

# No Receipt, No Return

By [Endelda <endeldas.writing@gmail.com>](mailto:endeldas.writing@gmail.com)

Rated: PG

Submitted: May 2019

Summary: Clark reassures Lois after a crisis of confidence.

Story Size: 3,173 words (17Kb as text)

**Disclaimer:** I own only the products of my own imagination. All recognizable Superman characters, plot points, & dialogue belong to DC Comics, Warner Bros., December 3rd Productions & anyone else with a stake in the Superman franchise.

Thank you to NostalgiaKick who beta'd for me, to Folc4evernaday who threw a Hail Mary Pass with some mushy dialogue when I was stuck, and to Deadly Chakram who told me I had to write it when I shared the prompt with her.

So I saw a post on Imgur that was a screenshot from Twitter with the original poster blurred out, but Google says that loads of people have tweeted it and I couldn't track down the original for attribution.

The spoilerey prompt is at the end.

\*\*\*

Lois Lane-Kent was sitting on her sofa flipping through the channels for something to watch; her old Ivory Tower tapes had lost their appeal since her marriage. She was just starting to wonder if Clark would be home from his latest Superman rescue soon or if she should give in and order takeout, when her cell phone rang.

"Lois Lane," she answered. "Hey Bobby, what have you got for me?" She reached into the end table drawer for a notepad and a pencil. "Really? I can't believe you convinced him to talk to me! Where and when? Thanks, go get yourself a dinner at the Jade Rice Palace and tell them to put it on my tab." Lois hung up and placed a quick call to the restaurant to authorize Bobby's meal, then hopped off the couch to go upstairs and change into something more appropriate for her meeting.

She couldn't believe that Bobby had gotten Butch Mikkelsen to agree to talk to her! She'd been trying to pin the guy down for ages; he was the only lead she could find who might have information about who was distributing the newest drug that had been making the rounds and putting a lot of teens in the hospital. She headed for the townhouse door, then paused for a moment. She'd been trying to be better about checking the water level since she and Clark had gotten married a few months ago, but at the same time she was determined to hang onto the things that she felt were intrinsically 'her.' *I can't wait for Clark, who knows when he'll be back? I only have an hour to get to the meeting with Butch! Besides, I'll be fine. It's a public place and I can kick Butch's butt if he's not on the level.*

With that thought, she scribbled out a quick note, then folded it over and carried it into the kitchen where she stuck it to the fridge with the Superman shield magnet she'd bought over her husband's protests. *There, that should do the trick.*

\*\*\*

Clark flew in through their bedroom window and headed straight for the shower, washing the stink of the fire off and changing into more comfortable clothes at super-speed before heading downstairs to find his wife.

"Lois, I'm home!" he called as he made his way downstairs. He listened for her heartbeat when she didn't answer, but was met by silence. *It's 9pm*, he wondered, *where could she be?* He'd been planning to cook that night, but dinner plans were always on an ad hoc basis due to his Superman duties and he certainly didn't expect Lois to sit and starve because he had a rescue. *She must have given up and gone for takeout.* As he made his way into the kitchen to set the table and wait for his wife, he made a mental note to talk with Lois again about how to better prioritize his time now that they were married.

*Hmm, if she went for takeout I should have time for a quick snack before she gets back.* He was reaching for the door of the cabinet where his junk food was stashed when he saw her note (caught under that cheesy magnet that still made him cringe a tiny bit) and plucked it off the fridge to read.

*Clark,*

*Bobby got Butch Mikkelsen to talk to me! Meeting him at the Mended Drum at 8, have Spike meet me there if you beat me home.*

*Love,*

*Lois*

Clark gave an exasperated groan as he whisked himself back through the living room, up the stairs, and straight into the master bedroom closet to dig out his 'Spike' paraphernalia. The Mended Drum! That was the seediest dive in Suicide Slum! They had a standing order with Costmart for replacement bar furniture after the nightly brawl, and a brief attempt to class the place up with live entertainment a few years ago had ended when the owners discovered that the patrons tended to see the performers as moving targets with poor dodging skills. He zipped out through the window without bothering to spin back into his Suit; flying high and fast should be more than sufficient.

\*\*\*

Clark touched down in a grimy alley behind the bar and tugged his jacket straight before heading toward the side door, helpfully propped open with a chunk of broken cinder block. He slipped Spike's dark sunglasses on and reminded himself to strut a bit as he made his way through the crowd in search of 'Angel.' Any attempt at picking out her heartbeat was thwarted by the skull-rattling volume of what Clark assumed must be music. Judging from the enthusiasm of the dancers on the floor it was popular, but he could have sworn the drummer was just energetically slamming rocks together.

He finally spotted his wife at the bar and slowly made his way through the crowd in her direction, deftly dodging wandering hands and being careful not to make eye contact with any of the patrons. Clark groaned inwardly as Lois met his gaze with her own fiery but slightly glazed one.

"*Spike!*" she shouted with a slight slur as she leaned toward him. He caught her as she started to tip off the stool and eased her back upright.

