A Love Story

by The_Fallen_Sky

Summary

This is a Chlark love story.
His mother died suddenly a few weeks earlier. He puts up a brave front, doesn't let anyone know how much her death affects him, how much he's hurting. The others don't bother to look past his facade, take him at his word when he tells them that he's 'holding up' or 'doing fine'. Mostly, they leave him alone, too concerned with their own lives and the business of saving the world to really care if he's holding up or not. 'If he needs us, we're here', 'He seems fine to me', and 'If he was having trouble dealing, we'd know', are all any of them have to say on the subject.

She's shocked and disappointed by these people, the very same people who claim to be his friends, who owe him their lives several times over. She's told them as much, but they all dismiss her concerns saying she's overreacting.

She's not overreacting. And she's not imagining the sadness, pain and despair she sees in his eyes or the feeling that he's drowning, losing himself to an abyss of grief, unable and unwilling to ask for a lifeline.

She can't sit idly by and watch him drown, not when she knows she can save him.

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She steps out of the rental car onto the dirt driveway. It's been months since she's been here, but one look around and she feels like she never left. She may have grown up in the big city, currently live in another city, but she considers Smallville her hometown, and she considers this place, this farm, her home. She may not have ever lived here, but this is the place that always felt like home, always welcomed her with open arms, even when she felt unworthy. And the people who lived here, the one that still does, they were and are her family, he is her family, and he needs her.

She heads for the barn, because she knows that's where he is.

The place is quiet, save for the sound of her shoes against wood as she ascends the steps to the loft. There aren't any animals here anymore, and the silence, the distinct lack of life, is palpable and reminds her that there's even less life here now that Martha is gone, and her heart breaks all over again for the loss of the woman who was her friend and, if she's being honest, a surrogate mother.

Upon reaching the loft, her eyes immediately fall upon the couch, specifically the lone figure
sitting upon it. He's dressed in a blue t-shirt and jeans, his head bowed, his eyes focused on something, an object, held in his hands. He makes no move to acknowledge her presence, but she's certain he knows she's there.

After a moment's hesitation, she slowly makes her way over to the couch and quietly takes a seat next to him.

He still doesn't acknowledge her, hasn't moved since she arrived, just keeps staring at the object in his hands as if it's the only thing that exists in the entire universe.

Unwilling and unable to break the silence, she holds her tongue and looks at the object he finds so fascinating. Not surprisingly, it's a picture, specifically, it's a picture of the Kent family, Martha and Jonathan flanking a young Clark, all of them smiling brightly, their eyes shining with happiness and love, the epitome of the picture perfect family.

She can only imagine the mixed emotions he must be feeling as he gazes upon the past, a time when his world made sense, when the two people who mean the most to him were alive and well, and he knew he wasn't alone.

A thought occurs to her, a disturbing one at that. Does he think he's alone, that there's no one left in this world who loves him?

Her immediate reaction is to dismiss the thought as absurd, but looking at that picture and looking at him now, remembering the way he's looked so defeated these past few weeks, as if he's lost all hope, she can't help but believe that he believes he's completely alone.

All at once, she wants to grab him by the front of his shirt and shake him, look him square in the eyes and tell him, in no uncertain terms, that he most definitely is not alone, that someone in this world loves him and is here for him, but she settles for reaching out and laying her hand upon his, squeezing gently.

After several long moments, his focus shifts from the picture to their joined hands, lingering a moment, before he finally looks at her.

She's instantly struck by the grief and despair she sees within his cerulean orbs, and she can feel tears threatening to form in her own. She's never seen him so broken, so emotionally gutted, and she hates it, wants to fix it, wants to take away his pain and make him whole again, but she doesn't know how, doesn't know that she's capable, and that scares her. What if she can't help him? What if there's no way to heal the gaping wound in his soul? What if he continues to drown in his sorrow until he's consumed by it?

No. She won't let that happen, won't let him die a slow and agonizing death as he wastes away, consumed by sorrow and grief. She doesn't know how exactly, but she knows, absolutely knows, that she's capable of saving him, and that's exactly what she's going to do.

Without conscious thought or hesitation, she removes her hand from his and places it against his cheek, feeling the warmth of his skin, the roughness of the stubble.

His expression remains unchanged, but she feels him move, almost imperceptibly, into her touch, which causes hope to bloom in her heart.

She continues gazing into his eyes, captivated by the depth of emotion she sees there, can feel herself being drawn in. She knows that if she lets herself be pulled in by the whirlpool, she'll be in danger of drowning along with him, but she doesn't care. She's willing to accept any risk and the
potential consequences if it means she has a chance at saving him.

Leaning in, as if drawn by some unseen force, she kisses him, a gentle pressing of the lips meant to comfort and reassure.

It lasts but a moment before she pulls back a mere fraction, taking a slow breath, her eyes drifting shut.

A beat...

Two beats...

Her lips are upon his, sliding, caressing, exploring.

Three beats...

He's kissing her back, tentatively at first but with ever increasing certainty.

They continue to kiss at a languorous pace, gentle, chaste kisses filled with love and affection but devoid of the urgency of passion.

She's only intermittently aware of what's happening. One moment, they're kissing, fully clothed. The next moment, their shirts are gone. And so it goes until they're completely naked. Absently, she wonders if he's used his superspeed to divest them of their clothes, but she has a vague recollection of her hands working their way down his body, unbuttoning and tugging at fabric before tossing it aside. Likewise, she can still feel his hands ghosting along her body, gently peeling away her clothing.

Her mental wanderings come to an end as she finds herself lying on her back, the softness of the couch beneath her.

He's cradled between her thighs, his bare skin glowing in the late afternoon sun as he hovers above her. His muscles are taut as he holds himself still, and she can feel his hardness poised at her entrance.

He's looking at her, his eyes in askance.

She meets and holds his gaze, her eyes searching his, seeing the ever-present sorrow and grief but also a longing, a need.

A sort of giddy elation permeates her being as it dawns on her that the longing and need she sees reflected in his eyes is for her, and yet she remains calm and still, her expression unchanged, showing no outward sign of her joy.

This moment is too important, too solemn to be tarnished by her girlish ego. This moment is about him, what he needs.

He needs me, she thinks.

And in a moment of complete honesty, she's able to admit, ...and I need him.

She manages to convey her ascent simply with her eyes, and he flexes his hips, slowly pressing his length into her welcoming warmth.

Once fully sheathed within her, he pauses, both of them adjusting to the feel of the other, soaking in the myriad sensations coursing through their bodies.
The seconds seem to stretch into hours as they lie there, intimately connected, staring into each other's eyes, a blanket of silence surrounding them, the shallow rise and fall of their chests the only motion.

The moment, so precious and fleeting, is broken as their lips meet, her arms sliding over his smooth skin, one wrapping around his shoulders, the other snaking around his neck, her fingers tangling in the hair at his nape, while her legs hook over his hips, cradling him.

Several minutes pass as they continue to kiss, languorously, savoring each other's lips. Finally, he begins to move within her, a slow, minute withdrawal before he pushes back into her. He repeats the movement and takes up a steady, languid rhythm, gently rocking his hips, maintaining as much physical contact as possible.

Time falls away as they continue their intimate dance, the world dissolving around them.

She can feel something building inside her, deep in her belly, but it's not pleasure or the promise of release. It's something she's never felt before, doesn't know how to describe it but knows it's something unique, special, something few people ever experience, something to be treasured.

This feeling continues to grow in intensity, and she wonders if he feels it too. As if in answer to her unspoken question, he kisses her just a little deeper, and she knows that this feeling is being shared and is glad for it.

