

Born to Fly

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Rated: PG

Submitted: August 2019

Summary: Learning to swim can be absolutely magical.

Story Size: 1,244 words (7Kb as text)

Disclaimer: I own nothing. I make nothing. All Lois and Clark characters, plot points, and recognizable dialogue belong to DC Comics, Warner Bros., December 3rd Productions and anyone else with a stake in the Superman franchise.

Author's Note: This story is in response to the Five Word Summer Challenge posted on the Lois and Clark FanFic Message Boards. The only requirement was that the following five words appear in the story: Lemonade, Pink, Pool, Float, Cape.

Six-year-old Lois Lane stood at the edge of her grandparents' pool. She was a little nervous, but mostly determined. After weeks of patient lessons from her grandfather, she finally felt ready to swim on her own. No water wings. No float. Nothing. She was *ready*. How hard could it be? Her grandmother and grandfather easily cut their way through the water when they swam. Legs and arms, working together. Remember to breathe. Easy.

Still, she had to wait. It was nearly dinner time, which meant she was expected to be out of the water and sitting at the picnic table at the far end of the pool area. As it was, her grandmother was already laying out the utensils and plates. Lois hurried to help, even if that only meant keeping an eye on nearly three-year-old Lucy. She didn't mind. It wasn't like her baby sister could get into trouble, safe and secure in the small playpen their grandparents had erected under the huge umbrella that shaded the table and a good three feet extra all the way around.

She stood at the side of the playpen and played with Lucy, wondering when things would get *really* fun and they could do all sorts of sisterly things like she saw in the cartoons she watched every Saturday morning. That would be something indeed! Way more fun than just stacking wooden blocks with a toddler. It would make times like this easier to bear too, she hoped. She missed their parents terribly. But their mother and father had spent the better part of the summer working crazy hours and putting in a lot of something called "overtime" that Lois didn't really understand, other than it meant that she and Lucy had been practically living with their grandparents all summer. Now August was half over, and they'd done *none* of the family things Lois had wanted to do.

Oh well. At least she'd be swimming on her own before the summer ended. Then she wouldn't feel so bad when her classmates at school gloated over being able to swim underwater. Lois had been practicing religiously for weeks, and she *knew* she would nail it today. She'd come close yesterday, but she had forgotten to hold her nose on the way under the water and had flooded her nose and come right back up sputtering with her nose burning.

"Dinner's ready!" called their grandfather from where he stood at the grill, a plate heaped with slightly blackened chicken breasts.

Lois could smell the barbeque sauce from where she was standing, and her mouth watered. Quickly, she took her seat while her grandmother put Lucy in her high chair and then poured Lois a glass of pink lemonade. Lois grinned. Her grandmother *always* made the pink kind, which tasted *so* much better than the yellow

kind to her child's mind. She ate with gusto, her stomach growling in hunger from all the exercise she'd put in that day, doing laps with her water wings under her grandfather's watchful eyes.

"Grandpa?" she asked as the meal came to an end and she started to help clear the table. "Can I try swimming on my own again, without the water wings?"

Her grandfather chuckled, and his eyes sparkled. "Of course, Princess! Are you *sure* you're ready?" he asked kindly.

"I'm sure," she said defiantly, jutting out her little chin the way she'd seen heroes do in action movies.

That only made her grandfather laugh harder. "Okay, just as soon as we finish cleaning up, okay?"

"Okay!" Lois happily agreed. She worked even faster.

It was less than fifteen minutes before everything was either in the sink, wrapped up and put in the fridge, or scraped into the garbage pail. While her grandmother took Lucy for a bath and bedtime, her grandfather cleaned the grill, washed up, and then jumped in the pool with a perfect cannonball. He popped back up halfway across the pool and waved to Lois with both arms in a "come on" gesture.

"Okay, Lois, I'm ready. Jump on in!" he encouraged.

Lois closed her eyes against the butterflies that suddenly took wing in her belly. Then she backed up, got a not-quite-running start, held her breath, and jumped in. *Splash!* Right under the water she went, this time, with her fingers pinched tightly around her nostrils. She opened her eyes and let go of her nose, taking in a moment to enjoy being completely submerged. Then she remembered how to scoop at the water with her hands and kick with her feet. In no time, she was steadily making her way to where she could see her grandfather's hairy legs standing.

He was smiling when she surfaced. Smiling and laughing with pride. Lois beamed with her own sense of pride. But she was also a little sad that her mother and father hadn't been there to see it.

"Lois, that was great!" her grandfather praised her as she treaded water.

"I want to keep swimming. Can I grandpa? I'll go right to sleep later if you let me," she bargained. "I promise."

"Okay, sure. Practice is important after all," he told her with a wink and a laugh.

"Thank you! Thank you!" she gratefully cried, then she was submerging herself once more and flying across the pool even faster.

Flying.

It felt like flying. To be suspended with her feet off the ground. To float in a space that wasn't quite on the ground nor up in space. To cut through the water without running. To feel almost weightless as she zoomed back and forth.

Flying.

She loved it.

"Okay, okay, I think that's enough for tonight," her grandfather told her an hour or so later. The sky above had changed from the warm orange glow of sunset to the muted purple-black of the oncoming twilight. "Save some energy for tomorrow. You're like a little mermaid, you know that?" he told her, affectionately tousling her wet hair.

"Okay," she begrudgingly agreed. She couldn't resist one extra, quick underwater swim to the ladder though.

Her grandmother appeared at the sliding glass door as Lois exited the pool. She came out and draped a bright pink and blue tie-dye patterned towel around Lois' shoulders like a hero's cape.

"I saw you from Lucy's window," she told Lois with a smile. "You looked great out there."

"Thanks, Grandma," Lois said proudly.

"She's a regular mermaid," her grandfather remarked as he pulled himself out of the water.

But Lois knew, deep inside, she didn't *want* to be a *mermaid*. Somehow or another, she would find a way to fly. Be it as a pilot

or an astronaut or hang glider instructor or something she hadn't even thought of yet. Yes, she would find a way. Swimming was great and all, but Lois now knew a bigger truth.

She was born to fly.

THE END