

In A Name

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© 20-Feb-10

Rating: K

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Prompt: SR Clois, something sweet and flirty, set any time before Lois finds out that Clark is Kal-El, maybe with Lois being snarky back. Essentially, something with the same feel as the STM first interview, with Lois and Kal-El. Low angst would be great.

She supposed the day she'd finally accepted it was the day she'd bought her big jacket into work despite the warm weather.

Sure enough she was there, up on the chilly roof after the sun went down, waiting for the next big scoop to come flying by.

And of course he'd been there too. Professional as ever, calmly giving her his statements on the disaster of the day.

Perry, to his credit, had tried to assign other reporters to Superman, but it never seemed to work. He rarely showed and when he did he was reluctant to open up like he did for her. He never said, and they never asked, but it was obvious to everyone that if the *Planet* wanted to talk to him, it was through Lois or not at all.

So Lois had bought her jacket back to work and reclaimed her spot on the roof.

And, for the first time since he'd returned, she wasn't dreading seeing him again. Even when she'd accepted her role as his official press contact she'd never looked forward to seeing him. They kept most of the interviews strictly professional, discussing what she needed for her stories and nothing else.

Of course she couldn't keep completely professional with him, not when they shared a son. She knew some people would resent it if the father of their child had left them for five years and come back to a hero's welcome. But, as frosty as she was towards him, she knew he told her the truth when he said he never would have left had he known and she'd agreed he could visit Jason whenever he wanted.

The talk with her son had been surprisingly easy. She had been seven months along when she'd meet Richard so he was never under any illusions he was biologically related to Jason. And they'd never hidden anything from the boy either. He knew he shared no blood with Richard but the bond between father and son had always been more than that.

She'd seen him around since those initial talks, even when she wasn't the one waiting on the roof. Sometimes just as he was leaving Jason's room, or even last night, in the boy's room, talking to Richard of all people.

Lois had fully expected a confrontation the next morning but Richard had left for Israel suddenly to cover a breaking story and she hadn't talked to him since.

With the question of his talk with Richard and what on Earth they were going to do about

this Jason thing (he could hardly keep sneaking in while the boy was asleep could he?), Lois supposed if anything she should be dreading this meeting more but she wasn't.

In fact, when she finally heard the soft thump of his boots on the concrete behind her all she felt was relief. "Hi," she greeted him, turning to face him with a smile and pleased to see him smiling back.

"Hello, Lois." His voice was as warm as his smile and it didn't escape her that he'd used her first name rather than his usual 'Miss Lane'.

As soon as she realised that an odd thought occurred to her. She didn't know his name. She didn't know the name of her own son's father.

"I have a question," she said, not lifting her notepad or recorder.

"I assumed that was why you were up here," he replied with a note of amusement in his voice.

"Not on record though," she told him. He looked surprised, clearly even though he preferred to talk to her he hadn't been expecting anything other than an interview.

"Actually I have a few," she admitted, putting the notepad and recorder back in her jacket for the time being.

"I'll try my best to answer them," he promised her.

"You call me Lois," she stated, "yet I can't call you anything other than Superman. And since I was the one who first called you that I know it's not your real name. I don't mind you calling me by my first name, so long as I can do the same."

He looked pensive for a moment, as if he was considering her request. "Kal-El," he said suddenly, looking back up at her. "My Kryptonian name is Kal-El."

"Kal-El," she repeated, the name sounding both alien and strangely familiar in her mouth. "What's your last name?"

He looked confused for a moment before laughing. "I don't *really* have one," he admitted, "My name is just Kal-El, although I suppose 'El' is my family name. My family was the House of El on Krypton. That's what this is by the way," he said suddenly, looking down at the twisting symbol on his chest. "It's my family crest- It's not a big 'S' for Superman like most seem to think- I don't fly around with my initial on my chest like some sort of advertisement."

Lois hid a smile at his defensive tone. "Would you like that part on the record then?"

"Perhaps," he agreed, smiling back, "just to clear up any confusion."

"Of course," she said. There was a comfortable silence for a while which surprised Lois as the previous silences between them could have only been described as tense and awkward. Something had certainly changed but Lois didn't know what.

Maybe it was the fact that Richard no longer stood between them. He'd moved into the guest bedroom a week ago, staying only for Jason's sake. But she wasn't even sure if she wanted there to be a 'them' again. She understood why he left but she wasn't ready to forgive him for it just yet.

"So what did you and Richard talk about last night?" she asked, ignoring his shocked look.

Once he'd recovered from his initial surprise, Kal-El's face relaxed into a smile. "You were right, Lois," he told her, "he is a good man. He said he was happy for me to be a part of Jason's life so long as I allowed him to still be a part of his life as well."

"You would never cut him out though," Lois said with absolute certainty, surprised Richard had said anything like that.

"Of course not," he agreed, "Richard is Jason's father as much as I am. More so even. But his life has change almost as much as yours, he just needed some reassurance some things

would stay the same."

"Oh," Lois muttered softly. She hadn't thought of it like that but Richard's life really had been upturned by Superman's return almost as much as hers. "That's good," she said louder, "I'm glad you've talked."

"Me too," Kal-El agreed.

"So, back to your name." Lois changed the subject. "Could I just call you Kal, Kal-El is somewhat of a mouthful and if El is something like your family name then Kal has to be something like your first name."

"I guess," he replied, "but like I said before I... don't have a separate first and last one like you do." He covered himself well but Lois was no amateur at catching people out when they slipped up. She didn't miss the pause or the subtle way he spoke that sentence with just a bit less confidence than usual.

"You told me once you never lied," she said, daring him to deny it.

He didn't. Instead he just gazed out over the city and sighed. "Things have changed since then."

"Really?" she asked, raising an eyebrow, "I guess, in between breaking up with my fiancé and looking after our *son*, I hadn't noticed."

He didn't say anything but something in his expression spoke to her instead. The way he looked at her, almost as if it was painful for him to think about it.

Something tugged at the back of her mind but she couldn't quite grasp it. Like a word forever just on the tip of her tongue. "You do have another name don't you?" She realised, not knowing why she was so sure. "Kal-El's your Kryptonian name but you have another one, a human one, and *that's* your real one." She shook her head in confusion, but the memory she couldn't quite get tugged at her again and she knew she was right. How else would he learn English? And how else would he be able to so effortlessly adapt to Earth culture and learn their customs. He had to have lived among them.

Maybe he still did.

He opened his mouth but before he could reply his head twitched to the side and his eyes unfocused like he was listening to something only he could hear. "Lois..." he looked at her regretfully.

"Let me guess," she sighed, "you have to go?"

"It's not that big. I guess the firemen could handle it," he said slowly, "I don't really-"

"Yes, you do," Lois interrupted him, "I may not know as much about you as I thought but I do know that you need to go help people if you think you can."

"Thank you."

"But-" she called, just as he was about to take off "- you also need to tell me your name- your *real* name this time. When I told you Jason should know his father I meant his real father. Not Superman, not this Kal-El person, but you." She frowned. "Whoever you are."

He looked down at her, still hovering in the air like the impossible man he was. "You'll be angry," he told her.

"Of course," she agreed, "but if you don't tell me I'll have to find out myself. Then I'll be *furious*," she promised him.

"Goodbye, Lois."

"Goodbye, Kal-El," she replied as he disappeared, arcing high over the city, speeding off to some unknown destination. "Or whatever your name is," she added quietly.