

Lois, Phone Home

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Summary: In this story, it's Lois who has a secret identity ... one even her husband isn't aware of.

Lois Lane came out of the kitchen holding a croissant. She was greeted by a blinding smile as her husband came down the stairs from their second floor bedroom.

"Say hi to your folks for me." She took a bite of her pastry.

Clark Kent pulled his wife into a quick hug and kissed her. "You can still come with me you know. The folks would love to see you."

"I know, and I love seeing them, but I have made plans for this afternoon."

Clark's brow rose. "Just what has that devious mind of yours got cooked up?"

She swatted him on the chest. "For that remark I shouldn't tell you, but I plan to spend the afternoon with several cups of hot chocolate and the book I've been trying to find time to read for two months."

"Hot chocolate? It's mid-summer?"

Lois pouted. "So, I like hot chocolate." She shrugged. "We drink hot coffee all year long. What's the difference?"

Clark grinned. "Nothing, I guess. But why haven't you read the book before this?" His brow furrowed. "You've told me that you used to read in bed all the time."

A smile touched Lois' lips. "I don't sleep alone anymore."

"I wouldn't care if you wanted to have a light on so you could read."

Lois giggled. "I can't read when you're around. You're kind of a ... distraction." She pulled his head down and captured his lips with hers to punctuate her words.

He reached up and caressed her cheek. "I'll miss you."

She smiled. "Of course you will." She turned him around and pushed him toward the back door. "Now go before my resolve weakens."

He laughed. "I'll be back after dinner. I can't pass up a chance to eat my mother's cooking."

It was Lois' turn to laugh. "Just go, and have a great time with your parents. I hope to have several chapters read before you get home, and I expect you to bring me a doggie bag. I love your mom's cooking too."

She followed him out to the back patio. He gave her one last smile then shot up so fast that no eye could see him leave. Lois stared up at the clear blue sky and sighed. After a couple of moments she turned and hurried back into the house.

She knew that he was gone but, irrationally, she couldn't help but look around her before she pulled down the folding stairs in the upstairs hallway ceiling. The stairs led to the rarely used attic. Lois quickly climbed up and into the low ceiling storage space. The amount of dust on most of the boxes scattered around was an indication that the space wasn't visited often.

Lois negotiated her way around the boxes, ignoring them, until she reached the far end of the attic. Buried under a couple of larger boxes labeled 'Lois' winter underwear' was a smaller box labeled similarly. Unlike the other boxes, the smaller one was lined with a thin coating of lead and didn't contain any underwear.

She, once again, looked around to make sure she was alone, then pulled the heavy cover off the box. Inside was a small black box-like apparatus that had two knobs jutting from a smooth face and a lens-

like aperture pointing straight up. Lois pulled a strange looking piece from her pocket. It looked a lot like a smooth silver coin. There were no markings on it. She set the apparatus on the floor in front of her and slipped the 'coin' into a slot on the side.

Instantly the device began to hum. Moments later a flickering light shone out of the lens. A few moments more and the light coalesced into a hologram of a man's head. From what could be seen from his neck and shoulders, he appeared to be wearing some sort of uniform.

"Report," was all he said.

Lois squared her shoulders and stared directly at the floating image. "This is agent Lisan An; my post is Terra, Sol 3." She ran her tongue across her lips as the head seemed to look at something down to his left.

"Continue," he said as he looked back up at her.

Lois took a deep breath. "There is nothing new to report on the Kryptonian. His activities are still confined to the planet and the troubles encountered here. He is still conducting himself as a hero to the masses and hasn't shown any inclination to direct his attention toward any non-terrestrial species unless they threaten this planet."

"Explain."

"Recently we had an incursion from a group of survivors of the Kryptonian's planet. They were looking for the subject as he was some sort of royalty to their people."

"So, we were correct. He is planning to gather an army and stage a retaliatory strike against Thanagar."

"No, he fought against the faction of these other Kryptonians who supported the invasion of earth and helped defeat them."

"What happened to them?"

