

Prayers Answered

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Summary: One baby boy in a spaceship, years of tear-filled prayers answered.

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A companion piece to "[Earth's Calling](#)."

I must be dreaming.
This can't be real.

A few weeks have passed, and I still can't believe that this is happening. That you are here. That you are mine. *Ours*.

And I have to wonder, of all the people on this Earth, why me? Why us?

It's said that God answers our prayers in ways that we least expect. But this...this is almost ridiculous, what with the unconventional, unexpected, unheard of circumstances. I'm almost too afraid to hope that the Lord sent this precious, tiny little angel to me. I'm still so scared that someone will come knocking on my door, looking for the infant in the rocket ship, telling me that he is theirs, not mine. I'm terrified to have my arms empty again. I don't think I could survive that.

It's already happened once, when those men in suits came around town, asking pointed questions about the supposed meteor that crashed to the ground one warm May evening. Instinct and fear drove our thoughts as we lied and said that we knew nothing about it. Terror helped us to hide you away from them and kept us holed up in our farmhouse until we knew for certain that they had left Smallville.

We could not lose you.

Everything else, all of the other heartaches, would pale in comparison to having you taken away from us. The day I was told that I could never carry a child of my own in my broken, useless womb was one of the worst days of my life. I took it hard and grieved the death of my greatest dream — to be a mother. Even as a child, I can remember playing with dolls that my mother made for me out of the softest materials she could find and afford. I always had a small tribe of babies that I acted as mother to, looking forward to the day when I would find out that I was pregnant, envisioning a house full of laughing, adorable children. To have that dream ripped away from me...I'm not sure that words can describe how hollow, defeated, and bereaved I was. I grieved for Jonathan's loss as well, and for a long time, I was weighed down with such guilt that I could never make him a father.

Adoption wasn't something Jonathan and I needed to even bother considering, once we were able to move past the idea of having our own, biological children. We both knew that we wanted children, a family. There was no need to weigh the pros and cons, to carefully take all of the what-ifs into our thoughts. We knew we would love a child, no matter how he or she came into our lives. It didn't matter if a baby grew inside of me or shared our genetics. Money was no object. We would find a way

to pay the adoption fees, even if we had to sell everything we owned.

And then, just like that, that dream was torn to shreds as well, and we were forced to look into a childless future.

Never in our lives did we imagine that a streak of light in the sky, and a crashed capsule in a mound of torn up dirt in the middle of a field, would bring us a son, carefully nestled inside with no explanation of how he came into our lives.

Never in our lives, did we imagine *you*, my little Clark.

It still seems surreal, that after years of tear-filled prayers and fervent pleading to God, that you are here, asleep in my arms as I rock you into the night. You've been with us only a few short weeks, and your adoption is all but finalized, but I still can't shake the awe I have for you, and the fear that I might somehow lose you, especially after those men in uniforms came sniffing about just after your spectacular entrance into our lives. I look at you and I can't tear my eyes from your perfect face — those bright, intelligent eyes, that adorable button nose, that slightly crooked, but guileless smile, which never fails to light up your entire face. I cannot stop myself from examining your little fingers and tiny toes. I all but cry with joy when you laugh.

I used to feel inadequate as a woman, when I was waiting and wondering and grieving the death of my family dreams. I used to feel as though I'd done something wrong, something that the Lord was punishing me for, though I couldn't, for the life of me, figure out what it was. There were nights — so many nights — when I would cry myself to sleep, wondering how my own salty tears, spilling like an ocean, didn't drown me. I used to wonder how the heartbreak didn't kill me. I used to question why I was even on this planet, if I couldn't be a mother — to me, the most important job in all the world.

But now, here you are. And though the pain is not forgotten — I doubt I'll ever shed the scars I bear inside from that time — it has faded so far into the background that it seems like a distant memory from childhood, rather than the nightmare of my life as recent as just a few weeks ago. Looking at you, it's hard to remember what that time of my life was like, when tears exhausted me instead of middle of the night demands for food and dry diapers. I feel like, for the first time in a long time, that my laughter is real once more, for the light you've brought into my life.

You are the answer to every prayer I've prayed.

