

The First Lady's Tale

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Rated: G

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Summary: One year after meeting Clark, Wandamae Waldecker sends him a letter and a package. The first part of the story occurs during the episode "Bolt From the Blue," the second part during the episode "Ultra Woman," and the final part just after "Ultra Woman." This story is part of "The Canterbury Tales of Metropolis."

Story Size: 3,263 words (18Kb as text)

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Dialogue in the first scene taken from the episode "A Bolt from the Blue" written by Kathy McCormick.

Special thanks to Marcelle for doing such a great job as the General Editor (GE) for this story.

This story is part of the "Canterbury Tales Series," which includes "[The Psychic's Tale](#)," "[The Lookalike Agent's Tale](#)," "[The Slumlord's Tale](#)," "[The Nun's Tale](#)," "[The Showgirl's Tale](#)," "[The Florist's Tale](#)," "[The Cabbie's Tale](#)," "[The Runaway's Tale](#)," "[This I'll Defend](#)," and "[The First Lady's Tale](#)."

Lois Lane and Clark Kent were seated at a table across from Wandamae Waldecker and a portrait of President Abraham Lincoln on the grounds of the Happy Hollow Rest Home. They were interviewing Wandamae about her brother William, a.k.a. Resplendent Man, whom Wandamae called Tad.

Just as Wandamae told Lois that Tad could now fly, Gretchen Kelly, dressed as a nurse, interrupted and approached Wandamae. Gretchen insisted it was time to leave to see the doctor. Lois asked for a couple of additional minutes with Wandamae. When Gretchen refused, they argued, and Lois called her "Brunnhilda."

Clark dropped his pencil, and ducked under the table to surreptitiously apply some heat vision to Gretchen's shoe, causing it to smoke. Wandamae looked under the table and saw Clark give Gretchen the hot foot. Startled, Clark noticed Wandamae looking at him, and both quickly sat back up. Gretchen left, and Lois continued the interview asking Wandamae how William got his superpowers.

Wandamae looked right at Clark and said, "Superman."

Clark visibly paled, feeling too stunned to speak, waiting for her to say more.

She turned to Lois and explained, "Tad got his powers from Superman."

Lois looked stunned.

Wandamae next looked at Clark and in a softer voice continued, "Thank you for your help, General Grant. The President will be grateful to you. Someday soon you will command the Army of the Potomac."

Recovering quickly, Clark gave Wandamae a nervous smile, and she enigmatically smiled back.

One Year Later...

Wandamae had been living with her brother in an apartment for the past several months.

She was eating her breakfast while reading the *Daily Planet*. Opening it, she stared at the picture of Clark Kent and Ultra Woman on the front page. He was obviously bruised and battered. According to the article, Ultra Woman rescued him after he'd been mugged and kidnapped.

How awful!

Wandamae carefully read the article. Why was Ultra Woman suddenly in Metropolis? And where was Superman?

Could Ultra Woman have gotten her powers like Tad did last year? She still didn't know how he got them, and didn't want to know. She was just so very grateful he was back to being her Tad. When Resplendent Man was born a year ago, Superman was still as active as ever. Now he seemed to be working only part-time. And why didn't he rescue his friend Mr. Kent?

Wait a minute! That picture of Mr. Kent looked a lot like General Grant! He was the man who kept that nasty Brunnhilda from taking Wandamae away. Well, at least temporarily since that witch came back later. At the time she thought General Grant might be Superman in disguise, or the other way around. So was he also Mr. Kent?

Her head was spinning at the possibilities.

She looked closely at his slumped shoulders and realized he looked so defeated. Could he be injured and upset, focusing on what he can't do?

Of course he could! Isn't that what Tad always did?

Tad told her how scary it was for that awful Gretchen Kelly to find out who he was because she wanted his powers. And then she kidnapped Wandamae, using her as leverage to take Resplendent Man's powers. And almost killed her with that bomb wired to the cell door. Was Mr. Kent kidnapped and hurt as bait for the superheroes?

