

# Last Name (Extended Version)

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Rated: PG-13/M

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Summary: This is a sequel to my story 'Birthday Surprise'. Martha Ellen Kent wakes up in a strange room in the arms of a strange man and three missing days unaccounted for.

Story Size: 27,006 words (148Kb as text)

*Author's Notes : The premise of this story isn't particularly new. The Fan Fiction universe is littered with similar plots. Part of the inspiration for this story comes from the similar stories 'Pheromone' and 'The Newlywed Game' by Nan Smith. (Both of which are very good and worth the read) The other half of the inspiration is from the song 'Last Name' by Carrie Underwood. The rest of the blame can be laid at the feet of my very warped muse who decided to kick in as the song was playing on the radio while I was driving home from work. With the exception of one small WHAM, This story is mostly WAFFy fluff.*

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## Surprise

Martha Ellen Kent, daughter of Clark Kent and Lois Lane, slowly forced her way out of the drowsy haze that had enveloped her. She spent a moment to enjoy the languor of contentment that seemed to have settled over her. Then she became aware that her pillow was warm and slowly moving up and down. It also had a clearly audible heartbeat. The next instant she became very aware that she was halfway wrapped around a distinctly warm body and there, most definitely, did not seem to be any clothing involved in this very intimate situation.

'Oh God, no, no, no!' She cried out in her mind as she felt a moment of blind paralyzing panic. She forced down the panic with the iron determination that she had inherited from her mother.

'What would Lois Lane do?' She asked herself. Keeping her eyes closed, she cast back through her hazy memory looking for anything to explain her apparent predicament. Her last clear memory was the post graduation party that she had attended with her two best friends, Roxanne and Janet.

She had no idea how she ended up here or who her companion might be. She had no serious boyfriends, (her family heritage made any possible romantic relationship too complicated), and she had gone to the party unescorted, with the exception of her two friends.

Being very careful not to make any sudden movements that might alert anyone to her state of consciousness, Martha listened for any sign of others in the room. There seemed to be only her and her unknown companion. An intermittent cool breeze passed over the bare skin of her back and shoulders and she could hear the sound of ocean surf. She cracked open one eye to see her hand resting on an impressive expanse of chest and abdomen. Just beyond that was a brightly colored sheet that currently only covered them both from the waist down.

She started to lift her hand and her attention was drawn to a bright flash and sparkle from her third finger, which resolved itself into an unfamiliar shiny gold band with a single small diamond. "Oh, no, what have I done!" She muttered softly as she lifted her head and turned it to see who her companion in this disaster might

be. The next instant she found herself looking at the very handsome face of a total stranger.

She felt the stranger's hand move on the bare skin of her back sending a shiver up her spine. She had to fight the almost overwhelming desire to fly away from here as fast as her super speed would allow.

The stranger frowned and groaned then his eyes blinked open and he stared blearily up at her a moment. Then he closed them again with another groan. Martha held her breath as he grimaced, took a deep breath, swallowed, groaned again, then opened his eyes for the second time. This time he managed to, almost, focus on her face and frowned, a hint of confusion in his still slightly unfocused eyes. He blinked again and his frown deepened then he closed his eyes and mumbled. "What the hell was I drinking last night?" He seemed to be addressing the universe in general rather than anyone in particular.

Martha felt like she was trapped, frozen in place, like one of those nightmares where she could see the approaching disaster but could not make her body follow her orders to move out of the way.

Her companion opened his eyes again. His eyes flicked downward and widened significantly, causing Martha to blush, then his gaze hastily returned to her face. His brows furrowed in confusion and uncertainty. "I, umm ... " He paused, closed his eyes, swallowed once then reopened his eyes. "I know this sounds pretty bad considering, our ... ahhhh ... current situation, but, ah, well ... " There was a long pause as he tried to find a delicate way to say it. "Who, are you?"

His face and voice seemed to trigger a memory; an image flashed through her mind of this same guy walking up to her with an exaggerated, slightly lopsided, grin on his face and she heard him addressing her with the most ludicrous pickup line <"Hey Cutie where ya from."> The memory drew a groan from her.

Martha's paralysis finally broke and she managed to regain control of her own body. She immediately grabbed the edge of the colorful sheet and pulled it up in a belated attempt to cover up while backing as far away from the stranger as the large bed would allow. "Who are **You**?" She inquired, frowning at him.

"Uh George ... my name is George." He started to sit up. The movement sent a sharp pain through his head and he dropped back down. He closed his eyes, rubbed his aching brow, and groaned. "My head feels like it's clamped in a vice."

Martha looked around at the room. Then her ears picked up the strains of Hawaiian music. A quick glance through the outer walls of the building confirmed her growing suspicion. "Oh God, how did you get me here?" She exclaimed.

She had been speaking more to herself but, apparently, he took it as a direct inquiry. After a second, he opened his eyes and glanced around then looked at her. "I'm not even sure where we are, much less how we got here." He rubbed the side of his head as hazy memories began to fade in and out of focus. "Don't you remember anything?"

Martha shook her head as another absurd image popped into her mind. "I have this image of several guys dressed as Elvis Presley ... and Elvis music playing in the background." She looked intently at George and for the first time noticed a simple gold band on the third finger of the hand that he was using to hold on to his side of the bed spread. She had a sudden dreadful suspicion about what had happened. "And you were there?"

George could feel the pounding in his head fading as more images began to take shape. "I ... I remember ... flying ..." His brows furrowed in puzzlement as one series of images among those chasing each other around in his head became clearer. "We were flying ... no ..." The look of confusion deepened as he looked back up at her. "**You** were flying and you were **carrying** me." He looked closer at her and his eyes got huge with surprise as the images in his mind got sharper. "You're **Supergirl** aren't you?"

A lump of lead seemed to form in her gut as her heart pounded with surprise and fear. For the first time, she became aware that she was not wearing her short dark wig as her long red hair caught her peripheral vision. How much did he know? Did he know her true name?

Another hazy memory forced its way to the surface of his mind repeating over and over. It was of her saying something to some indistinct person in a white fringed outfit. What he could make out sounded suspiciously like wedding vows. His eyes narrowed in thought for a second as her words started to become clear then he spoke. "Ellen ... Your name is ... Martha Ellen, aaahh, Kent. Your middle name is the same as my mother's name." He glanced down at the ring on his finger, apparently confirming his growing suspicions. He was about to say something about it then changed his mind. "Uh, my name is George Kennedy ... no relation to the actor." He looked into her face searching for clues to what she was thinking.

Martha felt the horror of a nightmare come true as dozens of terrifying scenarios raced through her mind at near super speed. *'He knows!'* She tried to open her mouth to deny it but she seemed to be unable to make herself speak. The nightmare just kept getting worse each time he opened his mouth.

As the panicked look on her face registered in his mind, a flash of fear crossed his face. "Oh, God, what have I done?" He glanced around as though looking for some avenue of escape then he looked back at Martha "I am so sorry for whatever I've done to you." He looked down at the bed. "Whatever it takes, I'll do anything to make this right."

After a moment, to get her fear under control, Martha responded. "I need to call father." She looked down at the bed sheet that was the only thing covering them both. "No, I think the first thing to do is to get dressed." She caught a whiff of something very indicative of their situation and shook her head. "Better yet showers then dress then housekeeping **then** I'll call Dad." She suspected that the time between a call home and the arrival of a very irate father in this room would be very short so they had better be ready when she made that call.

"Do you want the shower first?" George inquired timidly.

She glanced down again at the sheet that was currently the only thing covering them both then looked around to find that there was not a single article of clothing within reach of either of them. *'Damn.'* She knew that she could just use her super speed to vanish into the bathroom but considering the rate at which they both seemed to be regaining their memories it soon wouldn't make any difference what he saw. And it seemed a bit ludicrous to indulge in a fit of embarrassment now.

"Aw to hell with it!" She exclaimed as she tossed aside her half of the sheet, catching a glimpse of wide-open eyes in a surprised face, and made her way to the bathroom. She made a concerted effort to maintain what dignity she had left and not shift into super speed. She clearly heard his heart accelerate and, in the bathroom mirror, she saw that his eyes had locked in low on her back like a homing beacon. Then he noticed her looking back at him through the mirror and looked down while blushing bright red all the way down to the bed sheet.

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Martha turned on the hot water as high as it would go then tried vainly to wash away the feeling of embarrassment that seemed to pervade her mind along with the smell of sex. All she could think about is how badly she had messed up. From her very first appearance as Supergirl, it seemed like she was plagued by unintentional scandal.

She thought back to that first appearance a little over two years ago. A news bulletin had popped up on the radio about a vacation cruise ship that had been damaged by an explosion, and was rapidly sinking in the cold water five miles off the coast of Alaska. The bulletin also stated that the explosion had caused a

fire on one side of the ship destroying half of the lifeboats before the crew had managed to put it out. The nearest real aid was eight hours away, making it more than six hours too late.

Dad and Jon were both dealing with a volcano eruption in South America and probably had no idea what was happening in Alaska. Time was short and Martha realized that if those people were to have any chance it would be up to her to save them. She was only eighteen and still a senior in high school. She had not really planned to jump into the family hobby this soon so she had not yet come up with a costume. Just after her brother had introduced the world to Superboy she had started wearing short dark wigs over natural red hair in preparation for Supergirl's eventual debut (hopefully after she finished junior college). In a sudden panic, she had quickly rifled through her closet and dresser trying to come up with some kind of last minute costume.

Supergirl showed up at the location of the crippled cruise ship ten minutes later in a common Superman t-shirt, a blue and yellow cheerleader skirt from an old Halloween costume and red shorts. She wore no shoes since nothing she had would have survived emersion in the ocean. She floated above the ship, her long red hair blown back by the cold breeze, and scanned the ship with her x-ray vision to assess the extent of the damage. She quickly located the ragged hole well below the waterline. With time and lifeboats both in short supply, her only viable option was to stop the ship from sinking until help could arrive.

The obvious solution was to lift the ship out of the water and fly it to the nearest port. However, the ship was so large that she didn't think she could lift it completely out of the water without it breaking in half. Her father or possibly her brother could have done it, but her aura was not yet strong enough to completely envelop something this massive. However, she thought that she might be able to lift it just enough to get the damaged area above the surface.

She dived into the water and centered herself under the hull then lifted until the hole was just barely above water level. She held the ship there until most of the water had drained out of the hull. She then set it back down and quickly bent the torn edges of the hole back into place and used her heat vision to weld the seams together before too much water could flow back in.

She had been proud of her handiwork as she inspected it to be sure it would hold. She broke the surface and checked to make sure that everyone aboard the ship was safe. She reveled for a moment in the realization that she had saved the cruise ship. Then she moved to the stern of the ship near the water level and began pushing the disabled ship toward the nearest port. Even at the speed that she had been able to push it, which was much faster than the ship could normally travel, it took nearly two and a half hours before she reached the small fleet of approaching rescue vessels.

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The one thing that Martha had not considered during this entire episode was the effect that getting wet would have on the t-shirt she had grabbed in her haste to get to the site of the developing disaster.

As she had risen out of the water, after patching the hole, somebody had managed to get four pictures of her in that soaking wet t-shirt that was clinging to her body like semi transparent paint. Two days later those pictures showed up on the internet.

She had been mortified when her mother had brought them to her attention. They proliferated so fast that it was impossible to eliminate them. As soon as the Superman Foundation eliminated the images from one site, they would pop up somewhere else. Those pictures fueled the fantasies of just about every young male on the planet as well as providing plenty of fodder for half of the world's comedians. Several uptight groups took every opportunity to, very publicly, lambast her while pushing their own agendas at her expense.

Two months later Grandmother Kent had finished a brand new

suit for her made of that special fabric that Jonathan's wife's father had manufactured for the family of Superman. But the damage had already been done.

Martha leaned her head against the wall of the shower. Why her? Why did it always have to be her that screwed up so spectacularly? If word of this latest disaster ever got out the whole family would die of embarrassment and the world would blame her for the downfall of the 'Super dynasty'.

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George sat there on the bed stunned for several seconds after the beautiful (naked) Supergirl disappeared into the bathroom. He suspected that the sight would haunt his dreams for the rest of his life. Then he thought about who her father was and wondered just how long that life would be.

Finally, he got out of bed and located his clothes. When he lifted his shirt from the chair, something fluttered to the floor. His first impression was a piece of paper with a lot of fancy printing on it. He picked it up to examine it. It was a marriage certificate for George Hubert Kennedy and Martha Ellen Kent in the state of Nevada at the Church of Blue Suede Deliverance. He groaned shaking his head. How much worse could this possibly get? \*A tacky 'Elvis' wedding in Las Vegas?\*

The date on the marriage certificate was the same day that his Fraternity brother ('*May he fry in the seventh level of hell*'), had dragged him to that damn party to celebrate his brand new Journalism degree. He glanced at the wall clock that also displayed the date. Three days! It had been three days and two nights since that double damned party. They appeared to have been married for more than forty hours. That, combined with their state of undress this morning, pretty much eliminated the possibility of a simple annulment.

He reread the document more carefully. He sighed. At least they had not listed her as Supergirl. That was one major disaster averted. The media would have had a field day with that. He realized that the biggest story of the century had just fallen into his lap and it could make his career ... but he also knew that there was no way he would ever write that story. That thought reminded him of her last name. There was a moment when he wondered if she was any relation to the famous reporting team of Lois and Clark. He dismissed that idea as being too ludicrous to contemplate. Even his luck couldn't be that spectacularly bad.

He held up his left hand and contemplated the plain gold ring that resided there. The image of the two of them standing before an Elvis impersonator in a glittering white outfit and giggling at each other passed through his mind and he groaned. When she remembered that image, she would surely kill him if her father hadn't already put him out of his misery.

After he quickly got dressed, he tried to straighten up the room and make up the bed. Next, he picked up her clothes and laid them out, relatively neatly, on the bed. By now, isolated memories of a sex-crazed evening were coming back at an increasing rate causing him to blush almost continually as he continued to straighten up the room.

While checking out the room he located a short dark haired wig and a pair of glasses in one of the night stands. That brought up images of a very pretty, dark haired girl in the middle of a group of dancing teenagers. A quick glance through the glasses showed that they did not function for vision correction. After a pause, to contemplate the new images, he returned to his search of the room and found her Supergirl costume under the bed. The memories that the suit raised made him pause and take a deep breath as he glanced over at the door to the bathroom. He was in **sooo** much trouble.