The feeling grows exponentially, like a balloon filling with air about to burst, but there is no urgency in their bodies, and their movements maintain their lazy, luxuriating pace.

Finally and inevitably, the balloon bursts, and this heretofore unknown feeling explodes like an atom bomb suffusing them with sensation. Warmth spreads throughout her body, starting at the point where their bodies are joined, a liquid heat bathing her from the inside. A tidal wave washes over her, engulfing her, drowning and baptizing her as it leaves her irrevocably changed in its wake.

His hips cease their movement, having spent himself inside her, but they continue to kiss. His kisses, sweet and sorrowful, begin to taste salty, and it's then that she realizes he's crying.

Several more kisses, each more heartfelt and lingering than the last, signal the end of their dance, and he buries his face in the crook of her neck, his tears hot against her flushed skin.

She pulls him close, their bodies still joined, and gently strokes his hair as she presses a tender kiss to his temple, her eyes filling with tears.

She came here wanting to help him, wanting to take away his pain and heal him, and while she may have failed in that lofty, impossible goal, she hasn't failed him. She's taken a portion of his sorrow upon herself and in return has given him a means to beat back the remaining sorrow within him and start the healing process. She's given him the most precious, valuable gift she has...her heart and soul.
It's been a week since she visited him, since their time in the loft, and she hasn't heard a word from him. Normally, she'd be worried, worried that they'd messed up their friendship, worried that he'd gone and done something foolish, but, strange as it seems, she's not worried. She knows he'll come to her when he's ready. She's not sure how she knows that, but she does.

As if on cue, she feels a faint echo of the sensation she experienced in the loft, and she instinctively knows that he's near.

She doesn't bother to question this new-found and rather odd ability to sense his presence, and looks up from her desk, her eyes searching the newsroom of the Star City Herald.

Almost instantly, she sees him, their eyes meeting from across the room. Even at this distance, she can tell that the grief and sorrow she saw reflected in his eyes a week earlier has lessened, and she can't help the burst of pride that fills her chest at the knowledge that she's responsible for the change.

Without conscious thought, she gets up from her desk and navigates her way through the throng of people and comes to a stop directly in front of him.

He's wearing a rumpled charcoal suit with a matching tie, which is slightly askew. His hair is styled so as to look professional, if it were the 1950s, and his thick, dark-rimmed glasses give him a very nerd-ish quality. If she didn't love him, she'd probably laugh at how ridiculous he looks, especially since she knows he's anything but a nerd.

After her perusal of his appearance, she looks him in the eye, pausing a moment as she gets lost in the sea of emotion she sees there. Without word or warning, she wraps her arms around him, giving him a warm, heartfelt embrace, which he returns in kind, his arms wrapping around her, enveloping her in his warmth, and she buries her face in his chest, breathing in his scent, so familiar and comforting.

The noise of the busy newsroom fades away, and all that remains is the sound of their breathing and the beating of their hearts.

Their private world is shattered when someone rushing past bumps into them, breaking the spell. Stepping back and out of his embrace, she's disappointed by the loss of contact and the accompanying emotional closeness, and so is he, if she's reading him correctly.

Oh a whim, she grasps his hand and begins leading him through the newsroom, down a nearly deserted hallway, and into a seldom-used, out-of-the-way conference room.

Once inside, she closes the door and turns to him. She wants to talk to him, ask him how he's doing, how his week's been, if he's working on any interesting stories, but as soon as she looks him in the eye, her questions die on her lips.

She's struck by the intensity of his gaze, specifically the longing and need she sees there. It's as if his soul is calling out to her, desperately trying to reach her, to connect with her. It's like a siren song, and, much as she should try to resist, she can't, nor does she want to.

She's felt this calling of souls before, in her youth, only it was her soul calling out to his. She knows what it's like not to have that call answered, to have that need go unfulfilled, and she knows
how much it hurts, and she won't make him go through that pain.

He must feel her soul reaching back to him, because he steps up to her, his hands encircling her waist, picks her up and carries her to the conference table, setting her down on top of it near the edge.

His hands loosen their hold and glide down the length of her skirt, stopping when they reach the bare skin of her legs just above the knees. From there, they slip under her skirt, slowly making their way back up her thighs.

Her hands press against the table, and she lifts herself up enough for him to grab hold of her panties and pull them down, sliding them the length of her legs before removing them entirely, setting them next to her on the table.

She maintains eye contact with him as her hands reach for the zipper on his pants, slowly lowering it. Her hand reaches inside both his pants and boxers, grabbing hold of his already hard member and pulling it free of its confines.

Her legs wrap around him, gently pulling forward until he's poised at her entrance.

There's a brief moment of hesitation as he silently asks her if she's ready.

Her response is her legs urging him forward, the tip parting her folds followed by his entire length. Once fully encased in the warmth of her intimate embrace, he pauses, both of them reveling in the sensation of being joined.

They continue to look into each other's eyes, neither able to give voice to their thoughts or feelings, but both of them understanding exactly what the other is experiencing.

On a whim, she reaches up, taking hold of his glasses, removing them and setting them on the table next to her. It's not that she hates the way he looks in glasses, but she doesn't want any barrier separating them, even if the barrier is a clear piece of glass.

He places his hands on her hips, gently grabbing hold, while she snakes her arms around his neck, her hands lightly teasing the soft hair at his nape.

Their gazes locked, he slowly withdraws before sliding back into her at an equally languid pace. Just as in the loft, their rhythm is steady and unhurried, their movements slight so as to maintain maximum contact.

As it was the first time, so it is now. The world seems to dissolve around them, time ceasing to exist. It's just the two of them, their slow, even breaths, the steady beating of their hearts.

She begins to feel a tingling sensation in the pit of her belly, spreading throughout her body, all the way down to her toes. It's the same sensation she felt in the loft, the first time they joined like this, but she still doesn't know how to describe it. It's a feeling beyond description, something beyond physical, beyond emotional. Whatever it is, however you describe it, it's growing exponentially, threatening to consume her, and she welcomes it.

Within moments, the sensation explodes within her, like a star going nova, her vision blurring before fading completely, every nerve in her body firing at once...

...and then she's floating in a void, her body left behind in the physical realm.
What should be a frightening experience is anything but. Wherever she is, she's not alone; he's here with her. She can feel him.

Somehow, they find each other through the darkness, drawn together by some unseen and extremely powerful force.

Their essences touch, sending jolts of electricity running through her and sparks cascading all around them. She's never felt so alive, but it's not enough. She wants more, needs more.

He must agree, because she can feel his essence surround her, penetrating her, combining with her. 

*They are one.*

Suddenly, she's back in her body, her heart calm, her breathing even.

She opens her eyes and finds him looking back at her, a profound sense of understanding and awe passing between them.

After a brief moment, they lean in, a jolt of electricity surging through them as their lips meet.

Finally, they break apart, her arms and legs releasing their hold on him as he pulls back and slips from her body.

She reaches down, tucking him back into his pants before zipping them up.

He reaches for her underwear and returns them to their rightful place.

Once dressed, he lifts her off the table and sets her on her feet in front of him, straightening her clothes before releasing her.

She picks his glasses up off the table and places them on his face. Her hands glide over his cheeks and neck, stopping at his tie, adjusting it, before smoothing over the lapels of his suit jacket.

His hands find hers, engulfing them, his thumbs gently rubbing soothing circles on the palms.

They stop and stare for a moment, reveling in their new-found closeness.

