

Early Intervention

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Rated PG

Submitted May 2013

Summary: A response to Queen of the Capes' challenge to write something "evil, warped, twisted or sinister."

Thanks to Iolanthe and Lynn for betaing and to Iolanthe for being the GE.

These characters are not mine.

Early Intervention

Edith Bennett, maternity nurse, looked up from her notes as a tall, bearded stranger approached her. He looked older than the average father, and his attire — an expensively conservative suit and navy blue tie — suggested his business was something other than admiring a new baby.

"Can I help you, sir?" she said.

"I've been asked to provide a consultation for one of your patients," he said. "The infant daughter of Dr Samuel and Mrs Ellen Lane."

Edith searched his features, rustling through the crevices of her memory, but came up blank. "I'm sorry, sir. I didn't catch your name."

"Mr Doe, paediatric specialist."

His name wasn't familiar, either — and she'd seen quite a few paediatricians in her two years on these wards. "I wasn't aware that the Lane baby has medical issues," she hedged.

"Dr Lane is a personal friend of mine. As with every first-time father, he's anxious that his daughter receive the best of care."

The nurse bristled. "This hospital has a reputation as -"

"I didn't mean to cast aspersions on your fine establishment," he said, a dazzling smile emerging from his austere manner.

"Your standing as a premier health-care provider stretches far beyond the state borders."

Edith straightened her shoulders with pride. "Are you new to the area?" she asked, her tone softening.

"No. As fortune would have it, I am in Metropolis this week, attending a seminar. When Dr Lane called with the good news of the arrival, he asked me to check over his daughter as a personal favour."

"I will accompany you."

"There's no need -"

"Mrs Bennett!" A candystriper scurried towards them. "Dr Scott needs you in Room 13."

Mr Doe patted the nurse's arm in a fatherly fashion. "Give me the crib number for the Lane girl, and I will find my own way there. I've had a lot of experience with babies."

"Crib 18," Edith said as she hurried away. "The nursery is at the end of that corridor."

Tempus stared at the sleeping baby in Crib 18. Despite her puckered, elf-like appearance, he knew she was Lois Lane.

He recognised her essence. Her innate fire. Her enmity for everything he deemed necessary in a perfect society.

He pulled back the covers. Using technology from many years in the future, he quickly and painlessly administered eight tiny chips of kryptonite, burying them under her skin where they would be undetectable to the machines of the next one hundred years.

The nurse swept into the room as Tempus was replacing the

covers over the baby. He turned, flashing his most respectable smile. "She's perfect," he said. "Dr and Mrs Lane have no cause for concern."

"Thank you, Mr Doe."

Tempus walked from the room, his gait purposefully steadfast despite the triumphant drums of victory pounding across his heart.

He had just secured the future of this world.

THE END