"Hey Angel," he shouted back, "did you find what you were looking for?" He caught the barman's eye as the man tipped his head in Lois's direction, then shook it slightly. She was cut off for the night. Clark had met the proprietor of the Drum, as the locals called it, before as both himself and — on a few memorable occasions when the nightly brawl got a bit too enthusiastic even by Pansy Hunnhelm's standards — as Superman.

Pansy was quite a colorful character. His mother had named him Pansy because it was her favorite flower and she liked the way it sounded, and he looked exactly the way you'd expect a man named Pansy who'd managed to survive to adulthood in Suicide Slum to look. He was a towering individual who topped out at 6'4" and rippled with muscle. He had a ring of bright purple pansies tattooed around the crown of his shaved head just above his brow line, and ropes of vines intertwined with a thorny tribal design swooped down the sides of his neck and wrapped around

his bulging biceps. No one who'd met him would admit to finding his name the least bit humorous.

Clark nodded his thanks and turned his attention back to his spouse. He nudged her shoulder "Angel!"

She spun back toward him with her (unbeknownst to her) last drink in her hand, slopping a good portion of it onto the floor and a bit onto his jeans. "What!" she bellowed over the rhythmic thumping from the sound system. "That rat stood me up! I can't believe I shelled out for an Imperial Feast for that no-good—"

Clark cut her off before she started naming names. "What have you been drinking?" Her breath was nearly flammable and he knew it wasn't like her to let herself get too far on the drunk side of tipsy.

She grinned at him sunnily in an abrupt about-face of mood. "Espresso Martini! Want one? It's mostly coffee, so the caffieeeeene keeps you sober!" She leaned hard on the 'e' and started to giggle a bit, then hiccuped and gave her half-empty glass a vaguely offended look.

Clark raised an eyebrow and looked at Pansy. The man knew who 'Spike' and 'Angel' were from past interviews, although thankfully he could be trusted to keep the information to himself. The bartender grunted and leaned over the bar. "Mostly vodka and Kahlúa, with a shot of espresso and some syrup," he shouted to the curious reporter. "She's had four."

Clark nudged Lois's shoulder, then hastily steadied her again before she slid off the stool. "C'mon Angel, if that guy stood you up we should probably head home."

Lois's jaw set stubbornly. "No way! You know how much an Imperial Feast costs, and I'm not leaving until I've talked to—"

Clark cut her off again. "Angel, honey, he was supposed to meet you here *two hours* ago. Your bird has either flown, or he never landed to begin with."

Lois glared at him. "Thirty more minutes, *then* we can leave!" She shifted mental gears like a racecar driver and beamed as she tilted toward him. "Let's dance!"

Clark winced as he gently kept his armful of wife firmly on her stool. The music blaring through the speakers had spin. It had rhythm. It had a beat, and you could dance to it, but it wasn't any kind of dancing that he enjoyed, even in the arms of his lovely and spirited spouse. "Why don't I have a drink and keep you company instead?"

Lois's eyes widened with delight. "Great idea, a drink!" She spun her stool back toward Pansy. "I'll have another 'Spress... Press... coffee thingy, and he'll have a Kryptonite!" she chirped.

"I'll have a *what*?" her husband sputtered.

She grinned at him over her shoulder. "You'll love it, it tastes really tropical!"

Clark rolled his eyes and sighed as he gave in to the inevitable. He nodded to Pansy to indicate that he'd take responsibility for 'Angel' and that it was alright to give her another drink, but noticed with relief that this round seemed to be mostly espresso and syrup. He watched the bartender with a wary eye as the man cracked a small green glow-stick, then dropped it and a scoop of ice into a highball glass which he proceeded to fill with generous helpings of spiced rum, coconut rum, melon liqueur, and pineapple juice, before topping the concoction off with 151 proof rum.

*Good thing I'm Kryptonian*, he thought, as the first sip hit his taste buds. *Otherwise we'd both be staggering out of here!*

"Good, huh?" Lois gestured toward his drink. "All that rum and fruity frou-frou stuff, reminds me of our honeymoon!"

Clark took another sip and grinned wickedly at her, filled with a sudden warmth that had nothing to do with the alcohol he was ingesting. He leaned down and whispered in her ear. "You mean our honeymoon *plans*, right? Not the actual honeymoon? I don't remember a lot of rum or fruit juice in my apartment."

Lois gasped, then turned her head and nipped at his earlobe as she snaked her arms around him to seize a generous double

handful of his behind.

He shot upright in surprise at her public groping, then hooked an arm around his wife's waist and tugged her off the stool. "C'mon *Angel*," he shouted toward her ear, "if he's a no-show, let's get you back home."

She melted against him and purred in his ear. "Sure handsome, I'd go anywhere with you!" then went abruptly boneless. Clark laughed to himself as he exchanged an amused look with Pansy, slapped enough money on the bar top to cover their tab and then some, then hoisted her over his shoulder and went out the way he'd come in, ignoring the mix of jeers and laughter from the crowd as they left.

\*\*\*

Lois woke up as Clark was depositing her on the sofa in their living room. His feet were just leaving the floor when she cracked one eye open and asked where he was going.

