

Going Up

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Rating: K+

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Author's Note: A birthday fic for oldromantic.

Clark adjusted his tie as the elevator doors slid to a stop. He had noticed the empty elevator heading upward toward the *Daily Planet* newsroom's floor as he swooped in from another rescue. In moments, he was through the access panel and into the empty car. When the doors opened, whoever had called for the elevator would see nothing more than a slightly disheveled-looking Clark Kent, which is exactly what he tried for-

"Lois... Jason!" Clark didn't have to affect his surprise when the doors slid open - he had only just scanned through the door to see who was there. Lois looked as if she was heading out for the day, her carryall over one shoulder. She looked like she had just had a bad day, her face pinched with annoyance. On the other hand, Jason waved brightly at seeing Clark. His small pack was fitted across his back - Clark was pleased to see it was still the Superman one.

Clark stepped aside, holding the door open with one hand to let them through.

"Hi, Clark," Lois said pleasantly enough, leading Jason with her free hand. "Just getting back?"

"Yeah, you wouldn't *believe* the traffic out there!" A heavy thunderstorm had started about fifteen minutes ago. It hadn't affected Clark at all, but it provided a good excuse for his tardiness. "Some folks just don't do well with bad weather."

"Of course, the *one* night I need to get home early..." Lois swore subvocally for a moment. Clark wondered if Lois realized that when Jason's super-hearing kicked in, her mumbles would be as loud as shouting. They were to him. He tried not to wince.

"Sorry, Lois. Bad luck, I guess."

"*My* luck, more like it." Lois sighed. She looked into his sympathetic face and then suddenly frowned. "Don't you have somewhere to be?" She nodded toward the door which he was still holding open.

"Oh!" he startled. He fumbled for an excuse, letting go of the door. "I just realized I need to... get something from the mailroom."

Lois gave him an odd look, but didn't make any comment. She pressed the button for the parking garage, and then the ground floor.

The real reason he was going back downstairs was to spend a little more time with Lois and Jason. He knew he was pathetic - he should just come out and tell her the truth. Richard no longer stood between them any more... Jason already knew who he was... what did he have to lose?

Nothing. Except Lois' trust.

He sighed internally and turned to Jason. "How are you today, young man?"

"I'm good. Mom says we can get pizza tonight!" Jason grinned at the news.

"Cheese still your favorite?"

"Uh huh." Clark knew Jason was particularly pleased at all the new foods he could try, now that his allergies were fading.

"You should really try the-"

At that moment, the elevator was plunged into almost total darkness, save for the tiny emergency phone light. The car shuddered to a stop on the emergency brakes.

Jason let out a tiny yelp of alarm - it was followed by Clark's, "Golly!"

"F-Crap!" Lois exclaimed angrily. "Who has it in for me today?!"

Clark X-rayed through the walls. The *Daily Planet* and the surrounding blocks were suffering from a power outage. "It's probably just a blackout," he reasoned while continuing to scan for the seriousness of the situation. The outage seemed to be confined to their section of the power grid.

"Or it could be this elevator. I mean, how old *are* these things?" She kicked at the wall for emphasis, and then he heard her blindly search inside her bag for her cell phone. She found it and flipped it open, casting a bright light on her worried face. "No signal," she announced with defeat.

"The cell phone towers are probably out as well..."

Lois turned an annoyed look on him before flipping the phone closed. She stalked over to the emergency phone. "Hey! Is anyone there?"

After a pause, a tinny voice rang out. "*Yeah, we're here. Are you stuck?*"

Clark could see Lois roll her eyes in the faint light. "Would I be calling if I wasn't?" she growled.

"It's going to be a little while. The power's out everywhere, ma'am. A lot of problems to take care of. You sit tight, and we'll be there as soon as we can."

"Sit tight? You'd better get here, pronto! This is Lo-" There was a distinct disconnection click, and Lois cut off her words with another growl. She slammed the phone back onto the cradle, stomped back over to her bag, and sat heavily on the floor.

"Mom?" Jason walked over and sat beside her. "They'll get here soon, right?"

Lois sighed and put her arm around Jason's shoulders. "Yeah, don't worry, kiddo. We won't be stuck here forever."

Clark crouched down beside them. "Help is already on the way."

At that moment, Jason seemed to recognize anew just who was sharing the elevator with him. "And *you* won't let anything happen to us, will you?"

Lois looked sharply at Clark and then Jason. But Clark stuttered out, "O-Of course, I'll be right here, keeping you both company..."

