

# Obsessive

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Rated: PG

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Summary: Superman's having some trouble handling his OCD. It's Lois' job to help him get a handle on it. How does she keep things calm? There's a twist!

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"Superman! Help! Help me! Please, help!"

The hero swooped in, cape billowing behind him as he landed gracefully before her. "May I be of some assistance, Mrs. Kent?"

Lois wrung her hands nervously. "Oh, Superman, thank goodness you came! I don't know what to do. I came home with my daughter to find the house a wreck and some stuff missing. What do I do?"

Superman's eyes widened ever so slightly at the scene before him. She couldn't possibly have done all this, could she? Just to get his attention? Pillows and cushions were strewn haphazardly across the floor, the coffee table was overturned, curtains ripped off the walls and lamps knocked over — one broken, even. He took in a long, slow, deep breath and met Lois' eyes. They were comforting, reassuring. It was all just part of an elaborate test, he knew. Fight the urge.

He mustered all of his patience and tried to continue forward, focused and on point. "I see. And what is it exactly that you would like me to do to help you?" Casually he righted a lamp back onto the side table, keeping his gaze focused on Lois.

Lois' gaze briefly tripped over his actions, but she made no comment on them. "I was wondering if you could perform a quick scan and see if there's any fingerprints or other stuff left behind, you know, before I tamper with the crime scene. Maybe even check and see if anything noticeable is missing."

He nodded curtly, placing a coaster back onto the end table and making sure it was aligned correctly. "All right, but might I suggest that the next time something like this happens, you call in the police? I can help with the immediate stuff, but really this is police business at this point."

"Oh! I know. I'm so sorry. It's just, I panicked and I didn't know what to do."

Superman began his scan, subtly clenching and unclenching his fists. Lois noticed the barest motion. As he was distracted, she glanced around furtively, in search of something to add to the mix, to keep him off balance.

Her eyes alighted on the small vase and a mischievous grin lit up her face.

The sound of another crash brought Superman back to reality. His spine straightened and he frantically turned his head to follow the noise. The clear glass vase that had once held a collection of sand, shells and pebbles was now scattered across the hardwood floor in pieces. That was the straw that broke the camel's back.

Lois studied him with a careful eye as he slowly transformed from the calm, confident superhero back into the frantic, panic-stricken young man underneath. He started up again with an all-too familiar patterned tapping rhythm, and Lois knew she was starting to lose him.

"Jonathan," her voice was low with warning and concern. "Stay with me. Just breathe through it."

Jonathan started shaking his head and found he couldn't stop. He couldn't help it. The room looked as though chaos itself had been unleashed in it. His mother smashing more things wasn't helping contribute to his inner peace at all.

"Jonathan," Lois' voice was much more stern and forceful this time. "Focus. You can do this, I know you can."

"Why? Why would you do that? Do you have any idea how many rocks were in there? There were sixty-seven of them. There were twenty-four shells. Ninety-one. Now there's even more, because you broke the shells and the glass and don't even get me started on the sand."

Lois huffed a sigh of frustration. They had come so close this time. "Okay. So let's just take a timeout here. Come on. Deep breaths still. In, out. In, out."

Jonathan mirrored her actions and followed her instructions, breathing as deeply as he could to beat back the panic creeping up on him.

"Remember what Dr. Burgh said."

Jonathan scoffed. "Mom, I told you, I don't like Dr. Burgh! His methods are crap."

"Jonathan!"

"It's the truth!"

"You're the one who wanted to do this. If you're gonna be a hero, then you're going to have to get more of a handle on your OCD. What if you rush into a situation just like this one? What if you're in public, or on the news, and you start up your little tapping thing again? Yeah, don't look so surprised. I noticed your little pattern. You think other people haven't caught on? If you do that even once in public, then you're risking complete exposure. Is that what you want?"

"No! Of course not, Mom!"

"Then you are going to take your therapist's advice and do the best that you can. You were doing so well to start with."

"But see, that's just it!" Jonathan shouted at her. He turned and started pacing, eight steps in each direction. "He says that I can't freak out because it's not in my power to control and I can't fix everything. But watch! Just—"

In a blur of wind and speed, Jonathan took off around the house, fixing everything he could within the smallest time possible. In mere moments, most of the house was righted, with the exception being the broken items, which he had swept into separate piles. He stopped on a dime right by his mother's side and outstretched an arm. "See??"

Lois, having watched her husband and subsequently her children doing the exact same thing over the years, was unimpressed. "So you fixed my problem, thanks, but you haven't done anything to help yours."

Jonathan groaned loudly. Lois turned to face her oldest son and placed a gentle hand on his shoulder. "Hey. It's okay. Don't worry about it. We don't have to get it just yet." His shoulders slumped at her words. "And hey, we're a lot closer. You didn't freak out when you came into the room, that's a good sign."