Then a rebellious part of his mind jumped in. '*But it was soooo worth it, even if Superman squashed him like a bug.*'

He caressed the unusual fabric of the suit a moment. Images of helping her remove the suit one piece at a time filtered through his

mind making him feel distinctly warm. As he stood there holding the suit, memories of hot wild sex pervaded his mind then, little by little, they were interspersed with images of quiet gentle lovemaking. He shook himself out of his overheated daze and carefully folded the suit then looked for a good place to hide it from any prying eyes.

He checked the drawers and discovered both of their cell phones. Both phones appeared to be dead.

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As she let the hot water sluice over her body Martha was hit by multiple images of rather uninhibited sex. Her skin tingled with the sensory echoes from the fragmented images that weaved their way through her mind. In one, she was wearing nothing but the cape and floating a couple of feet above the bed as they engaged in their very energetic sexual activity. Soon she was blushing all the way down to her toes. Her breathing increased and her heart was beating a fast tempo as she could feel herself getting very hot in reaction to that memory.

She dropped her head into her hands. "No! No! No!" This was so bad. She could just imagine the kinds of things that guy would be telling his friends after they got back to Metropolis. She, momentarily, contemplated dropping him in the middle of the Pacific and hoping nobody missed him. She quickly squashed that idea along with the idea of marooning him on a deserted island.

More images of sexual escapades flashed through her mind. She shifted the water temperature to maximum cold.

It didn't help.

Then other memories surfaced. In these new ones, he had been so tender, so considerate, as he gently roused her to a fever pitch until he finally drove her over the edge. More such memories of gentle lovemaking followed, arousing her even more than she already was. Then as the memories rushed in, she realized something. Yesterday and last night had been about much more than wild hot sex. They had been making love!

As the memories rushed in, her emotions continued to vary wildly and her mind began to shift gears from 'How do I get out of this?' to 'How do I salvage what happened between us?' The realization of how her thoughts were shifting hit her like a ton of bricks. Did she really want to have anything to do with this stranger? This was ridiculous. She did not even know this guy. She shook her head in an effort to banish those disquieting thoughts from her mind.

What was she going to do?

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Seemingly out of nowhere as he held the folded super suit and contemplated the two dead cell phones George remembered seeing a Hawaiian clothing store in the hotel lobby. He looked over at her clothes laid out on the bed, then glanced down at the condition of his own cloths and made a quick decision.

Well, there was at least one way that he might get a start at making up for what he had done. He set the folded Supergirl suit in the drawer and covered it with the wig. He set the two cell phones and the glasses on top of the dresser. He quickly checked out the sizes of her clothes then grabbed his wallet and went out of the room heading to the elevators.

George rode the elevator down to the lobby as memories of last night continued rushing through his mind at an increasing rate. As the elevator doors opened, he again fought to regain control of his overworked libido. He headed across the lobby to the shop he had remembered seeing.

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### Decisions

Finally realizing that she couldn't hide in the shower forever Martha got out and dried off then wrapped one of the oversized towels around herself and opened the bathroom door.

She paused in surprise to find herself face to face with the boy she had gotten herself into so much trouble with. He had one hand

raised to knock on the door and in his other hand was a bundle of brightly colored clothing.

George extended the bundle toward her. "I thought you might want some fresh clothes to change into."

She took the bundle giving him a little half smile for his thoughtfulness. "Thanks. The bathroom is yours."

He pointed to the dresser. "Both of the cell phones are dead. I put your suit and your wig in the top right drawer. I also got a charger. It's in that bag on top of the dresser next to the phones." He picked up a second colorful bundle and headed into the bathroom.

Martha stared at the closed bathroom door for several seconds. She shook herself and turned to face the room. The balcony door was wide open and she could smell the fresh ocean breeze coming from the open door. It was obvious that the boy had made a less than perfect attempt to straighten up the room and the bed. She could at least give points for the effort.

She quickly changed into the new clothes. They turned out to be a perfect fit. She almost laughed because the most prominent colors were blue and red with yellow accents.

She then grabbed her cell phone and plugged in the new charger. *'It's going take a few minutes before the phone is charged enough to make a call.'* She thought to herself.

For just a moment she considered zipping home and leaving George here to find his own way home, then rejected that thought. She could no more abandon him here than she could dump him in the middle of the ocean. She sighed and shook her head. When had she started thinking of him as 'George' rather than as 'that boy'? She looked down at her carefully folded suit then looked at her reflection in the mirror. The clothes he had picked out for her didn't look half-bad. Then she glanced at the made-up bed. For a stranger with a really bad pick-up line he was turning out to be very nice and considerate.

She folded both of their dirty clothes and placed them in the drawer on top of her uniform then placed her wig on top of that. She once again firmly put away the desire to run away from George. They got themselves into this mess together and she wasn't going to abandon him now. Whatever happened they would see it through together. Besides, she might have to be here to protect the poor lunkhead from the wrath of her parents, especially her mom. Dad always tried to be calm and reasonable but Mom was a lot more ... excitable.

Now that she had settled her mind on that question, she turned her attention back to that recalcitrant phone. "This thing seems to be taking forever to charge." She sighed over the still unresponsive device and her attention shifted to the bed that definitely still smelled of sex despite the efforts of the morning sea breeze. "This will never do. Even Mom will be able to smell that." She mumbled under her breath.

She looked through the wall into the hallway and spotted the maid's service cart at the far end of the hall. She watched the maid enter a room carrying a load of sheets and towels then shifted into super speed. Two seconds later their bed was remade up with fresh, clean sheets. The only clue to her activity was the still swirling air left behind by her swift passage.

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George took a quick shower and put on the new clothes that he had purchased for himself. By the time he stepped out she was already dressed and sitting on the bed fuming at her still unresponsive cell phone. He wasn't sure what, but he was sure there was something different about the room. After a couple of seconds trying to figure it out, he shrugged and gave up. He noticed her frustrated look then came over and after a moment's hesitation sat down beside her. "Still charging?" At her nod he continued. "Why not use the hotel phone or just ...?" He shrugged. "fly home?"

She looked up at him a moment before responding. "Because

my cell is free and more secure ...?" She sighed. "And it wouldn't be right to just run off and abandon you here."

The cell phone beeped and several messages appeared on the screen. Martha scanned the text messages, wincing at a couple of them, then logged into the phone and dialed a number.

Apparently, the other party must have answered on the first ring. "Daddy it's me." She paused a moment, a determined frown appeared on her face. "I'm OK but I think I've gotten myself into a bit of a jam." She listened a few seconds and her frown relaxed a bit. "I'm in the honeymoon suite in the King Kameamea Hotel." She paused again to listen then glanced at George and sighed. "Yea, he's here with me ... his name is George." She shrugged after another pause. "My memory is ... fuzzy. Neither one of us knows what caused this to happen. Ahh, Daddy, I think we got married." She closed her eyes as she listened then responded. "OK, we'll be right here."

She turned off her phone then faced George. Suddenly she felt a bit shy. "Mom and Dad will be here soon." She noticed the very nervous look on his face. "Don't worry ... Dad said that he knows what caused this to happen and that we really weren't at fault."

George thought a moment then spoke. "What I don't understand is how this could happen to **you**." He shook his head. "I thought you were invulnerable. You can swallow bombs for god sake. How could anything affect you like this?"

She shook her head. "I don't know. I can't get drunk and I'm immune to poisons." She shrugged. "All I know is that Dad said that he knew what had happened and that he would explain it to us when he got here." She looked him in the eye. "Dad asked me if I remembered leaving the party with a boy. That's when I told him that you were here with me." She shrugged. "He didn't say much about it except that it meant everyone was now accounted for. He did get very quiet for a moment when I said that I thought that we got married."

George sighed picked up the marriage license from the nightstand and handed it to her. "There's no doubt about that."

She had not noticed that before and now she looked it over carefully. She breathed a sigh of relief when she saw that there was no mention of Supergirl on it. That was one catastrophe averted.

They both sat there quietly contemplating their situation. After a moment George took a deep breath then, his head hung down and his hands resting on his lap, he spoke quietly. "Look, I know you don't want to be saddled with some loser like me." He raised his head and looked directly at her. "Once we get this mess straightened out I promise you that I will go away and never bother you again. And I will **never, ever** tell **anyone** your secret."

She looked back at him and her expression softened. "Let's wait and see what Dad has to say before we make any permanent plans for the future." The idea of him disappearing from her life bother a lot more than she expected.

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They both heard a slight thump then the balcony door slid the rest of the way open and they turned to see Superman set Lois Lane on her feet just inside the room. George jumped to his feet and backed up a few steps. The scowl on Lois Lane's face clearly indicating her displeasure. Superman's Face was neutral, unreadable. George had recognized Lois Lane and the other shoe dropped. When he screwed up, he **really** screwed up. He could see his journalism career going up in smoke.

Martha jumped to her feet. "Uhh, Mom, Dad ..." She stepped over next to George. "Uhh ... George already knows who I am." She shrugged and sighed. "Both of me. I flew us here."

When Martha stepped over next to him, George felt a momentary surge of gratitude for her gesture.

Martha's subtle gesture and the look of recognition on the boy's face had not escaped the notice of either Lois or Clark.

Superman sighed, glanced at Lois, then turned into a blurry

tornado. A half second later Clark Kent stood there dressed in a sweatshirt and dark pants. George experienced a moment of *déjà vu* then memories of seeing Martha do the exact same thing flooded his mind. Clark and Lois both noticed the young man's near lack of surprise, which told them more clearly than anything else that he had already seen Martha do the spin-change maneuver as well as being aware of their family secret.

For a long moment, the four of them stood there staring at each other, uncertain what to say next. Finally, it was Martha that broke the silence. "Dad, you said you know what happened to us?"

After another moment's pause, Clark began to explain. "It was the punch. One of the boys at that party, a very disreputable person, got his hands on a pheromone derivative compound that your mother and I encountered once before over twenty years ago and spiked the punch with it. According to STAR Labs, this substance blocks your normal inhibitions and boosts your libido. The upshot is that you become recklessly drunk on love."

Lois jumped in. "Your father and I got a report of a near riot at one of the rooming houses on the campus and went to investigate. We both recognized the symptoms ... But it took a while to figure out how they had been exposed. As soon as we realized what happened we contacted inspector Henderson. We had to track down everyone that had been exposed and put them somewhere safe. That was when we found out that you had been at that party. We were able to locate everyone that had been at that party except you and your ... friend. We were worried sick about you once we realized that you had been at that party. We had no idea where you were or what had happened to you. And then there was the boy that had also disappeared. The only clue we had was that one of the missing boy's friends 'thought' he had seen him leave with a girl. His description sounded a lot like you." She glanced at George then quickly returned to Martha. "I was so relieved I nearly cried when you called."

After a moment Martha reacted. "But why me? I thought things like that couldn't affect me."

Clark responded. "That is where our second culprit comes in. This other person spiked the punch with a wine that he took from his parents' collection." He glanced at George a moment then glanced over at Lois. She shrugged, shaking her head. Clark sighed then continued. "A few years ago someone in California came out with a new wine that had tiny particles mixed into it that gave off bright red sparkles. Shortly after this wine came out it was discovered that the red particles were actually pulverized red kryptonite. We tracked down as many of those bottles as we could but we were never able to find them all. We destroyed every bottle we could get our hands on. The bottle he found in his parents collection was one of those that we had been unable to locate. The red kryptonite enhanced the intoxicating effect of the wine, in general, and made your body, in particular, susceptible to both the alcohol and the pheromone compound."

Everyone fell silent as they all thought about what had happened. Finally Martha spoke. "So what do we do now?"

Lois opened her mouth, her eyes flashing, but Clark placed his hand on her arm forestalling what she had been about to say. She looked at him with a hint of rebellion for a moment then she relented and her expression softened.

Clark turned his gaze onto the ring fingers of the two young people. "You said that you thought that you had gotten married?"

Martha let out a deep sigh and nodded. George retrieved the marriage license and quietly handed it over to Clark.

Clark looked over the document and his eyebrows rose up nearly to the one curl that seemed to always hang over his forehead. Lois, after one quick look at the document in Clark's hand buried her face in her palm, shaking her head and groaned. "Oh, God."

Clark looked back up at the young couple, both of which were showing acute embarrassment. "I suppose the choice of venue had

something to do with your fondness for your Uncle Perry?" He inquired.

Martha shrugged turning pink. "Uuuh, a lot of the details are still unclear but ... that probably had something to do with it." She looked over at George with another shrug.

George was looking at Martha as she spoke then responded to her comment. "It's also possible that I might have influenced that decision." He smiled shyly at Martha then looked over at Clark. "I've been a bit of an Elvis fan most of my life. My mother is also a huge fan."

Lois shook her head with another groan. "Oh, no — not another one."

Clark fought down the grin that threatened to arise while he set the license down on the nightstand. He took a deep breath then began to speak. "First off, because of the special circumstances involved it shouldn't be too difficult to get an annulment in this case."

Clark observed as Martha and George looked at each other. Instead of the relief he had expected they both showed expressions of uncertainty with a bit of resignation showing on George's face. Clark had also noticed how often they seemed to look to each other for support. He felt a hand on his forearm and looked down into his wife's eyes. He saw surprise and uncertainty reflected there. She had apparently noticed the same things that he had.

After a moment Clark again spoke. "Before any decisions are made I think it is time for a little open, unvarnished honesty here." He turned his gaze on George. "You first, son, the whole truth. Exactly how do you really feel about what is happening here?"

George looked into Martha's uncertain eyes for a long moment then took a deep breath before speaking. "I'm probably shooting myself in the foot here." He took another breath and screwed up his courage. "I woke up this morning to find a very beautiful girl in my — this — bed and a pounding headache. Then fragmented memories of an incredible night began to surface then I realized that she is 'Supergirl' who, like every other male on the planet, I've had a serious crush on since she first appeared." His face turned bright red as an unconscious smile formed. Then after a moment his face fell into the look of resignation and he looked steadily into Clark's eyes. "But I'm hardly what anyone would consider a prime catch. I've never been able to hang on to a girlfriend for very long; I'm currently unemployed with uncertain prospects for the near future; and I've developed a reputation for getting into trouble way over my head ... like what happened here." He shook his head. "I'm sure she could do much better than a screw-up like me." He looked down at his feet.

