and my dual lives. He knows that he’s allowed to discuss all of Superman’s medical information, his personal Superman research, and anything else Superman-related with you.” Clark cocked his head to the side as an idea came to mind. “You know, in some ways, it may actually be helpful that Dr. Klein knows my secret. If we do ever get pregnant, we would need to tell him because he would have to be the baby’s doctor. And maybe even be in there with you during delivery.”

“Okay, Clark, you’re jumping about three light-years ahead of the current situation,” Lois said. “And just to be clear...if I ever do get pregnant, and I mean this in the nicest possible way, I do NOT want Dr. Klein in the delivery room. That’d just be too weird. Now, let’s get back to reality. We need to find out where to go from here—who planted the bomb, who’s delivering these cryptic, threatening notes to us, and how did he find out your secret?”

Suddenly, there was a knock on the conference room door, and Jimmy stuck his head in. “Um, guys, there’s somebody here asking to speak to you. Well, he’s mainly asking to speak to Lois, but I told him that Clark was coming, too, seeing as how you’re married and such. I thought he would most definitely want to be included in this interview.”

“Jimmy, don’t be silly,” Lois huffed in annoyance. “Just because we’re married doesn’t mean that we’re glued at the hip. I am still capable of interviewing *men* on my own.” She

crossed her arms over her chest in an effort to look tough. "Who is it anyway? I wasn't expecting anyone right now, and Clark and I are kind of in the middle of a big story. Never mind. I'll go take care of this myself." Before Jimmy had a chance to say anything, Lois walked quickly out of the conference room and stopped as soon as she saw who was waiting for her at her desk. "Dan?" she asked in bewilderment.

"As in Dan Scardino?" Clark asked Jimmy, still inside the conference room. "Jimmy, a little heads-up about this would have been nice." Clark walked out of the conference room to go stand beside Lois. "Dan Scardino," Clark said nonchalantly while putting a loving arm around Lois's waist and gently bringing her closer to him. "What a surprise. What is it that you needed to talk to my wife about?"

Lois tried to suppress a smile when Clark overly emphasized the word "wife." She never thought she would appreciate a man showing possession of her, but when it was from her husband, the man she wholeheartedly loved, it made her beam with happiness.

"Oh, hey, Kent," Dan acknowledged. "I'm here on assignment. I'm working a job here in Metropolis, and just happened to be at S.T.A.R. Labs doing some investigating when the bomb threat was called in. I saw Lois in the group of reporters while Superman was giving his statement. I figured she's working on it, and I thought I could help out. You know, kinda like old times." Dan paused for a moment as a silly grin took over his face, like he was reminiscing about the past. "Funny, Kent, I don't recall seeing you there. That's why I came here looking for Lois."

"Clark was working on a different story for us," Lois said, quickly covering for him. "He and I are now investigating the bomb that was left at S.T.A.R. Labs."

"So...I remember reading that the two of you got married a while ago," Dan asked.

"That's right," Clark answered. "Almost two years now."

"Hm," Dan said contemplatively. "That's interesting. Last time I saw you two, Kent was always leaving you high and dry on dates, Lois. What changed? He suddenly stopped running and finally was mature enough to commit?"

She cleared her throat and spoke up. "Dan, not that it's any of your business, but there was a lot that Clark and I needed to talk about before we could take our relationship to the next level. Once we were able to fully communicate and get everything out in the open with one another, it wasn't long before we saw just how deeply we loved each other and how much we just couldn't live without one another."

From where he stood, Clark was sure that he saw Dan's jaw clench at Lois's admission of love for her husband.

Surely, Dan didn't really think he was going to steal Lois away from Clark...did he?

"Well, now that you know about our personal lives, why don't you tell us what information you have?" Clark requested.

"Surely you know I'm not that easy," Dan said. "I thought we could help each other out. I tell you what I know, and you tell me what you know?"

"What exactly are you investigating?" Lois asked, crossing her arms over her chest and looking at him pointedly.

"I can't divulge all of it to you, but we have a pretty reliable source claiming that kryptonite was stolen by a scientist who works here in Metropolis. This scientist is planning on selling a melted-down liquid version of kryptonite to the highest bidder on the black market, and if and when the sale goes through, we believe that this liquid kryptonite will be injected into over-the-counter pain-relieving medication. Hundreds of thousands of people will unknowingly ingest kryptonite and be infected by it."

"But kryptonite doesn't affect normal humans," Clark said. "It only affects Superman."

"When exposed to it externally, you're right, it doesn't affect humans. When ingested, though," Dan started. "Well, we have reason to believe when ingested, humans can begin exhibiting superhuman powers."

Lois turned white as she thought about what that would mean. "Oh my God," she whispered. "Hundreds of thousands of people with powers like Superman? He would be outnumbered. Our society would cease to exist as we now know it." Clark put his hand on the small of her back and gave her a reassuring rub with his thumb.

"You understand it perfectly," Dan said, meeting her eyes with a sultry smile. "I shouldn't seem surprised by that. You always were incredibly brilliant. Not to mention incredibly beautiful. I see nothing has changed."

Lois smiled uncomfortably at Dan, and Clark took control of the situation. "Actually, Dan, her marital status has changed since she last saw you, so I would really appreciate it if you kept all your remarks about my wife more professional and less personal."

"Kent, calm down. I'm not the bad guy here," Dan replied. "Anyways, that's all I can tell you as of right now. Care to tell me what you know about the bomb threat?"

"Do you think the bomb threat is related to the scientist who stole the kryptonite?" Lois asked.

"Feels too coincidental not to be related," Dan shrugged. "What'd you find out?"

“Let’s go to the conference room,” Lois suggested. The three of them headed inside and closed the door. “I also have a reliable source from S.T.A.R. Labs who gave me some information. He said that some kryptonite is missing, along with paper files, and the same lab where the bomb was found also had its computer stolen. This computer has confidential records about Superman on it. Also, as Superman mentioned in his press conference, the bomb was deliberately set for him to see.”