"Yeah, but Mom, I... I don't feel like I'm making any progress. I know I've got a problem, I just don't know how I'm ever going to get better. I don't see a light at the end of the tunnel." He released a loud sigh and slumped his shoulders. "Maybe this just isn't a good idea. I get a bad feeling that this dual identity thing is only going to set me back."

Lois wanted to tell him he was wrong, just shake him until he came around to her way of seeing things. But, for all her belief and strength of will, Lois knew that there was no way she could know that for sure. There were numerous scenarios in which things could go wrong, things could fall apart, people could discover the truth. That was a constant danger for all of them. The truth was, Jonathan could be dangerously right.

So instead, she took a deep breath and told him what she knew. "You could be right."

Jonathan's eyes snapped to meet hers in surprise at the admission. He searched her features for some tell that she was humoring him, or being sarcastic, but found nothing but except sincerity in her expression.

Lois waited for the recognition to set in on his face before continuing. “Now, I’m not saying I don’t think you can do it, or even that you should. Because that’s not what I think. I think you can absolutely do anything you put your mind to. But you are right, there are a lot of risks that go into this lifestyle. Least of which being to your own health. If you decide you don’t want to do this, no one would hold it against you. Not me, not your father, nobody. You have to do what you feel is the best for you.”

“I know that. But, I just know I have to do this, you know?”

“I understand,” Lois gave him a sympathetic look. “And if that is how you feel, then I think you’re working in the wrong direction.”

Jonathan frowned. “What do you mean?”

“I think you’re still playing it too safe. If you really want this to work out, you’ve gotta raise the stakes. Get into a real situation.”

She could see Jonathan immediately distance himself from the idea as his eyes shut down and he leaned away from her. “I don’t think... I’m not ready for that yet. I don’t even know what to do, how to do it...”

“Have you thought of a name yet?”

Jonathan sighed heavily and sat down on the living room couch. “Not really. I still can’t decide.”

Lois choked back her laughter but Jonathan heard and gave her a disapproving look. She didn’t care though; she knew as well as he did that he had trouble making decisions on what to eat for dinner, let alone something as big as this. “Okay, but you’re going to have to come up with something. You’re twenty-three years old. You’re getting a little old to keep playing dress up in your father’s costumes.”

He scowled irritably. “It’s for practice. It’s not a game.”

She grinned and patted his cheek. “Sure, sweetie.”

“Mo-om...”

“I know, I know! I’m kidding. Geez.”

He smiled briefly at her humor before allowing his face to fall once more. Lois sobered and nudged him gently with her elbow. “Hey. I know it’s hard, but you are stronger than your OCD. All your compulsions and little ticks... I know you can get a handle on them. If this is really what you want to do, then I believe you can do it.”

He smiled weakly at her. “Thanks, Mom. Besides, I pretty much got you and Dad to blame for these issues of mine. You’re practically as OCD as I am.”

“That’s undiagnosed, Buster Brown. I could sue you for libel.”

“I believe you mean slander. And even then, I don’t know if that’s necessarily considered true character defamation.”

Lois grinned and ruffled his hair. “That’s my boy. See? We taught you all the important stuff.”

Jonathan huffed out a short laugh just as Superman came floating through the window. Clark did a quick double take at his son before relaxing. “That threw me for a bit of a loop,” he commented dryly. “How’s it going?”

Lois shared a look with her son. “Better. We think.”

Clark nodded and sped into the bedroom to change. When he reappeared he had a suspicious frown on his face. “Hey, Jonathan? Just out of curiosity, where did you grab that suit from?”

It was Jonathan’s turn to frown. “The far right end of your suit section. Why?”

Clark winced dramatically. “Ooh... Mom didn’t tell you... That’s where I keep your mom’s favorite suits...”

Jonathan’s brow furrowed deeper in confusion, an unasked question written all over his features.

“She likes it when I go commando in those,” Clark winked.

Jonathan’s eyes went comically wide and he jumped up as if he were on fire, shouting and speeding off to change as fast as

possible. He returned mere moments later to peals of laughter coming from his parents, once again in his own clothes. He narrowed his eyes suspiciously at them, making Clark laugh even more.

“You... should’ve seen... your face,” Clark panted between laughs. “Priceless!”

Jonathan, realizing he’d been duped by his parents once again, crossed his arms over his chest and scowled at them.

“Mean. You guys are *mean*. Taking advantage of a germaphobe like that for your own entertainment...”

“Oh, come on, Jonathan. Jonathan,” Lois called as he made for the door, attempting to clamp down on her laughter quite unsuccessfully.

“I’m gonna go home now,” he called out with an eyeroll as he opened the front door. “Bye!”

Lois and Clark couldn’t even respond, they were laughing so hard.

THE END