

Limelight

by repmetsyrrah

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Rating: K

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Author's Notes: Written for the *Planet* March fic grab- the challenge was to use the line: "I have everything under control." This is actually set in chapter two of a currently unpublished multi-chapter fic I'm writing. I wasn't going to show this particular scene in the fic itself but the muse just sort of ran with the prompt.

"There must have been something else you could have done, Clark!" Lois cried for what had to be the hundredth time in the last twenty minutes. She was pacing back and forth in front of her husband, wringing her hands.

"I know," Clark replied from his position on the couch, he lifted his head from where it had been buried in his hands. "I've been going over and over it in my mind and there may have been another way but there wasn't time to think. If I hadn't acted then at least three people would be dead."

"Yes, yes, yes." Lois waved away his explanation. "And now the *whole world* knows the Clark Kent and Superman are the same person. This isn't the same as when you slipped in front of Perry or when the *Inquisitor* printed those pictures of us together. We could explain those away, but this - this is different."

"I know," Clark repeated. He was focusing all his senses on his wife, not yet able to bring himself to hear the consequences of his actions. He had no doubt the news was already worldwide, the fact that Superman spent everyday masquerading as a clumsy, dorky reporter for the *Daily Planet* wasn't exactly something to hold over 'till the evening news.

The images of twenty minutes ago flashed through his mind again. The reporters, the dozens of cameras capturing the aftermath of the fire that had devoured one of the most well-known criminal hang-outs in the city, and later to record an event that would undoubtedly go down in history for centuries to come.

The armed men had appeared quickly- but not too quickly for Superman, the only thing that stopped him from appearing had been had been the cameras at Clark's back. Ironically he'd been afraid of someone figuring out he was Superman but in hindsight it still would have been a thousand times easier than what had actually transpired.

"Things just got out of hand," he said out loud.

Lois snorted and rolled her eyes. "You could say that," she muttered sarcastically. "He had a rocket launcher."

"That *was* unexpected," Clark agreed and looked up, meeting Lois' eyes. They simply stared at each other for a moment before simultaneously bursting into slightly hysterical laughter.

The whole thing felt rather surreal, Clark reflected as Lois collapsed beside him, almost in tears from laughing so hard. They continued for almost a whole minute before Clark's concentration slipped and a snippet of a TV report from a neighbouring apartment caught his attention.

"... Lois Lane can no longer deny any romantic interest in the Man of Steel. In fact she married him-"

That sobered him up rather abruptly. "Lois." He tried to get her attention. "Lois, snap out of it," he ordered, shaking her shoulder.

"Rocket launcher," she giggled again before turning to face him, still with an absurd grin on her face. "What is it?"

"Here." He grabbed the remote and pointed it at the TV, raising an eyebrow at Lois. "You ready?"

She shrugged, her grin gone and replaced with a grim expression. "Might as well," she sighed, "we'll have to do it at some point."

Clark took a deep breath and heard Lois do the same beside him before he pressed to button and the TV sprang to life.

A picture of an excited looking reporter in front of a picture of Clark and Superman side-by-side was talking animatedly. *"- numerous recording of the event have been pouring it, many reporters and civilians turning on the cameras as they were surrounded by twenty armed men who were attempting to steal several boxes of cocaine from the police who had confiscated them following a devastating fire in the apartment building where it was stored."*

And imaged flashed up on the screen of two masked men carrying a long box to a black van. Suddenly there was a commotion off screen and the camera turned to reveal a large man pointing a rocket launcher at a police car surrounded by bystanders who tried to run but not before he'd fired. But instead of the usual blue and red blur there was a brown one which was almost immediately obscured by smoke. As the smoke started to clear the noise level suddenly increased dramatically.

Standing at the centre of the blast was Clark Kent, star reporter for the Daily Planet with his glasses completely blown off and his shirt ripped wide open revealing a familiar red and blue insignia. The image froze on the screen and shrunk into the corner, revealing the reporter.