“Did Superman tell you what the note said, Lois?” Dan asked. “I saw him pull you away to talk to you for a moment after the press conference.”

“No, he didn’t tell me anything,” Lois answered. *Technically, I’m not lying because \*Clark\* told me what the note said, not Superman,* she justified to herself.

“Did your source mention the names of anyone who’s been acting out of sorts that I should bump to the top of my suspect list?” Dan asked.

“There was mention of a man named Stephen Travers, but he’s supposed to be unable to be reached. On some secret government mission,” Lois answered.

“Well, lucky for me, I’ve got a lot of pull into knowing about secret government missions,” Dan said, flashing his too-straight-and-too-white teeth at Lois. Clark stifled an eye roll. “Thanks, guys. I’ll let you know if I find anything that might help with your story if you’ll do the same for me and my investigation.”

“You got it, Dan,” Lois said. With a nod, Dan turned and headed out of the conference room and toward the elevator. Once he was far enough away, Lois turned back to Clark. “Well, today has certainly been a day full of unexpected surprises,” she told Clark. She noticed him just standing in deep contemplation with his hands on his hips in the corner of the conference room. “What?” she asked him.

“Hmm?” he asked, snapping his attention back to reality. “Oh, nothing.”

“Clark, please, I know you better than that,” Lois said, wrapping her arms around her husband’s neck. “Talk to me. Tell me what you’re thinking about.”

“It just seems like everything about today is such an odd coincidence,” Clark admitted. “You and I both get threatening notes today; both notes say that I will be taken out of the equation and this mystery writer will have you all to himself, and it all happens on a day when Dan Scardino, of all people, shows up again. And on top of that, there is just something about him that rubbed me the wrong way while he was here. The way he looked at you, the creepy way he smiled at you, the inappropriate compliments he gave you.

I don’t know... There’s just something about him that I still don’t like. I don’t trust him fully.”

“Are you sure that you’re not letting the past cloud your judgment of him?” Lois asked.

“I don’t think so,” Clark replied. He thought for a moment. “Okay, I admit, the guy doesn’t seem to bring out the best side of me. When you were dating him, I harbored so much resentment towards him. He was cocky, arrogant, played by his own rules...I almost lost you to him. I don’t know what I would do without you in my life. So, I guess, now that Scardino is back in our lives, it’s really brought out a side of me I didn’t know I had. I’m ready to pin this guy to the wall, and I don’t even know if he’s guilty of anything yet.”

“It didn’t take me long to see that he had nothing on you,” Lois said. “And that was without me knowing about how truly ‘super’ you are.”

Clark gave her one of his charming half grins and leaned in to kiss her. “But you mean to tell me that you haven’t been suspicious at all as to Dan’s sudden reappearance in our lives?”

“I mean, I can admit that Dan’s reappearance on the same day that you and I receive threatening notes telling us that someone knows your secret is definitely an odd coincidence, but he seemed to have a perfectly logical reason for being in Metropolis today,” Lois said. “Besides, he’s been out of our lives for three years. Why would he come back now?”

“Because he found out that I’m Superman,” Clark said. “And he thinks he’s finally found the way to get me out of the picture and have you all to himself.”

“That sounds more like Lex Luthor than Scardino,” Lois told him.

“All right,” he acquiesced. “Maybe you’re right. Let’s just move on so that we can focus all of our attention on who else could be sending us those threatening, cryptic messages.”

“Thank you,” Lois said, smiling at him and giving him a quick kiss. “I have an idea. Let’s ask if Jimmy could comb through the surveillance cameras for the Planet and S.T.A.R. Labs to see if anyone suspicious pops up, or if the same person is seen at both locations, and while he’s doing that, you and I can go pay a visit to Bobby Bigmouth and see what we can find out about the kryptonite being added to OTC pain relievers. Sound good?”

“Sure,” Clark said. “I’ll go talk to Jimmy.” He stuck his head out of the conference room doors and found his friend

working at his desk. “Hey Jimmy, are you busy now, or can you do a favor for Lois and me?”

“Course, C.K., what’s up?” Jimmy asked. “And hey! It’s wild that Scardino showed up here today! How floored were you?!”

“Floored,” Clark said stoically. “Can you get the surveillance videos from downstairs in the Planet lobby and from S.T.A.R. Labs and see if the same person or people were at both locations today?”

“Sure,” Jimmy replied.

“Thanks,” Clark said, clapping his friend on the back. He brought his head in closer to Jimmy. “And just between you and me,” he said, lowering his voice to a whisper, “can you check out what Dan Scardino has been doing for the last few years?”

Jimmy’s eyes met Clark’s with a sparkle. “Still don’t trust the guy? I mean, I get it, you two had the bad history because of Lois and everything, but you’ve got nothing to worry about. That guy is not even in the same league as you—”

“Trust me, Jimmy,” Clark said with a grin. “I know. Can you please just help me out with this? And maybe just keep it between us?”

“You got it,” Jimmy answered.

### Chapter 3

Thirty minutes later, and armed with a vast array of junk food, Lois and Clark waited in their car in an alley behind a bowling alley.

“Ugh, what is that pungent smell?” Lois asked as they sat waiting, covering her nose and mouth with her hand.

“I don’t smell anything pungent,” Clark replied. “This chili dog smells delicious, though.” He lifted the bag containing the chili dog closer to Lois. “Maybe we should stop and get some for dinner tonight.”

“Oh, God, that’s where the smell is coming from,” Lois said, throwing open the door and jumping out. Clark watched her bend over in front of the car and heard her throw up. Once she was finished, she walked around to Clark’s side of the car. “I think I’ll just wait out here where the smell isn’t going to make me vomit anymore,” she told him weakly. Clark opened his door and got out.

“Are you okay?” he asked.

“Yeah, but I think something in that chili dog has gone rancid or something,” Lois answered. “It smelled awful. And if we give Bobby food poisoning, he may never snitch for us again.”