And if Superman really was General Grant or Mr. Kent or both, how was he hurt? This must mean he really lost all or some of his powers! No wonder Superman failed to help Mr. Kent. He couldn't!

Did he live in fear someone would expose him? Like her after what happened when she met him last year. Oh my! She didn't want anyone to fear her! She would never tell! And who would believe her anyway? She was obviously delusional at the time, and thought it was General Grant she saw. She never even told Tad, and he knew all of her secrets. But this one was HUGE and not hers to tell.

She wished there was something she could do to help him feel better.

Wandamae remembered that when she was sick, she learned how much a kindness meant. She decided it was past time she returned Mr. Kent's kindness. And he sure looked like he could use some encouragement and kind words. So, how could she let him know exactly how much he helped her and others at Happy Hollow Rest Home without adding to his troubles?

Her gaze drifted to the letter her lawyer had reviewed and the package on her desk. They were waiting for her to send a note of explanation. Yes, that would be the perfect way to send him some encouragement and at least partially repay her debt to him. And maybe she could reassure him he had nothing to fear from her without revealing any secrets.

So she got out her pen and paper, and wrote a letter.

An hour later, she finished it. Then she read it over and felt satisfied. She put it in an envelope, marked it "Personal" and "Read Me First," then placed it in the package.

She'd send it today.

Three days later...

Clark exited the elevator into the newsroom with a spring in his step.

This past week went from bad to worse to wonderful. Initially

he felt useless after losing his powers to Lois. Then he was mugged and kidnapped as Clark, escaped, and Superman fought the Newtrich sisters without his powers. Ultra Woman saved him, using Dr. Klein's red kryptonite laser to restore his powers. Two nights ago the week turned around after Lois proposed. Of course Clark accepted, after gently teasing her with his response.

Now he felt like he was walking on air, and had to keep checking to be sure his feet were firmly on the ground. Armed with coffee and pastries for Lois and himself, he started towards her desk. And was stopped by Jimmy.

"Hey, CK, there's a courier with a package for you at your desk. Only you can sign for it. It's marked 'Private and Personal.'"

"Thanks Jimmy," Clark said as he dropped Lois's breakfast on her desk, and then headed for the courier at his desk.

Clark greeted the courier and signed for the package. He looked at it and saw it was from "W. Waldecker." Looking around and seeing no one observing him, he lowered his glasses to secretly scan it. Seeing no danger, he opened it. On top was a manila envelope labeled, "Open Me First" and "Personal."

After opening it, he smiled as he read through the letter quickly, then looked thoughtful as he read it again twice at human speed, savoring its content.

Lois arrived and asked what was in the package. He handed her the letter, saying, "See what you think."

Lois read...

Dear Mr. Kent,

Do you remember me? My name is name is Wandamae Waldecker, and my brother is William Wallace Webster Waldecker, whom I've called "Tad" as long as I can remember.

I hope you will not think me too forward to write you. I'm writing this letter to explain what is in this package, and why.

First of all, I want to tell you that I am deeply grateful for what you did for me, although I suspect you don't know what you did. I guess the best place to start is at the beginning.

Last year around the time when Resplendent Man appeared, I was introduced to you as Mrs. Lincoln. For many years I thought I was Mrs. Abe Lincoln. We met briefly at the Happy Hollow Rest Home, and I must admit that my memories of our encounter are confused.

No one has ever asked me about it, and I don't talk much about my delusions. If they did ask me, I honestly would say that I don't have a clear memory of our talk. I thought at the time I was Mrs. Abe Lincoln, able to talk to both President Lincoln and General Grant, for Pete's sake! Of course I know now that the President Lincoln I spoke to was a portrait, and I suspect General Grant was all in my imagination.

I shudder to think what you thought, although in your line of work I suppose you meet all kinds of people. I remember General Grant rescued me from a nasty nurse named Brunhilda. But that's impossible, isn't it? After all, General Grant has been dead a very long time.