Clark thumped back down to the carpet, then knelt to brush her hair out of her eyes. "I'm just going to change and get you something to eat, honey. I'm guessing you didn't eat anything before you went to meet Butch."

Lois shook her head and immediately regretted it as the room swooped and spun around her. She squeezed her eyes closed before answering. "I was in a hurry," she whispered.

Clark grinned. "I know you were. Just stay put and I'll be right back with some dinner, ok?"

She nodded faintly, swallowing hard as he zipped up to their bedroom, paused for a moment, then whooshed out the window in his Suit. She felt horrible. Her mouth was as dry as the Sahara and tasted like something had died in it, her eyes felt like hot scratchy marbles, and her stomach felt — there was a greasy roll of protest somewhere behind her navel as she tried to find the words and she gave up — awful. She reached up to run a hand through her hair and her fingers got tangled in the gummy coating of mousse and hairspray that she'd had to use to achieve 'Angel's teased and trashy 'do.

The easy tears of inebriation stung her eyes as she rolled off the couch and stumbled toward the kitchen for a drink. She was such a mess — why hadn't she waited? Now poor Clark had to deal with a drunk of a wife, just like her father. She started to sniffle as the tears rolled faster. She was going to lose him, she just knew it! Every relationship she'd ever had had turned into a federal disaster, and now she and her typical Lane Luck were doing everything possible to mess up her marriage too!

She staggered and hit their roll-top desk hard enough to knock a frame off the top. A sob burst out of her as Lois looked down to see what had fallen and saw her marriage certificate on the floor, surrounded by bits of its frame and shards of broken glass. The precious document was creased on the corner that had hit the floor first, and she cut her finger as she fished the paper out of the mess. Now weeping openly, she carried the certificate into the kitchen in search of a glass of water and a band-aid.

\*\*\*

Clark flew in through their bedroom window laden with takeout bags and was immediately alarmed. He could hear Lois's heart pounding a bit erratically, and he could smell blood and... smoke? His hair nearly stood on end as he rushed to the kitchen so quickly that he almost created a sonic boom on his way through the living room. He noticed in passing that his wife wasn't on the couch where he'd left her, and barely managed to refrain from tearing the kitchen doors off their hinges in his rush to find her. A quick sweep of the kitchen with his x-ray vision, and... there she was, crouching in the corner next to their dining set. She was struggling with something as he carefully approached her.

"Lois? Honey, what happened?" he asked her trembling back.

Lois shook her head as her movements became a bit more frantic. Clark straightened up and looked around the kitchen. A shattered glass lay in a puddle of water in front of the sink, several

broken eggs were dripping down the front of a cabinet, the fridge door was hanging open, and multiple drawers were spilling their contents onto the floor. He'd only been gone about fifteen minutes, what the heck had happened? He turned back to the source of the chaos, then spun back into his regular clothes and knelt down behind her. He paused for a moment as he heard a snuffle and the scratch of a match being struck, then rose up onto his knees and looked over her shoulder. He froze in horror.

"Lois!" he half-shouted. "What are you doing?"

The sniffling quickly degenerated to messy sobs again as she shot a glance at him over her shoulder. "I know you want out, Clark, don't lie!"

"I want *what*? No, I don't! C'mere!" He reached out to pull her into an embrace, but she shook herself and wiggled free, hunching further into the corner.

"Yes you do!" she insisted as she struck another match. "Look at me, I'm a mess! I'm drunk, and clumsy, and I can't cook — I couldn't even make eggs a la Katie Banks, and that's my one good non-chocolate, not-pasta thing!" Her poofy hair had collapsed into straggly clumps and her mascara was running. "I run off without you, and you're always having to save me, and you're *Superman*, and I'm a wreck! Ouch!" She shook out the match that had burned down to her fingertips and struck another. She shot him a gimlet glare for distracting her and for a moment he was supremely happy that he was the spouse with heat vision.

She turned away from him again and held the match to the creased corner of their marriage certificate with trembling hands. Her voice wobbled. "I know you want out, but too bad, buddy! I love you, and I'm not letting you go—" the paper started to catch, "—and good luck trying to return me without the receipt!"

Clark blew the flame out and scooped her into his lap despite her struggles, wrapping his arms around her and pressing his lips to her hair until she calmed a bit. "Can I tell you something?" he murmured against her ear.

Lois nodded and drew in a shuddering breath, braced for the worst.

"You drive me crazy," Clark whispered. "I never thought I could become so infuriated and entranced by someone all at once. I want to pull my hair out one moment and then hold you and never let go the next. You are everything I've ever thought, dreamt, or imagined, Lois Lane. I love you."

She wiped her face with her palms and craned around to look at him. "Really?"

Clark nodded solemnly. "Really. I love you, Lois. You're everything to me and I'm never going to leave or change my mind or disappear. I need you too much." He picked their marriage certificate up off the floor and reached up to slide his glasses down his nose. "But just in case you ever have any more doubts—" a quick dart of heat vision, and the document burst into flames, "—neither one of us is returning *anything*."

THE END

Prompt:

*Help, my wife got wine drunk and tried to set our marriage certificate on fire, saying "Good luck trying to return me without the receipt!"*