Clark noisily cleared his throat drawing George's attention then looked this intriguing young man in the eye. "Speaking of prospects, while we were trying to locate you and our daughter we learned that you just graduated with a journalism degree." Clark felt his wife's hand tightened around his arm enough to leave bruises on an ordinary person. She knew where this was going. "You do realize that you have landed right in the middle of a story that could make your career?"

A look of pure horror followed by stern determination washed across his features as he responded indignantly. "I could NEVER do anything like that."

Clark had been pretty sure how the young man would react. George's voice and the look on his face more than confirmed his opinion of the young man's character. The declaration had also had a strong effect on Lois and Martha. Clark simply nodded his approval to the young man.

Clark cocked his head deep in thought for a moment. "And how do you feel personally about being married to Martha?"

George again looked over at Martha then looked down, deep in thought, for several seconds. After another quick look at Martha, he again faced Clark. "It's like a dream come true." He paused a moment before continuing. "But only if she wanted it as

well. Otherwise it would be a nightmare for both of us.”

Clark had noticed that while George had been talking, Martha had appeared to be deeply affected by his words. He was beginning to suspect that there might be more between them than a drug and hormone fueled sexcapade. He thought back to the first time he and Lois had encountered this pheromone compound. The scientist that had analyzed it had said that, though very powerful, it only worked if there was already some form of attraction already present.

Clark turned his attention to his daughter. She was now looking at George with an expression that seemed to contain a whole gamut of emotions all mixed together. “What about you sweetheart?” He cocked his head as she looked at him. “How do you **really** feel?”

Martha looked down for a moment then shrugged. “I’m not really sure **what** I feel any more.” She glanced over at George then looked back more or less in the vicinity of her father’s shins. “At first all I wanted to do was get as far from him and the whole situation just as fast as I could. I felt so embarrassed and then I realized that he knew who I was and I was afraid that I had ruined everything for everyone.” She glanced again at George before continuing. “Then the memories started to surface.” Now it was her turn to blush bright red. “Everything became so confusing. The more I remembered, the more confused I became.” Again she glanced over at George then back at her parents. “All I know for sure is that when he looks at me I feel warm all over and I’m sure that I would miss that if he went away.” Her eyes dropped to the bed and her face turned even brighter red than before then her eyes slid to the floor at her feet.

Clark looked over at Lois and saw emotions as complex as anything he had ever seen before. The silent communion between them lasted for several seconds. Finally, he looked back at the young couple. “There is something you both should know about that pheromone compound that precipitated this whole situation. It doesn’t create an attraction. It merely shuts off the normal inhibitions and it only amplifies any attraction that might already be there.”

Martha glanced shyly at George then looked down with a deep sigh. Then she took a deep breath while working up her nerve. She looked up and her face blazed crimson. “One other thing to consider ... I’m pretty sure that we have not been using any form of ... protection these last few days.” She looked back at George. “But I could never feel right holding you responsible if anything were to come of it.”

George looked back in shocked surprise as her words sank in then his expression turned seriously earnest as he responded. “That may be so, but if something did develop I would **want** to be involved.” His expression and voice softened as he continued. “That is, if you would let me.”

There was a definite shimmer of moisture in Martha’s eyes as she looked back at George.

Clark felt the slightest squeeze from his wife’s hand on his arm. He looked over at her to see that she was also deeply moved by what was said. “Now that everybody’s cards are on the table, the question remains. Where do we go from here?”

George spoke first. “I’ve already told you how I feel about that. So for right now, what’s most important is what Martha wants.”

Martha gazed back at George as she realized that both of their futures rested squarely on her shoulders.

***NOTE:** For those that have never heard the song here is a slightly altered excerpt from ‘Last Name’ by Carrie Underwood.*

*Last night I got served a little bit too much of that poison  
And I got a little crazy  
Last night I met a guy on the dance floor  
And I let him call me baby*

*It started off “Hey Cutie where you from?”  
And turned into “Oh, no, what have I done?”  
We left the club about 1 in the morning  
I had no idea what I was getting myself into  
It must have been ‘kryptonite mixed with’ the Quervo  
And I don’t even know my last name  
My momma would be so ashamed  
It started off “Hey Cutie where you from?”  
And turned into “Oh, no, what have I done?”*

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### Returning Home

Martha Kent-Kennedy (married only two and a half days) looked at her brand-new husband that she had known for less than three whole days. The question of what to do about their hazily remembered marriage and subsequent two nights of honeymoon had been raised. George Kennedy (no relation to the actor), her husband, had left the decision about what to do up to her. According to her father, their two-day old marriage had been the direct result of exposure to some type of ‘pheromone’ chemical, laced with red Kryptonite. Her father said that they had more than adequate grounds to have the marriage annulled.

Martha looked back at her parents then back at George. She took a deep breath and shook her head. “I must be crazy.” She muttered mostly to herself, though everyone in the room heard it. Still looking into George’s very handsome face she squared her shoulders and spoke with conviction. “Despite how this thing started, I ... I don’t want to lose what I’ve found in George ... even if we are still almost total strangers. George, if you’re willing, I think I would like to give this insane marriage a shot.”

George smiled back at her then on impulse, he took both of her hands. “Like you, I really would like to give this marriage thing a fighting chance.” He seemed to pause a moment together his thoughts then kissed each of her hands. “Martha Ellen ... Kennedy, will you do me the honor of staying married to me?”

Martha felt a spark race up her spine at his words and actions. She gave the only answer that felt right to her. “Yes!”

For several seconds, they stood there lost in each other’s eyes, the two parents standing on the other side of the bed, completely forgotten. Finally, Lois noisily cleared her throat, bringing the young couple back to the here and now.

George looked over at Lois and Clark. With a sigh he finally spoke. “Now what should we do?”

Clark spoke first. “Do you wish to remain here for a little longer ...” He indicated the hotel suite with a nod of his head. “... or do you wish to head home. Either way you need to contact your family and let them know that you’re alright.”

George looked back at Martha’s lovely face. “I guess we should be heading back. We need to give ourselves a day or two to get accustomed to each other in a less emotionally charged environment.” He sighed deeply and ruefully shook his head. “And the sooner I face my family the sooner we can start figuring out how we are going to make this thing between us work.”

Clark nodded his acknowledgement. “Let’s go back to our place and you can call your parents from there to let them know that you are OK, then you two can decide what to do next.”

With a sigh, a shake of his head, and a self-deprecating chuckle, George commented. “As nervous as I was about having to face the both of you over this, I think that facing my parents scares me a lot more.”

Martha put her arm around him. “Don’t worry George. I’ll be there to protect you, and I’ve been told by my big brother that I’m pretty tough, for a girl.” She giggled at the memory of her brother’s words.

George shook his head. “You’ve never met my father. He’s a cop. Even you might find him intimidating.”

Martha looked back at George in surprise. “If he’s a cop, I wonder if I have already met him.”

"I don't know." George shrugged. "My dad has mentioned encountering Superman and Superboy a couple of times but I don't remember him ever mentioning you." He paused in thought then continued. "I do remember how incensed my mom got over the way the media treated you after your first appearance as Supergirl." His face took on a hint of pink. "She fussed at me for keeping copies of those first pictures of you."

Martha's face also developed a hint of pink and she giggled. Then with a shrug, she remarked. "Yea, I was in such a hurry to get to that sinking ship that it never occurred to me what would happen when that cheap superman t-shirt got wet."

Lois loudly cleared her throat. "Enough reminiscing over old embarrassments. I think it's time to head home."

George ducked his head a bit then spoke. "I'll run down and check us out, and then we can head back to Metropolis and face the relatives." He quickly grabbed his wallet and headed out the door.

Lois cocked her head and looked straight at Martha. "So he kept copies of *\*those\** pictures."

Martha glanced at her mother and blushed. "Yea ... one of the things I do remember clearly from the last few days was his insistence that the fantasies those pictures evoked were a very pale comparison to the reality that he now had." She blushed even deeper. "The way he looked at me when he said that made me feel so warm and desired." Then her mind seemed to be lost in some pleasant memory.

Lois found herself blushing at the naked emotion she saw in her daughter's face. Deep inside she felt herself thaw a little bit more toward this young man. Whatever his faults, he couldn't be all that bad if he could make her daughter look that happy.

A few minutes later George returned. "Everything's taken care of." He announced.

"Then let us change and head for home." Clark responded.

Clark and Martha both became whirling cyclones that rapidly changed color. A second later, they had become Superman and Supergirl.

George released a deep sigh and commented to Lois. "Wow! Does that ever become old hat?"

Lois took in the look of wonder in George's face then echoed his sigh as she responded while tilting her head toward Clark. "I've been married to him for longer than I care to admit and I still am amazed when I see what he ... what all of them, can do."

Without another word, Superman scooped up Lois and Supergirl wrapped her arm around George's waist. Lois put her arms around Superman's neck and George put his arm around Supergirl's waist. In her free hand, Supergirl carried a laundry bag with the rest of their things. The four of them rose up from the floor and, with a soft whoosh, the room was empty.

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George barely remembered the flight to Hawaii but the trip back was firmly etched in his mind. He felt like a kid taking his first airplane ride as he drank in the experience. The fact that there was no airplane, only the arm of his new bride holding him aloft, made the experience even more intense, more magical, that any ordinary airplane ride could ever be.

Soon they were over land and George eagerly took in the colorful landscape that flowed steadily beneath him. He was a bit surprised when he soon recognized the Metropolis skyline on the horizon. That was when it hit him how fast they must be traveling. They couldn't have been in the air more than a couple of hours, yet they had traveled all the way from Hawaii to Metropolis. His skin should have been ripped from his body by supersonic winds yet he had felt nothing more than a moderately stiff breeze.

His thoughts were interrupted by Martha's voice. "It's the middle of the afternoon so we will be descending very fast to avoid being observed."

George nodded then they were dropping like a lead weight. Despite how fast the ground came up George felt perfectly secure

with her arm around him. He felt a moment of concern when it looked like they were going to hit the ground without slowing down. Then they went from hundreds of miles per hour to a gentle descent in less than three seconds yet he never felt the sudden deceleration. The maneuver left him breathless.

As they touched down on the patio in the back of a home on the outskirts of Metropolis George started to breathe again. He turned in her arms and smiled. "You just keep coming up with ways to take my breath away."

Martha smiled back. "Why thank you."

Superman set Lois on her feet and the four of them entered the house. The next minute Superman and Supergirl had spun into Clark and Martha.

Martha gave George a quick tour of the house while he put off calling his parents. Finally, he grabbed a hold of his courage and made the call. It was his mother that answered. His father was at work helping to deal with other victims of the same spiked punch that had gotten him into his current situation. After a few moments of parental hysterics, George was able to calm his mother and reassure her that he was alive and well. Then came the more difficult part of the conversation.

"Um, Mom, I don't know how much you've heard about the effects of the stuff they spiked the punch with ..."

"Yea, that's pretty much what happened ..."

"Welllll ... yea I did leave the party with a girl but that's not exactly what happened ..."

"Well Mom it seems that we ... well we kinda ... eloped ..."

"Mom, Mom, Mom! ... It's not that bad — really ..."

Everything is going to be fine. I just woke up a few of hours ago and whatever that stuff was had worn off ..."

"There won't be any problems like that. The girl is a very nice person and her family is very understanding of the situation ..."

"I'm at her parent's home right now and we are considering our options. I will come by the house tomorrow morning to explain everything to you and Dad. For now, I just wanted you and Dad to know that I'm fine and everything is going to be OK ..."

"I will. Bye Mom. I love you too ..."

He put away his phone with a sigh. "Well, that went as well as could be expected."

Martha grinned at him as she commented. "So I guess that means you will be spending the night with me?"

George took a moment to absorb what she had said then turned bright red. "Uh ... um ... I a ... I didn't really think about that ... I just wanted to give them a day to think things through before I talked to them." He shrugged. "I haven't even had enough presence of mind to think about tonight's sleeping arrangements." He suddenly felt very shy in the presence of her and her parents.

Martha was unexpectedly charmed by George's reaction and took a step closer to him. She had done a lot of thinking on the flight back from Hawaii and now she wanted to make her feelings perfectly clear to both George and her parents. She took a deep breath to steady her nerves then spoke her mind. "You are my husband and now that I have a clear head I want to get to know you better." She looked over at Lois and Clark. "I don't expect any wild honeymoon night but I do hope to get much closer to my new husband. If we are going to make this work, the sooner we start acting like a married couple the better." She turned her attention back to George. "Why don't we spend an evening on the town and just let tonight take care of itself?"

Clark spoke up at this point. "That sounds like a good idea princess. You two go out and have a nice time. Your mother and I will be here when you get back."

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It was already mid afternoon in Metropolis so George and Martha started their foreshortened day together by going out to a popular restaurant for a late lunch. Next, they went to the local theater for a new movie that they both had wanted to see. After the

movie, they took a long walk through Centennial Park and talked about their dreams of the future. Martha had been working summers as an intern at the Daily Planet and now that she had graduated, she was supposed to start working full time there beginning next week. George had just received his Journalism degree and planned to start applying to all the news organizations. He was hoping to, eventually, find a spot at one of the larger newspapers but he expected to have to start at a less prestigious paper and work his way up. They stopped for a while at the band shell and listened to the free concert that was being given there.

After the concert, they continued their walk and ended up in front of the Superman statue that had been built to commemorate Superman's destruction of the Nightfall asteroid. George looked up at the twenty-foot high statue as he commented. "My dad used to bring me here all the time when I was little and tell me the story of The Nightfall Asteroid. I always feel a sense of awe whenever I look at that sculpture. Even Superman must have felt just a little bit intimidated to have to go head to head with that monster. But he did it and saved us all."

Martha shrugged then looked around to verify that there was no one near enough to overhear before she commented. "Dad always gets a bit embarrassed whenever he sees that statue."

"I don't see why." George responded. "I think it is magnificent."

"I agree." Martha smiled as she looked up. "I think it captures him perfectly. The look of determination on his face is perfect. Most people don't realize that when he agreed to do it, he had no idea if he would be able to successfully stop the asteroid or even survive the attempt. But he did it anyway because that is who he is. He can't stand by if someone is in trouble and he has the power to do something about it."