On a whim, she rises up on her toes, her lips seeking his for a tender, heartfelt, soul-warming kiss that causes a pleasant tingling sensation to spread throughout their bodies.

Breaking apart, they exchange small smiles.

She takes his left hand in her right, lacing their fingers, and leads him out of the conference room, down the hall, and through the newsroom.

Neither notices the curious looks they receive from the peanut gallery on their way out, nor do they hear the whispers questioning what the wife of Oliver Queen was doing with the man in the glasses.
The next few days are bliss. They spend every free moment together, talking, laughing, crying and making love.

She knows that it will take a long time for him to heal from the death of his mother, but he's made remarkable strides since their relationship changed. She can see it in his eyes and feel it in his touch. He actually smiles when they're together, real, genuine, happy smiles, and it makes her smile and fills her heart with joy.

He talks about his fears for the future, how he worries that he'll end up alone with no one to love or who loves him. She wants to tell him that he'll always have her, that she'll be with him always, but she can't, so she settles for giving him all of her, everything she has right now and hopes that it'll be enough to last him the rest of his life. Still, she worries about what will happen to him when she's gone.

He talks about his parents, how lucky he was that they were the ones who found him, how lucky he was to know the love of two such wonderful people. He's not the only one who's thankful the Kents found him. She doesn't even want to imagine what her life would be like if his parents hadn't raised him, hadn't made him the man he is today, the man she loves.

He talks about wanting to get married one day and wanting to have as many children as possible, or at least as many as his future wife agrees to. She only half-jokingly tells him that, if she's his wife one day, she'll have as many kids as he wants, as long as he doesn't mind stretch marks. She doesn't tell him that she wants so badly to be his wife and have his children, as many as he wants, even if it means she'll be perpetually pregnant and riddled with stretch marks.

All is right in their world until the day Oliver returns from his overseas business trip.

Perhaps it makes her a horrible person, but she never once thought about Oliver during his absence, and she doesn't feel the least bit guilty for what she and Clark have been doing.

Still, she is Oliver's wife, so she puts on a smile and plays her role of dutiful, loyal wife.

Unfortunately, she's finding that it's much more difficult to be Oliver's wife than she remembers.

It starts when he kisses her upon his arrival home. She tries to act natural, but when his lips touch hers, she doesn't feel anything, no spark, no tingle, no hitch in her breath, no butterflies in her stomach, nothing. If anything, she feels guilty, feels like she's cheating on Clark.

Things only get worse from there. Oliver, wanting to celebrate his return, takes her out to a fancy restaurant for dinner, which is fine, but she feels very self-conscious, as if she's doing something wrong, as if she doesn't belong there. It doesn't help that he keeps touching her, and she has to fight not to cringe. It's not that she's repulsed by him, but feeling his hands on her, his lips on hers, makes her uncomfortable, and she knows it shouldn't be that way, and he'd be crushed if he thought she didn't like or welcome his affection. Still, she really wishes he'd keep his hands and lips to himself, because she doesn't know if she can keep pretending, convincingly anyway, that she's enjoying herself.

Thankfully, dinner is over quickly, but things only get more awkward when they get home.

They're barely in the door when he pounces on her, kissing her like there's no tomorrow, his hands grabbing and squeezing her ass. She wants to push him away, maybe even slap him for being so
forward, but she manages to restrain herself. However, restraining herself from slapping him and making him think she's as into it as he is, are two completely different things.

He must sense her hesitation, because he pulls back from devouring her lips and gives her a curious look. He's about to say something, and, not wanting to deal with his questions, she covers his mouth with hers, attacking his lips with as much vigor as he was doing to hers just moments before. Her strategy works, because he's kissing her with gusto while simultaneously maneuvering her toward the bedroom.

Once in the bedroom, his hands, which had been busy groping her, move to the zipper on her dress, pulling it down before sliding the straps off her shoulders, the dress falling from her body to the floor leaving her standing there in nothing but her panties. She's suddenly very self-conscious and wants to cover her breasts, but he beats her to it, his hands gliding up her body before cupping her breasts, kneading them roughly.

She's momentarily paralyzed, desperately wanting him to stop and on the verge of saying so, but the moment to act passes when his lips find hers, his tongue invading her mouth. Then, he removes his right hand from her breast, skimming down her stomach, dipping inside the waist of her panties before cupping her sex, a finger lightly tracing along her seam.

She's not the least bit wet, but, in his lust-fueled haze, he doesn't seem to notice, because his hand leaves her sex after a few moments, and he's removing her panties, sliding them down her legs before pulling them off.

She's completely naked, and she's freaking out. She doesn't want to do this, but she also doesn't want Oliver to think something is wrong, to know that it's not his touch she desires, to know that Clark is the only man she wants to see her naked, to touch her, to kiss her, to be inside her.

She's so confused. Oliver is her husband. She should want to be with him, want him to touch her, and she doesn't understand why she doesn't. It was just a week ago that she would've loved every moment of the attention Oliver is lavishing on her, but now she wants nothing to do with Oliver or his attentions.

Her indecision and lack of response go unnoticed by Oliver and thus do nothing to dampen his mood, because when she comes back to herself, he's completely naked, and they've moved to the bed, her on her back and him hovering above her.

It's only when he's between her thighs, his hard length poised at her entrance that he notices she's not responding like she used to, like she should.

He asks her if she's alright, concern thick in his voice and evident in his eyes.

She wants to tell him that she's not alright, that she doesn't want to have sex with him, wants to tell him that she and Clark have been seeing each other, have been intimate and that she's fallen in love with him.

She wants to tell the truth, but she's not sure what the truth is.

She loves Oliver, but she also loves Clark.

She wants her marriage to work, but she desperately wants to be with Clark.

Right or wrong, she has to make a decision. Does she suck it up, do whatever it takes to make her marriage work, even if it means she has to pretend to enjoy her husband's touch? Or does she bare her soul, tell Oliver that she had an affair with Clark and that she wants to be with him, thus ending
her marriage, her second marriage?

Her answer to Oliver's question is to kiss him, deeply, passionately, while she grasps his hips, pulling him forward, his steely length penetrating her, stretching and filling her.

She bites her lower lip when he starts pumping in and out of her, but it's not due to pleasure. His cock feels foreign inside her, doesn't elicit pleasure of any kind. In fact, the friction is painful, but she covers her discomfort by kissing him, and he mistakes her whimpers as a sign that he's hitting her g-spot, which results in him pumping harder and faster.

It's only a few minutes later, though it feels like hours, that he stills, and she can feel him throbbing inside her, his orgasm causing him to shiver. To her credit, she manages to put on a convincing show, crying out in ecstasy, making him think she's finished along with him.

Shortly thereafter, he rolls off of her, collapsing onto the bed, covered in sweat and breathing heavy.

After a few moments, he turns on his side, his arms wrapping around her, and kisses her tenderly, telling her he loves her.

She tells him she loves him, too, though she doesn't feel it.

Before long, he's asleep. Carefully, so as not to wake him, she extricates herself from his embrace and slides out of bed. As quietly as she can, she pads to the bathroom. Shutting the door and locking it, she turns on the light before walking over to the shower, turning it on and stepping inside.

The water is cold, but she barely notices. She's too numb to notice much of anything at the moment.

As the water cascades over her naked body, her mind keeps replaying what just happened.

She just had sex with her husband, and hated every second of it, but did it anyway so as not to rock the proverbial boat.

_God, what's wrong with me_, she thinks.

It's a good question, one that doesn't seem to have an answer, at least not one she's aware of or willing to admit.

