

So This Is Retirement?

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Summary: Lois and Clark are over 100 years old but not completely retired, it seems.

This fanfic is based on the story of Lois and Clark, the New Adventures of Superman. They are owned and copyrighted by someone other than me, but I borrowed them to bend and twist to make my own story. I'll try to straighten it back out before I return it to the owners.

“Clark! Clark! Wake up!”

On the edge of a really good dream was a nagging, insistent voice intruding into his consciousness. Clark slowly awoke, shook his head and looked around to see what was the matter. Then it dawned on him that the voice was that of Lois, and she was not quitting. She sounded almost frantic. He shot up and looked around to get his bearings so that he could rush to save her from the danger.

“Clark. Come downstairs. CJ is here and we have some trouble that needs Superman’s help.”

Well, maybe Lois wasn’t in as much trouble as he first thought, but she sure was not going to let him go back to sleep. Clark wearily drew his terry cloth robe around himself and went downstairs to the living room. Lois and his son, CJ, were sitting on the flowered, chintz sofa drinking tea. At first glance, it didn’t look like much of an emergency, just a family discussion between mother and son.

“Ah, there you are. Retirement just has dulled your quick movements! It took you a full minute to get down here after I started calling you,” said Lois with a grin on her face. The years had been kind to that face, Clark noticed. Both of them were now well over one hundred years old, but it was not obvious to the naked eye. Even CJ, who was nearing seventy-five, looked like he was no older than his thirties.

“Dad, the grandkids are all involved in a rescue of a large cruise ship that had a freak accident,” CJ started the conversation. “The ship was hit by a wall of water and started to capsize. The waves are so high that it’s almost impossible for another ship to get close enough to help. The Super7 have been evacuating the ship by carrying the life boats full of people to islands where they are safe. The problem is that now most of the ship’s passengers and crew have been evacuated, and it is possible to save the ship also, but it will need a port that can support the work that will be needed for repairs. We thought of the facilities on your island and wondered if you two would consider sharing your privacy with the crews of workers that it would need to take care of the ship?” CJ sat quietly while he waited for the information to sink into the consciousness of his father and for the questions to start.

“There is no other place that the ship could go?” asked a weary Clark. He realized that his island was in the middle of nowhere and the other islands that CJ mentioned were even less accessible than their island, but if he gave in to the request, his secret life would be invaded. Then again, the set up of his island was like nowhere else. This was the only place in the area that had the facilities to accommodate a few thousand people easily.

“Of course, there is always somewhere else that it could go,” said CJ. “The reason for this intrusion on your life is that you have the facilities to put up the crew, the deep water to

accommodate the ship, and it will just be easier in the long run to have all the repairs made here and then the passengers reloaded on the ship and let it continue the trip. Otherwise, the Super7 and all of us retired superheroes will be busy for the next week ferrying passengers back to civilization. That means you will be involved one way or the other.”

Lois looked at Clark with an unreadable expression on her face. It had been so long since they had interacted with people other than the family that it might be pleasant to see and talk to people once more. Then again, the reason for buying this island was that they were tired of the criminal element trying to end their lives. Isolation was also insulation.

“Honey, what do you think?” asked Clark. He was sure that CJ and his great-grand-children (the reigning Super7, as they were called) had discussed all the pros and cons about the revelation of his island. If they thought that it was necessary to bring the ship here, who was he to dispute the idea?

“Instead of disrupting the lives of the family, I guess we could share our facilities with the necessary crews and get the ship back to working as soon as possible,” she answered. It had taken Lois years to appreciate the quiet and peace of this island, and the thought of sharing the tranquility and safety with others was disconcerting. And exciting! Lois was still a bit of a thrill-junkie. Years of solitude had not dulled her quest to know all that could be known and to experience all that could be experienced.

“All right, then. Is it good to call the Super7 and discuss the next moves?” asked CJ. He still occasionally worked rescues when he was the closest one to the trouble, but most of his time was taken up with writing the series of books that became the gospel of the younger, youngster set. His autobiographical stories of being a child-to-adolescent-to-adult superhero, and how he learned to do the things necessary to be a superhero were the bible of the children trapped in the mediocrity of normal life. All the children of his world learned how it was to have Superman (the original) as a father and to have super powers. They all got to learn how to control super powers and go on adventures like he had in his lifetime.