And I wonder — how? How have Jonathan and I become so lucky? Why did your ship land practically at our feet? Were you truly meant for us? Was it random chance?

Who was it that bundled you up in that capsule? It's obvious to me that you were placed inside with great care and love. There were blankets to keep you warm, tubes that I can only assume delivered nourishment to you, even a small stuffed toy to keep you company. Even the ship itself screams to me of purpose and love and security. Granted, I don't know much about space craft, either of this world or any other world. But it seems to my untrained eye to have been built especially for you. It was just your size. And it was certainly built to last, to keep you safe, to afford you what comfort it could.

Did your birth parents put you inside? If so, why? What could make a parent — any parent — give up their child? Were they forced to? Were they afraid of something? Their love is clear in the way that you were bundled inside the craft, that's all I know. It must have torn them apart, having to place you inside. I can't even imagine how much that had to have hurt them.

All I can do is to offer a silent promise not to fail them as I love you and care for you — from the moment I first saw your tiny face until my last breath. I will defend you from the harsh cruelties of this world. I will raise you up to be a man that they can be proud of, even if they themselves aren't able to see it, even if they *can* see it but aren't aware of it because they don't know

that you are theirs by blood.

Because, Clark, the simple truth is this — you *are* my son. It isn't blood that makes the family. It's the love.

And believe me, baby boy, you'll have more love than you'll know what to do with. I don't care what your origins are — extraterrestrial or some Earthly, human experiment. It doesn't matter to me how you came into our lives — had you grown inside of me, or had you been handed over by an adoption agency, or had you crashed landed in a field after streaking across the night sky in a brilliant ball of flame. The fact is, you needed Jonathan and me. But even more so, I think, we needed *you*. You've brought more joy into our lives in the last weeks than I feel like we've known since we started trying to create our family.

You are a special boy. You didn't grow beneath my heart, in my womb. You grew *within* my heart, and with each prayer I sent up to the heavens, you came closer and closer to coming into our lives as an answer to those same prayers, those same sobbing pleas.

And yet, part of me feels shame in taking such unadulterated bliss in having you in my arms. For you to be here, to be my son, it means that your biological parents had to lose you — by choice or by force. I don't even want to imagine their pain and sorrow over losing such a perfect little boy. What must it be like, to be a mother, parted from her child? What kind of anguish must it be, to know that you'll never hold the child of your own flesh and blood again? To never see him grow into a man? To be forever in the dark as to how he's being raised? To only take solace in the *hope* that your child has found a loving home?

It hurts my heart to consider these questions.

But then, I look at you, and I know that your arrival into our lives was something preordained in the heavens. No one could love you more. No one could appreciate you more. No one could be more humbled to be your mother.

I'm not a perfect mother. I know that. I've already made mistakes. Forgetting, for a moment, to give you your stuffed animal when you go to sleep. Making a bath too cool for your liking, only because I feared to make it too hot and cause you discomfort. Making your bottle a little too warm, frantically trying to cool it down before you could drink it. Sneezing too loudly too soon after you finally nodded off to sleep, instantly waking you up and scaring you in the process.

But, we'll learn together, my precious miracle child. We'll both grow and learn together, side by side. I know that I look forward to it — every giggle, every smile, every bruise or skinned knee, every tearful awakening from a nightmare. Not that I want you to experience discomfort in your life, but I know, even with my vigilance, that I cannot protect you from every hurt the world can throw at you. I will embrace every tantrum and count myself lucky to be able to experience it.

Thank you, Clark, for letting me be your mother.

And thank you, whoever birthed this perfect boy and sent him into my life. You've given me the greatest gift of all, and I will forever be in your debt.

You've made the answers to my prayers possible.

My boy.

My son.

My little Clark.

You're too small and young to know it, but you've fixed all the broken things inside me.

I used to pray at night for the good Lord to grant Martha the desires of her heart — to send her a child, because I knew how badly her heart bled for a baby to love. Although I also wished for a child to call my own, I never prayed for my own sorrows to be lifted away. I dared not. My inner hurt, my desire to be a father was *nothing* compared to the anguish I felt in watching your

mother suffer, longing for a son or daughter.