Her head is telling her that she did nothing wrong.

But her heart is screaming at her, accusing her of adultery.

She's all mixed up and doesn't know what to think or believe. All she knows is that she feels like she just did something terrible, and feels dirty, tainted, because of it.

Slowly, she sinks to the shower floor, pulling her knees to her chest, silent tears mixing with the water raining down upon her.
Chapter 4

The next day finds her just as confused about her life and what happened between her and Oliver the night before.

She thought that maybe she'd feel different after a night's sleep, but it didn't help.

She thought she'd feel better once she buried herself in her work, but it didn't help.

It seems she gets more miserable with every passing second, so she tries not to think about it, but when you try not to think about something, it becomes the only thing you can think about.

She's in the middle of getting fresh coffee when Clark finds her.

At first, she's elated to see him, wants to run up to him, throw her arms around him and kiss him for all she's worth. However, as soon as the thought enters her mind, she remembers what she did last night, and her mood crashes. The guilt she's been feeling intensifies, and it's all she can do to give him a small smile by way of greeting, trying her best not to let on that something's wrong.

Her halfhearted smile is greeted by a dazzling one from him, which both amplifies her anguish and makes her want to kiss him.

Before she can stop him, his arms are around her, and his lips are against hers.

Instantly, she's filled with warmth, her entire body alive with sensation. Everything she didn't feel with Oliver the night before, she's feeling in spades now. Her body practically melts against him, and she can feel her desire rising with each passing second.

She's on the verge of tearing his clothes off and having her way with him right there in front of the coffee maker, vivid fantasies running through her mind of his naked flesh pressed against hers, his hardness buried deep inside her.

Suddenly, she remembers where they are, remembers that she's married to someone else, remembers what happened the night before, and she comes to her senses. Pulling back slightly, she breaks their kiss and presses a hand against his chest, gently pushing, which causes him to loosen his hold.

Confusion is etched on his face, and her heart breaks because of it and because of what she's about to do.

She's at war with herself. There's a part of her that's telling her she has to end this...whatever it is, with Clark no matter the consequences to him or their friendship. However, there's another part of her, a part that's screaming at her not to go through with it, not to break his heart, even if it seems like the right thing to do.

He's looking at her as though he can sense the war raging within her, as if he knows what's coming but refuses to believe it, and each second that goes by without her saying or doing something, causes a different war, one between hope and defeated resignation, to rage within him, which only makes it that much harder for her to do what she's about to do.

Swallowing the huge lump in her throat and mustering every ounce of courage she has, she tells him how much she loves him, how much his friendship has meant and continues to mean to her, and then she apologizes for leading him on, making him think there was anything more between
them than friendship that went astray in a time of grief. And then she tells him that, as much as she's enjoyed their time together, it has to end and that maybe it'd be a good idea if they kept their distance, didn't see each other for a little while.

She's amazed she manages to say any of it, let alone keep from crying while she does. But what amazes her most is the fact that she doesn't take it all back as she watches his face crumple and sees the hurt, sadness and grief her words cause him.

Much as she wants to, she can't look away from him, can't tear her eyes from his. She can feel her heart shatter into a million pieces in her chest as she watches his eyes, so full of life, love and joy just moments ago, turn gray, lifeless and dull.

He doesn't say anything, probably can't, and she knows why. She just tore his heart out and stomped on it, and he's trying to put on a brave face, doesn't want her to know how deeply she's wounded him.

With a slow, curt nod of his head, he turns around and walks away, his shoulders slumped and head down.

It takes every ounce of willpower and shred of self-control she has not to chase after him and beg him to stay, tell him she made a terrible mistake and profess her undying love for him as she peppers his face with kisses.

Instead, she stands there, completely numb, inside and out, and watches as he disappears around a corner, perhaps from her life entirely.

Tears sting her eyes and stain her cheeks as she silently weeps for the man she loves, herself and the life and love that might have been.
Chapter 5

It's been a month since she made her choice, and not a day goes by that she doesn't regret what she's done.

She knew it would be difficult at first, but she hoped things would get better with time, that her feelings for Clark would diminish, and they could be friends again, like they used to be.

Unfortunately, things haven't worked out that way.

Instead of her feelings for him diminishing, they've intensified. Apparently, absence really does make the heart grow fonder, and he's been very absent from her life. In fact, she hasn't seen him, not in person, since that fateful day, the day she nearly destroyed him.

He's been purposefully avoiding her, and she can't blame him. After all, she's the one who started this, let it take root, grow and blossom, and she's also the one who ended it.

Who knew one little kiss could be the catalyst for so much joy and heartache?

Still, if she had to do it over again, she wouldn't change a thing, except for the part where she broke his heart by choosing her husband over him.

She's tried to move on, put their time together behind her, but it's virtually impossible to move on when she sees his image everywhere she goes, on billboards, in magazines, on TV commercials and news reports. Heck, she's had to do stories on him herself for the Herald.

And it's not just during the day that she can't escape him. Every time she closes her eyes, she sees him. Every time she goes to sleep, she dreams of him, dreams of kissing him, dreams of his hands roaming over her body, dreams of his hard length inside her, stretching and filling her, dreams of him professing his love for her, dreams of marrying him in a lush green meadow on the Kent farm, dreams of being pregnant with their first child and having many more of his children during the course of their life together.

She can't even count the number of times she's almost contacted him, the times she's dialed his number on her cell, never quite able to press the 'call' button, the times she's thumbed out a text only to delete it, the times she's written an email and been unable to press 'send'. Heck, she's even contemplated going to the top of the Queen Industries building and screaming his name, or buying a plane ticket and just going to see him, but she never does.

Of course, her missing Clark isn't the only issue she's been dealing with over the past month. She's also had to deal with the fact that she's married to a man she's no longer attracted to, a man who's done nothing wrong, who loves her but whom she no longer loves.

She's done her best to play her role as dutiful, loving and devoted wife, but she dies a little more inside with every fake smile, laugh, kiss and orgasm. She's not sure how she continues to fool Oliver, but he's given no indication that he knows anything is wrong. He's a good man and doesn't deserve what's happened, doesn't deserve a tramp of a wife who lies to him with every breath she takes.

She's just finished faking her way through sex when she feels her gut roil. Rushing to the bathroom, she empties the contents of her stomach into the toilet, all the while saying a silent prayer of thanks that Oliver has already left for his nightly patrol. Sadly, this isn't the first time she's gotten physically ill after being intimate with her husband. Lately, anytime he touches her, she feels
queasy. Fortunately, she hasn't gotten sick in front of him, but she fears it's just a matter of time, and she's not looking forward to explaining to him that he literally makes her sick.

As has become her routine after sex, she gets into the shower, turning the water on as hot as it will go and standing under the spray, attempting to wash away her shame and her husband's touch.

Closing her eyes, she thinks about the state of her life, the gigantic mess it's become, and her emotions, which she's kept under tight wraps since this whole thing began, well up inside her, finally exploding in the form of heart-wrenching sobs, shaking her entire body so violently that her legs tremble and buckle. However, before her knees hit the shower floor, a pair of strong arms encircle her. Through the tears and the water, she looks up into the eyes of the one person she's been longing to see.

Clark.

He's standing in her shower, fully clothed in his Superman regalia, the spray from the shower soaking him from head to toe, and she's never seen a more beautiful sight. His eyes, still filled with pain and anguish due to her actions, are also filled with unabashed love and concern...for her. She assumes he must have heard her sobs and came to see if she's alright, but, on some level, she knows that what he heard wasn't her sobs, but rather her heart screaming in agony, crying out for him. Whatever the reason for his being there, she's grateful beyond words and throws herself against his body, wrapping her arms around him as tightly as she's able, burying her face in his chest as she cries tears of sorrow and joy.