“Sure. While we are at it, let’s just get all the family here right now to help set up to move everyone stranded on the neighboring islands over here to live for a week or so,” said Lois. She was excited about the facilities being used to capacity for the first time since she and Clark had moved to the island twenty-one years earlier.

“Are you sure that is a good idea, honey?” asked Clark. “We don’t need to have all of them live here just to repair the ship.”

“Yes, we do, Clark,” Lois replied. A frown creased her face and she looked like she was working a mental problem that pained her. “If we don’t get all of them here, the family will have to support their existence on the islands by transporting food and water to them. They also will have a full-time job taking care of any emergencies that happen elsewhere while still trying to keep this group of people alive and well.”

A deep sigh came from Clark. Peace, quiet, and safety were about to be compromised because of his family’s credo of helping the helpless and caring for those who could not care for themselves. He knew that fact, deep down, but it was hard to face the consequences.

“Okay, son, go ahead and get the ship and call the family together. We need to get this thing settled so that all our lives can get back to normal as soon as possible.” Clark realized that with that one sentence, life, as they had known it for the last twenty-one years, would never be the same again.

CJ Kent reached over and kissed his mother’s cheek, gave a wave to his father, and left in a giant whoosh!

“Honey, let’s get dressed and go down into the caves and see what we will need the grandkids to bring to be able to support the ship’s crew and repair people. We will worry about the rest of the

passengers later on,” said Lois. She was still mentally trying to work out the logistics of having so many people on their island.

“We also need to open all the solar panels and charge the generators to full capacity,” said Clark. This was turning into a big project. When the whole family arrived twice a year for a vacation on the island, they only numbered a few hundred. This ship would have more than two thousand people who would need to be accommodated, and unfortunately for the crew, the passengers would still expect to be pampered. It would not be enough that their lives had been saved from a certain death on the ship, but they would want gourmet meals and activities.

“Well, we are ready and able to accommodate them here, if we must,” said Lois. “Go on ahead and get dressed while I find Jimmy and Cassandra and tell them what is going on.” (Jimmy Olsen was now going on his one hundredth birthday in a few short months, and since he had been infused with the Superman life-force back in his twenties, he also needed to hide from prying eyes who would not understand why he was still alive. He and his third wife, Cassandra, had moved onto the island with Lois and Clark ten years before.)

Jimmy met Lois in the hallway as she was going toward the Olsen end of the house. “I heard the sound of someone taking off, and wondered if there was trouble? Is there anything I can do to help,” asked Jimmy.

“Yes, but it is going to take more than a little bit of our time and energy to do this project, Jim. Can you get Cassandra and come into the living room? Clark is upstairs getting dressed and I need to get some clothes on also. How about the two of you get dressed warmly as we need to go down into the caves and meet us back in the living room in about ten minutes. Okay?” In usual Lois-babble style she had given him the meat and bones of the problem and he knew that they would learn the rest soon.

“Sounds good to me. Sleep is overrated anyway!” Jimmy grinned as he turned back toward his end of the house.

TWENTY-ONE YEARS EARLIER

“Clark! This place is huge. Are you sure we need all this room?”

“No, we don’t really need it right now, but if we live many more years our own family will number into the hundreds. You know that no one else is interested in the place because of the history and the proximity of work crews to repair the run down state of this estate. I know that you think that twenty-seven bedrooms is excessive, but our five children all have at least three children of their own, who now have begun to marry and procreate. Don’t think of all the work it will take to make it livable because these same children who can come to visit can super-speed any repairs or maintenance work that needs to be done.”

“But...” Lois just ran out of steam. When Clark had come to her after the last attempt on her life and had told her of his “find” of an island in the Pacific that was on the market, she had not envisioned anything like what she saw. But Clark was right when he said that at her advanced age the attempts on her life were catching up to the law of averages and sooner or later she would run out of a lifetime of close-calls.