“Hey, my ears are burning!” Bobby said, walking up to them. “Hey, where’s the food? I need to know how much information you just bought from me.”

“It’s in the car,” Clark told him. “But be forewarned, you probably want to throw away the chili dog. Lois said it smelled rancid and it made her throw up.”

Bobby opened the passenger side back door and got in the back seat of their car. “Ooh, a chili dog from Frank’s! That’s what I’m talking about!” He took a big whiff of it. “I don’t think it smells rancid. I think it smells delicious. I’ll take my chances on it. Superman may be the Man of Steel, but I have the stomach of steel.”

Lois rolled her eyes. “Well, if it’s all the same to you, I think I’ll stay outside of the car for this little rendezvous.” Clark got back in the driver’s side, and Lois just leaned over the driver’s side window to join the conversation. “So what kind of information do you have for us, Bobby?”

He took a big bite of his chili dog before answering, and Lois had to concentrate on breathing in and out of her mouth rather than her nose to keep herself from vomiting again. “Well,” Bobby started, while chewing up his chili dog. “Word on the street is that someone is out to get Superman. Somebody with a big grudge against him. It started as a plan to just steal kryptonite and kill Superman with it, but then it was accidentally discovered that when humans ingest kryptonite, it turns them superhuman. But from what I hear, the effects wear off relatively quickly. The formula hasn’t been perfected to make it a long-lasting dosage.”

“Okay, something is not adding up for me,” Clark said with a puzzled look on his face. “Why would someone, who supposedly knows how to get superhuman powers, want to put this in over-the-counter medications and allow millions of other people to become unknowingly affected with superhuman powers? Why not keep this knowledge to himself and become the most powerful villain ever?”

Bobby shook his head and frowned. “I haven’t heard anything about it going into medication. No, whoever is behind this wants to be the one in control. He wants to be the one to end Superman. He’s out for revenge—not money. Who told you anything about this liquid kryptonite going in over-the-counter meds?”

“Sc—” Clark started but was quickly cut off by Lois.

“A source,” Lois interrupted.

“Well, your source is either mistaken or trying to throw you off the track,” Bobby said, opening the car door. “Anyways, that’s all I know, and I was never here. I don’t know who’s in charge, but all I know is they’re out for revenge on Superman, and they will stop at nothing to get it.” With

that, Bobby grabbed the rest of the food out of the car and walked away.

Lois took a deep breath and got back in the car. She stared out the front windshield, unable to make eye contact with her husband.

Clark took her hand in his and gently pulled her chin to look at him. "Lois, are you okay?"

"No," she said, her voice barely above a whisper. "Somebody has figured out how to make themselves superhuman, they have kryptonite, and they're out for revenge on you. No, Clark, 'okay' is definitely not a word I would use to describe myself right now."

"Lois, I will be fine," Clark said. "We just need to use every resource available to us to figure out who's behind all of this."

\* \* \*

"Lois, honey, come on, we should really call it a night," Clark called out to Lois, who was staring at her computer monitor intensely.

"Huh?" she replied. She blinked her eyes, which were heavy and dry from staring at her screen for so long. She yawned. "What time is it?"

"Clearly, it's time for us to go home and go to bed," Clark answered in response to her yawn. "It's well after ten. Nobody else is even here anymore. Even Perry went home an hour ago."

"Well, Jimmy couldn't find anybody familiar in any of the surveillance footage, nor did he find any one person who was at S.T.A.R. Labs and the Planet today, and I'm determined to find out who is threatening us and seeking revenge on you. So far, I can't find anybody who visited both buildings today. Well, except for Dan, but he had actual reasons to be at both places."

"Yeah, I bet he did," Clark muttered under his breath as he switched off his computer and stood up.

Lois shot her husband a smirk. "I heard that remark. You're not actually jealous of Dan Scardino are you?"

Clark walked over and got Lois's coat for her and helped her into it. "I am not a jealous man. But there's still a lot about Dan's reappearance into our lives that is just...suspicious. And frankly, I'm quite surprised he's not higher up on your suspect list. Are you sure that you're not keeping him off your suspect list because you still feel a little bit guilty for how things ended between the two of you?"

"Guilty?" Lois questioned as her voice rose and her eyes narrowed. "Why should I feel guilty? I was very honest with him about why I didn't want to continue pursuing a

relationship with him, and he knew that I was already in a relationship with you while I was with him. It's not like I sent him a text message a year into our exclusive relationship and said 'I just wanna be friends.' If I had done something low like that, *then* I might have had reason to feel guilty."

"I didn't mean it as an insult to you," Clark said. "Rather as a compliment. I know the world sees you as this gruff reporter who doesn't play by the rules and will take down anyone or anything who gets in the way of her story, but I know the real Lois Lane. The woman who thinks more of others than herself; the woman who is kind and considerate and would never intentionally hurt anybody unless they have it coming to them." Clark saw Lois's face soften.

"How do you do it, Clark?" she asked with a smile. "How do you know exactly what I need to hear? And how do you always manage to use that Smallville charm to make me go from being so frustrated with you to wondering how I ever lived my life without you?"

Clark smiled in return, wrapped his arms around her waist, leaned in, and gave her a sweet kiss on the lips. "Maybe because you're my wife and I know you better than anyone."

"Why don't you take me home and show me just how well you know me?" Lois whispered seductively in Clark's ear.

"With pleasure," Clark groaned. He picked his wife up in his arms and flew her home.

## Chapter 4

The next day, Lois and Clark were furiously researching Dr. Travers's whereabouts, and Clark was taking his turn searching through the video surveillance when he happened to look up and see Dan Scardino making his way to Lois's desk. Clark also stood up from his desk and walked over to Lois.

"Dan, to what do we owe the pleasure two days in a row?" Clark asked, forcing a smile and standing next to his wife.

"How's the research coming? Any new leads to share with me?" Dan asked.

