

# Clark 2.0

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(Replace\_at\_with@)>

Rated: PG

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Summary: Clark is angsty over how to tell Jimmy about himself. When Clark rejects all of Lois' serious suggestions, she comes up with a humorous one.

My thanks to Female Hawk for encouraging me to turn this from a simple joke into a regular story and for BR-ing both versions of it.

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Lois looked up when she heard her editor approach.

"Lois, C.K., would you come into my office?" When they all had settled down, Jimmy Olsen said, "I have this terrific idea for a Sunday special: A 20th anniversary tribute to Superman. I want you to put together a two-page color spread on how he's changed the city, anything biographical you can dig up, man in the street quotes, some photos taken over the years, the works."

Lois and Clark exchanged a quick glance before agreeing to tackle the assignment.

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That evening, as soon as they were in the privacy of their home, Lois was finally able to let loose the questions she had been holding in all day. "Clark, I can see the Superman assignment is bothering you. Why is that? You've never shied away from Superman stories before." She sat on the sofa and tapped it in an invitation for him to join her.

"Has it really been twenty years?" Clark asked as he settled down next to her. At her nod, he continued, "I guess it has. So much has happened."

When it became evident that Clark was lapsing into silent and sour ruminations, Lois decided to interrupt his thoughts before he became too grim. She brushed a stray lock of still-raven-black hair from his forehead and asked, "So, what's the matter? We still have plenty of good years ahead of us."

Clark shook his head. "No, it's not that. It's just... Have I really been lying to Jimmy for two decades?"

Lois knew precisely what he meant. "Think about what he was like early on. He couldn't have kept a secret then if you had duct-taped his lips together." She snuggled up to his side, and he draped his arm over her shoulders.

Clark chuckled, then sobered. "But he's matured a lot since then."

"You've got a point," Lois conceded. "Who'd have believed that Perry would offer Jimmy the editorship when he retired?"

"Well, he *did* offer it to us first." Clark's hand gently caressed Lois' upper shoulder.

Lois grimaced. "One time as an editor was one time too many for me. Jimmy's welcome to it!"

"No arguments here. But the point is, I've wanted to tell Jimmy about me for years. And I've been meaning to. But I've been waiting for the perfect opportunity, and it just never came up. And now it's been two decades."

"So tell him now."

Clark's hand stopped moving, and Lois could feel his arm become tense. "How? He'll never forgive me! If only I had told him when Perry was still alive. He'd have helped calm Jimmy down afterward. The Chief would have pointed out that we didn't even tell him; he had to figure it out on his own. He'd have made Jimmy understand that by telling him we are entrusting him with our lives. "

Clark continued, "But now it's too late. How can I possibly tell him now?"

"So, then, don't tell him."

"But doesn't he deserve to know? He is our best friend, after all."

Lois threw her arms up in exasperation. "Look, whatever you decide is fine by me. I'm going into the den to do some more research for the Linsdale article."

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That discussion had marked the beginning of a week of Lois trying to provide emotional support for an angsty Clark. After he had spent the first night debating with himself whether to tell Jimmy at all, he spent the remainder of the week paralyzed with indecision over just how to do so. Lois had offered him numerous possible approaches on how to let Jimmy know, and Clark had politely shot them all down. He was chasing a unicorn — seeking the perfect revelation. Lois had begun to think that this search was just Clark's excuse to postpone the difficult moment. But whatever the reason behind his delay, he was making life miserable for the both of them in the meantime.

It was time for Lois to take a different approach. Since Clark hadn't liked any of her earnest suggestions, perhaps he would at least appreciate one with a bit of levity. Lois turned her computer on; she knew she would have to do a lot of research to get the terminology right.

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Clark looked up to see Lois enter the room holding a piece of paper. As she handed it to him, she said, "You might want to give this to Jimmy. You know how much he loves technology."

Intrigued, Clark started to peruse the sheet. He saw that Lois had typed an advertisement of sorts. He read:

*Congratulations! You have been chosen as one of the select few to be given access to Clark 2.0. That's right! Most of the world only has access to the original version. You are already familiar with Clark 1.0: The colleague who wears loud ties, the reporter with the love of human-interest stories, the considerate friend, and the all-around good guy.*

*But you are about to become one of the elite few to have access to a more full-featured version of Clark. Clark 2.0 retains everything you admire in the original version, but also includes the following capabilities:*

- *Overclocking for ultra fast performance*
- *Environmental temperature controls*
- *Vastly enhanced input range and sensitivity*
- *Gravitational controls for three dimensional portability*
- *A system case impervious to impacts and to temperature extremes*
- *Full backward compatibility with Clark 1.0*

Clark felt the corners of his lips curve into a grin despite himself. Lois always knew exactly what to do to lighten his mood. He'd still need to figure out how to tell Jimmy, but that could wait until tomorrow. Right now, Lois was watching for his reaction to her 'invitation.' And there could only be one proper response to this bit of absurdity. He wadded the paper and tossed it at her. She laughed as she swatted it away.

Clark then commented. "Well, one thing's for sure. Every version of Clark is compatible with any version of Lois."

And he proceeded to demonstrate just how fully the two could interface.

THE END