The surprise of the whole thing was that on further investigation, the island not only included the mansion with twenty-seven bedrooms, and thirty-nine bathrooms, but a whole catacomb of caves underground that lent itself to double and triple the room of the estate. The previous owner, and notorious bad guy, Bill Church, had used the caves as a warehouse for his illegal merchandise, drugs, and guns. Because of the deep water port that opened into the caves, ships could come right up to the island. When Lois Lane, Clark Kent, and Superman had ended his reign as the crime lord of Metropolis and all major cities of the North American continent, Bill Church had abandoned the

island and his estate was unable to unload it years later when he died in prison. In total disrepair, the skeleton of the estate remained sturdy. There was a water-filtration system that took sea water and purified it for the inhabitants. Solar and wind power ran ten generators that fully powered the whole house and the caves and still had some left. After purchasing the house, Lois and Clark learned how to dampen down the massive power plant to accommodate so few residents.

“When you said that we should disappear and let the children come to us, I had no idea that you meant it literally.” Lois was completely overwhelmed by the estate. Her family, Clark and her children (and their children, and their children, etc.) were now her whole life. It was hard to remember when she thought only of herself, her work, and what tomorrow would bring her. That was a different Lois. This Lois had time to put down any project to talk to a grandchild about pets, projects, or giggles. ‘Mad Dog Lane’ was so far gone that few except Clark and Jimmy even knew the term any more. Lois was now Granny!

“Are you sure that this is how you want to spend the money from your book and the rest of your years?” Lois was sure that Clark had thought it all out before proposing the idea of the island to her, but his “Memoirs of Superman” (that he both ghost wrote, as Clark Kent, and starred as main character, Superman) had netted them a fortune that needed to be channeled into a safe harbor for their declining years. All their children were financially secure now, and their fortunes could rival those of Lex Luthor and Bill Church, but they made their money the honest way without taking advantage of anyone. The Superman Foundation was given millions each year from the proceeds of the family endeavors. The world would never know that fact, because the Kent family was able to hide all the good works and superpowers from the rest of the prying eyes. Lois and Clark were secretly pleased that their end was mirroring the predictions

of Herbert George Wells who told them that they (and their offspring) would eventually create Utopia. The pendulum had reversed from the evil having the money and prestige, to Super-good now being the dominant force in the world. Lois would love to write her story, but she also was like a lion-mama who protected Clark’s secret to the death. Before the move to the island, she had shredded all her diaries, notes, and letters so that they would not fall into hands that would be unkind to the Kryptonian branch of her family. As each of her children married, she was pleased that their spouses were also just as devoted to keeping the family secret.

“How much do they want for this island?” Lois was sure that whatever they were asking it would create a vacuum in the financial state of the family. “Surely, even though it is really run down, there must be a twenty or thirty million dollar price tag on the place.”

“That’s the good part.” The amused look on Clark’s face caught Lois’ interest. He looked like the cat that swallowed the canary. “I asked the Bender Law Firm for an asking price of the island, and they told me that there wasn’t one any longer. It was strictly a “make an offer” type of proposition. My offer was one dollar, and they accepted. It has a backlog of three years taxes owed and was about to go into foreclosure, so they were glad to get out from under it. I told them that I would talk you into the purchase and we’d be back to them in a week to sign the necessary paperwork. I knew I’d be able to show you the worth of the island.”

“You already said you’d take it? Clark!! What were you thinking? Are you sure that we will be able to fix the place up and maintain it without draining finances too much?”

“Lo-is! Relax. This place is solid and a good buy. All the children and grandchildren can fly in so the cost of having company is nil. And, you have to admit that unless you can fly, this place is about as secure as you can find anywhere. No alarm

system is needed. Isolation and sheer cliffs protect us from the bad guys. Kryptonite is unheard of around here, so that is one less thing to worry about. What else would be needed to keep us safe in our latter years?"

"One dollar, huh? You always did know the value of a dollar!" Lois melted into a fit of laughter.

The paperwork was signed, the government of Fiji was paid the back taxes, and a family work-week was declared so that the island could be readied for its owners. A fevered, but good natured flurry of pounding and cleaning took over the island as it slowly was restored to its glory. The orchard was tended and a huge garden was planted. When the great-grandchildren and all the retired superheroes moved Lois and Clark from Metropolis to the new Kent Island estate, it was a happy day for all concerned. The family stayed behind another week to enjoy the new facilities, and a great time was enjoyed by all. CJ and his next younger sister, Lara, bought a large boat that they put into harbor in the caves below the house. A happier vacation could not be remembered by anyone, unless honeymoons counted.