She's not sure how long they stay like that, standing under the shower's spray, wrapped in each other's arms, but the longer they're in physical contact, the better she feels. In fact, the sensation of his hands against her bare back quickly turns from soothing to sensual, and she can feel a heat blooming within her that has nothing to do with the steam from the shower.

Suddenly, she's very aware that she's naked and he's not, and she's struck with the urge to tear his suit from his body and feel his bare skin pressed against hers. Guilt spikes within her at the thought, but she brushes it aside, sick and tired of feeling guilty, of pretending she's fine, of denying herself what she wants most...him.

Haven't I suffered enough? She thinks. Hasn't he suffered enough?

Her answer to both questions is a resounding yes.

Her mind made up, she takes a step back but maintains her hold on him. Looking up into his eyes, she conveys her want, need and desire for him with one look, and before she can blink, he's standing before her, completely naked.

Without a word, she leans up and presses a tender kiss to his lips, that old familiar electric spark sending tingles throughout her body and causing a rush of moisture between her legs completely unrelated to the shower.

They continue to kiss, slow and sensual, and her arms snake around his neck, while his encircle her waist, pulling her flush against his body. She presses her breasts tight to his chest, her nipples becoming stiff peaks within seconds, reveling in the feel of his skin against hers.

A low moan tries to escape her lips, only to be captured by his, as she feels his hard length pressing against her belly, throbbing with need. She wants him inside her, needs to feel him stretching and filling her.
As if on cue, his hands cup her bottom, giving each cheek a gentle squeeze before he lifts her up, her legs instinctively wrapping around his waist. She can feel the tip of his manhood pressing against her opening, and she shivers in anticipation. With tenderness and care, he slowly lowers her, his length sliding inside her welcoming warmth. Before he's even fully inside her, her inner muscles clench and spasm as a powerful orgasm, the first she's experienced in over a month, surges through her body, igniting every nerve with pleasure.

Though her body is boneless and her muscles feel like jelly, she maintains her hold on him, even presses herself tighter against him wanting as much contact with him as possible. Her release, while exquisite, hasn't satiated her but rather has only intensified her desire. Yet, somehow, she manages to maintain a calm demeanor, her kisses languorous and sweet and overflowing with emotion.

Holding her firmly in place, his hips begin a slow, rhythmic motion, gently thrusting, his steely length gliding in and out of her, sending ripples of pleasure cascading throughout her body. Time seems to stand still as they continue their languid lovemaking, both of them savoring the other, reveling in the connection they share.

A familiar and welcome sensation builds within her, growing stronger with each passing second. She longs for the sensation to sweep over her and consume her, but she also doesn't want it to end, doesn't want him to soften and slip from her body. Sadly, she doesn't have a say in the matter, because, all too soon, the sensation, once a dormant volcano, erupts within her, sending shockwaves of molten pleasure gushing through every cell in her body.

She feels his hand softly caressing her cheek, and she leans into his touch, a contented sigh escaping her lips. She's pretty sure she blacked out for a moment, and that causes her to smile. Opening her eyes, she looks into his and sees a complex swirl of emotion, love, adoration, contentment and wonder chief among them.

Somehow, even though he's spent himself inside her, he's still hard, and she's glad for it. If it were possible, she'd love nothing more than for him to be forever inside her, to feel his heart beat within her, to be one. And she certainly doesn't want this moment to end, their bodies entwined after having shared something so intimate, so incredibly profound.

He must sense her thoughts, because he makes no move to release her. Instead, he turns off the shower, steps out and, somehow, manages to dry them both off before carrying her to the bedroom. Once there, he gently lays on the bed, still hard and inside her, and she sprawls out on top of him, snuggling into his embrace.

They share a tender yet passionate kiss filled with love and an unspoken promise. Breaking the kiss, they exchange soft smiles, a feeling of warmth and contentment suffusing them.

She's still smiling as she rests her head on his chest and listens to the steady rhythm of his heartbeat as it slowly lulls her to sleep.

Tonight she will dream of a life on a farm in a small Kansas town where she's married to her best friend and pregnant with his child. Tomorrow, she will wake and do anything and everything necessary to make that dream a reality.
She awakens the next morning feeling better than she's felt in a long time. The burden she's been carrying has been lifted, and she's no longer conflicted about what she wants or what she should do.

She's mildly disappointed to find Clark no longer under and inside her, but she quickly realizes it's for the best. After all, she may no longer want to be with Oliver, but having him find her and Clark, naked and intimately joined, isn't how she wants to ends things.

As it is, she's alone in bed, neither Clark nor Oliver anywhere in sight, and she's wearing her pajamas. At first confused as to why Clark would dress her before leaving, she's struck by the thought that he didn't want Oliver to see her naked. A smile graces her lips, and warmth fills her heart at the possessiveness of Clark's actions. In her youth, she wanted nothing more than for him to want her, to claim her as his and his alone, and, although it took much longer than she ever could've dreamt, he's finally done just that, and she's nearly giddy with delight because of it.

As she moves to get out of bed, she notices a piece of paper on the nightstand. Picking it up, she sees it's a handwritten note from Oliver. In it, he apologizes for not being there, but he had an early meeting to attend and won't be home until late. She's quite relieved by the news, because it means she has time to prepare for what she must do.

Her mind briefly ponders possible scenarios of her upcoming breakup, but she quickly chases away those thoughts, not wanting to dwell on the ugliness of the situation. Instead, she starts making a mental checklist of everything else she has to do before she can leave Star City and start her new life with Clark.

A life with Clark...

The thought instantly fills her with joy, and she can't stop the smile that lights up her face as she imagines all the wonderful possibilities awaiting the two of them.

With a bounce in her step, she makes her way to the kitchen to prepare her morning coffee.

Once properly caffeinated, showered and dressed, she calls the Herald and tenders her resignation, effective immediately. Her boss is none too pleased with her decision and tries, without success, to talk her out of resigning. He even goes so far as to offer her a huge raise, which she finds tempting, but not nearly tempting enough. She's made up her mind that she wants to be with Clark, and nothing and no one is going to keep her from him.

After she's finished severing her professional ties with Star City, she begins the task of sorting through her clothing and other assorted possessions, packing the things she wants to keep and boxing up the rest for donation to charity.

The task seems daunting, at first, but she quickly finds that many of her possessions are reflective of a life fueled by Oliver's wealth, a life that's never suited her, and her new life will have no place for extravagant gowns, ostentatious footwear and other assorted designer apparel. No, her new life will be more down-to-earth and her clothing more practical and economical. It's not that she and Clark will be poor, but they also won't be going to upscale restaurants and clubs on a regular basis. In fact, she envisions nights spent at home, the two of them having dinner before curling up on the couch and watching TV before going upstairs, making sweet love and falling asleep in each other's arms.
She sighs dreamily at the simplicity and utter beauty of the life she envisions and briefly wonders how she ever succumbed to the temptation of a rich playboy and his high-end, forever-in-the-spotlight lifestyle.

The day passes quickly, and by late afternoon, she's finished packing. She's actually surprised by how little she's decided to keep, just a couple of suitcases worth of clothes and shoes and a few pieces of jewelry, barely a fraction of the possessions she'd accumulated during her marriage to Oliver.