George tightened his arm around her shoulder. "Every time you talk about him, my admiration for your father and for you increases."

She smiled at him then returned her gaze to the statue. "Ever since I learned the truth about who my Dad really is, and by extension what I am, I've wanted to be just like him." She sighed. He is my inspiration."

After a moment of quiet contemplation, they moved on. Their next stop was a diner located at the edge of the park for a light dinner. Over the appetizer, they got into a discussion of the merits of various Elvis songs, which got pretty animated. She told him about Perry White's fascination with 'The King' and love of his music.

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When George and Martha returned late that evening they found Clark waiting up for them. "Welcome back. Did you two have a good time?"

"We had a wonderful time." Martha replied enthusiastically. "With the exception of when we were at the theater, we talked non-stop." Then she looked at George and continued. "Seems like the more I learn about him, the happier I am that we are staying married."

Clark smiled. "I'm glad that you're happy Princess." He centered his gaze on George then continued. "I spoke to Perry White about you today. He called a couple of your instructors that he knows at Met U. Perry would like you to come in to speak with him Wednesday of next week. I can't promise anything but Perry appeared to be impressed with what your instructors had to say about you."

George was stunned by this unexpected development. Martha almost squealed in delight. "George, that's wonderful. I'm sure Uncle Perry ... ah Mister White will want you for 'The Planet' once he meets you."

George finally recovered. "That is fantastic news Mister Kent. Ever since I became interested in journalism as a career, I've dreamed of working at a major newspaper like The Daily Planet.

But to have a shot at working for The Planet itself seems too good to be true. I don't know how I could ever thank you enough for this opportunity."

Clark gave him a serious look. "Don't get too excited just yet. You still have to get the job and if you do, you'll be starting at the bottom of the ladder. You will still have to prove yourself if you want to work your way up." Then Clark smiled and clapped George on the shoulder. "And call me Clark. We are family after all."

He stepped back, smiled at Martha, and did the spin change into Superman. "Now I think I'll do a quick patrol over the city ... Let them know I'm around. See you two in the morning." He rose up, hovered for a moment, and then, with a whoosh, disappeared through the open back door.

George stared at the blank space where Clark had stood in bemused fascination. He was pulled out of it by Martha's chuckle. He looked over at her. "What?"

"Dad pointedly did not invite me to go patrolling with him." She chuckled again then laid her hands on his chest. "I guess he thinks that I might have a better way to spend my time." She stretched up on tiptoes and gave him a kiss that left no doubt about what she meant.

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George slowly made his way to consciousness. He immediately became aware of the other body spooned tightly against his chest. It took him a moment of confused uncertainty before the realization of everything that had happened registered with his conscious mind. He had married this girl just a couple of hours after meeting her at a graduation party. They had both been under the influence of alcohol and an insidious pheromone chemical. To top it off she happened to be the object of the erotic daydreams of nearly every male on the planet, including him. He glanced downward. And at present, they were apparently floating nearly a foot above the mattress.

She was Supergirl, oldest daughter of Superman. But most amazing of all was that, for the first time in his life of one girlfriend after another, George realized that he was truly head over heels in love.

Unlike the two previous nights of wild sex, last night had only involved cuddling, caressing, and hours of small talk. For him, waking up with her in his arms was the most wonderful feeling in the world. In fact, she had him literally floating on air. The thought of waking up like this every morning for the rest of his life was George's definition of heaven.

After several minutes of wallowing in the experience, George reached up and gently caressed her cheek. "Wake up sweetheart. It's a brand new day."

Martha shifted against him as she swam up from the depths of slumber. She opened her eyes to see the guest room of her parent's house and to the feel of a warm body wrapped around her. Remembering the events of the last few days, she turned her head to look into the face of the stranger, whose presence felt so right to her at this moment, and smiled. "Mmmm ... Good morning yourself."

George grinned back at her. "Are you aware that we are floating?"

"Hu?" Then they dropped to the mattress, with a thud and a bounce, and she started to giggle as she turned in his arms to fully face him. "I haven't floated in my sleep in a long time."

George laughed. "I've had dreams of flying but I never expected to wake up in mid air." He kissed her, then returned for more. "I have a feeling that living with you will be one unique experience after another. I can hardly wait to see what comes next." George glanced over at the clock on the nightstand. He sighed deeply. "Looks like it's about time to get up." He shook his head with another sigh. "And I still have to face my parents this morning."



Martha's expression turned serious. "**\*We\*** have to face your parents this morning."

George shook his head. "There's no need to subject you to their histrionics. There will be plenty of time for you to meet them after they've had time to calm down and adjust to the situation. I ..."

Martha placed a finger to his lips then jumped in. "We got into this **together** and **we** will see it through together, side by side. We're married now, for better or for worse, from this day forward." She removed her finger from his lips and kissed them. "I intend to be there for you, by your side, or covering your back, as the case may be."

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### Meeting His Parents

Martha sighed again. "Oh well, I guess we had better get out of bed and get ready for the day." She threw back the covers and glanced down at the both of them. They each took a long moment to admire the other's body. They weren't exactly naked but they weren't far from it. "I think I could get use to this view each morning." She commented. "We've got a big day ahead of us."

"That's an understatement if I ever heard one." George responded. "As for the view, I definitely like what I see."

Twenty minutes later George and Martha entered the dining room to a roomful of open-mouthed stares.

"Good morning, everyone." Martha chimed in with a chipper tone of voice. "I would like for all of you to meet my new husband George ...". She glanced over at him, her eyes full of mischief. "ahh, what did you say your last name was?"

There was a long moment of silence as everyone in the room stared back at them in stunned surprise. Then everyone was talking at once, firing questions or making comments about Martha's sanity.

Martha let out a piercing whistle that brought the babble to a halt, then she spoke into the shocked silence. "As I was saying, George Kennedy, this is my family."

She indicated the oldest couple sitting together on the other side of the table. "That is my oldest brother Jonathon and his wife Kristen. They have been married five years and they're expecting their first child in about six months. Both of them currently work at Star Labs under Doctor Bernard Klein. I assume that they showed up here this morning to see if I had survived my ordeal." She then pointed to the youngest girl at the table. "This is my younger sister Lucy. She graduated high school last week."

George nodded to Lucy then looked at Martha. "I think I know about Jonathon. Is Lucy ... ah ...". He shrugged.

Martha nodded. "Yes, she has all her powers but has not yet made a public appearance. I think that she's still trying to make up her mind on a costume."

"Martha!" Lucy and Jonathon both blurted out in shocked surprise.

At everyone's shocked expression Martha retorted. "Everyone chill out. George already knows all about me. I flew us to Hawaii for our honeymoon. After that it was a bit difficult to keep him from figuring out what I am." After a momentary pause she continued, indicating the last person at the table. "James is my youngest brother. He has not fully developed the power of flight yet. He's anxious to get into the bizz but Dad won't allow us to join in the family hobby until our powers are fully developed."

She glanced around then addressed the table. "I suppose Mom and Dad have already taken Clara to her daycare?"

Jonathon spoke up. "Yea, Mom and Dad left about an hour ago."

Martha nodded then turned to George. "Clara is sort of the unplanned surprise in the family. She's only twenty months old." She took George's hand and led him to the table. Soon they were both answering rapid-fire questions between bites of breakfast.

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Martha and George quickly and silently dropped from the sky into a blind spot formed by a gap between two apartment buildings. George looked over at Martha, cocked his head and let his eyes scan up and down her body. He smiled rakishly as he took a moment to appreciate how good she looked in her skintight Supergirl uniform. "I just can't get over the fact that you are really my wife." Then he took a deep breath and his expression became serious as he spoke. "You know this could get Ugly. You really don't have to do this." He shrugged. "They're **my** parents. I can handle this on my own."

Martha shook her head. "No ... **I need** to be there. Like I told you, before we came over here, we got into this together. **I belong** with you and I'm **not** going to abandon you now. It's by working together that we intend to give this marriage a fighting chance."

George released a huge sigh. "Well if that's the way you feel then I guess we'd better get this over with." He glanced out of the gap. "I don't see anyone around. I guess you'd better change and we'll face the music together." He gave her the once over with an exaggerated leer. "Although showing up in that outfit would certainly make for an effective distraction."

"You boys are all alike." She smacked him lightly on his chest. Then she glanced down at her blue and red outfit with its rather iconic red and yellow symbol emblazoned across her chest. "You know, showing up like this **could** balance the scales in our favor." She looked back up at him.

George's expression turned serious and he nodded. "That is true." Another sigh. "But for the sake of your family and mine, we can't let anyone else find out about your family secret. And, walking up to my parent's front door as Supergirl is sure to get the whole neighborhood talking."

Supergirl was suddenly a whirling blur of red and blue. The blur quickly turned into a blur of brown and green then solidified into Martha Kent 'Kennedy'. The transformation had taken about a second and a half yet she seemed to be a completely different person. Not only her physical appearance had changed radically but even her personality seemed to have altered just a bit.

"Wow!" George responded. "No matter how many times I've seen you do that the last few days, it still amazes me." He grinned. "In fact, everything about you amazes me. I feel the urge to pinch myself to prove that I'm awake and this is all real." For a moment he just grinned at her then he gave a little shiver and adopted an attitude of determination. "We may as well get on with it."

Martha opened her mouth to comment. "Of course we don't want your neighbors to know but I could just change back into Supergirl once we're ..."

George reached out and touched her lips and continued. "While I believe that your family secret would be safe with my parents, I think it would be better to not bring it up unless it became absolutely necessary. Say when we want them to babysit our kids who have a tendency to fly around the room. Besides, I want my parents to accept and, possibly, learn to like you for **'who'** you are, **'not'** **'what'** you are."

Martha laughed. "Hey, we don't develop the ability to fly until our mid to late teens. In fact we don't start developing our powers until we're around ten years old." Her expression became more serious as she took a deep resigned breath. "I must admit that facing your parents as Supergirl does sort of appeal to me." When facing a difficult or hostile situation she always felt more self-confident when she was dressed in her uniform. "But, I suppose you have a point." She straightened her spine and announced. "Let's go."

They stepped out from between the buildings and walked the short distance to the front door of his parents' apartment building. Inside the building, he led her to the third apartment on the second floor. He turned to her and spoke softly. "This is your last chance to run for the hills."

Martha shook her head. "Nu,uh! No way! Ain't gonna

happen!” She responded quietly but emphatically then she grinned. “There’s something you need to understand about me, especially if you want to spend your life with me. Lois Lane is notorious for her stubbornness and tenacity. Mom has never backed down from a challenge in her life. Dad once told me that ‘Her favorite pastime is dangling over the jaws of death’.” Martha broke into a wide grin. “I’m Lois Lane’s daughter through and through, and there’s no way I’m going to back out now.”

He shrugged and smiled back at her. “Far be it from me to argue with the daughter of Lois Lane.” He then shifted to face the door and pressed the doorbell. “I guess it’s into the lion’s den for the both of us. Just don’t say I didn’t warn you.”

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Paul Kennedy, a Metropolis beat cop since before he got married, sat in his small home office brooding over the reports before him. When his son had disappeared from that insane college frat party four days ago Paul had asked a detective buddy, named Wolf, to keep him in the loop of the investigation. The fact that Chief Inspector Henderson, a legend throughout the Metropolis Police Force, was personally heading the investigation made him doubly anxious. A case had to be very serious for Henderson to become directly involved.

It was the two reporters from the Daily Planet that had first suggested a possible cause for the actions of the kids involved in the near riot. It had taken another several hours before the detectives finally identified the punch as the source of the insanity.

By sunrise that next morning, many of the missing attendees of the party had been found but several of the kids involved were still unaccounted for, including his son. By that evening, they had gotten the STAR Lab’s analysis of the spiked punch. Someone had put a diabolically destructive combination into that punch. The report had fully explained what had happened and why.

By the second morning, the two people responsible for the spiked punch had been found. It took every bit of Paul’s self-control to resist the urge to go down to lock-up and beat the tar out of the two kids that were responsible. Also, by then, all but two of the missing kids had been located, many of them under very compromising circumstances.

But the only clues to his son’s location, or the location of the other missing person, a female, was one other kid’s less than reliable statement that he thought that the missing boy and the missing girl had left together. Even more troubling was the fact that the missing girl was the daughter of two prominent and influential Daily Planet reporters. His son had managed to get himself into some fine messes before but they all paled into insignificance compared to this latest potential disaster. He only hoped that the extenuating circumstances would help to reduce the negative effects this could have on his son’s future.

By the third day, yesterday, Paul was ready to tear his hair out in frustration over the lack of any new developments. The only positive news was the fact that the effects of the pheromone had begun to wear off for many of the effected kids. Then toward the end of his shift he had received a report of two hits on his son’s credit card. One was for the ‘Chapel of Blue Suede Deliverance’ in Las Vegas and the other was for store #0623 of ‘The Big Kahoona Beach Wear’ chain.

When Paul got home that evening, Ellen, his wife, was bursting with important news. She informed him that she had heard from George. Their son had called to assure them that he was alive and safe. Then she told him that George had said that he was married. Paul felt a sinking feeling growing in his stomach. George had done some pretty stupid things in his young life but this was by far the dumbest yet.

Now it was late morning and, according to Ellen, George would be stopping by soon to explain things. Paul fought to calm himself down. What was there to explain? George had gotten himself into a mess, though it wasn’t entirely his fault, and now

they had to figure out how to untangle it. He only hoped that George and the girl had at least exercised some basic precautions over the last few drug and hormone fueled days or there might soon be another more complicated problem to deal with. He glanced at the credit card report then looked through the door toward the kitchen where his wife was currently trying to get her mind off of the situation by making a late breakfast.

He again glanced at the credit card statement he had obtained yesterday. “The ‘Chapel of Blue Suede Deliverance’?” He muttered. “What will Ellen think when she hears about that? She’ll probably blame herself or have a heart attack or both ... What will the girl’s parents think when they hear about that?”

The doorbell rang, startling him out of his swirling thoughts.

Paul was so keyed up that he nearly fell out of his chair. “Calm down, get control of yourself.” He muttered to himself as Ellen rushed past the door to his little office. He quickly recovered his wits and jumped out of his chair, heading after his wife. He reached the main entry hall just as Ellen opened the front door.