"The video you just saw was taken only twenty-five minutes ago in Metropolis. Preliminary findings conclude that it is not fake and has not been altered in any way. Of course these tests are merely a formality given the dozens of eyewitnesses who can confirm its credibility."

The reporter disappeared to be replaced by a panel of three men. Clark recognised them as various editors of Metropolis' other newspapers. Lois did too, her lip curled and she practically snarled at the TV. "What's the Editor of that rag the *Inquisitor* doing there? This is just ridiculous."

Clark didn't answer, but silently agreed. He was examining the men as a voice-over introduced them, it was clear they'd only just walked into the studio and been shoved in front of the cameras.

The editor of the *Star* was the first one to start speaking. *"I guess we know how Lois Lane got all those Superman exclusives-"*

"And to think they both denied it year after year!" the man from the *Metro Times* interrupted only to be cut off from his next sentence by the editor of the *Inquisitor*.

"Well, I guess we had it right the whole time," he smugly announced.

Lois couldn't take it anymore, she gave a frustrated yell and picked up a mug from the coffee table and hurled it at the TV. Clark caught it just before it hit the screen and calmly turned it off. "Lois, just take a deep breath," he started.

Lois was having none of that. She leapt up from the couch and started pacing back and forth again. "I just can't believe they're doing this already - it hasn't even been *half-a-friggin'-hour*," she ranted, her language automatically softened as a reflex from years of motherhood. Her temper however, remained the same. "Just think what they're going to be like after half a day," she continued, "half a week, half a month. What about half a *year*?" she asked, turning to Clark. "This..." She jabbed her finger at the TV. "... is only the beginning. How long before they take back the Pulitzer because they think it's unfair? How long before our friends sell us out? How long before the press arrive outside our door?"

"Um-" Clark winced, looking through the floor from their penthouse all the way to the street where five news vans had already arrived and were rapidly being joined by more.

"Huh, they're here already, aren't they." Lois rolled her eyes. "You know, I'm such a hypocrite. As a reporter myself I should understand this," she admitted.

"I think this story is going to be bigger than anything we've ever covered," Clark told her.

Lois snorted. "Well, you maybe," she said with a small grin, "do you forget who first covered your arrival?"

"Technically I was involved in that as well," he protested. "And besides that was different, Superman appeared as this untouchable alien who came to save the world but now that everyone knows Superman is less *Super* and a lot more *Man*..." he trailed off and sighed.

"Yeah," Lois agreed. She started to pace again but came to a stop so suddenly it looked like she had slammed into an invisible wall.

"Lois?" Clark asked worriedly.

"The kids," she whispered. Clark's mouth dropped open and they shared a horrified look.

"We have to go get them." He leapt up, and was dressed in a new suit and tie before Lois could even blink. "I'll pick up Lucy, Ella and Chris, you call the others," he ordered, picking up the car keys and headed for the door.

"You're going like that?" she asked just as he was about to take off. "The school's going to be swarming with reporters by now - if you go like that you'll never get in. Superman has to go."

He turned around with a rather bewildered look on his face. "What?" he asked in a stunned tone, "I can't go as Superman - sure it'd be easier to get in because I could just fly but-"

"Clark," Lois interrupted, taking his hand and giving him a reassuring look, "Just trust me, okay? I have everything under control."

"It doesn't sound like it," he said, frowning at her. "Superman picking up Clark Kent's kids in the middle of the day is hardly going to convince everyone those videos were fake."

"I know." Lois nodded. "But you were right before- there's no good explanation to explain all this away. So after I call the other kids and tell them what going on, I'm calling Perry - his retirement party was two weeks ago so he should be getting bored and coming back any day now."

"You're going to get him to print it?"

Lois nodded. "It's the only thing we can do - and wouldn't you rather have the facts out there than all this wild guessing?"

He nodded. "You're right."

"I know." Lois grinned. "From this day on Clark Kent and Superman are no longer two different people."