She finds she's glad to have so few reminders of her time with Oliver. It's not that she didn't enjoy being with him, but that life is over, and she wants to focus on the future, specifically her future with Clark.

Her thoughts of Clark remind her that she needs to call him.

She's just dialed his cell and pressed send when a whoosh of air ruffles her hair and a pair of strong arms scoop her up. Before she knows what hit her, his lips are on hers, kissing her with a quiet passion and tender affection that makes her heart skip a beat and her whole body tingle with warmth.

Of their own volition, her arms snake around his neck and tangle in his hair, and she kisses him back with equal fervor and intensity.

They get lost in the moment, lips caressing, tongues tasting, bodies thrumming, and it's not until she feels his hardness pressing into her belly that she remembers why she called him. Summoning all of her will power, she reluctantly breaks their kiss and pulls back enough to look into his beautiful eyes, currently clouded with want, desire, need and just the barest hint of disappointment and confusion.

Not pleased at the loss of her lips against his, he leans in, recapturing her lips. She tries to resist, but her resolve melts almost instantly, and she's once again lost in a world of blissful sensation.

Her brain, the part that's actually capable of rational thought, comes back online when his hands slip inside the waist of her jeans and panties, cupping her bare bottom, kneading the fleshy cheeks. Again, she pulls back, breaking their kiss, and again he leans in, attempting to recapture her lips. Despite how badly she wants to keep kissing him and let things play out to their inevitable conclusion, she knows they don't have time, so she covers his mouth with her hand, attempting to still his advances. Unfortunately, he seems determined to move things along, because he starts kissing her hand and presses her tighter against his body, slowly grinding his hips.

A low moan escapes her lips, and she's just about to surrender to his advances and her own desire when her phone rings, ruining the moment and bringing her back to reality.

Sighing in frustration, mixed with a tiny bit of relief, she removes her hand from his mouth and expects him to set her down and release her. Instead, as soon as her hand is gone, he swoops in and kisses her.

Realizing more drastic measures are necessary, she places her hands on either side of his face and physically removes his lips from hers. She's incredibly surprised he let her, because she's not physically capable of making him do anything, least of all when he's so determined.

She's about to tell him to put her down when she looks into his eyes, his big, puppy dog, begging and pleading eyes. She's quiet for a moment, quiet and still, and then she bursts into a fit of giggles. Apparently, that's not the response he was hoping for, because his hopeful expression turns into a
defeated frown, which only makes her laugh harder.

In an effort to improve his mood and soothe his battered ego, she caresses his cheeks and kisses him tenderly, pulling back before things heat up again. She's rewarded with a genuine smile, which she returns in kind.

Knowing that their intimate moment has reached its end, he slowly lowers her until her feet are back on solid ground. However, his hands are still inside her pants, cupping her bottom, and she gives him a look. Sighing in defeat, he gives her cheeks one last squeeze before removing his hands and releasing her. She rewards his obedience with a quick kiss and a smile before she grabs her phone.

Her smile falters, and her mood dims when she sees the message is from Oliver. It seems his plans have changed, and he'll be home early, in a few minutes, to be exact.

Instantly, Clark is by her side, his hand holding hers in a show of support. She looks up at him and gives him a reassuring smile.

Her eyes flit from his over to her bags, silently asking him to take her belongings to the farm. His answer is a slight nod.

Leaning in, he gives her a tender, lingering kiss, filled with love, before pulling back and giving her hand a gentle squeeze. They hold gazes for a long moment, reaffirming their love and devotion.

He breaks eye contact first. Moving to her bags and gathering them up, he gives her one last reassuring glance, which she receives with a small smile, and then he blurs out of existence, taking with him her belongings, her heart and her future.
Chapter 7

The minutes feel like years as she waits for Oliver to arrive. It's true what they say, the waiting really is the hardest part. Still, she uses the time to go over what she wants to say, playing out different scenarios of how things might go. She wants to believe things will go smoothly, that Oliver will take her breaking up with him in stride and that they'll part amicably. However, the more she thinks about it, the less optimistic she is that things will turn out quite that well. At the end of the day, the best she can hope for is that Oliver doesn't yell or completely lose it, because she knows Clark will have an ear open for any trouble, and his showing up to defend her will only make things worse.

She's pulled from her musings when the door opens, and Oliver walks in. Their eyes meet, and he greets her with a huge, brilliant smile. In that moment, all of her anxiety and concern disappear and are replaced by a calm and confidence the likes of which she's never felt before.

Despite what she's about to do, the heartache she's about to inflict, she knows it's for the best and has no reservations or doubt about breaking Oliver's heart. While it will cause him unspeakable pain in the short term, she knows that they'll both be better off in the long run when it's over.

He moves to embrace and kiss her, but she stops him with a hand against his chest. His expression turns from affectionate joy to confusion, and before he can ask what's wrong, she says those four words every man dreads.

He's immediately on alert, his body becoming tense and his posture turning slightly defensive.

She decides to go with the direct approach. Taking a deep breath, she starts at the beginning, telling Oliver about her trip to see Clark after his mother died. She tells him how Clark was consumed with grief and drowning in sorrow and how it broke her heart. She tells him that her first instinct was to comfort Clark, to show him that he wasn't alone, that there was still someone who loved him. She tells him how she kissed Clark and how that one kiss led to another and another and eventually led to them making love.

At that revelation, Oliver's expression sours, his eyes filling with a mix of hurt, betrayal and anger, but he manages to hold his tongue.

She proceeds to tell him how that one moment of indiscretion with Clark opened her eyes to something she had dreamed of in her youth but that she had thought abandoned and forgotten long ago. She tells him that her dalliance with Clark wasn't a one-time happening, that what started out as a gesture of love, support and comfort had grown into something deep, profound and powerful.

After pausing a moment to gauge his reaction, she quickly pushes ahead rather than give him an opportunity to ask questions or start throwing around accusations. She's on a roll and doesn't want to be derailed before she can finish.

She then tells him how guilty she felt for betraying him and how she decided the right thing to do was to save their marriage, so she ended things with Clark.

Hearing this news causes hope to brighten Oliver's dour expression, but she knows it'll be short-lived.

What she has to say next is difficult, but, after taking a cleansing breath, she tells him that, after having been with Clark, something inside her changed. She tells him that her heart, which she once
pledged to him, now belongs to Clark, and, if she's being honest, it always did. Yes, she tried to
move on from Clark, truly believed she had, but once she and Clark crossed the final threshold of
intimacy, she realized that her heart and soul had only ever and would only ever belong to one
man: to Clark.

She apologizes for betraying him and for not telling him the truth sooner. She assures him, as
cliche as it sounds, that it's not him, it's her. She tells him he's a wonderful man and a good husband
and that he doesn't deserve what's happened. She also tells him that she doesn't regret their time
together, that being with him was good for her, and she hopes that being with her was good for
him, too.

Removing her wedding ring, she takes his hand and places it in his palm. He looks down at it with
sadness and disbelief in his eyes before looking back at her.

She tells him that it's not his fault, that he didn't do anything wrong.

She sees the questions, the doubt in his eyes, and assures him that there's nothing he could've done
to prevent this, that it isn't a competition, that it isn't a matter of him lacking in some regard or
Clark being a better man.

Looking deep into his eyes, she says with complete conviction and the utmost sincerity that it's all
about destiny, that she and Clark were destined to be together, and she's never been more certain of
anything in her entire life.

As difficult as she knows this has to be for him, she's pleased to see him handling it with dignity
and class, and while she's not happy about hurting him, she can't deny the relief she feels as she
notices a kind of resigned acceptance in his eyes.