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George looked enquiringly at his mother, standing in the open doorway with a relieved yet anxious expression on her face. Then his eyes shifted to his father standing behind her and frowning back at him. Both parents had already noticed the petite young, ‘pretty’ brunette that was standing, half hidden, behind their son. They had not expected him to show up with the girl and were both completely unsure how to act around her.

After a long tension filled pause, George broke the silence. “Hi, Mom ... Dad. Can we come in?”

“Oh! Ah, Yes, come in, come in.” His mother responded as she opened the door wider and stepped back in a tacit invitation to enter.

Paul scowled as he also stepped back. His attention was drawn to the young woman entering with his son.

Ellen seemed to be having difficulty deciding just where to rest her gaze. Paul’s gaze had settled squarely on the girl, measuring, sizing her up. Finally, Ellen broke the uncomfortable tableau by throwing her arms around her son. Paul’s gaze flickered toward them then returned to the girl. She looked so tiny next to his tall athletic son.

After a second, Ellen pulled away. “Oh George, we have been so worried about you.” She pulled him into a tight hug. “Thank God you’re home safe.” Finally, she released him then she took a step back and looked uncertainly over at the girl as though trying to decide how to react to her. After a moment, she looked back at George. “Um’ who is this?” She half-heartedly indicated the young woman.

George reached out and drew an uncharacteristically shy Martha forward. There was no point in beating around the bush. He might as well take hold of the elephant in the room by the tusks and drag it out into the light and make his parents acknowledge it. “Mom, Dad, this is Martha Ellen Kent, now Martha Ellen Kennedy ... my new wife.” George drew himself up straight with a determined look on his face as he watched both parents for their reactions.

Ellen’s jaw dropped, Paul’s scowl deepened and Martha’s face turned a bright pink. They both already knew about the wedding but they had not expected to have their son’s mistake so blatantly rubbed in their face by him. For that matter, why would he bring the girl here in the first place? Surely, it would have been better to let her stay with her parent’s while the details of the annulment were ironed out.

The tableau held for about two seconds before the uncomfortable silence was broken.

Ellen recovered first. Visibly pulling herself together, she cleared her throat. “Um, yes, why don’t we sit down in the parlor where we can all be more comfortable and talk about this.” She grabbed Paul’s arm, breaking his stare and pulled him toward the

opening into the family parlor. George put his arm around Martha and they followed his parents through the doorway.

Paul and Ellen took the love seat. Ellen grabbed Paul's hand in a bid for some small amount of comfort and security in what she was sure would be the very trying hours ahead of them. George took Martha's hand and guided her to the wide sofa but made sure that she was sitting close enough for their hips and shoulders to touch. He did not release her hand once they were seated. He was determined to emphasize the status of their relationship any way he could.

After they were all seated, Paul's attention immediately focused on how close the girl was sitting next to his son. He decided that he needed to deal expeditiously with this messy situation before it could get any worse. This was not the time to beat around the bush. It was time to be blunt and to-the-point. He was the first to speak. "Have you found out how soon you can get an annulment?"

Ellen looked over at her husband in surprise at his rather abrupt question. The same question had been running through her mind but her husband didn't need to be so brusque about it.

George clenched his jaw at the obviously blunt intent of his father's question. He glanced at Martha's blushing face then he bit back an angry retort and forced himself to pause and calm down. Angry or harsh words would only aggravate an already tense situation but it was time to make their intentions clear and let the chips fall where they may. He glanced at both his parents then his gaze centered on his father. "The thing is ... we aren't going to get an annulment."

Ellen gasped at George's declaration then tightened her grip on her husband's hand. She looked uncertainly into the reddened face of her husband watching the emotions flicker across it. As soon as she felt assured that he wasn't going to explode, she turned her eyes back toward her son and began to look more closely at both of the young adults before her. There seemed to be more going on between them than she had first realized. She and Paul already knew that they had only known each other for a matter of a few hours before running off to get married. And, only about three days had passed since that incredibly foolish action. Yet, as she observed them, she noticed that they seemed to be drawing strength from each other like they were a well-established couple.

Paul fought to control his annoyance. Didn't these two young fools understand the seriousness of their situation? The longer they waited to deal with this mess, the harder it would be to untangle it. He had seen enough examples of the results of such irrational and immature actions on his job as a Metropolitan beat cop. He was a firm believer in actions and consequences but he couldn't let that happen to his son regardless of how foolish he had been lately. "Nonsense, the two of you are total strangers, and I've seen the reports on that drug you were both dosed with. That report is all the legal grounds you need to get out of this with a minimum of legal entanglements."

George held tightly to his self-control as he responded. "We have seen that same report and if you read it carefully you'll find that it does not give us as firm a ground for annulment as you might think." He knew that there were elements of that report that could be used for an annulment and other elements that could be used to argue against an annulment.

Now Ellen's thoughts began to churn and she asked, "George, what are you talking about?" Paul had told her that the spiked punch had caused George to fall madly in love with the first girl he saw.

George responded to his mother. "In the first place, according to the report, that pheromone compound only works if there is already some initial attraction present in the affected person." He glanced over at Martha and smiled at her. "And there is definitely some attraction there."

Paul could feel a rise in his irritation level and again had to fight for control. Paul shook his head in frustration at his foolish son. "That is irrelevant. You're a healthy male and she is a reasonably attractive female. The argument would still stand up in court." Why did his son have to be so stubborn about this? "You two are total strangers. She was probably just the first female to catch your eye after you were drugged." Paul had noticed that the girl had a firm grip on George's hand and wondered how much influence she was having on his son's decisions.

"You missed the point, Dad." George retorted. He paused to get himself under control. He needed to appear calm and rational, a difficult proposition under the circumstances, if he was going to have any chance of influencing his parents' attitude toward Martha, much less getting them to really accept the current situation. "As I said, there is definitely attraction here. The effects of the drug wore off over a day ago yet my feelings for Martha haven't changed a bit." He squeezed her hand. "And Martha says that her feelings for me are just as strong as when we ran off to get married. That is why we are not going to get an annulment."

"This is nonsense!" Paul blustered. "This girl knows nothing about you. None of your relationships ever lasted more than a couple of months. This will be no different." His gaze bored into his son. "You need to end this farce now before you hurt this poor girl any more than you may already have." He pulled himself up short at the sudden thunderclouds he saw in his son's expression. Maybe he had gone just a bit over the line this time.

George decided that it was time to set his father straight about how things were. "To begin with, Martha knows me a lot better than you think. I have already told her about my rather dismal record with girlfriends. In fact, I have already offered to get an annulment." He took a deep calming breath and looked over at Martha. "It may be true that we have really only had one day, since the drug wore off, to truly begin to get to know each other. But in that short time she has captured my heart in a way that I have never experienced before in my life. I ..." He stopped talking, totally at a loss for words, because there were none adequate to describe the feelings that had steadily grown inside him since yesterday morning.

Both parents stared at their son in surprise at his outburst.

George felt the anger and frustration leach out of him at the thought of the last twenty-four hours. Finally, he continued in a much more gentle voice. "I have no words powerful enough to express how much I have come to feel for Martha." He turned his attention fully on Martha, who was looking back at him with wide glimmering eyes. "I find myself constantly amazed that she would want to have anything to do with me. You cannot possibly understand how lucky I am that she really wants to be with me as much as I want to be with her and I intend to stay with her for as long as she will have me."

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### Revelations

Paul shook his head in disbelief then, after a few moments of stunned silence, turned his scowl on the young woman. "And what about you, young lady? What are your thoughts on the matter? Why would you even want to stay with a guy that you barely know and has a less than stellar reputation with women?"

Martha was taken by surprise by the suddenness of the question, as well as the nature of it, and dragged her eyes from George's face to look at his father. It took a long moment to pull herself together and form a response. By the time she spoke her voice had taken on some of the firm resolve that she often used as Supergirl. "Personally I think that I'm the lucky one. I just want to be with him." She paused a moment in thought. "It doesn't matter how we ended up getting together. I find that I really care about him, more than I ever thought possible, and I would really like to give this marriage a chance ..." Her eyes shifted back to George. "That is if George is willing."

Paul was struck, momentarily, speechless. The shy young girl that she had been just moments ago had disappeared and a strong confident woman was sitting in her place. Paul's years as a beat cop had taught him how to read people at a glance and he knew his very stubborn son. These two young people were clear as an open book to him. Both of them were still a bit unsure about where they were going but they now projected an air of determination to see it through wherever it might take them. They both knew what they thought they wanted and they were not going to let anything stand in their way.

Paul opened his mouth to respond but his mind refused to produce anything intelligible.

George jumped into the momentary break. "I've made a lot of mistakes in my life and this last one was a real masterpiece ... but it is also one of the very few that I do not regret. I think that breaking off this relationship before it ever gets a chance to develop would be the worst decision of my life." He took a moment to select his next words. "I never believed in love at first sight but when I woke up yesterday morning with this beautiful stranger in my arms I fell head over heels and I felt that I was the luckiest idiot on the planet. I half expected her to run for the hills. Yet, despite the panic I saw in her eyes, she stayed and, since that moment, all I really wanted was to find a way to make her want to stay with me." He glanced over at Martha. "And, probably against her better judgment, she says that she wants to give our marriage a chance." He looked back over at his parents. "Her happiness matters more to me than I thought possible and I intend to dedicate my life to making sure that she never regrets her decision."

Paul once again felt himself robbed of rational speech. He had never heard his son wax so eloquently about any of his many girlfriends. He knew that George wanted to be a writer and had always had a way with words yet he was surprised at how moving his son's speech had been.

Martha rested her head on George's shoulder for a moment then addressed her new in-laws. "All we ask is that you give us a chance. Don't dismiss us out of hand. Spend today with us and get to know me better."

Paul ruefully shook his head. The girl's words were hard to ignore. It was only fair that they should get to know the girl before making up their minds about her and them. "That makes some sense... I guess it's really not too much to ask for us to at least spend a day to get to know you."

With those words, there was palpable release of the tension in the room. "That's all we're asking for." George remarked. At that moment tension and hunger, joined forces and his stomach gave an audible growl. He looked at his mother and gave an embarrassed shrug.

Ellen stood up as she remarked. "I was just starting breakfast when you arrived. Would you like something to eat?" She also had felt the change in the room's atmosphere and was swamped with relief that the expected knock-down-drag-out shouting match had not developed. Like her husband, she wasn't so sure about this idea of staying married but at least she had not found the girl to be a particularly unlikable person. And the girl did appear to really care about George. Maybe there was a chance.

Martha decided not to mention that they had already had breakfast. "That sounds great, can I help?" Martha offered. This would be her best chance to try to get on her new mother-in-law's good side. If there was one thing she had learned from her father and grandmother, it was how to cook well. If she was careful not to take over, maybe she could show her mother-in-law a few useful tricks; possibly even swap a few recipes. She stood up to follow Ellen into the kitchen.

George smiled for the first time since he and Martha had entered the apartment. "Better take her up on it, Mom. Among the many things I've already learned about her, she is a fantastic cook.

She learned from her father." He cocked his head, remembering yesterday's dinner at the Kent's house. "However beware. You two might get caught up swapping recipes."

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Martha had helped Ellen fix breakfast and the results had been superb. Ellen had conceded that Martha really knew her way around the kitchen. Score one for Martha.

After breakfast, they headed over to Centennial Park. They had spent the morning exploring the park and talking things over. Lunch had been at a small hot dog stand in the park. During lunch, they heard a soft sonic boom and looked up to see a tiny familiar blue and red figure moving rapidly to the north. It was flying too high to be identified.

Paul gazed after the figure and marveled at a sight that always sent a thrill through him.

Last year, Superboy had saved the life of Paul's partner and close friend when a burglary call had gone terribly wrong. Two months before that, Supergirl had rescued Paul's cousin from an apartment fire. It had been just a few years ago that the daughter of the neighbor across the street had been saved by Superboy when part of an airplane had fallen into Centennial Park Lake. Paul felt extremely fortunate to live in a city protected by the Super family. It had been said that you couldn't call yourself a true citizen of Metropolis unless you had a relative or close friend that had been saved by one of them. They spent a few more hours in the park after lunch, then came home.

Paul listened with interest to a few stories Martha told about her reporter parents. He had crossed paths with Lois and Clark a couple of times and they seemed like nice people. It was common knowledge among his colleagues that you could always count on Lane and Kent to be fair and honest in their reporting of the city's police.

George told Paul and Ellen that Martha's parents were letting Martha and him stay in a spare guestroom until they could find a small place of their own. Paul commented that George had to find a job first which might be a bit difficult. George responded that he already had an interview with Perry White of the Daily Planet next week.

There was some more small talk about both their families and about the new couple's plans. Then Martha had taken them out to dinner at a small hole-in-the-wall Italian restaurant that Paul had never heard of before. The owner came out to greet Martha and had bragged to Paul that Superman had once stopped there to grab an order of takeout. Paul was surprised to discover that the food at this place was fantastic.

Then it was back to their home where they settled in to watch a movie together. Paul retired early in the evening because he had an early shift the next morning. He left his wife and the two kids watching some sappy romantic movie. Paul never would have expected his son to sit still through one of those but George was hanging in there with the two women.

Paul lay in bed thinking about the events of what had turned out to be a long and interesting yet pleasant day. The more Paul learned about Martha, the more he liked her as a person. But he still thought that it was a mistake for George and Martha to stay married. Despite his feelings on the matter, he realized that he was not going to be able to change their minds. He came to a grudging acceptance of the situation. At least if his son was going to royally screw up his life, the girl he ended up with seemed to be a nice, reasonably sane person. Some of George's numerous previous girlfriends had been nuclear disasters waiting to happen and there had been a few meltdowns among them. Paul also had to admit that a relationship with this girl might actually do his son some good. He just hoped that his son didn't end up disappointing or hurting the girl in the end.

Halfway through the second movie Ellen was fading fast. She told the two young people that if they got too tired to drive home

after the movie they were welcome to stay in George's old room. Then she also retired for the night.

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Ellen drifted awake and shifted uncomfortably in her bed. Her back was achy (probably a result of all the walking they had done yesterday). In addition, her mouth felt like it was stuffed with cotton and she was thirsty. She was acutely aware of Paul softly snoring beside her. She glanced over at the clock beside the bed. The display showed 1:08 am. It was **way** too early in the morning and she really did not want to get out of the nice warm bed.