As I said, my memory of that time is confused. You wouldn't believe some of the things I thought I saw when I was ill!

What stands out in my mind is how kind and patient you and Ms. Lane were to a crazy lady who thought she was someone else. Most people quickly became frustrated with my delusions, but not you. Yes, I sometimes knew how annoyed and upset they were, but in my illness was unable to change my behavior. Thank you for your patience.

Anyway, back to my explanation.

In this box you will find a Letter to the Editor that my lawyer read and vetted. It explains in detail how your article on corruption and incompetence in nursing and rest homes in the Metropolis area saved my life and those of some other residents of the rest home. I hope your editor will consider publishing it as my way of saying thank you.

And congratulations on your Kerth Award for that article!

You see, after Ms. Lane, Resplendent Man and Superman rescued me from that awful Gretchen Kelly, there was a thorough investigation of how she got into the rest home, masqueraded as a nurse and kidnapped me without any of the staff noticing anything! Did you know they weren't even aware I was gone until I returned hours later?

Because of your article, the Board of Directors hired an outside agency to investigate. Their investigation was very thorough. Believe me, they went over everything with fine-toothed combs! The administrator and several others resigned in disgrace.

There have been many changes at Happy Hollow, and there was even a settlement I cannot discuss. My lawyer Constance Hunter made sure my explanation of what happened in my Letter to the Editor was not part of a gag order and that my letter doesn't hurt anyone. You, your editor, the Daily Planet's attorneys or all of you can contact her for verification.

The investigators discovered that some patients including me were receiving the wrong medications!

My medication was changed, and within a few weeks I was Wandamae once more. I no longer believe I live in the 1860s as the First Lady, although I have written a romance novel about a politician and his wife who live in the mid-1800s. It's being published and my publisher wants a sequel and maybe a series! Can you imagine? Me, a published author! It's a dream come true.

Tad and I now share an apartment. I left the rest home several months ago, and am able to do so many things I couldn't for so long. I have my life as Wandamae back. It's wonderful, and I owe it all to you.

So you see, you, Mr. Kent—not Superman or any other superhero—gave me back my life. And for that I will be forever grateful! Thank you seems so inadequate, yet it's all I can think of to say.

My book is dedicated to Tad, to Ms. Lane and to you: the three Real Life Heroes who saved me. Tad stood by me when I was lost, living in the past as someone else.

Despite seemingly hopeless odds, Ms. Lane didn't give up. She cleverly discovered the combination to unlock our cell, defusing the bomb before it exploded.

And you... you unlocked the prison my mind was in and set the real me, Wandamae, free. Your article set in motion the investigation, subsequent correction of my medication and my recovery. Without your article, I am sure I would still be lost inside Mrs. Lincoln.

I'm still on medication. And I will stay on it as long as the doctors think I need it, even if it's the rest of my life.

Thank you again. You know, I can't say that enough.

Do you even know how many people you helped? There are at least a dozen others at Happy Hollow Rest Home who have been released after their medications were corrected. And more whose lives your article improved. I often wonder how many other people in other rest and nursing homes you also saved?

Maybe that would make a good follow-up article? If you write that article, I would read it.

Who am I kidding? I read all your and Ms. Lane's articles! At least since my mind cleared.

I also want to share my happy news. My publisher expects my novel to be a bestseller! Maybe he says that to all his new writers, I don't know. Soon Tad will accompany me on my book tour, and our first stop will be Metropolis. I would love to meet you and Ms. Lane again, although I know book reviews are not part of your usual beat. Is "beat" the right term? And I suppose neither one of you would find romances interesting or serious enough to read. Maybe you'll make an exception for my book?

Perhaps Tad and I could take you and Ms. Lane to lunch? If

that's not a conflict of interest; you know more about that than I do.