When supplies were needed by the family, Clark put the suit back on once again and he and Lois ventured out to different countries to load up on the needed items. Every once in a while, at least in the beginning of their stay on the island, the two of them would venture out to the far east and enjoy authentic Chinese food. After a while, the solitude of the island made the wander-lust disappear, and unless a visitor wanted to go to get "take-out" from China, Clark's version of Chinese was all they ate. A quiet happiness settled into the life-style of the Kents and the island not only became their sanctuary, but it also became their favorite place to be.

When Jimmy's second wife died, he grew restless about living alone in Metropolis. More and more often, he stayed on the island with Lois and Clark. He was not content, and seemed to always be searching for an elusive happiness that seemed to evade him. When he met Cassandra for the second time, she was his answer. He had known her mother in high school and they had been good friends. He had been introduced to Cassandra when she was in her teens and he had returned to his thirty-fifth high school reunion. Angela, his first wife had been diagnosed with cancer, and his whole world was falling in on him. After Angela's death, Jimmy quit working at the Planet and had taken up photography as a war correspondent. He took chances that no other correspondent took, and his pictures were award-winning. He met a wonderful journalist, Naomi, who was also on the same circuit and married her. They both went to work at the Daily Planet and life settled back down to a happy but busy lifestyle. When Naomi died, Jimmy went into a tailspin. He no longer was reckless like he was the first time he lost someone, but he didn't seem to know what to do with himself. He spent time on the island, sometimes months at a time. When he did wander back to Metropolis, he seemed to have no rudder. When the Daily Planet called him to come back as a guest photographer and to teach a new bunch of photographers what it was to catch a moment in time, he re-met Cassandra. She was much younger than him and when he told her about his adventure with getting infused with the life-force of Superman, she understood why he looked close to her age. Both of them seemed to click instantly, and the almost forty years difference in age did not matter. After he married her, she enjoyed living with him and the Kents on the island. Eventually, an offer of a wing of the house was extended, and both Jimmy and Cassandra felt like that was their new home.

PRESENT DAY

When Lois and Clark walked into the living room, Jimmy and Cassandra were waiting for them. Both looked like they were geared up to start an adventure. Clark chuckled softly as he knew

he was outnumbered in the enthusiasm department. Lois and the Olsens were ready to have a change of lifestyle, even if it was temporary. They all seemed to be happy with the mundane until an adventure poked its head into their view.

"Clark, you want to explain this to Jimmy and Cassandra, or do you want me to do it?" Lois was running mental lists through her head, and really didn't want to pause the lists to explain the situation. She hoped that the prod would get Clark talking so that she could get started with her day soon. The sun had just pushed its face above the horizon, and soon the visitors would begin to arrive. CJ had told her that they needed to move the ship first before it was swamped and lost, but as soon as it was securely anchored in the harbor, the visitors would begin to arrive.

Clark went through the description of the sinking ship and how the Super7 had spread the survivors on all the nearby islands, most of which were uninhabited. They had worked so fast to insure safety, and had not been able to explain the situation to the survivors of the ship — both passengers and crew. So, preparations for the influx of people would also include explaining the situation. The ship was fully stocked with foodstuffs and would support the survivors, and the island could furnish the rest that would be basic survival accommodations. Jimmy went with Clark to help get the

dampers off the solar panels and turn on the turbines of the windmills so that the generators would begin to soak up the energy produced by the island. They also needed to get the holding tank filled with fresh water processed by the filtering system. Most of these steps were not used unless company was expected. If all four occupants of the island wished to shower at the same time, it would not strain the surface holding tank that was solar heated. With two thousand people expected, there would be considerably more water needed.

One of the first things Clark did was to move the bee hives to the far side of the island so that they would leave the visitors alone. He also took great care to check over the hen house to make sure that it was securely anchored.

Jimmy then tethered the goats on the other side of the mansion so they could eat

grass but couldn't wander around while there were others on the island. That would guarantee the dairy and eggs of the island's residents were preserved from harm by outsiders.