But she really was thirsty.

She wondered if George and Martha had gone back to her parent's home or if they had decided to stay the night here.

She really was very thirsty.

Finally, with a quiet groan of surrender, Ellen rolled out of bed, being careful not to awaken her husband. Paul would be getting up in an hour and a half to work the early morning shift. Still in a half dozing state, she put on her bathrobe and quietly padded toward the kitchen.

As she approached the family room, the first thing she noticed was the sound of the romantic theme song from the movie that George and Martha had stayed up to watch. When she entered the room, she saw the main menu of the DVD displayed on the video screen.

Next she became aware of the two figures asleep in the sofa and paused to look wistfully at the young couple. George and Martha were in a semi-reclined position with his arm across her shoulders and her arm was around behind his back. Her head was resting on his shoulder and his head was resting against the top of her head. It was really a rather sweet image.

Ellen smiled at the scene and then continued through the family room and into the kitchen. She opened the refrigerator and stood there for several seconds looking for something to drink. She finally settled on a half empty two-liter bottle of root beer. She took it out and took a long gulp from it. She felt a momentary pang of guilt. She was forever fussing at the rest of her family for drinking straight from the bottle.

She shrugged and took another gulp. The cold drink seemed to rouse her out of her semi somnambulant state.

She stopped as she became aware of a vague sense of uneasiness. She stood there trying to analyze the now growing feeling that something wasn't right. She slowly returned the bottle to the fridge as she continued trying to figure out just what it was that was bothering her. She glanced around herself looking for a source for her disquiet. When she saw nothing out of place, she tried to shake off the feeling of something being wrong then headed back toward the bedroom.

As she passed back into the family room, she once again paused to glance over at her son and his new bride. The sense of unease grew stronger. She swept the room with her gaze but again nothing seemed out of place. Her gaze settled back on the young couple in the sofa and she smiled. She hoped they wouldn't be too uncomfortable sleeping there. She started toward the sofa intending to turn off the TV.

Then it hit her.

She could see the upper quarter of their backs. From her current vantage point behind the sofa and the way they were slouched down, she should only be able to see, at most, the tops of their heads. What were they sitting on?

She eased around the sofa to see what was holding them up so high.

She noticed that their other hands were clasped together with the fingers interlaced and George's legs were resting on top of Martha's legs. She still didn't see what they were sitting on.

Then it suddenly became clear and she raised her hand to her mouth, stifling a sound that was halfway between a gasp and scream. They weren't sitting on anything else. There was nothing

under them but nearly a foot of empty space. After a few stunned moments, Ellen approached the sleeping couple for a closer look.

A few passes of her hand beneath them only served to verify that there was nothing holding the couple up but empty air. She backed away, her eyes huge with amazement. Then her knees began to buckle and she slowly collapsed to the floor next to the coffee table.

Ellen continued to stare at the empty space between the young couple and the sofa, trying to decide if she really was seeing what she thought she was seeing. Could she just be dreaming? She pinched herself. No, that had definitely hurt so she wasn't dreaming. Her son and his new bride were definitely floating.

After a couple of minutes Ellen pulled herself back up onto shaky legs then she quietly made her way back around the sofa and into her bedroom.

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Paul was pulled from a disturbing dream of being in a tacky little Las Vegas chapel surrounded by a crowd of Elvis impersonators, each one singing a different song. The images around him wavered and disappeared and he tried to drift back to sleep.

The insistent shaking continued. He tried to ignore it but he was already losing his battle with wakefulness.

"Paul, wake up!" Ellen insisted quietly.

"What?" He stared blearily up at his wife.

She put her hand over his mouth. "Shhh, quiet. Don't make any noise. There's something you have to see."

She took her hand away from his mouth and he reluctantly sat up with soft groan. Placing her finger over her lips in a shushing gesture, she grabbed his hand and practically hauled him out of the bed. He stopped her long enough to grab his robe then let her drag him into the family room.

The first thing Paul noticed was the TV that was still on and showing the DVD main menu. The next thing he noticed was the young couple asleep on the sofa. His attention shifted to his wife wondering why she was dragging him out here just to show him the two sleeping kids.

She pulled him around to the front of the sofa then let go of his hand. Leaving him standing there looking confused she approached the couple then proceeded to wave her hand through the empty space between the sleeping couple and the sofa. In his drowsy state it took a couple of seconds for what he was seeing to fully register. Then all the air seemed to whoosh out of him and he sat heavily in the adjacent chair with a soft thump.

Paul sat there for several seconds staring wide eyed at the unbelievable scene before him while his thoughts ended up chasing themselves around and around in his mind. He had already realized, after spending a day with her, that Martha was a very extraordinary young woman but this was something else entirely. Who was she? She had to be another member of Superman's family. Did Superman know about this? Did the Kents know about her? Did his son know? What could all this mean?

After a few more minutes, Ellen glanced at her husband then reached out and gently nudged her son's shoulder.

George shifted slightly with a sleepy groan and Martha shifted slightly in response but both remained fast asleep.

Ellen tightened her grip on his shoulder, nudged him again, and spoke very softly to him. "George honey, wake up, you're floating."

George groaned again as he dredged his drowsy way to consciousness. Finally, he opened one reluctant eye. "Hu?"

"You're floating." She repeated very softly.

In his still half-asleep state, George took a moment to process what his mother had said. It was something about floating. Then both eyes popped open as he took in his surroundings. His mother was standing next to them looking down at him, her eyes full of questions. His father was sitting in the adjacent chair looking back

at him with the most peculiar look on his face. And he now realized that he was feeling that unusual weightless sensation that he always felt when Martha took him flying.

He turned his head to look down at the top of Martha's sleeping head then noticed the sofa that was a bit further away than it should have been. He shook his head then looked back at his mother and blinked, trying to clear his sleep fogged head. "Oh, boy." He muttered under his breath. "This is going to be interesting." He remarked in the same low tone then let out a yawn followed by a huge sigh.

George gently untangled his hand from Martha's and caressed her face then kissed her. "Sweetheart, wake up." He kissed her again as she began to stir.

"I don't want to wake up." Martha mumbled sleepily. "It feels too good laying here in your arms." She shifted her free hand around his waist into a gentle hug. "I want to stay right here." Then she frowned as she realized that George's heartbeat wasn't the only one she was hearing in the room.

George rubbed his cheek against the top of her head. "Sweetheart, my parents are here and you're floating in your sleep again."

Her eyes flew open and they dropped to the sofa with a thump as she took in the faces of George's parents staring back at her, both their faces a study in confused, conflicting emotions. Suddenly she was very awake and very flustered. "Oh, ah, I, ah ..." She looked up into George's eyes for some kind of enlightenment.

George gently caressed her uncertain face then with a half shrug and encouraging lopsided smile he commented. "I guess some explanations are in order."

Ellen shifted over to stand beside her husband, taking hold of his hand for emotional support in the face of what had just happened. The first thing that went through Paul's mind was the realization that, although George had been surprised to find the two of them floating, he had not been surprised at her ability to do so. George and Martha took a few moments to untangle themselves from each other then sat up on the sofa facing George's parents.

Paul was the first to break the tense silence with several questions. "Who exactly are you? Are you a descendant of Superman? Do the Kents know about you? What does my son have to do with this?"

George and Martha both looked at each other inquiringly. Martha shrugged and commented. "They deserve an explanation." Then they both looked back at Ellen and Paul trying to figure out just what to say to them.

George was the one to respond. "First off, Martha ..." He combed his hand affectionately through her hair. "... really is the daughter of Clark and Lois Kent and they know all about her. Second, we really are married. Everything you have heard about what happened to us is true. The only thing that we didn't tell anybody was that there was something else in that punch that caused Martha to be affected the same way as everyone else at that party." He looked inquiringly at Martha wondering just how much he should tell them.

Martha decided to help him. "As far as **who** I am, I really am Martha Ellen Kent, ah **Kennedy**." She paused a moment then stood up. "Perhaps it would be easiest to just show you." With that she became a whirling blur and a second later Supergirl stood before them. "This is just a disguise, a costume and an attitude that I take on when I'm using my special abilities to help."

George glanced at Martha standing there in her Supergirl persona and shrugged then commented. "You have to admit; when I blunder into something it's never just a minor blip on the radar." He smiled up at Martha as he reached out and took her hand, giving it a squeeze. "But this time, I think I've actually ended up winning the jackpot for a change. I just hope that I'm smart

enough to avoid messing up and losing the best thing that has ever happened to me."

Paul and Ellen both stared at Martha in amazement. After a few seconds Ellen spoke, her voice quavered a bit echoing uncertainty, surprise and amazement. "George, You're married to Supergirl!?" She blinked twice. "Supergirl is my daughter-in-law!?"

"No," George replied. "I'm married to Martha Kent. Like she said, Supergirl is just a disguise she uses so that she can use her powers openly in public."

Paul finally spoke. "So does that mean that you're really Superman's daughter and the Kents adopted you?" In a way, it made sense to him that Superman might want to hide his son and daughter among normal people until they were old enough to start using their powers. Then in the next second, he realized that George had said that she thought of herself as Martha and Supergirl as the disguise. So how did that affect her relationship with Superman?

Ellen continued to try to wrap her head around the concept that her son was married to Supergirl.

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### Reality Intrudes

Martha and George looked at each other as they both realized that Paul had unwittingly given them a way to distance the rest of her family from Superman and Superboy. George shrugged and spoke so quietly that only Martha would be able to hear him. "It's up to you how you want to answer that."

Unknown to the others, Martha shifted into super speed. She had found this to be a useful trick when she had a difficult decision to make and very little time to make it. She could stick with the interesting concept that her father-in-law had just given them. But she disliked hiding things this important from people that were important to her. She had faith that George would support whatever she decided but she didn't like the idea of causing George to lie to his parents.

"Oh, Daddy I could really use your help right now." She sighed in frustration. She glanced around at the other three people in the room trying to decide how she should respond. If she told the truth then the rest of the family secret would become obvious to her in-laws.

She was startled by the sound of her father's voice responding at super speed. "What is it that you need, Princess?"

Her father's voice had come through loud and clear from somewhere outside of the apartment building. She released George's hand so that she wouldn't inadvertently injure him while operating at super speed. Then she quickly scanned through the walls. She spotted her father floating, hidden, just inside the foliage of a tree in the small park like courtyard at the front of the apartment building across the street. "How?"

"I was out on a rescue when I felt your confusion and then I heard you call for my help. I came as quickly as I could."

No living being can hold perfectly still and Martha knew that her appearance was probably starting to blur so she started to spin change back as she explained the situation to her father. To the others in the room she had again become a whirling blur. They didn't notice that it took an extra tenth of a second to change. Her words were so fast, so soft, and so high pitched that they were nearly inaudible to normal human ears. The whooshing sound of her spin change would easily hide whatever sound wasn't outside of their hearing range.

Once her explanation was complete, Clark floated in place for a whole microsecond considering the situation from all angles. Finally, he asked her a very important question. "Do you believe that they can be trusted with the whole secret?"

She had been considering this very question while explaining the situation and she responded immediately. "I think that they can be trusted. I know that George's father admires and respects the

super family and he also respects the reporting team of Lane and Kent.”

Clark responded. “If you are expecting this relationship to last then it’s always easier in the long run to tell the truth.” There was another microsecond pause. “Maybe you can invite them over for dinner tomorrow and we can all talk about what this secret means.” Then Superman rose up out of the foliage and shot off toward home.

The next instant the whirling dervish was replaced by Martha minus her short dark wig and glasses.

She sat back down next to George and remarked. “This is as close to the real me as I can get. The dark hair and glasses are almost as much of a disguise as the Super uniform. This is my natural hair color. Both my natural grandmothers were redheads. Only George and my family ever get to see me like this. As for my parents, Lois and Clark are my natural biological parents and I am the daughter of Superman, which makes me half Kryptonian. Knowing those three facts makes you privy to just about the world’s biggest secret.” She paused to let her words sink in.

Paul saw the ramifications immediately. “Clark Kent is Superman?”

Martha nodded.

“How does Ultrawoman fit into all this?” Paul asked. Like most people, he had assumed that Ultrawoman was the mother of Superman’s kids. Marthahad referred to herself as ‘half’ Kryptonian therefore Lois could not be Kryptonian.

Martha responded. “In a way I am the daughter of Ultrawoman. Through an improbable set of circumstances, Mom ended up with Dad’s powers for a very short time. She created Ultrawoman so that she could use them to help without giving herself away. After a few days she lost the powers and Ultrawoman disappeared.” She shrugged. “I considered calling myself Ultrawoman when I decided to follow in my father’s footsteps but my first appearance happened before I was really ready to begin my career and the press named me before I could put in my vote.”

Paul paused to consider everything they had been told as he gazed at the girl sitting beside his son. In the last two days his world had been turned upside down more than once and he was still unsure how he should feel about all of this. It was obvious what his son got from this relationship. But what could this young woman who could have any man she wanted possibly see in his errant son? How long could such a lopsided relationship last?

George interrupted their thoughts. “You both know, of course that you can-**not** tell **anyone** about this ... don’t you? ... not even Scott and Cassie.”

“You don’t want to tell you brother and sister?” Ellen asked in surprise.

George shook his head. “To be honest, I wasn’t sure I wanted to tell you. This is a very big and potentially dangerous secret for anyone to know. I didn’t want to put you in the position in having to protect a secret like this. You can’t even let the slightest hint that you might know slip out.”

Paul nodded. “We understand. We will keep your secret safe.”

Several loose items in the room rattled as Martha’s head popped up. She appeared to stare into space for a moment then she jumped to her feet and exclaimed. “Oh My God!” She looked at the rest of the people in the room. “I’ve got to go.” She became a miniature tornado then Supergirl was once again standing there. She looked at George. “I’ll be back as soon as I can.” The next instant she was gone in a whoosh of swirling air and fluttering curtains.

Those left in the room stared at each other in surprise at this sudden exit. Finally, George got up and walked over to the open balcony door. As he closed the door, he spoke. “Somebody turn on the news. Maybe we can find out what happened.”

After a moment, Paul grabbed the remote from the coffee table

and turned on the TV. It was already set to LNN.