Also in this package are two signed first editions of my book: one for you and one for Ms. Lane. My publicist sent a preview copy to the Daily Planet's book editor:

If there is ever anything I can do for you, please contact me. No matter how large or small. I owe you so much. I'm also including my contact information in this package.

I hope you and Ms. Lane consider Tad and me among your friends.

With deepest gratitude forever,

Wandamae

While Lois read the letter, Clark looked through the rest of the package. He found an envelope marked "To the Editor" and two signed copies of Wandamae's novel.

Lois finished reading and turned to Clark saying, "Wow! Clark, did you have idea what your article did?"

"No, Lois. It was news to me."

"What's that about her and our conversation at the Happy Hollow Rest Home?"

Clark looked sheepish, looked around, and when he saw no one was paying any attention, he whispered, "She saw me give Gretchen a hot foot. And I think this is her way of saying The Secret is safe."

Lois grinned and whispered, "A hot foot? You did that? You're going to have to tell me all the times you've done something like that. Not now, but when we're alone. Gretchen was a witch, and if anyone deserved a hot foot she did. And I think you're right about The Secret, but it wouldn't hurt to subtly be sure when we talk to her in person. So what do you think about Wandamae's thanks?"

He smiled and said, "You know, Lois, I did that investigation as Clark without using any super help. Especially this week, after being ordinary, it's nice to be reminded that just ordinary Clark can still make a difference and change things."

Lois replied, "Clark, you are never ordinary! You make a difference all the time with your words! Never doubt your impact as a writer! You've done that as long as I've known you. And this may be the best PR the *Planet* has had in years! A potential bestselling author credits one of its top reporters with saving her life. Well, actually both top reporters if you count me unlocking that cell. And how about all those other lives your article saved? Don't ever forget how important you are! If you do, I'll be happy to remind you! Come on partner, let's see what Perry thinks about it."

Once again Clark was amazed at how Lois spoke whole paragraphs without a breath. Maybe that was one of her superpowers. And her support warmed his heart.

Clark touched her arm and said, "Wait. Before we go in there, I want to know how you feel about Wandamae. Do you want to talk to her at all?"

"What do you mean?"

"Well, she's completed a novel. Does that upset you? I know you started at least one, and I just think we should decide how we want to handle this before approaching Perry."

"Oh." Lois stopped, took a deep breath and then looked thoughtfully at her ring.

After several moments, she responded. "Okay. You know I'm not always one to check the water level. In this case, I agree with you; we should be together on this. So here's what I think. I'm engaged to the man I love and have a career I love. And I'm so happy I'm not sure there's any room for bitterness or resentment. Maybe last week I would have been upset or hurt, feeling like I failed to finish my novels. And maybe next week I'll feel differently. But I know now they were mostly therapy for the pain and loneliness in my life. The truth is it's possible no one else will ever read them. And I'm okay with that. This week though,

after Ultra Woman saw enough pain and suffering to last a lifetime, it's different. I can't begrudge Wandamae her success. Now if she were up for a Pulitzer in investigative journalism, I might feel differently..." Lois grinned and Clark chuckled.

She then quietly continued, "As long as I have you. And together we can handle Wandamae... or anyone else."

"You do. My love for you is forever."

With tears in her eyes, Lois gave him a quick kiss and said, "And I love you forever."

After a moment she asked, "Are **you** okay with talking to Wandamae?"

"Yes, but I'd like to do it in a private place rather than a crowded restaurant. I just don't know how she'll react with her previous illness, and think a private setting is safer. I wouldn't want her to make a scene in a public place. Maybe I could cook lunch or dinner at one of our apartments?"

"My apartment. Her brother has been there, and there's nothing to hide except my novel and notes. And I won't give them access to my laptop."

Smiling, Clark replied, "Sounds like a good plan, Lois."

Lois then turned towards Perry's office.

Clark folded Wandamae's letter to him and put it securely in his inside jacket pocket. Then he picked up the letter to the editor, one of Wandamae's books and followed Lois.

THE END