I didn't want to believe it at first, when we were told, in no uncertain terms, that Martha would never conceive a child. I wanted the doctor to be wrong. Teenagers in the back of their father's truck can make babies, surely we could too. The two of us — a happily married, loving couple who were more than ready to add a child to our family — could not fail in this, the most basic of bodily functions. We just needed more time, I kept telling myself, especially in the beginning. And then time came and went and we were still childless.

I felt powerless. I felt useless. I felt unworthy to be Martha's husband. Though the fertility problems were neither all mine nor all hers, I felt as though if she'd married someone else, she could have been a mother. Irrational, yes, but I couldn't help but lay awake at night, wondering how she could even stand to be married to me. I felt responsible for the grief she carried. And it killed me inside that I could do nothing to ease the pain she bore. That I had no power to grant her greatest wish.

We decided that adoption was what the Lord wanted us to pursue. "When God closes a door, He opens a window." That's what we'd always been told. So, while we could never have a child born of our mixed biology, adoption felt like that open window into creating our family. We didn't just accept that adoption would be our road to having a child, we *embraced* it. Whole-heartedly. Without reservation.

And then that window was slammed closed on us too.

I've rarely seen your mother so devastated. Our last hope was gone forever — ash sifting through our trembling fingers. Our future — our *childless* future — looked bleak. Even your mother, the eternally dogged optimist, was beaten down — shriveled down into herself as she tried to come to terms with the cards we'd been dealt in life.

And then, a miracle.

You.

Nothing was out of the ordinary that night. We were going home from meeting up with friends in town for dinner at one of our favorite places. It had been hard on Martha in some ways. Greg and Alice, as we found out that night, were expecting their third child. Oh, they were gentle when they told us — they had to, as Alice was starting to show — and we were both genuinely happy for them. But it hit us hard too, knowing that would never be us, knowing that all three of their children had been conceived after we had started trying. Martha was unusually quiet and reserved on our way back home, and I know she was trying to reconcile herself, again, to the childless future before us. I was just about to suggest that maybe we should get away from the farm for a vacation during the summer — something not too elaborate of course, since we'd just come through a less-than-stellar year for crops — when, suddenly, the night lit up as a fireball streaked overhead.

We thought it might have been a meteor.

We were wrong.

As we came up to the place where we'd seen it crash, we saw that it wasn't a space rock at all. It was a sleek metallic ship, inside of which we found a precious, smiling baby boy. You, Clark. You were there, looking up at us with no fear, no reservations, no shyness. Only a huge, welcoming smile and eyes sparkling with innocence and intelligence.

We were both instantly captivated by you. We both immediately loved you. But fear ruled us too. Fear that others might have seen your crash-landing out in that field. So, we didn't even discuss things. We simply acted. We took you and your ship and brought you home, our hearts hammering in our chest the entire time, barely speaking until we were safely back behind the locked doors of our home. Then, and only then, did we start to process what had happened that night.

A few days later, some men came sniffing around, asking

about the meteor crash, as it came to be accepted as being, but by then, we were on our way to adopting you, our official story being that you'd been left on our doorstep without so much as even a note. We knew we could never give you up. From the moment our eyes settled on you, we knew you'd been sent to answer years of our prayers. You alone could mend our broken hearts and trampled spirits.

And you *have*.

More than we ever could have imagined. Faster than we ever thought possible. More completely than we ever dared to pray for.

I've never seen Martha so happy before. She's absolutely *thriving* as your mother. There's a light in her eyes I've never seen before. Sometimes, I catch her looking at you, a smile in her eyes and tears streaming down her cheeks in awe and gratitude. She's scarcely even slept since your unexpected arrival. If she isn't up feeding you or rocking you to sleep, she's sitting there just watching you, even as you sleep, studying the delicate rise and fall of your chest as you breathe and the tiny movements of your body as you dream. Some nights, you've hardly even slept in the crib we bought for you, because she's held you against her chest in that old rocking chair for most of the night.

Just watching her alone, being so happy, would enough for me. But to have you here, to experience — finally — fatherhood...I can't even describe the pure bliss that has overtaken my life. I don't think I've ever laughed so much in my entire life as I have in the few short weeks since we found you in that field. And I've found that, suddenly, all of my priorities have changed. Dreams of an overabundant harvest, to make up for last year, have been shoved aside to daydreams about when we'll hear your first words, see your first steps. Finishing projects around the farm and house can wait. It's more important for me to spend those precious moments with you, delighting in your smile and laugh.