"We're still chasing down a few angles, so not much to share right now," Lois answered, standing up from her seat. "Whoa," she said, grabbing Clark's arm with one hand and putting her other hand down on her desk to steady herself as she was suddenly overcome with a wave of dizziness.

"You okay?" Clark asked, concerned. He held her hand and put his other hand on the small of her back.

“Yeah,” she said sheepishly. She sat back down. “I must have just stood up too fast. That combined with the fact that I haven’t eaten anything this morning. Must have just been a drop in blood sugar. I’m fine.”

“You sure?” Dan asked. A copy boy walked by carrying a box of donuts. “Hey, sir, do you mind if I steal one of these donuts from you?”

The copy boy couldn’t have been more than twenty years old and had probably never been called “sir” before. The look of flattery was evident on his face. “Yes, of course,” he answered proudly.

Dan grabbed a donut out of the box and handed it to Lois. “Here, this should help you feel better.” Lois noticed Clark giving Dan the side-eye.

Lois smiled uncomfortably and accepted the donut from Dan. “Thanks.” She took a bite. “So, anyways,” she said, waving her hand in a “move on” motion. “You were asking about our research. We don’t have much in the way of new leads. We’re still working on all the angles we were presented with yesterday. What about you? Anything new on your end?”

“As a matter of fact, yes,” Dan said with a big grin. “I was looking into this scientist, Travers, and investigating what top-secret government project he was working on, but get this,” he started.

“Let me guess,” Clark interjected. “There is no top-secret government project.”

“Bingo,” Dan said. “Even more interesting, I just found out that a body was just pulled out of Hobbs Bay. Some divers found it. I don’t know much, but I do know that the preliminary coroner’s exam shows that the body looks to have been in the bay for about six weeks. And six weeks is how long Travers has supposedly been on this top-secret government mission.”

“Thanks, Dan!” Lois said, standing up from her chair quickly. “We’ll head down to Hobbs Bay now and see if we can get some answers.”

“Are you feeling better now?” Dan asked, seemingly unconcerned with the investigation at hand anymore. “If you’re not, I’d be happy to find that copy boy and grab another donut for you.” He reached out and put his hand to her shoulder, giving it a gentle squeeze.

Lois smiled uncomfortably once more. She had tried defending him to Clark, but even Lois’s reporters’ instincts were starting to stand on edge around him. “Actually,” she started.

“Actually, Dan,” Clark interrupted, putting his arm around Lois’s shoulders and pulling her gently into his own

embrace...and out of Dan’s reach. “I had actually promised Lois that I would take her to a nice, romantic lunch right now. Just the two of us.”

“Yes, he did,” Lois said, playing along. “Which is why I haven’t eaten anything today. I want to save my appetite for our romantic lunch.”

“You’re going on a romantic lunch date on a Thursday at ten thirty?” Dan asked skeptically.

“Yeah,” Clark answered, as if there was nothing unusual about that statement. “We work best after spending some quality time together and having a big meal. So I think we’ll go for that lunch and then see what answers we can dig up at Hobbs Bay and the coroner’s office.”

“Suit yourselves,” Dan agreed. “But just remember. We’re supposed to be helping each other. So far, I’ve been giving you all the tips, and I’ve gotten nothing in return. I think you owe me.” With that, he walked off.

“I’ll tell you what I owe you,” Clark mumbled.

Lois lightly jabbed Clark in his ribcage with her elbow. “Careful,” she lightly chided. “Superman has ethics unlike any other person on this planet.”

“Yes, but when it comes to”—Clark lowered his voice to a soft whisper before continuing—“Superman’s wife, his ethics go out the window. Which is exactly where I would like to see Dan Scardino go.”

“And I love you for it,” Lois said, giving him a light peck on the lips. “Now come on.” Lois tugged on her husband’s arm as she grabbed her coat off the hook.

“Where are we going?” Clark asked.

“You are taking me to that romantic lunch that we told Dan about, and then maybe you can contact Superman to go investigate the crime scene at Hobbs Bay to see if his super senses can find anything pertinent to our investigation that might be invisible to the naked eye,” Lois responded.

Clark allowed Lois to pull him towards the elevators. “You actually want lunch at ten thirty in the morning?”

“I guess that donut went right through me.” Lois shrugged nonchalantly.

Clark waited until they were safely in the elevator with the doors closed before continuing the conversation. “Wait, I just realized that you said you just want Superman to go? Why? Where will you be?”

“I have to go meet a source,” Lois told him. “It’s a very important meeting.”

“Really? Who’s your source? And what story are you working on that I’m not?” Clark questioned.

“Right now, I’m not at liberty to say, but I promise to let you know if I find out anything good,” she answered with a mischievous grin.

“Are you sure everything’s okay?” Clark asked. “You’ve been a little bit off for the past few days.”

“I’m fine, honey,” she replied. “Now, how do you feel about Italian for lunch? I have such a craving for pasta right now!”

\* \* \*

From the safety of his car, Dan grinned a wicked grin as he held his most valuable possession in his hand—his vial of liquid kryptonite. His supply of liquid kryptonite was running dangerously low, so he had to use it sparingly until he got back to his laboratory to melt down some more of his solid kryptonite. The chunk that his accomplice—oops—*former* accomplice had stolen from S.T.A.R. Labs was almost gone as well. He would have to find more kryptonite to steal at a later time. He had more pressing matters to attend to, such as getting Lois Lane back. He placed the vial of green, glowing liquid in its pouch to ensure its protection. Once he swallowed the liquid kryptonite, it would take about ten minutes to fully integrate into his system, and his superpowers only lasted for ten minutes, so he had to wait until the precise moment to drink up. Once the liquid kryptonite was fully in his system, he possessed all the same superpowers as Superman, or rather *Clark Kent*, as Dan had recently learned.