Lois took Cassandra with her to the store room where they counted the inventory of linens. They could use the ones on the ship, they knew, but it was easier to see what was available first before requesting ship materials. The next thing to do was to open the ventilation system in the caves and dry the musty smell out of the air. The generators always carried a positive charge as they did not use all the electricity available to them, so the ventilation system should already be working before the rest of the generators were even primed. Also, in all the different rooms down in the caves, there was a set up with huge coffee makers and plastic/paper cups and available coffee that just needed to be set up and plugged in as the first occupants arrived. Both of them worked silently doing the routine that they knew so well. When the family was coming they did this same stuff without thinking.

A loud crash and resounding movement of the earth signaled the arrival of the ship. The Super7 had moved the whole thing faster than they first thought they could, evidently. The sonic boom marked speed from them, and Clark chuckled at the show of strength from his great-grand children. They weren't satisfied just to tow it into port like CJ had mentioned. The earthquake like movement of the island was a result of the dropping of the ship into the port. He wished he had been able to witness the busy bees with the building sized burden they had carried. The family would have to all get together soon and share the details of this rescue, because it sounded like one of their better ones. But, with

all that needed to be done before survivors arrived, he allowed just a chuckle and kept working on all the things he and Jimmy were supposed to get done.

Around ten o'clock, the four residents of the island met in the kitchen, weary but satisfied that they had gotten as much done as possible before the arrivals would begin. Coffee and hot biscuits with jelly and honey revived them. The front door opened, and CJ walked in with his youngest son, Oliver. They asked where the first group should go and it was decided that they probably would like to take a shower so they all came into the house and the first group of thirty headed to bathrooms. Lois headed back into the caves and plugged in the coffee makers in the first two rooms. She took a deep breath, relishing the fact that their hard work to purify the air had been a success.

Clark donned the suit and went to help his offspring ferry survivors to the island. As the sun began to set, he was having trouble finding any survivors left on any of the small islands dotting the Pacific. He wondered if there was a way to rectify the headcount of survivors. There was no one lost in this rescue, but it would be a shame if they missed someone on one of the islands dotting the horizon. There were so many islands, some so small that they would accommodate only a few people, but those few would not want to stay there the rest of their days. He was sure that the ship line had all the paperwork so that they knew who was where on board the ship, but he wondered if they had a way to find a scattered bunch of people and be able to tell who was still missing.

By the time that it was bedtime on the island, all the people had bathed, fed, and were housed in the caves. The Super7 knew they still needed to bring a crew to repair the damage from the wave, but they left with a tired look on their faces. They were all pleased that the rescue had gone so well. They arrived back the next morning with tools, man-power, and supplies for the repairs. Three of the Super7 stayed to help with repairs at super speed. It took much less time than was first expected, and the ship was repaired, restocked, and reloaded with passengers in only four days. As the ship pulled away from the harbor in the caves, it sounded its air horn and all the people on deck waved goodbye to the island. Lois, Clark, Jimmy and Cassandra breathed a sigh of relief and waved back to the slowly disappearing dot on the horizon. Solitude sounded like heaven at that time!

It had taken the Super7 less than twenty-four hours to move the passengers and crew to safety and move them again to the island. In that timespan, they also moved the cruise ship. But, it took all of the Super7 and four of the thirty retired superheroes three full days to get rid of all the litter left by the occupants of the ship. They spent three exhausting days compacting and throwing the refuse into the sun. It was a wonder that there was not a dangerous solar flare during those three days as the sun consumed the waste left behind.

As Lois climbed into bed next to Clark, she cuddled with him and let out a sigh of release of tension. It had been a beautiful day to see all the people leave. At her advanced age, she was not enthusiastic about having company. Family was one thing and welcome at any time. She hoped that they would never have to do that accommodation again, but then the credo of the family was "doing all I can do to help all I can help." Even those without superpowers were able to make a difference in the world. So many years ago she had told Clark that "one man (or woman) can make a difference" and again she was reminded that even in the sunset of life she could make the world (even small as an island) a different place.

THE END?

Many thanks to my beta, VirginiaR, for her wonderful help with my lousy spelling, and use of too many commas. Also, she

suggested that the farm boy in Clark would have a garden and an orchard. Wish I had thought of that!!

Thanks also to G.E. Classicalla. She fine toothed it even more. Thanks Nancy.