You are our greatest treasure, my son. We are rich for having you in our lives.

But I wonder. Who was it that put you in that rocket? Why did they do it? Who are you, by blood? Where do you come from? Are you some Russian experiment? Or do you hail from someplace among the stars? Are you an angel in disguise, sent by God to heal our souls? Will we ever know for sure?

Who gave birth to you? Are they alive? Are there more children out there, somewhere, with similar origins and ships who've crashed to the Earth? Did luck cause us to find you? Or were you deliberately sent to us specifically? If so, why us? Not that I'm ungrateful, but out of all of the couples out there who'd love a child, how did it happen that we were chosen to be your parents?

I know it doesn't do much good to speculate and wonder. We'll never get the answers to even a fraction of the questions we have, if I had to guess. In a way though, it doesn't really matter. Whatever your story is, however it came to be that we found one another, it doesn't make a difference. You are our son. Maybe not by blood, but by love alone, you are ours. A Kent for life. Our precious Clark.

I still can't believe it. It still feels unreal in some ways. One moment we were feeling sorry for ourselves and the next...we were parents. There was never any question in our minds that you belonged to us. Oh, we had fears — still do, to be honest — that someone would take you away from us. Or that we'll wake up and find that this whole thing has been a dream — albeit a wonderful, marvelous dream. Or that some other unspeakable tragedy will befall us that will cause you to no longer be ours.

That fear — that unnamable, indescribable fear — hurts. It shoves cold daggers into our hearts and squeezes our chests until it's all but impossible to breathe. It paralyzes us and numbs our tongues into muteness. It makes us treasure each moment with

you even more than the one before it.

My son.

Who are you, really? What was the name given to you at birth? What is your heritage? Does it even matter anymore? You are Clark Kent, son of Jonathan and Martha Kent, two simple, grateful farmers. *That's* what matters. That and who you will become. A doctor, a lawyer, a school teacher, a farmer, an engineer. The world is open to you. Whatever you choose to do, your mother and I will support you. In the meantime, however, we will guide you and nurture you and help you to grow into a respectable man. We will raise you to be kind hearted and compassionate, someone who helps those in need, someone to be trusted on the deepest of levels. I don't have to know your parents to know that they would be pleased by that. Any parent would want their son or daughter to be raised to be the kindest, best person they can possibly be. Yes, I think they would be happy that Martha and I found you.

In the meantime, you have your whole childhood before you. I can scarcely wait to watch you grow and learn. I'm already imagining the lazy summer days spent swimming down at the old quarry, playing ball out in the yard, even checking over your homework once you are of school age. I can't wait until you can follow me into the fields and I can share my passion with you — showing you all the growing things and how to care for them. Covered from head to toe in the rich soil of our land, I'll beam with pride as I'll watch you learn, even if you decide that farming isn't the career you'll pursue.

For the longest time, I blamed myself for your mother's unhappiness at being childless. But you've changed all that. You've completed our family and mended the holes in our hearts. I don't know if I'll ever truly stop feeling like I let your mother down when we were trying to conceive a child. What I do know is this — I feel so incredibly blessed to have you for my son. You've healed the hurts that I bore and dried my tears — usually hidden to spare Martha further heartache. You've brought love and life into me again. You've replenished my very hope for the future and resurrected all my broken, discarded dreams.

You've made me a *father*.

I don't know how I can repay you for that, except to promise that you will never go without the things you need. Martha and I may not be rich, and there may be times when we'll have to scrimp and save, just to get by. But I swear to you, Clark, though you may not always have all of the unnecessary wants in life or the newest gadgets or toys, you'll never want for the things that you need — food, shelter, clothing, and love.

I wish I could reassure the parents who birthed you, in how well loved and cared for you are and always will be. But I am content to make these promises to you, Clark. Because you are the one who matters most to me. I will always be eternally grateful for the people who gave you up — for whatever reasons they might have had — but it is to you that I am the most indebted. You're the one who put my soul back together.

And I will dedicate my life to protecting you and loving you, as only a father can.

THE END