She won't deny that part of her would like to hear him say something, even if it's to yell at her, but
she has a feeling he's too much in shock at the moment to say anything, least of all to say something
constructive.

Breaking the silence, she apologizes once more for her actions and for hurting him, telling him she
wishes it didn't have to end this way. She then thanks him for loving her, for being a wonderful
husband and friend. She also says she hopes that, someday, they can be friends again. Then she
tells him that she hopes he doesn't let this incident sour him on marriage or relationships in general
and that she hopes he'll find love again someday, because he deserves to be happy, to have
someone who loves him and whom he can love.

Having said what she needed and wanted to say, and having just watched him collapse into the
nearest chair, presumably from shock, she reaches out to comfort him, but he raises a hand and
holds it out stiffly, halting her. He looks up at her with tears of pain and anger in his eyes, his jaw
tightly set, and he slowly shakes his head.

Looking into his eyes one last time, she gives him a small, bittersweet smile before turning away
and walking out the door.
Chapter 8

As much as she hated having to break Oliver's heart, she's relieved that it's over. She's actually kind of surprised by how calm she was while it was happening. She had expected to feel so much worse and for it to be more difficult than it was. Likewise, she had expected more of a reaction from Oliver. It's not that she's complaining about how smoothly things went, but she can't help but wonder if this is just the calm before the storm, so to speak, that things might get very nasty and ugly before all is said and done.

A momentary sense of dread washes over her, but she shakes it off. She's come too far to let the fear of the unknown put a damper on the beginning of her life with Clark. She's waited too long, sacrificed too much to let anything get in the way of her...their happiness.

With a renewed sense of determination, she calmly and confidently makes her way outside where she finds Clark waiting patiently for her.

Their eyes meet, and she can see the concern he has for her, wondering if she's okay. A warmth radiates throughout her body as her heart melts at the caring and love she feels from him and for him.

A slow, genuine smile graces her lips in answer to his unspoken query, which causes a mirroring smile to brighten his somber countenance.

Her pace quickens, and within moments she's throwing her arms around him, hugging him for all she's worth. As his arms wrap around her, returning her embrace, she feels the final remnants of her earlier anxiety and unease melt away, leaving her feeling light and energized.

Acting purely on instinct, she turns her face upward, and her lips are immediately met by his. It starts out as a soft, caressing kiss, a way of reaffirming their connection, their love, but as they continue to kiss, an urgency begins to creep in, and she can feel her desire rising.

Reluctantly, she breaks the kiss, which results in him groaning in disapproval and giving her the most adorable pouty expression she's ever seen. She completely forgets why she stopped kissing him and leans in to kiss the pout right off his face.

After several long minutes, at least she thinks it's only been minutes, she again pulls back, much to both their disappointment. Having lost practically all capacity for rational thought, she simply stares into his eyes, conveying her need for more than just kisses from him.

It seems her message is received, because one moment, they're on the sidewalk in front of what used to be her apartment building in Star City, and the next moment, they're standing in front of the farmhouse in Smallville.

As they stand wrapped in a loving embrace, staring into each other's eyes, the most wonderful realization dawns on her.

I'm home.

It seems like such a small and simple thing, but it's absolutely everything.

Pure, unadulterated joy wells up inside her, and she smiles so brightly as to make the sun jealous. She's positively giddy with glee, and her mood is infectious, because he's smiling just as brightly, his eyes shining with love and it's all for her.
Unable to hold back another second, she leans in and kisses him, tenderly, sweetly, sensually, passionately. She pours her heart and soul into kissing him, sharing her joy with him, showing him the depth of her love for him, but it's not enough. She needs more, needs to show him exactly what he means to her, how much she loves and cherishes him, needs to lay her soul bare before him, to join with him physically, emotionally and spiritually. She needs to be one with him.

He seems to know exactly what she wants, what she needs, because the world blurs, and she finds herself straddling his lap as he sits on a bed.

Our bed, in our bedroom, in our home.

Her desire rises with each realization that everything she's wanted since she was 14 and first moved to Smallville is finally hers. It's a heady feeling, knowing her dreams are all coming true, and she thinks she may just die of euphoria, but as his lips taste hers and his hands rove over her body, she becomes desperate for more, wanting to drown in sensation, consumed by passion, lust and love.

Frantically, she begins clawing at his clothes, needing to feel his bare skin against hers. Frustration sets in quickly as she tries and fails to make any headway in divesting him of his clothes, and she briefly considers breaking their kiss in order to accomplish her goal, but can't bring herself to do it.

Luckily, he's just as desperate to feel her heated flesh against his, so he uses his powers, forgoing superspeed and resorting to brute force as he literally tears the clothes from her body and then from his, all the while maintaining as much contact as possible and kissing her as if her lips are the source of life itself.

Free from any barriers, she presses herself as tightly against him as possible, but it's still not enough. She's desperate to be closer, needs to feel him inside her.

As if sharing one mind, she feels herself being lifted, and then feels him at her entrance, the tip parting her sensitive folds, and then feels herself being stretched and filled as she's slowly lowered onto his throbbing hard length.

He's inside her, fully encased. They are one. And the desperate need, the overwhelming desire she felt burning within her cools to a low simmer but continues to burn.

Her faculties return to her, and her kisses turn from torrid to languorous as she savors their connection, revels in the feel of him, rejoices at the wonder of it all.

Slowly, she pulls back, her eyes alight with emotion as she meets his gaze. His eyes are glowing with affection and adoration, and it's all for her.

They pause and just stare, completely enraptured by each other and the moment.

He breaks the stalemate first, his hands caressing her back before sliding down to cup her bottom, gently squeezing. Her breath catches and a small moan escapes her lips, but she remains still, her eyes firmly locked with his. Next, his hands move to her sides, slowly skimming upward to her breasts, which he gently palms, his thumbs stroking her nipples, turning them into hardened peaks and sending jolts of electricity directly her core. She makes a mewling sound of pleasure and approval as her inner muscles contract involuntarily at the stimulation.

Her hands untangle from his hair and cup his cheeks, her thumbs making soft sweeping motions as she continues to look into his eyes.

This moment is perfection personified, and she wishes it could last forever.
However, she can't resist the desire she feels any longer and slowly leans in, her eyes drifting shut as her lips touch his, feather light at first but with gradually increasing pressure and intensity. He kisses back, their lips starting a rhythmic and ancient dance that soon finds her hips rising and falling in time with her heartbeat, which has slowed despite their earlier excitement.

Time falls away, dusk turns to night, and still they dance.
Chapter 9

This must be what heaven is like, she thinks.

She's sprawled out atop Clark's body, both of them completely naked, covered in a thin film of sweat, her head resting on his chest, one of his hands resting on her firm bottom, while his other hand alternates between tracing random patterns and gently stroking her back.

They're taking a break from their marathon of love-making, a break which she suggested, much to his disappointment. She can still picture his face, the sad eyes and petulant pout, as she told him her spirit was willing to continue, but her body needed a break, and a slow smile lights up her face. They've only been an official couple for a few hours, and he's already hopelessly addicted to her.

On a whim, she presses a tender kiss to his chest, just above his heart, which earns her a gentle squeeze of her bottom. A delightful tingling sensation spreads throughout her body, and she sighs contentedly as she rests her head once more against his chest and listens to his strong and steady heartbeat.

Her eyes drift shut, and she can feel sleep calling to her, but she's too wired and too tired to surrender to oblivion.