After Lois had broken up with Dan for Clark, Dan had been upset and even angered by her choice. How had he, the super-cool, rebellious DEA agent, been passed up for this mild-mannered dweeb who had left Lois high and dry on dates multiple times? What did she see in him? Dan’s anger had started eating away at him, and his ego, manhood, and pride had been hurt. That hurt had then grown to obsession. He’d become obsessed with finding out what Clark Kent had that Dan Scardino didn’t, and through his own personal research and sources as a government employee, Dan had been led to the truth. Clark Kent was, in fact, Superman. Once he knew that, he knew why Lois had chosen Clark, and Dan knew that he was never going to let that happen again. He would become just as powerful as Clark, and then Dan and Lois could live happily ever after. He hoped his fraudulent tip paid off. He had to get Lois and Clark in the middle of nowhere so he could show Lois that he, too, had all those wonderful powers, and then he and Lois could live the life he’d always dreamed of. He would have to kill Clark so that Clark wouldn’t come after Dan and Lois, but he knew he couldn’t do it in front of Lois. Some of her feelings for Kent probably were real, and if she witnessed Dan killing her husband, well, it probably wouldn’t go over well with her.

As Dan sat in the car, he saw Lois and Clark walking out of the Daily Planet and down the street. He got out of his car and followed a safe distance behind them. He continued following behind the couple as they walked for fifteen minutes.

“Damn it,” he muttered under his breath when he saw them enter an Italian restaurant. “They were telling the truth.” He turned around and headed back to his car, frustrated that they weren’t following his fraudulent tip to lead them out to Hobbs Bay. His plan would have to wait longer.

## Chapter 5

“So, I’m willing to admit now that there is something really unusual going on with Dan Scardino,” Lois told Clark after the waitress had delivered their lunch orders to their table.

Clark gave her a sympathetic smile. “I’m sorry,” he told her. “It’s not something I’m proud of. I like thinking the best about people, but there’s just been too many odd things happening surrounding his return into our lives for me to not be suspicious of him. What is it that’s making you change your mind?”

“This morning’s rendezvous,” Lois answered. “I mean, yeah, I know he’s always been a little flirty, a little cocky, and he’s always played by his own rules, but he knows that I am a married woman, and it feels like he’s still trying to win me over with charm and gifts—like the donut that he got for me.”

“And he did that with your husband standing right beside you,” Clark added.

“Clark, I think we need to start looking into him and his whereabouts for the last few years. You also need to make sure you’re careful—like, *really* careful to not do anything”—she lowered her voice to a hushed whisper before continuing—“super when he’s around.”

“Well, if he’s the one behind the notes, murder, computer theft, and kryptonite theft, then he already knows everything,” Clark told her.

\* \* \*

“Well, I better head back to the Planet so I can get the car and go meet my next source,” Lois said, checking her watch after they finished their lunch.

“This source of yours has definitely piqued my curiosity,” Clark told her as he pulled his wallet out and put a couple of bills on the table. “I think I’ll walk you back to the Planet first and then see if I can get Superman to investigate at Hobbs Bay. I want to make sure you get back safely.”

The two walked back to the Daily Planet, and Clark opened the driver’s side door for Lois. Before she got in the

car, she slipped her arms around his neck and gave him a kiss on the lips. “Be careful,” she told him. “If Dan is our man, he’s smart enough, cocky enough, and crazy enough to go after you—even in broad daylight.”

“Don’t worry,” Clark said, resting his hands on her hips. “I’ll be very careful. Coming home to you is always my top priority.”

“I hope so,” Lois said, pressing her body closer to Clark’s. Clark responded with a gentle yet firmer hug. “I love you.”

“I love you, too,” Clark said. “I’ll meet you back here in, say, an hour and a half?”

“Okay,” Lois said, getting in her car.

\* \* \*

Superman touched down at Hobbs Bay a short time later. Oddly enough, there was no police, no medical examiner, and definitely no media around. Something was not right with this picture. If there had been a body found, this place would still be swarming with media and forensic examiners. At the very least, crime scene tape would still be present! Only this section of the marina was completely vacant.

As Superman was prepared to have a “super” look around to make sure he wasn’t overlooking anything, a “Help, Superman!” jerked his head up, and he quickly took off to the sound of the crisis.

“Argh!” Dan yelled angrily from the driver’s side of his car. He slammed his fists on the steering wheel as he watched Superman fly away. When he saw Superman fly down by himself at Hobbs Bay, he had naturally assumed that Lois would be driving up any minute, and so he had drunk his vial of kryptonite. Not only was Lois not around, but Superman had taken off, too. His powers weren’t anywhere close to developing in an instant so he could use them to take down his biggest rival. He only had one vial of kryptonite left, and the next time he used it, he would not fail. He would become just as strong as Clark Kent and sweep Lois off her feet and back into his life.

\* \* \*

Lois walked back into the Planet a while later with a dazed look on her face. She made it down to her desk, where Clark greeted her right away.

“Hey, Lois, I’m glad you’re back because you are not going to believe—” He stopped cold when he saw the expression on her face. “Hey, honey, are you okay?” He took hold of her waist and looked at her, his eyes frantically searching hers.

“We, um—we need to talk,” she said, meeting his eyes for the first time.

“Lois, you’re scaring me,” Clark told her. “Are you okay? Are you hurt?” He followed her as she walked into the conference room.

“What? No, I’m not hurt,” Lois answered. “Sorry. I wasn’t trying to scare you. I guess I’m just in shock.”

“Why? What happened?” Clark asked, still worried about his wife. They got in the conference room and shut the door for some privacy.

“Um, well,” she started as she paced the floor. “I—I’ve been practicing how I’m going to tell you, and I wanted to wait until we got home, but you could tell something was different just by looking at me, which doesn’t surprise me at all, you are my husband, and like you said, you should know me better than anyone,” she babbled.

Clark gently stopped her in her tracks and took her hands in his. “Tell me what?” he asked.

She looked up at him with the biggest smile on her face. “I’m pregnant.”

Clark stared at her with wide eyes as her words sunk in. He stayed silent for a moment before he found his words again. “You—you’re what? How do you know? Are you sure?”

