

110 Kisses: You're Family

By [Sara Kraft \(skfolc@gmail.com\)](mailto:skfolc@gmail.com)

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Summary: When Lois has dinner with Clark and his family, she has a few realizations, and when Martha so casually calls her family, she's not sure what to think. A kind of tag for the episode "Chi of Steel" and a smidge of a fix-it (barely) and also a self-imposed challenge to write 110 ficlets with kisses based on a list of 110 prompts on tumblr.

Story Size: 2,535 words (14Kb as text)

This story is part of the "110 Kisses" series. [View all the stories here.](#)

Author's Note: So, I saw 90sfangirl79 on AO3 post an awesome one shot based on a prompt from [this list](#), and she has a whole collection of them (and I'm way behind on my fic reading). And then I had this idea that I should write a kiss for every dang 110 prompts on this list. So...we'll see if that works out. Here's number 2. "You're family."

I immediately knew which episode I'd tie into when I read this prompt. AnnieM is always talking about this end scene in "Chi of Steel" where Martha says that Lois is family. It's this little "throw away" line that wasn't even scripted (at least in the script version we have), but has so much potential meaning. So, here's me trying to fix the fact that the line deserves a much more important role than the episode gave it.

A huuuuuge thank you to AnnaBtG for her BRing and excellent knowledge of the present tense (which is not a strong skill of mine...yet?)!! And thank you to SuperBek for cheerleading and helping me work through the ending!

I'm sitting here at the table with Clark's mom as Clark pours us all some wine. There are candles and a tablecloth and four sets of cutlery arranged just so, and I can't help but smile at how cute and a bit over the top Clark's dad has gone with this impromptu dinner party for four Mrs. Kent insisted upon.

"Okay, folks," Mr. Kent says from around the corner as he approaches the dinner table, his arms laden with plates heaped high with Chinese food. "Here we are, hot stuff. Eat hearty."

"Oh, Jonathan, it's beautiful," Mrs. Kent says as Mr. Kent sets a plate in front of each of us.

I'm glad she insisted. This is...really nice, having dinner with Clark and his parents. I feel a small pang of jealousy, or grief maybe, as I imagine that this was how Clark grew up—dinners with everyone in attendance and no one yelling at each other. But then I shake the sad thoughts away and smile—an actual, real smile—because I'm here eating dinner with my best friend and his amazing parents.

I pick up my fork, my eyes wide at the sight of all the delicious food. It all smells so good. I take a bite of whatever the noodle and chicken dish is, and it tastes amazing. "Delicious," I gush, praising Mr. Kent.

Next to me, Clark has a similar reaction. "Dad, I am impressed!"

Mr. Kent shrugs, spreading his hands wide in a show of modesty. "It's...beginner's luck," he claims.

I'm already on my third bite, and each different dish tastes just as good. "Oh, beginner's nothing," I tell him, grinning. "I haven't had Chinese food this good since... I've never had Chinese food this good!"

Everyone, including me, chuckles, and we're all quiet for a minute while we enjoy another bite or two of food. As I eat, I wonder why this feels so easy. Is it just because the Kents are all so kind and such good people? I smile at Clark when I catch him looking at me, and he smiles back as if he couldn't ask for anything more right in this moment. Or maybe that's why I'm smiling...

Mrs. Kent breaks the silence. "Jonathan, you look a little perturbed. Is something wrong?"

He puts his fork down, a look of deep consternation on his face, and asks her, "Martha, do I really just sit around all day and play checkers?"

I can barely hide my grin, watching him come to terms with the inequity of the division of labor. He'd really put his foot in his mouth a whole lot over the past few days, and while he is a good and honest man, it became clear to me this week that Clark had gotten everything chivalrous and feminist from his mother.

"No," Mrs. Kent says, her tone reassuring for a moment. But then, like the feisty woman I admire, she follows up. "Sometimes you watch football...read...take amazingly long naps..."