They remain like this for a long while, snuggled in each other's embrace, enjoying the quiet reverence of simply being together.

Idly, she wonders if this is all just some wonderful dream she's having, a dream she'll eventually wake up from. The very thought that this might not be real or that it's only fleeting gives her pause, and she quickly chases the doubt away, snuggling deeper into his embrace. Even if this is a dream, which she's certain it's not, she's going to cherish every moment of it.

As her thoughts turn to more pleasant things, she feels him shift beneath her, and she whines in protest when he begins to sit up, dislodging her from her comfortable perch.

She's about to tell him to lie back down but holds her tongue when she looks up into his face. He's wearing an expression, has a look in his eyes she's never seen, and it captivates her.

Without a word, he slides out from under her and stands up, giving her nude form an appreciative once-over before leaning down and scooping her up in his arms, holding her tight to his chest. Her arms instinctively go around his neck, and she looks into his eyes, silently wondering what's on his mind. Her only response is his lips capturing hers in a brief but tender kiss, and then he's moving, carrying her out of the bedroom, down the hall, down the stairs and out the door.

A thrill of excitement and wonder shoots through her as she tries to discern his intentions, but her mind comes up empty as to what he's got planned. So, she simply holds on and enjoys the ride.

As he's carrying her, she looks up at the sky, which is lightening with the approaching dawn, and wonders if he's taking her somewhere so they can watch the sunrise together. If so, it's quite the romantic gesture, and she smiles at the thought.

It isn't until they've lost sight of the farmhouse that she realizes they're both still naked. Normally, she'd freak out and insist that he get them some clothes or take them back inside, but, for some reason, she feels perfectly at ease with their nudity, like it's the most natural thing in the world. Plus, she finds the brazenness of the whole thing very arousing.
After a few minutes of walking, he stops. Looking around, she sees that they're standing in the middle of a wonderfully lush and green meadow with trees in the distance and not a soul, animal or human, to be seen for miles.

Gently, he sets her feet on the dew-covered grass, and she looks up at him in puzzlement. She has no idea why he's brought her out here, and she's about to ask him that very question when he blurs away and returns mere seconds later.

Even more confused, she opens her mouth to speak, but he silences her with a finger against her lips.

After a moment, he removes his finger and simply stares into her eyes, his gaze filled with intense emotion, the likes of which she's never seen from him or anyone else for that matter. She finds herself unable to look away, drawn in by some unknown and unseen force, a force that beckons to her.

The warm and gentle breeze caresses their bodies, the air around them suddenly charged and weighted with the intensity, the importance of the moment.

Slowly, he lifts his right hand. Breaking eye contact, she looks down and sees that he's holding an object. Taking a closer look, she sees that it's a bracelet, silver with a turquoise stone inset and markings carved into the band.

She's not entirely sure what the bracelet is or what it means, but she knows it's meant for her, and that him offering it to her is something special, perhaps even something profound.

Her eyes lift from the bracelet and find his. He's looking at her with intensity, solemnity, pure emotion, as if he's laying his soul bare before her, and she can feel him asking her the most important question anyone has ever asked her, can feel his soul calling out to hers.

And she answers.

Without hesitation and without breaking eye contact, he places the bracelet on her wrist.

It is done.

What was two, is now one.

The bracelet begins to emit a low humming sound and glows with a soft white light. The light begins to spread, slowly moving along her body until she's completely engulfed.

She feels a sense of rightness and completeness wash over her. It's as if, for the first time in her life, she's whole.

Ignoring the light and the humming, she has a sudden and uncontrollable urge to kiss him, so she does, her lips meeting his in a tender caress, sealing the pact.

The light fades, and the humming ceases, but they continue to kiss, completely lost to the moment. Her arms wrap around his neck, and she begins to gently pull him with her as she slowly sinks to the ground.

There, in the tall grass of the meadow, they consummate their relationship, making love for the first time as husband and wife.
The sun breaks the horizon, signaling the start of the new day...

...and the beginning of the rest of their lives.
She’s making dinner when she looks out the kitchen window and sees her husband being chased by a little raven-haired terror, both of them laughing as the little girl gains on her father, eventually catching him and "tackling" him to the ground and then pouncing on him as he begs for mercy.

She can't help the smile that graces her lips or the warmth she feels suffusing her soul as she watches the two most important people in her life wrestle in the dirt, her husband tickling their daughter, making her squeal with delight.

It’s these simple, everyday moments that mean so much to her, make her glad to be alive, and make her appreciate all the hardships and missteps she’s had to endure to get here.

She takes a few moments to watch her family; the way her daughter's wavy, obsidian tresses whip wildly about as she writhes and squirms from being tickled, her laughter echoing in the early evening air signaling the innocence and pure joy only a child possesses, the way her husband lies on his back, their daughter sitting atop his broad chest, his smile shining brightly, his laughter filled with mirth as he both tickles and cradles their little girl. She sighs contentedly and smiles even brighter, reveling in the ordinary magic of it all, before she goes to the door and announces that dinner is ready.

Upon hearing her declaration, the two of them scramble off the ground, racing each other to see who can get to the house first. Clark loses, of course, but just barely.

In a show of sportsmanship, he picks Lara up and hoists her onto his shoulders, carrying her up the stairs while proclaiming her the 'champion of the world'. Her response is a fit of giggles and a brilliant smile.

After dinner, Clark goes on patrol while she takes their daughter upstairs for a bath.

Once bath time is over, she helps Lara into her Superman jammies and tucks her into bed. Lara, as per usual, begs to be read a bedtime story, and, as always, she caves. Grabbing The Princess Bride off the bookshelf, she climbs into the bed, and Lara snuggles up next to her, her stuffed bunny, Shelby, tucked under her arm.

After fifteen minutes, she looks down and sees that Lara’s sound asleep, her head resting against her arm.

Carefully, she slips out of bed and adjusts the covers. With reverence and a gentle touch, she brushes a stray lock of wavy black hair off of Lara's face before leaning down and pressing a tender kiss to her forehead.

Slowly, she makes her way out of the room, stopping a moment in the doorway to gaze lovingly at her precious little girl, saying a silent prayer of thanks for her family, her life and all the blessings therein.

She's had that dream and others like it for the past few days. In fact, she's been dreaming about their daughter, Lara, ever since the day Clark gave her the bracelet. At first, she dismissed the dreams as her subconscious yearning to have a family with Clark. However, she's come to believe these dreams are much more than that.
She's sitting on the porch steps, anxiously waiting for Clark to return home from work and a quick patrol. He's usually home by now, and the extended wait is trying her patience.

Just when she's ready to call out to him, which she knows will get him here instantly, she spots a red and blue, man-shaped object approaching in the sky.

She's on her feet and rushing to meet him before his feet even touch the ground, her arms wrapping around him, her lips seeking his.

After several long moments, she breaks the kiss, pulling back enough to look into his eyes, an excited look upon her face.

He's about to ask her something, probably why she's so excited, when he just stops, his expression turning from curious to awestruck.

His eyes leave hers, slowly traveling down her body before coming to rest on her midsection.

Within moments, his eyes, now full of wonder and excitement, snap back up to meet hers, and a brilliant smile lights up her face as she nods her head yes, answering his unspoken question.

A smile brighter than the sun illuminates his face, and his arms tighten around her as he lifts her off the ground. Joyous laughter erupts from both of them as they revel in their good fortune.

Before long, they're kissing, tenderly, lovingly at first, but their kisses soon become more passionate as they celebrate the life growing within her.

It won't be until much later that they realize they're floating several feet off the ground.

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