“I’m positive,” she said. “The ‘source’ that I told you I needed to meet was really an appointment with my doctor. Like you had said earlier, I’ve been really off this week. I’ve been nauseous, dizzy, overly sensitive to smells that have never bothered me before, and my cycle is late to start this month. I started suspecting it last week, but I just now was able to make it to the doctor, and a positive pregnancy test confirmed it.”

The biggest grin erupted on Clark’s face as his lips crashed into hers, and he kissed her with intense passion. They pulled apart slowly. “I love you so much.”

“I love you, too,” Lois replied.

“I can’t believe that we made a baby,” Clark said as he touched his forehead to Lois’s. He grinned again. “I’m never going to get tired of saying that.”

“One thing, though,” Lois said. “Mum’s the word for a while until we can ensure that this pregnancy is developing normally. Obviously, we can tell your parents, but don’t say anything around here yet.”

“Good idea,” Clark said. “I guess we need to talk to Dr. Klein and see what to do from here.”

“We will,” Lois said. “But not today. Today, let’s just enjoy having our own little special secret that nobody else is in on.”

“Okay,” Clark said.

Their moment was interrupted by Jimmy knocking on the door. He grinned when he saw the looks on their faces. “Am I interrupting something? You guys look ridiculously happy for it being 3:00 p.m. on a Thursday afternoon.”

“Jimmy, let’s just say that you’ll understand one day when you meet that special someone,” Clark said as he walked over to his friend. “Now, what’s up?”

“Um, I had some information for you that you had asked me for,” Jimmy said, trying to stay vague with his information.

“What information?” Lois asked.

“I guess I can tell you now since you’re now becoming suspicious of Dan,” Clark said. “I asked Jimmy to do some digging on our favorite DEA agent and see where he’s been for the last few years.”

“So what’d you find out?” Lois asked Jimmy.

“Well, according to his personnel file, he took a long leave of absence from work about three years ago. It was documented as personal, and the only details given were that he endured emotional trauma that was affecting his job performance.”

“Three years ago?” Clark asked. “Lois, wouldn’t that have been around the time that you broke up with him?”

“It would have been,” Lois agreed.

Jimmy continued on with his findings. “Dan was brought back on active duty after a three-month leave of absence, but he has had several incidents at work for which he was written up,” Jimmy informed.

“Yeah, but that’s not that unheard of,” Lois chimed in. “He’s a rule-bender. He’s always been like that.”

“Yeah, but get this,” Jimmy continued. “His most recent incident occurred a week ago. He went ballistic at work after seeing Superman on TV rescue a woman who had been trapped in her third-floor apartment after a fire broke out.”

“Why would that set him off?” Lois asked. “Superman does that kind of stuff all the time.”

“No idea,” Jimmy shrugged. “The personnel file didn’t go into that much detail, but it did say that the image on the TV enraged him so much that he picked up his own work desk and hurled it across the office. He caused tens of thousands of dollars’ worth of damage, and then you’ll never guess what happened.” Jimmy paused for dramatic effect. “Scardino was FIRED.”

“Fired?!” Lois shrieked. “But—but he just happened to be at S.T.A.R. Labs because he’s working on a case.”

“Apparently not,” Jimmy told her.

“Thanks, Jimmy,” Clark told him, taking the paperwork from Jimmy’s hands. “You did really good. We’ll take it from here.”

“Okay,” Jimmy said. “Let me know if there’s anything else you need from me.”

Clark turned back to where Lois had shrunk down into one of the chairs of the conference room. “Are you okay?”

“I caused him to snap?” Lois asked. “I can’t believe this crazy person is Dan Scardino. I mean, yeah, he always played by his own rules, but I never thought he would just go completely crazy. It’s like a switch flipped or something.”

“Lois, this isn’t your fault,” Clark said, squatting down beside her.

“I know,” she told him. “Clark, Jimmy said that Dan picked up his *desk* and hurled it across the office.”

“Right...” Clark said, the tone in his voice indicating he didn’t know where Lois was going with that statement.

“He’s the one with the kryptonite,” Lois said. “It’s giving him superhuman powers. There’s no way that he would normally be able to pick up a one-hundred-plus-pound desk and hurl it across a room.”

“Which confirms that he knows my secret, he’s sending both of us threatening notes, and he’s out for revenge,” Clark agreed.

“Oh my God, I’m gonna be sick,” Lois said, jumping up from her chair and grabbing the trash can next to the conference room doors. She promptly lost all the contents of her stomach into the trash can.

“Hon, maybe you should go home and rest,” Clark said when Lois sat back down beside him. “I know you hate not being in the middle of a hot story, but now that we know you’re pregnant, you have the baby to think about—”

“Clark, everything is fine,” Lois said. “Vomiting, being sick, queasiness, it’s all a normal part of any normal pregnancy. I’m fine. All this information just kind of hit me.”

“It has been a very *informative* day,” Clark agreed. “First, we find out that the woman that I’m crazy about is having my baby.” He paused when he saw Lois’s face break out into a big grin. “Then we find out a whole lotta things that we weren’t expecting about Dan Scardino.”

“Are you up for a trip to S.T.A.R. Labs?” Lois asked suddenly. “We can do some digging on the pretenses that Dan gave for being there, and I feel like letting a certain scientist know that we defied all the odds.”

“Okay,” Clark said, smiling. “Let’s go.”

## Chapter 6

“Lois, Clark, I wasn’t expecting you today,” Dr. Klein greeted as the pair entered his office. “What can I do for you?”

“Well, we’re here on both official and unofficial business,” Clark started.

“I’m pregnant!” Lois blurted out.

Dr. Klein looked taken aback for a moment. “You—you’re pregnant? But—but how did you get pregnant?”

Lois and Clark looked at each other and then back at Dr. Klein with eyebrows raised in disbelief.