The news reporter was droning on about a controversial fishing rights law that had recently been introduced in ‘The House’. Paul was about to change the channel when the reporter was apparently interrupted. He placed a finger over his ear for a moment then looked down at something on the desk in front of him. A second later, he looked up and continued to speak. “We interrupt our program to bring this breaking news. There has apparently been a massive explosion near the Hobbs Bay area. There are reports of several buildings on fire. We will bring you further develop ...” He paused a moment then continued. “We just received a report that Superman and Supergirl have both just now showed up at the scene of the disaster.” Again he paused. “The LNN News-copter has arrived on the scene and we should have a live report in moments.”

A moment later, the view on the TV changed to an aerial view of a massive conflagration. Three Apartment buildings were on fire and there was a large geyser of fire shooting skyward from a pile of rubble where a fourth building had once stood. After a couple of seconds, a new streak of blue and red shot across the screen. The next second, the voice announced. “It appears that Superboy has also arrived to help in this major disaster.”

“Oh my God!” Paul unconsciously echoed Martha’s earlier exclamation. “That is terrible. They’re going to need every available officer.” He jumped up. “I have to go help.”

“But, Paul, it’s the middle of the night.” Complained Ellen. “Your shift doesn’t start for another couple of hours.”

“It doesn’t matter, Honey.” He ran to the hall closet. “They’re going to need every cop they can get. I’ll just be starting my shift a couple of hours early.” He pulled his gun belt from the closet safe then seemed to, finally, realize that he was wearing nothing but a bathrobe and underwear. “Damn.” He complained and ran into the bedroom.

Ten minutes later, he rushed out of the bedroom dressed in his uniform. “I’ll be back as soon as my shift ends.” Then he ran out the door.

After a stunned moment, Ellen and George returned their attention to the TV in the family room. On the screen they saw Superman dive straight down into the center of the fiery geyser while the other two zipped in and out of the other burning buildings. Each time one of the two younger heroes came out they would be carrying one or two people to safety. After a couple of minutes, the flame geyser began to diminish until it had finally gone out. Seconds later the Superman emerged from the pile of rubble and was soon rescuing survivors like his son and daughter.

At that moment police cars, ambulances and fire trucks could be seen arriving at the disaster. Next the news trucks arrived hot on their heels as police fire and rescue workers poured out of the many emergency vehicles.

The phone rang and Ellen answered. “Hello?” ... “No Paul has gone to help out at the Hobbs Bay fire.” ... “OK. Goodbye Captain.” She shrugged and hung up the phone.

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Paul placed a not quite regulation flashing light onto the roof of his car and raced toward the area that he had recognized from the TV images. He arrived just behind the news trucks and grabbed his spare high visibility police vest out of his trunk then ran over to where the police command van was parked while pulling on the vest.

“Where can I be of assistance?” Paul inquired as he stepped up to the open door of the command post van. As the others looked up Paul identified himself.

The Police Captain in charge sent Paul over to work crowd control at the emergency medical station where the most serious injuries were being dealt with. Paul was soon very busy keeping reporters and distraught relatives back from the area. Every few seconds one of the super heroes would drop down to deliver

another seriously wounded person.

Meanwhile the Fire fighters were trying to contain the fire as best as they could to give the Super Heroes more time to get the people out of the buildings.

After about five minutes he heard a cry of dismay from one of the paramedics. “We’re losing him! We can’t get him to the hospital fast enough.” They were working on a small child.

Paul looked around and saw Supergirl floating about sixty yards away and staring intently at one of the burning buildings. He yelled out. “Supergirl! We have an emergency over here!”

Supergirl glanced toward him then, after a look of surprise, zipped over to hover above where Paul was standing. “Over there.” He remarked as he pointed to the desperate paramedics.

Supergirl zipped over to the paramedic station and there was a short intense conversation. She quickly wrapped the child in her cape, then wrapped that bundle in one of the emergency thermal blankets. The next instant she vanished in a swirl of disturbed air and a louder than normal sonic boom. One of the paramedics nodded his appreciation at Paul then moved on to the next injured person.

Paul returned his attention to his crowd control duties.

Seconds later Supergirl returned and continued rescuing people from the burning buildings. As each of the super heroes brought another injured person to the paramedics, Paul could see the barely controlled stress in their faces. They were pushing themselves in a race against time to save as many people as possible. Their biggest limitation was the frailty of the people that they were rescuing.

Finally, the last of the survivors had been saved and the super heroes started working on putting out the fires at their hard to reach sources. Very shortly, the fires were under control.

Paul looked over curiously when a quiet cheer went up from some of the paramedics. One of them noticed Paul’s gaze and called out to him. “We just heard that the child Supergirl rushed to the hospital is going to make it.” Paul felt a slight lift to his spirits at the good news. The next moment he heard one of the nearby reporters repeating the same overheard news.

The next instant the smile vanished from Paul’s face as he spotted Supergirl carrying a very small limp form toward the area that had been set aside to receive the dead bodies. The look of deep sorrow on her face hit him like a mace. He could feel the pain that she must be going through at this moment and wished that he could just reach out to her and give her a hug just like Ellen often did when he came home after a particularly hard day. Superman appeared a short distance behind her carrying a much larger body. Superman’s face was also very somber. Though he showed better control of his emotions it was obvious to Paul that he was as deeply affected as Supergirl.

Then Paul realized just what his son brought into their relationship. His son’s caring compassion would serve the same purpose for Martha when she needed it. Maybe their relationship wasn’t as one-sided as he had thought after all. The super family may be physically invulnerable, Paul thought, but they were as subject to emotional trauma as anybody else. Surely they must need loving support in the face of difficult situations just as much as he did. Paul felt his heart go out to those three selfless heroes, especially the still very young Supergirl. After a few minutes to contemplate this idea, Paul finally turned his mind back to the task at hand. There was a crowd of spectators to control and a group of injured people to protect.

A few hours later, the Super heroes were gone, the dead and injured taken away. The news vans departed, and most of the spectators dispersed. Still, Paul remained at his assigned post while the fire inspectors and arson detectives moved in to pick through the remains searching for answers.

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As Ellen watched the news reports on the fire she had become acutely aware that one of those three blue and red clad figures

zipping in and out of that scorching inferno was her new daughter-in-law. She glanced over at her son. He was watching the action on the screen with single-minded intensity.

As she watched her son’s expressions, pain washed over his face and he groaned a soft, “Oh, no.” His fists clenched as he shook his head.

Ellen looked back at the screen and gasped at the image of a somber faced Supergirl carrying the small body of a dead child. The news camera followed Supergirl as she carried her sad little burden over to where the coroner’s office had set up their area. Ellen realized that this type of tragedy must still be very new and disturbing for the young super hero.

As Supergirl delivered her burden to them, Superman came up carrying another body, his expression somber but controlled. Superboy arrived seconds later with another body. His expression was almost as devastated as his sister’s had been. Now that the last of the survivors had been rescued, they had begun the gruesome task of recovering the bodies of those that had not survived. With no more survivors to worry about, this task went much more quickly but the toll on the three super heroes was plain to see. With each body that Supergirl carried from the collapsed buildings, the look of despair on her face became, darker.

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An indeterminable time later the three super heroes had finished their final sad task and left the scene. Five minutes later the balcony door opened and a stricken Supergirl stood in the opening, her face a tragic mask, her eyes shimmered with barely contained sorrow.

George shot out of his chair and strode purposefully toward her. The next instant he was holding her tightly in his arms.

Martha released a deep sob into his shoulder. “She was so small and I just couldn’t get to her soon enough.” She choked out in a very unsteady voice.

George rocked her gently as he spoke softly to her. “We saw on the TV what happened. I’m so sorry that you had to go through such a terrible experience. I don’t care how powerful you are, no one can go through something like that without being shaken up.”

Martha continued speaking into his chest. “She was buried so deeply and there were others trapped in the layers above her.” She gave a half-stifled sob. “If only I had been a little faster, I might have gotten to her in time.”

George tightened his arms around her and shook his head in denial. “Even you can’t save everyone but you did the very best you could. We heard what the experts on the TV were saying about the situation. They all agreed that the three of you were accomplishing the impossible. You were pulling survivors out of there as fast as you safely could and you saved so many people. No one could have possibly done any better and a lot of people are **alive** tonight because **you** were there. They announced that the child you rushed to the hospital survived because you were fast enough to get it there in time for the doctors to save its life. Nobody, not even your father, could have done any better. Without your help over a third of those that survived would have died.”

George had been telling the truth with that last statement. Some wit within the network had added a line of text at the bottom of the screen that showed a running total of the number of lives saved by each of the three super heroes. George had thought it to be rather crass but it did give him license to truthfully report that she had saved more people than either her father or her brother..

Martha sank even deeper into George’s embrace, soaking up his love and reassurance. “But she was so small ...” She softly complained, mostly to herself.

George gently kissed the top of her head. “I know honey, I know. I’ve been a fairly rabid fan of yours since your first appearance, so I know that this was, by far, the worst situation that you have ever faced. I was so proud of how well you handled yourself out there.” He let out a deep sigh. “It’s just such a shame



that the first body you had to retrieve was so young.”

George’s mother watched quietly as the small drama played itself out. Seeing her son comforting a distraught Supergirl was a revelation to Ellen. She had been thinking that the two of them were so completely mismatched. Supergirl was so far out of his league. What could her son possibly bring into this relationship? Supergirl had always seemed so much larger than life. Now, in her son’s arms, the young super hero looked so tiny and frail. Martha had needed George’s comfort and Ellen could see the girl’s posture slowly begin to relax under her son’s gentle ministrations. Ellen didn’t bother wiping away the tears that were forming at the corners of her eyes.

Finally, once Martha had her emotions under better control, George pulled back slightly and gazed with gentle compassion into her face. “Do you want to go home now?”

She nodded. “Uh, hu, would you please take me home?”

“I think I can do that, if you’re willing to do the heavy lifting.” He responded with a half smile.

She gave him a watery half smile in return. “I think I can manage it.” She paused to look over at George’s mother. “Dad suggested that I invite you both over for dinner tomorrow ...” She glanced at the old grandfather clock that stood in the corner of the room. George had told her that it once belonged to his great grandfather. “uh, I mean, this evening. I hope you can come.”

Ellen nodded, still a bit dazed by all that she had witnessed this night. “We’ll be there.”

Martha hugged George close, then rose from the floor and drifted toward the still open balcony door. “Bye for now.” Then she and George were gone.

Deep in thought, Ellen quietly went over and closed the balcony door. Her son was married to Supergirl and tonight she would be dining with Superman and his family. She shook herself out of her star struck mood. She had to remember to think of them simply as the Kent family when she met them for dinner tonight.

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A short time later that morning, as George lay holding a contentedly sleeping Martha, the events of the explosion and fire kept running through his mind. Finally he got quietly out of bed, grabbed his laptop computer and went downstairs. He sat at the breakfast table, opened up his private journal file and wrote up a report of the incident as it had appeared on the TV broadcast. Then he wrote down his thoughts on the episode and how such things must affect the super heroes. Although not stated specifically, he did include some thoughts that were the result of his first hand experience when Martha had returned from that terrible disaster.

“That is some very impressive writing.” Commented a female voice from behind him and startling George. “What do you plan to do with it?”

George turned around to see Lois standing right behind him. “Nothing really.” He shrugged. “Sometimes, when I’m confused or my thoughts are in turmoil, I find that writing it down helps me think it all through ... to settle things in my mind. That’s what this file is for. I use it as a sounding board.” He looked back at his computer screen. “It has helped me a lot tonight though it would probably be best if I deleted it. I wouldn’t want anyone else to see it in case I unintentionally put too much information in it.”

Lois sat down at the table next to George. “I know how personal a journal can be so I would understand if you said no, but before you delete it would it be alright if I read it?” She did not look upset and seemed honestly curious.

George shrugged again. “It is a bit personal, but I’m sure there isn’t anything here that you haven’t felt as well, so I suppose it’s OK.” He swiveled the laptop toward her.

She scrolled to the top of the article and began to read. She chewed on the corner of her bottom lip and her frown deepened as she continued to read. Finally, she looked up at George, her eyes shimmering with strong emotion. “That is some very good

writing, very insightful.” She paused a moment composing herself. “What would you title this article if you were to publish it.”

George was surprised by her question and remarked. “I hadn’t really thought of a title ...” He considered the concept seriously. “The best thing I can come up with, off the top of my head ... is ... **‘Sometimes Even Super Heroes Can Fail’** ... or something like that.”

She nodded. “Mind if I make a suggestion?”

“Sure, I don’t mind.” He replied.

She thought a moment then spoke. “Don’t delete that entry. Copy the article to a new separate file; edit out anything too personal; add that title and your byline and I’ll send it to Perry.” She took in his incredulous look. “I have been thinking of writing an article like that for awhile but I could never come up with the right words. This article says what I wanted to say beautifully.” She glanced at the clock. “If I know Perry, He’s holding up the morning edition to get in every last scrap of information on that fire. If you are quick enough and he likes it, he might even put it in the morning edition.”

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### Morning At The Planet

Perry White turned on his computer as he sat down at his desk. He had come in as soon as he had gotten word of the gas explosion. The instant the computer came up he was checking his incoming files. In his in-box folder were half a dozen new articles, including the expected two from Lois and Clark about the explosion and fire last night. He was momentarily reminded about Martha. It was good to see her home safe and see Supergirl back in action. He returned his attention to his in-box and noticed a group of photos from James, he still thought of him as Jimmy Olsen. There would be more than enough to fill the front page of the morning edition.

After a short time, Perry sat back with a sigh of satisfaction. Lois and Clark and Jimmy had done it again. Two excellent articles and a dozen great pictures. This morning’s edition was going to sell out fast. He called the print room and told them to be ready to print up two full runs the instant that they received the finished pages from him.

He glanced back at the picture currently displayed on his screen. Supergirl was in the foreground carrying the body of a young child and behind her was Superman carrying the body of a woman. Superman’s face was very somber but it was the look of desolation on the face of Supergirl that drew the eye and hit one in the gut. It was an award-winning picture. He just wished he had a proper article to go with it so that he could use it in this morning’s edition. Maybe he could get Lois or Clark to write a story to go with it for the evening edition.

