

# Like a Brother

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Rated G

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Summary: A brief look at an alternative universe.

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“Jonathan! In that rocket! It’s... It’s...”  
“Babies?!”

Martha Kent felt like she was dreaming as she carefully picked up the two infants. It was unreal—unbelievable. Yet, here they were. An answer to prayer, straight out of science fiction. A miracle.

Jonathan, of course, was suspicious of miracles. Jonathan was suspicious of secret government projects and Russian spies, and little green men with ray guns who might zap unsuspecting farmers. He made his suspicions known all the way to the truck, and all the way to the house, and all the way to the spare room that would just make a darling nursery if he would only fix it up while she set about finding something to use for a cradle until they could get to the store in the morning.

“What are we going to name them?” she asked, once the matter — and the infants — had been settled.

Jonathan scratched his chin. “Well,” he said, “We can name the boy after your family, I guess...”

Martha smiled. “Clark Kent. I like it.”

“What about the girl?”

Martha thought carefully. A wicked grin spread over her face. “Well, since our two little ‘explorers’ were on an ‘expedition’ through outer space...”

Jonathan eyed her warily.

“...how about something like Lois or Louissa?” She beamed impishly.

Jonathan rolled his eyes, then thought about it. “I kinda like Lois,” he decided. “Lois and Clark Kent.”

“Our children.”

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The door slammed open, and Martha had to steel herself against the gust of wind that accompanied her daughter’s arrival.

“I win!” Lois was shouting. “I win I win I win!!!”

Clark was only moments behind her. “You cheated!”

“I did not.”

“Did too!”

Martha smoothed her apron and went to close the door.

“What’s going on, you two?”

Lois beamed. “I’m faster than Clark!”

“You are not!” Clark protested. “Mom, she cheated and—”

“Kids!” Jonathan had entered from the living room. “How many times have we told you to be careful when you’re out in public? If anyone saw you—”

“No one saw us,” protested Lois.

“To your rooms, both of you!” Jonathan pointed toward the stairs.

They obeyed, heads hung and shoulders slumped.

“Cheater...” Clark whispered.

“Did not,” she whispered back.

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She could hear his heartbeat from inside the treehouse. Ignoring the “No Girls” sign posted on the front, she floated up to the doorway. He was slumped inside, his head on his knees.

“Hey.”

“Go away,” he muttered.

“Do you want to tell me what’s wrong?”

“No.”

She squeezed into the treehouse, sitting next to him. “Come on,” she prodded.

He looked up, finally, and she saw that he’d been crying.

“Lana dumped me.”

Lois winced. “I’m sorry.”

“I thought we were going to be together *forever*,” Clark said, his voice full of hurt. “I was going to get Grandma’s ring and propose to her after graduation, and we were going to go to college together and get married and...and...” He buried his face in his knees again.

Lois put an arm around him. “Hey, you guys fought before. She’ll probably...”

He shook his head. “No. She’s never coming back. She’s going with Brad Fisher now.”

“Brad’s as dumb as a box of rocks, and so is Lana,” she said.

“Look, Clark, you’re...well, you’re a pretty great guy. You deserve better than some dopey blonde who struts around with her nose in the air and thinks the Washington Monument is in Seattle.”

“She doesn’t have her nose in the air,” defended Clark.

“Clark, if it rained, she would drown,” Lois told him. “You’ll find someone better; don’t worry. Do you want me to ask Rachel if she wants to go with you to the prom?”

He nodded. “Okay. Thanks, Lo.”

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“I still can’t believe you didn’t jump on this opportunity! I thought you wanted to work for the Planet as much as I did?”

Clark set the last box down in Lois’s new apartment. “I do...someday. I just...I don’t know, Lo, I need to—”

“—Find yourself, yeah, yeah.” Lois opened the box and began putting the things in it away. “The way you talk, I’m starting to think my brother is Where’s Waldo. You’ll still stay in touch with everyone, right?”

“Of course,” he replied. “I plan to drop by to see Mom and Dad at least once a week...”

“What about me?” she asked.

He raised an eyebrow. “You kidding? Getting away from you is one of the highlights of—hey!” A pillow smacked into him.

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Lois stared at the papers on her desk and tried to keep from crying. How could she have been so...so *stupid*? To think that she had almost...

The words he’d thrown at her when she refused to end the date his way had hurt: “Naive farm girl”, “Old fashioned”, “Little girl pretending she’s a grown up”. He’d left her broken-hearted and crying, and it only got worse when she discovered what he’d been *really* after.

She heard him coming off the elevator and did her best to ignore him. He walked right by her desk and straight into Perry’s office. After a moment, she heard Perry shouting.

“QUIT??? What do you mean quit?! What *is* this, Rochert?”

The door opened, and Lois chanced a glance up. He looked bruised and slightly disheveled, as if he’d been in a bar fight the night before and hadn’t quite recovered. He made a bee-line for her desk. Lois’ heart started pounding, and she almost had to use her special hearing to make out what he muttered to her.

“ImSorryForHowITreatedYou.ImSorryForBreakingYourHeartAndTryingToStealYourStoryAndIWillNeverDoItAgain. Goodbye.”

With that, he left the bullpen. Lois never heard from him again.

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“Clark Kent, welcome to the Daily Planet.”

Clark grinned and shook his new boss’s hand.

"I expect great things from you," Perry continued. "This theater piece is good, but never forget: the Kent byline has a big reputation to live up to. And don't think for a minute that you can just ride on your sister's coattails."

"Wouldn't dream of it, sir."

From across the room, Lois smiled at him. "I knew you could do it," she whispered.

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"Lo, will you stop laughing?" Clark blushed at their reflections in the mirror while his sister doubled over even harder. "I said stop. Stop! Lo, shut up!"

She really had no right, he thought. After all, she was the one who *started* this whole 'disguise' idea. And it was a great idea. Still...He turned in front of the mirror, once again frowning at the leopard-print.

Their mom handed him another outfit, fresh from the sewing machine. "Try this one, dear."

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It was three in the morning when the phone rang. Lois cursed and answered it. "H'lo?"

"Oh...um, hi, Lo..." It was Clark. "Did...did I wake you up?"

Lois rolled her eyes. "No, I was just sitting up by the phone, hoping you'd decide to call me."

"I'm sorry," he said, and something in his tone sounded off. "If you want, I can—"

"Wait, Clark, don't hang up." Lois sat up in the bed. "What's the matter? What is it?"

There was a long pause. "Um..." Finally, he asked, "Did the globe ever...do anything...while you had it?"

"The globe?"

"From Bureau 39."

"Did it *do* anything?" Lois echoed, trying to wrack her brain. "Um, I don't think so... Like what?"

Another pause.

"Clark?"

"Lo...um... Okay, just a crazy thought..." Clark laughed, but Lois could tell it was fake and forced. "What if we weren't actually...I, I mean..." He paused again. "What if we were supposed to be...uh..."

Lois was starting to get annoyed. "Clark?"

"You know what? Never mind. I'm sorry. The whole thing is...never mind. Go back to sleep, Lo; I'm sorry for waking you up."

"Clark?"

"Good night, Lo," he continued. "I love you. A-a-as a sister! I mean, I love you as a brother loves a sister. Um—"

Lois shook her head. "You're weird, Clark."

Much to her surprise, he gave a genuine, relieved chuckle at that. "Thanks, Lois," he said, and then he hung up.

Lois stared at the phone in confusion, and then did the same.

THE END