“No, I didn’t mean *how* did you get pregnant, I mean, I know how you got pregnant, of course. It starts with—well, you two know what leads to pregnancy, obviously because you do it…” Dr. Klein let his words drift off and took a deep breath to recompose himself. “I just mean, I thought our test results were so conclusive that a human and alien couldn’t reproduce. But frankly, I’ve seen the two of you together, and it doesn’t surprise me at all that you were able to go against the odds. Congratulations.”

“Thank you,” Lois replied. “We just found out this afternoon, so it’s all very hush hush until we can figure out if the gestation period is the same as a human pregnancy. But in the meantime, we’re also here on official Daily Planet business as well. We were wondering if you had any interaction with Dan Scardino when he was up here before the bomb threat yesterday morning.”

Dr. Klein thought for a moment and then shook his head. “No, that name doesn’t ring any bells for me.”

Lois pulled out a picture of Dan that Jimmy had included with his research. “What about this guy? Have you seen him before?”

“Oh, yes, he introduced himself as Andrew something,” Dr. Klein recalled. “Nice guy. Kinda odd.”

“Odd, how?” Clark questioned.

“Well, he told me that he was a DEA agent and that he was investigating Dr. Travers’s research project. He told me that he had reason to believe that Dr. Travers had gotten his hands on kryptonite. This DEA agent started out friendly and chatty, and then suddenly he was intensely questioning me on what kryptonite did to Superman, and how much of it a human could ingest without doing irreparable damage to themselves.”

“What did you tell him?” Clark asked.

“Obviously, I told him that as Superman’s doctor, I wasn’t at liberty to discuss Superman’s medical background, including kryptonite, and that I honestly didn’t

know what would happen to a human who ingested the meteorite,” Dr. Klein answered. “Why? Who is this guy?”

“Nobody important,” Lois answered. “Thanks for your help, Dr. Klein.”

“Hope I helped,” Dr. Klein replied.

Clark smiled. “You did.” The couple turned to leave when Dr. Klein called out to them.

“I’m really happy for the two of you. Nobody deserves it more, and you two are going to be phenomenal parents.”

“Thank you, Dr. Klein,” Clark responded.

“And Lois,” Dr. Klein called out once more.

“Yes?”

“Don’t do anything, well, ‘Lois.’ You’re carrying precious cargo.”

“I’ll take good care of the two of us,” Lois promised with a smile, placing her hand on her currently flat stomach. “But don’t worry about me. As you know, I have connections with Superman. He was overprotective of me before, but I’m sure he’ll be even more so now that I’m carrying his child.”

Clark put a loving hand on the small of Lois’s back. “Count on it,” he promised as they left.

\* \* \*

Dan had watched as Lois and Clark entered S.T.A.R. Labs. It was five in the evening, and most scientists were leaving the facility for the day. Dan knew that this was the perfect opportunity to approach Lois once she came out. He was ready to make his move. He would wait outside until the liquid kryptonite fully took effect, and if Lois and Clark weren’t outside by then, he would go inside. He wasn’t letting Lois get away again. He was ready to have her once and for all, no matter how he had to make it happen. He quickly chugged back his vial of liquid kryptonite and waited.

\* \* \*

Dan eagerly welcomed his senses being heightened as the superpowers began to take effect. He started thinking he was going to have to attract more attention to himself and go into S.T.A.R. Labs to retrieve his true love when he saw Lois and Clark walking out of the building. He waited until they made it out to the parking lot and were close to their car—away from where anyone would see them.

“Hey, you two,” he said, mustering a fake smile as he approached them. “Funny running into you two here. You must be following up on leads just as I am.”

“Exactly right,” Lois agreed, an uncomfortable smile plastered on her face. “We should really head back to the

Planet and get our notes together and we will call you tomorrow to let you know what we found out.”

“I don’t think you’ll be going anywhere,” Dan said. With a quick motion, he picked up their car with one hand and hurled it into the sky.

Clark immediately stepped in front of Lois to use himself as a barrier between Dan and Lois.

“Dan, don’t do anything stupid,” Clark said, folding his arms across his chest. “We know you sent the threatening notes. We’re sorry that you were hurt when Lois chose me, but don’t make this worse for yourself. Hurting us is not going to change her feelings for you.”

“Stay out of this, Kent,” Dan spat out. “You see, I was so hurt when Lois broke up with me that I kind of lost it. I was angry. I was hurt. I was so *UPSET!*” Dan yelled in rage. “I just had to find out what you had that I didn’t, and it didn’t take me long to figure out why I lost her. I mean, who could really compete with Superman? So I spent every waking hour, every penny I had trying to figure out how I, too, could become Superman, and look at me now. Every single superpower that you have is now mine. But you know what you have that I don’t have, Kent?” He pulled a small lead box out of his jacket pocket.

“Dan, you don’t need to do this,” Lois pleaded, stepping out from behind Clark. “Put the box away and let’s talk about this.”

Dan ignored her and continued directing his conversation at Clark. “I don’t have any adverse effects to kryptonite. In fact, it fuels me. So we can either do this the hard way or the easy way. I can fly out of here with Lois, and she and I can finally fulfill our happily ever after while you live the rest of your life as I have—a shell of a man, fully in this world but missing the one thing that makes your world worth living—or you can try to stand in our way and die.”

“You know I would never let you take my wife,” Clark said.

“Then I guess you leave me no choice,” Dan replied nonchalantly. He opened the box to reveal a glowing chunk of green kryptonite.

Clark immediately fell to the ground, moaning in pain. “Ohhh!” he groaned as he tried to move his body away from the poison.

“Clark!” Lois yelled at the sight of seeing her husband writhing in the ground in pain. She was about to rush towards him when an overwhelming surge of dizziness, nausea, and pain overcame her. She dropped to her knees and fell to the ground. “Oh!” she yelled as she hit the ground.

“Lois, what’s happening? Are you okay?” Dan asked, kneeling down beside her.