Jason tilted his head for a second, and then opened his mouth in a small 'oh'. He nodded, and then snuggled farther into his mother's shoulder. Lois looked mystified for another second longer before shrugging.

Clark moved to a sitting position a few feet away, giving them some space. His thoughts turned inward as the minutes dragged on. If he could just get over his fear of how Lois would react to finding out he was Superman, then he could get the three of them out of there in seconds.

Knowing that he could be *doing* something, even though his hands seemed to be tied, made him feel restless. It seemed he wasn't the only one. Jason suddenly sprang up and started

to pace the floor on the other side of the car. Clark still remembered what it felt like to be that age. Staying in one place - especially against his will - had been torture.

"It really shouldn't be much longer, Jason," Clark tried to console him. "Do you want to play a game or something to take your mind off the waiting?"

"No, it's okay. I just hope they hurry..." His pacing increased.

Lois leaned over toward Clark, murmuring. "He'll be fine. He's always had a lot of energy. Almost as much as-" Lois cut off suddenly. Clark could easily guess what she had almost said. "-as if he ran on batteries or something..." she finished instead.

Clark smiled. "He's doing really well. When I was that age, I would have been climbing the walls to get out."

"Huh," Lois huffed in thought. "You, as a kid? I can't even imagine it. What was that like... a lot of feeding the chickens?"

Clark's heart warmed at her teasing tone. Somehow being stuck in an elevator was starting to improve her mood. "And running through the cornfields." For a brief moment, he felt himself sail over the tops of the rows of waving gold. "I really needed all that space, let me tell you."

"I figured you for a bookworm, Clark Kent. Curled up in an overstuffed chair..."

"I read plenty of books, believe me..." His voice dropped in pitch as he got more comfortable, and he scooted a little closer. "I just wanted to see the world they spoke of."

Lois opened her mouth to respond... but suddenly Jason's white athletic shoes were between them. They looked up at his pale face, wan in the dim light.

"I have to go to the bathroom."

After making this announcement, Jason began to dance around a bit, in obvious stress.

"Oh, no... can you hold it, honey?"

"I *have* been..." he whined in a low voice.

Lois tried to reassure him. "You're going to have to try a little bit longer, sweetie. They should be here any minute..."

Clark was at a loss. He himself had not experienced anything like this in years - he'd always had fine control of his metabolism. But Jason was only half-Kryptonian, and his human genetics had always been stronger until recently. Clark could only imagine how embarrassing it would be...

Scanning through the walls, Clark tried to see if help was anywhere near... nothing. Jason would just have to-

Jason bolted toward the doors, hands scrabbling at the seam to find purchase. "I can't *hold* it..." There was suddenly an ear-splitting shriek of wrenching metal.

Lois leapt to her feet. "*No!* Wait-!"

Clark knew exactly why Lois was freaking out. She had no idea that Clark already knew Jason's secret. But Jason did. If he could just zoom in quickly, to give him a little help...

Clark grasped the doors and shoved them apart with super-strength-

The lights flickered.

And came on.

Full.

Clark closed his eyes for a beat... then turned to Lois.

She stood there, mouth open in shock. It was obvious that Clark had helped to wrench the doors open.

"Oh, no..." Jason whined. "It's still too high..."

The elevator car was just enough below one of the floors that a two foot opening existed between the forcibly opened doors.

Pressing his lips together slightly, Clark rose into the air, gently pushing upward into the support beam in the ceiling. The elevator moved upward with him until Jason could scabble into the deserted hallway. "Thanks!" he called, racing down the hall. The restroom door slammed behind him.

Clark floated back downward, facing Lois with a sheepish expression.

Lois' mouth had closed, and she arched one eyebrow. "I'm always around, huh?"

He kept silent. He'd learned long ago that when Lois was truly angry... not to answer her rhetorical questions.

She walked up to him slowly, step by step. "So not only do you keep this from me... but you make me sit in a stuffy elevator for God knows how long? And *Jason*? He didn't seem very surprised, did he?" She jabbed a finger into his chest. "When were you going to tell *me*? Huh?"

Clark waited a moment, to make sure she really meant for him to answer. Then he opened his mouth to speak-

Flush!

Clark closed his mouth with a click, mortified.

Lois' jaw clenched...

And then she burst out laughing.

She slapped his chest, hugging her side with the other hand... and he found himself laughing, too, the ridiculousness of the situation bubbling out of him. Soon they were both unable to stop.

A few minutes later, feeling much better, Jason popped his head in to look down on them, scratching his head in confusion. His parents were sitting on the floor, still racked with giggles.