She lets the words hang in the air for a moment, and Mr. Kent shakes his head and scoffs, seeming pretty disgusted with himself, and I almost feel bad for the poor guy.

"...when we're visiting Clark," she emphasizes. She chuckles, and I have to admire her technique. "Back home, you're up at four a.m. running the farm, remember?"

"Well, so are you," he protests, still visibly upset.

I watch in almost fascination because...this is so very different from how my parents fought. This doesn't even

seem like a fight. I wonder if it's a fight. I'll have to remember to ask Clark later.

"Honey," Mrs. Kent continues, putting a gentle hand on her husband's arm, "the point of all this isn't that I work harder than you...but that we both work hard." She pauses to laugh, and it's almost as if her blue eyes are sparkling. "Except when we're visiting our son."

Seemingly reassured, Mr. Kent chuckles good-naturedly. "You know, this was fun," he says. "I'm almost sorry things have to go back to the way they were."

I have trouble biting back the grin again.

"Oh, they don't have to!" Martha assures him as his eyes go wide.

"What?" Mr. Kent asks, worried.

"You can keep making the meals." She takes another bite. "Mmm. You're good—"

Mr. Kent seems ruffled now. "Martha, I've got a confession—"

"—but personally, I'd order from Szechuan Palace. Now, the House of Hunan is great but all this garlic just gives me gas."

I'm grinning so hard my cheeks hurt, and I almost laugh, especially when Clark is so adorably embarrassed by his mother's candidness.

"Mo-om..." he chides quietly. "We're in front of company here..." I would swear Clark's blushing.

"Oh, I'm sorry, honey," she tells Clark, not really sounding sorry at all. "She's family," she adds, waving off his concern as if her words are just a matter of fact.

I duck my head as I pick my fork back up to continue eating. This is definitely...this is really nice, eating here together like...like a family. I can feel tears threatening at the back of my eyes, and I will them to go away. But then, as if he can tell what I'm feeling, Clark looks over at me and gives me that smile again, that smile that has always, always felt like it's just for me.

I pause mid-bite, my breath a bit unsteady for a second, before I smile back at him. Maybe it's the wine, but my cheeks are feeling a bit warm as well. I decide then that I just need to enjoy this meal and this company, relax and enjoy. Well, as much as I'm ever able to relax, anyway. Then again, being around all three Kents seems to have an almost calming effect on me.

Before I know it, it's well past ten in the evening. Mrs. and Mr. Kent—no, Martha and Jonathan, as they both insisted numerous times throughout our dinner to call them—are yawning and making their excuses to retire to Clark's bedroom to get some sleep. Thankfully, having just wrapped up the story about Harlan Black and his underground indentured servant trade, Clark and I don't have to go into work tomorrow. Unless news breaks, then I'll be there, of course.

But in the meantime, I kinda want to linger in Clark's apartment—in Clark's presence—as long as possible. Tonight almost feels a bit different, in a way, but I'm not quite sure how.

She's family.

There are so many things that could mean, and really, I ought to know better than to overthink this and assign more than face value to it. But...there's really no way I'm *not* going to overthink this.

So instead, I help Clark clear the dishes from the table and we wash and dry them side by side in a comfortable silence. Well, I'm sure Clark is comfortable, and I'm...almost comfortable. Really, I'm about as comfortable as I can get, outside of a nice bubble bath, a glass of wine, and an episode of *Ivory Tower*.

It's almost easy to lose myself in the silence, but the fact that Clark is standing so close to me is even more distracting. Every time his shoulder or hand brush mine, they send pleasant ribbons of warmth throughout my body.

With the dishes done and his parents sleeping, we both know, and neither of us wants to say it, that it's time for me to go home. We walk up the stairs leading to the front door of his apartment, and he grabs my coat from the rack and holds it open for me. I slip my arms through one at a time and then hold my breath as I wait for...that. His hands rest on my shoulders and linger there, as though he needs to make sure my coat is on properly, but maybe he just wants the excuse to touch me more. I hope he just wants the excuse to touch me more.