“Ohhhh!” she moaned in response to Dan bringing the kryptonite closer to her. She clutched her belly and curled up in the fetal position.

“Lois?” Clark said weakly. “Honey, talk—talk to me.”

“Dan,” Lois mumbled almost inaudibly. “You have to... get—get the Kryptonite away. It’s hurting...the—the baby.”

“The baby?” Dan asked in disbelief. “You’re—you’re pregnant?”

All Lois could do was nod in agreement as tears rolled down her cheeks in pain.

“No! You’re lying!” Dan yelled. “I got hold of all of Dr. Klein’s research on Superman, and everything I read said that a human and Superman are incompatible for reproduction.”

“Lo-Lois,” Clark called. He struggled against his own pain to weakly crawl to where his wife lay.

“Cla—” Lois responded with a labored breath. Clark could see that she was slipping out of consciousness.

“Dan, she’s—she’s in pain! She’s hurting! If—if you really...love her, take away...her pain.” Clark struggled to speak as his own pain was radiating.

Dan ran his hands through his hair in panic mode. His well-thought-out plan was quickly deteriorating. “How do I know you’re not just playing me? There’s no way you two made a baby together.”

“You—you said you have all my powers,” Clark replied. “Then *listen* to her.”

Dan cued in his super hearing and gasped in surprise when he heard a tiny flutter coming from deep within Lois’s abdomen. “Lois, my love, I just wanted us to be together. The two of us. It didn’t work this time, but don’t worry. I will be back.”

“Like hell you will,” Clark growled, rising up from where he had been lying. He ran at Dan, tackling him to the ground. The kryptonite fell from Dan’s grasp and rolled several feet away.

“What the hell, Kent?” Dan yelled. “I thought kryptonite rendered you weak and almost immobile.”

“Normally, it does,” Clark replied in a menacing voice. “But when you hurt my *wife* and our unborn baby, I suddenly have all the strength in the world.” He delivered a swift punch to Dan’s jaw, and Dan’s mouth immediately began to bleed. “Looks like your powers are wearing off.”

“Clark!” Dr. Klein yelled from several feet away. He saw Lois on a heap in the ground and ran over. Clark kept Dan pinned to the ground.

“What’s going on?” Dr. Klein asked in a frenzy as he approached everyone.

“Dr. Klein, get the kryptonite away from us!” Clark exclaimed.

“Kryptonite? How are you able—? Hey, isn’t that—?” Dr. Klein spoke in broken sentences, in shock at the scene before him.

“I’ll answer all your questions later,” Clark responded. “Please! Just get the kryptonite away from us!”

“Of—of course,” Dr. Klein stuttered, rushing to grab the kryptonite and secure it back in its lead box.

“Can you stay here with Lois? I need to make sure Dan can’t hurt anyone anymore. I’ll be back in less than five minutes, and then we’ll get Lois inside,” Clark said to Dr. Klein.

“Of course,” Dr. Klein responded.

Clark spun into his Superman suit and flew Dan to the police station, staying only long enough to fill the police in on what crimes Dan had committed before flying straight back. Lois had started regaining consciousness.

“Lois, honey, can you hear me?” Superman asked his wife, cradling her head in his arms.

“Sup-Superman?” Lois called out weakly.

“I’m here honey,” Superman responded. “Let’s get you inside and make sure you and the baby are okay.” He gently scooped Lois up in his arms and carried her inside. Dr. Klein was able to quickly secure a room where she could be properly examined. Once inside the room, Superman spun back into Clark and held Lois’s hand.

“How are you feeling?” Clark asked his wife as she was beginning to come-to a bit more.

Lois gave Clark a weak smile. “Tired,” she answered truthfully. “But better.”

“Lois, lucky for you, we have prenatal equipment on site for the monkeys that we keep here for experimental purposes,” Dr. Klein said as he brought in a sonogram machine and a Doppler.

“I hope that machine has been well sterilized,” Lois joked. Clark chuckled, thankful that Lois’s sense of humor was returning.

“Are you two ready to hear your baby’s heartbeat?” Dr. Klein asked as he squirted gel-like goo on Lois’s lower

abdomen. It wasn’t long before a quick *ba-boom, ba-boom, ba-boom* filled the air.

“Oh my God,” Lois said with a big smile. “Clark, that’s our baby.”

“God, I love you so much,” Clark said, leaning down and giving her a soft kiss on her forehead.

After a quick look at their baby via the sonogram machine and waiting for Lois’s strength to come back as more time passed, Dr. Klein gave Lois and the baby a clean bill of health with strict doctor’s orders to go home and rest for the rest of the weekend.

“Thanks for all of your help today,” Clark told Dr. Klein as they were getting ready to leave. “Seriously, I’m not sure I could have kept Dan pinned down if you hadn’t come outside when you did and taken the kryptonite away from me.”

“Clark, between the amount of kryptonite and the close proximity of it to yourself, I just have to say that...well, I just have to say that...the love between you and your wife is definitely a once-in-a-lifetime kind of thing. And I hope you know that your secret, the fact that Superman could reproduce with a human, and anything you ever want to confide in me will always stay between us,” Dr. Klein said, extending his hand.

Clark shook his hand with a smile. “Thank you Dr. Klein. I have no doubt in my mind that I can trust you. You’re a good friend.”

Dr. Klein smiled a proud smile.

“Clark? Are you ready?” Lois asked.

“I’m ready,” Clark answered. He spun into his Superman suit and gently picked up his wife in his arms. “Thanks again for everything, Dr. Klein.” And with that, he sped his wife off to their house.

\* \* \*

Dan paced angrily back and forth in his cell. How could his plans have ended up going so awry? How had he let the woman he loved get away again? Why did she have to get pregnant with an alien baby? An evil smile spread across his lips as he realized that being in jail gave him plenty of time to hatch a new plan—a plan in which he could not fail. A plan in which he and Lois would be together, and the two of them would raise this baby as his own, and the three of them would live happily ever after.

THE END

(for now!)