

# For Jason

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Rating: K

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A/N: Written for the 12days\_of\_clois Valentine's Day challenge, prompt 'Lonely'.

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Clark returned from yet another warehouse fire covered in soot and feeling rather emotionally drained. It was the third in less than a week and the police were beginning to suspect arson, however unlike the previous two fires which had been in abandoned warehouses this one was a fully staffed very busy distribution warehouse. But the worst part of the whole thing had been the fact that it had a built in day care centre to look after the worker's children. None of the adults had been seriously hurt but five children were taken to hospital and most of them suffered from smoke-inhalation.

He'd stuck around for a while afterwards assisting with the clean-up and trying to help the police and fire fighters figure out if it was an accident or arson and, if it was deliberate, how the arsonist had managed to start a fire without anyone noticing during such a busy day.

His mood hadn't been improved by the particular date on which the fire had happened. Going back to a cold, empty apartment on any day wasn't appealing but on Valentine's Day it was enough to turn a bad day into a downright miserable one. He had been teased a few times that week in both his guises by workmates and those rescue workers more familiar with him, he'd always smiled and laughed it off but his mind always turned to the one person he wished he could be with tonight, who was also the last person who would ever consider talking to him at the moment.

After the New Krypton incident had revealed Jason's true paternity he had finally seen that keeping his true identity from Lois would do more harm than good in the long run. Her immediate reaction had been what he had expected, anger, hurt, betrayal; however what he hadn't counted on was her persistence in punishing him for his secrecy. She hadn't spoken to him since the New Year and absolutely refused to allow him to see Jason, which hurt more than anything else she'd said or done.

So tonight like every other night since he sat down on the couch staring at a blank TV screen and hating himself for hoping some emergency would come along just so he could take his mind of how tragic his life was at the moment.

However, distraction tonight came in a different, and highly unexpected, form. There was sharp rapping on his door and he opened it only to be faced with a rather annoyed looking Richard White. "Evening, Clark." He nodded to him before stepping past him into the apartment asking, rather pointlessly, "May I come in?"

"Sure." Clark blinked watching Richard look around his living room. "Can I get you something to drink?"

"No, I'm fine," Richard answered, "Sit down Clark," he said, stopping in front of the TV and indicating the sofa.

"What?" Clark asked, not quite understanding what Richard was doing.

"Sit. Down." Richard pointed to the couch in front of him. "I want to talk to you and it's going to be easier to say what I have to say if you're sitting still."

"What?" Clark repeated, still very confused. Richard was acting rather strangely and on top of that Clark had been under the impression that Richard had moved to New York last week. "Why aren't you in New York?" he asked, still not moving towards the sofa.

"My flight was cancelled so I decided to go tomorrow instead. Clark, please sit down."

Clark decided to humour him and walked into the living room and sat on the sofa looking up at Richard expectantly. "So what's this about?"

"*What this about?*" Richard looked at Clark incredulously, "It's about this thing you've been avoiding for the last two months. It's about Lois."

Clark blinked and pushed his glasses up his nose. "R- Richard, I- um, I don't really think that-"

"What?" Richard interrupted, "You don't think this has anything to do with me?" Clark stayed silent so Richard continued, "You're right, this isn't about me, this is about Lois but more so it's about Jason."

Clark's head shot up. "Jason?" he asked, fear shooting through him. "Is something wrong with him?"

Richard held up his hands. "Calm down, physically he's fine but emotionally..." He paused in his pacing for a moment and shook his head. "He's upset, he doesn't realise what's going on, he doesn't understand why he can't talk to his Daddy Clark anymore. Yes, he knows," Richard answered in response to Clark's startled look. "And I should also tell you that right after Lois told me I went up to say goodnight to him and he asked if he'd be able to fly one day, like you."

"Richard-" Clark started, prepared to deny everything but the other man was on a roll and simply spoke over him.

"Don't bother, Clark." He started pacing again. "After that a lot of things fell into place and after the way Lois suddenly started treating you after New Years it didn't take a genius to see through those glasses or to know what you'd told her." He sighed. "She's a mess, Clark." He stopped and stood directly in front of him. "She comes home every night, puts on a happy face for Jason but once he's in bed she just sits and stares at the wall." He turned to glance at the blank TV then turned back to Clark with a raised eyebrow. "I'm thinking you know what I'm talking about."

"Richard-" Clark tried again but Richard just held up his hand and glared at Clark.

"I'm not finished," he said, "Lois needs you, Clark. Jason needs you. And the reason I'm here is because Lois is far too proud to admit it and Jason's far too caring to tell Lois that he needs you after he saw how much you hurt her. I know your relationship with Lois - or lack thereof - is none of my business but Jason's happiness is. I know now he's not my son but that's not going to stop me loving him like he is. I don't care what eventually happens between you and Lois but you need to at least speak to her about this, you need to overcome this - this-*thing* between you and you need to do it soon. Today preferably, I mean it's Valentine's Day what better day to try and repair a relationship? Please, Clark," Richard pleaded with him. "If not for Lois, if not for yourself then for Jason's sake, for your son's sake."

Richard stopped pacing and looked hopefully at Clark. Both of them were silent for a

long time before Clark sighed. "You're right," he agreed.

"Yeah," Richard nodded, "I mean- um, good... that you think so." He gave an awkward smile. "Yeah," he said again. "So I've pretty much said what I needed to say and I've got an early flight tomorrow so I'll go." Clark didn't say anything. "I'll let myself out." He pointed towards the door.

He was halfway there when Clark spoke, "That was quite a speech," he said, raising his head to look Richard in the eye.

Richard shrugged awkwardly. "I guess it's been building up inside me for a while," he admitted.

"Is it true?" Clark asked with pain in his eyes. "Jason's really that upset?"

"Yes." Richard nodded and Clark could see how much it hurt him as well. "He's too stubborn to let his Mom see but when I come round to visit and I put him to bed." He sighed. "I can tell."

Clark nodded and returned his gaze to the floor. "Thank you," he said. Richard didn't reply but a moment later Clark heard the door open and close with a click.

Clark wasn't sure what he was going to do but he knew now he had to do something. Richard was right, he and Lois were being selfish. This was about more than them, this was about their son and they had to fix it before they hurt him more.

He got up and began pacing the same route Richard had a moment before, going over his options. He could fly to her house right now, it would only take a moment. But he dismissed that plan, it was too... Superman-ly. This was between her and *Clark*. He could always just change when he got there and knock on her front door, but then she'd probably ask how she got there and he had promised her he'd never lie to her again and he'd have to admit he flew and... it wouldn't work.

Before he wore a hole in the carpet he sat back down on the couch and his eyes fell on his cell phone. He would have to call her, he realised. And before he could talk himself out of it he reached for the phone and dialled her number.

It rang... and rang... and rang. He sighed, clearly she had seen who was calling and decided not to answer. He pulled the cellphone away from his ear and was about to end the call when there was a click on the other end and a tired voice answered, "Hello."

If it wasn't for his acute hearing he wouldn't have heard her but the phone was back up to his ear faster than a speeding bullet. "Hi," he answered nervously. "It's me."

"I know," she replied.

There was a heavy silence before Clark cleared his throat, "We need to talk," he told her, expecting her to hang up at any moment. Clark took it as a good sign and continued, "I know that you're angry at me and I understand that but this isn't only hurting us."

"I know," Lois agreed, "and that's why I answered the phone, not because I forgive you but because there's a sad little boy up stairs who misses his Daddy Clark."

"So, we're going to talk?" Clark asked, "For Jason."

"For Jason," Lois agreed. There was another awkward silence before Lois let out a quiet chuckle. "Richard got to you too then?"