A short time later Perry had just finished setting up the final layout for the morning edition when he was surprised by an alert telling him that another article had reached his in folder. A quick look informed him that Lois had sent it to him. The file was titled **‘Sometimes Even Super Heroes Can Fail’**. Immediately intrigued, he pulled up the file and was again surprised to see that the By-line was ‘George Kennedy’. That was the young fella that Clark had recommended to him the other day. He began to read.

As he finished reading, he wiped his eyes. He had the perfect article to go with that incredible picture of Jimmy’s. It was so easy to see why Clark had recommended the guy. He quickly rearranged the layout to include the picture and the new article below the fold then sent the completed files to the printers.

He leaned back in his chair and smiled. This morning’s edition was going to take Metropolis by storm.

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George woke up to the feel of a warm body pressed tightly up against his. He ran his hand up along silksmooth warm skin until he reached a soft breast and stopped.

The warm body wriggled seductively. “Mmmmm, don’t stop

now. That feels so good.”

“Don’t tempt me wench.” George smiled as he cupped her breast then kissed her behind her ear.

She turned in his arms until they were facing each other and wrapped both arms around him. “I know that we agreed that our first time, without that pheromone would be when we were both ready and in the mood ... but last night I needed it.” She rested her head against his shoulder. “I’m sorry that I jumped the gun like that.”

George chuckled. “Believe me, I have no complaints. Most of my memories of that time have returned and our first ... our first dozen times were all wonderful.” The quick kiss he gave her became very drawn out and he just went with the flow.

She finally drew away to look into his face, her eyes alight with emotion and a hint of pink in her cheeks. “Is that so?”

He grinned back at her and remarked. “Yes it is, but this time was even better.”

She giggled and turned bright red. “Yea, mine are all back as well.” She looked up into his eyes. “It **was** a pretty good honeymoon, wasn’t it?”

He kissed her passionately. “Like I said, I have no complaints.” At that moment, the alarm clock went off. She jumped out of bed and he whistled as he observed her lithe nude form.

Martha laughed. “Today is supposed to be my first day as a full time Daily Planet employee.”

As Martha started to turn toward the closet, George climbed out of the bed and pulled his robe off the foot of the bed then put it on, all while still admiring the view of her moving toward the closet. “I’m going to miss you today.” He remarked as she opened the closet door.

Martha paused a moment then turned back to face him. Her eyes lit up with inspiration. “Why don’t you come to work with me? Dad told me that Perry wanted to meet you. I could introduce you to him and show you around the place afterward.”

“Are you sure that Mister White won’t mind you bringing a stranger in with you?” He inquired. “I’m not supposed to meet with him until later this week.”

“Naw, Perry will probably love meeting you.” She responded with a twinkle in her eye. “And besides, this isn’t an interview, it’s an introduction. You’re not a stranger; you’re my husband ... and my lover.” She grinned wickedly at the stunned look on his face. “I call shower first.” Then, in a blur of high-speed motion, she grabbed her robe, snatched some clothes from the closet, and left the room.

George stood there moment staring at the open bedroom door as the words ‘you’re my husband and my lover’ echoed repeatedly through his head. Then the spell broke and he called out after her. “Hey! You cheated.” Then he laughed. Everything about her just made him feel happy. He thought about just following her to the shower. That thought brought out a sly grin. Then he saw Lucy walk past the open bedroom door. He wondered if that would be a good idea in a crowded house full of people with super hearing. Then he thought about last night. “Oh boy!” He mumbled to himself as his own cheeks turned bright red.

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George and Martha came down together to find most of the rest of the Kent family at the breakfast table. Jonathon and Kristen had returned to their own home yesterday morning.

Clark looked up and smiled at them. “Good morning, princess. Ready for your first day working full time?”

“Sure am.” She replied. “I was thinking of taking George into work with me this morning and showing him around. You don’t think Perry will mind, do you?”

Lois responded. “After that article last night, I think Perry would love to meet him.”

“Article?” Martha and Clark inquired simultaneously.

Lois smiled at Clark. “Check the morning edition when you

get to the office.” She replied, a bit enigmatically.

Martha looked over at George. “Do you know what she’s talking about?”

George shrugged. “I think so. I was writing in my journal last night and your mother saw part of it. She insisted on sending last night’s entry into Perry.” He shrugged again.

“Oh!?” She inquired.

George glanced over at Lois, his grin mirroring hers. “You’ll have to check it out in the paper when we get there.”

Martha glanced back and forth between George and Lois. “Mom, I think you are a bad influence on my husband.” She remarked with a huff.

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Lois, Clark, Martha and George stepped out of the elevator onto the pressroom floor. The activity in the bullpen was in full swing as all the reporters were busily engaged in doing their jobs. Lois and Clark immediately headed for their desks. George and Martha both stood at the top of the ramp taking in the ambiance of the busy newsroom.

Their quiet contemplation was interrupted by a bellow from the other side of the room. “Martha, you’re late! In my office, now!”

“Come on.” Martha grabbed George’s hand and started pulling him down the ramp into the bullpen.

George looked over at her and was surprised to see her grinning from ear to ear. Hardly the expression one would expect from a new employee that had just been yelled at for being late their first day on the job. Very shortly, she pulled him into the Editor-in-Chief’s office and closed the door behind them. Perry stood in front of his desk glaring at them. George felt the irresistible urge to fidget even though Perry barely gave him a slightly curious glance.

Perry stepped toward them, then his expression softened to one of concerned compassion as he threw his arms around Martha. “Darlin’, I am so glad to see you home, safe and sound.” He took her by the shoulders and held her out at arm’s length. “We were all so worried about you when you disappeared.” His expression turned a bit more serious. “You are OK aren’t you? Nothing bad happened to you while you were under the influence of that evil drug, I hope? Your parents haven’t told me anything about what happened to you after your disappearance. All they would tell me was that they had found you and you were OK.”

She smiled back at Perry. “No, nothing ... **bad** happened to me ... **strange**, maybe, but not bad.”

Perry cocked his head at her curious statement. He considered asking for more then changed his mind. “If you ever need anyone to talk to about ...” He glanced again over at George. “anything, you know where to find me.”

“I know Uncle Perry.” She responded, knowing that he was referring to last night without referring to it in front of a stranger. “I’m doing just fine now.”

Perry nodded then shifted his attention more fully on George. “And who is this young fella’ you dragged into my office?”

Martha grinned wickedly. “Oh’ this is my new husband.”

“What!?” Perry bellowed, causing George to take an involuntary step back.

“We met for the first time shortly after drinking the spiked punch at the graduation party. We bumped into each other on the dance floor where he used the most awful pick-up line I’ve ever heard.” Martha shrugged. “A short time later we ran off and got married.”

“What!? But ... But ...” Perry sputtered nearly incoherently.

Martha continued. “After the drug and the resulting initial shock wore off, we discovered that we still were attracted to each other and we didn’t really want to end our marriage so we decided to try to make this thing work despite how it started.”

After a few moments’ silence, Perry finally spoke in a much

more subdued voice. “Martha, darlin’, are you both sure you know what you are getting yourselves into?” He paused, glancing over at George, then continued at an even more subdued voice. “You say you were total strangers before the party ... Does he ... ah ... you know ... ?”

Martha giggled. “I flew both of us to Vegas to get married, then to Hawaii for our honeymoon, and he informs me that I tend to float in my sleep.” She glanced at George. “After all that, I don’t think he had much trouble figuring out what I do in my spare time.”

Now it was George’s turn to look shocked. “Mister White knows?”

Martha looked over at George. “He’s known my parents for twenty-five years, and he certainly didn’t get to be Editor-in-Chief of the Daily Planet because he can yodel.” Martha responded with a laugh. “Of course he knows.”

“What about your parents? How do they feel about this?” Perry asked.

Martha giggled. “Once Mom got past the urge to explode, she decided that he really isn’t such a bad guy. Mom and Dad are both behind us in this.”

Perry started to extend his hand. “I guess congratulations are in order ...” He paused. “Aahh, what did you say your husband’s name was?”

“Oh, I apologize.” Martha spoke up. “Perry White, this is my new husband, George Kennedy.”

Perry’s brows furrowed in thought as he cocked his head for an instant. Then his eyebrows shot up as he continued to grab George’s hand. “You wrote that article that Lois sent me last night.”

“Yes, sir.” George replied, sheepishly.

Perry’s face cracked a smile. “Son, that is some of the finest writing I have seen from a rookie in a long time.” He paused and his head cocked the other way. “And Clark tells me that you might be interested in writing for the Planet.”

George nodded. “Sir, any journalist with more than three brain cells to rub together wants to work for the Daily Planet and I’m no exception.”

Perry grinned. “Glad to know you feel that way.” He looked George over as though appraising him then smiled. “Why don’t you let Martha show you around and when you get back we’ll get your employment paperwork filled out.”

George blinked twice as the words sank in then replied. “Thank you, Sir.” George grinned back. “I really appreciate this chance.”

“Call me Perry.” He remarked, then released George’s hand and turned back to Martha and the concerned compassion look was back. “I wanted to see you before you had a chance to see the morning paper.” He sighed. “I know that last night had to be particularly hard on you and I felt that I should warn you that the two front page pictures are particularly stark and emotional, especially the one of you. I just didn’t want you to come upon it unaware.”

“That’s alright, I’m fine, now.” She looked lovingly over at George. “Although I don’t know how I would have made it through if George hadn’t been there for me when I needed it.”

Perry looked back at George with a definite increase of respect. “I’m glad to hear it. Well young man, you continue to take good care of our Martha and we should have no problems.” He glanced down and noticed that George and Martha were now holding hands. With an embarrassed clearing of his throat, his normal bluster returned. “Now get out of here and take a look around the place.” His glance shifted to Martha and his expression sobered a bit. “As for you, young lady, I expect to hear the whole story, or at least as much of it that is fit for these old ears, when you get the time.”

“Sure thing, Uncle Perry.” She responded with an impish grin and a sloppy salute.

“None of your sass, girl.” He waved at the door. “Now get out of here.”

As she reached for the office door, she paused. “By the way, we got married in ‘The Chapel of Blue Suede Deliverance’.”

Perry’s eyebrows shot halfway up his forehead then he shook his head. “Bet Lois loved that.” He muttered as Martha and George exited the office. As the images swirled through his imagination, he began to laugh.

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As they exited the office, a middle-aged man approached them. He had a donut in each hand, one of which he held out to Martha. After a quick curious glance at George, he addressed Martha. “Are you ready for your first day as an official staff photographer?”

“I sure am.” She sketched another quick salute with the hand holding the donut.

Jim Olsen’s expression became more sober. “Have you seen this morning’s paper yet?”

George looked more closely at Jim’s face wondering just what the man knew and what picture Mister White had been referring to. Martha’s expression became more serious. “No, I haven’t seen it yet but I have been warned.” After a quiet pause, Martha’s expression brightened and she turned toward her husband.

“George, this is Jim Olsen, head photographer for the Planet and my immediate supervisor.” Then she took a bite of the donut.

“George?” Jim cocked his head curiously at George. He wondered if this had anything to do with that article in this morning’s paper.

Martha quickly swallowed then responded. “Sorry, this is George Kennedy ...”

Jim reached out his hand. “It was you that wrote that amazing article in this morning’s paper. It’s a real pleasure meeting you.”

“... and my new husband.” Martha continued.

Jim stood there with his hand halfway extended looking completely dumfounded for a full two seconds. Then the wheels began to turn in his mind. It had to be that pheromone laced punch. “Your husband? You got married?” Suddenly the article he had read took on a completely new meaning. “He knows?”

Martha rolled her eyes. She leaned in close and spoke in a low voice. “Of course he knows, he’s married to me.”

George coughed and Jim sputtered while Martha laughed. George gave Martha an inquiring look and she nodded her head. He looked at Jim to see him looking back.

Finally George spoke. “We married in Vegas and honeymooned in Hawaii. Somewhere along the way I got a clue.”

Jim shook his head. “Kids!” He grouched. “I just wanted to let you know that there is a press conference about yesterday’s fire and we are supposed to get some pictures for the evening edition.”

“OK. If you don’t have anything for me this morning, I’m supposed to show George around. Perry has hired him.” She glanced speculatively at George. “Then I’m going to find a copy of this morning’s paper and read the article that everyone seems to know about but me.”

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George sighed as he finished filling in the last of the stack of paperwork that the woman in Personnel had given him. He glanced up at Martha sitting across the conference table from him. She looked up from the newspaper she had been reading, her eyes shimmering with emotion.

After a moment, she set the paper on the table and spoke. “This is one of the reasons I’ve been fallen in love with you. You really understand me. You know what I need and you support me when I feel like I’ve reached the end of my rope.”

“All I do is give you my love.” George responded.

She smiled back. “That is a lot to give anybody.”

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### Epilogue

Martha looked down at the tiny newborn infant that she held in her arms. “Oh my, she is so beautiful.” Martha looked over at her parents, who were smiling happily back at her.

The infant had finished her first meal and now cut loose with a huge yawn that threatened to crack her face in half. Then she proceeded to emit a loud burp and spit up on Martha’s shoulder.

Lois chuckled at the look on Martha’s face. “Oh she definitely reminds me of you at that age.”

Martha held the infant out away from herself as Lois swapped out the dirty cloth for a clean one. She gave the infant a look that was part annoyance and part amused indulgence. “Keep that up kid and I might just give you back.”

She placed the baby back on her shoulder and soon got one more tiny and un-messy burp. She smiled at the now drowsy infant. “Well I think it’s time to give you back to your mother.” She reluctantly handed the baby back to her brother’s wife, then looked wistfully at the little family. It had been six months since the pheromone incident and as she gazed at her brother’s family she thought about her decision that day and wondered how things might have been different if she had made a different decision. She looked down at her growing belly. There was no doubt that it was the direct result of those three pheromone-fueled days.

Everyone’s attention was drawn to the hospital room door as it burst open and an out of breath George hurried into the hospital room. “Sorry I’m late. I got a bit bogged down by some last minute errands at ‘The Planet’.”

Martha smiled looking down at her wedding ring as George put his arms around her from behind. No doubt about it. The first couple of months of their marriage had been extremely chaotic and filled with probing questions from friends and a fair share of hysterics from George’s family. She felt his hands gently caress her belly and leaned back into him with a contented sigh. In the end it had all been worth it and she would never regret her decision to give their marriage a chance.

THE END

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