And then a part of me I hadn't realized was so close to the surface wonders why he needs the excuse, why I need him to have the excuse. Maybe...maybe he could just touch me because he wants to, because I want him to.

She's family.

I hear Martha's voice echo in my mind, and as Clark holds the door open for me and then follows me out, closing the door quietly behind him, I panic slightly, wondering what she meant by it, what I want her to have meant by it.

But the thought, the wonder...it's all a bit ridiculous, isn't it? Ridiculous and altogether too soon to even partially entertain the idea that Martha might be thinking of me as...

No, it's ridiculous. Clark is just my partner and my best friend. And he made it very clear that day outside what was left of the bombed Daily Planet building. He wants what I want—to be best friends and partners, forever.

That's...what I want. Clark, in my life, forever.

I just...I don't know what that means.

She's family.

The easy love and affection and laughter that was at the dinner table tonight, all night...how could I ever expect to be a part of that?

I stare up at the stars peeking through in the small courtyard in front of his building, and I feel silent tears start to fall. I can sense Clark close behind me, and I wish he'd touch me again.

"Lois...hey," he says softly, touching my shoulder. "Are you crying?"

He knows me so well, and that just...makes even more tears fall. I shake my head, but he already knows I'm lying. Maybe that's why I feel like I don't quite belong, at the dinner table or here in Clark's life at all. He's too good for me.

Without a word—because he knows what I need, he always seems to know—he gathers me up into his arms and gives me a lingering hug that's full of warmth and acceptance. "Why are you crying?" he whispers against my hair before he pulls back, his hands on my shoulders for a brief moment before he's reaching up to wipe away my tears. His touch is warm on my skin and I savor the feel of it.

"Your...your mom, she said..." I duck my head, unable to handle the concern and affection in his eyes right now, especially not now. "She said I'm...family. I just...I'm not sure..."

He blushes, and I watch as some sort of disappointment flashes through his eyes. It's gone so quickly that I can't be sure what it means, but my heart twists all the same. There was something disappointing in the comparison there, that idea that I am family, and I have to look away from him. I don't want to see that disappointment again, or whatever that was.

"Lois," he says, his voice just a rasp of my name.

I don't want to look.

But he knows me better than I know myself, and he must know that I need to look at him, so he shifts to face me and lifts his hand up to my chin, gently encouraging my eyes to meet his. "It can mean...whatever you want it to mean," he says softly, answering the question I haven't even had the courage to ask yet.

"What do *you* want it to mean?" I ask him, stalling for time as though he's put some sort of deadline on me deciding. He hasn't, at all, but there's something about this night that feels different, and part of me fears that there *is* a deadline.

The emotion flickering through his eyes this time is one of tortured yearning, matching the strain of his voice as he says my name. "Lois..."

He doesn't want to answer me, but I need him to say it first.

He won't, he can't...because he already did and I shut him down.

Which leaves it up to me. I have to be the one to say it, to say what I hope we're both thinking. But I open my mouth and the words won't come out.

So we stand there for several long seconds, separated only by inches, the look in his eyes so telling that he might as well be saying the words. My hands come up to rest on his chest—something I've done before, plenty of times, but without so much as a second thought.

His warmth comforts me, and there's a tingling there that...well, it's always been there, but lately it's been harder and harder to pretend that it's not. There's another second when time seems to stand still between us, and then I'm leaning in and rising up on my toes even as he's drifting toward me.

Our lips meet, and there's warmth and tingling there too, but also magic—a strange but intoxicating mixture of desire and comfort. His hands come up to frame my face, holding me as though I'm precious while he moves his lips against mine. His tongue presses gently against my lips, and I whimper as I melt further into the kiss, further into him and his warmth and affection and yearning. It feels like home—like I'm just where I'm meant to be.

And as he kisses me again, his arms wrapping around me and holding me even closer, I realize I'm okay not knowing the answer right away—not knowing what this all means. Because I do know something even more important—Clark will help me figure it out in time.

THE END