"They returned to the planet that they had named New Krypton and haven't been heard of since."

"Do you have the coordinates of their world? We should monitor their actions as well."

"Yes sir, I'm sending them now." Lois fiddled with the two knobs a bit then tapped a spot on the top of the device.

The head briefly looked down, then brought his gaze back up to Lois.

"Sir, if I may ask. I've never understood the paranoia we show regarding the Kryptonian race."

"Thanagar and Krypton were bitter rivals for millennia. Then came a period of an uneasy truce, but old suspicions never went away and each planet felt the price of that peace was eternal vigilance. When Krypton destabilized and destroyed itself there were many of our people who thought we had something to do with it."

"Did we?"

He shook his head. "Not to my knowledge, but you know if some of our own people thought we could have done it, then for sure the Kryptonians might also think so."

Lois bit her lip. "Sir, my intel is that the subject came to this planet as a child and was raised by Terrans. I doubt he is even aware of Thanagar or our history with his lost planet. And except for those few New Kryptonians, there are no more Kryptonians."

She noticed the pursed lips and a nod of the head. "I think you are correct. The council discussed this matter just recently and it's been decided that you can come home. We've down-graded the threat assessment of the subject Kryptonian to negligible. You've been stationed there, undercover, for a long time and your sacrifice to duty has been noted. We will arrange for a covert translight scout ship to pick you up in three days time."

Lois suddenly felt panicky. This was going all wrong. It was true that she was certain that Superman was no threat to Thanagar; but leave?

Her mind flashed back several years. The giant probability computers of Thanagar had predicted that the recently found Kryptonian passing himself off as the earthman Clark Kent would try to find work in Metropolis as a journalist. Immediately her superiors had placed her in the big city. She caught a break when she found out that one of the top reporters in the city for the top newspaper, The

Daily Planet, had gotten killed investigating a story in the Congo.

She had used Thanagarian science to allow her to quickly take the place of the deceased reporter. No one was the wiser. She felt bad that a woman had died, but it had given her the perfect cover from which to observe the subject.

She was ready to follow Kent around Metropolis until he landed somewhere. It was providence that he, with a little subliminal help from her, had landed a job at the Planet. She had counted on the fact that mentioning the human interest piece that she suddenly didn't want to do would intrigue the wanna be reporter.

Over time her assignment had gotten more and more enjoyable. She actually enjoyed being a big time reporter, and her partnership with Clark Kent was... well, interesting. Thanagar was no different than most other inhabited planets in the universe. Men and women played the game. As Lois, she tried to keep her mind on the mission, but being with Clark so much took its toll on her objectivity. It was soon obvious that he had feelings for her. And despite her efforts to the contrary she developed feelings for him.

As assignments go, her being stationed on earth became the best thing that had ever happened to her. She grew to love Clark Kent/Superman, and had even gone so far as to marry him. A fact that she conveniently left out of her reports. Now they wanted to bring her home!

Lois, because that is who she thought of herself as, swallowed the lump forming in her throat. "While I appreciate the council saying I can come home, and I don't think that the subject represents a serious threat to Thangar, I feel that it is my duty to stay." Lois took a breath. "The power that the yellow sun energized Kryptonian possess is just too great to be ignored. Even if he should never turn his attention to the home planet, he must be kept track of if only for our piece of mind."

The floating head stared at her for several moments before he spoke. "You realize that because you are so well placed there now, the council would ask that you stay to keep the subject under surveillance."

Lois nodded. "I understand, and I'm willing to do it." It was time to play her trump card. She drew back her shoulders. "Life is duty, duty is life."

"You are a credit to the service, agent Lisan An. I will await your next report."

"Thank you, sir."

Lois reached down and pulled the silver coin out of the device. She quickly put it back into her 'underwear' box and hid it back under the other boxes. She moved to the pull down steps and hurried down them. Within another few moments she had the folding stairs back in place.

A large smile grew on Lois' face. "Yes!" Her fist pumped the air.

She then moved leisurely toward the den, and the book she was actually looking forward to reading.

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THE END